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Introduction

Ever since the humans started keeping historical records, hair has been evoking considerable interest in its symbolic and evocative properties. It has been an object of beliefs indicating established tradition, which may or may not have appealed to certain individuals. In many cases, it has also been the means of projecting self-image in the society. In certain societies of the world it has been the subject of art, language, poetry and folklore for ages.

Reading through the pages of history one comes to the irrefutable conclusion that at one time the whole world treated hair as a necessary and useful part of the human body. As the human society entertained the idea of fashion, everything began to be looked at from the angle of making the human appearance what it was not. In this process the laws of nature were the first casualties. No proof of the utility of hair was necessary and no natural law was considered more advantageous than self-indulgence. In course of time politics too began to play its part. Those in authority foisted their half-baked opinions on the gullible subjects. Their position of authority was enough to coax or compel the people to tow their line of thinking. Fortunately a lot of research has these days gone into finding what hair is. On the basis of this research we are now in a better position to understand hair and can make educated choices.

In India there were numerous cultural values associated with the hair and they were dying away. The Sikhs were the first people to restore the imbalanced thinking about the hair. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, never shaved and his follower Gurus continued the tradition. Lastly their tenth Guru made it compulsory for the Sikhs to retain their God-given appearance and treat the hair with respect they deserved. Honouring the hair meant honouring all that the Indian society (and the Sikh ideology) considered desirable. Since the saints of India never shaved, the Sikhs came to be known as the saint-soldiers. Their moral excellence and bravery soon became a by word.

Soon after the Second World War the Sikhs began to emigrate to the West and came face to face with the difficulties of getting employment unless they conformed to the Western ways in personal appearance. There were many Englishmen who out of narrow mindedness and Xenophobia argued for cultural correctness and expected the Sikhs to tow the English cultural line. Many Sikhs succumbed to the pressure. Their degradation was bound to affect the next generation of the Diaspora Sikhs. The chain reaction spread like wild fire because there was no religious organization in the West to stem the tide of apostasy among the Sikhs. Sikh youngsters are today taking their apostate parents as their roll models and have patchy or little knowledge of their religion and culture. This book is an attempt at providing them with some basic facts about hair and the expectations of their religion. It is hoped that it will afford an opportunity for the Sikh youngsters to see

how their ancestors respected mother nature and what moral and ethical nuances they had attached to the hair and the turbans.

The book starts with the description of facts about hair and how it has been looked at in various countries, religions, cultures and political circles. Then it explains why the Sikhs do not remove their hair and why do they tie turbans. Towards the end of the book some commonly asked questions have been answered.

I hope that my attempt will prove helpful in understanding the background of the Sikh thinking behind the hair and turbans. Suggestions for the improvement of the book will be gratefully acknowledged.

G.S.Sidhu
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Chapter 1

Nature's Gift

Hair is an important God-given natural characteristic coating of the body of all mammals.¹ Humans or the *Homo sapiens* are the important members of this category. They have various kinds of hair. (1) Long hair as on the head and male chin etc. (2) bristles in the nose, ears, eyelashes etc and (3) fine short hair on the skin. The hair of the non-human species is known as fur.

Hairs cover the whole body of the mammals with the exception of soles of the feet palms of the hands, and the lips.² The most noticeable hairs are on the heads of the humans. They grow longer than those of most other mammals and are also comparatively denser³. Of all the hair on the human body 25% grow on the head. On the average a person has 90,000 to 1,40,000 hairs on the head.

Some anthropologists think that the significance of long head hair may be nature's gift of adornment.⁴ This may be true because the long lustrous hair is a visible sign of healthy individual. It can provide useful information about the symptoms of human health.

Although some biologists argue that humans might have been born without hair, the fact remains that humans have brought hair with them from the womb.⁵ There is no fossil record of human hair to establish how the feature evolved outside the womb if it did. There is no denying the fact that throughout the human history hair has existed in one form or the other.

It is a general belief that hair and nails continue growing for some days even after death but it appears to be a myth because no empirical evidence has so far substantiated it.⁶ The impression appears to be the result of the retraction or shrinking of the skin around the hair roots. The tissue dehydrates making the hair and nails appear longer.

¹ Examinations through microscope have proved that even plants have hair all over them. They appear in various forms, help them breathe and secrete and protect them from the effects of frictions. M. Guetard, Mr. Grew (1682AD) and Malpighi (1686AD) have written a lot about the hair on plants and hair in general.

² Amatus Lusitanus mentions a person who had hair on his tongue.

³ Hair density also depends on race. Caucasians have the highest hair density. Asians have less dense hair but their hair grow faster. Temperatures and weather conditions seem to affect hair growth. The colour of the hair and the skin depends partly on these and partly on the genes known as Mclr and SLC24A5. Red haired people have the least density of hair.

⁴ hr clz myN hY qyrl kwrlgrl tpkql [iXh kwrKwnw qU ny kb rwiegW bnwieAw]

⁵ According to Dr. Stephen Juan every human foetus grows a soft layer of hair in the womb. According a local newspaper Longky Djanggola dated 13.7.2007; a bearded baby was born to Mitra Jayanti wife of Muhammed Rifai of Maesa (Parigi Kota-Indonesia) on 10.7.2007. He had a 3cm long beard at birth. Such unusual births are not common. The doctors diagnose it as the result of hormonal imbalance called hypertrichosis.

⁶ The belief may have originated from Wulferus (See his *Philosophical collections*) who tells us that the grave of a woman at Nuremberg was opened up after 43 years and it was discovered that her hair were issuing forth in large numbers through the clefts of her coffin.

1.1 Growth of Hair

The fine hair on the body, known as Lanugo begin appearing in the last stages of pregnancy in all full-term babies. After birth they start falling off regularly.

Head hair grows at the rate of 0.25 to 0.40 millimetres per day. In other words the average growth of a hair is about 12 cm per year. The development of hair takes place in three stages.

- (1) **Anagen Phase** (the Growth phase): - Hair plants itself firmly and starts issuing from the papilla.
- (2) **Catagen** (The transitory phase): - In about two to four weeks the hair enters the follicle⁷ and starts growing.
- (3) **Exogen phase** (the resting phase): - The hair lasts at least for three to four months before it is ready to fall off making room for its successor.

Each hair has a definite period of growth.⁸ After reaching the period of dormancy, (usually three to four months), the hair stops growing and the follicle starts shrinking and resting. Thus each follicle undergoes cycles of growth and rest throughout life. The auxiliary and pubic hairs have a slower growth whereas the head hairs have a faster growth and are comparatively longer. Experimental scientist Dr. Neufeld transplanted hair from the head on to the leg. It did not grow as long as it would on the head.

Humans lose roughly 100 strands of hairs a day and gain almost the same number everyday. Thus nature maintains and regulates the number of hair on the head. During chemotherapy or radiotherapy, epithelial cells are damaged leading to quick hair loss on the head and the eyebrows. Some other diseases and traumas can also cause temporary or permanent loss. Some diseases leave patches of baldness on the head.

When we grow old, the hairs get less and less nutrients and therefore turn their pigment and become gray or white. This is natural and is not a cause for concern.⁹ In some people it starts early but usually at 75 the hair naturally grow gray. At this stage thinning of hair starts and in some cases some people develop baldness. Men turn gray earlier than women. For some mysterious reason red hair does not turn gray but assume sandy colour before turning white.

There are roughly 5 million hairs on a human head. Oddly enough the same number inhabits the body of a gorilla with the only difference that gorilla hair is comparatively

⁷ On the average a human head has about 140,000 hair follicles. Each follicle can grow about 20 individual hairs in a person's lifetime.

⁸ Hair does not grow forever. It grows only as long as the hair follicle is active. The productive capability of follicles varies from person to person. Again hairs at different locations of the human body are programmed by nature to grow to different lengths and for different periods of time.

⁹ The snow on the roof does not mean that there is no fire inside.

thicker and grows only to a certain length. Barring any disease or accident the maximum life of scalp hair is roughly seven years on average.

1.2 Physical Properties of hair

1. Hair is elastic. It can be stretched up to 20% of its length. It tends to return to its original shape after stretch.
2. Hair can absorb and evaporate moisture
3. Wetting the hair changes its behaviour
4. Natural sunlight and artificial ultraviolet light cause chemical changes in the hair
5. When rubbed or brushed, the hair builds up static electric charge
6. Our genes determine the type, texture and length of our hair.
7. The hair is very strong and resists breaking. Ten strands of hair can carry a weight of 1 Kg.¹⁰
8. Body hairs provide surface area for the bacteria to break down the fatty material secreted by the apocrine glands of the body.
9. Hairs keep a record of the constituents of our body tissues for a long time.

1.3 Food of the hair: -

Vitamin C and vitamin D are necessary for the growth of hair. It grows faster and shiny if carrots, green vegetables and fish are a part of the daily human diet.

It has been proved that zinc and copper deficiencies in the body affect pigmentation of the hair.¹¹ Dr. Fell has stated that with the exception of Liver and the brain tissue our hair is the only tissue that contains these minerals in any significant quantity. Dr. Beinert has proved that copper and iron together are necessary for the enzyme known as cytochrome oxidase, which is absolutely necessary for hydrogen transport chain of aerobic respiration of the hair. Another enzyme known as tyrosinase is also required by the hair to produce melanin. Its absence is known to cause albinism.¹²

¹⁰ In an exhibition named 'decoding Hair' held at Heureka Science Center (Helsinki- January- August 2004) and later at Science and Technology Museum Beijing (China-June 2005) a strand of 200 hairs was shown carrying a weight of 3Kg. A Malaysian gentleman named Letchemanah Ramasamy tied his hairs to a London double Decker bus and pulled 7874 Kg for 32.85 meters.

¹¹ Melanin imparts blackness and luster to the hair. Phenomelanin produces yellow and red pigment in the hair. According to Dr. Flesch, Dr. Rothman and Dr. Russell phenomelanin is also dependant on the catalytic function of copper. However Dr. Mason concludes that Zinc and copper both are required for the chain of chemical reactions triggering this enzyme.

¹² A disease marked by congenital absence of pigment in hair and skin. Sufferers feel that their eyes are incapable of bearing light.

Over and above this the hair contain small quantities of manganese, Chromium, nickel and traces of other metals, which have been found in its RNA. Folic acid¹³ and vitamin B₁₂¹⁴ are also needed to produce nucleic acids.

1.4 The Structure of hair

Human hair is made of proteins known as keratins (a long chains of amino acids)¹⁵, which shape themselves into a tubular form. The inside content is absorbent like a sponge and lends colour to the hair. The outer surface of the tubular structure is covered with scale-like tiny plates. The hair does not contain nerves or blood but is firmly rooted in the living human skin. It has two parts (i) the portion growing above the skin and (ii) the portion anchored in the skin. In the skin, a hair is like a long narrow tunnel leading to the follicle (part of the skin that packs the cells together to make the hair). The follicle is attached to the lower layers of the skin. At the end of the follicle is a root known as papilla (connective tissue) The papilla is the centre of growth and nourishment of a hair and collects nutrients from the blood to feed the hair. Around the papilla gather epithelial cells, which are known to be the fastest growing cells in the human body.

A little bit below the outer skin (called epithelium) there are some glands known as sebaceous glands, which supply a fatty secretion (known as sebum) to the hair. They are connected with a muscle (*Erector pili*), which makes our hair stand on an end when we are cold, scared or have goose bumps. The more the sebaceous glands, the thicker grow the hair. Human stem cells¹⁶ are located at the junction of the *Erector pili* and the follicle

1.5 Types of hair

Humans have three types of hair.

Lunago: the very fine hair that covers almost the whole body (excepting palms, lips and foot soles etc).

Vellus:- body hair that grows slightly longer in most parts of the human body (in both sexes).

Terminal hair: The longest fully developed hair. They are darker than the vellus hair.

From childhood onward the vellus hair cover the whole body (except lips, palms, soles nipples,¹⁷ naval and certain external genital areas). With the start of puberty vellus hair begin to turn into terminal hair. However, different areas have different sensitivities concerning growth. These hairs (known as androgenic hair) also grow on the chest and chin of the males but not on the females. Males have more androgenic hair (particularly on face, abdomen, chest, legs and arms) than women.

¹³ Folic acid (B6) affects dozens of important physiological functions.

¹⁴ Vitamin B helps produce amino acids of which Pantothenic acid deficiency causes impaired growth in hair. If this vitamin is used over a long period it restores the damaged hair and its pigmentation.

¹⁵ So far 80 different keratins have been identified in the human hair.

¹⁶ Scientists have recently developed human skin from stem cells.

¹⁷ Simon Mould (UK) has a 4.5 inches long hair on his nipple. It is a rare phenomenon.

1.6 Functions of hair

Hair is an epidermal outgrowth whose primary purpose appears to be insulation from hot and cold conditions. It regulates the body temperature in summer and winter. In a way it is nature's thermostat to provide insulation of the brain from excesses of weather by trapping air between the skull and the hair. The air trapped adjacent to the skin provides an insulating layer for the brain's safety. Dr. Wong and Dr. Simmons (2001AD) conducted experiments and concluded, "*The hair is an excellent heat insulator*". It is worth noting that keratin, which is what the hair is made of, is a very bad conductor of heat. It, along with the air trapped in the hair; provides an ideal insulation and a cushion for the scalp. All this helps in maintaining the equilibrium of body temperature. In winter the hairs keep the brain warm and in summer they keep it cool by trapping the body moisture close to the skin.

According to Dr. Rothman (See *Physiology and Biochemistry* 1953 Page 602) human hair provides the brain not only protection from heat but also from harmful ultra violet rays of the sun. Melanin granules have been discovered in the melanocytes epidermis of hair and melanin has a special affinity for ultra-violet rays of the sun. It is melanin that lends colour to our hair. Dr. Krol and Dr. Lieber conducted some experiments in 1998 and discovered that melanin protects useful biomolecules such as lipids and nucleic acids from ultraviolet light. Dr. Orton later confirmed the results through independent research in 2002 AD. In this process the hair pigment serves the same purpose as chlorophyll in the plants. It absorbs the short length ultra violet rays before they reach the scalp.

Dr. Kvam and Dr. Tyrrell proved that too much of melanin if left in the body may get irradiated with ultraviolet light and cause oxidative damage to DNA. The body regulates its quantity of melanin through the hairs. The extra melanin in the hair reacts with the fatty secretion of the skin in the presence of solar radiations producing vitamin D so essential for growth and development of the human body. It has been discovered that vitamin D is directly concerned with calcium metabolism of the human body. Experiments conducted on monkeys prove that any significant deficiency of Vitamin D may lead to Tuberculosis.

Solar energy is necessary for all life.¹⁸ A lot of research has now gone into finding what light is and what it does to life. Newton (1666 AD) discovered that although light appears white, it consists of seven colours. Each colour is the result of a particular radiation. These colours are **violet**, indigo, green, yellow, orange and **red** in that order. Violet and red are the extremities of the spectroscope and produce ultra violet and infrared radiations. A part of these rays is absorbed by our body and produces necessary heat,

¹⁸ There is no denying the fact that life without the sun is unimaginable. All living matter requires solar energy. Plants use it through photosynthesis carried out by their leaves. Humans make use of it through their hair and skin. Keep a human being away from the sun and see the result. Even our forefathers knew the utility of the Sun and that is why they worshipped it. Ancient man lived naked and was healthier but we cannot go back to the primitive period because of modern civilization. Doctors do advise sunbathing and the wearing of light clothing for this reason.

chemical reactions, and electrical energy etc. for our survival. The effects of these rays are also different. For example ultra violet rays kill certain bacteria, coagulate albumin and produce anti-toxins. Like a sieve pigments in the hair absorb some harmful radiations along with conveying necessary radiations to the body. Healthy hair is therefore a necessity of the humans.

Hair has the advantage of long-term memory like the tree rings. The protein in the hair fiber holds composition of body tissues for a permanent period. A trained eye can discover the toxins in the body through analyzing the hair. It tells us what vitamins and minerals in the body are depleted or are too abundant to cause harm through imbalance. Experts can detect radiation, heavy metals (like mercury, cadmium, arsenic and lead), pesticides, food chemicals and bacteria etc in the body by analyzing the hair. It has been demonstrated that hair keratin have affinity for arsenic poison.¹⁹ They attract poisons, especially arsenic, from the body. The hair shafts store such poisons for a long time. In one case (Mr. Lafayette Baker's case)²⁰ arsenic was detected a century after his death.

Small amounts of Iron²¹, Zinc, lead, and selenium are necessary for our body but excess of these metals can cause poisoning, cancers and other diseases if they stay in the body. According to Dr. Rozanowska (1999 AD) hair act as scavengers of free radicals and metals. They maintain these metals in correct proportion and draw away the excess amounts. According to Mcrone Research Institute Cysteine in the hair has an affinity for lead. It draws excessive quantities of lead from the human body. Hair is therefore indicator of certain diseases of the humans. Dr. Janet Starr Hull PhD (P.O. Box 239 Mellisa, Texas 75454) works internationally through hair toxin analysis and has cured numerous celebrities, athletes, dentists, and lawyers through hair analysis process. Some scientists use human head hair as a tool for monitoring environmental pollution. Dr. R. Sharma of St. John's college Agra used hair to ascertain the environmental pollution in the city of Agra in March 2004.²²

Hair analysis is extensively used these days in forensic sciences. It has some advantages over other bio monitors like blood and urine in that it is easily available and is very stable in room temperatures. Again it not only demonstrates recent concentrations but also reveals the exposure along a given long period of time. Scientists in Scotland have recently developed a mass spectrometry method of detecting and dating anabolic steroids in head hair. Department of Pharmacology, University School of Medicine Gifu (Japan) has called the hair "A tape recorder" which stores along its full-length full information of the past and present use of drugs by the wearer.

¹⁹ Dr. Saferstein was the first to discover arsenic in the hair in 2001AD

²⁰ Lafayette baker died on 3 July 1868. He was administered arsenic in small doses by his brother-in-law Wally Pollock. The cause of Napoleon's death has now been conclusively determined by the analysis of his hair. Everybody now accepts that he was poisoned. Similarly Mcrone Research Institute has now ascertained the cause of Bethowen's death from his hair as Plumbism (lead poisoning).

²¹ Iron deficiency has been known to cause hairlessness in rats.

²² According to his rsearch Nickel and Lead concentrations are higher in the hairs of those living near roadside areas.

It has been discovered that our body produces some homocysteine, which is linked with the causes of hardening and furring of our arteries. Our hairs draw it away.

Body hair retains our unique chemical signature. Professor Veronica James of Australian national University has discovered that hairs from the breast cancer patients have a different molecular structure from those that are healthy. This fact is these days very helpful in diagnosing the cancer. It is also possible to ascertain the *Genus* of a species from its hair.²³

1.7 Commercial Uses of hair

For the past many centuries hair has been treated as a useless thing. The Chinese were the first to use hair in certain manufacturing processes and in supplying artificial hair.

Cysteine is a naturally occurring sulphurised amino-acid ($C_3H_7NO_2S$) found in the hair. It plays a role in cross-linking necessary proteins. From it a German Company has now started producing grade L-Cysteine by hydrolysis (with 20% HCl at 100 °C) of the hair proteins in the human hair. Cysteine is known to provide relief to the smokers suffering from aero digestive tract cancer. Doctors are conducting experiments by using it to help cure binge-drinkers from their hangover. It breaks down alcohol into harmless vinegar. Health care industry is also using Cysteine in cosmetics and skin care products as moisturizers and anti-aging formulations. Its derivative N-acetyl Cysteine (NAC) is used in cough medicines.

Cysteine produced from human hair is of a better quality and is therefore used in producing various meat flavours. It is popularly known as a flour improver and is used as a processing aid in baking for softening the dough. It enhances stretchiness of dough, which facilitates its quick processing by machines into pizza crusts and doughnuts. Its commercial name is E920 and it is permitted for use in biscuits, breads and cakes (except food prepared from whole meal flour). Muslims and Jews say that its use in food tantamount to *Haram*, which they do not touch much less eat.

Most of L-Cysteine is extracted from bird feathers but Japanese, Chinese and Germans use human hair. More and more sheep breeders are now using Cysteine on the sheep to produce better quality wool. It has also been found that if hairs (specially of hares and beavers) are spread on the fields, they get putrefied and provide the best manure for the cornfields.

These days hair is also used to make artificial diamonds. It is now possible to wear the hair of our dead ancestors as a ring on our finger.

²³ Earlier Dr. Poinar had proved that *Genus* could be determined through hair.

It is a common practice in China that Chinese women sell their tresses to the industrialists in order to support their families. In Xuchang (China) 112 hair products are manufactured by 200,000 employees and in 2004 AD China exported hair goods worth \$250 Million to America.

1.8 Shaving

Cleaning the body is necessary but most people these days go a step further and disfigure it. They make it look what nature did not intend it to be. Men and women are becoming more and more ostentatious caring more for show than health. No one has so far outlined any health advantages of shaving and humans are the only species, which consciously and deliberately try to alter their appearance.

Just like the tresses, which were romanticized down the ages by the poets, people have made removal of hair a popular sport. It has become a fashion to remove body hair. Women too are not far behind. They too shave, tweeze or depilate their hair.²⁴ Hair removal industry is progressing by leaps and bounds and millions are exploiting it for personal gains.

About eight hours after the shave the male hair starts coming out of their follicles again. On the very next day 10% hair appear in chisel-sharp points jeering at the futility of shaving. Within a few days the beard shows up the spectacle of a bombed up disaster area. Only the wives know what inconvenience and problems they face from the stubble on the male faces. Rubbing against the sharp distal ends of the harvested crop must be very discomforting to them.

Barbers instruments are a source of spreading skin diseases. It is not uncommon to come across people who have developed pimples, abscesses, ulcers, boils, bumps²⁵, razor burns or carbuncles through the barbers' instruments. Millions of pounds are paid to barbers year after year for shaving.²⁶ Their dirty fingers, offensive breaths and contaminated dull razors are the source of numerous other diseases. The frequent (in some cases daily) use of alcohol-based disinfectants, abrasions from the steel blades and variously used other chemicals do immense harm to the skin, which loses its suppleness, and becomes hard

²⁴ Plucking, waxing or zapping is now common among women in the West. Laser removal of hair from the legs is the latest craze but its success rate is only 30%. Hairs start growing again after a year. Another modern method is Electrolysis. Hair follicle is killed either by inserting Sulphuric acid into the follicle or is destroyed electronically. The method is very expensive and is still not hundred percent successful. Hairs start growing from a different place.

²⁵ Razor bumps are called pseudofolliculitis Barbae (commonly known as PFB). They form into papule leading to swelling and soon become infected. This disease is very common among people of African/American descent. If not cured in time it leads to Sycosis barbae folliculitis resulting in pus-filled blisters. Nearly 70% of shavers develop another kind of inflammatory condition known as acne vulgaris, which causes damage to sebaceous follicles of the face leading to inflammatory lesions resulting in loss of social esteem.

²⁶ According to an estimate £199.7 million pounds are spent every year on preventing grayness of the hair.

and unsightly like cooled up lava. Most people complain of irritation, painful ingrown hairs²⁷ and itchiness after shaving.

Regrowth of hair appears quickly in some cases and the people have to shave everyday spending at least 15 minutes. Those who shave themselves at home bear costs of creams, blades, brushes, razors, scent, sprays and the borax solution (used to wash brushes). Shaving brushes are made from badger hair. They come from China where badger is becoming an endangered species.²⁸

In Arabia and Egypt the hair from the face and the eyebrows are removed by threading. The process is known as *Khite* in Arabia and *Fatlah* in Egypt. The practitioner intertwines the hair in a thread and pulls them out. The process is painful and causes diseases like folliculitis, bacterial infections and reddening of skin (puffiness).

Turkish barbers spread paraffin on a piece of cloth. Then rub this cloth against the hairy part of the skin. It is then set alight.

In this age of AIDS, Hepatitis and other similar diseases shaving can be very harmful to health. If one really wishes to get rid of hair the solution lies in somehow stopping the formation of male hormone testosterone otherwise the shaving is nothing but an exercise in futility.

In hot countries like India the deaths from Sunstroke are common in summer. Statistics prove that more shaven people suffer sunstroke than the *Keshadhari* (hair wearing) people.

It is ironic that humans go on removing their own natural hair but use more and more hair from sheep, goats, rabbits and other woolly animals to protect themselves from cold. In deed it is a fact that textile industries have a roaring trade in wool and the farmers are applying every technique to increase the quantity of wool they can gather from the wide array of animals. The consumption of wool has been going up year after year.

Hair is an individual's passport of self-expression. Those who shave them or use laser to destroy them are taking extra vengeance against God for offering them a highly beneficial gift.

²⁷ After a close shave the hair regrows but cannot come out of the follicle. It turns backwards into the skin. This causes enormous itching and pain and in some cases leads to infection and ugly scarring (known as post-inflammatory pigmentation). Ingrown hairs are a common problem. It is also common knowledge that shaving makes the hair grow coarser and rougher in structure.

²⁸ Badger meat is a delicacy of the Chinese.

Chapter 2

Hair, Fashion and Culture

“Hair of the head is a symbol of faith, intuition of truth, or the highest qualities of the mind.” (*Dictionary of All Scriptures*- G. A. Gaskell)

Almost throughout the whole world people are these days interested more in how they look rather than what they are. Nobody seems natural anymore and nobody is interested in concentrating on the person inside. Hair is considered simply as an adornment for brandishing one’s self-imagined beauty.

At one time people used to say “*Religion runs the East and fashion runs the West*” Such was the craze of fashion²⁹ in the West that people like Groucho Marx (1930 AD) shaved off their eyebrows and facial hair completely and then redrew artificial beards and moustaches in ridiculous shapes using a black marker. These days there is hardly any difference between the East and the West.

Most of the fashions are connected with hair and clothing. Western women are two steps forward. They take pride in fashionable haircuts and wearing very revealing clothes.³⁰ By using straighteners, curlers, crimpers and special chemicals, they not only smother their natural hair but also spoil their shine and weaken their strength, Curly, wavy or kinky hair may look beautiful to some people but the processes used to mould the hair cause damage to the skin and the hair follicles.

The craze for changing straight hair into curly hair has gone too far. People are harming the hair through genetic and ingested means by altering the shape not only of the hair but also of the follicles. Some try to develop kinked hair by using the drug etretinate. Some even try to chemically perm the hair fiber into the required shape. Sky is the limit in fashion. Some similar fashions have also entered the male world. They are jokingly termed “manscaping”.³¹

Using the easily available synthetic hair the women have devised a number of funky hairdos, outlandish styles and trendy fashions of hair like spider web, hairy-copters and

²⁹ Fashion is a fad of the affluent people derived from “Fash” which means “bothering or tormenting oneself”. It is wasteful and un-necessary and has come to be associated with “out of the ordinary.” Nobody knows when it started but information is available from 1858 AD onwards when an Englishman Charles Frederick opened the first haute couture in Paris. Later Lucien Vogue published his magazine named ‘La Gasette du bonton’ (1902) leading the way for numerous other fashion magazines (Vogue, Fashion age etc). Now fashion TV is promoting fashion 24 hours.

“Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new” (Henry David Thoreau)

“A fashion is nothing but an induced epidemic” (George Bernard Shaw)

³⁰ “Never in the history of fashion has so little material been raised so high to reveal so much that needs to be covered so badly.” (Sir Cecil Beaton). “A woman’s dress should be like a barbed-wire fence serving its purpose without obstructing the view.” (Sohpia Loren)

³¹ Some men even go to the extremes. For example Peter Mandelson, the former Northern Ireland Secretary even shaves the backs of his hands.

flower flying etc. All this has led to a big world industry dealing in artificial hair affecting the financial market in the Western world.

Fashions are so fickle that they are on one day and are gone the other day.³² In the Bible evil is depicted by red hair. For example Judas, who betrayed Jesus, is shown with red hair and so is Eve because she beguiled Adam.³³ It was on this account that red haired women were persecuted and killed as witches in the middle ages. Red haired children were supposed to have been born to women who copulated with the devil. But fashions changed in the 16-17th century when red hair became fashionable.³⁴ These days red hair is considered a sign of youth and emancipation among women. They use artificial colours and chemicals to create red hair.

In the 15th century English women sat for many hours in the heat of the sun in order to bleach their hair after covering them with saffron and onion water. In the 16th century they tried their best to copy the cheek colour of Queen Elizabeth. In order to achieve a pallid complexion like the queen's, the women used white lead based rouge mixed with egg white. We know now how poisonous this concoction was.

In the 18th century such was the craze for high foreheads that women plucked their hair or used vinegar, cat's dung or quick lime to remove frontal hair.³⁵ Duke of New Castle's wife paid £40 to remove her forehead hair through such treatment. Many hairstyles were made using lard and flour. The style lasted for one month and became smelly causing dermatitis on the scalp and attracting lice.

Similarly around 1700 AD American women applied poultices of caustic soda to burn away their unwanted hair. Brazilian women used *coco de mono* tree secretions to get rid of hair. Some such fashions existed among the Greek women too. Between 1500-65 BC they wore long and curly hair. Around 300 BC the fashion was to tie the combed hair in a knot at the nape of the neck.³⁶ Between 300 and 150 BC artistic buns were in fashion.³⁷

During renaissance period sugar was expensive and only rich people could afford to buy it. People knew that sugar causes rot to the teeth. The fashion-conscious renaissance people (especially women) started blackening their teeth to prove how rich they were.

In the 19th century obesity was considered a symbol of wealth in Germany. Many people stopped working in fields to grow fat. Young men participated in duels to gain facial scar so that they could prove that they were very brave and masculine. These and other such

³² "Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months."(Oscar Wilde)

"Change of fashion is the tax levied by the industry of the poor on the vanity of the rich" (Chamfort)

³³ In the drawings Eve is always shown wearing red hair and eating the forbidden fruit.

³⁴ Nazis were still convinced of the evils of red hair. They were on the horns of dilemma whether to permit two red haired persons to get married. They feared that such a match would produce 'degenerate children'.

³⁵ Some even used Asse's fat, She goat's gall, bat's blood, powdered viper or resin.

³⁶ This style is still prevalent and is called "The Greek Knot".

³⁷ At that time men had begun to use "calamistrum" (a hollow stick) to re-shape their hair like women.

fads have been common in European history and no wonder the Europeans are inventing hair fashions these days.

Film stars have heavily influenced the modern hairstyles. Models, actresses and professional women wear wigs of artificial hair but remove their natural hair. They are being slavishly copied everywhere.

A moustache is central to the identity of its male wearer. These days numerous moustache fashions have come into existence. Some moustaches had come to be associated with tyranny; despotism and dictatorships. People immediately recognized the tyrants and mass murderers like Hitler (Germany), Stalin (Russia), Papa Doc Duvalier (Haiti), Augusto Pinochet (Chile), Emperor Bokassa (Africa) and Saddam Hussein (Iraq) from their moustaches. These days' people sport them as fashion.

The human craze has no end. People do bizarre and insane actions.³⁸ For example Elvis Presley's lock of hair was purchased by an anonymous buyer at a cost of \$115,120. Similarly somebody purchased the hair of Albert Einstein at an enormous cost.

2.1. Baldness

Baldness (Androgenetic disease known as Alopecia areata) affects nearly 40% of the world population. Effects of alopecia areata (multiple areas of hair loss) can sometimes lead to Alopecia Totalis (Loss of all head hair), which has a very devastating psychological and social effect on the sufferer. It results in the loss of self-image causing social phobia, anxiety and even depression.

There was a time when Alopecia was considered a sign of mental illness. People thought that like the dry soil a frail mind couldn't support hair. Researchers now tell us that baldness has something to do with X-Chromosome, inherited from mothers.³⁹ Some others however believe that high levels of testosterone cause it.

Chemicals like minoxidil and Finasteride are frequently used to re-grow the hair. Dr. Karaminkian of New York Metropolitan area and Dr. Washenik MD, PhD Director of Bosley International Transplant Co. Canada are of the opinion that drugs may slow down the fall of hair but they cannot bring back hair or create new growth. Chemicals like doxocubicin, epicubicin, and Toxol have been proved to slow down the onset of alopecia. It is believed that the regular use of black currant and zinc supplements too have a salutary effect.

³⁸ Hans Lambeth (Norway 1846-1927) used special treatment to extend his beard to 17.5 feet. Kalyanji Ranji Sain of Sudagarh (India) has carefully nurtured his moustache to prolong it to 11 ft 1 inch. He is crazy to have his name recorded in the Guinness book of records. Mr. Bhupati Das (West Bengal) grows his beard for the craze of entering in the world record. He wears a 4-foot long moustache that can carry 24 Kg weight on it. Many others are also involved in this craze.

³⁹ It has been found that women and castrated men never go bald.

Since 400 BC males and females have been treating baldness but with limited success. They have used ridiculously bizarre objects to get rid of it. Some examples are dog urine, spider webs, egg yolks, Snake oil, cow saliva, grape seed, rosemary oil, Emu oil, eucalyptus oil, jojoba oil and aloe Vera.

The magic cure is still elusive. It is ironic that those who have hair do not want them and those who haven't got them are trying to grow them and are desperately trying every medicine available.⁴⁰

2.2 Beards and Moustaches

American Psychologist Palgrini and colleagues (1973 AD) state that beards and moustaches increase perceptions of a person's intelligence, health, social status, popularity, likeableness, sensitivity, sincerity and generosity to others.

Women do not have beards but nature has compensated them with longer and denser hair on the scalp than men. Again it is a fact that women seldom ever go bald unless they suffer from some kind of very serious disease. However some women do get beards,⁴¹ which are the result of hormonal imbalance in the bodies.

Beards were greatly in fashion in most parts of the western Society, especially among the nobles and upper classes during the 18th century. They became all the more popular after the Napoleonic era. Many male European monarchs sported beards. For example Alexander II of Russia, Napoleon III of France and king Frederick III of Germany were all bearded. Numerous other elite figures too wore beards. For example Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Dickens and Giuseppe Verdi were a few of them. Heavy beards and long sideburns were very popular among the Victorians. The fashion changed in the 20th Century when people began to associate beards with lack of refinement and lack of cleanliness. Some even went to the extent of calling the bearded people eccentrics.

It was different in America. During the 18th Century Americans were not fond of beards. During the middle of the 19th century up to the Civil war the beards became a fashion among the Generals. No president had beard before Abraham Lincoln⁴² but after him almost all American presidents (excepting Mckinley) had either a beard or a prominent moustache.

During and after the World War I beards fell out of vogue once again because people had to wear gas masks and the spread of lice among the soldiers took an epidemic proportion.

⁴⁰ Sale of artificial or natural hair is these days a Billion dollar industry.

⁴¹ This is known as Hirsutism (growth of hair in women caused by male hormone Androgen). A common cause of Hirsutism is PCOS (polycyclic ovarian syndrome). Vivian Wheeler (USA) has an unusually long beard (11 inches). She stopped shaving in 2000.

⁴² Abraham Lincoln did not have a beard before becoming the president. A girl named Grace Bedell Chatanque County New York wrote him a letter on 15.10.1860. She wrote that he looked ugly without a beard and that all women would vote for him if he grew a beard. Lincoln replied to the letter on 19.10.1860 and never shaved afterwards. On 11.2.1861 he entered the Whitehouse as a bearded president of America.

Soon after TV became popular and the shaven soldiers on the TV began to be copied in public. The Gillette Safety Razor Company made a roaring trade through advertisements eulogizing shaving. The trend lasted right up to 1960 AD when the businessmen and hippies once again popularised long hair and beards. The singers like the Beatles, Barry white, Peter and Paul wore beards again. This fashion too ran its course by 1980s

Some of History's known bearded people are Karl Marx, Fidel Castro, Leo Tolstoy, Moses, American President Benjamin Harrison and these days Osama –bin-Laden.

2.3 Beard and Moustache fashions

Beards and moustaches differentiate between sexes. They are a sign of masculinity and are also connected with sex. They start developing when a male reaches the age of puberty. Through the facial hair people effortlessly demonstrate their identities religious, political, social and others.

Now the West has come up with numerous fashions of the beard and moustache, which the people in the East are slavishly copying. Some of the beard and Moustache fashions are Chin trap, Garibaldi, Goatee⁴³, Royale, Stubble, Van Dyke, Verdi, Neck beard, Tail back, stud muffin, and Fu etc.⁴⁴ Fashions like 'Ole Civil war, and 'big wily' are displayed proudly. More and more fashions are coming in daily. The moustaches are used an orbament to decorate the human personality showing no respect for nature.

The type of straight downward flowing long beard known as Full beard is found only among the baptised Sikhs. Although people in the West have stopped wearing long beards many Christian priests (Specially Greek orthodox) still keep long flowing beards (and moustaches) and are greatly respected.

2.4 Social and cultural aspects

“The bearded races of mankind have commonly held the beard in high honour”.

(The Encyclopedia Britannica).

(a) Hair and male culture

As puberty progresses hormonal changes start taking place and hair begins to demonstrate a sign of masculinity in men and femininity for women. Male level of testosterone induces growth of hair on certain parts of the males (beards, armpits, chest and pubic hair etc) leading to development in muscles and vocal chord indicating male adolescence. Growth of the beard is therefore considered a sign of development of sexual capability in males. It is for this reason that in certain societies the onset of Male pogonotrophy

⁴³ Goatee beard is a compromise between being clean-shaven and being manly.

⁴⁴ Artificial beards sell from \$5 to \$50 and artificial moustaches sell at \$14 in America.

(beardness) is celebrated as an important period of life.⁴⁵ Development of Estradiol hormones causes development of breasts in females. They show up in the female body with the onset of menses. Hair therefore carries a great social significance for human beings. It is considered a sign of manhood in men and femininity in women.

Researchers tell us that hair produce and trap *Pheromones*, which stimulate sexual urges in opposite sex (the process is known as *dimorphism*).⁴⁶ It is a special favour to humans that out of all mammals only they have been granted by nature to have long hair on the head. During the 17th Century most men in Europe wore long flowing cavalier locks, which were often curled and perfumed. World war 1 and especially world War II popularized shaving among both sexes but “*For men the closely cropped crew cuts adapted for practical reasons during world war II soon gave way to longer hair and untrimmed beards.*” (New encyclopedia volume 12).

The ancient Gauls esteemed it an honour to have long hair (*Galia comata*) on their head “*Long hair was a mark of honour among ancient Gauls..... among the first Franks, and in the beginning of our monarchy, it was a characteristic of princes of the blood... whereas long hair was the mark of royal blood, ere more or less short, depending on the degree of inferiority in the ranks, in such a way that the monarch’s head of hair became, so to speak, the yardstick of social rank.*” (Denis Diderot’s *Encyclopedia. Translation by Michael Kwass*). It is believed that Julius Caesar made the French cut their hair as a token of submission.

Almost all cultures have some moral expectations associated with beards and moustaches. Here are some.

Greece: There has been an old saying in Greece which indicates how much the people loved their hair, “*There are two kinds of beardless humans—boys and women—and I am neither*”

Arabia:- “*A man without moustache is no better than a cat without a tail.*”

The Arabs used to humiliate the prisoners by cutting their hair before setting them free. Among them (1) a shaven head is considered more unsightly than the loss of a nose. (2) a bearded man is considered incapable of acting dishonestly. (3) Good wishes are expressed by saying, “*May God preserve thy beard.*”

All four schools for the interpretation of Islam consider the shaving of a beard as effeminacy. It is forbidden as *haram* in Islam.

Shakespeare:- “*He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man*” (Much Ado About Nothing Act 2 Scene 1)

Mark Twain is also reported to have said, ‘*With a beard he is more than a man. Without a beard he is less than a woman.*’

⁴⁵ In certain areas of the Panjab, they use a phrase “*mu`C nhIN qW p`uC nhIN*” If you haven’t got a moustache, you have no social standing.

⁴⁶ *Pheromones* are not obvious or quantifiable. They can only be felt and are detected subconsciously.

People could even pledge their beard for payment of debts. It has been a custom in Babylon to take oaths on the beards. Pathans still do so. In Arabia swearing by beard has always been considered a lasting and solemn commitment.. Once this was done a Muslim would accept death but never back out from his word. Some Muslims still do this and often say, “ Keep the honour of your beard” Pulling or holding somebody by the beard is considered assaulting an honour. Such traditions prevail in Punjab too.⁴⁷

Throughout the course of human history hair especially beards have been considered symbols of sincerity, trustworthiness, wisdom, maturity, virility and high social status.⁴⁸ In ancient times the length of the beard was considered a symbol of wisdom and knowledge in Israel and in India. When a bearded person committed a mistake people immediately reminded him that having grown a beard he was no longer a child to be pardoned for his transgressions. When somebody was involved in an anti-social act like adultery, the usual punishment was to cut his beard or shave his head.

Shaving was a punishment in Norway and France for those who collaborated with the Nazis in the Second World War (read *Life under the Occupation* by Allen Lane 2006)

Great men of all cultures usually kept their hair and beards. Rabinder Nath Tagore, Walt Whitman, Abraham Lincoln, Bernard Shaw, Socrates, Plato and Karl Marx, to name a few, all had hair/beards. Religious men like Zarathustra, Moses, and Confucius also sported hair. So much so that Michelangelo and William Blake even depicted God with long flowing beard. Beardless men were called “Barefaced” which means shameful.

American Psychologist Palgrini (1973AD) and his friends conclude that those having unshorn hair and beards have an impressive personality and their teeth last comparatively longer than those of the shaven people.

“I would just like to say it is my conviction that longer hair and other flamboyant affectations of appearance are nothing more than the male’s emergence from his drab camouflage into the gaudy plumage that is the birth right of his sex.” (Mary Rayme in “Rock stars- a biological necessity)

Hair has always had social and cultural implications.⁴⁹ It is common knowledge that certain amount of hair on the head is considered socially desirable and indeed necessary. No body likes to be completely hairless. However the right to decide as to how much hair must remain on the head and to what length is an arbitrary decision usurped by the barbers,the society and in some cases by some Governments. Cutting the hair indicates submission to social or external control and not cutting the hair indicates the wearers’

⁴⁷ “dyKIN ikqy dwVHI nUM lwj nw lwv dyvIN [The Sikhs too use this phrase.

⁴⁸ Such was the respect and authority vested in the beard that the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut used to strap a long plaited artificial beard dusted with gold to her chin. Perhaps this was a way of showing who was the boss.

⁴⁹ There are various customs and cultural nuances associated with moustaches and beards in the Punjab. Here are some. dwVHI dl lwj rKxw 2.dwVHI ivc iqnkw 3.DOll dwVHI suAwh pwauXl 4 sucl dwVHI 5 dwVHI pkVnw 6 dwVHI qy h`Q Pynw Moustache: 1.m`uCW nUM qwA dyxw 2. mu`C nlvIN krnw 3. mu`C mroVnw 4. mu`C dl lwj rKxw 5. m`uC dw vwl hoxw 6 m`CPut gBrU 7. mu`C mMunxl etc.

independence and maturity. In his book *Rape of the lock re-visited* (1973 P.576) Dr. D.K.Kentsmith states that a person's vitality and strength resides in the hair, which is a gift from the Creator. Similarly Hamilton (1996AD) believes that hair should be cut only when a close relative dies.

(b) Hair and female culture

“For thousands of years, society has frowned on cutting of hair by women. Speaking in very broad terms, it is only since the turn of the twentieth century that the practice has gained ground and held wide acceptance.” (*Women's hair: The long and short of it* 1979 Daniel L. Seagraves. P.15)

In the West hair on women's head were once considered a very desirable trait. For example in olden times Greek women never shaved. They dyed their hair with henna and decorated them with powdered gold and fresh flowers. Men kept shoulder length short hair. When upper classes started shaving their slaves, hairdressing became a fashion among the upper classes too and the slaves began to ply the trade of the barbers.

According to Elizabeth Gitter hair was an obsession for the Victorians. They used women's hair in painting and literature a lot. In the image of a woman's hair they discovered complex meanings both magical and symbolic.

Around 1910-20 a feminine revolution started when women began smoking in public and embraced consumer culture. Women's magazines like “Ladies Home Journal” and “Pictorial Review” popularised cutting of hair and sowed the seeds of sex-exciting feminine poses.

Hair removal is an attempt to return women to child-like body, to consider women as less than adults.” Argues Christine Hope. Unfortunately it has become an unquestioned staple fashion. Most advertisements are aimed at women, which lower their self-esteem. They present unshaven women as anachronistic and uncultured. Advertisements consciously propagate that shaving is a hygienic necessity. The fact however is that more than the hygiene it is the voice of the herd that is compelling the women to shave. The practice is a very destructive, expensive and unnecessary cultural disease.

(c) Hair in army culture

During and before the American Civil war facial hair was common and the commanders could be seen wearing them. Trench warfare (in Second World War) brought a number of changes in the way people wore hair. Gillette⁵⁰ Company, which provided razors for the

⁵⁰ A French barber, named Jean Jacques invented razor in 1762 AD. King Gillette a salesman of the Baltimore Seal Company brought it to England in 1895 AD. The product soon began to be sold by his associate William Nickerson

soldier's equipment list, further augmented these changes. After the war the military style took root in the society everywhere.

During 1970-1980s US navy was permitted to grow beards and moustaches but later US army and Marine Corps and the police began to require full shaving. US special operations forces and behind the line personnel working in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan are permitted to grow beards and moustaches to mix well and fraternise with the indigenous people. US Police forbade the growing of beards. Police officers Mr. Shakoor Mustafa and Mr. Faruq Abdul-Aziz challenged the requirement in the US Supreme court on religious grounds and won the case in 1997.

Canada permits handlebar type moustaches but not beards. However there are exceptions to this rule. Officers in naval uniform, Infantry pioneers, religious minorities (like Sikhs and orthodox Jews) are permitted to wear beards. But beards are not permitted (i) If the wearer has no moustache (ii) If the beard is a goatee or van dyke type.

French forces passed strict regulation on 28th July 1975 and regulated the look of the facial hair. Military personnel are permitted to grow a beard when not in uniform for a certain period of time but it has to be kept trimmed correctly according to the rules.

Israel prohibits beards and moustaches in the army but the regulation makes exceptions for (i) Orthodox Jews (ii) on medical advice (iii) those serving in the career field. Those permitted to wear beards must have full beard.

Dutch army forbids beards but small moustaches are permitted. However high ranking officers are permitted to grow full beards if they so desire but a beard must accompany the moustaches.

Some countries like India⁵¹ and Pakistan permit beards and moustaches⁵² in the army but Spain permits beards in the Spanish legion only.

British Navy permits full beards and moustaches but not one without the other. British armed forces allow only moustaches. British police permit any type of beards and moustaches provided they are neatly trimmed. The Sikhs and those working in intelligence operations are exempted from all such restrictions.

Irrespective of religion Judges everywhere cover their heads with wigs, which denote authority and respectability.

(Boston Massachusetts) in 1903 AD. By 1915 AD it was popular in the army and the French ladies (who called it *Milady Décollet*) began to use it.

⁵¹ During the time of the British in India it was compulsory for the Sikhs in military uniform to remain unshaven. Defaulters were court marshaled.

⁵² According to Dr. Pasricha (All India institute of medical sciences), the moustaches are the cause of saving men from many respiratory diseases.

Chapter 3

Hair and Religion

**“Speak with respect and honour
Both the beard and the beard’s owner” (Hudibras)**

Hair has played a great part in almost all religions. Our history tells us that Hindu Sadhus, Christian Nazarites, Jewish rabbis, Islamic Dervishes and Coptic monks have all worn hair. In some religions it is a requirement. Here we will survey how some well-known religions of the world have expressed their likes and dislikes about the hair.

3.1 Hair in Hinduism

Hair has always been considered an integral part of the human self-esteem among the Hindus. They have a long tradition of wearing them. Narda, Washist, Bhirgu, Inder, Sukhdev Muni, and many other Hindu *Rishis*⁵³ kept long hair and are shown as such in pictures even today. The three major Hindu deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are always shown with long hair. It is a belief among the Hindus that when Ganges fell from heaven Shiva caught it (*Gangadhara*) in his long hair.⁵⁴ Siva’s long matted hair (*Jata*) is worshipped in *Kapleshwar*, which is one of the four most scared Hindu temples (known as *Chardhaam*) dedicated to Shiva.⁵⁵ Hindu gods Rama and Krishna are always shown with their head hair tied into a bun on their heads. Every year at *Ram Leela* festivals the Hindu gods and *Rishis* are shown with beards and *Keshas*.

For the Hindu scholars of yore human hair had physical as well as psychological significance and it was considered a great spiritual quality to remain unshaven. The commonly held belief was that hair is spiritual radar, which attracts solar subtle energies from the atmosphere. The *Sanyasis* (ascetics) too used to wear long matted hairs and considered them necessary for spiritual perfection.⁵⁶ It was also the belief of the Hindu Yogis that the hair carried radiant and spiritual energy and that those involved in yogic exercises and meditation could concentrate better if the hair remained intact.⁵⁷ They tied

⁵³ Modern day Hindu Religious leader Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (died on 6.2.2008 at the age of 91) kept a long beard and never shaved his head throughout his life.

⁵⁴ It is also believed that a Hindu saint Virabhadra was created by Shiva from his dreadlocks (*jata*). *The warrior pose Virabhadraasna* is attributed to this saint.

⁵⁵ The other three are Tungnath, Rudranath and Madmaheshwar.

⁵⁶ Even these days some people (like Rastafarians) believe that hairs are an extension of ones spiritual self and emitters and receivers of spiritual energy. Rastafarians justify their dreadlocks by saying, “Dreads are antennae to God.” In some other African tribes also there is a firm belief that hair is spiritually linked and that human soul or spirit resides in the hair.”

⁵⁷ In Jewish mysticism (Zohar) hairs are considered channels of subconscious Holy energy, which flows from God to the human soul. It is for this reason that Hasidic Jews do not remove even a single hair from the head. Their belief is that hair come from holy sources and project positive energy.

the hairs into a bun on the head and considered that it enhanced the overall looks of a yogi. Thus hair was the sign of the development of the self-image of the spiritual people.

There is no mention of shaving in the *Vedas*⁵⁸ *Puranas*, *Upnishads* *Simrities*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*, which proves that all people in India used to keep long hair. The impression one gets from the Hindu scriptures is that all Hindu *Rishis* and *Sanyasis* and mendicants sported long hair (*Jata*). The Rig Veda mentions the long hair of the *Gandharvas*. In fact we find that in the Rig Veda there are hymns titled “*Hymn of the long haired sage*”, and “*The keshim hymns*”(Rig veda 10.136) which point to the tradition of long hair among the people. So much so that even a cow’s hair was considered as sacred. “Worship to thee O, cow, **to thy tail-hair**, and thy hooves and to thy form.” (Athrava Veda X: 10). The Bhavishat Puran says, “*Only those who have unshorn hair have a right to be the rulers of the land.*” Excavations in India indicate that during the Indus valley civilization, “*The men’s hair was rolled into a bun and held at the back with a fillet.*”

Removing hair was a very insulting punishment.⁵⁹ In Manu Simiriti we find that striking a person on the hair and holding someone’s hair was considered the greatest disrespect to the wearer. It was the ultimate punishment for a serious crime (see Manu Simiriti Chapter 7 Shaloka 91) In the Hindu scripture **Mahabharata** we read that Yudhistera punished Aswasthama by shearing his head off. Paras Ram had pledged to kill all Kashatryas. When Lakshman caught him alive and tried to kill him, Ram Chandra told him to cut his hair off and release him because cutting of hair was a calculated insult worse than death.

“A Brahman must not be subjected to corporal punishment. For him shaving his head, banishing from the town, and parading him on an ass are the punishments.”(Naradiya Dharamashastra P.183 Translation by Tr. Julius Jolly)

Telling lies, molesting women, or leveling false accusations were all punished by shaving the head and the beard of a person.” *He who gives false evidence must go naked in public and with hair shaved. He must be handed a begging bowl to beg for his food from door to door.*” (Washisht Simiriti Chapter 16 Shalok 28)

“The devotee must get up early and wash his hairs and beard, and comb them. He must keep his nails neatly pared and never remove hair from the body.”(Manu Simiriti Chapter 6 Shalok 6). Atharva Veda tells us that black hair was very much respected. It even contains a prescription for keeping the hair “black and strong.” There is thus no doubt that Hindu religion instructed everybody to keep good care of the hair.

⁵⁸ In the Rig Veda a Brahman named ‘Kandi’ prays to God to make his hair grow long. (Chapter 4 Shalok 9). Rishi Kutas has written a number of Shalokas on hair. Further references are available in Rig Veda 2.55, Yajur Veda 20.5, Sam Veda 3.14, 1.19 and 20.5 “socSM kySM ivSxM XmmwivS: pRwvMqU juqXy ivS: (Swm vyd iDAwie 20 mMqr 2 KMf 5)

⁵⁹ Hindu God Krishna punished Raja Kans like this. “*He held the crown bearer by his head hair pulled him to the ground, dragged him and later sat on his chest.*” (*Wishnu Puran Chapter 20 Shalok 6*). This fact is also mentioned in Gurbani where the Guru writes, “*kysl kMs mQun ijin kIAw*”(pMnw 874) similarly Krishna punished Rukman by shaving his Kesh and beard in spite of the fact that the later begged to be killed rather than shaven. Shaving was thus considered severer punishment than death.

Ancient Hindu literature stipulates that a man must be ready to offer his head in the service of God.⁶⁰ It is not known for certain when and why the Hindus began to offer the hair to the deity instead of the head. Presumably at some stage religious and fertility rituals somehow got associated with hair, which began to be offered as an alternative to human sacrifice. In the Temples of the blue Skinned Vishnu in Madras 500,000 pilgrims offer hair yearly. 600 barbers are always in service.⁶¹ In Triputi Temple (south of India) and in many other such temples hair is offered to the goddess as an offering.

Thousands of babies are shaven off daily (*Mundan sanskar*)⁶² and their hair offered to the gods and goddesses to propitiate them. It is explained by saying that the first set of hairs of the male child is polluted (sUqk dy vwl) because they come from the womb. Nobody explains why the hair of the female children are not similarly polluted and why the hair of the male's eyes and the ears remain unpolluted in spite of the fact that they too come out from the same womb. Why after one cut of the so-called polluted hair they cannot be preserved and allowed to grow naturally. Strangely the argument is never applied to Rama and Krishna. There is no mention in the Hindu scriptures that they were shaven or that they ever offered their hair to any goddess. The Hindus go to any extent to represent them at festivals with long hair tied on their heads in the form of a topknot.

It is believed that at some stage the great Hindu scholars, whose duty it was to impart correct knowledge to the ordinary people, themselves started disobeying the natural law and finding fault with God's creation. We find references to this fact in the Biography of Guru Gobind Singh⁶³ written by a Hindu named Daulat Rai. He writes, "*People never shaved themselves in the old times. It is said that in India a certain Raja*⁶⁴ *prohibited this*

⁶⁰ This was interpreted literally. Human sacrifice (nr bll) was common in Hinduism. The practice was wide spread and may have originated from the Purushamedha ritual of the Vedic Aryans. In Benares the head was chopped off with a saw (known as krvq). This is mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib. "ArD srlr ktwelAY isir krvqu Drwie (pMnw 62). According the 1933 Journal of Assam Research Society Kamakhya Devi Temple in Orrissa continued human sacrifice even up to 1796 AD. These days they sacrifice six-foot effigies made of flour because according to Dr. Pardeep Sharma (Director Vivekananda Institute of Culture) "A willing human being is difficult to find these days."

According to the Guinness book of records the Thuggee cult continued the practice even in British times and killed at least 2000,000 people until Lord William Bentinck stopped it by law. According to Khurja Police Tantric Hindus and Kali cult still kill human beings in secret.

⁶¹ Indian hair is considered the best in length, luster, texture and strength. It is long, tangle free and with cuticles (scale like fins on the outer layer) It is in demand all over the world and is known as *Cuticle hair*. Triputi hair alone earned India \$62.5 million in the year 2007. Nearly 50,000 devotees have their hair-cut here everyday. The Jews do not accept wigs made from Indian hair. "Once the hair has been offered to an idol it cannot be used by a Jew" (Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv of Jerusalem)

⁶² The Hindus perform this ceremony when the hair of the child is removed. A boy becomes Munda (muMfw=shaven) after the ceremony. It is for this reason that the Sikhs do not use the word Munda but use the words Bhujangi for boy and Bhujangan (instead of Munki) for a girl. The word *Bhuj* means arm and *Ang* mean part. A child is thus considered a supportive arm (*Bhujang*) of a Sikh. Those who shave their heads are known as *Patit* which means fallen or *Bemukh* (*deserter*). Bwel kwnH isMG nwBw ilKdy hn "BujMgl KMfw AMimRqDwrl isMG dw bytw[ieh pd sB qoN pihlW swihzwidAW vwsqy vriqAw igAw, Pyr isMGW dy puqRW lel ho igAw" (mhwn koS pMnw 920) Bujw= ijs nwl Bojn krley (pMnw 919)

⁶³ "swihb-ey-kmwl gurU goibMd isMG" – lyKk dOlq rwey

⁶⁴ In Suraj Parkash the name of the Raja is given as Nand Chand. It is said that he was instrumental in popularizing the Hindu *sanskar* of "*Mundan*" He imprisoned some politically opponent Brahmans and had them shaved, suin mihpiq ky mn mih Awel] jih kih qy idj lley bulwel] "idjbr ibidAw ijqk pRblnw]sB ko kljih kys ibhlnw]50] SUdr Cwp Apnl idhu lwie] mufyN sls mMqr inhPlwie] 51] He then compelled them to write letters to all Brahmans to get

practice in one of the areas conquered by him. He permitted only a pigtail on the head, which was a sign of slavery. Some Rajput Raja probably did this. Another possibility is that the Bodhi Rajas, who hated all Hindu rituals, compelled the Hindus to wear only pigtails as a ploy of showing them utter insult”

He further writes, “*Whatever the reason, one thing is certain that it was the sign of enslavement and humiliation. Whether it was a physical insult perpetrated by a non-Hindu conqueror or a mental and spiritual slavery foisted on the Hindus by the Brahman, the relation of the pigtail with Hindu rituals has never so far been established with reference to the scriptures of the Vedic religion. In both cases it was a sign of slavery which Guru Gobind Singh wanted to obliterate.*” (Punjabi edition page 145)

A similar story is recorded in the Atharva Veda. The lecherous, depraved, womaniser Brahman Ruler Som Raja and Warun Dev were punished to be killed but were let off by shaving their heads, which in those days was a greater punishment than death. They made it known far and wide that shaving was a necessary religious requirement (*Mundan Sanskar* for the Hindus).

Yet another argument is offered to say that the Brahmans themselves must have started the practice. In *Manu Simriti* (chapter 8 Shalok 379) we read, “*Khashatryas, Vaishas and the Shudaras must be given death sentences but if similar heinous crime deserving death sentence is committed by a Brahman, he should be let off by shaving his hair.*” It is assumed that when more and more Brahmans became corrupt and the number of shaven Brahmans rose, they themselves began to preach that Shaving was a sacred duty of all Hindus. Later people copied these depraved Brahmans and the Society took it as a norm.⁶⁵

3.2 Hair in Buddhism and Jainism

All Indian philosophers and *Rishis* of yore wore hair without an exception. Gautam Buddha had long and lustrous locks before he became a mendicant and used to wear a turban called *Usnisa*.⁶⁶ In his book “*The Buddha’s Cuda, Hair, Usnisa and Crown*”(1928) Coomaraswami quotes from *Nidana Katha, Lalitavistara, and Mahavastu* to give full details of his hair and headdress. Later on being instructed by a Sanyasi, Buddha agreed to get his hair and beard shaved and said, “*These locks of mine are not suited for a*

shaved. The idea was that thus insulted they will not go against authority. He even used force to shave the people and interpolated spurious hymns in the Hindu scripture. “inj bl krky isr muMfvwey] Sms smyq kys ibnswey] kvlAn qy Slok bnvwey] bhu gRMQn mih dey ilKwey] sB jg muMfiq Bey ibpR jb] ieh BI Drm bKwnq Bey qb] 53] piTih slok sunwvin kry, CqRI bYSin ky kc hry] (sUrj pRkwS pMnw 5592) Mr. Todd also mentions this cause of shaving and writes that the Kesh of the Brahmans were shaved through stratagem and then they were compelled to propagate it as a requirement of Hindu religion.

⁶⁵ “jwpdw hY ik ies pRkwr szwvW ivc kys hlx hoey lokW Aqy aunHW dl AOLwd qoN ieh BYVI rVS turl ”(Bwel vlr isMG). (Also see Suraj Parkash Page. 5. 29)

⁶⁶ For fuller details of Buddha’s turban read “*Bodhisattva Warriors*” by Terence Dukes (P.158-174). *Usnisa* used to be a turban of spiral conical form and was used by the royalty. It looked like the spiral shell of snails.

mendicant” The ‘Cuda Maha’ inscription on the southern gateway *stupa* at Barhut Sanchi (50 BC) celebrates his hair and reads “*Worship of hair*”.⁶⁷

“*Let him kindle the sacred fire while his hair is black*” (Baudhya Dharma Sutra 1:2)

The Buddhist monks shave their heads and beards but the common people keep long hair. The Jains and the Buddhists believe in *Ahimsa* (No killing) and usually shave their heads so that no lice infested their hair. Their scriptures do not suggest shaving as a sacred duty. The Buddhist Rajas are said to have foisted this practice on the Hindus too. Since the hair was bringing people into conflict with the Buddhist authorities, people began to remove the hair of their own accord rather than suffer insult at the hands of the Buddhist oppressors.

3.3 Hair in Christianity

“The glory of young men is their strength, but the beauty of old men is their gray hair.” (Proverbs 20:29 RSV)

“To dress with decorum is a Christian principle of permanent validity for the outward appearance reflects the inner attitude. How this principle finds expression in detail will vary from place to place and from age to age. (New Bible Commentary)

Hair is mentioned in the Bible nearly a hundred times. Every time it appears with God’s name or indicates respect and honour. For example in Matthew 10:30 we read, “*The very hairs of your heads are all numbered*”. This proves that God is intimate with his creation and cares for their appearance.⁶⁸ According to Historian Egezit (See *Christian Reading 1898 page 142*) Apostle James, the Head of the church in Jerusalem never cut his hair.

Moses and Noah had long hair.⁶⁹ Greek priests still abide by canonical exactitude and keep long flowing beards. Some people claim that St. Paul too had long hair and used “headbands” (Acts 19:12). “*Paul reproves the Corinthians for falling in with a style of*

⁶⁷ Fuller details of Buddha’s hair are recorded in Digha Nikaya, Mahapadana Sutta and Majjhima Nakaya No. 16, 36, 85, and 100. “*I will here cut off my hair and beard (Kesamassum Otaretva) and don the yellow robe, and go forth from home to homelessness. (Digha Nikaya Vol. II P.28). “There came a time when I, being quite young, with a wealth of coal black hair untouched by gray and in all the beauty of my early prime—despite the wishes of my parents, who wept and lamented—cut off my hair and beard, donned the yellow robes and went forth from home to homelessness (Majjhima Nikaya Vo.II P.163)”. After removing hair the Buddha came to be known as **Mundaka Samana** (shaven monk). His statues still show him with ringlets of hair and a topknot on his head.*

Buddha had personally offered 8 strands of his hairs to Tapussa and Bhollika after he got enlightenment. These hairs were kept in a monastery at Chitagong. On 17.7.2007 Rohita Bogollagama, the foreign minister of Sri Lanka, collected some strands, which have now been placed in Gangaramaya Temple in Columbo.

⁶⁸ The Bible says, “*And He created man in His image*”(Genesis 1:27). Similar statements are also found in *Taurat* (of Moses), *Jabur* (of Dawd), and *Al Quran* (of Muhammed). Obviously the word ‘*Image*’ here does not refer to outward features, which vary from one human to another. It is a metaphor for describing the creation of God. In the case of humans it means the hands, feet, hair, nose etc all that God gave to humans. There must be some purpose in giving humans long hair and the biggest brain (cerebrum) and that is why the humans came to be known as the highest creation. Avr join qyrl pinhwr] iesu Drql mih qyrl iskdwr](gurU gRMQ swihb pMnw 375)

⁶⁹ Some historians write that James, the just, brother of Jesus Christ had very long hair reaching his ankles.

manners which confounded the distinction of the sexes and was detrimental to morals.”(Today’s Dictionary of the Bible 1982 P.275)

The punishment for beard shaving was also prevalent in Biblical times. We read about this in the Bible Samuel 210:4-5 and the book of chronicles. Psalm 13 praises the flow of oil from Aron’s beard on to his collar (See also exodus xxx 30). In 2 Kings 1:8 a messenger’s description of a man with long hair caused the king to identify him as prophet Elijah. In this case the Hebrew words used were *ba`al sa`ar* which mean “Lord of the hair”. In 2 Samuel 14:25-26 Absalom’s hair is praised as attractive.

Here are some more examples.

“As surely as Lord lives not a hair of his head will fall to the ground.” (I Samuel 14:45)

“Surely God will crush the heads of his enemies, the hairy crowns of those who go on in their sins. “(Psalms 68:21)

“The beard must not be plucked. You will not deface the figure of your beard.” (Leviticus 19:27)

“If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow. (Genesis 42:38 NIV)

It was a custom to shave the head when somebody died. The Christians were forbidden from following this tradition. *“Allusions show that men wore the hair long...to cut the hair and beard short was a dishonour. The hair and beard were cut short as mourning. This practice was followed by both men and women..... the short haircut was a token of the prostitute” (Dictionary of the Bible John L. Mckenzie 1965. page. 331)*

“And ye shall not shave your head for the dead with a baldness on the top, and they shall not shave their beard. (Leviticus 21:5)⁷⁰

A very influential 15th Century catholic cardinal named Johannes Bessarion was accepted as the successor of Pope Nicholas V on condition that he shaved his beard. The cardinal justified the wearing of a beard on religious grounds but his plea was not accepted. About this incident Historian Mark Zucker writes, *“ Not only did this result in Bessarion’s loss of pontifical throne, but his beard was later to cause him even greater humiliation and suffering. For a slight breach of etiquette during an embassy to Louis XI in 1471, the French king pulled him by the beard, an insult so serious and so upsetting that it is said to have brought his death from shame a year later.”*

Many Christians thus considered a beard the sign of spirituality, maturity and manliness. In the Eastern countries the Christian priests still wear beards. Amish and Hutterite Christians shave their beards but once they are married, the shaving is stopped forever.

⁷⁰ Also see Numbers 6:5-6

St. Clement of Alexandria did not like shaving. He was of the opinion that it is only the beard on the chin that differentiates a man from a woman. According to him “*God adorned man like the lions, with a beard, and endowed him an attribute of manhood, with a hairy chest- a sign of strength and rule.*” He further said, “*It is not lawful to pluck out the beard, man’s natural and noble adornment. .The beard signifies the courageous, the beard distinguishes the grown men, the earnest, the active and the vigorous.*”(The Instructor Book III 2.277)⁷¹

A Nazarite (Numbers 6:2-4)⁷² believed that the whole body (including the hair) belonged to God so a razor never touched a Nazarite’s skin. “*The secret of his strength will be his magic hair.*”(Judges 13 and 16: 17, 16:22). “*The hair was associated with strength⁷³ and purity and NOT cutting the hair was considered a sign of consecration to God by the Nazarenes (Numbers 6:5)*”. {The New Smith’s Bible Dictionary 1966 Page. 275}

The Bible tells us that Samson was never shaved from his birth.⁷⁴ He was so strong that he killed a lion barehanded and fought with thousands of philistines with nothing more in his hand than the jawbone of an Ass. In order to kill him the philistines sent a girl named Delilah to seduce him and find out the secret of his strength. In a moment of weakness Samson told Delilah that his strength lay in his hair, which had never seen scissors. Delilah cut seven locks of hair and Samson lost his strength.⁷⁵ He was caught, blinded and made to grind corn. After some time when his hair grew to a certain length, he

⁷¹ “The beard is the handsomeness of the face, and a wife is the joy in a man’s heart” (R.Akiva Eicha Rabbah)

⁷² A Nazarite or a Nazarene is one who comes from Nazareth. Jesus, Samuel. Absalom and Samson were all Nazarenes and wore long hair. Absalom was defeated in a battle and escaped on a horse. His long hair were caught in a bough and he was lifted off his saddle (2 Sam xvii-9)

⁷³ This belief is prevalent in many cultures. For example A resident of Thailand (belonging to Hmong hill tribe) named Mr. Hu had 19ft 1 Inch long hair. He died at the age of 87. Asked about the cause of long hair he said, “I cut my hair when I was 18 but I soon fell ill. I never cut the hair again.” Mr. Sateow (Thailand) nurtured the hair through medicines to a length of 16 ft 11 Inches. He too claimed that hair have healing powers.

The belief in strength due to hair is also found in Sumo wrestlers of Japan. The word Sumo came from Shinto religion. Sumo wrestlers (called Rikishi) wear only a loincloth (*Mavashi*) and meet in the ring (*Dohyo*). They have to push their opponent out of the Dohyo. They have distinctive and unique hairstyle (called *Oichomage*) with topknot of hair on the head like the Sikhs. Those who enter the Sumo profession do not cut their hair. In 1668 AD after Meiji Restoration the Government of Japan banned long hair but the Sumo wrestlers were given religious exemption.

⁷⁴ Son of Manoah. Samson’s mother was unable to produce a child. An angel visited her and promised to grant her a male child provided the child abhors drinking and cutting his hair. This was accepted. Samson’s story is recorded in Judges 13-16, in Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) and in Talmud. He lies buried in Tel Tzora (Israel)

⁷⁵ Samson killed 1000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:15-17). Samson’s loose living did not displease God, nor was God displeased when Samson touched the dead (forbidden to a Nazarite-Numbers 6:6), but God took away all his strength when he had his hair shaved.

The Nazarite vows are as under:

1. Abstain from grapes in any form (perhaps the idea was not to get intoxicated)
2. Avoid touching the dead (the idea may be not to eat meat)
3. Do not trim your hair.

Samson got married to a Philistine woman against the principles of the Jews and also used to visit prostitutes. On his journey to Timah (Judges 14:5) he touched the grapes and later he touched a dead lion. He also touched the dead jawbone of an ass and drank water that flowed out of it. (Judges 15:15). All this was forbidden to a Nazarite. It therefore means that keeping the vows had nothing to do with his strength. The cause of his strength was not the vows but his hair.

regained some strength and managed to destroy the philistines once more. (See Judges 16-17).

Christ is shown in the pictures with a beard and long hair on his head. When he was arrested they plucked his hair as punishment. *“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid my face from shame and spitting”* (Isaiah 50:6 KJV)

The Church of Later day Saints customarily kept long hair (for example Brigham Young onwards to George Albert) but later the practice stopped. Mormons still keep beards.

*“Knot your turban round your head, wear your sandals on the feet but leave your **beard** uncovered.”* (Ezekiel 24; 19)⁷⁶

It is mandatory for a Christian Presbyter to have a beard. *“Ye shall not mar the figure of your beard.”* (St. Cyprian of Carthage treatise III AD 250).

“How womanly it is for one who is man to comb himself and shave himself for the sake of fine effect..... The hair on the chin is not to be disturbed, as it gives no trouble, and lends to the face dignity and paternal terror.” (The Apostolic Constitutions AD 390)

Franciscan Christians believe that a beard is absolutely necessary for Christians.

Pope Anicetus (2nd Century AD) is said to be the first Pope to forbid the clergy from wearing long hair.⁷⁷ St. Patrick renewed this decree in 450 AD and expelled many longhaired clergy from the church. Once again in the 11th Century some longhaired people were ex-communicated by the church en masse and prayer at their funeral was forbidden. In 1119AD the Council of Toulouse ordained that it was the duty of the Archdeacons to shave all their clerics by force if need be. According to Guglielmus Durandus the Council argued that the length of hair was symbolical of the multitude of human sins and *“Cutting the hair denotes that we ought to cut away the vices and sins which are a superfluous growth in us.”* It is not known if the cutting of hair wiped away the sins of the Christians.

According to canon No. 67 of the synod of Elvira in 309 AD Christian women were forbidden from befriending longhaired men under penalty of excommunication. This provided strong motivation to men to cut their hair.

These actions started debates, which lasted for a long time. Professor Utrecht (1650 AD) and Professor Reves indulged in a war of words to prove or disprove whether cutting of hair was a justifiable religious requirement for the Christians. Similar long and violent debates also ensued between the English clergy on the one hand and the Scottish scholars

⁷⁶ Other references to beard can be seen in Ezekiel 24:24

⁷⁷ Meletius, the confessor, states that a certain Pope (named Peter) was arrested by the king on account of lascivious activities. As a mark of dishonour half his beard was cut off. He might have propagated shaving.

on the other. In 1865 AD the Clergy of Bavaria introduced the keeping of long hair and declared, *“To cut off the hair means to cut off God’s power.”* The Pope rebuked them.

Women

The Bible describes hair as ornament, enhancing the appearance of women. This attraction is poetically expressed in a song, which runs as follows: *“Your hair is like a flock of sheep and goats from Gilead”*(6:5)

The ancient Christians considered shaving a woman as humbling her (Deuteronomy 21:10-14). Other than this people were asked to shave only to show that their vow to God had ended because their deeds (misdeeds!) were not consecrated to God.

St. Paul said that hair was a natural veil or covering for the women: He tells us that in his day it was shameful for a Christian woman to cut her hair (I Cor 11:15) {The Bible Almanac Nashville Thomas Nelson 1980 P. 484}

In medieval times the church forbade women from using cosmetics because, *“It tampered with God-given image.”* In *‘The Romaunt of the Rose’* Chaucer’s personification of *‘beautee’* is a woman who does not use *‘peynte’*. In 1250 AD the Church ruled that women were not permitted to show their hair in public. This led to the wearing of hats, bonnets and veils by the women.

Those in favour of shaving usually quote the following lines of Saint Paul from the Bible *“Does not nature teach you that it is a shame for a man to have long hair?”* (I Corinthians 11:14)

It needs to be noted that in the times of Saint Paul the prostitutes displayed their long hair in public to attract customers and these lines were uttered by Saint Paul to shame those men who did not cover their heads and went about displaying their long hair like the prostitutes. If we apply these remarks strictly to Christian Saints then we will have to admit that Christ, Samson, Absalom and Samuel were shameless people because they kept long hair. One wonders why did the Bible institute the Nazarite vow if long hair brought shame on men? The fact is that the word *PaRah* (Judges 5:2) used in the Bible has been wrongly translated. It does not mean ‘shaving’. It means, “Removing the pins that keep hair in place.”

Christianity requires that women must have long hair *“If a woman has long hair, it is her glory”*(New International Version I Corinthians 11:15).

Does God discriminate between human species and have two rules one for men and one for women? God cannot be irrational and require women to have long hair and excuse men from the same requirement and yet go on providing them long hair? Shouldn’t the admonition fall on both men and women if they cut their hair?

“The normal Israelite custom for both sexes seems to have been to let the hair grow to considerable length.” (New Bible Dictionary Second Edition)

3.4 Hair in Judaism

Since the hair was shaved in an initiation ceremony dedicated to a divinity in Arabia, the cutting and tearing of hair was forbidden to the Jews (Jer 49:32, Lev 19:27 and Deut 14:1)⁷⁸. The practice was considered a pagan rite. *“The ancients usually wore their hair long.....Recall the long hair of Samson and Absalom. Because the hair was shaved in an initiation to a divinity in Arabia, the cutting of hair was an abomination to the Jews.”* (The Zondervan Encyclopaedia of the Bible). Orthodox Jews have for centuries been wearing long hair and beards and they have honoured their beards as a *“Badge of manhood”*. It is on record that during Israel’s early wars for conquering Canaan, the Jewish soldiers had to take a vow not to cut their hair. It was believed that the hairs were the seat of a man’s vitality and life force.

Jewish history tells us that King David sent some Hebrew ambassadors for condolence to king Harun around 400 BC. Harun thought they were spies. In a fit of anger he ordered that half the beards of the ambassadors’ should be shaved. King David took it as a calculated and deliberate insult to his men. He wasted no time and ordered the slaughtering of all *ammonites* in his kingdom.

Beards were considered in Judaism as sign of power, dominance, spiritualism, virility, piety and masculinity. Rabban Gamliel, the *nasi* (Religious head) was to be succeeded by Elazar Ben Azaryah, a brilliant demagogue and a devoted Jew. Unfortunately he was only 18 and had not yet grown a beard, which was considered the necessary vesture of a Jewish religious leader. His candidature was rejected. It is said that he prayed to God all night and the next morning he woke up with a long flowing beard and was anointed.

It was customary for Hebrew men and women hair to be kept clean and well groomed. Slovenly hair was considered a sign of mourning. *“Loss of hair to a woman was shameful (I Cor 11:6)⁷⁹ and women were warned against elaborate hair dressing.”* (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible Vol 3 P.15-16)

Out of the 613 commandments of the Jews one refers to “Self-harm” which is interpreted as a prohibition of shaving.

3.5 Hair in Islam

⁷⁸ *“Thou shalt not round the corners of your beards, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.”* (Leviticus 19:27) The Poskim (The Jewish religious lawyers) permit cutting by scissors but not by razor. However many Jews grow beards and consider cutting a sin. They argue that beards are symbolic of the tradition of their ancestors. The Zohar (one of the sources of Kabbalah or Jewish mysticism) attribute holiness to the beard and allow it to grow naturally.

⁷⁹ This was exactly the same in the Punjab where such women came to be called muMnl Ku`QI

Muslims are divided on the issue of hair. The very devoted Muslims however never cut their beards⁸⁰ but much depends on which sect a Muslim belongs to. Sunni Muslims consider it mandatory but some other sects consider it virtuous to sport a beard but not mandatory. The confusion is based on Shafi I Madhab, which contains two opinions. One recommends a beard the other says that Prophet's beard was only an example, which need not be copied.

Some Muslims however are positive that they are forbidden from shaving their beards. For example Sahi Bukhari (Volume 7 Book 72 Hadis No.780) says, "*Do the opposite of what the pagans do. Keep the beards and cut the moustaches short.*" According to Abu Dawd, Al Trimidhi and An Nassai there is a *hadees* (No. 1646) in which Amr Abu Shuaib reported prophet Muhammad having said, "*Do not pluck out grey hair, for they are the Muslim's light on the day of resurrection.*" "They also quote, "*Ye have indeed in the messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the final day and who remembers Allah*" (Quran 33:21). This sect of Muslims considers Prophet Muhammad as 'the walking Quran' who must be followed in every respect.

The Prophet said, "*I have no connection with one who shaves, shouts and tears his clothing*" (Sahi Muslim Hadis No. 501). Ibn Abbas relates that the prophet said, "*Anyone who shaves has no claim to the mercy of Allah*" (Reported by Ibn Abbas in *Tibrabi*)

In his book "Masail of the hairs" Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi quotes Mawahib and writes "*To the best of my cognisance, shaving the head is not established practice of prophet sallallahu alaibi was sallam save on the occasion of Umra. Hence allowing the hair to grow is Sunnat.*" Again in the same book the Maulana further writes, "*Certain Ulema support the view that both Halaq (Shaving the head) and Tark (Allowing hair to grow) are Sunnat practices.*

All Muslims agree that it is forbidden to have haircut during Hajj. Those who violate this have to offer FIDYA (redemption)⁸¹

In Muslim countries women are still expected to grow long hair and keep them covered. "*It is not permissible for her to remove the hair of her head or to remove any part of the eyebrows, whether by shaving or any other means.* (Fatwah al Lajnah al daa imah 5/194)

Prophet Muhammad and all his companions kept beards. They were prohibited from following the unbelievers (who used to shave). Later day Muslim leaders like Ammar Bin Yaasir, Abdullah Ibn Umar, Abu Hurairah and Jaabir all sported long beards. Jaabir himself testifies, "*We grew beards and only after Hajj and Umrah did we trim them to the required length.*" "*Growing of the beard is an Islamic injunction and all the Ambiya without exception are agreed on this.There are numerous other Ahadis that*

⁸⁰ Among the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence, a beard is considered mandatory for all Muslims. It is described as a very important part of Abrahamic traditions. They believe that God himself commanded Abraham to "*keep a beard, trim the moustache, pare the nails and pluck the hair from the armpits.*"

⁸¹ Muslims kill animals to propitiate Allah. Fidyah is killing an extra animal for a feast.

command the cutting of the moustache and the growing of full beards.”(Shaikh Maulana Muhammad Zakanya. Shaikh-ul-Hadith Saharanpur.India)

“Trim closely the moustache and let the beard flow” (Sahi Muslim Hadis No. 498)

However at present there are three different opinions in Islam about the keeping of beards:

(a) According to Ibn Taimyiah keeping a beard is *Sunnah*⁸² *Muakkada* (*emphsised Sunnah*) and therefore shaving is prohibited. *“To shave the beard is HARAM”* (Imam Shafi Kitab-ul-Umm). It is *Gunah-e-Kabira* (great sin). Imam Shafi, Maaliki and Hanbali Muslims fall in this category. According to them *“To shave the beard is Haraam”*(Kitab-ul-Umm-Aqueeqa). They quote *“Holy is the being who adorned men with beards and women with braids”*(Takmela e Bahr al Raiq Vol. 3 Page 331)

(b) According to Iyad it is *Sunnah Adiyab* (*reprehensible or undesirable but not Haram or prohibited*). It is not *makruh* (Hateful).

(c) Modern Muslim scholars interpret it as a General *Sunnah* (*commendable but not obligatory*)

It is said that at one time all Arabians used to keep long hair. When Prophet Ibrahim developed illicit relations with Hagar (In Islam she is named Hazra), his wife Sahra was very angry. She punished her husband by cutting his moustache off.⁸³

Bahais too forbid shaving. *“Shave not your heads, God hath adorned them with hair, and in this there are signs from the Lord of creation to those who reflect upon the requirements of nature.”* (Kitab-e-Aqdas- Bahauallah)

Bahauallah is supposed to have instructed Abdul Baha to sport long hair and not to shave (See Traveller’s narrative Vol. 2 page xxxix-xi)

3.6 Other Instances

Greeks used to let their hair grow long in ancient times as a token of beauty. Long hair was considered the dress of the philosophers and shorter hair signified servitude and peasantry. Greek Gods (i.e. Achilles, Hector, Hermes, Zeus and Poseidon etc.) had long hair and beards and are depicted as such in the statues. The Trojan soldiers too kept long hair

⁸² *Sunnah* means the precepts and examples from Muhammad’s life and teachings developed between the 8th and 10th centuries AD. There are five main schools of interpretation of *Sunnah* one for the Shia and four for Sunni tradition. They regulate every area of a Muslim’s life from dress to defecation.

⁸³ It is also claimed by some people that she cut the foreskin of his Penis too and thus giving rise to circumcision prevalent among the Muslims.

The Germanic and Celtic tribes of Europe always wore hair and beards. They too considered short hair a sign of slavery. Massai warriors of Africa used to let the hair grow to waist length and braided them. The Chinese wore long hair as is evidenced by the figurines discovered in the terracotta army.

Egyptian children used to keep long “side lock” of hair, which had become a part of the Egyptian art. Shaving was not common but slowly and steadily the fashions took root when the royal families started the fashion.

“The ancient Britons were proud of the length and beauty of their hair, and were at much pains in dressing it. Some of them carried this to an extravagant height. A young warrior who was taken prisoner, and condemned to be beheaded, requested that no slave might be permitted to touch his hair, which was remarkably long and beautiful, and that it might not be stained with his blood. Not content with the natural colour of their hair, which was commonly fair or yellow they used washes to render it still bright..... They used various arts to make the hair of their heads grow thick and long, which last was considered as a mark of dignity and noble birth.....”

(The London encyclopaedia or universal dictionary of Science page 757)

“In later times, the Anglo Saxons and Danes, also considered fine hair as one of their greatest ornaments, and were at great pains in dressing them.”

(The London Encyclopaedia or Universal dictionary of science page 758)

“Danish soldiers who were quartered upon the English soil, in the reigns of Edgar and Ethelred II, were particularly attentive to the dressing of their hair, which they combed at least once everyday and thereby captivated the attention of the English ladies.

“Gregory of Tours assures us that in the Royal family of France, it was long the peculiar mark and privilege of kings and princes of the blood to wear long hair, dressed and curled; all others wore it polled or cut round, in sign of inferiority..... To cut the hair of a prince under the first race of French kings was to declare him excluded from the right of succeeding to the crown.”

(The London Encyclopaedia or Universal dictionary of science Page 758)

Chapter 4

Headgears

Man is known as the climax of evolution in the animal kingdom. He has developed in all respects over millions of years and has the ability to face natural calamities. He can control and improve his environment. This technique was learnt by the humans from nature that endowed the humans with hair for the protection of their bodies against heat and cold. A part of the body that required more protection was gifted with more long hair and a part that needed less protection was endowed with short hair. Thus nature has a purpose in providing us long hair on the head. They regulate the body temperature and protect the head.

For a long time the humans lived naked⁸⁴ and had not yet learnt to produce covering for their bodies. They had to protect their heads against all types of risks. When cloth was invented the humans started covering all parts of their bodies. They could not have left the head uncovered because it was the controlling centre of the human body.⁸⁵ Since 40% of human heat was lost through head, a thick covering, which could insulate the head against inclement conditions and arrest dissipation of heat, was a necessity. Naturally man copied nature and started using a comparatively thicker and lengthier cloth for his head. The cloth trapped air and thus reduced the loss of heat through evaporation. Just as the shoes were necessary for covering the feet, turbans began to be considered necessary for covering the head.

A thick headgear also offered the humans protection against injury, falling rocks, and accidental falls and later against weapons and masonry. Slowly and steadily many types

⁸⁴ Even now many humans in the jungles of Papua and Africa live without clothes. ivsmwdu nwgY iPrih jMq (pMnw 463)

⁸⁵ Humans are supposed to have started using clothes some 72000 years ago. The earliest piece of linen was found in Egypt and is dated 5000 BC. Later head covering (dating 4000 BC) on the kings' heads was discovered in the carvings in Iraq.

of headgears came into existence to cater for comfort and ease or to meet the craze for fashion. A helmet was the last invention, which protected the head against bullets.

Different styles and different names of headgears became prevalent in different parts of the world. Religions provided further fillip in providing names for the headgears. Topi, Kufi (Muslim), Doppa (Worn by Kazan Tartars), Bokhara (fez-turban combination worn by the Druz), and Fenta (worn by Zoroastrians) are some of them. The Pope wears a white cap (Zucchetto), the Cardinal red, Bishops abbots and priests wear black caps. The Jew men (married or not) must cover their head. Their common headgear is the KIPPAH. It is referred to as “The Fear of Heaven”. According to the Jews the Yarmulke (the skull cap worn by the Jews) symbolizes their loyalty to God. It means ‘slavery under God’.

A headgear is known as Dastar in Afghanistan,⁸⁶ Safa / Dastar in the Punjab, Pagri in India and Pakistan, Dulband in Persia, and *Tulbent* in Turkey.⁸⁷ Japanese wear Bosa. Swiss shepherds wear *Cut-unt-ring* for luck and their women wear it for fertility. The Christian turban or turband has more or less disappeared.⁸⁸ The Portuguese and Spanish Turbante, The German turban, the French and Dutch Sarband and the Turkish Sarik etc are rarely seen these days.

Ancient Egyptians called the headgear Pjr from which the word “Pugri” may have developed. In Greece the word for a headgear is *Pilos*, which seems to have been derived from *Pilo*⁸⁹ (pronounced as Pee-Loh) meaning “Hair”. It also means “Only God” thus signifying its connection with divinity.

Zoroastrians believe that the hair covering is necessary for the attainment of Urvan (Buddhist Nirvan).

Today the humans have invented heaters for use in winter and Air conditioning for use in summer, but they have not been able to get rid of clothes altogether. Clothes are as necessary today as they were when they first came to be produced. The human head still needs as much protection today as it did millions of years ago. For this purpose a turban is one of the best headgears. It not only protects the head against dust but also helps in keeping it cool. It is a great help in protection against sunstrokes especially in hot countries. It is practical and can be made into any shape and kept clean by washing it regularly. It is very useful for the bald people. The bald scalp burns more easily in the sun causing serious problem. With no natural cushion on the head injuries are possible if one accidentally bumps into a tree limb or a cupboard door. On a cold day the bald people feel too chilly. All this can be easily remedied through wearing a turban.

⁸⁶ In the Pushto speaking area (Pakhtoonistan) the word for the turban is “*Patkaiy*” from which the commonly used modern Punjabi word “Patka” appears to have been derived.

⁸⁷ Etymologists like the Sumerian scholar Muazzez Cig trace the word “turban” from Arabic ‘Dulband’, which in course of time became ‘turban’. According to him In Sumeria and Egypt women used to wear turbans in the temples whereas men wore sheep-skin fur on their heads as head gears.

⁸⁸ There are copious references to turban in the Old Testament (i.e. exodus 28:4)

⁸⁹ The English word ‘PELT’ (hairy skin of an animal) appears to have been derived from it.

4.1 Headgears in the West

As mentioned earlier, headgears were used throughout the world in one form or another. In course of time they became an object of fashion rather than of utility. Many kinds of hats and caps began to be used. A hat is a noticeable fashion. The old saying is, "If you want to get ahead and get noticed, then get a hat". The word 'ahead' means, "head further forward."

Around 1700s the American women decorated their hair with feathers, fruit, flowers, golden nets, linen and sometimes-even sculptures. Some time later stuffed birds began to be used to decorate the hats. In Edwardian era an exotic feathered hat could cost up to a £100. Workshops called *Plumassiers* cropped up here and there, which began to fix bird feathers in the hats for a small payment. This gave rise to flamboyant hats. In America *Audubon society* and in England RSPB (Royal society for prevention of cruelty to birds) expressed grave concern about this trend. The fashion had to be stopped. Queen Alexandra forbade the wearing of osprey feathers. Women began to use false hair around 1770 AD.

At one time covering the head in the West was considered a sign of affluence and nobility. People used to say, "*Only beggars go bare-headed*". Soon it turned into fashion. The fashion itself began to slow down with the oncoming of the First World War (1914-1918 AD). In World War II (1939-1945 AD) people had to run for shelter and hide. A hat became a big hindrance. Berets and hoods became the fashion for men and women began to tie head scarves and tiaras on their heads.

These days not many people in the West wear turbans (except for some West Indian women) and a few English women. Modern European turbans, wherever they are seen, are known as *chaperons*.

4.2 Headgears in the East

People have been covering their heads in the Middle Eastern and Asian countries since time immemorial. Persians called their headgear a Dastar.⁹⁰ It was looked upon as a sign of nobility, purity, respectability and trustworthiness. Different types of turbans became prevalent in different areas. Persians, Iranians, and Indians could be easily recognized from their turbans. In old Chinese language the turban was called "baoshi" (now called Maotzu). It means the "hair cover".

Political influence in the matter of wearing clothes was responsible for change in material and style⁹¹. For example in India Moghul and Rajput style turbans were permitted for the

⁹⁰ The word is derived from Persian word "DAST" which means a hand. A turban is a headgear, which must be made on the head by hand. (A hat, cap, tiara, fez or beret cannot be called Dastar for that reason)

⁹¹ For example Mao suits were once the national uniform of Mainland Chinese people.

nobles and aristocrats of those tribes only and they were the only people who could carry weapons and grow beards and moustaches. This led to the phrase “*Aadmi Dastar, Guftar te Raftar ton pachhania janda hair.*”(A man is distinguished by the design of his turban, the manner of speech and the way he behaves and walks among people).

4.3 Turban in Christianity

Turban was considered the symbol of royalty and dedication and its mention in the holy Bible can be found at many places.

“*They shall wear linen **turban** and linen drawers on their loins*” (Ezekiel 44:18)⁹²

Like the Sikhs who sometimes decorate their turbans with a religious symbol known as *Khanda*, the Christians too used to decorate their turbans with religious symbols. “*He then tied the turban upon his head and set a gold rosette as a symbol of holy dedication as the Lord had commanded.*” (Leviticus 8,9)⁹³

In Biblical times a turban was the sign of dignity, self-respect, righteousness and authority. “*When God takes away the turban, he takes away the dignity of man*”(Isaiah).

Wearing of turbans also indicated the social status of the wearer. “*Girded with belts on their loins, with turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers, like the Babylonians in Chaldea, the land of their birth.*” (Ezekiel 23:15)

There are many references in the Bible indicating that turbans were in common use in Biblical times and the Jewish Judges were distinguishable from their special headgear.

4.4 Turban In Judaism

The old Hebrew word for wearing is *Labash*. It was used for wearing all clothes except the headgear. The word for wearing the headgear was *Habash* which literally translates, “*to wrap*”⁹⁴ Its origin dates back to the time when all Jews used to wear turbans. It is said that when an astrologer told a Jew boy Rab Nahman Bar Issac that he would become a criminal in life, his mother immediately donned a turban on the boy’s head as a counter measure (Shab156b). Turbans used to be a distinctive mark of the Torah scholars and were interpreted as a sign of piety.

Moses, the founder of Judaism, used to wear a turban and so did all Jewish priests. It was considered the sign of holiness and prophet hood. The most famous turban in Jewry was

⁹² See also Exodus 26:6, 28:4, 28:36, 39:27, Isaiah 3:22-23, 62:2-10, Ezekiel 23:14 Job 29:14 Zachariah 4-9

⁹³ Also see exodus 29:6, 28:36, and 39-31. It is interesting to note that not only did the Christians use turbans and decorations on them, but they also used to wear Kachhehras (kCihry) and *Kamar Kasas (kmr ksy)*. “*He shall wear a sacred linen tunic and a linen drawer (kCihrw). He will also tie a linen sash round his waist (kmr ksw) and wind a turban round his head (dsqwr).* And he must take a bath before putting them on.” (Leviticus 8:9)

⁹⁴ Another word for headgear in Hebrew is “*Migba’at*” which translates as “Wrapping” or applied “cover”.

the one worn by Moses Maimonides, the 12th century philosopher and rabbi who also sported a beard and long hair.

Shatnez prohibits Jews from wearing wool. “*You shall not wear combined fibres, wool and linen together*” (Deuteronomy 22:11)

The Jews associate hair with sex and consider the female hair erotic. Therefore women have always been expected to keep their heads covered (except from their husbands). They may use Snood, Tichel (scarf) or the Sheitel (wig). Covering the head is considered “*A pious Act*” (Midat Chasidut). The word Yarmulke used for the headgear of the Jews is derived from “*Yara Melekh-ka*” which means “*to tremble in service of God*” Or “*To stand in awe of God.*” A Yarmulke is also called a Kippah (plural Kippot). Some Jews think that it means “*A crown*” many others however think that it has a deep mystical meaning “*The protection of God’s own divine hand.*” The headgear is thus a very spiritual and significant religious adornment for the Jews.

Jews consider covering the head so sacred that some Jews even consider it improper to sit at home with an uncovered head. Some never remove headgear even when sleeping. Some others wear it even to their deathbeds. Halacha (Tenth law) forbids Jews from walking four cubits (about 8 feet) with uncovered head.

Reading the Torah (Jewish scripture) without covering the head is forbidden. Talmud says, “*Cover your head in order that you should have the fear of heaven upon you.*” It is also recorded in the Talmud that when tying a turban the Jews should recite, “*Our God, who crowns Israel with glory.*” “*The Shekina, God’s presence, resides on my head*” (Talmud -Kiddushin 31A)

“*Covering my hair helps me stay connected to my identity as a Jewish woman, yearning for holiness.*” (Rivkah Lambet Adler PhD)⁹⁵

4.5 Turban in Islam

Prophet Muhammad used to wear a white turban and was known as *Sahib-e-Imamma* (the turban wearer, great man)⁹⁶. It is also stated in Islamic history that along with other merchandise he also traded in turbans. “*The turban was worn from the beginning of Islam and it did not cease being worn until our time*”(Imam Malik)

⁹⁵ Interestingly the the word “*Keshar*” in Hebrew means “connector”

⁹⁶ Except that when he entered Mecca he wore a black turban. Abbasids still wear black colour and claim that the Prophet himself handed over his black turban to them. Chisti Sufis used to wear black cloaks and black turbans. Most Muslims believe that “Wearing of *Imamma* (turban) is a *sunnah* (instruction) of the prophet.

Some staunch Muslims believe that a turban is a frontier between faith and unbelief.⁹⁷ They quote *Khasaaile Nabwi* by Zakrya Khandalwi (page 5) where it is stated that the Prophet said, “Wear the turban as it is a sign of Islam between a Muslim and a Kaafir”⁹⁸The Arabs respected the turban very much. According to a Hadis by Ibn Abbas, “When the Arabs forsake wearing the turban, they will lose their respect and dignity”.

“The angels attend the jumu’h while wearing turbans. Hence those people who are wearing turbans receive the benefit that the angels make dua for them till sunset”(Dailami)

The turban was also offered as a *Khilat* and was called *Khilafah* (Turban of honour). The Prophet himself is said to have tied a turban on Ali’s head at Khuma and also wound it on the heads of his Governors as investiture.⁹⁹ The Caliphs have been following this practice since then. The famous sufi Salah-ud-din is always shown with a long flowing beard and a turban on his head. The Muslim kings throughout the Islamic world donned turbans with jeweled bands known as *Sarpech* decorated with a crest (*Kalghi*). It was considered a sign of authority and power. One of the *ahadis* reads, “Wear turbans and thus appear different from earlier people (meaning unbelievers)”. The *Ahadis* also mention that according to the Prophet’s prophesy, “A Muslim will receive light on the day of judgment for each *Kawai* (tier) of his turban round the head”. Abdulla Bin Amar reports, “Allah’s prophet used to wind the turban around his head and tuck the end behind whereas the other extremity hanged between his shoulders.”

Most Muslim *Ulemas* (Scholars) still wear turbans in almost all Muslim countries and consider the tying of a turban as *Sunnat-e-mustamirrah* (The firmly established practice of the Nabi) . Sayyads (descendants of prophet Muhammad) usually wear black turbans.¹⁰⁰ Muslims in the Persian Gulf area wear a checkered cloth known as *Keffiyeh*¹⁰¹ but in Oman they still wear the usual turban (Sultan Qaboos of Oman wears an elaborate turban).

In Sudan the Muslims always wear white turbans. Some in Egypt, India and Indonesia wear green turbans and believe that they were ordered to be worn by the combatants of the prophet (*Sipah-e-Sahaba*). In Yemen the Muslims pray, “*Allahumma salli ala Sahibi al taj.*”(O God, bless the owner of the crown). Here the word ‘crown’ refers to the turban of the prophet.

In Ottoman era the Turks used to wear very big turbans (perhaps the biggest in the world). Now Turkey is the only Muslim country where turban has given place to Fez. In 1826 AD

⁹⁷ Lessons in the art of tying turbans are provided by the Muslim clergy on You Tube under *Amama kaisay banda jayey* (How to tie a turban).

⁹⁸ Although this Hadis is supported by Bukhari (p.33), Ibn Majha (p. 256 and Ibn Dawd (p.19) modern Muslims consider it as Maudhoo (fabricated).

⁹⁹ For example when Abd-al-Rahman Ibn Awf was being sent for a military expedition, the prophet himself tied a turban on his head.

¹⁰⁰ Ayatollah Khomeini always wore a black turban. Most of the present day Ayatollahs of Iran wear black turbans.

¹⁰¹ A *Kaffiyeh* is a rectangular patterned headgear held by a thick black cord called *ekal*. *Kaffiyehs* are used mostly in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf states. Yassar Arafat popularized it.

Mahmud II the head of the Ottoman Empire discouraged turban and replaced it with Fez. The change did not go easy with the people. Thomas Allom (1830 AD) tells us “*the inhabitants refused to regulate their costume by direction of the Sultan. They refused to doff the cherished turban for the recently introduced Fez.*” Reverend Walsh wrote that the Fez was, “*a miserable substitute for the splendid turban.*” By 1922 the Fez became the national headgear of the Turkish males.

There is nothing more lethal to religion than the self-righteous intolerant politicians. Their influence has created anomalies and ridiculous situations. For example In Afghanistan the *Taliban* (Under Mullah Omar) officially ordered (on 28.3.2001) all Muslims to wear black turbans. They claimed that a turban is an essential part of the Muslim dress. School Children were required to start wearing black turbans in lower grades and white turbans in upper grades. No Government employee was exempted from wearing a black turban. Some years ago the Government of Malaysia made it compulsory for non-Muslim policewomen to wear a *Tudung* (headgear for female Muslims) while on parade. On the other hand three Muslim students wearing turbans in a Muslim school in Seremban (Malaysia) were expelled for wearing *Serbans* (turbans). On July 12,2006 the Federal Court Panel of three Muslim judges justified the expulsion saying that covering the head with a *serban* (turban) was not a Muslim *Sunnah*. They ignored the fact that the father of one of these boys Syed Ahmad Johari was a schoolteacher, wore a *serban* and also donned a Jubah (lose robe worn by Arabs).¹⁰² The judge called him *angkuh* (arrogant) and stated that “*Islam was not about turban and beard*”.

Similar paradoxical situation developed in Turkey. Although Kamal Attaturk, the founder of modern Turkey, himself used to wear a turban at one time, a ban (1926) on wearing the turban was imposed and women were banned from entering the Universities of Turkey with their heads covered. Similarly Reza Shah Pehalvi banned headgears in Iran. These restrictions have been very divisive in these countries. Turkey is now changing the law and all the ayatollahs of Iran now wear turbans. In Fremont (USA) Muslims observe November 13 as “turban day”

Most modern Muslims interpret wearing of a turban as *Farz* (duty or suggestion) and not an order. However while going to the mosque for prayer a turban is strongly recommended.

4.6 Turban in Hinduism

In India turban has been an essential part of the male dress since time immemorial irrespective of religion.¹⁰³ It was called *Moond-ves* (Head gear)¹⁰⁴. The style of tying has

¹⁰² Sikh children are permitted to wear turbans but women are permitted only head scarves (not the Burka)

¹⁰³ Wearing of turbans was common in post-Vedic times. Read *Bodhisattva warriors* by Terence Dukes Page 158-174

differed from area to area.¹⁰⁵ There are thousands of styles ranging from the wheel-like turban of the Bengalis to the boat-like turban of the educated Sikhs (Nihang Sikhs prefer a conical turban). Rajput style turban (*safa*) has been very popular during the Mughal period. In certain areas (for example in Rajasthan),¹⁰⁶ the size of a turban also matters. The members of the erstwhile royal families and other affluent people still don bigger turbans indicating their position in society. In Mysore a special turban is called *Peta* and it is offered only to people who do something good for the society.¹⁰⁷ Another special turban is worn in Karnataka. It is called *Mundas* which is a heavy headgear broader in the middle but tapering upwards. It is worn by the dancers and is held in great esteem.

Hindus in India have been wearing turbans for thousands of years¹⁰⁸. The great Hindu Scholar Swami Vivekananda always wore a turban. According the world famous Hindu saint Osho's follower Ma Prem Naina the religious people have always covered their heads while meditating. This preserves spiritual energy. According to her, "*When energy reaches the head, there are chances of it getting diffused or scattered. If one covers the head with a cloth, the energy does not flow out and in turn intensifies meditation.*"¹⁰⁹

The great Hindu lawgiver Manu recommended the wearing of a turban. Ketya Simiriti advises that hair should remain covered when eating meals.

Although the custom is now slowly dying out one thing is however still common throughout India and is not likely to disappear soon. All Hindus wear turban (usually pink) at the times of the weddings of their sons and daughters. Indian Muslims usually prefer white turbans.

4.7 Turban in world culture

The earliest record of turbans available so far is that found in Iraq. Excavations of Assyrian carvings in Iraq prove that 4000 years ago the kings used to wear turbans. By 1000 BC it was not only a utilitarian object but also a symbol of nobility and power almost throughout the world.

¹⁰⁴ "Moond" in Indian languages means "Head" and "Ves" means "Dress". mUMif muMifwieAY jy guru pwelAY hm guru klnl gMgwqw (pMnw 155) mUMfu mufwie jtw isK bwdI moin rhY AiBmwnw] (pMnw 1013). Moond-ves means Head dress.

¹⁰⁵ It is said that in India the style of turbans changes every 20 miles.

¹⁰⁶ In Surabhi turban museum at Jaipur can be seen the largest collection of Rajasthani style turbans worn by farmers, labourers, musicians, merchants and the rulers etc. Turban trying competitions are held here every year.

¹⁰⁷ A *Peta* is a long colourful turban. It is usually 82 ft long and only 8 inches wide. It is worth watching a *peta* being offered at marriages and other social gatherings.

¹⁰⁸ The Hindu scholar Swami Vivekananda wore a turban all through his life. So did Lokmania Tilak. Mahatma Gandhi wore a turban in early life and then discarded it.

¹⁰⁹ Osho World Galleria at Ansal Plaza has a collection of many turbans and other headgears used throughout the world.

In certain countries a turban is considered the crown of responsibility. For example in India when a person dies his elder son is offered a turban in public to indicate his responsibility towards the family. Thereafter he is looked upon as the head or leader of the family and enjoys the same privileges as his father before him. Offering a turban is a great honour to the recipient. At weddings in-laws offer a turban to the bridegroom.

Exchanging of turbans is considered a pact of committed friendship. Once they exchange turbans, they call each other Turban-brothers (pg v` t Brw). They will gladly accept death but will never sully their friendship or betray their friend. Any anti-social act by a man/or woman is described by saying, “He/she has sullied his/ her father’s turban”. Cowardice is described by saying, “You have tainted your turban.” There are numerous idioms like, p`g lwhuxw (to insult), p`g pYrIN rKxl (to show respect or to submit) p`g dl lwj rKxw (to act ideally) etc. associated with turbans in Punjabi language.

Wearing of turbans in China has been a custom since very long. There was a time when their turbans were very prominent and were associated with certain political movements. For example in the year 184 AD Jhang Jiao led a rebellion of more than 300,000 turbaned people against the Emperor Lingdi of Han Dynasty.¹¹⁰ This rebellion is known as the *Yellow turban rebellion* because the rebels all wore yellow turbans. In 1368 AD The *Red turban revolt* of China toppled the Yaan dynasty and established the Ming dynasty.

Turban movements were not only peculiar to China alone. *Vieux Turbans* of Algerian Ulema opposed the French colonial administration.¹¹¹ During the agitation for the freedom of India the most popular song of the freedom fighters was, “*Take care of your turban o peasant.*”¹¹² Akali Sikhs wore blue turbans and fought for the freedom of India against the British Government. In 1988 Nawaz Sharif (who later became Prime Minister of Pakistan) contested an election against Miss Benazir Bhutto. Since according to Islam a woman was unacceptable to rule, he coined a slogan, “*Jaag Panjabi jaag, Teri Pagg Nu Lagg Riha Daag*” (Wake up O Panjabi, your turban is getting tainted—Beware O Panjabi your honour is at stake)

An uncovered head is considered a sign of mourning in many countries.¹¹³ The Veteran Punjabi poet Bhai Gurdas describes an incident where a certain person forgot to wear his turban after taking a bath. When he entered his house, all women began to mourn thinking that somebody in the family had died.¹¹⁴

Turbans are light, easy to wash and can be tied in a variety of ways always giving the feeling of freshness and newness.¹¹⁵ They can be of any colour. The turban also has some

¹¹⁰ The rebels named their movement Taiping Dao (Way of peace).

¹¹¹ They rose in rebellion under their leader Bashir Abrahimi. The rebellion resulted in more than 40,000 deaths.

¹¹² pgVI sMBwl j`tw pgVI sMBwl auey[lut ilAw dyS qyrw klqw kMgwl auey]

¹¹³ In Egypt a turban is removed from the head when someone in the family dies.

¹¹⁴ TMFy KUhoN nHwieky p`g ivswr AwieAw Gr nMgy, Gr ivc rMnW kmIIAW D`usl llql dyK kuFMgy (Bwel gurdws vwr 32 pOVI 19)

¹¹⁵ This cannot be said of hats and caps. Deluged with sweat, the hats and the caps soon develop a greasy, smelly and dirty luster, which is detrimental to health. Sweat-stained hat or cap is not easy to clean if at all.

very practical advantages. In rural areas and in deserts exhausted travelers sometimes use turbans as pillows, bedspreads or blankets when nothing else is available as such. In North Africa and especially in Morocco people store money in the folds of their turbans. In sandy deserts people wrap their turbans round their faces to keep away flying sand injuring their eyes. It is not uncommon to find people using turbans as towels or (folded turbans) as strainers to obtain drinkable water from otherwise muddy river water. In India there are copious examples of people having saved drowning persons by throwing them a turban to grab. Drawing water from a well in times of emergency is all too common using the turban as a rope. A turban is also a perfect protection against snow, sleet, rain and hailstorms. In times of emergency turbans have been used as bandages to stop bleeding. This practice has been common among many cultures especially among Muslims in the Middle East (See Bukhari Shareef Vol. 2 p.577)

Chapter 5

Politics of the Hair and Headgears

On reading the title of this chapter you must be wondering about the futility of writing on a topic, which has neither any relationship with personal appearance of an individual or with any religion. You are wrong. Politicians have influenced, and in some cases dictated, the appearance and the religions of the people throughout the

ages.¹¹⁶ For example In India we know the orders issued by the Mughal Emperors¹¹⁷ to shave the heads of the people and limit the length of their beards. Sultan-al-Malak-al Salih (c.1354) limited the length (to only 10 ells) and style of the non-Muslim headgears. In the 16th century Sultan Murad III classified the non-Muslims as *Dhimmi* (Inferior breed) and banned the Jews and Christians from wearing turbans. In the 17th century “*pact of Omar*”¹¹⁸ ruled about the Way the non-Muslims were to look and dress themselves. According to Tritton Omar I did not allow the Christians to wear white turbans. Only Ottomans could wear white turbans (considered in Islam as the colour of paradise). There were special instructions known as *Adab-e-dastar* regarding the wearing of turbans. Here and there other colours were also fixed for people of different faiths and social status.

In America at one time people were even persecuted for growing long beards. For Example on the tombstone of Mr. Joseph Palmer of Leominster Massachusetts who died in 1840 AD we find the following inscription. “*Persecuted for growing the beard*” “During the sixties white American youth used hair to make a variety of political and philosophical statements”(Van Deburg 201). Around 1960AD some school students in America were expelled from school for not shaving their hair. In 1964 the Beatles appeared with long hair on the *Ed Sullivan* show, which prompted the students to copy their fashion and as many as nine students suffered expulsion from schools. In January 1970 a student named Chesley Kerr took Coronado High School in El Paso (Texas) to court for denying him the right to wear long hair. A student movement was started in America whose slogan was, “*Hell no, let it grow*”. The schools called hair dirty, messy and un-masculine but the students argued by saying that the expulsion violated the 1st, 9th and 14th amendments to the constitution. The case dragged on until November 19,1970 when Judge Fortas remarked, “*In our system, state operated schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism.*”

¹¹⁶ Emperors and politicians have done very funny and amusing things. For example Emperor Nero imposed a tax on urine. This caused difficulties to those who used urine for cleaning clothes in those days. Peter the great of Russia imposed tax on, beards, beehives, horse collars, hats, boots, chimneys, clothing, birth, marriage, burial and soul (This tax was known as Religious dissenters tax in 1718 AD. Julius Caesar imposed a tax on bachelors in 18 BC and the English did so in 1695 A D. In 1795 AD William Pitt, the younger, imposed a tax on windows.

¹¹⁷ Emperor Aurangzeb mistook a long bearded man as a *Qazi*. On realizing his mistake he ordered all Hindus to be shaved. In some cases their beards were cut forcibly. Later on 8.9.1710 Bahadur Shah issued orders restricting the Hindus from riding horses. He appointed Sarfraz Khan to ensure that prominent Hindus shaved their beards. On 10 December 1710 he issued the order “ Followers of Nanak should be butchered wherever they are found.” Again in 1713 Farrukh Seyar issued a similar order requiring non-Sikhs to shave off their heads because, as Akhbarat-e-Darbar-e-mulla tells us, “*it was difficult to distinguish between the Hindus and the Sikhs.*” What happened after the defeat and capture of Banda Bahadur is history.

1658 Muslim Muhatasaihs (censors of social norms) appointed

1665 Custom duty on goods sold by non-Muslims doubled

1668 All non-Muslim fairs were banned

1669 No non-Muslim religious places to be constructed

1674 Conversion of non-Muslims to Islam ordered

1679 House tax (known as *Jazya*) imposed on non-Muslims

¹¹⁸ The pact was signed between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. The Jews and the Christians agreed that they would not resemble the Muslims in appearance. The Muslims considered the Christians and the Jews as inferior races.

Even now Students at Brigham University have to follow the following instruction, “*If moustaches are worn they should be neatly trimmed and should not extend below the mouth. Beards are not acceptable.*” In 1997 California Department of Corrections (CDC) started a social headhunting by forbidding prisoners from wearing long hair and beards.¹¹⁹ In 1960 in an obscenity trial a Judge in Oz ordered all defendants to have a haircut.

In Greece all men wore beards until 323 BC when Alexander, the great, prohibited them. Alexander was told that when the enemy catches his soldiers, they are humiliated by shaving. Alexander considered it an insult. He ordered all his soldiers to remove their hair and beards so that no one would be able to drag them by the beards or the head hair.

Until 296 BC nobody in Rome shaved his hair. Even their servants and slaves were forbidden from removing their hair. Pliny tells us that Ticinius came to Rome from Sicily in the 454th year of the founding of Rome and introduced shaving among the Romans. Caesar (101-44 BC) was clean-shaven and therefore people began to shave in large numbers to look like him. The Roman dandies began to shave and gather at the barbershops. Later When Emperor Hadrian (76-138 AD) became the Emperor, beards again came into fashion and his courtiers all started growing beards once again. Scipio Africanus is said to be the first Roman who once again introduced shaving among the royals. During the 19th Century *Carbonaria* in Italy were tortured for wearing long hair and were forcibly shaved. This resulted in a revolt against the Austrian domination of some states of Italy. Such changes have happened a number of times in Roman history.

History tells us that King Alfred decreed,” *If a man shaves off another’s beard, let him make amends with twenty shillings. If he bind him first and then shave him like a priest, let him make amends with sixty shillings*”

When William, the conqueror attacked England; the English had a fashion of wearing long hair on the head and the upper lip but keeping their chins shaved. William did not like the fashion. Soon people began to copy the conqueror and the fashion spread through France and Germany too.

Towards the end of the twelfth century Pope excommunicated those who wore long hair and ordered the priests not to conduct the last rites of those who refused to remove hair from their body. St. Wulstan, the Bishop of Worcester, went a step further. He called such people criminals and beasts and cut the hair of people forcibly. He also preached vehemently that all those wearing hair would go to hell.

During the reign of Henry I, Mr. Anslem the archbishop of Canterbury was a fierce opponent of long hair. He republished the Pope’s decree against hair and tried his best to

¹¹⁹ The Department of corrections limited the length of hair to 3 inches. An inmate named Billy Soza Warsoldier at Adelanto community Correctional facility Victorville (USA) challenged the restriction and sought exemption on religious grounds. On 26.5.2004 Ninth circuit court of appeals rebuked the Department of corrections for foisting enforced conformity and stated, “ Discrimination on the basis of an immutable characteristic associated with race, such as skin colour, hair texture, or certain facial features violates title vii even though not all members of the race share the same characteristic.”

tow the Pope's line. Unfortunately by then the fashion had taken a turn. Henry and his nobles and judges had started growing ringlets of hair, which fell on their shoulders and the backs. Stowe writes that the fashion spread like wild fire and "*men forgetting their birth transformed themselves by the length of the hair into semblance of woman kind.*" People even began to knit false hair curls to their heads. This was galling to the priests who called it a great sin against God. The King's chaplain Mr. Serlo (1104 AD) delivered a highly sentimental speech in the court against this practice saying that hell awaited those with long hair. He recounted such concocted stories and misquoted references that Henry and some of his courtiers began to weep at their folly. The priest had brought a pair of scissors with him. Henry and many of his nobles had their hair cut there and then. Soon one of his knights who had not shaved his beauteous hair recounted a dream in which he claimed to have been visited by the Devil. The devil tried to choke him by thrusting his hair into his mouth. The next day he cut his tresses off. The priests used this story as a Godsend weapon and preached against hair with all the gusto. In a very short time everybody got shaved. However Stowe also tells us that "*scarcely was one year past when all that thought themselves courtiers fell into the former vice and contended with women in their long hairs.*" The king now realized that Mr. Anslem's line of argument was wrong and deceitful. He grew his hair again and so hated the Church that no appointment was made for five years to replace the archbishop after his death. This time he did not even listen to his physician Grimbalde who suggested shaving as a part of treatment to cure him from his dangerous disease.

The number of times the Church changed its stand and reversed its politics on hair (especially beard) is astounding. The arbitrary exercise of power has been the favourite pastime of the church luminaries inspite of the fact that the scripture does not approve shaving of hair.

In the civil war of England the Cavaliers (who supported the king and were therefore called Monarchists) had long hair and people associated wit, wisdom and virtue with them. On the other hand the Roundheads did not grow hair and beards and people coined a phrase, "*No hair no piety.*" to defame them

William Fitzosbert was popularly known as "Long beard" because he wore a long beard hanging down to his waist. He was a very good demagogue and convinced the people of the necessity of retaining hair on the body. Many followed him. His aim in doing so was to distinguish Saxons from the rest of the population.

In 1327 AD Robert Bruce's son David was married to Joan, the sister of king Edward. The wedding party of the Scots pasted the following doggerel at the door of St. Peter Stangate, which tells us about the prevalent custom of the beards.

Long beards heartlesse
 Painted hoods witlesse
 Gray coats gracelesse
 Make England thriftlesse

When the war broke out between Spain and Britain, the slogan of the British people was, *“Shave off the beard of the Spanish Emperor.”*

Although Henry VIII himself wore a beard, in 1535AD he imposed a tax on beards. Later when he contracted syphilis, he repealed it in 1560AD

In England John Knox, Thomas Cranmer, Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Dickens, George Bernard Shaw¹²⁰ and Bishop Gardiner had long beards, which they never shaved. Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603 AD) did not like beards and is reported to have levied a tax on beards.¹²¹

In France the hair in general and the cut of the beard have been directly associated with fashion which has been the prerogative of the elite. What the ruler did the subjects followed. Long hair was considered the symbol of sovereignty and social status. For example among the successors of Clovis there was the royal custom of retaining long hair and beards. The nobles and serfs too copied them in every respect. The fashion continued up to the time of Louis Debonair. After him Hugh Capet introduced shaving once again.

Louis VII shaved himself even at the cost of ridicule and banter from his courtiers. His queen Eleanor Guienne hated her husband's action and kept nagging and reproaching him for years. Eventually she divorced him and the king lost the provinces of Guienne and Poitou, which he had received as dowry. She later married Duke of Normandy (who later became known as Henry II of England). This provided the English royalty a foothold on the French soil.

After the death of Henry IV of France the custom of beards fell out of fashion because his successor was still too young to have a beard. Courtiers shaved off their beards but a minister named Mr. Sully did not shave in spite of the jeers and catcalls of the other nobles.

Louis XIII became bald and amused himself by ordering the cutting of the courtiers' hair. Only a small ridiculous tuft of hair was allowed to be left on the chin. During the 17th Century Louis XIV went grey for some reason and shaved his hair. All his courtiers followed suit and within hours no one was left with hair.

Towards the beginning of the 18th century almost the whole of Europe had discarded the hair and the beards. The Russians still kept long hair and beards, which they cherished and carefully preserved. They allowed their beards to hang down gracefully on to their chests and never cut their moustaches. In 1705 AD Peter, the great, of Russia levied a tax

¹²⁰ George Bernard Shaw was five years old when he saw his father shaving himself and asked, “Daddy why do you shave?” His father immediately threw away the razor and said, “Why the hell I do?” The father and son never shaved again.

¹²¹ She was so crazy that she used to remove hair from her eyebrows and the forehead.

on beards in order to westernise the Russian Society.¹²² He ordered that all nobles, serfs and army men must have their heads shaved within a stipulated period. Anyone who wanted to retain his hair had to pay a tax of 100 Roubles. The priests with long hair had to pay one Copeck every time they passed through the city gate. For many years Russia collected enormous revenue through this tax. As receipt of payments the collectors issued a metal token called “BORODOVAIA” (beard bearer) which carried the pictures of moustaches on one side and long bushy beard on the other with words “Deuyee Vyeatee” (money paid). This side also carried date, year and a royal stamp with black Russian eagle as royal authority. This receipt had to be shown every time a bearded person entered the town. Those who failed to pay or declined to cut their hair suffered imprisonment.¹²³

Peter’s legislation was considered by the Russians a great sin perpetrated by the atheist ruler to ridicule people’s religion. Their stubborn resistance only resulted in an increase of tax on the beard. Some old Russians, whose heads were shaved forcibly, saved their precious hair requesting their families that they be placed in their coffins when they died. They feared that they would not be allowed to enter heaven without their natural hair. The Czar was thus the first beardless Emperor of Russia and the first smoker Royal. By 1830 AD the custom had run out of steam and like the French and the Belgians the Russians too began to grow moustaches and beards.

Leo Tolstoi (world famous writer of *war and peace* and *Anna Crenina*) had long hair and a beard, which was not liked by the priests who sought his expulsion. “*The proctor General of the holy synod which superintends religious matters in Russia, desires the expulsion of Count Tolstoi, the famous novelist, for encouraging the religious sect known as Donkobortsi.*”

In 1185 AD Emperor John of Ireland had shaved off the beards of a group of nobles to punish them. This was an insult that led to war.

A race of highly intellectual people known as “Mullets” lived in Polland. They had the tradition of keeping long hair on their heads. In 1939AD Hitler started his “*Das Mullett ist Kaputt*” operation and openly declared their destruction and extinction. The Mullets went underground. They had only spud guns in their hands for fighting but gave Hitler a bloody nose using guerrilla tactics. Later these people were oppressed and persecuted by Joseph Stalin. Many mullets immigrated to North America where they still live. The Nazis also punished the Jews by cutting their beards off.

In 1838 AD the King of Bavaria forbade the wearing of hair and ordered to arrest those who did not shave off. The Newspaper *Le Droit* reports, “*Strange to say that the*

¹²² Some historians write that he felt ashamed when a woman pointed out the snot dangling from Peter’s beard. He shaved it and banned all citizens from growing beards.

¹²³ To add insult to injury the ruler hung out a suit of clothes at the gate of the city and all citizens were ordered to wear similar design of clothes. Anything going below the knees was cut off forcibly and the wearer was ordered to pay two grives as penalty. (Read: *Readings in European History. Boston Grin & Co. 1906 Volume 2*)

moustaches disappeared like tree-leaves in autumn. Everybody rushed to be shaved and therefore no one was arrested.”

As late as the 20th century Singapore and Malaysia insisted on haircut. Their argument was that escaping prisoners were hard to identify. In Afghanistan Taliban banned long hair but encouraged beards.

Despite the efforts of the politicians, monarchs and tyrants who tried to control the length of the human hair, the hair keep growing and there is no dearth of people who value long hair.

As far as women are concerned most countries /cultures expect women to cover their heads. Politicians, however, interfere to dictate their own terms. For example Muslim countries, Islamic schools, Islamic radical organisations (and especially Saudi Arabia) expect Muslim women to cover their heads whereas France and some other countries discourage it. Turkey banned headgears for women in 1950.¹²⁴

Thus we see that personal appearance has never been allowed to remain personal by politicians. No wonder the French Government now objects to anybody covering the head in schools and colleges.¹²⁵ Fortunately the French Church is silent. But who knows when the volcano may start spewing Lava.

X-

When the Satan was kicked out from heaven, he turned round and said to God, “I hear that you are about to create a new creature in your resemblance”.

“Yes” Said God.

“He will need laws. Won’t he?” asked the Satan.

“Yes” Exclaimed God. Do you expect for yourself the right to frame those laws?”

“Oh No” Replied Satan, “It is equally good if you grant that right to man”.

X-X

¹²⁴ The law has now been changed (February 2008).

¹²⁵ On 3.9.2007 Irish Government refused employment to a Sikh in Irish reserve police (The Garda Siochara) unless the Sikh removes his turban. This reminds one of Ronald Reagan’s words, “Government exists to protect us from each other. Where Government has gone beyond its limits is in deciding to protect us from ourselves.”

Chapter 6

Sikh Religion and hair

“If any thing is sacred, the human body is sacred.” (Walt Whitman)

Appearances speak volumes about people’s beliefs. It is a symbol of one’s roots and culture and an extension of their spirit. The Sikhs do not disfigure themselves by shaving. They keep long hair and respectfully use the word “KESH” for their hair. The word stands for head hair, beard and all other hair on any part of the body.¹²⁶

In ancient times it was a tradition that nobody removed hair from his or her body. In his world famous book, “*Kitab-ul-Hind*” “Alberuni” wrote, *These people do not remove hair from their bodies.*¹²⁷

During the Mughal Rule in India special type of turbans, beards and moustaches were reserved only for the nobility. With the exception of Rajuputs, who had developed matrimonial relations with the Mughals, the common people were forbidden from adding Singh after their names, riding horses, bearing arms or beating drums. The Sikh Gurus resisted these uncalled for restrictions on people’s fundamental rights. Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa (1699 AD) and declared that the Sikhs would do all these things. Historical records tell us that the Sikhs started riding horses, carrying swords and began to beat drums every morning and evening. They never shaved their heads and beards and were soon declared as outlaws.

6.1 Will of God

Hair is a part of the body’s integument system. It is one of our many lines of defence protecting eyes, ears, nose and head from foreign matter such as dust and bacteria. Leaving the hair intact is like living in harmony with nature. It is ungrateful to reject a gift so graciously given by our kind master. God has given us one face and through our ignorance we try to make ourselves another by removing the hair.

We have discussed how most religious preceptors have avoided interference in the matter of human hair. If anything, they have appreciated God’s creation with wonder. The Sikhs are firm believers in God and their Gurus have advised them umpteen times in the scripture to accept the doing of God as sacrosanct.¹²⁸ God creates hair on the body for a purpose and removing it from the body means proving ourselves more intelligent than God.

¹²⁶ See Gurmat Martand by Bhai Kahan Singh Part 1 page 309

¹²⁷ Alberuni came to India in the 11th century with Muhamud Ghaznavi.

¹²⁸ “All of Allah’s creation is handsome” (Quran Sajda 32:7)

Our body is designed by nature taking into account its needs for survival and development. God has produced nothing useless. Everything created by God has its special function, which no other animate or inanimate object can perform. True that our link with God is through our mind and that outward accoutrements do not interfere in this process but it is also true that man can never find peace by going against God's Will. It sounds ridiculous to think that the omniscient Creator did not design humans, known as the leaders of all creation, with careful thought.¹²⁹ If God wills our appearance to be of a certain type then be it so. If He differentiates males from females there must be some good reason behind it otherwise what logic was there in not decorating the females with beards and moustaches?

No Sikh has been permitted to alter even a full stop in the Sikh scripture (Guru Granth Sahib). Similarly no Sikh is authorised to alter the appearance of a Sikh approved and authenticated by Guru Gobind Singh, who proudly said, "*I endow the Khalsa with my special form. It is through my form that I will live among them*"¹³⁰

The Sikhs value the *Kesh* as a gift from their Guru; a gift which keeps them connected with Him.. He, in his infinite wisdom, called the *Kesh* a visible token of his affection.¹³¹ It proves not only the Sikhs' indebtedness to the Guru but also their commitment to the ideal behind the creation of the Khalsa.

Some people talk of scientific proofs of the utility of hair. The Sikhs do not need any scientific proofs of the usefulness or otherwise of hair. Their belief in God's wisdom and their Guru's word are sufficient for them to grow the hair and desist from shaving.¹³²

The story of Samson and Delilah (Bible –Judges) clearly demonstrates that the spiritual power of the Almighty God rests in the human hair in the same way as the ability of the plants to help bring rain.

Psychologically speaking the removal of hair from the male body is characteristic of the male's tendency towards becoming feminine. Freud and McDougal are of the opinion that this tendency is a remnant of the common origin of men and women and that both men and women are trying to merge into each other. If this argument were accepted then, it would be considered a violation of the Will of God who wanted them to be different in looks as well as in functions. Again if merger has anything to do with the origin then the tendency of both sexes should be to become one with God, our common origin. This is possible only if we accept and respect God's dispensation and willingly become a part of

¹²⁹ Avr join qyrl pinhwrl] iesu Drql mih qyrl iskdwrl] (pMnw 374)

¹³⁰ KwlsW myro rUp hY Kws, Kwlsy mih hauN krON invws]

¹³¹ inSwin is`KIN eIN pMj hr& kw&] hriz nw bwSd eIN pMj muAwP jkVw kwrdo kC kMGw ibdW, **ibnW kyS hyc Asg jumlw inSW**] (From a manuscript of Dasam Granth). It is on record that although Bhai Ram Kanwar had adopted all other Ks but the Guru had declined to baptize him unless he grew long hair. rwm koier kr jor, sls invwieAw gurW nUM imhr kro mm Er suDw Ckwvo dws nUM] (sUrj pRkws 4.35)

¹³² " ies ibiD ko Aib pMQ bnwvON]skl jgq mih bhu ibdqwvON] lwKhuM jg ky nr ie`k Qwie] iqn mihM imly eyk isK jwie] siB mihN pRQk pCwnXo prY] rIY n kXhUM kY ishuM krY] (sUrj pRkws irqu 1 AMsU 7)

it instead of finding fault with it. The Sikhs follow this path. For them all that God does is sacred and any supposed improvement on God's work is unforgivable.

“God and nature do nothing without a purpose. Nature always strives to realize perfection. There is nothing accidental but everything has a purpose. It is indeed this very prominence of design in Nature, which constitutes the beauty of her creation and the charm with which even the least of them repay investigation. Nature like a judicious manager gives to each the instrument it can use.” (Aristotle by Zeller Volume 1 page 471)

6.2 Keshas and the Sikh Gurus

“Guru Nanak's noble religious ideology gave birth to a great nation known as Sikh. Their greatness is evident in their character and appearance” (Rabinder Nath Tagore)

All Sikh Gurus had *Kesh* and they advised their followers to keep long hair because the human image is complete only with the hair.¹³³ Guru Nanak Dev even imagined *Sargun* God to have long hair. He wrote, *“Your eyes are beautiful, and Your teeth are delightful. Your nose is graceful, and Your hair is so long”*.¹³⁴

It is recorded in the Sikh history that when the Muslim scholars questioned Guru Nanak as to why people were behaving badly, Guru Nanak is reported to have said, *“The Hindus and the Muslims are both going astray and are finding fault with their Creator. They are trying to improve upon God's work by shaving themselves and violating the natural law.”*¹³⁵ He clarified the point further and said, *“The first principle of Islamic Sunnah is to keep hair on the head.”*¹³⁶ The Muslims are violating the *Sunnah* of the Prophet”.

In religion there are no two ways. You either follow a religion or you don't accept it in the first instance. There is no intermediate stage.

Guru Nanak's devotee Mardana was a Muslim who stayed with the Guru throughout his life. His instruction to his son Nooru was (1) Keep long hair. Do not shave (2) Do not use intoxicants. (3) Say your prayers regularly. (See Gian Ratnavli Bhai Mani Singh) According to Bhai Mani Singh Guru Har Rai later gave exactly the same instruction to Haqiqat¹³⁷ Rai's grandfather.¹³⁸

¹³³ kysw kw kir bljnw sMq cauru Fulwvau] (pMnw 745) kys sMig dws pg Jwrau iehY mnorQ mor]1] pMnw 500) kysw kw kir cvru Fulwvw crx DUiV muiK lweI (pMnw 749) kys jly jYsy Gws kw pUlw (pMnw 870)] All prominent Sikhs like Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Dyalal, Bhai Mati das, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Nand Lal and Baba Budha and others were *Keshadhari*.

¹³⁴ qyry bMky loieX dMq rIswlw] sohxy nk ijn **lumVy vwlw**] (pMnw 567)

¹³⁵ AwKy nwnk SwH s`c, suXhu bhwaudln plr, ihMdU muslimwn doie isr gum Qley zhlr.

¹³⁶ Av`l suMnq mUey hY, isr qy rKy joie, pwvy murwqbw s`Xdl v`fw irKISr hoie] Bhai Vir Singh writes that the *Peers* (Muslim holy men) of Uchh Sharif (now in Pakistan) used to keep long hair on their heads (See Guru Nanak Parkash page 636). Soofi Muslims still keep beards.

¹³⁷ Haqiqat Rai was executed in Lahore on the pretext that he insulted Muhammad 's daughter Bibi Fatima's name.

The Bhagats (Indian saints) too considered God as *Kesh* bearer. Kabir has mentioned the ‘*Kesh*’ a number of times in his hymns. He even taunts those who shave when he says, “*What is the point in shaving your head, if your mind remains unshaven (un-reformed). It is your mind that exhorts you for sin, what harm have the hair done?*”¹³⁹ Farid too has mentioned *Kesh* quite often in his hymns.¹⁴⁰ Bhagat Bhikhan also mentions *Kesh* in his hymns with respect.¹⁴¹

The long *Keshas* of Guru Amar Dass can still be seen preserved in the *Chaubara Sahib* at Goindwal. He himself mentions the *Keshas* respectfully at many places in his hymns.¹⁴² The story of Guru Ram Das’s long beard and Baba Sri Chand’s reaction to it is well known.¹⁴³

Guru Arjan Dev advised a *Qazi* “Your Muslim semblance is complete only if you follow the Prophet and wear a turban.”¹⁴⁴ He himself sported a very long and lustrous beard and has recorded the reverence in which the beard was held in his days.¹⁴⁵

Bhai Gurdas has mentioned the ‘*Kesh*’ reverently a number of times in his *Wars* and *Kabits*.¹⁴⁶ Another great Sikh scholar Bhai Nand Lal, the poet Laureate of Guru Gobind Singh, wrote that a male human being was complete only with ‘*Kesh*.’¹⁴⁷ He so loved the Guru’s hair that he wrote, “*The whole world is enamoured of the hair of my master. This world and the next together cannot pay the price of even one hair of my master.*”¹⁴⁸

Even the Muslim followers of Guru Gobind Singh were not exempt from the requirement of sporting long hair. The situation took a disastrous turn in the time of Banda Bahadur when he was arrested. Amin-ud-Daula writes that after the fall of Loh Garh and the arrest of Banda Singh, Emperor Bahadur Shah issued orders to shave off all the Hindus and the Sikhs. Non-Muslims were strictly forbidden from sporting *Kesh* and beard. If one was

¹³⁸ Haqiqat Rai’s grand father Bhai Nand Lal Puri (1630-1661) visited Guru Har Rai at Kartarpur in 1728 (See *Parasarprasna* by Kapur Singh Page 86 and *Panjab Deean Varan* by Ganda Singh P.19-20)

¹³⁹ kbLr mnu mUMifAw nhl kys muMfwey kWie] jo ikCu klAw so mn klAw mUMfw mUMfu AjWie (pMnw 1369) See *Guru Granth Sahib* pages 481,870,1104,1106,1365,1366 and 1369 for other quotes.

¹⁴⁰ (1) Pridw isru pilAw dwVI pll muCW BI plIAW (pMnw 1380) (2) dyKu Pridw ju QIAW dwVI hoel BUR (pMnw 1378)

¹⁴¹ nYnhu nlu bhY qnu Klnw Bey kys duD vwnl (pMnw 659 sorT BIKn jl)

¹⁴² sy dwVHIAW sclAW ij gur crnl lgMin] muK scy scu dwVHIAW scu bolih scu kmwih]53] (pMnw 1419)

¹⁴³ sRI cMd qb igrw aucwrl] kwih bFwel dwVHI Bwrl] (igAnl igAwn isMG). The Guru himself mentions the ‘*Keshas*’ many times in his writings.

¹⁴⁴ swbq sUriq dsqwr isrw (pMnw 1048), “kysw kw kir cvru Fulwvw”(pMnw 749) References to *Kesh* by Guru Arjan Dev can be seen on pages 387, 500, 745,749, 810, and 1048.

¹⁴⁵ grlbw aupir ij iKMjY dwVHI] pwrB Rhim sw Agin mih swVI (pMnw 199) hir hir nwmu idRVwieau guir mlTw, gur pg Jwrh hm bwl (pMnw 1335)

¹⁴⁶ pihny pMjy kpVy pursvwv vys, muCW dwVHI sohxl bhu durIB kys (vwr 26/11) Other references to *Keshas* and beard by Bhai Gurdas can be found in var 4.18, 13.13, 25.12, 15.18,37.14. See also his *Kabits* 346, and 347 etc.

¹⁴⁷ See his *Ghazals* 11,13,19,21,35,47 and 54. Many references appear in his *Ganj Nama* and *Rehatnamas*. He writes, “kMGw donoN vKq kr pwg cunih kr bWDel] dwqn nlq kryie nw duK pwwih lwl jl

¹⁴⁸ dln E dunIAW dr kmMdy AW prIN duKswir mw, hr do Awlm klmiq Xk qwir mUie Xwir mw] (dlvwin goXw)

found disobeying the order his hair was to be forcibly pulled out one by one in public and he was to be severely punished.¹⁴⁹

For the Sikhs Hair is an outward expression of their culture and heritage. They are a test of a Sikh's firmness and dedication. All contemporary writers mention in their writings and *Rehatnamas*¹⁵⁰ that the last Guru formally prohibited the Sikhs from removing hair from any part of the body by any means. Bhai Santokh Singh even goes to the extent of saying that a Sikh should offer as much respect to the hair as he does to his Guru.¹⁵¹ Here are some instances from the life of Guru Gobind Singh

- (1) Mai Bhagan (mwel BwgW) of Agra asked Guru Gobind Singh about the purpose of remaining unshaven. The Guru is said to have replied, "Beard is God-given gift which makes man look like God. Even the devil will hesitate to trust a beardless person."¹⁵²
- (2) Bhai Kahn Singh Malwai was plastering a wall when some mud inadvertently fell on to the Guru's dress. Immediately a Sikh hit the Malwa on his head. At this the Guru was enraged. He considered it the highest insult to hair for which the culprit could make amends only by offering his daughter to Kahn Singh in marriage. The later apologized and accepted the punishment.

6.3 Baisakhi

"Aurangzeb ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru's agents (Masands) for collecting the tithes and presents of the faithful to be expelled from cities". (Khafi Khan II 652 also see J.N.Sarkar page 212)

Under orders from Emperor Aurangzeb the 9th Guru of the Sikhs was beheaded at Chandni Chawk Delhi (1675AD). One of his companions was sawn alive, another one was boiled alive and the third one was burnt alive to instil fear in the minds of the people. In order to stem this tide of terror and to safeguard the survival of the nascent nation from extinction, something needed to be done urgently.

¹⁴⁹ It is said that for days people were submitted to humiliation and officers directed teams of barbers from street to street in Delhi shaving the people. In certain cases even clothes of the people were taken away as punishment. "He sent specially trained troops to all parts of Punjab populated by the Sikhs. The troops were ordered to shave their heads and beards." (The Sikh Courier Autumn-Winter 1989 Page 7) "bwdSwh ny Purmwn jwrl klqw ik qmwm ihMdU dwVHIAW munvw IYx ikauNik aunHW Aqy isKW dy drimAwn Prk dw pqw nhIN lgdw" (sMKyp isK ieiqhws-ipAwrw isK pdm pMnw 62)

¹⁵⁰ Read the Rehatnamas of Bhai Prahlaad Singh, Chaupa Singh, Dya Singh and Kesar Singh Chhibar etc. nwel dw hQ sls ichry nw lgxw pwvY] kysWDwrl gurU dw pMQ khwvY (kysr isMG iCbr bMswllnwmw ds pwqSwhIAW kw sMn 1780) ibiKAw ikirAw B`dn iqAwghu] jtw jUt rihbo Anurwghu (Bwel suKw isMG guriblws pwqSwhI 10 sMn 1797 AiDAwey 11) kysWDwrl sB ko klnw] blr rUp sB ko pRB dlnw (mihmW pRkws srUp dws B`lw swKI KMfy pwhul kl sMn 1776) AnMd rUp suMdr srUp] AYsy inhwr gur kysDwr (gur soBw pMnw 87) "gur kw isK B`dx nw krwvY (Rehatnama Bhai Chaupa Singh P.17)

¹⁵¹ Cwp gurUu kl gur sm jwnY] gur sm Adb kys ko TwnY (38)

¹⁵² dwhVI bMdgl AYn ^udwey dldwr Sumwry] bgYr dwhVI SYqwn ibswhs n krdmih] (sUrj pRkws irqU 4 Ansu 6)

On 30th March 1699 AD Guru Gobind Singh called a large gathering of his followers at Anandpur (Panjab). Quite unexpectedly he came out of his tent with a drawn out sword and asked for the heads of five followers one after the other. He then prepared *Amrit* (*sacred water*) by reciting five hymns while stirring water and sugar in a bowl. Each one of his followers was then administered this sanctified water (known as *Amrit*) while the initiate repeated *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh* (I will remain pure and dedicated to God and all my actions will reflect God's doing). Later he asked the five baptized ones to similarly baptize him as well. Over and above other instructions all baptized Sikhs were instructed to keep five articles of faith at all times. One of these five was the *Kesh*,¹⁵³ which was never to be removed by any means and another was a sword.¹⁵⁴

After this incident the Guru wrote a letter to the Sangat of Kabul¹⁵⁵. Among other instructions he also sent the following most important instructions which are blatantly disobeyed by many so-called modern Sikhs.

“Retain your *Kesh*. This is my seal. Look after your *Kesh* twice a day.

Don't use tobacco

Read the scripture and utter *Waheguru, Waheguru*

Follow the discipline initiated by the Guru”

The wearing of long hair had already been associated with holiness and saintliness in India. Thus the Sikhs wearing *Kesh* came to be called holy warriors and their whole history is replete with holy wars. They passed through numerous trials and tribulations but did not discard their hair. Efforts were made by many in power to ban the visible sign (*Kesh*) of the Sikhs. They suffered the heinous atrocities but there is not a single incident in which the Sikhs removed their *Kesh* and saved their lives.

6.4 Sacrifices for the hair

. “The hair represents the spiritual asset of man”

(*Libro d'oro del Sogno* – Phaldor)

¹⁵³ pihly muixAwd pMQ dl ieh rKI] Bdx nhINN krnw iehu Tihrl jy p`kl] rihqnwmy iIk msMdW nUM iBjvwey] jo gurU kw isK so gurUu kl rihq kmwey](bMswvllnwmw)The hairs have to be combed twice daily and kept clean by frequent washing. Every Sikh keeps a small comb, another symbol of faith, in the hair at all times.

¹⁵⁴ It is said that 30,000 Sikhs got baptized there and then. Obviously a set of 60,000 *kachhehras* and 30,000 *Kirpans*, which they were told to wear, could not have been produced overnight from the blue. People used to wear *Kesh* and *Kachhehras* and wielded swords everyday because Guru Hargobind had already required this. History also tells us that most of Guru Nanak's Sikhs had already started wearing long hair in his time and at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur most of the followers of the Guru were known as *Keshadhari*.

¹⁵⁵ (1) kys r`Kxy] ieh Awfl mohr hY] donoN vkq kysW dl pwlNw krnl (2) qmwkU n vrqxw (3) gurbwxl pVHnl. vvhgurU vvhgurU jpnW (4) gurU kl rihq rKxl] This *Hukamnama* is dated 26 Jeth Samat 1756. Referring to the *Kesh* on his head Bhai Nand Lal wrote ‘Just as a dog has a collar round his neck, I am Guru's dog and I carry the Guru's seal on my head. “Iwl sg gulwm gurU goibMd isMG, dwgdwry nwm gurU goibMd isMG “ The Guru believed that only those followers remain steadfast and faithful who carry the Guru's sign.” dwgy hoih su rn mih jUJih ibnu dwgy Big jwel (pMnw 970)

There is no compromising the beliefs if they are held truly and devotedly. For a Sikh the Guru's instruction is more important than life. In their daily congregational prayer the Sikhs repeat, "Grant us the strength to maintain our hair till death".¹⁵⁶ Such has been the faith of the Sikhs in this that they have accepted death but never let the scissors touch their hairs.

Guru Gobind Singh's two sons aged 6 and 8 years were bricked alive in a wall at Sarhind on 27 December 1704 but they did not accept Islam and part with their *Kesh*.

Bhai Mati Das was sawn alive (on 8.11.1675). His brother Bhai Sati Das was wrapped in wool drenched with oil and set ablaze (on 10.11.1675) but did not agree to go against the Guru's instructions. Their companion Bhai Dayla was boiled alive in water (on 9.11.1675).¹⁵⁷

On 30, December 1710 Emperor Bahadur Shah issued the following edict to the *Faujdar*s, "*Nanak prastan ra har ja kih bayaband ba-qatl rasanand*" (Kill the disciples of Nanak wherever they are found.) According to *Akhbarat-e-Darbar-e-Mualla* dated 11 October 1711 Forty Sikhs were captured from village Alowal (Near Multan) and ordered to shave off if they wanted to save their lives. Not even one agreed to shave.

The Sikh leader Banda Singh and his 794 companions were captured on 7 December 1715. Such was the faith of the Sikhs in the Guru that all Banda Singh's captured soldiers died repeating 'Waheguru' and not even one apostatized. They stoically accepted tortuous death than dishonour. Their execution is fully recorded by the English (John Surman and Edward Stephenson) and Muslim historians who witnessed the gory spectacle of the Sikh butchery.¹⁵⁸ Their butchery was started on 5 March 1716AD and they were tortured and killed in public for many days in batches. John Surman in his letter-dated March 10 writes, "*With what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one has apostatized from their new formed religion.*" (Also see Wheeler's *early records of British India*)

Historian Khafi Khan tells us that there was a young boy among the captured Sikhs who was pardoned because his mother declared her son was not a Sikh (9.6.1716). The boy immediately disclaimed his mother in public and declared, "*I am every inch a Sikh. I must die a martyr's death. This woman does not know what Sikhism is. She cannot be my real mother.*"¹⁵⁹ He is further reported to have said, "*My mother is persuading me to exchange*

¹⁵⁶ This started after the capture and martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur. The Sikhs entered these words in their daily *Ardas*. "*Xon kih kY krhYN Ardws] guru krY qukn kw nws] gurU KwlsW bhu pRkwsY] isdk inBY sMg kysn svwsY] (pMQ prkws AiDAwey 46)*

¹⁵⁷ The Quran sanctions this sort of punishment for the Kafirs (non-believers). "*As for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them; boiling fluid will be poured down their heads.*" (*Quran XXII. 19-22*)

¹⁵⁸ Aw igRPqwrwin by Kud grdn pyiS jlwdW ml inhwnd vwiHgurU vwiHgurU goyXw jW ml dwdMd] The captured soldiers fearlessly lowered their necks before the executioner and after repeating Waheguru, Waheguru sacrificed their lives. (Rasala Sahib Numa page 197)

¹⁵⁹ ipsir aU b PirAwd Awmd ik mwdrn drog my goXd] mn b-idlo jwn Az mOaQikdwny vw iPdVlAn jW insw murSid Kudm] mrw zUd b-rPlkwin mn rsWnMd] "The son complained that his mother was a liar and said, "I am so devoted to my Guru that I do not care for life. Please do not delay my execution. I am anxious to join my dying co-

*a diamond for a glass bauble.*¹⁶⁰ Banda Singh's execution was horrible. They thrust the quivering heart of Banda Singh's son Ajay Singh into his mouth, and then gouged out his eyes one by one. Later his hands were cut off and his flesh was torn with red-hot pincers. He expired on 9th June 1716.¹⁶¹

After Banda Singh's death Emperor Farrukh Siyar once again (in 1716 AD) repeated the edict¹⁶² issued by Emperor Bahadur Shah to extirpate the Sikhs. He appointed Abdus-Samad-Khan to finish the Sikhs once for all and he declared that (1) no Hindu in the Punjab will grow hair or beard (2) Rewards will be paid for catching the Sikhs, bringing in their dead body or heads or informing about their hideouts (3) Offering asylum to the Sikhs will be punishable with death.

For the next three years the Sikhs were butchered daily at Lahore. Prices were laid on their heads, and even Hindus had become their enemies. No Sikh was ready to shave off and save his life.¹⁶³ Such was the hatred of the Mughal Government for the hair that even non-Sikh "*Syal Pachadhas*" and young women were forcibly shaved and their hair and heads were presented in the Lahore court to grab prizes.¹⁶⁴ Farrukh Siyar died¹⁶⁵ in September 1719AD and Abdus-Samad-Khan was transferred to Multan. His son Zakriya Khan became the Governor of Lahore (1726-1745AD) and continued the extermination of the Sikhs all the more vigorously.¹⁶⁶ His daily routine of killing the Sikhs lasted from 1735AD to 1737 AD.

At this time a Kashmiri Muslim Mullah named Abdul Nabi declared himself the Emperor of Kashmir. He ordered cutting off the noses and ears of the Hindus and the Sikhs.¹⁶⁷ He forbade keeping of long hair, riding a horse and wearing white turbans. Thousands fell to his sword in Kashmir and the adjoining areas.

A Schoolboy named Haqiqat Rai was executed for not accepting Islam (January 1735).¹⁶⁸ On 14th June 1738 AD 90 year old Bhai Mani Singh, the Head Granthi of Darbar Sahib

religionists." (muMqj'Ab-aul-lubwb -KPI KW) The incident is recorded by Giani Gian Singh in Panth Parkash as follows: "puiCE En bqWxo isK] mYN hUM shl gurUu kw isK] mwel myrl bolq kUr] kql hox mYN cwhUM zrUr (pMQ pRkwS AiDAwey 56 pMnw 404)

¹⁶⁰ hs kY bwlk boile Dirw] k'c nw gRwhq Cofq hlrw] mYN nhIN AYsw vxj krYhoN] isKI qj nihM jlvn cYhoN] (pMQ pRkwS pMnw 404)

¹⁶¹ To know all about Banda Singh's execution read "*History of India* by Elphinstone"

¹⁶² He coined the phrase, "Slay, slay and slay again till there is no trace of the infidels". (Transformation of Sikhism page 112)

¹⁶³ ieh jbrl ipK isMGn kYrl] ihMdU qurk Bey sB vYrl] isMGn ko lgy pkrwvn] kY isr kwt lwhOr phuMcvvn] isK AisK n dust inhwrYN] kysW vwly ko kt fwrYN (pMQ prkwS AiDAwey 72)

¹⁶⁴ rwwl cMdr Bgw ky qlry] isAwl pcwDy bsq gMBIry]so sB dwVHI kys rKwvq] C`ly pwey gly ltkwvq] aun ko mwr muMf iqn ilAw ky] dwVHI kys lhOr idKw ky] bhuq AORqn ky isr ilAwey] duStn ley ienwm mhwey](pMQ pRkwS 7/555)

¹⁶⁵ Farrukh Siyar had met a tortuous death in an internecine war of succession. He was blinded before being killed.

¹⁶⁶ Shahid Ganj (Place of martyrs) is the place in Lahore where he used to torture and execute Sikh men women and children in public.

¹⁶⁷ According to M.A.Macauliffe (The Sikh Religion page 70) similar punishments were meted out to the followers of Guru Gobind Singh who were apprehended when crossing the *Sirsa* River after their flight from Anandpur.

¹⁶⁸ Haqiqat Rai's family had accepted Sikhism from the time of Guru Har Rai.

Amritsar, was killed by inches.¹⁶⁹ Each limb was cut inch by inch and yet the valiant Sikh kept on declining the offer to save his life. Where would Sikhism be today if he had succumbed to the pressure and abjured his faith?

Most remarkable is the story of Bhai Sukha Singh. Afraid of being apprehended and tortured by the state the parents of boy Sukha Singh of Village Mari Kambo pressurized him to have a haircut. The boy flatly refused but the parents insisted on shaving him.¹⁷⁰ Eventually when the boy was sleeping the parents shaved off his hair. Next morning as the boy came to know what had happened, he jumped into a well to kill himself but some people saved his life.¹⁷¹ The boy immediately left home for the wilderness never to return. He soon joined the Sikhs. Every Sikh now remembers the brave man Sukha Singh who later killed the profligate Governor Massa Ranghar who was desecrating the holy Harimander Sahib (14 August 1740)¹⁷².

Bhai Taru Singh of village Poohla was arrested and presented to Zakrya Khan Governor of Lahore (1726-1745 AD).¹⁷³ He was ordered to shave off his hair, accept Islam or lose his life.¹⁷⁴ He flatly refused to shave and gladly accepted death. His words were, “*I will never abjure Sikhism, My hair will last to the end of my life.*”¹⁷⁵ The Governor took it as a challenge and to give him a foretaste of what was about to come he ordered his finger to be cut and daubed with salt.¹⁷⁶ Bhai Taru Singh still did not agree to change his religion. Once again he was offered monetary gains and political status if he accepted to become a Muslim and agreed to be shaved.¹⁷⁷ When nothing worked the Governor ordered (on 1 July 1745 AD) his hair to be scrapped off along with his scalp.¹⁷⁸ Thus was martyred the devoted Sikh who considered the hair more valuable than his life. As if nemesis was watching close at hand Zakrya Khan died the same evening tormented with acute urinary problems.

¹⁶⁹ Guru Gobind Singh's wife Mata Sundri had appointed him as the High priest of Amritsar Gurdwara in 1720AD. He was dictated the last Authentic copy of the Adi Granth by Guru Gobind Singh. He was an erudite scholar, an excellent administrator and a deeply devoted Sikh. He was the son of Bhai Mai Das of Muzaffar Garh. His grand father Mr. Ballu had killed Murtza Khan who was instrumental in having Guru Arjan martyred.

¹⁷⁰ iehu isKI Aiq burl blw hY [pwie rKI inj gl qYN blw hY [kys muMfwey Cof Ab isr ky [bny rho mony isK gur ky (pMQ pRkWS 82/633)

¹⁷¹ Ab jlvn insPI hY myrw [fUb kUp mih mrn cMgyrw [Cwl kUp mih mwrl jwey [kwFx gey sbMDI Dwey (pMQ pRkWS 82/633)

¹⁷² Sukha Singh and his companion Mehtab Singh were later captured after some years. Mehtab Singh was broken on the wheel and Sukha Singh was mercilessly killed.

¹⁷³ Bhai Taru Singh's sister was also arrested but the residents of Lahore paid a heavy ransom of Rs 100,000 for her to be released. In those days it was considered a very noble and meritorious act to get the release of a Sikh. “ is`K Cufwvx hY vf krm, gaU bRwhmx qoN SuD Drm.”]

¹⁷⁴ nvwb khYN qUM ho muslmwn]qau CfWgw qumrl jwn] isMG khXo hm fr ikAw jwnoN] ikm hovYN hm muslmwno] muslmwn kr mroN ik nwhIN] jau qb mroN ikauN Drm gvwhl] (pMQ pRkWS pMnw 275)

¹⁷⁵ mYN gurisKI nihM qjYhoN] kysW swsW sMg inBYhoN] (pMQ pRkWS pMnw 76/582)

¹⁷⁶ sunq nvwb Aiq kROD jqwieau] kwt AMgul jnu IUx lgwieXo (pRwcln pMQ pRkWS-rqn isMG BMgU)

¹⁷⁷ iPr nvwb muV AYsl khl, ijMd chUN qW Awwhu dln] AOr jo cwho mWgso Dn Ar mulK zmlNn] (pRwcln pMQ pRkWS-rqn isMG BMgU)

¹⁷⁸ jUqn swQ kroN bwl dUr] nweAn khXO isr munoN zrUr] (pMQ pRkWS) qb nvwb bhU kRoD Brw] qurq hukm aun moclAn krw] ies kl Koprl swQy bwl] kwt auqvro rMbl nwl (pMQ pRkWS pMnw 276) Herodotus tells us that this type of punishment was common in the ancient times in North America and the Siberian part of Russia.

On Zakriya's death (July 1, 1745AD) his son Yahya Khan issued a proclamation for a general massacre of the Sikhs. No exceptions were made. Saints, scholars, peasants, women and children all fell victims to his wrath. Prices were laid on the heads of the Sikhs¹⁷⁹ and on March 10, 1746 AD Sikhs of Lahore were made over to the sweepers for execution. Thousands were killed in one day. An army under the direct command of Yahya Khan and Diwan Lakhpat Rai¹⁸⁰ hunted the Sikhs everywhere throughout the Punjab.

Subeg Singh and Shahbaz Singh Jamber (father and son) were arrested and offered the choice of saving their lives if they shaved off and accepted Islam. They were even offered the fife of a few villages.¹⁸¹ They accepted to be broken on the wheel limb by limb but declined to remove even one single hair from their bodies (10 March 1746AD). On the same day a number of other Sikhs in Lahore were butchered in cold blood. ((See *History of the Sikhs* by Hari Ram Gupta P.27)

Yahiya Khan's brother Shah Nawaz imprisoned Yahiya Khan in 1747AD and expelled Lakhpat Rai. On April 11, 1748 AD Muin-ul-Malik (also known as Meer Manu) became the Governor of Punjab. He changed his attitude towards the Sikhs for some time only to beguile them. It was his stratagem. Soon he too followed the policy of persecution and butchered thousands of Sikhs in sight of a multitude of spectators in Landa Bazaar Lahore and imprisoned Sikh women in the dungeons.¹⁸² *"He sent specially prepared trained troops to all parts of the Punjab populated by the Sikhs. The troops were ordered to shave their heads and beards."*¹⁸³ He was the worst tyrant who did not even spare newborn babies.¹⁸⁴

Sahib Rai, a stooge of the Government, taunted a 30-year-old Gursikh Tara Singh of village Dalwaan *"I will prepare ropes using the hair of the Sikhs' and use them to tether my horses."* This was a calculated insult but Tara Singh only advised Sahib Rai to address the Sikhs with respect. The later however said that there would be no need because the Sikhs will be wiped off within days. This put Tara Singh on his guard. One night Sahib Rai secretly invited the Governor to attack Tara Singh and his companions. 22 Sikhs fought with hundreds. Many died on both sides. Jathedar Baghel Singh and Bhai Tara

¹⁷⁹ d'sy jo ds dmVy pwv y] pwie bls isKVw pkVwvy] pwey pcws ilAwvy so sls] imly jglr kwm bf QIs] (pMQ pRkwS igAnI igAwn isMG)

¹⁸⁰ Lakhpat Rai had taken a pledge, *"I am a Kashatrya. I will not call myself Kashatrya until I have finished the Sikhs lock stock and barrel."* He killed thousands of Sikhs in Shahid Ganj (Lahore) and burnt all copies of Guru Granth Sahib that he could find. He ordered that anyone with hair on the head (Sikh or non-Sikh) should not be allowed to live. The combined forces of Lakhpat Rai and Yahia Khan mercilessly killed 7000 innocent Sikhs at Kahnuwan. (This is known as Chhota Ghalughara). Lakhpat Rai was not the only Hindu who acted against the Sikhs. Hindus like Chuhar Mall Ohri, Deva Chaudhry, Diwan Hari Sahay, Sahib Rai, and Pahar Mall were all staunch enemies of the Sikhs and sided with the persecutors. On the other hand Pandit Surta Ram, Chaudhari Jawahar Mall, Lachhi Ram, Diwan Dila Ram and Des Raj appealed to Lakhpat Rai and the Governor to show mercy but to no effect.

¹⁸¹ khXo dIn qum hmrw mwno dYhUM jglr Apwry] nhINN qo qum ko cwVH crKVI mwroN duK dY Bwry] (pMQ pRkwS 75/568)

¹⁸² The Sikhs coined a phrase, *"mMnUM Aswfl dwqRI ASIN mnUM dy soey] ijauN ijaUN mnUM vFdw ASIN dUX svwey hoey"* Manu is a sickle (a persecutor) and we are his crop. The more he tries to mow, the more we grow.

¹⁸³ See Sikh Courier Autumn – Winter issue 1989 page 7)

¹⁸⁴ Retribution was quick. Mannu fell from his horse and died in November 1753 AD

Singh were both killed but they had demonstrated that the Sikhs do not accept insult to their hair.

At one stage Baba Ala Singh, the ruler of Patiala, was in a fix. He could either stay with the Sikhs or agree to side with Ahmad Shah Abdali, who had conquered almost the whole of the Punjab and was threatening Patiala. Ala Singh chose to remain with the Khalsa. Irked by his decision, Ahmad Shah attacked Ala Singh's state of Patiala and captured him alive (1762 AD). Abdali agreed to save his life on condition that he shaved off his hair and broke away from the Khalsa. Ala Singh flatly refused. Later through Shah Wali Khan, Ala Singh agreed to pay a restitution of Rs 100,000 and an annual payment of Rs 500,000 if the order to shave him issued by Abdali was rescinded. Abdali agreed and thus the devoted Sikh saved his hair at an enormous cost to his exchequer.

Bhai Jai Singh resident of village Baran (bwrn -Distict Patiala) was flayed alive.¹⁸⁵ In 1753 AD Abdus Samad Khan, the *Subedar* (Governor) of Sarhind camped at Mughalmajra and ordered his police inspector Nizam-ud-din to arrest the Sikhs of the area and bring them into his presence to work as *Bagari* (unpaid slaves). Most of the Sikhs had run away on hearing the arrival of the tyrant but Bhai Jai Singh, his wife Dhan Kaur and his sons Karara Singh and Kharak Singh were rounded up. Bai Jai Singh was ordered to prepare the smoking pipe (*Hukka*) for the *Subedar* (Governor) which he flatly refused saying that his Guru had forbidden the Sikhs from touching tobacco.¹⁸⁶ The Governor ordered that he should either shave off, abjure Sikhism accepting Islam as his religion or he will be tortured to death. Jai Singh accepted the later.¹⁸⁷ Two butchers were immediately brought to the scene and Bhai Jai Singh was hung upside down to a banion tree. He was flayed alive from the tip of the toe to the head and all members of his family were killed.¹⁸⁸

Hundreds of such examples are available in Sikh history, and, fortunately for us, the Muslim historians themselves (who witnessed the Sikhs accepting death rather than saving their lives by shaving off) recorded them.

¹⁸⁵ Flaying a person alive has been a common punishment among the Muslim rulers. (1) Shamas Tabrez (real name Makhdoom Shah Shamsudin) resident of Sabzbar (District Ghazni-Afghanistan) who later settled at Multan (India) was skinned alive for holding unacceptable views about Islam (He uttered the word *Analhaq*). (2) Shamsudin Muhammad resident of Tabrez was skinned alive and thrown into a well by Alla-ud-din Mahmood because he was rumoured to have brought a dead man to life. The famous poet Maulana Roomi was the follower of this saint. (See Mahan Kosh page 158).

Many Sikhs were flayed alive. Bhai Gulzar Singh and Bhai Dewan Singh were companions of Bhai Mani Singh and were arrested and martyred with him. Bhai Gulzar Singh was skinned alive in June 1791 Bikrami (1734 AD). Bhai Jai Singh resident of village Baran (Then known as Mughalmajra) of Ravidasia caste was skinned alive in 1753AD.

¹⁸⁶ ku` Tw hu` kw crs qMbwkU ,gWjw topl qwVI KwkU] ien kl Er nw kbhUM dyKy,rihqvMq jo is` K ivsyKy]

¹⁸⁷ Widhata Singh Teer has recorded Jai Singh's answer as follows: dln mMn Pyr vl AMq mrnw, ikauM hoeleyy iPr DrmHn swhw] qUM qW zulm dy GoVy swr hoieEN, au`qy sut ky pwp dl zln swhw] swfl A`K dy iv`c n clz koel, ieh jo zr jorU zmln swhw] swnUM mOq dw BY nw mUl irhw, huMdy moq qy nhIN ZmZln swhw]

¹⁸⁸ The incident is reported to have happened on cyq sudl dsvIN sMmq 1810.A Gurdwara on the spot commemorates the incident and a fair is held there every year. A certain poet writes, "DMn aun isMGn ky ijn kr swkw qjy prwn, rhy nwm ijs krm kw hY jg Awvn jwn] Shld jY isMG Kik` t huey, voh hYN purS mhwn]

The stories of these (and many other) brave Sikhs remind one of Flavius Domitianus Augustus who persecuted the hairy philosophers and ordered them to either live in exile or have a hair cut. Epictetus resented and refused. He said, “*I will not shave myself.*” In that case “*I will take your head off,*” said Augustus. Epictetus replied, “*If that will do you any good, make no delay. Take it off.*”. Once again the Sikhs practically demonstrated what Epictetus had stated.

For a Sikh the *Kesh* are a mark of dedication, group-consciousness and symbol of a sense of belongingness. He has pledged his head to the Guru and that is why everybody in India calls him a *Sardar* (*honourable leader*).¹⁸⁹ His turban denotes his commitment to the Guru and demonstrates his competence as a saint-soldier. If the head is shaven, would the Guru who required the Sikh to remain hairy, accept a head that has been mutilated and is not natural? Would people still call him a *Sardar*? Ask a devoted Sikh why he /she keeps long hair and the answer is most likely to be, “My hair is an article of my faith and a sign of my commitment to my Guru. It represents what is best in me, therefore I like to be different.”¹⁹⁰

Observance of religious codes always poses some difficulty in that one has to have full faith and commitment at all times which in today’s world is not easy but this does not mean that such laxity in observance is permitted by the religion. Even non-Sikhs like General Sir Charles Gough knew about this principle of Sikhism when he wrote, “*Under no circumstances not even to save his life in fever, will a Sikh allow his hair to be cut.*”

A Sikh with hair is intimately connected with a philosophy and a culture. His readiness to express his individualism through hair shows the world his strong sense of identity. His hairs indicate natural growth not only of hair but also that of his mind.

As stated earlier the Sikh Gurus visualized *Sargun* God with long hair. They addressed God as KESHAV (One wearing head hair)¹⁹¹ and themselves copied God in maintaining long hair. Therefore it becomes all the more necessary that the Sikhs keep long hair unless they abjure their faith altogether.

Hairs are a part of the human body and the Sikhs wear them proudly as their identity. It is tragic that some so-called modern Sikhs are ignoring the sacrifices of people like Bota Singh, Garja Singh, Baba Deep Singh, Sukha Singh, Mehtab Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa and Baba Gurbakhsh Singh and thousands of others like them who laid down their lives to uphold the *Keshadhari Sikhi*. For the Sikhs hair is an inviolable article of their faith. The tendency on the part of some people to be like the rest is nothing short of slavishly imitating the majority and thus lowering their own self-esteem. A hundred thousand lemmings are not always right.

¹⁸⁹ In Persian the word *Sar* means Head and *dar* means a gibbet. *Sardar* means “head on the gibbet. In other words it means “Somebody who has already accepted death”.

¹⁹⁰ so slsu Blw pivqR pwnnu hY myrl ijMduVley jo jwie IgY gur pYry rwm (pMnw 540)

¹⁹¹ kysv klys nws AG KMfn nwnk jlvq drs idsy (pMnw 829) kysv clq krih inrwly klqw loVih so hoiegw (pMnw 1082)

“My dear Sikh gentlemen, the Keshas of your head are not simply hair, these are those electric wires, which attach you to the powerhouse of mighty Guru Gobind Singh Ji and are the culture crown of the hearty head of Bharat Mata.” (Lady MacMillan)

6.5 Keshas and Sikh Women

The care and respect of the hair was not just meant only for the male Sikhs. Women too remained in the forefront in respecting hair. In the lockups of Governor Meer Mannu (real name Muin-ul-Malik) they suffered untold atrocities. Their children were starved to death in front of their eyes. They were butchered and hung round their necks for days. Some were even catapulted up in the air and received on spears. The women themselves were forced and flogged to grind corn for the army all day. Not a single woman succumbed to remove the hair or accept Islam and thus save her life. These and thousands of other such martyrs are now respectfully remembered in the congregational prayers of the Sikhs.

6.6 Sejah Dhari Sikhs

The word “*Sehaj*” has been in use in India for thousands of years. The Buddhists used it as *Kaivlaya* (Salvation) and one of their sects was named *SEHAJYAN*. The Sidhs and Yogis also used this word for bliss (*Sehaj yog*).¹⁹² Guru Nanak used it as the fourth stage of spirituality (cOQw pd)

These days it is commonly but wrongly believed that all those who do not keep long hair or tie a turban are *Sehaj Dhari* Sikhs¹⁹³. This is not correct.

Sehaj-Dhari is a composite word formed by putting *SEHAJ* and *DHARI* together. The word Dhari means possessor (as mwieAw Dwrl), wearer (as ikrpwn Dwrl, kysW Dwrl), under control (as sgl smgRI qumrY sUiqR Dwrl). The word *Sehaj* (written as sihj or shju) has been used in the following meanings since ancient times:

- (1) **Knowledge:** - “Actions alone do not lead to acquisition of *knowledge* (*shju*) and without knowledge duality is not destroyed”.¹⁹⁴
- (2) **Ease:** - “The emancipatory door becomes wide and one (devotee) enters it with *ease* (*shj*)”.¹⁹⁵
- (3) **Slow and steady:-** in this sense we use it in daily life (*sihgy sihgy*). Some people use this meaning of *Sehaj* to define *Sehaj dharis* and conclude that a *Sehaj dhari* is a “*slow adopter*” who has not become baptised but is moving

¹⁹² gur kw sbdu mnY mih muMdRw iKMqW iKmw hFwvau] jo iKCu krY Blw kir mwnau shj_jog iniD pwvau (pMnw 359)

¹⁹³ isKW dw iek AMg jo KMfy dw AMimRq pwn nhIN krw Aqy k`C ikrpwn dl rihq nhIN rKdw pr sRI gurUu gRMQ swihb ibnw Awpxw hor Drm pusqk nhIN mMndw [pMjwb Aqy isMD iv`c sihjDwrl bhuq igxql dy hn[Kws krky isMD dy sihj Dwrl vfy pRymI Aqy buDlvwn hn. (mhwn koS pMnw 137)[Bwel mnl isMG jl dl “Bgg rqnwvll” iv`c vl sihjDwrl dl ieho pRIBwSw id`ql gel hY [

¹⁹⁴ krml shju n aUpjY ivxu shjY shsw n jwie (pMnw 919)

¹⁹⁵ mukiq duAwrw moklw shjy Awvau jwau (pMnw 1367)

- towards a stage when he/she will get baptised.¹⁹⁶
- (4) **Spiritual bliss/ peace:-** “*Spiritual equipoise* (shju) is attained in the fourth stage. Only Gurmukhs *achieve it.*”¹⁹⁷

In Gurbani the last meaning of *Sehaj* has been used more often than the others. The meaning of *Sehaj dhari*, therefore, is “A person who has attained/is trying to attain the spiritual bliss (a state of spiritual equipoise)”. Writing about “Drm dw sMklp” Dr. Krishan Lal Sharma writes, “gurU nwnk dyv jl ny shj dl vrqoN suBwvk Drm dy ArQW iv`c klql hY [suBwvk Drm means “religion in daily practice”. According to Gurbani, a true Guru must himself be at the height of *sehaj* (spiritual bliss)¹⁹⁸ and must have the ability to guide the follower to the same spiritual height. When the devotee reaches this stage “Easily and intuitively, he remains blended with the Lord, and obtains the immortal status”.¹⁹⁹ Guru Angad Dev gave this explanation of *Sehaj* to Yogi Dya Nath at Khadur Sahib (See Sikh Review March 1964 P.4)

So a *Sehaj dhari* is a knowledgeable person of a high spiritual order. Such people existed among the Sikhs right from the time of Guru Nanak. The eleventh *Var* of Bhai Gurdas in Bhagat Ratnavli clearly indicates that right from the time of Guru Nanak the *Sehaj Dharis* had abandoned the Hindu rituals and customs altogether. Some very famous *Sehaj Dhari* Sikhs were Bhai Ghanaya, Bhai Sewa Ram ji, Bhai Adan Shah, Baba Kala Dhari (Descendant of Guru Nanak),²⁰⁰ Gurbakhsh Singh Udasi, Bhai Des Raj²⁰¹ Mahatma Pritam Das and Santokh Das²⁰² In our times Bhai Chaman Lal’s grandfather was perhaps the only person who could recite *shabads* extempore from any part of the Guru Granth Sahib although he remained unbaptised all through his life.²⁰³

Sehaj Dharis were responsible for keeping the Sikh image alive when the Khalsa was engaged in life and death struggle with the Mughal Government. Many Akharas started by them (Sewa Panthi, Nirmlay) are still doing a yeoman’s service to Sikhism. It was during the years of persecution (1716AD to 1799 AD) that many unbaptised Sikhs had to remain without *Keshas* in order to prepare recruits for the Khalsa and to look after the Sikh religious places.

A baptised Sikh who commits a sacrilege by transgressing the Guru’s orders is called a *patit* (fallen, outcast). A *Sehaj Dhari* is equally a *Patit* if he does not observe restrictions of the Sikh faith. These days some people consume liquor or smoke cigarettes and yet claim to be *Sehaj Dharis*. Such people are *Patit* and have no claim to be called *Sehaj*

¹⁹⁶ It is said that Jaswant Rao of Batala and his retinue of combatants helped Guru Gobind Singh a lot in his battles. When the Guru asked him and his men to get baptized, he is reported to have said, “Sir, We will get baptized slowly and steadily *sihji sihji*”) But this was never made a rule by the Guru.

¹⁹⁷ cauQy pd mih shju hY gurmuiK pLY pwie (pMnw 68)

¹⁹⁸ pUrw siqguru shij smwvY (pMnw 1344)[shjy Aidstu pCwxIAY inrBau joiq inrMkwru (pMnw 68)

¹⁹⁹ nwnk shjy imil rhy hir pwieAw prmwnpdu (pMnw 1415) shjy shjy imil rhY Amrw pdu pwvY (pMnw 725))

²⁰⁰ A descendant of Guru Nanak, who came to meet Guru Gobind Singh near Nangal. They sat under a *Plah* tree where now stands a Gurdwara called *Gurplah*.

²⁰¹ He repaired Harimander Sahib after its destruction by Ahmed Shah Abdali,

²⁰² Together they caused a canal to be dug for bringing water to the Amritsar *Sarovar*.

²⁰³ Bhai Chaman Lal has now got baptized and changed his name to Chamanjit Singh.

Dhari Sikhs. “qIn pRkwr mm isK hYN ,shjl ,crxl, KMf” My followers are of three grades *Sehaj dhari*, Devotees, and baptised with Khanda (Rehat Namay Piara Singh Padam 1974). It is easier to be a Sikh than to be a *Sehaj dhari* Sikh.

After Guru Gobind Singh the authority to safeguard religion and to codify its beliefs and practices was passed on to the Khalsa Panth. The Khalsa Panth in its turn organized itself into the SGPC, which issued a code in 1945. The code stipulates that *Every Sikh who has been admitted to the rites of Amrit, i.e. who has been initiated as a Sikh must allow his hair to grow to its full length.*

According to the Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 –Section [10-A] ‘*Sehaj dhari* Sikh’ means a person –

- (i) Who performs ceremonies according to Sikh rites;
- (5) Who does not use tobacco or *Kutha* (*Halal* meat) in any form;
- (6) Who is not a *Patit*; and
- (7) Who can recite the Mool Manter (Basic concept of Sikh Religion)

Section (11) “*Patit*” means a person who being a *Keshadhari* Sikh trims or shaves his beard or *keshas* or who after taking *Amrit* commits any one or more of the four *kurahits* (misdemeanors).

“A *Sehaj Dhari* is a limb of the Sikhs although not baptised with the Khanda. He may not wear a *Kachh* or *Kirpan* but he believes in no other scripture except *Guru Granth Sahib*.”(Mahan Kosh Page 137)

There is a Rehat Nama (Code of conduct) known as *Rehat Nama Sehajdharian or Wajab-ul-Arz*²⁰⁴. This Rehat Nama instructs the *Sehaj dharis* as follows: -

They must not deal with five prohibited people (like Dhirmal etc)

They must have their sons baptized.

They must retain *Kesh* and should not remove hair from any part of the body.

They must preach Sikhism, learn Gurbani and share their earnings with others.

They must adopt Sikh way of life

A *Sehaj Dhari* subscribes fully to the Guru’s philosophy and does not put his faith in any other religious system or deity. ²⁰⁵ His worship and prayers are Sikh but he is not yet baptized to entitle him to be a Singh. He is well on his way to be a Singh but being a *Sehaj Dhari* is a temporary concession granted to him. Hargopal son of Bishambhar Dass of Ujjain wanted to know the difference between a *Sehaj Dhari* and a Singh. Guru Gobind Singh is reported to have replied, “A *Sehaj Dhari* is the embryonic Sikh carrying

²⁰⁴ Bwel mnl isMG jl dl swKI “Bgq rqnwvll” ivc ilKI shjDwrl isKW dl bynql ijs iovc ds pRSn dSmyS dy pyS klqy gey hn. (mhwn koS pMnw 1089)

²⁰⁵ qusW isdk qy qkVy rihxw,gRMQ jl dw Bog pwvxw qy pMjvyN pwqSwh jl dy shikRql sLokW dl kQw is`KW QIN sunxl.....isdk ijhw qy nwm ijhw pdwrQ koel nhIN. (mhwn koS pMnw 1089)

the imprint of Guru Nanak. I have offered him *Pahul*, made him a Singh (*lion*), and appointed him to chastise the oppressor Turks.”²⁰⁶

At another time Guru Gobind Singh was sitting in the garden of Amir Khan at Agra when a Bhandari Khatri named Nau Nidh asked why the Guru required his followers to remain unshaved. The Guru replied, “*Hair is a God given symbol of beauty and as such all our Rishis, Munis and religious men remained unshaved. Removing hair betrays lack of faith in our preceptors and the wisdom of God.*” “If that is so”, asked Nau Nidh, “Who started this practice of shaving and why?” The Guru replied, “Paras Ram, the arch Brahman, out of personal enmity, is said to have killed several *khatri Rajahs* and pardoned those who agreed to have their hair cut to escape from death.”²⁰⁷

Under the parliament act of 1977 the Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee re-defined the term Sikh and made it compulsory for a Sikh to have “untrimmed hair”.

6.7 The Sikh Turbans

The Punjabis have been wearing turbans since very old times. There are references to their turbans in the ancient literature. With the advent of Sikhism (1469 AD) the Sikh turban assumed religious connection. Right from its originator Guru Nanak all Sikh Gurus wore turbans. The turban thus became an article of a Sikh’s religion, creed, politics, race and nation. It began to be loved and respected. Because of their ideal behaviour a turban wearer Sikh began to be respectfully addressed as Sardar (Chief or leader) in India.

The turban keeps the hair clean and contained and does not let them get disheveled. A cap or a hat is not suitable because it can be blown away with wind and cannot be worn in war. For the Sikhs their turban is an integral part of the dress, their identity and a constant reminder of their obligation to the Gurus. It is affectionately called “*The holy head gear*” It expects the wearer to live up to a certain standard behaviour. A Sikh turban is therefore the badge of the ambassadors of Sikh faith representing their holiness, dedication and commitment to the ideals of the Khalsa. It is also considered a symbol of courage and honour. Cowardice²⁰⁸ or an immoral act is described in Sikh parlance as having sullied the turban.

During Mughal period (1526AD-1750AD) restrictions were placed on the turbans and orders were issued to remove the hair. It is said that when Guru Tegh Bahadur was

²⁰⁶ sihj DwrlAw Awid isK, gurUu nwnk kl Cwp] KMfy pwhul, hqn ko qurkn, isMGn Qwp] (sUrj pRkwS irqU 5 AnsU 6) jo AMimRq KMfy ko lY hY] gur ky ho jhwz cF jY hYN]

²⁰⁷ sUrj pRkwS irqU 1 AnsU 47

²⁰⁸ When the Sikhs were losing their fight against the British, Shah Muhammad expressed it as a dishonour and wrote, “ipCy bYT srdwrW gurmqw klqw koel Akl dw kro ielwj Xwro [POj buiCAW dl swfy pyS Awel **p`g dwVHIAW dl rKo lwj Xwro**] Such is the respect the Sikhs show for the turban that they refused to wear helmets during the two world wars because they thought wearing a helmet was tantamount to admission of fear from death. Some Sikh political prisoners like Bhai Randhir Singh declined to remove their turbans when they were imprisoned.

martyred in Chandni Chawk Delhi, people of Delhi dared not come forward to claim his body. The next Guru is reported to have said, “*I will make the Sikhs distinguishable among millions so that they demonstrate their religion openly*”. He therefore ordained in 1699 AD that all Sikhs would wear turbans, carry swords and beat drums forbidden to the people.²⁰⁹ Soon the Sikh turban began to be associated with high moral character, holiness, piety, sovereignty, courage and patriotism. People respected them so much that they invented a saying, “*The Nihangs have come, open the doors without fear to give them a warm reception.*”²¹⁰ So for the Sikhs a turban did not remain simply a cultural appendix as it was for all Indians but got inalienably attached with their religion. It came to be regarded as an inseparable part of their dress and any disrespect shown to the turban came to be regarded as an insult to the wearers and their religion. Even individual Sikhs began to consider themselves equal to the Emperors in all respects.²¹¹

The Sikh religious requirement of maintaining hair and using turbans has brought the Sikhs into conflict here and there with Western Governments whose laws require shaving. The Government of Britain has shown magnanimity by passing the Motor Cycle Crash Helmets (Religious Exemption) Act 1976, which exempts the Sikhs from wearing a crash helmet while riding motorcycles. The House of Lords has also permitted the Sikh Drivers and Conductors of public vehicles to wear turbans. Sardar Mota Singh (now retired) was the first Sikh circuit Judge in England who wore a turban on duty. Later in 2003 another turbaned Sikh Mr. Rabinder Singh QC became a deputy Judge in the high court. Canada permitted the Sikhs working in Police to wear turbans (1986AD). Since 1990 the turbaned Sikhs have been joining the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The French Government is at present digging it heels and is not permitting the wearing of turbans to Sikh students in schools. This is causing concern to the Sikhs all over the world.

6.8 The Styles of Sikh turbans

The original style of the Sikh turbans was usually flat covering a part of the forehead and with no angles and no twists like those seen in Pathan or Afghani turbans. This was also the style of the Muslim Sufi saints. Later in the time of Guru Gobind Singh, who made it compulsory for every Sikh to have long head hair, turbans became a compulsory adjunct to the Sikh dress and their style too changed.

The Sikh Gurus were contemporaries of the Mughal rule in India. The Mughals meticulously chose the turban's length, style and material. Their turbans used to be ornately decorated according to their status. Since a turban was also a symbol of royalty

²⁰⁹ Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangu writes, “doey vyly auT bMiDayu dsqwry, phr AwT riKaury SSqr sMBwry.” He also wrote, “kysn kl kljo pRiqpwl, nwh ausqRn isau ktIE bwl” Tie your turban daily, remain armed all the time. Keep good care of your hair and never let the blade touch your hair.”

²¹⁰ Awey nl inhMg bUhw KolH dy insMg

²¹¹ hm kwhU kl kwix n kFqy Apny gur prswdy] (969-16)].

and authority restrictions began to be placed in the later Mughal period on the ordinary citizens for copying the royal style. The Sikhs never cared much for such restrictions. So during the Mughal period the style of the Sikh turban came close to the Rajput style but slowly it changed with the time and these days the Sikhs usually wear turbans which have a sharp angle at the forehead and no loose end (like the one seen in Afghani style) is left hanging. The Nihang Sikhs have developed their own distinct style, which looks like an upturned funnel (called Dumala) placed on the head. This proved useful for them in war because they could store their quoits on their heads and it was also an added protection for their head against sword cuts.

A Sikh turban is generally distinguishable from the other styles of wearing turbans by their pointed front. However the Namdhari Sikhs and modern day Sikh *Sants* have started wearing white turbans, which are flat at the front and cover a part of their foreheads (coif-like style). Some American Sikhs of 3HO too like to wear white turbans. Nirmala Sikhs wear ochre coloured turbans. Sikh army men usually wear folded turbans of greenish/Khaki colour that match up with their army uniform. These days fashion has entered into the turbans as well. Their styles are changing. Youngsters have started wearing turbans of the colours that match with their suits.

A Sikh turban can be of any colour or length. Most Sikhs usually tie blue turbans, which were popularized by the *Akalis*. When the British clashed with the Sikhs and committed sacrilege by stopping the Religious ceremony at Jaito, the Sikhs started wearing black turbans. The Gurus have placed no restriction on the colour or style of the turbans. At one time the *Buddah Dal (the old stalwarts)* used blue colour. Saffron coloured turbans were once current in the *Taruna Dal (Young Sikhs)* who fought against the *Mughals*. This colour is also considered the colour of dignity, valour and sacrifice.

With the advent of the British in India, fashions began to influence the life style of the people. It became a fashion to copy the British. Many people shaved themselves and began to wear hats. The Western culture has still not ceased to influence Indian youth. They have slavishly started shaving and remaining bareheaded. The princely turban is gradually disappearing and with this are disappearing the moral constraints the society lived by.

6.9 The Turban and the Sikh Gurus

Religion is a way of life suggested and practically demonstrated by a religious preceptor who becomes the perfect model for the followers. It has to be lived in daily life with reference to the teachings and examples set by the preceptor so that people recognize the follower through his Guru and the Guru is recognized through the life style of the

follower.²¹² The Sikh Gurus preached that one tends to become like the roll model, which one respects and follows.²¹³

The incidents of Prophet Muhammad's life are recorded in the *Ahadis*, which every Muslim follows. Similarly the Motor way (gwfl rwh)²¹⁴ for the Sikhs is the instruction of the Gurus recorded in the Holy Granth and the patterns of behaviour demonstrated by the Gurus in real life situations. Since all the Sikh Gurus had unshorn natural hair and wore turbans, it becomes incumbent on the Guru's followers to emulate their life style.

Religious symbols have emotional attachment of the devotees to them. A Christian cross or a Brahman's sacred thread may be meaningless to many but the members of those faiths have a deep spiritual attachment to them. Similarly for the Sikhs hair and a turban are dearer to them than life. Their Gurus required hair and turbans therefore they must be maintained without question.²¹⁵ The long hair, beards and turbans are the distinguishing features of the Sikhs. They have always been a matter of inquisitiveness with the non-Indians.

The Sikh Gurus retained long hair, grew beards and wore turbans on their heads. Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606AD) while defining a morally true and socially acceptable person says that such a person should not be without a turban and should retain God-given hair (GGP.1084).²¹⁶ Guru Har Gobind (1595-1644 AD) used to wear an excellent turban in a peculiar style. His court poet Nath Mal Dhadhi described his turban as comparatively more honourable and attractive than that of Emperor Jehangir.²¹⁷ It is reported in history that during his period most Sikhs looked upon themselves as princes and donned turbans of very good quality in violation of the unjustifiable law of the land forbidding the wearing of turbans in royal style. Guru Gobind Singh (1666 AD-1708 AD), the 10th Guru of the Sikhs, made it compulsory for his baptized Sikhs to retain hair and wear a turban. He himself wore a turban and remarked, "KwlsW myro rUp hY Kws] Kwlsy mYN hauN kro invws (The Khalsa is my special form, It is through this special form that I shall dwell among them).²¹⁸ This reminds the Sikhs to stick to their identity and always look like their master.

The relationship that exists between a Sikh and his Guru exists only as long as both live the same pattern of life and have the same beliefs. One cannot exist without the other. The Guru exists only if there is a follower²¹⁹ and the follower exists only if he has a Guru.

²¹² pRB qy jnu jwnljY jn qy suAwml (pMnw 93) Guru Ram Das clearly states that he is imitating his master (God) "qUM swihb hau sWgl qyrw (pMnw 358) .

²¹³ jYsw syvY qYso hoie (pMnw 223) This was practically demonstrated by Bhai Lehna who followed Guru Nanak and later assumed the name Angad and was anointed the Guru of the Sikhs. In our day-to-day life we see that those who love a particular actor or actress start adopting his or her fashion. When Kennedy became the president of America, the hairstyle of his wife Jacqueline Kennedy became the popular hairstyle of the American ladies.

²¹⁴ IlhW AMdr cIAY ijauN gwfl rwhu (B:gu: 5/13) gurisKl dw rwhu iehu gurmuiK cwl cIY so dyKY (B:gu 28/6)] siqgur scw pwqSwh gurmuk gwfl rwh clwXw (Bwel gurdws 5/13)

²¹⁵ gur pRmysru jwix sbdu kmwieAw (Bwel gurdws 20/4)

²¹⁶ swbq sUrQ dsqwr isrw (pMnw 1084)

²¹⁷ do qlvwrIN b`DIAW iek mlr dl ie`k plr dl [.....p`g qyrl, kl jhWglr dl ?

²¹⁸ Akwl purK kl sUrQ eyhw, prgit Akwl KwlsW dyhw] (rihq nwmw Bwel pRihlwd isMG)

²¹⁹ jau pY hm n pwp krMqw AhY Anpqw] piqq pwnv nwmu kYsy huMqw (pMnw 93)

When a follower deserts the Guru by disobeying him, the Guru discards the follower.²²⁰ To claim to be a Sikh and not to have a Guru to follow is like a dismissed soldier who still claims to be a regular combatant.

6.10 Turbans in Britain

The first Sikhs who came to Britain around the middle of the twentieth century had to face a lot of difficulty in finding jobs with turbans on their heads. Some jobs required removal of the turban. Therefore many bade goodbye to religious requirement to meet the immediate need of employment. However they were not lost to Sikhism forever. They still had the intention of growing hair afterwards. As the number of such people increased the general tendency was to copy the British and adopt British fashion. Even though they remained Sikhs in their thinking, their outward appearance betrayed their weakness.

With the arrival of many educated, well-informed, committed Sikhs the situation began to change. A number of Gurdwaras appeared here and there and literature on Sikhism began to be produced. This has caused the prodigal son to return to the faith and the number of baptized Sikhs is on the increase. Even the host community, which first poooh pooohed the hair and turban, has accepted the Sikhs as the best of friends and workers. So much so that when the law required the motorcyclists to wear crash helmets, the British Parliament, respecting the Sikh sentiments exempted them from wearing a crash helmet on 15th November 1976. At the time of the third reading of the Bill Lord Avebury said, *“There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the wearing of the turban is an essential part of the Sikh religion. The ten Gurus, the founders of the religion and the architects of it, all wore turbans themselves. The turban of the Sikhs is not merely a headdress. It is inseparably connected with the Sikh baptism and the Sikh code of conduct.”* Referring to the apparent changing patterns of appearance of the Sikhs and the growing tendency to shave off their heads he said, *“In the Sikh religion there is no hierarchy of clerics who can add to or embellish the doctrine as time goes by.”*

“The turban is a symbol of dignity and self respect.” (Lord Earl Gray Member of Parliament)

6.11 Apostasy

The slavish imitation of the Western culture is luring away unwary Sikhs into the craze of shaving. The result is that the importance of hair is being doubted and scoffed at and the Sikhs are becoming a butt of the non-Sikhs. Here and there the shaven Sikhs themselves mock those with hair. Little do our shaven Sikh brothers realize the magnitude of their

²²⁰ sggur qy jo muh Pyrih mQy iqn kwly (pMnw 30) siqgur qy jo muh iPry sy bDy duK shwih] (pMnw 645) siqgur qy jo muh Pyry qy vymuK bury idsMn] (pMnw 233) siqgur qy jo muh Pyry Eie BRmdy nw itkMin] (pMnw 233) jo Apny gur qy muK Pyr hYN] elhW aUhw iqn ky gRih igrhYN] (dsm gRMQ) so socin ky jog mhwnw] Drm iqAwg ijn ikX AG nwnw]qjy su pMQ kumwrg cwlv] so socin ky jog ibswlv (sUrj pRkws 3/36)

actions. Their action is resulting in the loss of Sikh identity, bringing ridicule on their beloved Gurus and creating fissiparous tendencies in the *Panth*. Some of them even go the extent of saying, “*Hair is of little importance.*” To them all we can say is that the denial of *Kesh* is denial of belongingness to Sikh faith and therefore to the Guru. If they care even a mustard seed for Sikhism and their Guru they must get off the denial wand wagon and the slavish imitation of others.

The apostasy among the Sikhs has been going on unabated for years but the Sikh institutions have not taken any reasonable serious remedial measures to stop its onslaught. In fact the impression one gets is that the link between the Sikh Institutions and the young generation is non-existent. No wonder, therefore, that fashion-ridden Sikh youngsters are blindly imitating others and becoming easy victims to apostasy. There is so much to distract them and so little to keep them on the track. If some preachers do respond to the need they simply devote most of their time on cheap homilies. The core subject of morals and especially of the religious significance of *Keshas* seldom ever crops up. This is likely to go on unless the Sikh Institutions wake up and arrest the heretic tendencies through consciously preaching the values of Sikh religion. Some work is being done here and there by individuals and some organizations unsupported by the SGPC but their financial muscle is not such as can stem the tide.

The Sikh Gurus did not make any secret of their instructions and expectations. They knew that the path of Sikhism is not easy to follow therefore they openly declared that only those need follow this path who pledge their heads to the Guru.²²¹ Those who claim that although they do not wear long hair and turbans they are still Sikhs, should weigh their faith on this touchstone and decide for themselves how good Sikhs they are. Offering a head to the Guru beside they are not even prepared to obey his simple instructions about the *Kesh*, which are not so difficult to follow. The Gurus themselves have mentioned such time-servers in clear terms.²²²

The first and foremost condition for a follower of the Guru is not to question the Guru's instruction but to accept it without caring what others says.²²³ It is on record that Guru Amar Das did not accept Guru Angad's son Mohri as a Sikh until the later fell at the Guru's feet and accepted the Guru's word. The same later happened to Ram Rai (Guru Har Rai's own son) who transgressed and changed the import of the *Shabad* (Holy Word). If even the Guru's own children were not exempt from towing the Guru's line, how can modern Sikhs claim that they are Sikhs without *Kesh*, a requirement made compulsory by their Guru?

²²¹ jau qau pRym KyIx kw cwau] isru Dir qll gll myrl Awau] (pMnw 1412)

²²² slwmu jbwbu dovY kry muMFhu GuQw jwie] (pMnw 474) nwnk gurUu n cyqnl **min Awpxy sucyq**] Cuty iql bUAvV ijau suMly AMdr Kyq (pMnw 463)

²²³ suin sKley pRB imlx nlswnl]mnu qnu Arip qij lwj lokwnl (pMnw 737) so isKu sdw bMDpu hY Bwel ij gur ky Bwxy ivic AwvY] AwpxY Bwxy jo cly Bwel ivCuiV cotw KwvY] ibnu siqgur suKu kdy n pwvY Bwel iPir pCoqwvY] (pMnw 601)

Is it not hypocrisy to pray daily, “grant the Sikhs the gift of Sikhism, the gift of Keshas, the gift of dedicated observance, the gift of rationalization”²²⁴ and yet demonstrably do everything to thwart it? Do the shorn people leave the Gurdwara when this is recited in the congregational prayer? If not what do they expect from the Guru by ridiculing Him in His very presence? Sin or virtue at heart has the tendency to appear outside and words fail to embellish the truth.²²⁵ Their appearance betrays lack of faith.

Usually the people ask, “What is the use of wearing long hair”. They do not understand that the Sikhs do not keep hair for deriving anything benefits from them. “Use” is the last thing they can think of. They keep the *Kesh* because their *Kesh* attach them to their Guru. And the Guru in turn expects them not to flinch when they are boiled, sawn alive or cut limb by limb and to stand for the philosophy behind the keeping of long hair. “*Kesh*” is the necessary adjunct of the spiritually reborn Sikh known as the Khalsa. Can we really ask somebody, “What is the use of your taking birth”?

Modern Sikhs become members of many worldly organizations and take an oath never to disobey their rules or byelaws. How ridiculous it is that they join the Guru’s institution and yet question every rule he made for his Khalsa.²²⁶ Devotee’s (the Sikh’s) self-sacrifice is the first requirement because the beloved (the Guru) himself is ever ready to sacrifice himself for his follower.²²⁷

The Hindu History tells us that disrobing of one woman named Daropadi led to a fratricide war resulting in a million deaths. Many Brahmans were killed simply because they looked at the naked heel of a woman.²²⁸ Today the Hindu women themselves go half naked without shame Nobody cares about heels when the Hindu women do not even cover their breasts. Kesh It is a shame that the Sikh women are slavishly imitating Hindu women and cutting thei *Kesh*. Neither the Hindu women care for their scripture nor do the Sikh women care to obey Guru Gobind Singh, who had prohibited the cutting of *Kesh* as one of the four heresies. To them fashion is more important than spirituality. It is strange that even when they violate the most important principle of Sikhism they still claim themselves to be Sikhs. Little do they realize that a Sikh is a Sikh only as long as he follows the Guru.²²⁹ The moment a Sikh disobeys the Guru he/she no longer remains a Sikh.

The Sikhs form only 2% of the population of India. A number of them now live in many other parts of the world. *Kesh* is one of the five articles of their faith and their identity. They can be recognized among millions with their *Kesh* and turbans. So a Sikh, wherever

²²⁴ isKW nUM isKI dwn, kys dwn ivswd dwn, Brosw dwn.....

²²⁵ jo jlle hoie su augvY muh kw kihAw vwau] (pMnw 474) The Guru says that only those people are pure inside and out who are pure in both mind and body. Mind and body must demonstrate Sikhism. “jIAhu inrml bwhrhu inrml, bwhrhu q inrml jIAhu inrml[siqgur qy krnl kmwXl] (pMnw 919) Guru Gobind Singh wrote, “hmU mrd bwied bvd suKnvr, n iSkim idgr dr dhwin idgr [A true human is the one who is one inside and out.

²²⁶ Here the first and foremost undertaking is “mYN mnu qnu Arip DirE gur AwgY, isru vyic IIE muil mhGw (pMnw 731)

²²⁷ ieSk Avl dr idly mwSUK pYdw my Svd , qw nw sozd SmW pY prwnw SYdw my Svd]

²²⁸ It is worth noting that women exposing an ankle in the Victorian times were considered indecent in Britain.

²²⁹ isKI isiKAw gur vlCwr (m:1 pMnw 465)

he lives, openly demonstrates his Indian origin and his dedication to a set philosophy of life. Nobody needs ask a Sikh about his origin and nobody needs ask him about his beliefs. This cannot be said of shaven people.

How can one say “*Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*” to a person when one does not know if the person in front is a Sikh? I have come across people who grumble and complain that I did not care to greet them properly and therefore ignored them for being clean-shaven. Here is a classic example of a brother accusing another brother and causing internecine distrust. How can brotherhood progress if this continues? We pray to our brothers come stand with us, promote Sikh brotherhood and prove to the world that you are proud of being the Sikh of the illustrious Guru Gobind Singh. You look every inch a lion with the hair on. Join the pride of the lions.

When the Sikhs were hunted and hounded throughout the country and everybody was their enemy, even then they did not shave off. Such was their determination and faith that in dire adversity they sang, “*Manu is our sickle and we are his crop. The more he tries us to mow, the more we grow.*”²³⁰ What danger is there today that the modern Sikh finds the hair and the turban superfluous? Proclaim yourself in the Western environment my friend and be on the guard. Even iron gets rusted in the company of water unless it transforms itself into stainless steel.²³¹ Be firm in your faith. If the modern imitating tendency continues, the next generation will be the Sikh generation of smokers, drug dealers, and shaven criminals masquerading as Sikhs and you will be instrumental in bringing shame on Guru Gobind Singh.

Come back O prodigal son like Professor Puran Singh and Maharaja Duleep Singh. Your Guru is waiting to embrace you.²³² Remember only dead fish float down the stream, living fish care little for the flow and travel upstream. Forget about the criticism of the people. Ignore the fashion craze. It has never done any good to anybody and is ephemeral. Come to the Guru and be saved. You are unique. There is no one like you in the whole world; why ape others.

²³⁰ mMnUM Aswfl dwqrl AsIN mMnuUM dy soey, ijauN ijauN mMnUM vFdw AsIN dUx svwey hoey]

²³¹ sohbyqy Aihl sPw sy idl qyrw kB pwk ho] zMg sy AwlUdh ho jwqw hY Awhn Awb myN

²³² Awie imlu gurisK Awie imlu] qU myry gurUuu ky ipAwry] rhwau] hir ky gux hir Bwvdy sy gurU qy pwey] ijin gur kw Bwxw mMinAw iqn Guim Guim jwey] (pMnw 725)

Chapter 7

Questions

Q1. Many people think that hair is a dead and useless part of the body. It has no connection with the brain. How do the Sikhs justify hair?

The idea originated with Charles Darwin's book, "Descent of Man" in which he listed roughly a dozen human parts as "*dead and useless.*" His argument was that Nature discards non-functional parts in its natural selection process. Useless parts die of atrophy. In 1931 Mr. Wells (a Darwinist) declared that "*body hair of men and women is purely vestigial, a useless revolutionary left over.*" Discover Magazine of June 2004 again published an article titled, "Useless body parts." In it Jocelyn Selim once again described the hair as one of the many useless parts of the human body.

Around 1925 AD the scientists had prepared a list of "vestigial" human parts considered useless. It contained 150 names of the so-called useless body parts. At that time Subclavius muscle (a small muscle under the shoulder) was considered useless. Now General Practice Notebook states that it stabilizes the clavicle during movements of the pectoral girdle and provides protection to the subclavian vein. For a long time the scientists considered appendix (a narrow muscular tube attached to large intestines) as useless but now they say that it produces white blood cells and antibodies. (See Creation magazine Volume 20 December 1997). Modern scientific discovery has nearly shattered the complete "Vestigial Structures List" proving how ignorant even scientists can be. Doctor Bergman and Doctor Howe have written a book (titled, "*Vestigial Organs are Fully Functional*") to refute Darwinian arguments. Among other arguments they also prove that hair intensifies sense of touch. Terence Anthony has also done a lot of research on this topic. He argues that hair have sensual appeal.²³³ The old Hindu belief is that hair act as antennas. They collect cosmic energy (pRwx) and channel it to the brain.²³⁴

What do animals use their toes for and what do the men use their nipples for? Are they useless? According to Darwin they should have disappeared millions of years ago. Has a peacock lost its crown just because it serves no purpose? We cannot say that Darwin is correct all the time.

As far the human hair being a dead tissue, need it be explained that dead things do not perform any functions. The hairs draw unwanted zinc, lead, arsenic, and chromium from the body, which they store for years. Scientists claim that by analysing the hair they can

²³³ Dixon and others have also substantiated this. They argue that women prefer men with a hairy chest.

²³⁴ "Perhaps the message of the link between hair and power is that the body contains clues about our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being." Hamilton Hubbard.

tell what the humans ate millions of years ago before they turned into mummies. It is now commonly believed that every hair lives and receives nourishment from the body like other body parts.

Like other human organs the hair too show signs of ageing and turn gray. Their lustre and shine disappears similarly as the lustre and shine of the human face fades with age. We also know that hairs also respond to unfair treatment through chemicals. They lose their lustre and bounce and become dry, brittle and weak at roots. When the body is diseased, the hair too shows up signs of disease. Do dead things change like this? All this goes to prove that hair is as much a part of the body as other organs.

The inter-relationship of the body parts is accepted universally. It is a fact that the human body is not a collection of disparate cells. It is one unit. When one cell suffers, all cells feel the pain. When a finger is cut the whole body feels the effect. Since hair is a part of the body, any thing done to the hair (for example pulling) affects the whole human body. Even though the effect of cutting is not physically visible or demonstrable as yet, we cannot say with any certainty that cutting has no effect on the hair or the body.

The argument that hair has no connection with the brain is wrong. There is nothing in the human body, which has absolutely no connection with the brain. The digestive system in our body has no direct connection with the brain and yet our brain controls and directs it through various functional parts of the body. Some people also argue that the hair does not have nerves. It should be noted that our brain does not always use nerves to communicate with the different parts of our body. For example a number of functions carried out by hormones in our bodies do not need nerves or visible channels for communication. Isn't it a fact that hair receptors alert us to parasite (flies and fleas etc) crawling on the skin without using any nerves?

Some people argue that since hairs do not respond to stimuli, they are dead. This is not correct.²³⁵ There are some plants and animals (Porifera, virus etc.), which do not show any sensation to touch, but nevertheless they are considered alive. Nature does not differentiate life and death like we do. Nature values an organ for the function it has been allotted. The shell of an egg may be dead and useless to us but can we imagine an egg without a shell? To us feathers appear to be a dead tissue but can we imagine an adult bird flourishing without feathers? A grain of wheat has no sensation but when planted it grows and produces a living plant. Can we say that the grain of wheat is dead because it does not visibly respond to stimuli?²³⁶ The saliva and the enamel on our teeth have no sensation, no nerves, and no direct connection with the brain; can we say they are useless? Nothing is useless in what nature creates. An elephant cannot do what an ant can do; the cell in the ear cannot do what a cell in the kidney can do. What a hair does cannot be done by any other organ of the body. Each part has a function. Whether we understand

²³⁵ It needs to be noted that physical stimulus is not the only stimulus to sensitivity. There are other stimuli like chemical stimuli, vibration and sound etc.

²³⁶ jyqy dwxy AMn ky jIAw bwJu n koie] (pMnw 472)

it or not is another matter. No other part of the body can perform the function of the hair just as no other part of the body can perform the function of an eye or an ear.

If the hair is really dead to the brain how does brain come to know that the hair has been cut and new hair must be arranged to take its place. Can anything like hair grow on the human body without the brain knowing about it? When a hair is cut, the brain knows that a necessary part has been removed and immediately plans producing a new hair by redirecting additional resources for its re-growth. It continues to do so until the newly growing hair reaches its natural optimum size. If the hair were dead and unconnected with the body, a new hair would not grow to take the place of the dead hair. .

It is now widely known that the life of an individual hair depends on the health of its follicle, food supply to the body and the atmospheric conditions. Hair follicles produce androgenic hormones. The hair grows until it reaches a specific length. Then its growth comes to equilibrium with the environment and stops. The follicle rests until the hair dies and snaps its connection with the follicle. At this stage the dormant follicle having rested sufficiently becomes active again and produces another hair in place of the dead. By cutting the hair again and again we are depleting the raw materials (like proteins) needed by the body because they are unnecessarily used up in re-growing the fresh hair. Cutting also denies the follicle necessary rest that it must enjoy to work at its best.

'Humans can live without hair' is another argument some times advanced by some people. The argument is fallacious. If we can live without hair can't we also live without eyes, ears, legs, nipples, nails and lips etc? It doesn't mean that we do not need these organs and they are useless.

Strangely enough people call the living and growing hair dead but carry the dead hair (wigs) on their heads to cover their baldness. Those who have the hair try to remove it and those who do not have it try to get it at all costs. Hindus go to every extent to simulate their religious leaders by decorating young boys and girls with hair at the functions like *Ram Leela and Dusehra* etc. Similarly the Christians consider the Christmas celebrations useless without a hairy Santa Clause.²³⁷ But they themselves find no use of the same hair. It is a mad world.

Hair is a living part of the body. Every hair remains alive right up to the tip. It falls off only in a natural shedding process after having performed its useful function allotted to it by nature. The Sikhs believe that God creates everything for a purpose and nothing is

²³⁷ Known as Sinter Klaas in Netherlands, Belgium and Holland (Pere Noel in France and Canada) was born in 280AD. His real name was Saint Nicholas and he was a Bishop in Izmir (Turkey). Because of his magnanimity towards two sisters whom he saved from prostitution, he began to be called Kris Kringle or Santa Claus (corruption of Saint Nicholas). His relics were brought to Bari (Italy) by some merchants and a basilica was erected in his honour in 1087AD. Later he became a patron Saint of Amsterdam and Moscow. His feast day is December 6. Saint Nicholas was not the only Christian saint who kept long hair and beard. All Christian saints valued their hair. For example in the 13th Century Saint Odin was worshipped as God. He is depicted everywhere in pictures with head hair and long flowing beard like that of Santa Claus.

useless. Our wonderful Lord, who makes no mistakes, designs our body wonderfully. Nothing is useless in the human body.

Q2 Why do the Sikhs cut the nails but do not let the scissors touch their hair?

Like the nails the hair has no blood and no nerves but nevertheless both are connected with the body. Whereas the condition of nails indicates the deficiencies of calcium and diseases attached to such deficiencies, the hair shows up signs of melanin deficiency in the body and the consumption/ natural production of free radicals/ poisons.

As for cutting the nails and not the hair we must know the difference between the nails and the hair.

1. As stated elsewhere in this book every hair is attached to a muscle through the follicle deep within the skin (known as stratum germinateum). The follicles are further connected with nerve fibres and blood capillaries and are surrounded by sebaceous glands secreting oily pigment to the hair.

The nail is only an extension of the outer hardened skin (stratum corneum), which is constantly shedding dead cells. Thus we see that the nails have no such significant and sensitive connections.

2. The number of hair on the human body is numerous (there are at least 1,40,000 hair on the human head alone) whereas we only have twenty nails. Nature must have some different functions allotted to them.

3. The hair is very strong and resists being snapped whereas a dead nail starts splitting and breaking off after some time.²³⁸

4. Diseases, poisons, ageing and food affect the whole human hair (its shine, lustre and colour) but dead part of the nails does not respond to them.

5. Human hands have to be used for work. The nails on the hands interfere in many activities but the hair does not cause any great inconvenience.

6. Hairs protect the brain, an all-important part of the body, from vagaries of weather (like wind, snow, sleet, hails and rain etc) against direct contact with the scalp. The nails do not perform any significant function except protecting the tips of the digits.

7. Nature has a way of managing things. In winter nearly 50 and in summer nearly 100 hairs fall off daily and new hairs take their place. Nails have no automatic regeneration of this type.

²³⁸ Hair is as strong as a copper wire of the same diameter. It can stretch up to 20% of its length before breaking but when wet it can stretch up to 50% of its original length

8. The body keeps supplying pigment to the hair as long as it stays on the head but a dead part of the nail receives no nourishment from the body.

9. Both males and females have nails but moustaches and beards are not provided by nature to females. Cutting of nails does not affect the appearance of the two sexes but cutting of moustaches and beards interferes with nature's mechanism of differentiating the sexes. Why should man look like women when nature has allotted the sexes different shapes and different tasks? Nature's plan is evident throughout life. Lions and peacocks will not be recognisable as such if their male distinguishing parts are removed.

10. According to Professor Xiawei M.D, PhD University of Pennsylvania human hair follicles are a good source of adult stem cells (Read American Journal of Pathology). Nails have no such thing.

11. Dead things do not grow. Only the living part of the nail grows and prolongs/pushes the dead part of the nail forward. Living part keeps its length. In the case of the hair the whole hair prolongs itself and there is no way of finding which part of the hair is dead and which alive.

In both cases only the dead parts are removed. In the case of nails the dead parts start breaking off but in the case of hair they are combed out. This process of removal is in line with nature, which casts off dead cells from the body everyday.

The nails can only justifiably be compared with the dead cells of the body. Another nearest thing to nails is the dandruff. Their comparison with the hair is improper and unjustifiable.

The Sikhs believe that humans must follow a discipline. An undisciplined human being is like an animal. The Sikh Gurus suggested the discipline for the Sikhs and preached acceptance of God's will. Whatever the Guru says the Sikhs follow it without question.²³⁹ Their tenth Guru instructed the Sikhs not to remove hair from any part of their bodies and the Sikhs obey this order. Acceptance of the Sikh way of life is optional but once it is accepted a Sikh cannot say that he/she would follow only some directions and not the others.

Q3 Why do hairs on the head grow longer than those on the other parts of the human body?

In the whole of animal kingdom only the humans have the longest hair on the head. There must be some reason why nature did this. If the hair were unnecessary, nature would not have grown them on the child's head when the child is still in the womb. Of all the hair on the adult human male three quarters are on the head and the face alone.

²³⁹ Obedience and disobedience cannot co-exist. gur kihAw mwnu inj inDwnu scu jwnu mMqR iehY inis bwsur hoie kl'wnu lhiih prm giq jlau] pMnw (1403) guir kihAw sw kwr kmwvhu] (pMnw 832)

One reason why humans top the list of highly developed mammals is that they can regulate their body temperature better than other species. The exuberant growth of hair on the head of the humans is proof of human's superior most brain development. It is the humans' crown of glory.

All hair has some function or the other. Eyebrows protect our eyes from sun glare and sweat and also reduce the amount of light reflected into the eyes. Eyelashes keep away dust and debris. Nasal hair trap dust and bacteria and prevent them from reaching the lungs. Similarly long scalp hairs offer us the advantage of trapping heat. We find the proof of such regulation of heat in nature. Many species of animals go through molting cycles to shed old coat of hair and get a new one. We also know that animals inhabiting cold climates have comparatively thicker masses of hair often known as fur, wool or coat. The longer and denser the hair the more still air and therefore heat they trap. It is for this reason that woolly mammoths that lived in very cold climates had more hair than other elephants living in comparatively hotter climates. Nature provides the animals newer coats of hair in winter when they complete their molting cycle. This is nature's way of regulating the animal's body heat because the old fur/hair become less dense due to natural wastage. Hair is the automatic natural thermostat of the mammals and nature did not ignore the humans in providing this all-important regulatory organ of heat control.

Long hairs on the head protect the brain from harmful ultra violet rays of the sun and the thick layer of hair protects the epidermis from minor abrasions. The length and denseness of hair is nature's way of increasing the surface area. It is also common knowledge that a shaven head suffers deeper cuts from a sharp weapon than a hairy head.

Hair follicles have developed a nerve network around them. This helps some animals to receive tactile and sensory information (through vibrissae) about their environment. The human hair may also be performing this function. In 1982 Dr. R. Harris gave many examples of the way the hair convey messages.

Our head is as it were the capital of the human-body empire where all records are kept and every action is monitored.²⁴⁰ It is therefore imperative that it should be properly protected. It is for this reason that Nature grows longer and denser hair on the head than elsewhere. Many people also believe that our head is the most spiritual part of our body and must therefore claim to be protected and cared for.

Nature had a purpose in endowing the humans with long hair. Surface area wise humans have the biggest brain (cerebrum) and require more protection of the brain compared with other animals, hence longer hair on the head.

²⁴⁰ Brain is a human computer. It can get very hot and very cold as it can gain or lose heat quickly. By trapping still air near the scalp (with hair and turban) the temperature is regulated. It is common knowledge that the computers need fans to keep them cool and regulate their temperature.

Q 4. Isn't it wise to remove the hair because they can cause infections when surgery is performed?

This is a myth. If hair could cause infections, the wounds of the injured soldiers would never have healed. There is no part of the body (except hands, palms and feet soles etc) where there is no hair. When one receives a cut or an abrasion, the hair is immediately involved.

Dr. Judith Tanner of Derby City General Hospital states *“The evidence finds no difference in surgical site infections among patients who have had hair removed prior to surgery and those who have not. If it is necessary to remove hair then clipping results in fewer surgical site infections than shaving using a razor.”*

Dr. William Schector M.D. Professor of Clinical Surgery (University of California. San Francisco) conducted an experiment involving 5775 patients who were shaved rather than clipped pre-operatively. In this experiment too it was proved that more shaven patients were statistically discovered with site infections.

In another similar experiment conducted on 3193 patients, the results showed that the removal of hair from a surgical wound for avoiding infections had no value. *“The subjects showed that patients who were shaved preoperatively had a statistically significantly higher rate of surgical site infections.”*

“Antiseptic cleaning and body hair removal do not reduce surgical site infections”
(Bruce Sylvester health Behaviour News Service 9.5.2006)

*“The potential risk of hair being contaminated by Papilloma virus, Picorna virus or Parvo virus is when hair is cut from a person infected by one of these viruses and there is **contamination of the cut hair by the living tissue.**”*
(Scientific Committee on Consumer Products. Report dated 21 June 2005)

*“With constant advancements in medical field, today's surgeons have a variety of suturing material at their disposal. But when one looks into the realms of ancient Indian medicine, the human hair's efficacy as a simple, widely available and cost-effective suturing material is recorded. And a clinical study has been conducted to prove its utility in treating simple wounds. With further research, human hair has a great potential to be used in a wide range of surgical procedures”, say **Dr Yunus G Solanki & Dr R Govind Reddy.***

These three doctors conducted the experiment on 30 patients aged between 1-60 years in Bombay. Wounds treated in the study included those of face, trunk, ear lobule, and breast etc. They were sutured with human hair and the treatment left no scars. Human hair is available everywhere and is cheaper than suturing material normally used by the doctors.

It is worth noting that in the Shushruta system of Indian medicine hair was invariably used as a suture.

Q5 Hairs are simply weight on the head and have no useful function. They usually attract vermin infection.

Weight is the gravitational pull of the earth on an object. Obviously when the earth pulls the humans, it pulls all that goes with the human body and does not pull each limb separately. If hair is weight then obviously hands, feet, ears, nose, head and female breasts are all weight too.

Again it should be noted that we feel weight when something extraneous to our body is placed on it (For example a turban or a hat etc). Scientists tell us that we all carry at least 14 lbs of atmospheric weight on every square inch of our skull but we never complain about it because we are used to it right from our childhood. Similarly we do not feel the weight of the hair. They are a part of our body. Besides the hair does not carry as much weight as we gladly carry when we wear warm clothes in winter with an overcoat. If anything the hairs simply act as a buffer between the weight and the scalp.

It is strange that modern man feels the weight of the hair but wonder of wonders he never feels the weight of a mobile phone, a pen, a watch, a purse full of coins, and a bunch of keys, which he always carries with him.

Vermin have no connection with long hair. Even shaven people carry lice²⁴¹. In England it is a big problem with the teachers in schools who find most shaven children infested with vermin.²⁴² Cleanliness is absolutely necessary and is said to be “next to godliness”. Lice find a welcome home only on those who do not keep their hair combed and clean. The Sikhs are required to comb their hair twice a day and have frequent hair washes. Vermin, therefore, hardly attacks any Sikh.²⁴³

Carelessness and laziness in personal hygiene are the real causes behind the infestation of lice. A Sikh can never be careless and lazy as far as his hair is concerned.²⁴⁴ It is for this reason the wise Guru not only asked the Sikh to maintain long hair but also to keep a

²⁴¹ Human head lice (known as *Pediculus humanus capitis*) do not take birth from human flesh, grease, dirt or sweat and have no connection with the hair. They are parasites contracted by our forefathers from the prehistoric humans. They travel from one person to another and cause intense itching and scratching. Fortunately they are not carriers of any disease. In Britain £30 million are spent every year on eradication of lice from the heads of the shaven Britons.

²⁴² A team of researchers led by Dr. Daniel Thomas visited 31 schools in Wales. They discovered that 8% of school children were infested with lice. Not even a single child among them belonged to a Sikh family.

²⁴³ The Sikh Gurus attached a lot of importance to the early morning bath. Addressing the Jains (who do not take bath), Guru Nanak wrote, “After bathing the Muslims say their prayers, after bathing the Hindus do their Pooja. The wise always take cleansing baths. *nwie invwjw nwqY pUjw nwwin sdw sujwxl] muieAw jlvidAw giq hovY jW isir pwelAY pwxl](pMnw 150) kir iesnwnu ismir pRBu Apnw mn qn Bey Arogw] pMnw 611)* Take a daily bath and then say your prayers. This way your mind and body will remain healthy. *suix glw gur pih AwieAw] nwmw dwnu iesnwnu idVwieAw](pMnw 74)*

²⁴⁴ When a Sikh did not comb his hair and take a bath in the morning, the Guru was furious. He told him to give a word that such laziness will not be shown in future. The following instruction was issued there and then. “*hoie sucyq skl pRkwry[clx smyN Ardws aucwry] kwrij sB isD hoie jWqy[nih koel cwly ibnW nhwqy]” (sUrj pRkwS irqU 1 AnSU 21)*. Be ready in every way and never start without prayer and without a bath. This way success will greet you everywhere.

comb with the hairs and to clean them at least twice a day without fail.²⁴⁵ Not only does daily combing of hairs keeps lice away but it also massages the scalp and relieves stress.

As for the usefulness of hair, we have discussed this issue elsewhere in this book. The Sikhs do not keep long hair for usefulness. For them it is an order from their Guru, which they must obey. The hair shows a Sikh's cultural standards, mental health and moral state. It demonstrates his self-control, determination and commitment to an ideal. It is also his manifestation of piety and virility.

Q 6 The North Korean Government preaches that hair consumes oxygen and energy and hampers brain activity by taking oxygen away from the nerves. What is the point in keeping long hair?

The North Korean Government believes that hair is the waste product of the brain and that negative influences take hold in long hair²⁴⁶. They have so far quoted no empirical evidence to substantiate their claim. It is also a fact that no scientist (including North Korean Scientists) in the whole world has so far authenticated what the Koreans say.

Let us accept the Korean ideology for the sake of argument. When hair grows to a certain length it stops. After full growth its daily consumption of energy must also be the lowest. When the hair is cut it grows again and again. Does it grow without consuming any oxygen and energy? Can it be said with certainty that growing again and again consumes less energy/oxygen than a fully-grown hair?²⁴⁷ Over and above this we should not forget to add the cost of having a shave every fortnight. It must be costing at least a few hundred pounds a year whereas long hair can be washed ordinarily with the soap we use every day for bathing.

It is an established fact that the growth of the hair ceases after some time when the hair has reached its maximum length. At such time the major part of the root of the hair goes dormant and the remaining cells enter a period of absolute quiescence. Glycogen, which is necessary for protein synthesis ceases to be produced in the follicle. However when the

²⁴⁵ imil iml bYTiH kMGw kr kr] cun cun pwg bMDih mud kr kr] (pMQ pRkWS 3/21). kMGw dono vKq kr pwg cuny kr bWDeI (rihq nwmw)

²⁴⁶ Kim Jong II, the leader of North Korea has waged a war against people with long hair and has banned long hair as anti-socialist. Kim Jong II, the dictator of North Korea, has himself trimmed off his bouffant locks, which he wore for many years. Their TV series "*Hair dressing and our living*" and "*Let us trim our hair in accordance with Socialist Style*" are spewing political invectives against long hair. Only '*flat top*', '*Crew-cut*', '*Middle hair style*' '*Low hair style*' and '*High hairstyle*' fashions are permitted. The hair must not be longer than 5 cm but for men over 50 the permitted length is 7 cm to cover the baldness. The argument is political. No mention is made of health.

Pyongyang TV, press and radio have all joined to recommend a hair cut every 15 days. Those who flout the law are publicly named and shamed on the TV. Strangely, women have been exempted. Party paper '*Nodong Sinmun*' and The Government daily '*Minju Choson*' preach that dressing "*must be in accordance with our people's emotion and taste.*" Statements like the following are made frequently

1. *A man's hairstyle reflects his ideological spirit.*"

2. *Those who abandon our lifestyle and mimic other people's model are fools.*"

²⁴⁷ The hair grows only to a certain length and then stops. On the average a hair grows 0.25 inches a month. In the case of shaving, it has to grow hundreds of yards providing no rest to the follicles throughout life. It is ridiculous to claim that natural hairs consume more nutrients than shaven hairs. Even otherwise there is no empirical evidence to prove that shaven people are stronger or mentally more alert than those with uncut hair.

body needs more hair it discards the old growing hair and starts a period of organogenesis. In this process an entirely new hair root is generated and the growth of the hair in the follicle is resumed. The complex mitotic activities of the cells in the follicle, metabolic changes, and the synthesis of the protein go on unceasingly as long as the hair requires them for its growth. Necessary ingredients like glucose and oxygen etc. need to be supplied in adequate proportions to the hair again and again to re-grow the new hair. Unless some yet unknown process permanently arrests the re-growth of hair or the follicles stop their work, the hairs cannot be stopped permanently from appearing.²⁴⁸ Obviously continuous re-growing process affords no rest to the follicle, which is starved of necessary rest.

North Korean Government may not be aware of an elite group of smart dudes who are scientists and demonstrably sport long hair. The name of their club is “*Luxuriant Flowing Hair For Scientists*”. Again it needs to be noted that “*Beard Liberation Front*” was established by an American named Keith Flett in 1995 AD with the sole object of propagating the keeping of beards and fighting discrimination against those who do not shave. The organisation holds annual events and offers “*Beards of the year*” awards. It successfully campaigned against Exxon Mobil Company when the later banned beards for their workers. In addition to this, biannual ‘*World Beard and Moustache Championships*’ are held every year since 1991.²⁴⁹ A “*National Beard Registry*” was established in America (2002 AD) to encourage growing of full beard. Their members hate media driven corporate culture. Perhaps the Koreans are not aware of the “*The beard community*” established on March 17,2001 by some Western people who support the keeping of beards. Koreans should also be aware that next door to them in China people keep long hair and they too are communists like them.

Communists are well known for copying negative ideas. The Russian Westernising Czar, Peter the great, had banned long hair in 1705 AD and had forced all nobles to cut the hair short. Not to be left behind the late South Korean dictator Park Chung-Hee banned miniskirts, long hair and guitars in 1970 AD. Singing was banned as “*harming public morals*” and singers were arrested and punished. The result was chaos. Police dragged college and University students from their classes, forcibly shaved them and demanded written apology for not cutting their hair short. Soon it ended up in demonstrations and bloody confrontations. The students purchased more and more guitars, blue jeans and grew long hair. All education institutions had to be closed. Eventually one of his own men murdered the dictator in 1979 AD and now there are no restrictions on appearance, dress or music in South Korea or Russia. North Korea is now toying with an idea that South Korea tested and failed.

²⁴⁸ The damage to follicles causes a condition known as alopecia (commonly known as baldness). We have discussed this elsewhere in this book.

²⁴⁹ These championships started from Hofen-Enz (Germany). In 2006 it was held in Berlin and in 2007 (September 1,2007) it was held in Brighton where more than 252 people from all over Europe attended it. In 2008 it will be held in Carson City, Nev (USA) and on 23 May 2009 it will be held in the City of Anchorage (Alaska) “Beard and Moustache clubs” have been established in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K, USA, Ukraine and many other countries.

Culture is not just hairstyle and fashions as suggested by the North Koreans. Culture is the soul of a nation. The Communists are starving the soul and involving people in petty un-necessary and insignificant social fads. They are curbing the individuality and the self-identity of its people.

Q7. According to Darwin only the fittest species survive. Who is fitter to survive the shaven humans or the unshaven ones?

Darwin is not always right.²⁵⁰ The giraffes did not survive because they somehow elongated their necks and became the fittest. Neither can it be said with any certainty that their long necks always proved advantageous to them. According to Darwin's theory the smaller animals like rabbits, which have very small necks, would not have survived at all. Again Darwin claims that humans lost their tails but provides no explanation why human hair (which had less use and less strength as compared to the tail) survived. It is argued by the Darwinians that because humans started covering their bodies they began to lose their hair. The argument is fallacious because if that were the case our pubic hair should have disappeared a long time ago.

Human species have a highly developed brain and long hair on their heads. That is why they are known as "*hairy quadrupeds*". Nature has endowed humans with hair to protect the brain, which is the governing office of the human body. The hairs act as thermal regulators of the body. 40% of human body heat is lost through the head. The hairs keep the heat within the body. A shaven man can experience this in snow and compare the heat loss with an unshaven man. Considering the amount of heat loss through the head, this natural insulation makes sense. Body hair is not only a retainer of heat it also helps in keeping the body cool in excessive temperatures. When we perspire, the hair catches the sweat and keeps it near the skin. Evaporation causes coolness.

In addition the hair also prevent the brain from rain, dust particles and harmful radiations of the sun falling on earth. To remove the natural hair guard and then resort to man-made artefacts like hats to arrest the heat loss or prevent radiation damage is simply ridiculous.

Man may have reached the apex of creation because of his well-protected brain. No other animal is as wise and intellectually advanced as humans and no other animal has such long hair on their head either. Nature is not wasteful. Hair on the body parts has a function otherwise nature would not have produced them.

Research biologists (like Neer 1975 and Whitehead and others 1981) have proved that Vitamin D is essential for normal human growth. It helps the body absorb Calcium, which is necessary for skeletal development and in preventing pelvic deformities. At the time of pregnancy, the women need more and more calcium in daily feed and for lactation.

²⁵⁰ A survey was conducted by News week. The Question was "Do you believe that the theory of evolution can co-exist with religion?" Result:- Yes=55% No. 39% Not sure 5.9% Perhaps the respondents had not studied Sikhism.

Casual exposure of hair to sunlight is known to convert dehydrated cholesterol of the human body into vitamin D3 by UV photons at normal body temperature.²⁵¹ If this exposure is not sufficient, the individuals are at risk of suffering from Vitamin D deficiency. This usually manifests itself in diseases like osteoporosis and rickets etc. Hair thus helps in providing a permanent source of Vitamin D.

It has now been ascertained that hair also helps in olfactory communication. This important communication works through scent (known as Pheromones), which are unique to all human beings. This fact is demonstrated in newborn babies who easily distinguish the pheromones of their mothers and can even distinguish the mother's clothes out of a bundle. Experiments also prove that close proximity of a mother's pheromones calms down a crying baby.

Freudian Psychologists themselves believe that hair is a phallic or sexual emblem. According to them long hair represent the Id and cutting the hair is akin to castration (*Leach E.R. in Magical hair July 1958*). Pheromones are thus our chemical signature. They are instrumental in attracting mates. It may be due to this fact that many religions require women to keep long hair.

The hairs definitely improve the quality of life, and may even be prolonging it. On the other hand no scientific empirical evidence is available to prove that shaven heads have a better chance of survival or that they improve the quality of life and health.

Survival does not depend on one factor like hair alone. The way we humans are inventing lethal weapons and engaging in destructive religious and political confrontations, we can destroy ourselves with or without hair.

Q8 If hair attracts sunlight to provide vitamin D why cover it with a turban?

Following the wisdom of nature, which provides long and dense hair on the head, the humans have started using a turban to cover the head hair. Not only do the hair protect the head from environmental harmful effects that can attack hair directly but also prevent dust and microbes entering the hair. It is common knowledge that the folds of the turban provide additional insulation to the head and protect it against heavy blows, cuts and excesses of temperature variations. It also protects the head from rain, intense sunlight and dust.

We all know that if we wrap ice in a woollen cloth we can preserve it for a longer period. The cloth insulates it against the outer heat. Similarly a turban protects the head from cold in winter. The uses of the turban in summer need not be justified. It preserves moisture under the turban to keep the head cool. It has been noticed that those wearing a turban hardly ever feel hot and take it off on the other hand those wearing caps always complain of heat and take off their hats time and again.

²⁵¹ Although Vitamin D was not known to the primitive people but they knew about the gift of the solar energy from the sun and therefore worshipped the sun and kept their hair intact.

Long and intense exposure of hair to the sun can leave the most lustrous hair looking like a haystack. A head wrap (turban) is therefore necessary. People use ultraviolet inhibitors to guard against this but a turban is the cheapest and the foolproof method of dealing with this problem.²⁵²

Vitamin D (also known as sunshine vitamin)²⁵³ is produced as a chemical reaction, which continues under the turban unabated because useful rays still reach the head through the turban but they do not strike the head directly.

It is true that human body requires exposure to sunlight and air but humans have grown into social animals over the centuries. They have developed some moral and ethical norms for the society, which have been universally accepted. Man cannot go back to primitive life of the jungle once more but if the modern facilities and inventions are used judiciously man can live longer and healthier life. Our use of processed, desiccated and canned food is equally doing harm but we cannot go back to the simple food our ancestors ate. A turban is not doing as much harm as these foods, our indoor life, and the air-conditioned rooms we live in. Add to it the nuclear bombs we produce, the tons of CO₂ we add to the air as pollution and tons of chemicals we use in agriculture. Turbans have a number of advantages and do no harm.

rihxl rhy soel is`K myrw, auh swihb mYN aus kw cyrw]

(gurU goibMd isMG)

²⁵² On his way back from Damdama Sahib the Guru stayed in Talwandi where people were suffering from a strange and dangerous disease. The Guru was approached to work a miracle. He advised covering the head with a turban. Within days the disease disappeared. Trumpp and Dr. Gopal Singh tell us that nearly one lakh and twenty thousand people of the area got baptized in Talwandi and started wearing turbans. (Guru Gobind Singh by Gopal Singh p.78)

²⁵³ Vitamin D is very necessary for human life. Among other functions it helps promote the formation and growth of bones, prevents rickets in children, regulates the accumulation of fat in the body and helps normal growth of teeth. Most of it is produced by the chemical reaction of ultra violet rays with the sebaceous secretion from our skin. It also regulates the assimilation, retention, distribution and fixation of calcium and phosphorus in the body so essential for us. In females it helps build up foetal reserves and during nursing period of a mother's production and concentration of milk in the breast glands.

Chapter 8

Human rights

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

(Universal declaration of human rights article 18)

“In those states in which ethnic religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion or to use their own language.”

(Universal declaration of human rights article 27)