

## CHAPTER 3

# DISTINCT FEATURES OF SIKHISM FROM OTHER MAIN WORLD RELIGIONS

### Five Main World Religions

The five main religions of the world on the basis of the nomenclature of the followers of the religions, seriatim wise are :

1. Christianity (More than one third of world population)
2. Islam (less than 1/3rd of world population)
3. Hinduism (about 1/6th of world population)
4. Buddhism (about 300 millions)
5. Sikhism (about 30 millions)

Christianity is mainly dominant in the west, Islam in the middle east, Hinduism in the East (particularly India) Buddhism in Asian countries, while Sikhism in the North India, Punjab, though all these religions are now spread throughout the world. All these religions have their own distinct and separate doctrines, ideology and religious practices; there are similarities on several aspects in these religions but as well dissimilarities also. All the religions are based upon Truth to deal with the situation of that time. After lapse of time, a new situation arises, fake rites and rituals erupt in those faiths at the hands of some religious leaders to exploit the innocent masses. Then God, the Almighty deposes some of his other prophets to enlighten and protect humanity. All the religions should be analyzed with this objective consideration the due regard to all religions and not to undermine one religion or the other. The peaceful coexistence and understanding of all the religions and faiths is a must to maintain world peace, while the conflicts are bound to disturb it.

The Oxford Dictionary defines religion :

"The recognition of super human controlling power and especially of a personal God, entitled to obedience."

Religion, however, also emphasizes, morality and ethics of higher values affecting

the human behaviour, besides the social responsibility to mankind. Therefore, main basic features of a religion relate to the teachings as to :

- i) Pious relationships between man and God
- ii) Relationship between man and man
- iii) Way of living

The distinct features of Sikhism which is an independent and separate religion for the present age having been founded in the 15th century, are quite different from other main world religions i.e. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

## Sikhism and Christianity

Christianity was not known in the 15th century India, as it was only in the 18th century that Christianity came to be known there when the British entered India. Though Sikhism was already found in India, still there are more similarities than dissimilarities in both of these religions.

Max Arthur Macauliffe, the British eminent historian, author of the authentic *The Sikh Religion* published by Oxford University, London in 1909 remarked :

"The illustrious author of '*Vie Die Jesus*' asks whether great originality will again arise on the world would be content to follow the path opened by the daring creators of the ancient ages. Now there is here presented the Sikh religion totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influence. Based upon the unity of God, it rejected the Hindu formularies and adopted an independent ethical system, ritual and standards which were totally opposed to the theological beliefs of Guru Nanak's age and country."

Christianity believes in one and only one God without any other gods, goddesses and incarnations of God, and to worship and pray to one God only rejecting idolatry. Sikhism is in conformity with it which teaches fatherhood of God (one and the only one) and to the worship of Him alone and meditation in His Name alone, rejecting any other gods and goddesses and incarnations of God. Sikhism advocates remaining under His will and submission alone. Thus, this basic main aspect, Sikhism and Christianity hold the same view as to the fatherhood of God.

On the second aspect, Christianity believes in brotherhood of mankind being the creation of one Creator and the selfless service of humanity through its missionary zeal is well known. Sikhism is in full conformity with it as its first thought of fatherhood of God automatically leads to the brotherhood of mankind and lays great emphasis on selfless service to humanity. Both of these religions outrightly reject the discrimination in mankind on the basis of caste, creed, sex or any other ground, whatsoever, and stand for equality and dignity of each individual. Thus both these religions are of the same view as to relationship between man and man of love and equality without any distinctions. 'Sermon of Mount' preached by Christ is also in agreement to the thought of Sikhism, of submission to God, humility, mercy, kindness,

contentment, peace and purity of heart and mind on which virtues Sikhism laid a great stress.

However, the assertions of Christianity that Christ has been given all the authority in heaven and on earth; that Christ is to be accepted as Lord of life, that no one can search God other than Christ, that Christ can forgive the sins of others, are in contradiction to the thought of Sikhism. According to Sikhism only and only God is Supreme and everyone else is His creation and God is present in everyone, whose light shines everywhere and 'no one else than God has any authority over any other. All the creation of God is equal. Even then prophets have no power or any authority of God as they have been deputed by God with His message of Truth to enlighten mankind. The message is not theirs. It is the 'word of God'. They are only here to communicate it to mankind. They are a part of humanity, having been sent in heavenly garb. They have no authority to become the Lords of life of others and to forgive the sins of others as there is only one Lord, the God and no other. Sikhism declares that everyone can go to God and unite with his Creator directly by abiding His Name in his mind and to remain imbued with His Name while leading a Truthful and virtuous life and no one else can take the others to God. It is by the spiritual efforts of every human being as aforementioned plus the 'Grace of God' that one unites with God.

The Christian belief that Christ himself carried the sins of mankind on his body to the cross and through his Crucifixion, the sins of humanity have been pardoned by God is also in contradiction to Sikh thought. In accordance with the thought of Sikhism, sins can only be washed off from the human mind by the continuance of the remembrance of God, singing and hearing His praises of greatness and abiding the Name of God in one's mind. Sikhism does not accept any other method to wipe out the sins and impurities of mind as these flourish in the mind itself. Ego creates a false wall between God and the Soul in the human mind. As and when that false wall is removed by accepting the will of God and abiding in the Name of God in the mind by burning the ego, the light of God shines in the mind, body and soul. The sins and impurities of the mind are wiped out and man leads a Truthful living in the way of God.

Christianity believes Jesus Christ to be the Protector and redeemer of mankind. Sikhism is in contradiction with this thought as in Sikhism, God, the Almighty is above, the protector, redeemer of humanity, and the prophets who enlighten the mankind cannot become redeemer and protector of humanity.

Christianity believes Christ to be sitting on the right side of God to take care of the commandments of God. This thought is also in contradiction to Sikhism wherein God has no specific place to reside. Concept of God in Sikhism is formless, unborn, self-illuminated and is present in every thing which is part of His own, created by Him alone. The abode of God is in the mind, body and soul and it is His light which shines in everyone.

Christianity and Sikhism are in contradiction on the very vital issue of the

transmigration of souls. Christianity does not believe in the transmigration of souls while it is the basic and prominent feature of Sikhism that soul is not perishable while the body is perishable. The soul takes birth time and again in different bodies till it unites with God, whose part it is. It is the light of God which shines in everyone.

The way of life in Sikhism is distinct from that of Christianity as it is naturally in accordance with the doctrines, ideologies, religious practices of each religion, though the definition of vices and virtues are mostly the same in every religion. In Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib is the Divine guide while in Christianity, Bible is the 'Divine guide. Nucleus of Sikhism is the Name of God, from which Truth and pious deeds flow.

## Sikhism and Islam

There are similarities in Sikhism and Islam on the unity of God, and brotherhood of mankind as both these religions believe in one and the only one God and submission to His will and the brotherhood of mankind without caste and creed systems, but on some aspects there are dissimilarities in them as well. The principle of Islam is :

"La ilaha il Allah, Muhammad ur-Rasul u-Allah."

(None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, God the Almighty and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.)

'SHIRK' is the unpardonable sin which implies ascribing partners to Allah or ascribing Divine Attributes to others besides Allah and believing that the source of power, harm and blessings come from another besides Allah, as Allah does not forgive that partners should be set up along with Him in worship. Thus in Islam there is one and the only one God and only He should be worshipped.

The articles of faith in Islam are :

- | Allah
- | His Angels
- | His messengers
- | His revealed books
- | The day of resurrection
- | Al-Qadar [Divine pre ordainments (Fate i.e. whatever Allah has ordained must come to pass.)]

Disbelieving in any of these articles of faith in Islam is 'KUFR'

Five prayers are to be performed to Allah every day in the mode prescribed by the Prophet, Muhammad himself. The men should collectively perform these prayers in Mosques, while the women at their houses. These prayers are compulsory in Islam.

Quran is the scripture of Islam, containing 'word of God as Allah (God) sent the messages to Prophet Mohammad through angel Zabra-il as contained in Quran.

Islam believes in numerous angels of God. The first pertinent angel is 'Zabra-il'

who brought the messages from Allah to Hazrat Mohammad. Second is 'Maka-il' who is responsible for rains and other welfare. Third is "Izraf-il" who would end the world and on the day of Qyamat (resurrection) get the dead to come out of their graves. Fourth is 'Izra-il' who controls over the death, also called an 'Malkul Maut.'

In Islam, Hazrat Mohammad is the last messenger of God.

Sunnat-circumcision is essential in Islam for Muslims.

In Islam, the belief is, that the last day of the world is on Qayamat day- (Resurrection), when all the dead would come out of the graves. The disbelievers-sinful would be sent to Hell, while the believers (pure) would be sent to Heaven.

Islam's belief of unity of God, that there is only and only one God and His worship alone and to remain under His will, rejecting the theory of numerous gods and goddesses and incarnation of God and their belief in Idolatory is in conformity with the thought of Sikhism wherein only and the only one God is accepted and His worship alone and submission to His will alone. Sikhism is also in total conformation with Islam against ascribing partners to God and against the belief that the source of power, harm and blessings come from another source other than God and it is also against the theory of their numerous gods and goddesses and incarnation of God and their Idolatory. On this basic fundamental aspect of Sikhism and Islam hold the same view unto the pious relationship between man and God.

Islam believes in brotherhood of mankind and its equal status without any distinctions on the basis of caste and creed systems or any other ground whatsoever. Sikhism is in conformity with Islam in this regard as in it all the human beings are equal and of the same brotherhood, without any discrimination on any caste, creed or other ground whatsoever. Sikhism rather advocates selfless service to humanity which is of the same race. Both these religions are of the same view as per the relationship between man and man.

However Sikhism is in contradiction to Islam as to the theory of angels of God in it, the light of God is present in everyone who is in direct contact with God. Only the false wall of egoism comes between the mind and the light of God which shines in all. By remaining under the will of God and meditating in His Name, the false wall is removed and direct contact with God is realized. The Sikh Gurus directly got the commandments of God in order to enlighten the mankind with the word of God as contained in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This approach also brings the theory of sitting of God on the throne lifted by angels in 7th sky as put forth in Islam in contradiction to Sikh thought, vide which God's light itself shines in everyone and is manifest in everything. Man can unite with God who is inside and not outside, with the power of the Name of God to be imbued in one's mind as one's own self comprehends God.

Sikhism is in contradiction to Sunnat-circumcision. In Sikhism the submission to will of God is a must which has to be obeyed by everyone. The bodily appearance, as given by God is to be kept unchanged and any interference in it, obviously violates the will of God.

The day of Qayamat, Resurrection when the dead would come out of the graves and then would be sent to Hell or Heaven as is the belief in Islam is in total contradiction to the thought of Sikhism. According to Sikhism only the soul is perpetual while the body is perishable. The soul remains in the cycle of birth and death, changing the bodies according to the wish of God, till it merges in Him from where it had departed. The body being perishable cannot come again after death.

Sikhism and Islam are in contradiction on a very vital issue of transmigration of souls. Sikhism believes in the transmigration of souls that the soul is permanent and not perishable like the body. It transfers time and again in new bodies, till its emergence with God, whose part and light it is.

Sikhism accepts Hazrat Mohammad as the Prophet but not the last one. It is for God, the Almighty, to decide in His will that when and who is to be sent, as prophet with His message to enlighten mankind. Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikh religion was sent by God as a prophet with His message of Truth and Name of God to enlighten mankind to protect it in the 15th century when falsehood and tyranny had dominance in that age. He proclaimed that he is the prophet sent by God, with His message of Truth and the Name of God to enlighten mankind, but not the last prophet. The way of life in Sikhism is distinct from that of Islam as it is always on the basis of the doctrines and principles of each religion of its own. In Sikhism Guru Granth Sahib is the guiding Divine light while in Islam the guide is the Quran. Both these religions have their own distinct features with similarities on some points, while contradictions on others.

## Sikhism and Hinduism

Hinduism, though an ancient religion with its own culture, but it has not been founded by any prophet with his precise and specific thought and scriptures with uniformity of religious practices-code of conduct. It rather contains contradictory philosophies, modes of worship, rites and rituals which have been set forth by several Rishis and Munis as contained in the four Vedas, Shastras, Puranas and Simirities and epics. It is a freelancing form of religion for everybody to worship whosoever and in whatsoever manner, to perform whichever rites and rituals, to follow whichever epics or other religious books written by whosoever to adopt whichever system in life. There are numerous gods and goddesses, incarnations of God and anybody can have faith in anyone. Varuna, the sky God; Indira, god of rain and thunder; Wayu, the wind God; Surya, the sun God and Agni, the Fire God are worshipped by some, by chanting Hymns to invoke their help. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva are the main gods in the list of several gods and goddesses. Shri Krishna, and Shri Rama Chander, the king of Mathura and Ayodhya, heroes of Mahabharata and Ramayana are incarnations of God for worship in different systems. Yagnas—Fire sacrifices to please the gods and goddesses by pouring grain, milk and ghee on the sacred fire are performed by some. All these ceremonies and rituals are performed by Brahmins by chanting the hymns of various

kinds. Thus there is no uniformity in any aspect but still the religion is the same. In fact Hinduism brought everyone under its domain, whatsoever contradictions might be in those systems.

Samirities : Mannu Samirities had divided the society into four castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaish and Sudras – and divided man's life in four stages—Brahamcharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, and Sanyas with its own logic creating the worst kind of caste and creed system by giving Brahmins the superiority while to Sudras, the untouchability.

Veda :In Rig Veda Brahamin was described to be from the mouth of the God Brahma; Kshatriya to be from the arm of the body, Vaish to be from thigh of the body, while Sudra to be from the feet of the body. In it most of the space has been devoted to praising the gods and goddesses.

In Yajur Veda, the modes have been described for the sacrificial aspect and it is termed to be the diary of priests.

In Sam Veda, Mantras have been written to be read at the time of sacrificial ceremonies and addressed to Gods of Fire, Rain.

In Athar Veda, the Mantras have been mostly provided for the agonies instead of meditation of God. This all is taken to be the vedantic ideology, wherein duty of Brahmin is to study Vedas and receive the gifts; of Kshatriyas to protect the people; of Vaish to do agriculture; while of Sudras to serve all the three upper classes. Mannu had threatened the divided society that if this distribution of works is not followed, then God would withdraw his favours and human society would disintegrate. If one class assumes the duties of the other, then Dharama would be polluted.

Epics : The Epics of Mahabharata is as to the war between Kaurvas and Pandavas wherein Shri Krishna, King of Mathura gave Philosophical lessons to Arjuna, whose chariot he was driving at the battlefield. Krishna sermonised that Pandavas must fight that war for their rights as contained in Gita, the religious book of Hinduism, as Arjuna had become fickle-minded as to taking part in the war because of the drastic consequences of the killings of all their kith and kin and helpers at the battlefield.

The Epic of Ramayana relates to Shri Ram Chandra, king of Ayodhya, who was in battle with Ravana, king of Lanka who had abducted his wife Sita. Rama undertook war and burnt Lanka to ashes to rescue Sita. Both heroes of these Epics are considered to be incarnations of God and are worshipped.

In Hinduism a great stress has been laid upon the pilgrimages to the holy places and taking ritual baths in rivers and tanks there to wipe out the sins.

For the welfare of the ancestors to provide them the tasteful meals and other requirements, the feast of delicious meals, (called sharadhs) to the Brahmins along with the gifts, was advocated in Hinduism.

The ceremony of sacred thread was emphasized while one is still in teens so that he may remain pure during life.



## Twenty-three Avatars

In the Vedic system everything including heaven could be achieved by the performance of rituals and sacrifices. The worship and devotion were side-streams. These were to the deities and not for one God, the Almighty. This system forms part of 'Vaisnavism'. The religious practices of Sankhya, Yoga, Vedic ritualism and the Upanishad are reflected in Gita which contains divergent systems. Hinduism declared significant founders of different faiths and systems to be Avatars of Vishnu, just as Rama and Krishna as heroes of Ramayana and Mahabharata; Rasha as the first Trithinkra of Jainism; Gautam Buddha of Buddhism and Kapila of Sankhya. In all, the twenty three such Avatars were accepted for their worship by their followers in different ways.

Emphasizing supremacy of Vishnu and Brahma in Gita, Shri Krishna stated that all those who worship other gods also worship him though imperfectly. However Vishnu was given the Supreme position. The Brahmins thus expanded their fold retaining the caste and creed system. Vedantic ritualism and authority and their priesthood, owning the sermons of the philosophical discussion between Shri Krishna and Arjuna at the battle-field of Kurukshetra. Similarly the Nathism philosophy was reconciled, being akin to the Yogic cult : to be a celibate, not to engage in any worldly pursuit, to meditate in seclusion and to observe Ahimsa, which belonged to an ascetic group of Saivism. Hinduism is thus still under the Brahmanical and Vedic domination with the worship of numerous gods and goddesses, deities and the same performance of religious rites, rituals and practices though diametrically opposed to each other and continuation of the caste, creed and class systems as well. It is a matter of great appreciation that the religion is still the same-Hinduism, in spite of all such contradictions, for the followers or different faiths and systems, as to its elasticity to contain them all.

## Sikhism-Hinduism in Contradiction

Sikhism is in total contradiction to practically all of the doctrines, rituals and rites and religious practices of Hinduism. The first main contradiction is to the aspect of God, the Almighty and His worship which is altogether irreconcilable. Sikhism recognizes only and the only one God (formless, unborn and self-illuminated) the creator of the entire universe and no gods and goddesses and neither any incarnation of God and their idolatory. The nucleus of Sikh religion is that the praises and greatness of one and the only one God are to be reflected upon and His name should take abode in the human mind to remain imbued with His Name continually. He is the only one creator of the entire creation. The numerous gods, goddesses, and incarnations of God as set forth in Hinduism and their worshipping idolatory have been openly denounced and rejected in Sikhism. Rather it has been clarified in Divine verses, *Gurbani*, that Vedas, Shastras, Samirties, Puranas and all other religious books of Hinduism only describe the action to be good or bad or sinful, and they do not reach or preach the reality of God, the Almighty nor disclose its secrets and greatness.



In Sikhism all the useless rites and rituals of Hinduism have been discarded that these cannot take the man towards its goal. Rather these are misguiding and misleading practices. The pilgrimages to holy places and taking ritual baths there in rivers and tanks have all been denounced that these cannot purify the human mind as the baths can only clean the external parts of the body. The sins and impurities of the mind can only be wiped out with the Name of God. The feasts to Brahmins can never reach the ancestors rather such deceitful acts should be severely punished by even cutting the hands of such commission agents by God, the Almighty, as declared by Guru Nanak. Sacred Thread cannot purify the mind and is of no avail and rather contentment, compassion, chastity and truth should be the contents of sacred thread, sayeth Guru Nanak while rejecting such a farcical ceremony. All the superstitions and contradiction to the holy path as preached in Hinduism have been rejected in Sikhism.

The yogic cult of Hinduism was discarded in Sikhism, as Sikhism advocates a house holder's life and the social responsibility to society to which the yogic cult is in contradiction. The acquiring of supernatural and occult miraculous powers by yogis, which they allege to acquire, is against the Sikh thought in which will of God is supreme and so is the fleeing away from the world to mountains and forests for exclusive meditation in groups which negates the social responsibility. Guru Nanak confronted the Sidh Yogis at their mountainous abodes, that if they had acquired any divine knowledge, then enlighten the ignorant people with it, realizing their responsibility to the society as otherwise it was of no use, as Yogis had boasted that they were very learned persons acquiring the Divine knowledge. Their symbolism has been denounced in Sikhism that Yogis should have the contentment, their ear rings; modesty their begging bowl. God's meditation, their ashes; thought of death, their patched coat; chastity that of a virgin their department; faith in God their staff; brotherhood with all, their highest seat of Yogic order and they should deem the conquest of their minds to be the conquest of the world. Divine knowledge their food; mercy their steward; and they should listen to the Divine music that beats in every heart. In Sikhism, attitude to life is positive, discarding the negative attitude to disassociate from life to gain individual salvation, Nirvana, Moksha, or enlightenment of Hinduism. In Sikhism if one attains salvation and liberation, he is to help others to attain that aim in life itself.

Sikhism is in total contradiction to the caste, creed and other discriminations against mankind and the division of the society as advocated in Hinduism in four castes of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaish and Sudra wherein supremacy has been given to Brahmins and the untouchability to Sudras. Sikhism believes in the Brotherhood of mankind without any distinction on any ground whatsoever, and in the equality and dignity of each individual. Sikhism rejects the denigration of women on the basis of sex proclaiming that there can be none in the world without women and all the kings have taken birth from women then why to lower their status? Selfless service to humanity is the cardinal principle of Sikhism, besides the love and equality between man and man.

No doubt, both these religions are in agreement on the vital issue of transmigration of souls but their methodology of the uniting of the soul with the Creator and the concept of unity of soul with God and even the concept of God itself are altogether contradictory. Sikhism envisages such unity in the life time itself of a human being and then to enable him to attain this aim for others by enlightening them the true Sikh way of life thereby liberating the soul from the materialistic entanglements, the mind to be imbued with the Name of God, burning the ego, eradicating the evils and acquiring the virtues, and leading the truthful way of life in the Sikh way of life, which is in fact the way of God.

Sikhism is thus in contradiction to Hinduism on both the aspects of the pious relationship between man and God and between man and man with altogether different approach to the concept of God and concept of brotherhood of mankind. In Sikhism, God being formless, unborn and self-illuminated (one and the only one) the light of which shines in all, while in Hinduism, there being numerous gods and goddesses and incarnations of God, who were born like other human beings and were Kings of different states and took part in the battlefields for one side or the other. This contradiction on the fundamental issue of 'Fatherhood of God' can never be reconciled. Similarly in Sikhism, the 'brotherhood of mankind' with equal status to all without any distinction on any ground whatsoever is irreconcilable to the division of mankind on caste and creed basis, giving one section superiority while the other untouchability and other discriminations between man and man of Hinduism.

The way of life is distinct in both of these religions as it is always based upon the doctrines, ideology and religious practices of its own of every religion. In Sikhism, *Guru Granth Sahib* is the Divine guide while in Hinduism, its own religious scriptures like, *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Shastras* are the Divine guide. Similar is the case of the different rites and rituals and religious practices of each religions to be the part of way of life of each religion. Sikhism is obviously a separate religion from Hinduism.

## Sikhism and Buddhism

Buddhism is silent on God and has not given an understanding of the Creator and the creation in clear terms as other religions have expressed their ideology on this aspect, though it has not even denied this existence of God. However, Buddhism does not believe in the transmigration of souls and the permanence of the soul. There are also some other religions as well like Christianity and Islam, which do not believe in transmigration of souls and the permanence of the soul. Buddhism, in some circles, is criticized to be not following the definition of religions strictly, because of its ambiguity on this major aspect of the religion of the existence and concept of God. However, on the whole, world has accepted Buddhism as a religion and it stands placed at number four in the list of world religions with the following of over three hundred millions.

The eight fold principles of Buddhism are :

1. Right understanding
2. Right thought
3. Right speech
4. Right bodily action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right moral effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

These eight-fold principles are based upon morality providing high moral and ethical values in the right direction of conduct of mankind but not to guide to the pious relationship of man and God. Buddhism also advocates four Truths :

- | All moral values flow from 'Dukha' that in reality the objects and other things are not what they should be.
- | All the problems arise from the worldly desires (Sanadhya).
- | The cessation of worldly desires ends 'Dukha' (Nirvan)
- | The way advocated by Buddha leads to the cessation of the worldly desires and material entanglements.

There is no doubt that if every thought and action of human being is based upon the right aspect, then it would lead to the elimination of temporary allurements of human desires.

The three pillars of Buddhism are :

- | Morality
- | Meditation
- | Wisdom

These are to be acted upon simultaneously in all the activities of life but no methodology has been provided to achieve these objects.

In Buddhism, unconditional non-violence is the rule. The monks stay in Buddhist centres called 'Matths' practicing the ideology of Buddhism and practising it with no moral responsibility to the society. Attitude towards life is negative and the world is considered to be a sort of suffering and illusion leading to disassociation from life. Nirvan, Moksha and enlightenment being the individualistic goal, involvement in the world is hindrance for the spiritual effort.

In Buddhism scientific approach to the creation of world is advocated. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, visited the primary centres of Buddhism in Ceylon. At the time of discussion between him and Buddhist monks, they argued that the world comes into existence with the combination of elements and is destroyed when these elements are separated. It was the scientific approach. Guru Nanak confronted them by asking them as 'from where the elements come and who combines and separates

the elements', for which they had no answer. Guru Nanak enlightened them that elements are the creation of God, who is the Creator of the entire creation, which is functioning under His commandments. God combines and separates the elements in a meticulous and super systematic manner under His will. Entire universe is functioning under His fear.

"It is in God's fear and will that wind and breeze ever blows; millions of rivers flow; fire works; earth is trampled under burden; clouds move head long; Dharam Raj stands at his door; sun and moon are restrained and travel millions of miles without end. In His fear are Buddha, Sidhs, 'Yogis, and demi gods; and sky is stretched. Nanak, True formless Lord alone is fearless."

(SGGS, p. 464)

Guru Nanak enlightened the Buddhist monks that their moral and ethical values as contained in eight-fold paths are not sufficient to get Moksha, Nirvana and enlightenment without meditation in the Name of God and without abiding God in one's mind. Such a submission would burn the ego, eradicate the vices and cultivate virtues to lead a truthful living. The moral and ethical values can be achieved by following these procedures, which ultimately unites the soul with the Creator. It can be attained by leading such a truthful life in normal householder's life with responsibility towards society and selfless service towards humanity. There is no need to roam about in forests and mountains and confined to Matths. Realization of one's own self comprehends God. Conquest of one's own mind conquers the world. The mind in this way would resist worldly desires.

Sikhism is thus in contradiction to Buddhism on the basic fundamental issue of fatherhood of God to which Buddhism is silent. Instead of presenting its viewpoint, Buddhism provides only the moral and ethical values instead of the methodology to attain those values on how to keep the right thought, action etc. There is no dispute with the moral and ethical values. Rather Sikhism has provided such comprehensive higher moral and ethical values, which is equalled by no other system or faith. It is only the Name of God, as preached by Sikhism that cultivates such values in one's mind.

Sikhism does believe in the peaceful means and not in violence but it is not unconditional like Buddhism. Sikhism advocates that if all the peaceful means have failed, then it is justified to resort to sword. Sikhism lays emphasis on the social responsibility and selfless service to humanity. Justice (religious, political, social and economic) is not to be secured for one's own self only, but for everyone, being the victim of injustice. The basic fundamental rights of humanity are not to be assured for one's own self alone but for the entire mankind. Sikhs did secure justice and assured the basic fundamental human rights for everyone, though their struggle against the tyrant Mughal and Afghan invaders was prolonged for about a century.

In Sikhism life is positive and real. The world is not a sort of suffering or illusion. Salvation is not only individualistic but for the entire mankind. After achieving the salvation/liberation, one is to make efforts for others to achieve that goal. The

involvement in the world is not any hindrance for spiritual effort but the activities in life in every sphere enhances the spiritual efforts if these are done with higher consciousness by transferring the control of narrow egoistic self centered mind to God tuned mind. Sikhism is a religion of normal householder's life to practically attain higher values of life and then put those into practice for the welfare of others throughout one's life; to earn livelihood with one's hard labour and with honest means, and share the earnings with the needy.

Buddhism had rejected the caste and creed distinctions in mankind as practiced in Hinduism. Sikhism is in agreement with it as Sikhism has outrightly denounced such caste and creed discriminations between man and man advocating equality and brotherhood of mankind.

The way of life in Buddhism and Sikhism are distinct as it is always based upon the principles and practices of each religion which are separate from each other. In Sikhism, the Divine guide is *Guru Granth Sahib* and the teachings of Sikh Gurus; in Buddhism, the guide is Gautam Buddha and his teachings, again quite distinct from each other. Buddhism does not believe in transmigration of soul, but it is the cardinal principle of Sikhism and both these religions are in contradiction on this vital issue.

Sikhism, has certain distinct features as to several vital aspects that differ from the other world religions. Sikhism is based upon its own divine revelation of Truth, the Name of God and pious deeds for the entire mankind. It is a religion for the present age having been founded in 15th century AD. Islam was founded ten centuries prior to it, while Christianity was founded five centuries prior to Islam. Buddhism was founded about five centuries before Christianity. Nothing is known exactly when Hinduism was formed. It has no specific prophet and its scriptures have been written mostly by Hindu scholars with no certainty of the time of their writing. All these religions have some similarities but more dissimilarities. The Name of God is the nucleus of Sikhism that meditation in the Name of God and making one's mind to be the abode of God as to have the feeling of continuous presence of God which eliminates the ego and other vices while inculcating the virtues to lead a truthful life and aspiring for the grace of God to unite with Him and then to help others to achieve the aim. The other religions have their own concepts, doctrines and ideologies. Sikhism is a separate religion like other world religions.

It is obvious from the brief comparative study of these religions that Sikhism is in total contradiction to Hinduism on the main aspects of relationship between man and God, between man and man and the ways of living. The concept of God, His worship, the religious scriptures, the fabric of caste and creed in mankind and the distinctions and discrimination thereto, are contradictory in both these religions. Rather unity of God being one and the only one without any worship of other gods and goddesses and the equality of mankind without discrimination on the basis of caste and creed systems is in conformity in Sikhism, Christianity and Islam. Though there are several contradictions, Buddhism is in total silence as to the existence and

concept of God, for which it has even been criticized as it does not fulfil this basic condition of a religion. All these religions have their separate doctrines, ideologies and religious practices. The way of life is also distinct which is naturally based upon the doctrines and ideology of every religion. There has to be the freedom of religion being the fundamental human right and due respect for every religion.

As to Sikhism, in the words of Max Arthur Macauliffe, the eminent British scholar:

"To sum up the moral and political merits of Sikh religion: It prohibits idolatry, hypocrisy, caste, exclusiveness, the con cremation of widows, the immurement of women, the use of wine and other intoxicants, tobacco smoking, infanticide, slander, pilgrimage to the sacred rivers and tanks of Hindus; and it inculcates loyalty, gratitude for all favours received, philanthropy, justice, impartiality, truth, honesty and all the moral and domestic virtues known to the holiest citizens of any country."

(*The Sikh Religion*, Preface XXIII)

And

"The cardinal principle of the Gurus and the Bhagats, whose writings find place in the sacred books of the Sikhs, was the unity of God. This is everywhere inculcated in the Sikh sacred writings with ample and perhaps not unnecessary iteration, considering the forces Sikhism had to contend within an age of ignorance and superstition."

(Introduction, p. II, Chapter II)

In the words of Bhai Gurdas, the first Sikh scholar of 16th century :

"Guru Nanak established a separate religion and laid out an easy and simple way of obtaining salvation by the repetition of God's Name. The Guru extricated men from the terrible ocean of the world and included them in the boon of salvation. He cut off the fear of transmigration and healed the malady of superstition and pain of separation from God. Until the Guru's advent, death's mace ever impended over men's heads and the apostate and the evil spent their lives in vain. The four castes of Hindus, he reduced to one. They (Sikhs) live as hermits in their families, they efface their individuality. They practice humility. They pronounce the ineffable Name of God and they transgress not the will of the Creator, by uttering blessings or curses upon their fellow creatures. Thus men were saved in every direction and Guru Nanak became the true support of the nine regions of the earth."

(Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, p. 194)