

The Guru Granth Sahib and Hinduism- Theistic Differences (Sikh religion and Hinduism)

© 2026 Raghunandan Singh Bhalla. All rights reserved

DR. R. S. Bhalla

Hinduism's attacks on the Sikh religion are as old as the Sikh religion itself. It is a game plan of Hinduism's efforts to assimilate the Sikh religion within its fold. Hindus adopted two-way attack on the Sikh religion. First, they attacked direct by denying the very existence of the Sikh religion. Second, they tried to disorganise the Sikh religion by indirectly making space within the Sikh religion. This they did by converting one male of the family into the Sikh religion. With this it will appear that Hindu and Sikh are the same. This was their indirect entry into the Sikh religion to destroy its core. Both the techniques of Hinduism to ignore the separate and independent existence of the Sikh religion are discussed below.

Mahatma Gandhi writes "There are only three religions in the world, namely, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. He would regard Buddhism and Sikhism as branches of Hinduism, as the Hindu Mahasabha had defined it.¹ Again Gandhi writes "Guru Nanak was a Hindu reformer like the others who have founded Hindu sects. Sikhs are Hindus to all intents and purposes".² Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu fundamentalists, has a declared policy that Sikh is a Hindu and Hindu is a Sikh. However, the Sikh religion is not ready to accept adjustments to accommodate Hinduism or become a partner of Hinduism. The Sikh religion wants to maintain its separation and independence at all costs.

However as far back as 1877, Swami Dayanand Saraswati of Arya Smaj started a ceremony known as Sudhi, purification. It was a ceremony to bring back all those people back to Hinduism who have adopted the Sikh religion. He called Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, dumbi [hypocrite] and the Guru Granth Sahib [The Holy Book of the Sikh Religion] a book of secondary importance.³ Swami Dayanand Saraswati was making these remarks following the Manusmriti 12.96 "All those doctrines, differing from the Veda, which spring up and soon perish, are worthless and false, because they are of modern date." It was Swami Dayanand Saraswati's attempt to advance Hindu nationalism.

Hinduism is trying to spoil the core of the Sikh religion. Hinduism is trying to make the Sikh religion a hotchpotch rather than to let them keep their independence and separateness from Hinduism. It was Hinduism's indirect entry

to pitch into the Sikh religion. It was their back door tactics. In 1925 The Sikh Gurdwara Act was passed. The Act referred to the Sikh identity as a Keshdhadi Sikh [uncut hair], the identity given to the Sikhs by their Gurus, the precursors and creator, of the Sikh religion. The Act jolted the Hindus. The Hindu members of the Punjab Legislative Council, Dr. Golak Nath Narang and Raja Narendra Nath, opposed the bill because they wanted to include in the Act Hindus as Sahejdhari Sikh.⁴ This was their tactics to project the Sikh religion as a part of Hinduism. They wanted to force their claim into the Sikh religion as reformed Hinduism. This was their back entry approach to spoil the Sikh religion's claim to separateness and independence from Hinduism. Another attempt was made by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, once the President of the Indian National Congress in pre-independence India, by stating that "I cannot resist asking every Hindu home to have at least one male child initiated into the fold of the Khalsa".⁵ All such manoeuvres were used to assimilate the Sikh religion as a part of Hinduism. Such were the indirect attacks on the separateness and independence of the Sikh religion. These were attempts to make an indirect entry into the Sikh religion.

However, if Sikh is Hindu why convert him to Hinduism. Hindus are in a puzzle of how to tackle the independence and separateness of the Sikh religion. Among the Hindus there is a divide on this puzzle. They are wavering with regard to the separateness and independence of the Sikh religion. They know fully well that the Sikhs are quite different from Hindus in their religious beliefs, not only different but quite the opposite. The Sikh religion has become a headache for the Hindus. This essay will bring home to the readers that in the annals of Indian history the vibrancy and distortions brought regarding the Sikh religion need to be fully understood.

Hinduism keeps on changing their intrigues of maligning the Sikh religion which is on its strong march. The Sikh religion's independence and separateness from Hinduism is toxic to the followers of Hinduism. Hinduism is not ready to accept the Sikh religion's standing upon its own strength. It is not ready to accept the separate and independence existence of the Sikh religion. This essay is to point out the differences between Hinduism and the Sikh religion. The differences between Hinduism and the Sikh religion are discussed and elaborated strictly on the basis of the scriptures of both Hinduism and the Sikh religion. This essay is a comparative study between Hinduism and the Sikh religion. This is strictly a religious dialogue between Hinduism and the Sikh religion. There is not an iota in the essay to down grade any religious sentiments of Hindus.

To establish a religion three things are necessary. There must be a founder, the cardinal principles and the revealed truth. Hinduism does not amend to any of these conditions. Hinduism has no founder, no cardinal principles and no revealed

truth- “Since there is no single founder of this religion, nor a central authority or a ‘book’ of teachings laying down a doctrine, when seen in conjunction with the flexibility it offers to believe or not to believe in the existence of god, it becomes evident why attempts to define Hinduism within the confines of a religion have been unsuccessful”.⁶ Hinduism believes that God manifests in countless forms, animate and inanimate. The object of worship could be anything - a river, a tree, an animal, a mountain, a rock, an image or an idol.⁷ As a result, a Hindu can worship God in almost any form. Idolatry is Hinduism’s common and natural form of expression in worshipping God. Hinduism has 33 crores [thirty- three million] divinities,⁸ and they can choose any one among them to worship. At different times of the year, they devote themselves to different divinities. As Thapar Romila states “Hinduism was not founded by a historical personage as a result of a revelation; it is not a revealed religion but grew and evolved from a variety of cults and beliefs, of which some have their foundations in Vedic religion, and others were popular cults”.⁹ Hindus worship a deity of their choice which they believe is capable of fulfilling their aspirations- “it is not the Brahman- the unalloyed consciousness, it is *Isvara*, the personal god, who is remembered by all practicing and non-practicing Hindus. It is the personal god that they visit in temples and in *puja*”.¹⁰

Hinduism is an ideology like a sponge that absorbs everything and after a time discards it when it loses its usefulness. For example, “Elaborate rituals were developed in the Vedic literature for *ishtapurta* [to fulfill wishes] which were centred around sacrificial rites performed to propitiate the gods in order to obtain desired results.... It is interesting to see how puranic ideas and practices replaced Vedic rituals and beliefs. They offered simpler alternatives like “*bhakti*[adoration], *dana* [philanthropy or donations], *tirtha*[pilgrimage], *vrata* [fasting] to cumbersome Vedic rituals.”¹¹ Mishra states that “Puranic Hinduism which has evolved as an alternative to the ancient sacrifice-based Vedic system... is therefore not surprising that in the Mahabharata and the Puranas, *tirtha* is considered more valuable than sacrifice”.¹²

Keeping in mind, the changing forms and expressions in Hinduism’s search of divinity, Dr. Radhakrishnan states that Hinduism “is a museum of beliefs, a medley of rites, or a mere map, a geographical expression? Its contents, if it has any, has altered from age to age; from community to community. It meant one thing in the Vedic period, another in the Brahmanical.”¹³ Hinduism’s beliefs, rituals, ceremonies etc., go on changing with the passage of time. Old ideas, beliefs and concepts when found unsuitable, they were either rejected or modified to suit the new circumstances. To give credibility to these changes, new practices, rituals and ceremonies are made sacrosanct and made indubitably clear as the first principles for the followers of Hinduism. New reasons are invented to give them credibility. Because of such flexibilities in Hinduism, it is said that “There is in

fact no system of doctrines, no teacher, or school of teaching, no single god that is accepted by all the Hindus. Again, no amount of deviation from the established doctrines, no disregard of any book or even of some customs, would cause a person to fall from Hinduism, that is become liable to exclusion from the Hindu community.”¹⁴

In Hinduism a person is born a Hindu, one cannot become a Hindu. There is no method of conversion. Hinduism does not believe in proselytisation. Since Muslims were converting Hindus to Islam, Hinduism also started the process of converting people of other religions to Hinduism. Hindus found in the success of Islam, the weakness of their own creed. They discovered a method to reverse proselytization. It was to protect the Hindu's dwindling numerical strength. This process of converting people of other religions to Hinduism is called Suddhi ceremony. At present it is freely accepted and even made a dominant feature of Hinduism. However, it is against the basic concept of Hinduism as given in the Hinduism's scriptures. Hinduism is constantly undergoing modernisation. Revisions in Hinduism is a constant trend to go with the new ideologies. There was more pressure from within Hinduism for quicker and greater reforms. Hindu reformist finally worked out successful strategies to meet the modern challenges. Hinduism keeps on evolving. It also keeps a glimpse of its old beliefs to use them from time to time. New ideas and concepts may be undesirable and conflict with the original ideas but if they prove useful to the growth of Hinduism, they are made a part of Hinduism.

Success of other religions was putting pressure on Hinduism to reform. These warnings could not callously be disregarded. Even the pressure was from within Hinduism to fix and reform Hinduism to counter the successful strategy of other religions. Such a genealogical process gave new impetus to the growth of Hinduism though sometimes complicated. However, it keeps Hinduism within the reach of everyone without creating any problem for the new comers. Taking these trends and developments into account, Hinduism kept itself aligned with the growing social developments but never able to stand on its own feet. Mahatma Gandhi supports and appreciates this flexibility of Hinduism- I regard myself as one of the humblest of Hindus, but the deeper I study Hinduism the stronger becomes the belief in me that Hinduism is as broad as the universe and it takes in its fold all that is good in this world.¹⁵ Keeping these tendencies of Hinduism in mind Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks that Hinduism is an anthropological process than a religion.¹⁶ Mahatma Gandhi also believes that Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay, and subject to the laws of nature.¹⁷ Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi admits that Hinduism is not a religion, it is more of a culture and a way of life. Mahatma Gandhi also states- “Hinduism does not rest on the authority of one book, or one prophet, nor does it possess a common

creed- like the kalma of Islam- acceptable to all”.¹⁸ Hinduism is an ideology which changes from time to time to adjust itself with the changing circumstances.

Additions and subtractions in Hinduism’s ideology are based on pragmatic philosophy- “Hinduism has always been the sum of divergent ideas, beliefs and practices. This divergence is represented in various *sakhas* of the Vedas, and their followers, since inception. The black and the white Yajur Vedas are a shining example of this seamless coexistence since ancient times.”¹⁹ Viswanathan states that “So numerous are their suggestions of truth, so various are their guesses at God, that almost anybody may seek in them what he wants and find what he seeks, and every school of dogmatics may congratulate itself on finding its own doctrine in the saying of the Upanishads”.²⁰ Therefore- Hinduism is not a religion but a way of life. Hinduism is more a culture than a religion.²¹ In a recently published book Ashok Mishra writes, “Since there is no single founder of this religion, nor a central authority or a ‘book’ of teachings laying down a doctrine, when seen in conjunction with the flexibility it offers to believe or not to believe in the existence of god, it becomes evident why attempts to define Hinduism within the confines of a religion have been unsuccessful”.²² Hinduism as a faith is not based on the spiritual experience of any person. It lacks the theistic-philosophy of spiritual experience.²³

Another point of discussion regarding Hinduism relates to the etymology of the word Hindu. A dictionary known as Mahan Kosh compiled by Kahan Singh Nabha and published in 1930 in four volumes defines the word Hindu as thug, cheat, dishonest. The same dictionary was again published in one volume by the Language Department, Patiala in 1960 and the meaning of the word Hindu as defined by Kahan Singh Nabha appeared on page 275. This meaning was also confirmed in Pears Encyclopaedia, J. 48 at page 93, edited by Christopher Cook in 1975. In 1984 a case no. Cr. M.1 356-M/1984, pp. 4-5, in the Punjab High Court confirmed the above meaning of the word Hindu.

The word Hindu has not been mentioned in any of the scriptures of Hinduism. It has no reference in the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas nor it is mentioned in the Manusmriti, known as Manava Dharmasastra. Manusmriti is the encyclopedia and the very breath of life for Hinduism. The word Hindu is an invention of the Muslims for the people of India “The religion of the Indo-Aryan speaking immigrants was not Hindu religion”.²⁴ R. N. Surya Narain writes that “I am not clear about the meaning of Hinduism. The foreigners who coined this word may have a meaning attached to it but this name cannot with any justification be given to our nation or the Brahmans.”²⁵ The word Hindu was given currency by the Arabs in the eighth century A.D. to the inhabitants of India because of the practice of usuary as a regular feature in the economic and social life of the people.²⁶ Usuary is banned in the Muslim religion, it is regarded a sinful

behaviour. Because of this sinful behaviour, the Muslims started calling the people of India Hindu. Usury is accepted in Hinduism as a valid practice to earn money. Manusmriti 10.115 justifies usury as a means of acquiring property, receiving interest is regarded a law full mode of obtaining property.

From the above discussion of Hinduism, one thing is very clear that all the conditions- the founder, the categorical principles and revealed truth, are missing from Hinduism. Hinduism is in flux, it fleets.

The foundations of Sikh religion are laid down by Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikh religion. All the conditions mentioned earlier to establish a religion - the founder, the categorical principles and revealed Truth are found in the Sikh religion. The word Sikh is mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikh means a disciple or a learner- Sikhi is a process of learning by contemplating on God.²⁷ God in the Sikh religion is attributive and a Sikh is bound to follow those attributes. All those who abide and follow the convictions of the Gurbani are known as Sikh. The Sikh religion is thus a revelatory religion. These convictions are Dharma [religion] which teach the followers of Dharma the art of living. It is also made absolutely clear in the Guru Granth Sahib that a Sikh is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, he is under the command of all pervading God who is called Allah or Ram.²⁸ This is first-hand evidence, in fact, a declaration that Sikh is not a Hindu. The Sikh religion evolved into a separate and distinct religion from Hinduism. No-body will be allowed to interfere and challenge the separate and independent existence of the historical truth of the Sikh religion. This serves to hold them together as a united community ever since. The Sikh religion is cohesive and homogeneous.

Hinduism is a heterogeneous group of people and the members of the group call themselves Hindu. It is heterogeneous group because it is split into four castes. The caste divisions denote abiding or absolute set of duties on each caste. These set of duties are disabilities to keep each caste separate from the other. All the four castes- Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra- have responsibility for their own preservation. Caste system is fully established in Hinduism. And this is the most honest truth. Different categories of castes have created within Hinduism a quite unique, differential and discriminatory category of classes. The caste system is the main system of guidance in all religious and social affairs of Hindus. Because of superiority of one caste over the other, they are allowed to inflict degradations of various types upon the subordinates. The most elaborate explanation of the caste system one finds in the Manusmriti. The tendencies to impose intrinsically false and perilous system of ancient Hinduism is still in existence.

Hindus claim that both Hinduism and the Sikh religion are the same or two facets of the same coin. This they argue on the basis of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith. Guru Nanak was born in the Hindu family. Therefore, he was a Hindu. Whatever theistic philosophy he developed was the result of Hindu influence. It was the Hindu religious environment that showed him the light. He was the product of the Hinduism's ethos. However, Hindus failed to realise that one's birth in the Hindu family does not mean that one is bound and fixed to the Hindu ethos. Both Jesus Christ and Hazrat Mohammad were born Jews. They started different religions namely Christianity and Islam. Similarly, Guru Nanak though born in a Hindu family started a new religion and became a precursor of the Sikh religion. He abandoned his own Hindu heritage by giving the concept of one God and oneness of humanity, totally opposite, different and unique to Hinduism. Those who followed his theistic philosophy came to be known as Sikh and not Hindus. Guru Nanak's birth in the Hindu family was not in his hands but rejecting Hinduism was his personal genius effort.

Guru Nanak refused to be initiated into Hinduism. He refused to take part in thread wearing ceremony, the Jenue, the symbol of Hinduism. Jenue ceremony is a purificatory ceremony that gives a Hindu the status of twice-born, known as Dwija. It is called second birth in the religious context rather than social context. This ceremony is considered an important samaskara [sacrament]. Under the Hindu caste system this ceremony is only meant for the Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya. The wearing of Jenue imparts a special social status to members of the three superior castes. However, Sudra is not allowed to wear Jenue.²⁹ Again, different castes wear jenue made of different material because if all wear the same type of Jenue the caste differences will disappear. Brahmana will wear a thread made of cotton, Kshatriya will wear a thread made of silk and Vaisya will wear a thread made of wool. These three castes were sharply designated and isolated from Sudra.

Guru Nanak in his saintly and god-fearing manner refused to wear the Jenue. He gave reasons for his refusal- One should wear a Jenue of mercy which is mellow and soothing like cotton and tied with the knots of benevolence. Dress me with such a Jenue because it will comfort the soul, it will never soil and break; by wearing a Jenue like that one gets God's blessings.³⁰ Guru Nanak also pointed out the defects in the Hindu Jenue- When it is soiled, it decays and becomes outdated, one has to wear a new Jenue.³¹ His refusal created a bit of commotion. It was his first revolt against the fundamentals of Hinduism, a sacrosanct part of Hinduism. Guru Nanak also reprimanded Hindus who wear Jenue because they speak ill of others.³² It means that the Jenue does not bring any discipline and solace in the life of a wearer. The Jenue which does not guide a man towards truth, chastity and honour is fruitless.³³ Guru Nanak not only refused to wear the Jenue but also admonished those who wear the Jenue. The Jenue instead of

bringing comfort and humility in the life of the wearer gives rise to the pride of caste. Jenu is a source of domination and arrogance.

Moreover, the categorical principles of the Sikh religion as laid down in the Guru Granth Sahib by the Sikh Gurus, Bhagats and other devotees have made it absolutely clear that whatever text the Hindus and Mulla [Muslim] have written, nothing is borrowed from them.³⁴ The categorical principles laid down in the Guru Granth Sahib are important mile stones in the life of the followers of the Sikh religion. They are the source of truthfulness, humility and humanity. They are to bring solidarity and oneness among human beings.

Concept of God in the Sikh religion and Hinduism

The most common argument of the Hindus to prove that the Sikh religion and Hinduism are the same is claimed because of the use of the word 'Ram'. Both Sikh and Hindu are devotees of Ram. To clear this confusion, one must confine oneself to examine this tangle. The word Ram in Hinduism and the Sikh religion is used in totally different senses. The term Ram has a very wide significance. Unless one state clearly what one understands of the nature of Ram, one will remain confused.

In the Sikh religion the word Ram refers to formless God. However, in Hinduism, Hindus are the devotees of Ram, the son of King Dasratha in the Ramayana, Hindu's sacred epic. Both the uses of word Rama in the Gurbani and in the Ramayana, therefore, stand opposed to each other. For example, when two persons have the same name, it does not mean that both have the same nature and characteristics. Everyone will understand this common logic. Similarly in the Sikh religion and Hinduism the use of the word Ram is quite different, one bearing no relation with the other.

In fact, it is an affront to the Sikh religion to create a confusion over the word Ram. Ram of Hinduism is a living person. Ram of the Sikh religion is an infinite, formless and abstract. Gurbani states that "Ram is neither a person nor a demi-god, neither is He celibate nor Shiva... He has no mother father...neither is He Brahmana nor Khatri... He is free from birth and death... this is the trait or persona of Ram".³⁵ Such Ram is God of the Sikh religion. Such Ram, God, in the Sikh religion is adored and revered by different names. In the Sikh religion God is remembered by many names having infinite forms, and all of them cannot be enumerated.³⁶ However, all the names used for God in the Sikh religion have abstract, infinite and formless character.

Ram of Hindus was the Son of King Dasharatha, in the epic Ramayna, a complex metaphysical discourse. He was not the biological son of King Dashratha. King Dashratha had three wives, Koshalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. All the wives were given magic porridge infused with the essence of Lord Vishnu. The porridge was prepared while performing religious rituals or service. As a result, Koshalya gave birth to Ram Chander, Sumitra gave birth to two sons Laxman and Shatrughan and Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharat. All the four children came to be known as the sons of King Dashratha because of his wives. King Dashratha, in fact, was childless. He became father through mystical and occult measures.³⁷

When one compares the Ram of the Sikh religion who is an absolute, infinite, self-existing persona, one will immediately realise that the Ram of the Sikh religion has nothing to do with Ram Chander, the son of king Dasharatha. Guru Nanak in the Gurbani states – God is formless, God is fearless; many other miserable and hapless Ram are servile and miserable in front of Him.³⁸ Again Gurbani states that Dasharatha’s Ram is a human being with all sorts of limitation and incapable of protecting his own family.³⁹ Gurbani even referred to the killing of Ravan by Ram and stated- By killing ten headed Ravan, what greatness Ram has achieved.⁴⁰ Moreover Ram was incapable of killing Ravan, arrogant Ravan was killed by Ram only after Babhikan disclosed the secret to Ram of how to kill Ravan.⁴¹ Ram for himself cannot earn any credit for killing Ravan who kidnapped his wife. Ram for the discerning readers, who can see through the clever confusion created by Hinduism, will judge himself the clear differences of Ram of the Sikh religion and the Ram of Hinduism. Ram Chander may be a claver, brave and good king but cannot attain the status of God.

The Sikh religion and Hinduism are quite distinct. In fact, quite opposite to each other with respect to the notion of God. The differences and distinctions are very obvious when one reads this text. Hinduism believes -An Avtar is an incarnation of God. When God comes down to earth in any life-form, then we call that an Avatar...In the Bhagavad Gita it is written, “whenever there is a decay of Dharma (righteousness) and outbreak of Adharma (non-righteousness), I descend myself to protect good, to annihilate the wicked and to re-establish Dharma. I am born from age to age”.⁴² The Sikh religion does not prescribe to such an idea and the Sikhs should not miss a single chance to clear this confusion.

Gurbani expresses the transcendental unity of God in the world- Only one God prevails everywhere in the world and there is no one else.⁴³ In the Sikh religion God is both transcendental and immanent. Gurbani states- All Vedas and Shastras could not explain You, but in all the ages God is the same.⁴⁴ This shows that God does not take birth, God does not incarnate. God does not come into existence, that is, God is free from incarnation.⁴⁵ Gurbani even scolds one who

thinks that God takes birth- let that mouth incinerate that says that God takes birth.⁴⁶ It is only God who is free from the cycle of birth and death.⁴⁷

In the Sikh religion God is remembered by numerous names.⁴⁸ All these names are associated with different attributes of God. God is not an anthropomorphic but is formless attributive. For example, the very opening of the Guru Granth Sahib indicates the characteristics of God- Satnam indicates that truth is the attribute of God, Akalmurat, indicates that God is immortal and Kartapurkh means God is the creator. Different names used in the Guru Granth Sahib for God do not indicate different Gods as in Hinduism. In Hinduism different names indicate different gods, performing different functions- Brahma is the creator of the world, Vishnu is responsible for replenishing the world and Shiva is responsible for bringing destruction to the world. The existence of these three gods performing three different functions in the management of the world is totally antithesis of the Sikh theistic philosophy. Gurbani states- God is the only administrator of the world.⁴⁹

Sikh and Hinduism's prayers/ worship to God

In the Sikh religion prayer to God is offered in words. It is known as Ardas, meaning request or appeal. In the prayer Sikh refers to moral-social activities. By uttering attributive nature of God, one begs for God's mercy for one's moral-social activities. It is an appeal to God for His benignity. It is not a demand. Sikh believes that everything is in the hands of God, He is capable of granting one's wishes. It is the devotion and sincerity of the prayer to God that counts.

Sikh also prays to God for self-realisation. Self-realisation means to know one's self, since self is the image of God. Self-realisation is attained when there is a complete coordination between one's mind and God's command, complete adaptation of God's virtues.⁵⁰ God is remembered not by simply uttering His Naam, God is remembered through one's karma following the attributive nature of God. The prayer to God is conveyed through deeds and not through rituals. Spiritual merits are earned through noble deeds steeped in truthful and honest living; it is through noble deeds one gets divine understanding and realises one's self.⁵¹ It is the noble deeds of human beings that constitute the contours of God-realisation.⁵² Service of humanity is the method to meet God. It is only by being attributive like God, one serves God, one becomes like God and that is God-realisation.

In Hinduism's prayers are offered for spiritual merits. These prayers are offered through Gayatri Mantra. Gayatri Mantra's prayer is to natural elements- earth, wind, fire, etc. These natural elements form part of the Gayatri Mantra. Gayatri Mantra is oblivious of God.⁵³ Gayatri Mantra is written in the Rgveda. It

gives the forces of nature the status of Hindu deities. In Hinduism prayers are also offered to some trees because they are related to Hindu gods. For example, Tulsi tree is associated with Hindu god Vishnu, Pipal tree is associated with Brahma, he lives in its trunk and Bel tree is associated with Shiva.

Hindu worship their gods in images and idols such as carvings of stones or clay etc. However, Hindu worship is not simple. In Hinduism gods take birth, marries and have children. Sometimes they enjoy life by appearing on earth and return to heaven after fulfilling their mission. They have two-way traffic. Having such a concept of god, it is not unusual and unexpected to cast gods in an idol. All these occurrences and episodes are conducted through Mantras [sacred incantations]. Mantras are used to bring about unification and unfolding of consciousness. For example, an idol cannot be worshipped unless it is infused with consciousness, that is, with life. It is through Mantras life is infused into an idol. This infusion of life into an idol is very crucial part of the idol worship.⁵⁴ No puja or worship is performed and complete without *Prana Prathishtha*. Prana Prathishtha also requires special flowers, fruits, cloth, etc. If any part of idol breaks, broken idol is discarded because it is believed that life has fizzled out.

However, sometimes the Hindus worship a special stone known as Salagrama- It is a smooth stone said to be the natural form (Swaroopa) of Lord Vishnu. In fact, the word “Salagrama” is one of the names of Lord Vishnu. This smooth stone is found mainly at the bottom of the Gandaki River in Nepal. The stone picked from the river is worshipped as it is, without consecrational ceremony... The very presence of a Salagrama in a home is supposed to bring all prosperity... In the Padma Purana, Lord Vishnu tells Lord Siva, “Oh! Siva I reside always in the Salagrama stone.”⁵⁵ Gurbani makes reference to Salagrama-Brahmana worship Salagrama by wearing a rosary of Tulsi [Basil]. But if you are seeking God’s blessings, embark on the pursuit of God.⁵⁶

Since Hinduism believes in the plurality of gods, each god has for himself special Mantra to get in touch. Mantras are believed to have power to induce the gods to fulfill the wishes of the reciter. Vishwanathan explains the theory of Mantra and states- A Mantra is a magic incantation or spell... In Hinduism, deities are represented by Mantras and each deity is associated with a particular Mantra. It is said that the power of the Mantra brings down the deity to enter an image and then the image comes “alive”. All Hindu Mantras are made of Sanskrit alphabet. It is believed that each letter has the potency of infinite power and when several of these letters are properly grouped into a Mantra, then that Mantra contributes to create a special effect.”⁵⁷ Gurbani does not accept the notion of Mantras- Gurbani believes that Mantras and other incantations are hypocritical notions, by keeping God in mind one feels content and enjoys God’s company.⁵⁸

While performing Puja special care is taken of the foodstuff because each god takes special type of food for refreshment- Like humans, gods are also believed to have favourite foods, such as *modaka* for Ganapati, *laddus* for *Hanuman*, et cetera.⁵⁹

In the Sikh religion God is not represented in images or idols. God is infinite and cannot be apprehended by physical senses. God is “Agam” that is, He is inaccessible, beyond reach, and God is “Agochar” that is, He is incomprehensible, inconceivable.⁶⁰ Human intellect is finite and finite cannot know the infinite. Human intellect, however, can know God if it attains the height of infinity. This can be done only if finite intellect adopts the attributive nature of infinite, infinite will reveal Oneself. God-conscious person becomes one with God, he becomes like God, *Samdarsi*, and realises the oneness of humanity.⁵¹ God-conscious person, saint, becomes like God in the sense that both God and the saint are of the same nature and character.⁶² Therefore, God is realised only by becoming like God. By wearing rosary of Tulsi and worshipping stone god, *Saligram*, one cannot reach God.⁶³ *Gurbani* shows the way to meet God- By adopting attributive nature, one can reach and realise God, that is, only by becoming attributive like God.⁶⁴ *Bhagat Nam Deo* question those who worship stone God and remarks- One stone is trampled under feet but another stone is worshipped as God, if one stone is God, the other stone should also be God.⁶⁵ Similarly *Bhagat Kabir* expresses himself more strongly against idol worship and states- The sculptor while carving idol from stone places feet on the stone, and if the stone-god is real and true god, then it should eat the sculptor, that is, stone-god should kill him.⁶⁶ God is not a stone, stones do not speak- God has a life and speaks, He bestows bounties, He is philanthropist.⁶⁷ God is the producer, preserver and supplier of all necessities of life. *Gurbani* disapproved the worship of stone gods and states- worshipping stone gods is a sign of ignorance because stones themselves sink and how can they ferry and salvage others.⁶⁸

Gurbani states that Hinduism’s scriptures are unable to reveal the transcendental status and nature of God.⁶⁹ *Gurbani* states- *Inder*, *Vishnu* and *Gorakh* are looking for him on earth and sky, between earth and heaven; divine men, gods and demons are searching for Him but could not reveal the iota of the mystery of God.⁷⁰ *Gurbani* states that *Brahma* revealed his *bani* through the *Vedas* but all his *bani* is laced in *Maya*, that is, could not reveal the character and nature of God.⁷¹

Moreover, in Hinduism multiplicity of gods and division of faculties among them create a puzzle in Hinduism. God in the Sikh religion is absolute and perfect and all-pervading in running the universe. In pre-Vedic period gods like *Ruder* and *Inder* were all pervading but in the Vedic period previous gods were left out and new gods like *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiv*, *Ganesh*, etc., were

brought into prominence. All texts of Hinduism whether pre-Vedic or Vedic period never revealed the nature of God- Smritis and Shastras confine a person only towards maya, that is, towards mundane and profane activities.⁷² The stories of infighting and jealousies of Hindu gods and goddesses among themselves for power are very common. One can read all their stories in Hindu scriptures.⁷³

In the Sikh religion the realisation of God is by leading a virtuous life, virtues are the means of becoming aware of God. All other pretensions are considered indulgence in Maya, egoism. It is not the knowledge of virtues that leads to God, it is the adoption of virtuous conduct in life that leads to self-realisation which is the meeting point with God- By reading the Vedas, Smritis and Kateb and other scriptures one does not get deliverance, redemption comes from adopting the attributive character of God, that makes one Gurmukh.⁷⁴ It is the truthful life without dithering an iota from truth that leads to His realisation, it is by following the commands of God one meets Him.⁷⁵ Because of stress on truthful living it is Karma that is the conduit to meet God, all other methods to attain God-realisation are condemned- Pilgrimage, fasting, purification, austerities, rituals and other religious ceremonies are of no avail because all these are illusions, emancipation comes only from righteous conduct because that reflect the loving devotion of God.⁷⁶ By following the attributive nature of God, one reflects the love of God and His devotion.

Manusmriti only mentions rituals, austerities and Mantras for spiritual benefits, there is no mention of God in his whole thesis. Hinduism's sphere is limited within the physical phenomena because Hindu gods and goddesses are presented as living persons like all human beings who are subject to all types of follies and frailty. The arena of intuitive reality is beyond their approach and they have no idea of infinite and abstract nature of God. For example- Rgveda and Yajurveda concern themselves with mantras and *yajnas*, the Samaveda is more about the chanting of mantras while performing *yajnas*. However, the contents of all three Vedas, such as cosmology, worship of forces of nature and Vedas deities, methods of worship and philosophy, are 'serious' and *yajna* centric... No one can dispute that the objective of creating the three Vedas was not to teach magic, charm or sorcery.⁷⁷

Creation of the Universe

The next question relating to the concept of God is regarding the creation of the universe. Hinduism does not give any definite answer regarding the creation of the universe. Hinduism advances different episodes regarding the creation. All those accounts have advanced different explanations. Origin of the universe as one finds in the Vedas and Purana and Upanisads state- Brahman, born in a lotus growing out of the naval of *Narayana (Visnu)* who is reclined on

a bed formed by the coiled *Ananta naga* (endless snake), floating in the primeval waters, reciting Vedas from his four heads. Narayana (Sanskrit- nara = water, ayana= home) had remained for a year inside a golden egg which came into being by itself. And creation- the earth, the heaven and also the sky, directions, time, and senses - was thus manifested.⁷⁸ However from this explanation, one can conclude that the universe already existed in some form and gods came later to take charge of it.

Gurbani makes reference to Brahma entering in the time region- Brahma entered into time region or zone, then he made entry into the lotus to find God in the nether region but he could not discover the infinite nature of God, that is, he failed to know the formal, infinite and unapproachable God.⁷⁹

However, Kurma Purana refers to a dialogue between Brahma and Vishnu regarding the creation of the universe and states- When the three worlds were in darkness, Vishnu slept in the middle of the cosmic ocean. A lotus grew out of his navel. Brahma came to him and said, "Tell me, who are you? Vishnu replied, "I am Vishnu, creator of the universe. All the worlds, and you yourself, are inside me. And who are you?" Brahma replied, "I am the creator, self-created, and everything is inside me." Vishnu then entered Brahma's body and saw all three worlds in his belly. Astonished, he came out of Brahma's mouth and said, "Now, you must enter my belly in the same way and see the world." And so Brahma entered Vishnu's belly and saw all the worlds. Then, Since Vishnu had shut all the openings, Brahma came out of Vishnu's naval and rested on the lotus.⁸⁰

Manusmriti advances different explanations regarding the creation of the universe. Manusmriti 1.5-9, 12-13 gives somewhat different account of the creation of the world- (5) The universe existed in the shape of Darkness, unperceived, destitute of distinctive marks, unattainable by reason, unknowable, wholly immersed, as it were in deep sleep. (6) Then the divine self-existing (Svayambhu, himself) indiscernible, but making all this, the great elements and the rest, discernible, appeared with irresistible creative power, dispelling the darkness. (7) He who can be perceived by the internal organs alone, who is subtle, indiscernible, and eternal, who contains all created beings and is inconceivable, shone forth of his own will. (8) He, desiring to produce beings of many kinds from his own body, first with a thought created the waters and placed his seed in them. (9) That seed became a golden egg, in brilliancy equal to the sun, in that egg he himself was born as Brahma, the progenitor of the whole world. (12) The divine one resided in the egg during the whole year, then he himself by his thought alone divide it into two halves. (13) And out of those two halves he formed heaven and earth, between them the middle sphere, the eight points of the horizon, and the eternal abode of the waters.

Comparing all these versions about the creation of the universe, ignoring the differences, one will conclude that God discovered the world and merely put some modifications. Therefore, the world is not God's original creation. He discovered rather than created the world. Hinduism's idea of the creation of the universe is a mystic process created by mystic being through mystical ways. Hinduism, instead of solving the mystery of the origin of the world, created a new mystery to be solved. Such controversies in the Hindu scriptures are common features which create confusion and puzzles one about spiritual knowledge.

There is another episode regarding the creation of earth by Vishu. Earth was created from the body of two demons when Vishu killed them. This episode is regarding the life of Brahma. Brahma's life was threatened by two demons Madhu and Kaitabha. Gurbani makes reference to these two demons, Madhu and Kaitab,⁸¹ because Gurbani is inimical to wizards and condemns them. The Bhagavata Purana unfolds this benevolent act of Vishnu who saved the life of Brahma. The Bhagavata Purana explains the birth, killing and the resultant effect of the killing. These two demons were born out of the earwax of Vishnu which he threw into the sea. Vishnu killed these two demons who were bent on killing Brahma, the creator of the world. Brahma appealed to Vishu to save him. Vishnu played his tricks with Madhu and Kaitabha, and was successful in killing them. He saved Brahma from destruction. Their body fat, blubber, he threw into the sea and that formed the earth. Their bones were also thrown into the sea. Those bones formed the twelve seismic plates of the earth.⁸² This is how the earth came into existence, a mystical explanation, rather than an ethical and stoic answer. Gurbani states- God created the world, no one knows how He created.⁸³ The act of creation is God's own ingenuity. No one has access to know the mystery of the creation.

After creating the world, Brahma wanted to populate the world. He created four children from his mind - Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana, and Sanat kumar. They were the first sons of the Creator born out of his divine aura. Sons were known as Manasputras or Chaturvana. Brahma told them that they have been created for a certain purpose. The purpose is to populate the Brahmanda [world] through the act of procreation. They refused. Instead requested Brahma to grant them the blessings of immortality. They wanted to be out of the circle of life and death. Brahma argued some more, but finally yielded.⁸⁴ Gurbani makes reference to the four sages of Brahma- Divine like Brahma and saints like Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanat Kumar were unable to obtain inaccessible, infinite, and profound wisdom of God, that is, they could not become like God.⁸⁵ Brahma not only created his four sons but also brought Shiva into existence through his ecclesiastic power. When his sons refused to take part in the process of procreation, Brahma became very angry. He started emitting from his forehead a fiery beam which produced a celestial being with red blazing eyes. He roared ferociously and demanded his name. Brahma gave his name Ruder. Ruder was

Shiva, the destroyer.⁸⁶ Among the three gods of Hinduism, Brahma is regarded the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer. This completes the triumvirate of Hinduism, the sole authority and regulator of the universe.

Gurbani is indifferent to these three gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva since Gurbani catches glimpse of only one God.⁸⁷ Gurbani states that Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeo are afflicted with three ailments- and their acts are egocentric, they and do not remember God who created them.⁸⁸ To renounce their greatness, Gurbani states - God created countless Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, there is no shortage of such incarnations.⁸⁹ All these three gods are married and have children. Brahma's wife was Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge; Vishnu's wife was Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity; and shiva wife was Parvati, the goddess of power.

Ganesha is a cardinal deity of Hinduism. Hindus believe that Ganesha's devotion is the antidote of all problems of life- While worship stone-god, they mark it with the image of Ganesh and remain awake for the whole night to shower their adoration.⁹⁰ However, Gurbani rejects all such pretensions unless one realises the infinite and unapproachable God, all such performances are a waste of time.⁹¹ Any adoration to Ganesha is not given any spiritual recognition in the Sikh religion.

However, it becomes important to know the emergence of Ganesha in Hinduism and attaining the status of god. Ganesh's birth is a very mysterious event. Shiva's wife Parvati was getting ready to take bath. She smeared herself with turmeric paste. She began rubbing it off. From the peelings or flakes she made a mould of human body and infused breath into the body. She named that body Ganesha, Ganapati, Master of the ganas [attributes]. She started her bath and gave Ganesha a staff to watch against any intruder from coming inside her chamber while she is taking bath. Shiva, the husband of Parvati, came home. He wanted to go into the chamber, Ganesha objected. Over this fight ensued between them. Shiva cut Ganesha's head with his trident. When Parvati came to know about the fight and the death of Ganesha, she was furious. She insisted that Shiva must revive Ganesha. Shiva could not find Ganesha's head. The first head that he could procure was that of an elephant. Shiva revived Ganesh by implanting that head over Ganesh's body. All three gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, blessed Ganasha. Blessed him with the status of a cardinal deity, gave him the paramount status over all other gods. They called him Vigneshwar, the removal of all hurdles of life.⁹²

Another Hinduism's god which is very famous and popular is Hanuman, also known as Vayu Puttar, son of the wind. Gurbani makes reference to Hanuman and remarks that beings or characters like him do not know the

transcendence nature of God.⁹³ Hanuman is adored and worshipped. He is the son of Shiva. He is famous because of his intimate association with Ram Chander of Ramayana. He helped in building a causeway for the armies to cross over to Lanka to kill Ravan and save Sita, the wife of Ram. Hanuman got the title of Vayu putar because Parvati, the consort of Siva, transferred her pregnancy to the womb of the consort of Vayu, who delivered Hanuman.⁹⁴ Shiv Puran states another story of Hanuman's birth. Shiv was enamoured by Anjni and could not restrain himself. She gave birth to Hanuman but felt embarrassed from illicit birth. She left his son and disappeared in the sky. Hanuman thus came to be known as Vayu Puttar, the son of wind.

In the Sikh religion the existence of God is self-existent. God is immortal, unborn and has no form or shape.⁹⁵ Gurbani states that one's mouth will incinerate, if one talks of the birth of God.⁹⁶ However, Manusmriti 1.11 explains the birth of Brahma, the creator of the universe- From that first cause, which is indiscernible, eternal and both real and unreal, was produced that male (Pursha) who is famed in this world under the appellation of Brahma.

In the Sikh religion God is not male and does not take birth. Gurbani states that God's infinite form is Nirgun and Sargun. Gurbani states that before the world came into existence, God was in His Nirgun form, ingenuous and unsophisticated form, and later assumed His Sargun form, attributive and virtuous form. Gurbani explains very clearly how the Sargun state came out of the Nirgun state. Nirgun state was not a state of nothingness, without any gunas [attributes], but the gunas were there, not in the manifest form, they were in the state of hibernation. Gurbani states- The form, the Sargun state, came out of the Nirgun state, the formless state; God with His ingenuity was holding the form, the Sargun, within the Nirgun fold.⁹⁷

Form must exist before it can expand. Both Nirgun and Sargun states are the states of God, He is the same both in his unmanifested and manifested form- Narinkar [Nirgun] formless God created all forms.⁹⁸ Here one can give a very simple and practical example for common understanding. In mathematics zero is the starting point but it contains within itself the entire numerical expansion. For a common man zero means nothing. But he has failed to realise the potentiality of zero. Zero has the potentiality to expand. So is the case with unmanifest and manifest state of God who embrace within itself the entire scheme of creation. From this narrative of God given in the Guru Granth Sahib, it is very easy to note the difference between the nature of God in the Sikh religion and Hinduism. Both stand quite opposite to each other. In fact, totally negating the Hinduism's concept of god or gods.

In the Sikh religion God is beyond the notion of life and death. In Hinduism gods assume human bodies. They become subject to life and death. Gurbani commenting on the performance of the trio states- Brahma revealed the Vedas hymns, but always remained absorbed in maya and obsessed with infatuations; Shiva remained egocentric, proud, passionate and ill tempered; Krishan remained every busy in reincarnations; having and showing malicious nature, how can they emancipate people in the world.⁹⁹ They cannot deliver any spiritual lessons and provide guidance to people. The Sikh religion believes in one God as the sole eternal authority. However, "According to the Mahabharata... there are 33333 Hindu deities. In other sources that number is multiplied a thousand-fold. In modern times, Hindu gods are believed to number a staggering thirty-three crores, i.e. 330 million".¹⁰⁰ Since Hinduism is a growing process and is evolving with a slow pace, her gods keep on growing in numbers. In fact, Guru Granth Sahib also makes reference to the thirty-three crore gods [deities] and regards them the servants of God; they draw their power and wealth from God and God is their last resort.¹⁰¹ Their deliverance and salvation is in the hands of God.

While it was becoming difficult for the Sikh religion to grasp the concept of God in Hinduism, interestingly another important concept of Yugs [epoch] came under discussion. The concept of Yugas needs an explanation. Hinduism discusses the nature, character and the changing names of God in each Yug. And each Yug states a very different and colourful history of her nature, character and its existence. Manusmriti 9.302 while defining these Yugs state- Krita Yug [Satyug] is golden age, Treta Yug is silver age, Dvapara Yug is brazen age and Kali Yug is iron age.

Hinduism believes that there are four Yugs - Satya Yug, Tareta Yug, Dwapar Yug and Kal Yug. With the change of Yugs God's character, nature and name changes. Moreover, these Yugs are not of the same length, their duration also changes. During Satya Yug truth was the hallmark of life, that is, people in this Yug were honest and virtuous. In Treta Yug, truth was ignored and hypocrisy became predominant. In Dwapar yug duality prevailed. In Kal Yug religion was ignored and maya (wealth) became dominant.¹⁰² However, Gurbani relates these Yugs with the changes in human mentality due to changing circumstances. According to Hinduism during Treta Yug Ram, the avatar of Vishnu, was the ruler, in Dwapar yug, Krishan, the avatar of Vishnu, was in full control and in Kali Yug Kalki the avatar of Vishu will appear to finish the period of anti-gods.¹⁰³ Gurbani does not go along with these divisions. Gurbani states that whatever the Yug is, God is one and the same, there is no change in the nature, name and character of God; one and the same God prevails in all the Yugs.¹⁰⁴ In fact, the concept of Yugs do not fit in the Gurbani because God is one and remains the same in all the epochs.

It will be interesting to know that the life of Krishan, the god of Dwaper yug, suddenly came to an end. Krishna was killed by a hunter - After the Mahabharat war, lord Krishna was cursed by Queen Gandhari, the wife of blind Dhritarashtra, whose hundred sons were killed in the war- Oh Lord Krishna you are the cause of this war. If you had not participated in it, my children would be living today.... Lord Krishna went to the forest and lay down under a tree. At that time a hunter came along, saw Krishna's toe which he mistook for a rabbit, and struck him with his arrow... Lord Krishna started bleeding profusely. The hunter, seeing the calamity he has caused, prostrated before Lord Krishna and begged for his mercy. Krishna smiled and told him that he had done absolutely nothing wrong and that he (Krishna) was actually obeying the unwritten Karmic law, for in his last life, he had killed the hunter in a cunning manner when the hunter was the monkey-king Bali and Lord Krishna was the great Lord Rama.... So saying, Lord Krishna left the physical world and went back to Vaikunta as Lord Vishnu.¹⁰⁵ Hinduism believes that their gods come into the world by changing their names and return to their original place in heaven after finishing their role and representation on earth. Crossing down from heaven to earth and returning to heaven remained the privilege of Hindu gods. All the Hindu gods take part in this journey according to their capacity, ability and turn.

Use of Hindu Terminology in the Guru Granth Sahib

Hindu believe that since the Guru Granth Sahib used the name of Hindu gods and mentions Hindu scriptures in the Gurbani, Sikh is a Hindu. This fact left an unimpeachable impact and passion upon the Hindu mind to prove that Sikh is a Hindu. But it is a trite learning and an arm chair claim. However, the Hindus failed to notice that the Guru Granth Sahib also used the Muslim terminology Karim, Rahem, Allah, Khuda to address God.¹⁰⁶ The Guru Granth Sahib uses both the words like Ram, Allah, Khuda, Parbrahm, Hari, Narayan, etc., for infinite, formless and invisible God in the same breath.¹⁰⁷ This shows that in the Guru Granth Sahib there is no distinction between Ram and Allah, both the words are used for one and only one formless God. Moreover, in using the Hindu terminology, the Sikh Gurus gave the terminology different meaning and significance. This changed the whole essence and meaning of the Hindu terminology used in the Guru Granth Sahib. While using the vocabulary of both the Hindus and Islam, the Guru Granth Sahib commands that a Sikh is neither a Hindu nor a Musalman.¹⁰⁸ This dictum is further fortified by announcing that the Sikh religion has no dispute either with the Pandit [Hindu Priest] or the Mulla [Muslim Priest] because nothing is borrowed from them.¹⁰⁹

All such pronouncements in the Guru Granth Sahib prove beyond doubt that the Sikh religion is separate and independent of Hinduism. It stands on its

own theistic philosophy whatever be the claim of Hinduism. At the same time the Guru Granth Sahib is not trying to change Hinduism's narrations but is producing and providing a new thesis. The Sikh religion is not competing with Hinduism. The Sikh religion is standing on its own feet.

Sacred modes to attain God-consciousness in Hinduism

Hinduism's approach to attain perfections in life or to attain spiritual blessings need to be explained. Hinduism offers many types of rituals to attain expiation from sins. It is not possible to detail all of them, but, for example, some are given here. Tirtha [pilgrimage to holy place], Vrata [fasting], Auspicious days for celebrations, Yajna or Havan and Dana [Charity] to earn spiritual merits are open to discussion. These austerities are considered the gateway to heaven. Here discussion is confined to an examination of their sanctity and mysteries.

Tirtha- Among the Hindus, visit to the sacred places is considered a religious duty. It is their Dharma. Every religious duty in Hinduism is dharma, Dharma is duty.¹¹⁰(**Ashok 29**) The Hindus sacred books glorify the benefits of pilgrimage. Hindus visit these places with the conviction that their pilgrimage will give them purification and redemption from sins. These places are rivers, temples, etc. which are associated with Hindu gods. For example, the river Ganges is considered a goddess. It is associated with Vishnu and Shiva. Bhagirata risi [saint] brought the river down from heaven where it was touching the feet of Vishnu. The river entered the earth through the matted locks of Shiva. The reason for bringing the Ganges on the earth was as follows: Once was a king named Sagara. His sixty thousand sons "dug into the earth to find the lost sacrificial horse of their father, how was performing a horse sacrifice... A sage burned the princes to ashes, and years later Bhagiratha, the grandson of Sagara, persuaded the Ganges, which existed at that time only in the form of Milky Way in heaven, to descend to earth in order to flow over the ashes for his grandfathers and thus purify them so that they should enter heaven; he also persuaded the god Shiva to let the heavenly Ganges River land first on his head and meander through his matted hair before flowing down to the earth, in order to prevent her from shattering the earth by a direct fall out of the sky.¹¹¹

The most important pilgrimage for sacred bath is Kumbha Mella [festival]. This religious event is celebrated every three years on the banks of the rivers- Ganges at Haridwar, shipra at Ujjain, Godavari at Nasak and at the confluence of Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati, a mythical river, at Prayag or Allahabad. These are the four places where Mella is held. The Mella that is held every twelve years is known as Maha Kumbha Mella. Mella is celebrated due to the victory of Hindu gods over the demons. The story of Kumbha Mella relates to the churning of the ocean, Ksheersagar, by the triumvirate of Hindu gods- Vishnu, Shiva and

Brahma. The ocean was churned by gods with the help of Asuras [demons]. After churning, Amrit [elixir] was collected from the ocean. However, quarrel ensued over the division of the Amrit between the gods and the demons. To save the Amrit, which was collected in a Kumbh [pot], from the demons, Vishu escaped with the pot. During his escape he rested at four places. Due to the four resting places, the Mella is held at all the four places.¹¹²(Ed. 259)

The importance of Ganges and procuring of the Amrit need to be explained from the point of view of Gurbani. The Gurbani clearly and absolutely disapproves such practices to gain spiritual merits. The Gurbani states that so long as one's mind is licentious, everything is filthy, any bath at any place cannot clear that filth, no purity can be achieved by taking bath.¹¹³ The Gurbani states- The bath at Paryag is not equal to the singing of the praises of the God.¹¹⁴ The highly sacred bath of the Hindus at Paryag is not given any importance, that is, does not carry any spiritual merit. Taking bath at shrines, whoever sacred, one cannot wash away the sins. Rituals and religious rites are all ostentations of self-conceit.¹¹⁵ To wash away the sins, Gurbani stresses on self-control and self-discipline, control over five sense- lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride, rather than taking bath at sacred places or waters to wash off one's sins.¹¹⁶

Again, the Gurbani questions the process of getting elixir from water and states that when one churns curd, one gets butter, which is present in the curd, but by churning water one gets only water and nothing else.¹¹⁷ How can one get elixir by churning water. Gurbani is not based on mythology, Gurbani lays stress on logical reflections, reasons.

Gurbani explains that Tiratha have been created to inspire one to engage or make one aware towards the devotion of God- Tiratha are not simply for visiting and tasking baths, Tiratha are to inspire love of God, to convey divine knowledge, Tiratha in itself is Naam.¹¹⁸ By visiting Tiratha one does not gain any spiritual merit.

Vrata- In Hinduism Vrata [fasting] is a way to gain spiritual blessings- *vratas* have come to mean innumerable religious vows and austerities, especially by women. Since *vratas* invariably involve *upavasa* (fasting) on religiously important *tithis* (dates in Hindu calendar).¹¹⁹ It is primarily a religious undertaking in which one has to abide by certain restrictions regarding food. Vrata is observed in numerous ways. Sometimes it is observed for the whole day without taking any grain food. Sometimes it is observed by eating only fruits and drinking milk.

In the Sikh religion no such fasting is observed. Gurbani states that by fasting one is torturing one's body, without following the lessons of virtuous attributes of God one gains nothing, one cannot get any contentment.¹²⁰ Gurbani does not approve such pretensions. In fact, Gurbani states that without taking grain one cannot spend time with composure and contentment, and by avoiding grain one does not meet God, Kabir says that I have realised that blessed is the grain which blooms and radiates the mind.¹²¹ One should be obliged to God for these provisions and enjoy his bounties. One who takes Vrata to gain spiritual benefits is a hypocrite and fraudulent. Gurbani states- Nothing can be accomplished by fasting and any other penance except by committing oneself to the service of God.¹²² However, Hindus draw their highest moral, intellectual and spiritual inspirations from this ritual.

Auspicious Timing-Hinduism has auspicious time and day to perform their social and religious functions. For example, for conducting the ceremony of Jenu, Mundan [first time cutting of hair], marriage ceremony etc. Hindus consult their scriptures to find out an auspicious time and day for celebrations. However, in the Sikh religion there is no place for such omens and prognostications. Gurbani states that it is of no use to look for auspicious days, God as a guide is omnipresent all the times to show the way,¹²³ that is, without faith in God, such gimmicks serve no purpose. Gurbani states it is only the fools who look for auspicious days because they have lapsed in worldly affairs by ignoring faith in God.¹²⁴ All days are regarded equally good since they are God's blooming creations and His command is imminent, pervading at all the places and all the time.

Rituals have a special bond with Hinduism. They are the colourful art of getting blessings from deity. They are the physical acts. For example, the ritual of Shraddha is performed after the death of a person to ease the passage of the dead to the world of the ancestors. Gurbani states that such feasts for the dead cannot reach the dead.¹²⁵ Gurbani advocates- All human affairs or events are only for the living.¹²⁶ Dead people have no rights and duties. They have no demands.

Yajna or Havan- Rgveda speaks of yajna. They are of various kinds involving the sacrifice of animals.¹²⁷ It is believed that “*yajna*, sacrifice, is an act by which we surrender something for the sake of the gods”.¹²⁸ Gurbani mentions this practice of Devas [Hindu gods] of killing rhino for performing Havan [yajna].¹²⁹ Gurbani is very critical of any type of rituals to earn merits, rituals are the noose of worldliness, without Naam, devotion to God, one is doomed.¹³⁰ However with the passing of time, the Vedic rituals were replaced by Puja. Animal sacrifices are still observed in Hinduism.

Vedic period of yajna was replaced by idol worship [Murti Puja]. Yajna practice was proving very costly since it “require huge financial and logical resources which went beyond the reach of even wealthy members of society.”¹³¹ Yajna was replaced by puja to pay obeisance to Hindu divinities. Puja has become the core of religious practice and is within the reach of every Hindu. It was with the emergence of Puranas that Hinduism moved to a different direction and the concept of puja emerged. Pooja ceremony came to be considered important to invoke a deity. Though pooja culture is a later tradition in Hinduism, it has gained wide significance. It is Puranic culture. Vedas do not speak of Puja. It was a change from Vedic culture of yajna to the Puranic culture of pooja.¹³²

In puja the object of devotion is a murti in any form. There is no fixed form of idol because Hindu gods manifest in countless forms. Hindus’ puja often involves making offerings to the image of gods and goddesses, or to any one or more of innumerable animate or inanimate objects like animals, rivers, mountains, treated as divine by Hindus.¹³³ Murti puja had firmly become a part of Hinduism- “Manu’s code which many refer as the bible of Hindu practices, includes directives relating to temples and idol, it accorded a permanent place for idol worship in Hindu religion”.¹³⁴

The use of tantrism in Hinduism is quite prevalent. It is “An important feature of the Puranas are purely of non-Vedic origin. It is widely accepted that these practices pre-existed many of the Vedas.”¹³⁵ It is a specialised ritual technique to achieve worldly perfections. Mantras are magical incantations. They are used to bring about substantial and desired results- “In Hinduism, deities are represented by Mantras and each deity is associated with a particular Mantra. It is said that the power of the Mantra brings down the deity to enter an image and then the image comes “alive”. All Hindu Mantras are made of letters of the Sanskrit alphabet”.¹³⁶

Gurbani does not believe in tantras and mantras. Dictums and spells cannot force God to fulfil or perform a certain act or fulfil a certain wish. Gurbani states- It is only by remembering God one’s calamities end, dictums and spells cannot prevail over God, God is limitless, that is, God cannot be confined within the hotchpotch practices and processes.¹³⁷

Gurbani kindled and knitted the course to attain spiritual blessings- One may visit sacred places, observe fasting, perform sacrificial or sacred feasts and contribute towards charities and in performing all such deeds one may have decade bodily, but all such acts pale before the wisdom of Guru who guides one towards contemplation of God, that is, adopting the righteous course of conduct.¹³⁸ One can find the whole gist of spiritual awakening in the Gurbani.

Such is the attributive nature and service of God. As you sow, so you reap is the guiding principle in cultivating one's wishes.

All Hindu practices appeal to their gods to gain material benefits because they induce the gods to attend to the appeal. Havan is one of them. Havan is performed by preparing an altar for the ceremony but no image or idol of god is placed therein. Primarily Mantras are uttered according to the prescribed formularies since they possess mystical powers. It can be performed in public for the public good or privately in the house for the householders. Person performing the ceremony will utter some mantras and "it is the mantra that elevates an otherwise mundane and routine ceremony into a religious rite. The simple act of adding *ghi* [clarified butter] to a fire suddenly assumes special significance ... Only through mantra is this special physical act transformed into a religious one.... Mantras were applied to different ritual situations chiefly to secure the '*kamya*' [desired result] ...it was yajna that compelled the gods to attend the ceremony, and deliver the '*kamya*'.¹³⁹ Mantras, thus, used to bring about substantial results as well the unification and unfolding of consciousness.

Havan have played a major part in Hinduism. For example, Ram Chander and his brothers in Ramayna, and Draupati of Mahabharat were born through Havan. Gurbani does not believe in such practices and states that by performing Havan one's ego does not come under control and without controlling one's ego, one cannot secure peace of mind and emancipation from the cycle of life and death.¹⁴⁰ The material or substances used in the Havan to produce spiritual benefits are waste of essential goods since they are thrown into the fire. Gurbani disapprove such practices to attain spiritual benefits- By burning offerings, meditation, undertaking penance and needless feasts at the banks of the rivers, one cannot meet God, it is only by becoming Gurmukh, that is, negating egoistic attitude, one gets liberation from the cycle of life and death.¹⁴¹ Human good lies in getting rid of egoism.

Rituals are the fundamentals of Hinduism. Without rituals Hinduism's will not survive. They are the survival kits for Hinduism. They form the essence of Hinduism. Any act they perform regarding their dharma is accompanied by rituals. Rituals are the means to get rid of sins. However, Gurbani advocates a different path to get rid of sins- One should make a loaf of virtues and brighten it with noble deeds and furnish it with the subsistence of humbleness and humility. It is with such an advice of the Guru, one will be cleaned of all ill-intentions and sins to become gurmukh, that is, God oriented.¹⁴²

Dana and Dakshina- Another two types of ritual of Hinduism which bring spiritual benefits are Dana and Daksina. Dana is charity and dakshana is a gift given to a person who performs the ceremony, it is a sacrificial fee. Dana is the

main concern in this discussion. Dakshina is referred to clarify any confusion between Dana and Daksina because of their similarities. Dana in Hinduism leads to salvation. It is the expectation of the donor that he will get heaven in return. Dana can be of any thing and young damsels can also be given in dana, the list of things that can be given in Dana to accrue benefits are given in the Puranas which will liberate one from sins.¹⁴³ However, dana is given under certain rules to earn spiritual results or merits which are described in details in the Puranas. Puranas also provide for special dana for getting liberation from the cycle of birth and death, purged of all sins and promised *Visnu*'s realm for one *kalpa* with wife his and sons.¹⁴⁴

Gurbani never makes such promises that accrue from Dana. In fact, when the principle in Gurbani states that as you sow, so you reap, the question of promise from any act does not arise. Gurbani only counsel and advice but does not make commitments. Gurbani is very critical of such practices- If one take bath at Kurukshetar at the time of eclipse and makes donation of his fully decorated wife and listen to all the smritis, all this is of no use unless one stops one's habit of slandering, backbiting.¹⁴⁵ Every human deed should be based on righteous path rather than upon reciprocity and reimbursement. All types of gifts, bounties and pilgrimages are of no use unless one adopts truthful living.¹⁴⁶ Gurbani solely recommends virtuous conduct and that one is only conducive to spiritual merits. The stress of the Sikh religion is on the mental and physical discipline and not on rituals.

Hindu deities, devas and gods have a common practice of internecine fighting, going after one another and indulging in misbehaviour. In this practice they use their occult powers to control over others. For example, "Brahma (as creator) did not become a popular deity. He has just one popular temple at Pushkar in Ajmer (Rajasthan). It is believed he was shunned because of his incestuous inclinations towards his daughter Sarasvati."¹⁴⁷ Again, Inder, the god of rain in Rgveda, to embarrass Gautam Risi because of his wife, Ahilya, with whom he wanted to have sex, was creating problems for him through his occult powers.¹⁴⁸ Guru Granth Sahib made reference to this legend regarding sexual behaviour of Hindu god- Inder was infatuated towards Ahilya, the wife of Gautam Risi. He sexually assaulted her and suffered thousand despicable marks on his body.¹⁴⁹ Because of this fear, Inder while sitting on his throne was always in fear of his death. But the devil of death will not spare him in spite of all his efforts.¹⁵⁰ Similar is the case of Shiva. In Padma Purana one can read about Shiva's flirting with woman- "One day the god Shiva teased his wife, the goddess Parvati, about her dark skin; he called her "Blackie" [Kali] and said that her dark body against his white body was like a black snake coiled around a pale sandalwood tree. When she responded angrily, they began to argue and to hurl insults at each other. Furious, she went away to generate inner heat in order to obtain a fair, golden

skin. Her little son Viraka, stammering in his tears, begged to come with her, but she said to him, "This god chase women when I am not there, and so you must constantly guard his door and peep through the keyhole, so that no other woman gets to him."¹⁵¹ Gurbani very severely condemned all types of immoral conduct because such conducts violate moral code- Filthy and polluted are Brahma and Inder... Dirty is Shiv Shankra Mahesh and all those who use saintly garb but blatantly breach good conduct and do not follow the commands of God.¹⁵² Purans are full of such stories of Hindu gods relating to their misconduct.

Clipping of Hair

Hindu scriptures regard long hair as health hazard- I cut off the hair for a long life, properly digesting food, productivity, prosperity, good progeny, and valour.... The cut hair is placed in the dung of a bull and buried in a cow stable, or thrown in a pond or near the water... or buried in the root of an *udumbara* tree, in a bunch of *durba* grass or the forest. The reason for this is rooted in the fear that inimical elements can cast a magical spell or commit acts of sorcery using... hair."¹⁵³ This is one of the very important and binding ritual of Hinduism according to the Manusmriti 2.65- "The ceremony called Kesanta(clipping the hair) is ordained for a Brahmana in the sixteen year from conception, for a Kshatriya in the twenty-second; and for a Vaisya two years later than that." However, there are divergent views regarding the age for hair cutting but hair cutting is described as one of the Samskara.

The occasion of hair cutting is a moment of great joy for the family. During this ceremony great care is taken that the top knot is not cut. It remains one of the outward signs of all Hindus. It is called Sikha. This is one of the rituals, one of the samskaras. Because of this samskara, one is identified as Hindu. Hair cutting is regarded an important mile stone in the life of a Hindu. Shudra and woman are not a part of this ritual. Even in cutting hair, caste system plays a part. Hinduism without caste system has no standing, it will become a rider without a horse. It is only for the twice born Hindus since they are entitled to wear Jenu. The actual ceremony is performed on an auspicious day. On this special day the Brahmanas are given feast and presents called daksina. This ceremony of hair cutting is known as cudakarma or caula.

In the Sikh religion one's hair are considered God given gift and are never to be cut. Gurbani states that a Sikh should remain in the shape one is born. Gurbani recommends for the up keep of one's body as given by God and wear turban to cover one's head.¹⁵⁴ Keeping intact God given shape and following the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib are the only discipline and purpose of a Sikh's life. This is the Sikh code of conduct laid down in the Guru Granth Sahib. Keeping intact the God given gift of human body and covering one's head with

turban is an identity of a Sikh. Hairs are given so much importance that it is referred again and again in the Guru Granth Sahib as a means to pay respect to Guru-God.¹⁵⁵ For example, Gurbani states- A devotee in his devotion to saints wishes to make a whisk or brush of one's hairs to fan the saints.¹⁵⁶ Again, those beards are sublime and true that touch the feet of the True Guru.¹⁵⁷ For a Sikh the categorical instructions to preserve one's hair is expressed many times and many ways in the Gurbani to express one's humility and humbleness to God. They also project the growth of human body. It serves as a religious, social and political make-up which serves to hold them together as a homogeneous community. They are, thus, not only the symbols, but sacraments. The whole idea here is of total submission with the complete human body as given by God to infinite God, Gurbani state- Sikhs of the Guru are Guru's friend, they will walk on the path shown by Guru, whatever Guru says they will follow His unique and splendid messages.¹⁵⁸ Gurbani state- That Sikh is a true disciple, friend, relative and brother who surrenders to the Will of God but one who follows his own will, that is, self-centred, will suffer the pangs of separation.¹⁵⁹ The intrinsic worth of a Sikh lies in fully following the principles stated in the Guru Granth Sahib.

This identity keeps on reminding the Sikh of the Sikh Gurus. The theistic philosophy teaches him the whole purpose of his life. To keep one's identity is a must, since nations are built on identity. Without identity nations are lost and forgotten. Nations that cut themselves from their identity pass out like a meteor which burn themselves out when it cut off from the fire that generates and feeds it. A Sikh who cut his hair is going outside the pale of the Sikh religion by neglecting the code of the Sikh religion as stated in the Guru Granth Sahib. Gurbani states that God created human beings in his own image, if God is a mound of Gold, human being is a unit of Gold.¹⁶⁰ Again, Gurbani state that everyone bears Your image, Your expression.¹⁶¹ Gurbani imagining the image of God states that God is incomprehensible and infinite, He wears long hair.¹⁶² Sikhs in association with their Guru/God wants to represent His image.

Kamdhen and Parjat

Creating belief in extra-ordinary phenomena as a source of fulfilling human needs is condemned in the Sikh religion. Sincere and honest human efforts are the only means to fulfil human needs.¹⁶³ It means that nothing comes out of miraculous powers, it is only human efforts that pay. Hinduism's scriptures very often refer to metaphysical and mythical things to fulfil human needs such as Kamdhen, Parjat, etc. Here it becomes important to give some explanation of these metaphysical agencies and forces.

Kamdhen is belied to be a celestial cow that fulfills all human needs. In the Hindu scriptures Kamdhen's story runs as follows- "There was a king named

Vena who was so wicked that the sages killed him; since he left no offspring, the sages churned his right thigh, from which was born a deformed little man, dark as a burned pillar, who was the ancestor of the Nishadas and the barbarians. Then they churned Vena's right hand, and from him Prithu was born. There was a famine, because the earth was withholding all of her food. King Prithu took up his bow and arrow and pursued the earth to force her to yield nourishment for his people. The earth assumed the form of a cow and begged him to spare her life; she then allowed him to milk her for all that the people needed."¹⁶⁴ Hinduism believes in the mystical beings rather than God in replenishing human needs. Gurbani makes reference to Kamdhen and states- God fulfills are the aspirations and bestows bounties, Kamdhen's reigns are in the hands of God, one should always remember God for bounties.¹⁶⁵ Gurbani rejects this myth and advises to have faith in God. God looks after all beings. He is capable and competent in fulfilling human needs- Only God is the giver, one God gives to everyone, in His store house there is no paucity of anything.¹⁶⁶

The mystery of Parjat is associated with Krishna. Krishna is an incarnation of Vishnu in the Mahabharata and is the most popular god of Hinduism.¹⁶⁷ Gurbani refers to Krishna while citing his playful living- Krishna of Yadava tribe took away Chandrawali and molested her forcibly. Later Krishna brought Parjat tree, elysian tree, to please her paramour in Bindraban¹⁶⁸ In the context of Krishna's effort to provide Parjat to her beloved, it is interesting to explain the episode- "Krishna was strolling with his beloved Satyabhama in the garden of Devaraja Indra. Satyabhama stopped near a tree whose bark was of gold and leaves were of copper and the fragrance of its flowers was bewitching her. Krishna told her that this tree is Parjat. It is one of the ratnas [precious] that had surfaced from Ksheersagar, the Ocean of Milk, during the churning. She told Krishna that she wants to take this tree for planting in her garden in Dwaravati. To please Satyabhama, Krishna uprooted the entire tree. When Devaraj Indra came to know of this trespass, he became very angry and challenged Krishna for a fight with his Vajra. Krishna fought with Indra with his Sudarshana Chakra and defeated Indra. He brought the Parjat for planting in Dwaravati."¹⁶⁹ Such mythical stories of fighting between the Hindu gods are very common. Hinduism is a composite of these stories. These myths are the reality of Hinduism. Lord Krishna was changing roles in his life time. Sometimes he descends from heaven to live in the world and retreats to heaven after finishing his role in the world. Gurbani referring to Lord Krishna states- Krishna was always busy in his Avtarhood [incarnation] how would he redeem the world from sins.¹⁷⁰

However, such myths never became a part of the Sikh theistic philosophy. In fact, in the Guru Granth Sahib the word Parjat is used for God.¹⁷¹ One, in fact, can never understand the contours of Hinduism because mythology is never-ending process. One can expand it so far as one's imagination can go. Gurbani is

very clear in rejecting mythical and illusory ideas and states- The world is captivated and fascinated in worldly affairs and do not cherish truth, Guru's word shows the way and saves from going off the right track.¹⁷²

There is so much confusion in Hinduism that one does not even get a foggiest idea and hint of the nature of God and His existence by studying Hinduism's scriptures. Vedic and pre-Vedic periods keep on hammering each other- "Vedic gods – Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, et cetera ... disappeared from the Hindu pantheon a long time ago. They have been replaced with Rama, Krsna, Hanuman and Ganesa who are not mentioned in the oldest of our Vedic texts – the Rgveda".¹⁷³ Besides this confusion, another confusion is added. God is projected sometimes in human form and another time in supernatural form. For example, in the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna as a human being serves as a charioteer of Arjun in the Mahabharata. But Lord Krishna also showed to Arjun his microcosmic picture as an infinite- "Lord Krishna said, "Arjuna, you cannot see me with your eyes, therefore I am giving you divine sight. Behold my supreme yoga power" ... Then Arjun saw the entire universe with its many divisions resting together in the body of the God of gods.... "I am the way" and "come to me".¹⁷⁴ Gurbani states that in this transformation Nand [Krishana] must be very tired since he had wandered through eighty lacks of births. It was good luck of the poor person in whose house Nand took birth. But it would be questioned where was Nand before taking birth when there was no earth, sky and the ten directions.¹⁷⁵ It means that before the universe came into existence, there was no Nand. Krishna is not infinite and abstract. Infinite will not get involved in the circle of life and death.

Such differences in the notion of God in Hinduism and the Sikh religion's theistic philosophy keep them miles apart and put them in quite different camps of theistic philosophy. Plurality of gods in Hinduism is quite variant with the concept of God in the Guru Granth Sahib. Oneness and unity of God rather than the appearances of God at different times in the history of the universe in different forms, different shapes and under different names becomes incomprehensible with the Sikh theistic philosophy.

Guru Nanak's theistic philosophy is the negation of Hindu gods irrespective of their rank and status. For example, according to the Hindu scriptures Brahma, Vishu and Shiv are considered the creator, preserver and destroyer or annihilator of the world. In Hinduism the triple division of labour between Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv is considered sacrosanct and never to be blurred. Shiv is considered the god of annihilation. However, he himself was about to be annihilated by one of his devotee. He was saved by Vishnu. Bhamsasura, whose real name was Vrikasura, was an asura, demon. He was a devotee of Shiva. He got boon from Shiv. The boon gave him the magical power

to reduce anything to Bhasam [ashes] by stretching his hand over that thing. Because of this boon he got the name Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura after seeing Parvati, the wife of Shiva, became interested in her. He wanted to kill Shiva so that he could take hold of Parvati. He wanted to put his hand on Shiva to destroy him. Shiva came to know the intentions of Bhamasura. He ran away to save his life and appealed to Vishu to save him. Vishnu took the shape of a woman, named Mohini. Mohini showed her face to Bhasmasura and offered him to dance with her. Both started dancing. During the dance Mohini played a trick to put his hand over her head and so did Bhasmasura. In this act, Bhasmasura killed himself. Shiv was saved by Mohni, Vishnu.¹⁷⁶ Vishnu has destroyed Bhasmasura not by his godly power but by playing prank on him. In this way the destroyer, Shiva, saved himself from being destroyed. However, Gurbani makes reference to Bhasmasura in the context that God does not favour inimical actions. Bhasmasura got what he deserved.¹⁷⁷

Gurbani believes- None other than God can be seen, there is no Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh [Shiv].¹⁷⁸ Gurbani has no significance of these three. Hail the God who created the world and human beings, He created oceans, seas, ponds, plants, mountains, clouds, He is wonderful.¹⁷⁹ God created the world through His omnipotent and infinite capacity and ability, and fashioned the creation in different and wonderful colours; He himself knows the art of creation which is confined within Him.¹⁸⁰ With one word God created the world and with it came into existence [many hundred thousand] further developments, that is, succession of advances.¹⁸¹ Since creation is confined to God's ingenious ways, making any type of calculations about the creation is to indulge in ambiguities.¹⁸²

One can argue that the Hindu gods are only different in their names but in spirit they form a unity, in essence they are one. However, this argument is open to positive reactions. If these gods are one spirit, why they fight among themselves for power and division of labour. They get married and beget children. This creates further divisions and confrontation among them. They fight among themselves. And sometimes in the fight take sides. They enjoy different types of powers and oppose one another. Their opposition to one another is very clearly stated in the Hindu scriptures.¹⁸³ To accept their oneness is a mirage.

Gurbani states- God's existence is self-existence, God has no beginning and no end, God's existence is wonderous and unique.¹⁸⁴ Gurbani absolutely denies the living figure of God. God never takes birth, and that is why God's figure or shape can never be described to pay obeisance.¹⁸⁵ Gurbani states- God does not appear and disappear at different times, He is omnipresent, He is not only present in the world but His presence is in every person.¹⁸⁶ This is pantheism of the Sikh theistic philosophy. God is supreme, He never takes birth; God created the world by his own ingenious ways and kept His presence in the world; Your

form cannot be known and so how one can meditate on Your form.¹⁸⁷ Gurbani, in fact, berate those who believe that God takes birth.¹⁸⁸ If God is ocean, human beings are His streams. This is explained in the Gurbani by giving an example of an ocean and a drop of ocean water. Both the ocean and the drop are the same since both have the same characteristics.¹⁸⁹ Therefore every person is a kingdom of God.¹⁹⁰ When explaining the oneness of God and human beings, Bhagat Ravidas states that the difference between God and human beings is like the difference between a mountain of gold and a speck or atom of gold, like the expanse of water and the waves.¹⁹¹ Gurbani states- Hindus have forgotten the primal informal God and thus have lost the real path; what Narad guides them they follow and this leads them towards a blind, dumb and dark alley, and the ignorant and dumb are busy in praying to stones; the stones themselves down in water how they will lead them to cross the troubled ocean of the world.¹⁹²

Differences between the Sikh religion and Hinduism is not only confined to the differences over the concept of God and the realisation of God. The disagreements extend over other related subjects that follow from the concept of God, relating to the notion to spirituality. For example, the idea of heaven and hell, and transmigration of soul or reincarnation. Relating to both these concepts the Sikh theistic philosophy and Hinduism have taken different paths, both are miles apart.

Heaven and Hell and reincarnation in Hinduism

Hinduism has his roots in the Vedas. They are regarded the revealed canons, eternal, absolute and of unquestionable authority.¹⁹³ Another important and famous scripture, Manusmriti guides Hindus in their daily life towards spiritual goals. Manusmriti 4.233 states that “The gift of Veda surpasses all other gifts, water, food, cows, land, clothes, sesamum, gold, and clarified butter”. Upanishads, Purans and Smritis are other Hindu scriptures not only draw inspiration but follow the Vedic concepts to a large extent. However, one finds different explanations for both the concepts referred here in these scriptures. The Guru Granth Sahib do not acknowledge their eternal and unquestionable authority since by reciting the four Vedas one does not attain God’s amity and cordialship.¹⁹⁴

The idea of hell and heaven has its basis in the Rigveda. The concepts are associated with religious duties. Their violation leads one to hell and their rightful performance leads one to heaven- The *dana* [charity] ... to be given to a worthy person ... willing and happily ... means respectful or reverential offerings. A *dana* without *sraddha* [good-will] led both the donor and the donee to hell- ‘Both he who receives with honour and he who gives with honour go to heaven; in the

opposite case to hell.”¹⁹⁵ Manusmriti 9.107 states that one is blessed immortality only through son- That son alone on whom he throws his debts and through whom he obtains immortality, is begotten for the fulfilment of the law; all the rest they consider the offspring of desires. Manusmriti 9.28 states- The production of children, the nature of those born ... woman is visibly the cause. In case the wife is unable to produce a son, Hinduism has another solution. This is Nyoga- The Rgveda sanctifies a widow to take her brother-in-law to raise children for her husband.¹⁹⁶ Manusmriti 9.59- On failure of issue by her husband a woman who has been authorised may obtain in the proper manner prescribed, a desired offspring by cohabitation with a brother-in-law or with some other Sapinda of the husband. The ladder to heaven goes through son in the family.

During the Vedic period religious duties were performed through yajna, the idea of heaven and hell were associated with the performance of yajna- “It was the yajna (the sacrifice rituals) that had this capability”.¹⁹⁸ However, the pursuit of heaven for woman carries a condition- “In Visnu Dharma Sutra, it is said that *yajna* or *homa* when performed by a woman by herself (alone) does not lead her to svarga, i.e. does not beget her any benefit, and warns ‘if a wife performs a vow of fasting while her husband is alive, she robs her husband of his life and also goes to hell’.¹⁹⁸ Manusmriti 5.155 states- “No sacrifice, no vow, no fast must be performed by women apart from their husband; if a wife obeys her husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven”.

Hinduism believes that after death soul experiences punishment in hell and reward in Heaven. Soul has to face the consequences. Therefore, Hinduism has a very vivid idea of heaven and hell. Soul with bad Samskaras goes to hell, the place of suffering, so that the soul can expiate the burden of the Samskaras through suffering in the hell. For example, in the Rigveda Rsi Vasistha commenting on the marriage between a twice born Hindu, (dvijati) and a sudra girl remarks- “One should not do so, i.e. marry a *sudra* girl, for by doing so the declination of the family is certain and loss of heaven after death.” It appears that Rsi is following what Visnu Dharmasastra and Manusmriti is stating that the *dvijati* may marry a *sudra* girl but go on to condemn it- the union (of dvijati) with a *sudra* woman can never produce religious merit”.¹⁹⁹

The Vedas refer to another world where people are assigned after death. Markandeya Purana states that “Sometimes a man goes to heaven; sometimes he goes to hell. Sometimes a dead man experience both hell and heaven. Sometimes he is born here again and consumes his own karma; sometimes a man who has consumed his karma dies and goes forth with just a very little bit of karma remaining. Sometimes he is reborn here with a small amount of good and bad karma, having consumed most of his karma in heaven or in hell. A great source of the suffering in hell is the fact that the people there can see the people who

dwell in heaven; but the people in hell rejoice when the people in heaven fall down into hell. Likewise, there is great misery even in heaven, beginning from the very moment when people ascend there, for this thought enters their mind: "I am going to fall here." And when they see hell they become quite miserable, worrying, day and night, "This is where I am going to go".²⁰⁰ Here the idea of hell and heaven is like a two-way traffic which is inter-changeable. This gives a vivid picture of Hell and heaven in Hinduism. Atharva Veda confirms the existence of hell and heaven, "Svarga has many women, great edible plants and flowers of various kinds, streams of *ghi* [clarified butter], honey and wine, milk, curds and lotus ponds all around. Shatpatha ...promises that the joys of heaven are a hundred times greater than those on earth, Kausitaki Upanisad... becomes more specific, assures '500 *apsaras*'(nymphs) will meet those who reach heaven".²⁰¹ Manusmriti 4.87 identifies 21 types of hells and in 4.88-90 Manu gives the names of hells where people go according to their sins and serve their punishments.

The Sikh religion negatives the belief in hell and heaven. There is no such existence as is marked in Hinduism. The sole purpose of human life is to attain oneness with God, that is, self-realisation. The whole concept and philosophy of hell and heaven is negated in the Gurbani. So long as human soul does not attain unity with God, it remains in the cycle of life and death. Gurbani states that ego, self-assertion, binds a person in the cycle of life and death.²⁰² The question of hell and heaven thus become unnecessary and futile for discussion in the Sikh religion.

Heaven and hell though used in the Gurbani many times but their use relates to pain and pleasure that human beings experience during life time. Therefore, the phrase heaven and hell is used as a figure of speech, as an analogy. Life experiences reflect the nature of human deeds. Again, the belief in the transmigration of soul rules out the question of heaven and hell- If one does not remember God, one will return to womb again and again, that is, the circle of life and death will never end.²⁰³ Moreover, Gurbani states that as one does so one gets, as one sows, so one reaps.²⁰⁴ Having such theistic ideas, the question of heaven and hell becomes futile for the Sikh religion. Bhagat Kabir says that for the devotees of God heaven and hell have no meaning, they are happy with the blessings and grace of God.²⁰⁵

Gurbani also warns people not to get involved in the question of heaven and hell because it is a losing game. They should concentrate on Naam because without Naam no one can remain happy. The question of sin and virtue is unconsciously linked by the simple-minded people to the idea of hell and heaven, but both hell and heaven are associated with maya, egoism.²⁰⁶ Heaven is found where unflinching devotion of God exists- God has saved me both from hell and

heaven and I am enjoying and blessed in the company of God.²⁰⁷ Hell exists where spiritual ignorance rules and glory and devotion to God is lacking.²⁰⁸ Gurbani not only rejects the idea of hell and heaven as given in the Hinduism's scriptures but also states that even by remembering Vedas by heart and reciting them would not help one in meeting God.²⁰⁹ The Gurbani does not look upon Vedas as sacred and infallible as revealed cannons of absolute authority. The word God is not mentioned in the Vedas. Vedas are oblivious of the nature and character of God.

In Hinduism the idea of heaven and hell is associated with the performance of ceremonies for the dead body. Without performing specific ceremonies in disposing the dead body is surely a sign of hell. In Hinduism the disposal of the dead body carries a plethora of ceremonies. After death, body is cremated. The funeral pyre is lit by the deceased's eldest son. After disposal of the deceased's body, many other ceremonies are conducted to help the soul's journey to the world of the ancestors. For example, the ceremony known as Shradhha is done for his heavenly abode and is performed every year. Manusmriti, in fact, lays down very elaborate rules for the performance of shraddha. One can find in chapter 3 of the Manusmriti details rules for the performance of sraddha. Sraddha in Hinduism helps in feeding the dead.

However, Gurbani does not lay down any such rules to guide the dead person's soul. Sikh is always obliged to God for the life he spent in the world. Nobody knows from where the life springs and where it goes or merges after death.²¹⁰ However, such pretensions of Hinduism to guide the soul after death are not taken note of in the Sikh religion. Gurbani states that after death the departed soul, the human breath, merges with air just as the fire blends with fire and human body becomes dust and merges with dust.²¹¹

Moreover, in the Sikh religion it does not matter whether the dead body is burnt or buried or thrown to be eaten by dogs, some cast off the dead body in water or just leave it to disintegrate and decompose.²¹² There are no rules and instructions for the disposal of the dead body linking with the idea of hell and heaven. Dead person has no rights nor the living has any special duties for the dead person. One can dispose of the dead body any way one likes.

Another important issue relating to death, though not relating to hell and heaven, is important in human life. It needs mention. Hinduism believes that death in the family causes defilement in the family. The question of Satak [defilement or vitiation] plays an important part in Hinduism. For example, Manusmriti gives a long list of events those bring defilement in the family. He also suggests way to get out of them. For example, Manusmriti gives a long list of events those bring impurity in the family. For example, miscarriage of a woman, death in the family, etc. Manusmriti 5.66 states- A woman is purified on

a miscarriage in as many days and nights as months (elapsed after conception) and menstruating female becomes pure by bathing after the menstrual secretion has ceased to flow. Similarly, Manusmriti 5.61 states- As is impurity on account of a death is prescribed for all sapindas, even so it shall be held on a birth by those who desire to be absolutely pure. Manusmriti 5.83 recommends a way to get out of it- A Brahman shall be pure after ten days, a Kshatriya after twelve days, a Vaisya after fifteen days, and a Sudra is purified after a month. In different cases the time span for purification changes with the nature of the defilement. The practice of Sutak is very prevalent among the Hindus.

Gurbani rejects the idea of vitiation. Gurbani states that one's birth and death is controlled by God, everything happens at His command and one is not touched by any impurity because of these happenings.²¹³ Sutak, defilement, is washed away by divine enlightenment.²¹⁴ Gurbani further suggests that the concept of Sutak is associated with suspicions and fear- all defilements are associated with avarice, falsehood, lust, wealth and dishonest intentions.²¹⁵ Gurbani rejects the whole concept of Sutak, it is the result of human frailties, ignorance and loss of self-confidence.

Transmigration of Soul or Reincarnation

The concept of incarnation or transmigration of soul occupies an important part of life both in Hinduism and the Sikh theistic philosophy. However, in Hinduism the concept of incarnation of soul is in disarray and is utterly confusing. The concept is used to protect and support the caste system. For example, Manusmriti 9.334 states- But to serve Brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas, householders and famous for virtues is the highest duty of a Sudra, which leads to beatitude. And Manusmriti 9.335 states- A Sudra who is pure, the servant of his betters, gentle in his speech, and free from pride, and always seeks a refuge with Brahmanas, attains in his next life a higher caste. This is the type of incentive to the Sudras to meekly serve the twice-born to improve their caste in the next birth. In the case of the Brahmana whatever be his faults, his birth as a Brahmana is confirmed. Manusmriti 9.317 states- A Brahmana, be he ignorant or learned, is a divinity, just as the fire, whether carried forth for the performance of a burnt-oblation or not carried forth, is a great divinity. And Manusmriti 9.319 states- Thus, though Brahmanas employ themselves in all sorts of mean occupations, they must be honoured in every way; for each of them is a very great deity. Sudra is permanently trampled like an ant under the foot of an elephant.

Manusmriti recommends the sacrifice of animals to propitiate gods and relates it to transmigration of soul. Manusmriti 5.38 states- As many hairs as the slain beast has, so often indeed will he who killed it without a lawful reason suffer a violent death in future births. In Kaushitaki Upanishad there is a reference to

transmigration of soul- When people depart from this earth, they go to the moon. Those who do not answer the moon's questions become rain, and rain down here on earth, where they are reborn according to their actions [karma] and knowledge – as a worm, an insect, a fish, a bird, a lion, a boar, a rhinoceros, a tiger, a human, or some other creature. Those who answer the moon's questions correctly pass to the heavenly world: They go on the path to the gods, to fire, and finally to *brahman*. On the way, he shakes off his good and bad deeds [karma], which fall upon his relatives: the good deeds on the ones he likes and the bad deeds on the ones he dislikes. Freed from his good and bad deeds, this person, who has the knowledge of *brahman*, goes on to *brahman*.²¹⁶ Again “According to the Brahmanas, evil or harmful acts attracted retribution- “For whatever food a man eats in this world, by the very same is he eaten again in the other world.”²¹⁷

Hinduism's different scriptures accept the idea of incarnation but their explanations keep on changing. However, Hinduism also prescribes the way to escape from incarnation- “good deeds were rewarded after death by a sojourn in heaven, and bad acts attracted punishments! If pleased, god blessed individuals with immortality and a good life. These ideas connecting good deeds with heaven- “To him who freely gives and “the liberal giver”, and rewards- “on the highly range of heaven he stands exalted, yea, to the gods he goes, the liberal giver” appear in the early Vedas Apart from life in heaven, good deeds also brought the reward of immortality and good health. “For those who give rich deeds are made immortal; the giver of rich feasts prolong their lifetime”. The “deathless, un-decaying world” “wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines was the ultimate goal achieved through good deeds of sacrifice, the Vedic rituals.²¹⁸ But for a Brahmana to get out of the cycle of life and death, Manusmriti 2.249 states- A Brahmana who thus passes his life as a student without breaking his vow, reaches after death the highest abode and will not be born again in this world. This means that he will be free from the cycle of life and death, his emancipation comes for remaining a student in the study of Vedas.

However, Gurbani does not follow this type of arguments and advocates- It is not by contemplating over Vedas, Purans and Shastras that one will get emancipation, liberation comes with the Grace of God, emancipation from the cycle of life and death.²¹⁹

The Sikh religion also holds the idea of incarnation but the theistic philosophy justifying incarnation is totally different. The Guru Granth Sahib does not endorse the convictions and practices of Hinduism. For getting liberation from the cycle of life and death, Gurbani advocates the life of righteousness. In the Sikh religion, incarnation is tied up with karma, that is, human deeds- Every action is like a seed shown in body, body is the field of action, what one does, so

are the consequences.²²⁰ Again the question of one's karma does not depend on one's caste and status in life.²²¹ The question of incarnation is tied to the grace of God. Gurbani states that if one disregards and is oblivious towards Naam, that is, if one does not adopt the righteous course of attributive nature of God, the cycle of birth and death will not end.²²² Gurbani advocates that unscrupulous human living keeps one in the cycle of life and death, one who adopts the attributive character of God merge in the Supreme, like a light merges in light.²²³ After getting liberation from the cycle of life and death Gurbani states- one's soul merges with the Supreme just like the waves and bubbles of water, those arise from the water, becomes one with water.²²⁴

Status of woman, Sources of Procreation and The Caste System

Status of woman

Guru Granth Sahib's categorical principle of one God and one-ness of humanity left an immense impression on the social life of the Sikh religion. This principle placed all the followers of the Sikh religion, irrespective of their gender, on equal pedestal. It is the most important single factor that gives status to woman equal to man as compared to Hinduism which regards woman as an appendage of man. The concept of oneness of humanity has also created other significant differences in the social life of a Sikh and a Hindu.

The most important and fundamental aspect of social living is gender equality. In this discussion both Hinduism and the Sikh religion seem to be miles apart. One will find the glaring differences regarding the status of woman under both the philosophies. Such social practices effect social living. What religion teaches is generally followed in practice.

Manusmriti lays down moral and spiritual rules of Hinduism. Manu is declared and accepted as an omniscient sage and Manusmriti 2.9 state- For that man who obeys the law prescribed in the revealed texts and in the sacred traditions, gains fame in this world and after death unsurpassable bliss. The sanctity of Manusmriti is made indubitably clear to the followers of Hinduism. Manu is regarded the greatest law maker of ancient India. His canons guide the behaviour of woman right from the birth till death.

Throughout the genealogy of Hinduism, woman was bound to follow and abide by the laws made by man. Manusmriti set the rights and duties of woman. Manu starts from the presumption that woman is a tool of seduction. With this presumption he ignores her relations with her father, brother and other closed relatives. Manusmriti declares that woman do not deserve liberty. In this respect Manusmriti 2. 213-15 states " It is the nature of woman to seduce men in this

world; for that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females; For women are able to lead astray in this world not only a fool, but even a learned man, and to make him a slave of desire and anger; One should not sit in a lonely place with one's mother, sister, or daughter, for the senses are powerful, and master even a learned man." This is very despicable and disgraceful. It is an attack on the integrity and liberty of woman. It is a daily insult, perpetual degradation and unalterable inferiority complex.

First attack on the status of woman, Manusmriti starts by controlling her means of living. To keep woman under control Manusmriti 9.199 states- Women should never make a hoard from the property of their family which is common to many, nor from their own husband's particular property without permission. Manu interferes with her security that one gets from the means of living. This is the starting point to subject her and bring her under man's control. Woman is not allowed to hold property, but herself is treated like a property. Manusmriti 3.27-29 states, "The gift of a daughter after decking her with costly garments and honouring her by presents of jewels to a man learned in the Veda and of good conduct whom the father himself invites is called the Brahma rite; The gift of a daughter who has been decked with ornaments to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice during the course of its performance they call the Daiva rite; When the father gives away his daughter according to the rules after receiving from the bridegroom for the fulfilment of the sacred law, a cow and a bull or two pairs, that is named the Arsha rite". One also finds such references in Vedic texts that recommend young damsels for dana, gifts and charity.²²⁵ Such practices mentioned in Hinduism's scriptures are untold insults and cruelty on woman.

Marriage is an important institution in social and religious life in Hinduism. It is socially important since it nurtures humanity- A man who did not marry was considered committing a crime and failing to perform his duty towards his forefathers. He thus shut the door for himself for *pitraloka* in the afterlife, and worse, ensured hell for himself.²²⁶ The importance of marriage is associated with the birth of a son who is the source of deliverance. It has a religious importance because Hinduism believes that the existence of a son in the family is an important step to avoid going to hell. The presence of a son in the family absolves the father from all ancestral debts and attains immortality. The question of religious merits of heaven and hell is solved by the presence of a son in the family. If one has not begotten a son, one will sink to the place of degradation, that is, hell.

Manusmriti 10.69 states- As good seed, springing up in good soil, turns out perfectly well, even so the son of an Aryan by an Aryan woman is worthy of all the sacraments. The importance of son in the family is so dire a need that Manusmriti 9.59 recommends- On failure of issue by her husband a woman who has been authorised may obtain in the proper manner prescribed, the desired

offspring by cohabitation with a brother-in-law or with some other sapinda of the husband. Even a widow is authorised to raise a son for her dead husband. Manusmriti 9.60 states- He who is appointed to cohabit with the widow shall approach her at night anointed with clarified butter and silent, and beget one son, by no means a second. Hinduism believes that birth of a son in the family is an imperative sign that he will save his ancestors from going to hell. Son is a guarantee for heaven. “The birth of a son was of utmost importance to every couple. Without a son, the last rites and *shraddha* of the father could not be performed, which means a certain journey to hell. If a man could not produce a son because of bad luck or physical shortcomings, a provision was made for the woman to invite her brother-in-law to impregnate her. The Rgveda too sanctifies a widow to take her brother-in-law to raise children for the husband... Subsequently, the *smritis* also made a provision for the wife of an impotent or invalid male, or a widow to bear children from the brother of her husband, a *sagotra*, or a *brahmana*.”²²⁷ Atharva Veda provides hymns for prayers for the birth of a son.²²⁸ So much importance of man is given in Hinduism’s scriptures that woman’s status and role is connected as a means of obtaining a son. Burden of producing a son was considered a duty of woman. Manusmriti 3.11 attaches so much importance to the existence of a son in the family that he suggests that a prudent man shall not marry a maiden who has no brother.

Such importance to male reduces the status of woman as an appendage of man. Manusmriti allows man all types of indulgences. Manusmriti 5.154 glorifies man- Though destitute of virtues, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife. However, for a wife, Manusmriti 9.78 states- “She who shows disrespect to a husband who is addicted to some evil passions, is a drunkard or diseased, shall be deserted for three months and be deprived of her ornaments and furniture. Once the girl is married, Manusmriti 9.46 states- “Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband; such we know the law to be.” Woman finds solace only in death.

For woman there is no independence since her birth. She is treated as a property. Manusmriti 5.147-148 states- “By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged woman, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house; In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent.” For violating her duties, she is threatened with dire consequences of losing her place in heaven and go to hell. Manusmriti 5.164 states- “By violating her duties towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world, (after death) she enters the womb of a jackal and is tormented by diseases (the punishment of) her sins.”

In fact, she is made an item of pleasure for man. Manusmriti 9.94 states- “A man aged thirty years, shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him, or a man of twenty-four, a girl eight years of age; if the performance of his duties would otherwise be impeded, he must marry sooner.” Manusmriti 9.33 further declares- “By the sacred tradition the woman is declared to be the soil, the man is declared to be the seed, the production of all corporeal beings take place through the union of the soil with the seed.” For such good services, Manu offers her reward, Manusmriti 5.155 states- No sacrifice, no vow, no fast must be performed by women apart from their husbands, if a wife obeys the husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven.

Manu’s philosophy first condemns woman then suppress woman and lastly discards her as a slave. This strategy was to keep woman permanently under subjection and preventing her from aspiring to rise to a higher level equal to man. In fact, for woman Manusmriti is a veritable code of hell full of all types of restrictions. One can also find support of Manu’s view in other Hindu Dharam Sastras. However, at present such conditions imposed by Manu on the independence and status of woman are removed by the Hindu Marriage Act, 1956. Moreover, because of modern education woman are as good participants as man in modern enterprises. The capacity to grow, to expand, to assimilate and oppose the harmful effect of Manusmriti is getting visible among the educated woman. This seems to be the persistent desire to break the old shackles of Hinduism. Manu’s phobia has lost much of its lustre. However, there are still pockets of society in India which are not fully transformed. Manu’s religious code still has its impact. What Hinduism has taught that is difficult to efface totally from their thinking patterns. Their lot is still not improved enough. One can find the relics of Manusmriti among the religious fanatics and uneducated people. In fact, the teachings of Manusmriti accepted in Hinduism for generations have gone so deep in the social living of Hindus that its total rejection seems impossible rather unimaginable since it is keeping the Hinduism’s menace in the Hindu society.

In the Sikh religion woman is given human dignity. She is not condemned and relegated to a lower status to man. Gurbani gives them equal status- both man and woman emanate the light of God;²²⁹ God is both male and female at the same time;²³⁰ God is both father and mother.²³¹ While commenting on the status of woman Gurbani states- Woman conceives and nourishes the child inside her body. It is woman whom man marries and seeks her company. She sustains the human race. When wife dies, man finds another wife for company. Human relations are established through woman. She gives birth to kings how can one condemn her? Woman gives birth to another woman and no one can take birth without her. Only God is not born of woman.²³² Here one finds that woman is the focal point of human race. Her role is to civilise the human race with her cordial

and humble nature as the cradle of thirty-two nobilities²³³ of creating gentleness, good-will, amity, etc. for social living are given credit in the Gurbani. Guru Nanak started the first attack on the disabilities and restriction imposed on woman.

The tradition of sati in Hinduism is severely condemned in the Guru Granth Sahib. This tradition has its origin in the Purana. It relates to Sati, the wife of Shiva. Sati was the daughter of Daksha, the son of Brahma. “Daksha, the father of Sati, insulted Shiva by failing to invite him or Sati to a great sacrifice [grand yagna] to which everyone else (including Sati’s sister) was invited. Sati, overcome with shame and fury, committed suicide by generating an internal fire in which she immolated herself. Enraged, Shiva came to Daksha’s sacrifice destroyed it, and – after Daksha apologized profusely- restored it.”²³⁴

Manusmriti which is the ideal and super code of Hinduism lays down very strict conditions upon a widow. Manusmriti 5. 156-157 states- A faithful wife, who desires to dwell after death with her husband, must never do anything that might displease him who took her hand, whether he be alive or dead; At her pleasure let her emaciate her body by living on pure flowers, roots and fruit; but she must never even mention the name of another man after her husband has died. Manusmriti 5.160 and 165 states- A virtuous wife who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste, reaches heaven, though she has no son, just like chaste men; She who, controlling her thoughts, words and deeds never slights her lord, resides after death with her husband in heaven and is called a virtuous wife.

Gurbani totally disagree with such ideas and states- If she commits sati because of conventions or rituals or obstinate nature, she does not get united with her husband, instead she started wandering in different life cycles.²³⁵

The tradition of Sati is a slur on the dignity of woman. It is a cruel torture. It is a blot on the status of woman as a free person. Gurbani condemns the burning of a widow on the pyre but gives the title of Sati to a widow how dies with grief after her husband’s death. Widow will still be called Sati if after her husband’s death she remains pious and content bearing all the pains in his loving memory.²³⁶

The Sikh religion and Hinduism are diametrically opposing each other regarding the status of woman. Even with all the advancements in the status of woman in Hinduism due to modern education, she is still bound by religious restrictions. She is not allowed to go to temple during her monthly course. She is considered to be impure during that period. These ancient beliefs are still dear and hold great importance in the life of a Hindu. Her widowhood is still looked

down upon by that section of the Hindus who are still tied to Vedas, Manusmriti, and Puranas.

Sources of Procreation

In the Sikh religion every aspect of human life is judged through reason, God has given human being logical wisdom.²³⁷ Mystical processes and procedures play no part in the Gurbani. Human life is lived according to the processes and procedure set by God. Human life is produced through procreation. In the Guru Granth Sahib four methods are given to procreate life. Life comes into existence through egg, earth, placenta and sweat, and God is present in all of them.²³⁸

Ram Chander of Ramayana was not the biological son of Raja Dasratha. His birth was mystical. He had mother but no father. Raja Dasrath became the father of Ram Chander because his mother was married to Raja Dasratha. His birth was a miracle child. This is already discussed above.

Similar is the story of Sita, Ram Chander's wife. Sita was dug from the earth lying in a jar. A farmer's plough hit the jar with a furrow and found a child in the jar. In Indian language farrow is known as Seet, the name Sita is derivative from Seet.²³⁹ Similar story is regarding her death, "As she was still speaking, a miracle occurred: From the earth there rose a celestial throne supported on the heads of Cobra People [Nagas]; the goddess. Earth took Sita in her arms, sat her on that throne, and as the gods watched, Sita descended into the earth."²⁴⁰ Sita was born of the earth and returned into the earth.

In Mahabharata the birth of Draupati is from the fire, celestial birth. Draupati's father Drupada had no son who would help him to fight his enemies. In order to get a son "Drupada performed a sacrifice in order to get a son who would kill his enemy, Drona. As the oblation was prepared, the priest summoned the queen to receive the oblation and let the king impregnate her, but she took so long to put on her perfume for the occasion that the priest made the oblation directly into the fire, and so the son was born out of the fire, not out of the queen. And after the son came a daughter, Draupadi.²⁴¹ Draupadi was born through the fire, a fire girl.

Similar is the episode of "The five sons of King Pandu, called the Pandavas, were fathered by gods: Yudhishtira was by Dharma, Bhima by the Wind, Arjuna by Indra, and the twin, Nakula and Sahadeva, by the Ashvins."²⁴²

Hindu scriptures sometimes give account of the births by taking some mystic potions and tonics. Sometimes birth takes place without a woman. All such mystical ways of birth are not endorsed and conceded in the Guru Granth Sahib. Gurbani is reality, Gurbani is life essence and Gurbani is truth which tells the intent and purpose of life. It is not mythology. It is not the dream of a dreamer.

Caste System

Another glaring example of Hinduism that negates human dignity is the caste system. The question of immorality, inequality and social injustice, one finds in the caste system, the bed rock of Hinduism. The caste system is totally organised in a subjective order. Manusmriti 1.31 states- But for the sake of the of the world he caused the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arms, his thighs, and his feet. While stressing the superiority of Brahmana, Manusmriti 10.3 states- On account of his pre-eminence, on account of his superiority of his origin, on account of his observance of particular restrictive rules, and on account of his particular sanctification the Brahmana is the lord of all castes (varna).

Vedas not only provide the four-fold division of society they also prescribe a course of life right from childhood to the end of life for all the four divisions. The caste system regulates education, marriage, family life, old age, etc.²⁴³

Manusmriti 1.87 states- But in order to protect this universe HE, the most resplendent one, assigned separate duties and occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet. Manusmriti 1.88-91 states- To Brahmanas he assigned teaching and studying the Veda, sacrificing for their own benefit and for others, giving and accepting of alms; The Kshatriya he commended to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study the Veda and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasures; The Vaisya to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study the Veda, to trade, to lend money, and to cultivate land; One occupation only the lord preserved to the Sudra, to serve meekly even these other three castes. Sudra are regarded scavengers since Manusmriti 5.140 states- Sudras who live according to the law...their food shall be the fragments of an Aryan's meal. Manusmriti 11.35 regards Brahmana as the super hero because all other mortals subsist through the benevolence of Brahmana- The Brahmana is declared to be the creator of the world, the punisher, the teacher and hence a benefactor of all created beings; to him let no man say anything unpropitious nor use any harsh words.

Caste system is hereditary in Hinduism. Sudra has become a dreg of the society. The idea that one man is superior to another man because of birth is a blow to humanity. In Hinduism the touch of a Sudra makes a person impure-

Manusmriti 5.143 states- He, who, while carrying anything in any manner, is touched by an impure person or thing, shall become pure if he performs an ablution, without putting down that thing. Manusmriti fixes the living conditions for Sudra in chapter 10.51-56 as follows- they will live outside the villages keeping dogs and donkeys as their wealth; they shall wear garments of the dead bodies and eat their food in broken dishes and use ornaments of black iron, they shall keep moving from place to place; their transactions and marriages shall be between themselves; at night they shall not walk in villages and towns; during the day they go about their work wearing marks at the king's command and carry out the corpses of those who have no relatives; and by king's order they shall execute the criminals and shall receive their possessions". More so Manusmriti 10.129 deprives Sudra from collecting wealth- No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able to do it; for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmanas. The Hindu caste system is nothing more than a lever of oppression and it is linked to the divine law.

Manu also prescribes punishments for Sudra if he does any wrong against the twice- born. The punishments are very severe. In fact, punishments are prescribed for all the three castes for doing any wrong to the Brahmana. However, Sudra's punishments are very severe. For Example, Manusmriti 8.267 states- A Kshatriya, having defamed a Brahmana, shall be fined one hundred panas, a Vaisya one hundred and fifty or two hundred; a Sudra shall suffer corporeal punishment. Manusmriti 8.270 states- A once-born man (Sudra) who insults a twice-born man with gross invective, shall have his tongue cut out; for he is of low origin. There are numerous punishments like pouring hot oil into the mouth, cutting fingers, thrusting red-hot iron in the mouth, etc.

Manusmriti is the backbone of Hinduism. Its influence is still visible. Its presence is like leprosy in Hinduism. But it is the pillar upon which Hinduism survives. Caste system is a hierarchy of subordination from the highest to the lowest. It is a progressive order of reverence and a graded order of contempt. The caste system is a clear exploitation of human beings by human beings in the name of religion. In Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, "According to the three Gunas (Sattvic, Rajastic and Tamasic) and the proper division of labour, the Chatur Varna ("four-coloured") society was created by me".²⁴⁴ One finds the roots of varna is the Rgveda and the caste system is an off shot of varna ashram since it lays down the rules of different professions which developed into caste system parallel to the verna ashram. There is no doubt that both the verna ashram system and the caste system are complementary. The restrictions which the varna ashram imposes are the same as one find in the caste system. Commenting on the effect of the caste system upon the Sudra, Swami Dharma Theertha writes- "The feeling of caste conceit on one side, and the degradation on the other, enters into the flesh and blood of the young ones and they never recover from it in after life They

are made to humble themselves to dust.”²⁴⁵ The Sikh religion is “a model and inspiration to the lowly and oppressed of all times, and a memorable contrast to the Brahman.”²⁴⁶

The caste system started from the Vedas and codified in Manusmriti also spread its influence in Ramayana. Ramayana epic, which was written thousand years after Vedas and Manusmriti, was influenced by the caste system. One finds the influence of caste system in the story of Shambuka in Ramayana- A Brahmin’s child died of unknown causes, and the father blamed Rama for failing to maintain dharma, accusing Rama of being guilty of Brahminicide. The sage Narada warned Rama that a Shudra was generating tapas ... and that this violation of dharma was causing disasters such as the death of the child. Rama gave instructions to preserve the child’s body in oil. Then he explored the country and found ... a man generating *tapas*, hanging upside down. Rama asked him his class... and the purpose of his *tapas*, and the man replied, “I was born in a Shudra womb, and I am named Shambuka. I am doing this in order to become a god and to conquer the world of the gods.” Rama drew the sword from his scabbard and cut off Shambuka’s head while he was still talking. And at the very moment, the child came back to life.”²⁴⁷

Hinduism’s relaxation of old restriction on Sudra is the result of modern developments. On close scrutiny one will find that the old wine is still enclosed in new bottles. Past is still present in variable fashions and the higher caste Hindus are not ready to treat Sudra on equal footing. Old habits die hard. The conditions of Sudra in present day Hinduism still reflect their inferior position in social ladders. Moreover, centuries of repressions have caused in the mind of Sudra the inferiority complex which is still present in their behaviour. When and how they will come out of this degradation is not certain. Hinduism is never going to change in regard to caste system since it will be the end of Hinduism. A Hindu cannot feel himself a Hindu unless first being a caste person. Hindus cling to caste system with demonic tenacity. The four legs of Hinduism are its foundation. Every Hindu scripture old and new regards the caste system the gift of their gods. Manusmriti 2.11 declares -Every twice-born man, who, relying on the institutes of dialectics, treats with contempt those two sources of the law, must be caste out by the virtuous, as an atheist and a scorner of the Vedas. And the two sources of law, Manusmriti 2.10 states- But by Sruti (revelation) is meant the Veda, and by Smriti (tradition) the institutes of the sacred law: those two must not be called into question in any matter, since from those two the sacred law shone forth. Manusmriti totally negates any dent in the revelations of Hindu scriptures. No reason, no logic and no discourse is allowed to change the Hindu ethos. That is why the present tendencies of Hinduism do not show sufficient improvement on the intrinsically and vulnerable policies of their predecessors.

They persist in their archaic and traditional cultural habits. They have not realised the sanctity of human life and unity of mankind.

The Sikh religion vehemently preaches for human dignity since human dignity is the dignity of God. The Sikh religion is the abode of all those who wish to live a commendable and respectful life of peace. Guru Granth Sahib will be a guide to get rid of the social and religious inequalities. The Sikh religion has not only given the concept of oneness of God but it also preached the idea of oneness of humanity. The question of caste and creed has never become a focal point of the Sikh religion. Gurbani states that all human beings are created by God, all are exalted and no one is low.²⁴⁸ Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, though born in a high caste, declared himself a part and parcel of the meagre class since God's blessing are always upon those who are humble and modest.²⁴⁹ God's blessings do not call in question the caste of a person, in God's court caste has no meaning.²⁵⁰ Attributive path of God is open to all and caste is immaterial.²⁵¹ The Sikh religion teaches the lessons of humanity and humility and encourages fraternity among human beings.²⁵²

Gurbani advances two very interesting points to destroy the existence of castes. First, if there are different human castes, their births must be different. However, all human beings are born in the same process from mother, there are no different processes for different castes. Such an argument makes caste irrelevant. How they become different after they are born. Second, when a person is in her mother's womb, the lineage is not in question, there is no caste at that time. How one gets caste after coming out of the womb.²⁵³ Gurbani tells us that one is counted supreme if one submits to God, there is no supremacy with Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisy and Sudra.²⁵⁴ The Sikh religion came as a saviour of the oppressed, avengers of wrong and liberator of those in serfdom.

So far, this essay has given the views of both the Sikh religion and Hinduism pointing out their differences. However, the chief articles of faith and discipline that serve to hold the Sikhs together are summarised to give an overall view of the Sikh religion- "They must believe only in One Immortal God; They must not worship idols, cemeteries, threes or spirits; They must ever help the poor and protect those who sought their protection; They must have no distinctions of caste or class or profession and must deem themselves of one family; They must practise the use of arms, must wear arms constantly, must never flee before an enemy, and must be prepared to die for a cause of truth and justice; They must lead a pure life of chastity, moderation, discipline, benevolent actions and dedication to God; Women were to have all the consolations of religion which men enjoyed; Every one was to live by honest labour and shun the company of idlers and wicked men."²⁵⁵ After summarising the Sikh religion, Swami warns the followers of the Sikh religion to protect their faith from the pitfalls of

Hinduism and lapsing into Brahmanism- “The Sikhs, along with the rest of India, are sinking together under the curse of Brahmanism”.²⁵⁶

The purpose of this article is not to challenge or condemn what the Hindus believe. The principles, traditions and convictions of both the Sikh religion and Hinduism are cited simply to show their differences. If the Hindus feel satisfied and get peace of mind from their beliefs there can be nothing better than that. Purpose of religion is to bring discipline, serenity and peace in life. In fact, religion is honest and truthful discipline, whatever be the name of the religion. The only purpose of this writing is to convey the idea that the Sikh religion is quite independent and separate from Hinduism. The Sikh religion has nothing to do with the Hindu ideology. Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikh religion, made clear that the ideals of the Sikh religion are quite different from Hinduism. There is no commonality between Hinduism and the Sikh religion. The only commonality is, that both Hindus and Sikhs are human beings and demand humanly behaviour, “The human body is one, the human soul is one. Human beauty is one. Our perception of the Beauty is one; our self-intoxication is the same. Our pursuits of pleasure are alike. There is no difference between man and man”.²⁵⁷

However, it is wrong to regard that a Sikh is a Hindu or the Sikh religion is a follow up of Hinduism or the Sikh religion has come into existence to provide sword protection to Hinduism. Hindus very convincingly cite the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur for the protection of Hinduism. However, this conviction is based on wrong premises and trite learning. Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his life not to protect Hinduism but in the name of human rights and humanity. Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his life to defend the rights of the people to secure the right of freedom of belief and worship. This was in consonance with the Sikh religion’s convictions in the ethical-social order promoting the principle of tolerance and acceptance of diversity of religious beliefs. It was a fight against injustice and not a religious struggle. Guru Teg Bahadur gave his life in defence of religious tolerance, equality and freedom of conscience. It is a martyrdom in defence of the basic human values. All such talk that Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his life to protect Hinduism is a pap talk. Such talk is the result of arm chair learning to create confusion between the Sikh religion and Hinduism. However, after reading this article one will surely understand that the Sikh religion is distinctly separate and independent of Hinduism. Sikh is not a Hindu nor Hindu is a Sikh.

The religious conviction of tolerance of the Sikh religion is clearly visible in the principle of universal participation of people of all faith in the Sikh temples, Gurdwaras. The Sikh Gurudwaras are open for everyone. People of every faith are allowed not only in the Gurudwaras but to take free food called, Guru Ka

Langer, which is served in the Guru's kitchen. The spirit of oneness of humanity and humility are the core of the Sikh spirit.

This essay is not to hurt the feelings of the followers of Hinduism in any manner but to clarify the confusion that Hinduism is creating in the minds of the general public regarding the Sikh religion. It is not an attack upon Hinduism. It is against the attack on the separateness and independence of the Sikh religion. One should read this essay in the spirit of the Sikh religion standing on its own feet. Distinctiveness of the Sikh faith is the aim of this essay. Human souls are wounded by hatred and the Sikh religion is against any fissures towards any human being. Gurbani states that every human being is a kingdom of God.²⁵⁸

This essay will serve as a lesson of wisdom embodying the nature and principles of the Sikh religion. The philosophy of life and the Sikh religion's code of conduct will appeal to the modern mind in the spirit of science. Its approach is rational and ethical since the Sikh religion imparts the lessons of negating evil thoughts for others.²⁵⁹ The Sikh religion is a practical lesson to lead a life of sincerity in the service of others. The Sikh religion treats humanity as one universal entity rather than a divided house. One has to accept that the Sikh religion embraces catholicity and is of cosmopolitan nature. The Sikh religion is a religion of tolerance and that is its beauty and glory. It encourages sweet social and harmonious living among people of all faiths. Guidance for world order is written in the Guru Granth Sahib by the Grace of God- No one shall cause pain and establish dominance over others. Everyone shall abide in peace and the governance should be gentle and compassionate.²⁶⁰ Such philosophy shall be Summum Bonum for the people of all religions of the world since it will be a valuable contribution towards the uplift of humanity in all spheres of life. All discriminations existing in the world due to numerous causes, such as religion, shall disappear under the guidance of the Sikh religion. The Sikh religion is original and practical in every respect since it embraces the welfare and amelioration of the whole humanity. The Sikh religion respects the independence existence of every religion of the world. Each religion should enjoy its independence.

One should read this essay against the huge system and the campaign of Hinduism against the separateness and independence of the Sikh religion

References

1. Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CW) vol. 32, p. 564
2. CW. vol. 63, p. 294
3. Hardev Singh Virk, Genesis of the Hindu-Sikh Divide: Critical Evaluation of the Divide, 2021, Introduction
4. Sangat Singh, The Sikhs in History, 2005, p. 169
5. Dr. Gopal Singh, History of the Sikhs (!469-1988) 1995, p. 657
6. Ashok Mishra, Hinduism Rituals, Reason and Beyond, 2019, p. 230
7. Ibid., p. 217
8. Ibid., p. 20
9. Thaper Romila, A History of India, 1966, p. 132
10. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 196
11. Ibid., pp. 234-235
12. Ibid., p. 243
13. Dr. Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life, 2007, p. 46
14. Swami Dharma Theertha, The Menace of Hindu Imperialism, 1946, p. 195
15. CW., p. vol. 27, p. 61
16. Dr, Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 46
17. CW. vol. 25, p. 443
18. CW. vol. 25, p. 516
19. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 267
20. Ed. Viswanathan, Am I a Hindu? The Hinduism Primer, 1993, p. 46
21. Ibid., p. 1
22. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 20
23. Sharma D.S., Studies in the Renaissance of Hinduism, 1944, p. 637
24. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 19
25. R.N. Suryanaryana, Universal Religion, 1952, p. 78
26. Thaper Romila, op. cit., p. 132
27. Guru Granth Sahib, Rag Suhi M. 1, p. 465
28. Rag Bhairo M. 5, p. 1136
29. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 308
30. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 471
31. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 471
32. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 951
33. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 903
34. Rag Bhairo, Bhagat Kabir Ji, p. 1159
35. Rag Gond, Bhagat Kabir ji, p. 871

36. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 358
37. Ed. Viswanathan, op. cit., p.278; Wendy Doniger, The Hindus An Alternative History, 2015, p. 221
38. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 464
39. Rag Ramkali M. 1, pp. 953-954 & 1412
40. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 350
41. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 942
42. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 109; Wendy Doniger, op. cit., pp. 222-223
43. Rag Maru M. 5, p. 1080
44. Rag Gauri M. 3, p. 254
45. Rag Maru M. 5, p. 1095
46. Rag Bhairo M. 5, p. 1136
47. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 473
48. Rag Maru M. 3, p. 1067
49. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 199
50. Rag Majh M. 5, p. 106
51. Rag Srirag M. 3, p. 66
52. Rag Majh M. 5, p. 134
53. Rag Ramkali, Bhagat Kabir ji, p. 970
54. Ashok Misra, op. cit., p. 285
55. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 97
56. Rag Basant M. 1, 1170
57. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., pp. 159-160
58. Rag Suhi M. 1, p. 766
59. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 295
60. Rag Bilawal M. 1, p. 838
61. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 272
62. Rag Gond M. 5, 867
63. Rag Basant M. 1, p. 1170
64. Rag Majh M. 5, p. 106
65. Rag Gauri, Bhagat Namdeo ji, p. 525
66. Rag Asa, Bhagat Kabir Ji, p. 479
67. Rag Bhairo M. 5, p. 1160
68. Rag Bihagra M. 1, p. 556
69. Rag Maru M. 5, p. 1078
70. Rag Jaijivanti M. 5, p. 1388
71. Rag Vadhans M. 3, p. 559
72. Rag Maru M. 3, p. 1053
73. Satyarth Nayak, Mahagatha 100 Tales from the Puranas, 2022

74. Rag Suhi M. 5, p. 747
75. Rag Gauri M. 1, p. 277
76. Rag Srirag M. 1, p. 75
77. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 91
78. Ibid., p. 221
79. Rag Gauri M. 1, p. 227
80. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 85
81. Rag Gauri M. 1, p. 224
82. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 5-8
83. Jap Ji, p. 4
84. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 9-10
85. Rag Asa M. 5, 401
86. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 10-11
87. Rag Maru M. 1, p. 1035
88. Rag Suhi M. 4, p. 735
89. Rag Bhairo M. 5, p. 1156
90. Rag Parbhati, Bhagat Beni ji, p, 1351
91. Ibid.
92. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 153-157
93. Rag Dhanasri, Bhagat Kabir Ji, p. 691
94. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 208
95. Rag Bilawal M. 1, p. 838
96. Rag Bhairo M. 5, p. 1136
97. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 414
98. Rag Maru M. 3, p. 1066
99. Rag Vadhans M. 3, p. 559
100. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 224
101. Rag Asa M. 2, p. 422
102. Rag Ramkali M. 3, p. 880
103. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., pp. 474-5, Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 112
104. Rag Ramkali M. 3, p. 880
105. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., pp. 93-95; Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 242
106. Rag Ramkali M. 5, p. 896
107. Rag Ramkali M. 5, pp. 885 & 897
108. Rag Bairo M. 5, p.1136
109. Rag Bhairo, Bhagat Kabir Ji, pp. 1158-1159
110. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 29
111. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., pp. 55-56
112. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 259

113. Rag Vadhans M. 3, p. 558
114. Rag Gond, Bhagat Namdeo Ji, p. 873
115. Rag Ramkali M. 5, p. 890
116. Rag Parbhathi M. 5, p. 1348
117. Rag Sorath M. 1, p. 635
118. Rag Danasri M. 1, p. 687
119. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 247
120. Rag Parbhathi M. 5, p. 1348
121. Rag Sorath M. 1, p. 635
122. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 905
123. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 904
124. Rag Bilaweal M. 3, p. 843
125. Rag Gauri, Bhagat Kabir Ji, p. 332
126. Rag Devgandhari M. 9, p. 536
127. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., Ch.12 & 13
128. Ibid., p. 257
129. Rag Malar M. 1, p. 1289
130. Rag Gauri M. 3, p. 162
131. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 153
132. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 269; Ashok Mishra, op. cit., pp. 215-216
133. Ashok, op. cit., p. 273
134. Ibid., p. 256
135. Ibid., p. 224
136. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 158; Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 413
137. Rag Ramkali, Bhagat Kabir Ji, p. 971.
138. Rag Kalyan M. 4, p. 1325
139. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., pp. 414-415
140. Rag Bhairo M. 5, p. 1139
141. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 214
142. Rag Bihagra, Salok Mardana-1, p. 553
143. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., pp. 233, 237-239
144. Ibid., p. 237
145. Rag Gond, Bhagat Ravidas ji, p. 875
146. Rag Sorath M. 5, 642
147. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 269; Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 19-22
148. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., p. 261
149. Rag Parbhathi M. 1, p. 1344
150. Rag Maru M. 3, p. 1049
151. Wendy Doniuger, op. cit., pp. 396-397

152. Rag Bhairo, Bhagat Kabir ji, p. 1159
153. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 325
154. Rag Maru M. 5, p. 1084
155. Rag Asa M. 5, p. 387
156. Rag Suhi M. 5, p. 745
157. Saloks in Addition to Vars M. 1, p. 1419
158. Rag Dhanasri M. 4, p. 667
159. Rag Sorath M. 3, p. 601
160. Rag Srirag, Bhagat Ravidas Ji, p. 93
161. Rag Tilang M. 5, p. 724
162. Rag Vadhans M. 1, p. 567
163. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 474
164. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., pp. 112-113
165. Rag Dhanasri M. 4, p. 669
166. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 257
167. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 474
168. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 470
169. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 384-389
170. Rag Vadhans M. 3, p. 559
171. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 265
172. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 419
173. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 64; Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 129
174. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 90
175. Rag Gauri, Bhagat Kabir ji, p. 338
176. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 180-182
177. Rag Todi M. 5, p. 714
178. Rag Maru M. 1, p. 1035
179. Rag Suhi M. 1, p. 788
180. Rag Majh M. 1, p. 138
181. Jap Ji, p. 3
182. Rag Gauri M. 3, p. 510
183. Satyarth Nayak, op. cit.
184. Rag Maru M. 1, p. 1036
185. Rag Maru M. 5, p. 1095
186. Rag Suhi M. 4, p. 759
187. Rag Maru M. 5, p. 1095
188. Rag Bihagra M. 5, p. 1136
189. Rag Ramkali M. 1, p. 878
190. Rag Tilang M. 5, p. 724

191. Rag Srirag, Bhagat Ravidas ji. P. 93
192. Rag Bihagra M. 1, p. 556
193. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., pp. 409 & 209
194. Rag Gauri 5, p. 216
195. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 235; Manusmriti 4.235
196. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 315
197. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 119
198. Ibid., p. 249
199. Ibid., pp. 374-375; Manusmriti 2.17
200. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 403
201. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 208
202. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 466
203. Rag Asa M. 3, p. 434
204. Rag Dhanasri M. 1, p. 662
205. Rag Ramkali, Bhagat Kabir ji, p. 969
206. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 292
207. Rag Jaijivanti, Bhagat Kabir Ji, p. 1370
208. Rag Kedara M. 5, p. 1122
209. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 216
210. Rag Gauri M. 1, p. 152
211. Rag Ramkali M. 5, p. 885
212. Rag Sorath M. 3, p. 648
213. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 472
214. Ibid.
215. Ibid.
216. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 176
217. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 199
218. Ibid.
219. Rag Jaijivanti M. 5, p. 1361
220. Rag Srirag M. 5, p. 78
221. Rag Parbhathi M. 1, p. 1330
222. Rag Asa M. 3, p. 434
223. Rag Srirag M. 3, p. 31
224. Rag Sarag M. 5, p. 1209
225. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., p. 233
226. Ibid., p. 350
227. Ibid., p. 315
228. Ibid., p. 103
229. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 223

230. Rag Maru M. 1, p. 1020
231. Rag Majh M. 5, p. 103
232. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 473
233. Rag Asa M. 5, p. 371
234. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 392; Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 72-78
235. Rag Gauri M. 5, p. 185
236. Rag Suhi M. 3, p. 787
237. Rag Kalyan M. 4, p. 1325
238. Rag Sorath M. 1, p. 596
239. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 221
240. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 227
241. Ibid., pp. 300-301
242. Ibid., p. p. 263
243. Ashok Mishra, op. cit., pp. 34-35
244. Ed. Vishwanathan, op. cit., p. 249
245. Swami Dharma Theertha, The Menace of Hindu Imperialism, 1946, p. 207
246. Ibid., p. 163
247. Wendy Doniger, op. cit., p. 249; Satyarth Nayak, op. cit., pp. 291-294
248. Rag Srirag M. 1, p. 62
249. Ibid., p. 15
250. Rag Asa M. 1, p. 349
251. Rag Basant M. 4, p. 1178
252. Rag Dhanasri M. 5, p. 671
253. Rag Gauri, Bhagat Kabir ji, p. 324
254. Rag Gond M. 4, p. 861
255. Swami Dharma Theertha, op. cit., p. 161
256. Ibid., p. 163
257. Puran Singh, The Spirit Born People, 1999, p. 144
258. Rag Tilang M. 5, p. 724
259. Rag Asa M. 5, p. 386
260. Rag Srirag M. 5, p. 74.