

God in Sikhism

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The fundamental belief in Sikhism is that God exists not merely as an idea or concept, but as a real entity. God is indescribable, yet knowable and perceivable to anyone who is prepared to dedicate the time and energy to become perceptive to His persona. The Gurus never spoke about proofs of the existence of God. For them, He is too real, and something obvious does not require any logical proof. God is transcendent and all-pervasive at the same time. Transcendence and immanence are two aspects of the same single Supreme Reality. The Reality is imminent in the entire creation, but the creation as a whole fails to contain God in its entirety. We will describe the Reality within Sikhism, and explain how it parallels to Islam or Hinduism.

Key words: Sikhism, God, Onkār, Unity

Introduction

Sikhism is a major religion of India, primarily a religion of Punjab. Its followers are called Sikhs. Presently it has about twenty million followers in the world. They have built their own religious places of worship, called the Gurdwaras, which in addition to being place of worship also serve as centers of the Sikh culture. The holy scripture of Sikhism is Guru Granth Saheb. Sikhism maintains that truth is higher than anything else. Then they question what truth is. Truth has been explained in the very Mool Mantra of Sikhism, which contains the nature of truth and the means for reaching the truth. Man is to become a dynamic man, or a *gurmukh*, who is the true follower of God.

Sikhism as a religion is uncompromisingly monotheistic. The Gurus have described God in numerous ways in their hymns mentioned in the Guru Granth Sāhib, but the oneness of the deity is consistently emphasized throughout their literature. For example, God for the Sikhs as described in the *Mool Mantra*, the first passage in the

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Guru Granth Sāhib and the basic formula of the faith is as follows:

Ik Onkār Satināmu Kartā Purakhu Nirbhau Nirvairu Akāl Mūrati
Ajūni Sāibhan Gurprasādi (SGGS, 1)

One Supreme Being, Truth is His name; the Creator Primal Being; without fear and without enmity, the Timeless Verity, un-incarnated and Self-Existent, known through His grace. (McAuliffe 1963, 1:290)

Oankār is a variation of the mystic monosyllable Om first set forth in the Upanishads as the transcendent object of profound religious meditation.

Guru Nanak prefixed the numeral one (*ik*) making it *Ik oankār* or *Ek ankār* to stress God's oneness. God is named and known only through His own immanent nature. Almost all names are attributive. The only name which can be said to truly fit God's transcendent state is *Sat* or *Satnām* (Sanskrit *Satya* meaning "truth"), the changeless and timeless Reality (Kaur 2001, 81).

Doctrine of God in Sikhism

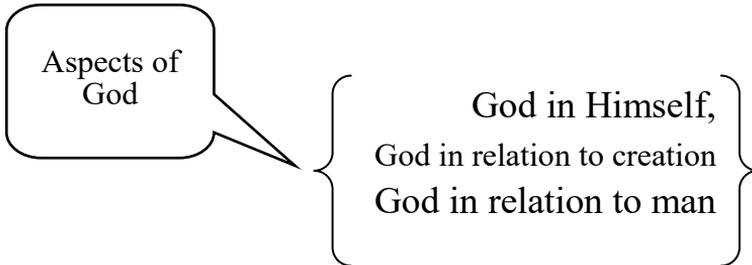
God is *Kartā Purakh*, the Creator-Being. He created the spatial-temporal universe, not from some pre-existing physical element, but from His own Self. Universe is His own emanation. It is not *māyā* or illusion but is real (*sat*) because, as says Guru Arjan, "True is He and true is His creation [because] all has emanated from God Himself" (SGGS, 294). However, God is not identical with the universe. The latter exists and is contained in Him and not vice versa. God is immanent in the created world but is not limited by it. "Many a times He expands Himself into such worlds but He remains the same One, Ek oankār" (SGGS, 276).

God is *Akāl Mūrat*, the Eternal Being. The timelessness involved in the description *Akāl* has made it popular in Sikh tradition as one of the names of God. *Akāl Purak* is defined as the Timeless One, as in the description, *Sat Sri Akāl*. One of the most sacred shrines of the Sikhs is the *Akāl Takhat*, the Eternal Throne, at Amritsar. *Mūrat* here does not mean form, figure, image, or idol. Sikhism expressly forbids idolatry or image-worship in any form. God is called *Nirankār* or the Formless One; although it is true that all forms are the manifestations of *Nirankār*. Bhai Gurdās, the earliest teacher and the copyist of the original rendition of Guru Granth Sāhib, says, "*Nirankār ākaru kari jotī sarup anup dikhāia*" meaning "The Formless One" having created form manifested His wondrous refulgence (Gurdas 2008, Var 12, Ode 17). *Mūrat* in the Mool Mantra, therefore, signifies truth or manifestation of the Timeless and Formless One.

God is un-incarnated, or *Ajūni*, and *Sāibhan* (Sanskrit *svayambhu*), or self-existent. The Primal Creator Himself had no creator. He simply is, has always been, and shall ever be by Himself. *Ajūni* also affirms the Sikh rejection of the theory of divine incarnation. Guru Arjan says, “Man misdirected by false belief indulges in falsehood; God is free from birth and death. . . May that mouth be scorched which says that God is incarnated” (SGGS, 1136).

Aspects of God

God in Sikhism is thus depicted in three distinct aspects: God in Himself, God in relation to creation, and God in relation to man (Singh 2001, 2:93). God by himself is the one Ultimate, Transcendent Reality, *Nirguna* (without attributes), Timeless, Boundless, Formless, Ever-existent, Immutable, Ineffable, All-by Himself and even Unknowable in His entirety. The only nomenclatures that can rightly be applied to Him in this state of *Sūnn* (Sanskrit, *sūnya* “void”) are Brahman and Par-Brahman (Sanskrit, Parbrahman) or the pronouns He and Thou. During a discussion with *siddhas* (Hindu solitaries) Guru Nanak, when asked about where the Transcendent God was before the stage of creation, replied, “To think of the Transcendent Lord in that state is to enter the realm of wonder. Even at that stage of *Sūnn*, he permeated all that Void” (SGGS, 940). This is the state of God's *Sūnn Samādhī*, or His self-absorbed trance.



When it pleases God, He becomes *sarguna* (Sanskrit, *saguna* “with attributes”) and manifests Himself in creation. He becomes ingrained in His created universe, which is His own emanation. In essence, He remains an aspect of Himself.

God in the Sikh Scripture has been referred to by several names, picked from Indian and Semitic traditions. He is called in terms of human relations as father, mother, brother, relation, friend, lover, beloved, and husband. Other names, expressive of His supremacy, are *Thākūr*, *Prabhu*, *Swāmi*, *Sāh*, *Patsāh*, *Sāhib*, *Sāi* (Lord, Master). Some traditional names are *Rām*, *Nārāyan*, *Govind*, *Gopāl*, *Allah*, *Khudā*. Even terms such as *Nirankār* and *Niranjan etal* are as much related to

negative attributes as are the positive terms like *Dātā*, *Dātār*, *Kartā*, *Kartār*, *Dayāl*, *Kripāl*, *Qādir*, *karim*, and so forth. Some terms peculiar to Sikhism are *nām* (name), *Sabad* (word), and *Wāheguru* (*Wondrous Master*). While *Nām* and *Sabad* are mystical terms standing for the divine manifestation and are used as substitute terms for the Supreme Being, *Wāheguru* is a pleasantly expressive phrase showing awe, wonder and ecstatic joy of the worshipper as he comprehends the immenseness and grandeur of the Lord and His Creation.

Creation is His manifestation, but, being conditioned by space and time, it provides only a partial and imperfect glimpse of the Timeless and Boundless Supreme Being. God is both Transcendent and Immanent, but that does not mean that these are phases of God, with one following the other. God is one, and He is both *Nirguna* and *Sarguna*. "*Nirguna Sargunu Hari, Hari Merā*, (God, my God is both with and without attributes)," sang Guru Arjan (SGGS, 98). Guru Amar Das also said, "*Nirguna Sarguna Ape Soi* (He Himself is with as well as without attributes) (SGGS, 128). Transcendence and Immanence are two aspects of the same Supreme Reality.

The Creator also sustains His Creation compassionately and benevolently. The universe is created, sustained and moved according to His *Hukam* or Divine Will and His Divine purpose. "The inscrutable *Hukam* is the source of all forms, all creatures... All are within the ambit of *Hukam*: there is nothing outside of it" (SGGS, 1).

Guru Amar Das reassures: "Recognize your self, O mind! You are the light manifest. Rejoice in Guru's instruction that God is always with (in) you. If you recognize your Self, you shall know the Lord and shall get the knowledge of life and death" (SGGS, 441). The knowledge of the infinitesimal nature of his self when compared to the immenseness of God and His creation would instill humility in man and would rid him of his ego (a sense of I, my and mine) which is "the greatest malady man suffers from" and the arch-enemy of *Nām* or path to God-Realization (SGGS, 466, 560, 589, 1258). Having surrendered his ego and having an intense desire to reach his goal (the realization of Reality), the seeker under Guru's instruction (*Gurmati*) becomes a *Gurmukh* or person looking *Guruward*. He meditates upon *Nām* or *Sabad*, the Divine Word, while yet leading life as a householder, earning through honest *labour*, sharing his victuals with the needy, and performing self-abnegating deeds of service. Sikhism condemns ritualism. Worship of God in the Sikh way of life consists in reciting *Gurbāni* or holy texts and meditation with *Nām*, in solitary, or in *Sangat* (congregation), *Kīrtan*, or singing of scriptural hymns in praise

of God, and *Ardās* or prayer in supplication. Service to *Satguru* (God) is the highest form of worship (Singh Puri 1999, 25).

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The Unity of God

The ultimate reality existent in the Guru Granth Sāhib is certainly a metaphysical one. The numeral one represents it most clearly and closely (Kaur 1995, 26) in God's transcendental Unity, as well as in His manifestation of Unity (Singh 2004, 268). The Unity of God may and does express itself in the multiplicity of existence, and there is the pre-existent unity, whole, complete, full, and unconditioned. God is *Ek* (Singh 1999, 19) One, and *Anek* or many (Bhatia and Bakshi, 1:220).

The One, while manifesting Himself as the many, does not lose His oneness and essentially existentially remains one. He is One in His being and One in His activity. That One is *Nirankār* (the unformed One); He is the *Akār* (the form); He is *Nirgun* (without qualities) and *Sargun* (with qualities); He is *Nirantar* (within all), *Nirlep* (beyond all taint or ties of *Māyā*), *Gupāt* (invisible, not manifested), *Pargat* (visible, manifest), *Nerei* (near in His omnipresence), and *Dur* (far away in His transcendence) (Kaur 1999, 32).

According to Sikhism, God is the Supreme Reality, and no second reality stands against Him on an equal footing imposing any limitations upon His being. He is one without a second. He is the all-pervading soul of the universe. This is another way of stating the truth that multiplicity in the universe is held together and energized by the Supreme Unity, which is the unity beyond the multiplicity and in the multiplicity. The primal unity, when it takes the form of becoming, becomes one and many. Behind the many there is the living unity of the One. God is the unity in the multiplicity. Guru Nanak's mystic vision reached the point where he finds all in the One, and One in the all (SGGS, 907).

The metaphor most commonly used in Guru Granth Sāhib to integrate unity and plurality is of the sun and its rays, water and its waves, fire and its flames, dust and dust particles, and music and its tunes. The rays, the waves, the flames and the tunes are nothing more than the manifestation of their respective sources. In the same way, created and manifested plurality has no independent existence but is only in the willed, ordered manifestation of the one source. Thus, the

essential unities of God as well as His manifestation unity are affirmed by the Guru.

The Numeral One

The numeral one affirms His existence, entity and wholeness. Moreover, the *Ek Oankār*, as expounded in the Guru Granth Sāhib, is a dynamic concept (Kaur 1995, 26).

The Holy Sikh Scripture begins with the figure one (Singh 2000, 24), standing for the mathematical unity. It is prefixed to the monosyllable “Om,” which in the Hindu scriptures indicates the Unity of the manifest God.² Though the term “Om” used in the Sikh Scripture seems to be the same, by prefixing the figure one to it, its content becomes much different. *Ek Onkar* in the Sikh Scripture does not mean that the Absolute is a unity of any trinity, but that it is essentially and completely one: a unity of content, quality, quantity, and operation. He is one in His Being, one in His *Shabda* (Word or Logos), one in His *Hukam* (order or fiat), one in His *Raza*’ (Will), and one in His existence (*Sat*) (Kaur 1999, 33).

The highest unity that man is capable of conceiving is the mathematical unity of one (Kaur 1999, 34). The term one is used as synonymous with God.

God’s bothering of Himself in the creation is not *Māyā* or an illusion. He truly is, and His creation has also real existence (SGGS, 284). The multiplicity is as real as the unity, since the creature is one with God in the very act of being other than God; it is God’s *Hukam* (SGGS, Japji).

The Guru believes in the One Reality, the nominal behind all phenomenal of multiplicity. The phenomenon is the manifestation, or rather the creation of the nominal, as really existing as the nominal. The One God expresses Himself as the plurality, yet He remains the unity just as an individual expresses himself in a variety of acts and remains one. In the Sikh Scripture, the Unity of God is not stressed at the cost of multiplicity, but the many are stressed to be only manifestations (creations) of the One (Kaur 1999, 36).

According to the Sikhs view, God is the mathematical unity or one viewed in relation to His creation. God, as He is absolutely in Himself beyond all duality, is neither one nor many. He is both one and many and with equal reality and truth (Kaur 1999, 33).

2. This unity is the unity of all the created Trinities like Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh; Sattva, Rajas, Tamas; waking life, dream-life, and dreamless sleep.

Thus we discover the unity of ourselves with God through the very realization that we are ourselves and not God. The multiplicity of objects is a manifestation phase of God's creative activity, but behind and beyond the multiplicity is God Himself: the One, the Absolute, the Self-existent, and the Self-identical.

Creator

God is the only Reality who is the Creator of all life and the Universe. All life and things visible and invisible emanate from Him. Before the act of creation, there was nothing except God Himself.

He is defined as *Kartā Purakh* (the Creative Personality). The word *Purakh* is derived from the Sanskrit word *Purusha* (person). Guru Nānak has also used this word for the "Universal Soul or Spirit" (Singh, 1979, 9).

According to Sikhism, God is the Creator of the universe. The universe is in time and space and is changing and becoming. God is not identical with the universe. The Creator is different from the creation which is limited and conditioned. God is uncreated, independent, unlimited, and thus different from His creation. God is not only the material cause of the universe. He creates everything.

The Sikhs believe that the universe is not illusory or unreal. The creation is in God but not God. God manifested Himself into *Nām*, then came the world was created. He creates all and fills all, yet He is separate.

In the Mool Mantra, after expressing the unity and the reality of God, the Guru says that He is *Kartā* (the Creator). The other names of God as creator used by the Guru in the Sikh Scriptures are *Usāranwālā*, *Kartār*, *Kāran*, *Sirandā*, *Sirjanhār*, *Khāliq*, and *Bharanhār* (Kaur, 1999, 39).

The concept of a creator God leads us further to determine whether the Guru thinks of God as a creator of the world in the same sense in which a carpenter is the creator of a table. The material of the table is independent of the carpenter. This led Aristotle to determine that God was the mover of the universe. He was the first cause, the first and final, the efficient and formal, but not the material. In India too, we have the *Sankhya* system and other schools of similar thought, which believe that God is only an efficient cause. *Purūsa* needs *Prakriti*, the matter for the creation of the world. However, in Sikhism, God is the sole cause and the cause of causes. There is no fundamental cause outside him, and hence He is named *Karn-Kāran*.

Although the *Hukam*, the Will or Word of God, is mentioned in the Biblical sense, the idea here is more monistic. He “wills” to be known and expands. The word of God as *Kartā* is merely His Will like that of a creative genius. From this point of view, God is named *Hukmi*: He has no form, color, or outline. He becomes manifest by the true Word (Singh 2002, 97).

Thus God is the creator. In essence, He is the sole cause manifesting through Will, and manifested as Word in a subtle form and as World in a gross form, but the divine Being has been given some other attributes with relation to the world. He is *Mool*, the root of the whole universe. He is *Tek*, the support of the world. He is *Āsrā* and *Ādhār* in the same sense. Thus God is the *Ratio Essendi* of the world.

Sustainer

God creates the whole cosmos by an act of Divine *Hukam*. He is responsible from the very beginning: the creation of the show, the continuous sustenance of it, the guidance of its destinies, and the conclusion of it. God does not only create the universe but also sustains it by constantly giving it being:

O Lord! The giver of life and the preserver of it. Thou preserved us at every moment of our life because we are Thy children, we are wholly dependent on Thee for our very existence (SGGS, 674).

God has not only created the universe but also arranged everything in a systematic and coherent way. Combining water and air, God has infused life in the human body, made moon and sun as the great lamps, and created the earth as a place to live and die (SGGS, 877).

If God were to withdraw His being from the universe, the whole show would collapse into nothing. The creator is thus the first, the final, and the ever sustaining cause of the world. God is always immanent in the universe and is completely aware of the needs and necessities of each and every individual.

Transcendence (*Apāre*)

The Transcendence of God means that He rises above all. He is beyond, surpasses, exceeds, and surmounts all that is and all that is not, all that can be and all that cannot be. God in His Transcendence is beyond all limits, attributes, and manifestations of the world of appearance. The Guru has used the following words for the Transcendence of God: *Apāre*, *Apar-Apāri*, *Aprampār*, *Parpmpār*; all these words mean that God is beyond and still beyond. The other words used for the Transcendence of God are *Ūchā* (High), *Utt-Ūchā* (very High), *Ūcho-Ūchā* (Higher than the Highest).

These are degrees of the Transcendence of God. At the physical level there is opposition between pleasure (*sukh*) and pain (*dukh*). At the ethical level an unending struggle occurs between good (*bhalā*) and evil (*burā*).

God is Ever-Transcendent, but what is the nature of this ever-transcending Reality? Some call it infinite and eternal. For the Guru, God is infinitely transcendent and infinitely external. It is the easiest way to express the Transcendence of God by calling Him Infinite and Eternal. Man works under the limitation of space and time and has no other way to stress the Transcendence of God but to deny the categories of space, time, and cause by which they work. God transcends the universe and its limits and limitations; therefore, He must transcend the limitations of space, time, and cause. Thus, He is called Infinite, Eternal, and Uncaused. In his attempt to bring God near to man's mathematical ideas, Guru Arjan Sāhib says, "If I call Him great billions and trillions of time, and go on saying so for ever and ever, His light is ever so much the greater" (SGGS, 562). Guru Gobind Singh says, "*Ād Anil Anād Adwait Hai*" meaning God is the beginning of all things, beyond all numbers. He is eternal without any limit and without any end (Sri Dasam Granth Sahib, Akāl Ustat). God is both transcendent and inherent. No doubt, belief in God presupposes a transcendent depth in the world, but God can be known in and through the world (Bala 1999, 22). In the words of K. Ward:

Theistic religion claims to offer the possibility of human fulfillment by relation to a reality which is transcendent yet mediated in certain finite experiences. That transcendent reality is God, and that is the object of faith. (Ward 1974, 81)

The transcendence of God is stressed by many theologians in Judaism and Christianity such as Philo and Aquinas, and in recent time by Kierkegaard and Barth (Bala 1999, 22).

Personality or *Purakh*

The problematic nature of the ultimate Reality is a central problem for most philosophies of religions. This also appears to be the case in Sikhism as it finds it in the *moolmantra* (fundamental tenet), which is in the very beginning of the Guru Granth Sāhib. It epitomizes the central doctrine of the Sikh metaphysics. In that, Guru Nānak has enunciated the unity of personal God. Although the *moolmantra* refers to the personal unity of God by the use of the words *Purakh*, *Kartā*, and *Nirvair*, one also finds in it the spirit of impersonal idealism and non-dualism as the nature of Reality.

The non-dual nature of the Reality, along with its personal nature as *Kartā Purakh*, constitutes the systematic unity in the Sikh Scriptures. This aspect of Reality is very important for the understanding and realization of the true nature of reality.

God is *Kartā-Purakh*, or the Creator Person who creates the whole cosmos. He is *Ādi-Purakh* (The Prototype Person), the pattern and the model. He is also *Samrath-Purakh* (All-Powerful Person), implying that He possesses the ontological power of creating after the pattern and process of His own Being. He is Person, and he has the power of creating persons. If God is not personal in a literal sense, then God is not the ultimate explanation of that which requires explanation. Only one who is supremely personal can be the ground for the emergence of even the finite personality which we see in our fellows and know intimately in ourselves (Kaur 1999, 77).

This aspect of God is His Personality. In fact, the heading of a couple of hymns in Guru Granth Sāhib specifically reads: "That Person" (*So Purakh*), wherein He is described as fathomless and limitless. Speaking about the personality of God, Bradley states, "The Absolute has personality, but it possesses so much more. To call it personal would be as absurd as to ask if it is moral" (Bradley 1969, 153).

If by personality we are to understand the highest form of finite spiritual development, then certainly in an eminent degree the Absolute is personal (Bradley 1969, 470). Bradley concludes by saying, "It is not personal because it is personal and more. It is, in a word, supra-personal" (Bradley 1969, 471).

In order to gratify the emotional instinct, man must have access in spirit to a personal God to appeal to in order to grant him favors; to afford him solace in affliction; to love him as a son; as a kind and merciful friend; and to take an interest in him when he needs assistance (McAuliffe 1963, 112).

Omnipotence (*Qudrat*)

God is omnipotent (Bala 1999, 21). This word is built from two parts: Omni, which means "all," and potent, which means "powerful." When we speak of God's power and strength or His creative majesty and wonder, we are speaking about God's Omnipotence: the ability of God to do that which He wants to do. God's omnipotence is totally defined by God's Will. Indeed, omnipotence is simply God's ability to do that which God wants done.

Qudrat (originally an Arabic word) means power, ability, potency, vigor, force, authority, universe, nature, and so forth. Steingass has

given some additional meanings for the word *Qudrat* and has defined *Qudrat* as "being omnipotent, providence, preservation, the creation, and destiny." *Qudrat* has been used in Sri Guru Granth Sāhib as the power of God and a means through which he manifests Himself. God (*Kartā Purakh*) is the originator of this world—the *Qudrat*. This expression of *Qudrat* moves from the lower level to the higher level; from the gross matter to organisms; from the rational being to the highest spiritual level. It leads from the phenomenal to the noumenal.

Sri Guru Nānak Dev holds the view that the manifest world sprang forth from the act of His willing. From His one word "be," the world came into existence. From that one word, the whole inorganic universe came forth (*lakh dariāo*). His creation cannot be comprehended. It is so wonderful and amazing. He observes that the world, the universe, and the regions created by Him through His *Qudrat* are true. He denounces the idea of nature being an illusion.

His creation is not fortuitous or accidental. It is rational in nature: everything is happening under His *Hukam*. He Himself resides everywhere. He is ingrained in everybody as the Word (*Shabda*). He is to be known through His Word (*Shabda*). Guru Nānak has used the words *Pasāou*, *Kare Pāsā Dhāli*, *Sāji*, *Sājio*, and *Vasiā* in relation to *Qudrat*. They indicate that His creation is well-planned, beautiful, orderly, and is permeated by Him.

From the above discussion, we can say that the concept of *Qudrat* in Sri Guru Granth Sāhib is different from the concept of *Prakriti* in Indian philosophy. In Sikhism, God (the *Qadar*) is the Creator of nature (*Qudrat*). Nature (*Qudrat*) is not absolute or self-existent as in *Sāmkhya*. It is not only the created one, but God resides in His creation (*Qudrat*). The Absolute is intrinsic in nature, and in every part of creation there is the light of the Absolute. In the whole of the manifestation, man is the highest kind, because he has the capacity to realize God.

To analyze the nature of relationship between the Creator and His creation, we are to see whether creation is dependent upon Him and is determined by Him, or if He is also dependent upon His creation. Other questions include whether He is transcendent or immanent, and whether He is wholly immanent or transcendent as well as immanent.

In Mool Mantra, it is said that He is the One Universal Being, the Real, and the Spirit. He is the Creator, the Controller, beyond restraint, the Spontaneous, beyond any internal antagonism, and the Harmonious. He is Timeless, yet He does not come into birth or death. He is Self-existent. We can attune to Him through Guru's Grace. God

is the only one Reality who is our Creator and Lord, according to Sri Guru Granth Sāhib. All other things are the creation. Since they have been created, they are subject to the laws of nature, therefore making them perishable. All these attributes indicate His transcendence and His distinctness from His creation.

Guru Nānak, while talking about the Creator, compares himself (the creature) to a fish, and God (the Creator) to a river. God is just like a river which is full of wisdom, and the creature is a fish in that river. As the fish cannot measure the expansive river, similarly man cannot apprehend his Creator. Whatever man sees, it is the creation of God, and while man cannot live without Him, still he cannot know Him fully.

Guru Nānak further says that He is immanent as well as transcendent. He states that all the eyes belong to God, but He has none. The various forms are His, yet He has no form. He has thousands of fragrances, yet He has no smell. This brings out very clearly both the transcendence and the immanence of God.

Immanent or Omnipresent

The immanent aspect of God is explicit in diverse ways in Guru Nānak bani. The mystic vision of Guru Nānak reached its climax to find God not only in nature but also in the abode of the human heart (Bala 1999, 24). God's omnipresence means that He exists everywhere. God sees everything we do and everywhere we go. He knows all the thoughts and intents of our heart. If we are involved in evil things, this knowledge will give us great sorrow, for we know He sees all our sins. If we are involved in good things, we have great joy and comfort, since we know He sees our faithfulness.

Although God is present in all time and space, He is not locally limited to any time or space. God is everywhere and in every now. The expression of divine immanence is also clear in his nearness. This nearness of God can only be realized intuitively, since He is within every heart (SGGS, 433, 753, 943, 1026, 1127).

According to the Gurus, God creates the universe and then becomes immanent in it, while being transcendent at the same time. The immanent aspect of God has been variously described as His Will that directs the universe. His Word informs the universe, and His *Nām* not only creates the entire universe but sustains and governs the creation. He who permeates all hearts (the immanent) is transcendent too. He pervades, yet He is detached. He creates all and fills all, yet is separate. Having created the world, He stands in the midst of it, but he is separate from it (Singh 1994, 188).

The Gurus' statements about the immanence of God are to emphasize the spiritual and meaningful character of life and the universe and its capacity for relationship with God. They envision only one God which has various characteristics as indicated in the Mool Mantra. Just as the transcendent and immanent aspects of God, all description of Him seeks to define only one and the same God. On the other hand, it emphasizes God's capacity for revelation and nearness to man and His deep and abiding interest in the world. It is almost impossible to conceive of a theistic system without the immanence of God.

Infinity of God

The infinity of God means that He is without limits of any sort. He is boundless and immeasurable. Creation is just the opposite and is described as "finite." Creation is contained within limits of time, space, and material substance. God is limited by nothing. God never changes. If God were to change, this would imply that there was something wrong that needed to be improved. God never improves, because He is perfect and absolute. When we say that God is "infinite," we mean that He is unbounded and unlimited; unsearchable and not to be comprehended.

In Sikhism, God is not limited to any specific spatial-temporal context. He is not identical with His creation in which He is manifested. The great and obvious difference is that persons are identifiable bodies, locatable in space and time, whereas there is no continuously identifiable entity which can be identified with God. God manifests in many ways at many times and places, and. It is because God is not tied to locatable physical objects that we determine He is non-spatial. He is not at any place, not near or far from any place, and not in spatial relation to any spatial objects. Thus, if one is to know God, it is useless to look for Him as a locatable object. He is in the Spirit form, present everywhere, and His presence can only be felt. There are different eyes which can see Him (Singh 1979, 17).

His Light which is the source of all life pervades in all. He has created man in His own image. Man belongs to the Infinite God and inherits from Him the instinct of infinitude. God has created two main forces in the world, namely the Life Force and the Material Force. Man has been given the material body and God's ray of light animates it. He has both spiritual and material needs for his sustenance. He is allured by the glamour of the material objects and tries to satisfy his instinct of infinitude by possession of more material things and power. Since all things created by God are finite and have their limitations, man's yearning for more is never satisfied (Singh 1979, 18).

Hence, there is impatience in the heart of persons and is found in the flux of life. The passion for infinitude within persons finds its goal when they turn towards Infinite God and make a spiritual contact with Him. As man goes deeper into the infinite knowledge of God and His attributes, his vision is broadened and imbibes within himself the virtues. He then becomes the man of qualities and virtues, and he experiences no dearth of any material things necessary for life. The emphasis therefore is concentration on the Infinite Spirit of God.

The element of infinitude in man makes him seek refuge in the Infinite God. The human soul searches for a higher being, a return to the Source of Life and to the native land of the Spirit to find peace and satisfaction. Human life truly becomes terrible and burdensome when one breaks away his connections with his Creator. He becomes entrapped in the web of greed woven by his self. No strength is left in him to break this bondage. It is then that the tedium of non-being and self-alienation become apparent.

Guru Arjan says, "There can be no end to His Glories. I could utter but very little. He is Unfathomable, Inconceivable God. He is the Highest of the high, Infinite without end" (SGGS, 987). His ability is mingled in all and everything He has created and thus has the immediate, spontaneous, perfect, and fair control over all. Everything created by Him is well-organized and well-controlled. It is God's Personality that controls this. God having created the worlds has spread Himself infinitely. It would be a gross mistake to explain the personality of God in terms of parts of His functions. He is not merely the integration of Self and the parts. In other words, His Self is not a mathematical unity but a dynamic unity. The parts have no separate existence. It is His integrated Self which has manifested in diversity and immensity. All the parts of God's manifestations exist and function under His Will. Nothing is outside His control.

Conclusion

The fundamental belief of Sikhism is that God exists as a Real Entity. Sikhism as a religion is strictly monotheistic. The Gurus have described God in their hymns included in their holy text, Guru Granth Sāhib.

God is *Kartā Purakh*, the Creator-Being. He created the universe not from some pre-existing physical element but from His own Self.

God is *Akāl Mūrat*, the Eternal Being. God is *Ajūni*, un-incarnated, and *Sāibhan* (Sanskrit, *Swayambhu*), self-existent. The Primal Creator Himself had no creator. He simply is, has always been, and shall always be by Himself. God in Sikhism is thus depicted in three

distinct aspects: God in Himself, God in relation to creation, and God in relation to man. God by himself is the One Ultimate, Transcendent Reality, *Nirguna* (without attributes), Timeless, Boundless, Formless, Ever-Existent, Immutable, Ineffable, all by Himself, and even Unknowable in His entirety. He becomes *Sarguna* (Sanskrit, *saguna*, with attributes) and manifests Himself in creation. The Creator also sustains His creation compassionately and benevolently. The universe is created, sustained and moved according to His *Hukam* or Divine Will, and Divine purpose.

The Guru believes in the Absolute *Unity* of God. God is both the transcendent and immanent unity. The universe is in time and space and is changing and becoming. God is not identical with the universe. God is always immanent and the sustaining cause of the world. The Gurus say that before He created Form, He was all by Himself in His trance.

God's power is endowed with will and supported by a conscious intelligence which serves as the chief instrument for the fulfillment of His designs and purposes. With this will He comes out of His transcendental state of absorption in the Self and becomes the all-powerful immanent Creator (*kartā Purakh*).

There was a time when the world had not yet appeared, and there will be a time when the world will again disappear.

According to Sri Guru Granth Sāhib, God creates through His **Power** (*Qudrat*) and manifests Himself through His Divine Reason (*Hukam*). God's **omnipresence** means that He exists everywhere. According to the Gurus, God creates the universe, then becomes Immanent in it, leading him to be transcendent at the same time. By this explanation, the doctrine of God in Sikhism gets close to the Islamic conception of the Divine.

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92 / *Religious Inquiries 4*

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