

# EXPLORATION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN SIKHISM

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the teachings of the Sikh Gurus on gender equality. Within this study I intend to explore whether these teachings are applicable to Sikhs today. Women in the society in which Guru Nanak lived were considered inferior, they were viewed as seductresses and were seen as a source of pollution. Women were denied education and were not permitted to study of the Vedas (26).

## INTRODUCTION

The Guru Granth Sahib promotes an egalitarian outlook irrespective of gender and caste. The hymns of the Gurus, contained in the Guru Granth Sahib, repeatedly highlight the efforts of the Gurus in raising the status of women. Guru Nanak's hymns place emphasis on gender equality. In praise of women Guru Nanak states:

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੀਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਊਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥

*From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived; to woman he is engaged and married. Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come. When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound. So why call her bad? From her, kings are born. From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all. O Nanak, only the True Lord is without a woman.*

AGGS, M 1, p 473. (Thind).

Even though the Gurus promoted equality, the extent to which prejudice towards women was negated is debateable. There is a discrepancy between teachings and actual practice with regards to gender equality. This paper finds that discrimination against women is still present within Sikh Panth.

## DISCUSSION

In the fifteenth century, Hinduism and Islam were the two dominant faiths in the Punjab. Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru was born into a Hindu family. The position and status of women was influenced by Hindu and Islamic traditions. Hence the structure of Indian society was patriarchal and male supremacy was reinforced in the name of religion (18).

Religious scriptures such as *Manusmriti* and Vedas promoted a society in which equality between men and women were far from existence. Texts such as *Manusmriti* divided people into stratified caste system and promoted inequality between men and women (1). The condition of women was humiliating. They were considered to be inferior and the property of their fathers, husbands and sons. Women were not allowed to exist outside male-defining boundaries:

*In childhood a women should be under her father's control, in youth under her husband's and when her husband is dead under her sons'.*

Laws of Manu, 5.148. (Doniger and Smith).

Furthermore, women were viewed as temptresses/seducers and distractions from man's spiritual path, and thus could not be trusted and needed to be controlled. Therefore, Hindu men were warned to guard themselves against seductions and

were encouraged to live a life of *sannyasi* (ascetic). Says Manu:

*It is the nature of women 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 to desire and anger.*

Laws of Manu, 2.213. (Doniger and Smith).

Education of women was looked down upon. Women were only allowed to do household work, hence becoming economically dependent on men, and as a consequence they were considered to be the property of men. Furthermore, women were not even allowed to worship or even go into the temples and they were also denied the opportunity of education and were explicitly excluded from the study of the Vedas. Women's *sanskaran* (last rite, before cremation) were performed without Veda mantras because they have no knowledge of religion. (12, p 30) outlines "as per Manu's laws, only a male could perform the last rites and death anniversaries (*saradhas*) for the dead". Manu did not allow women to read Vedas:

*The uttering of the Veda mantras is useful for removing sin. As women cannot utter the Veda mantras, they are as unclean as the untruth.*

Laws of Manu, IX.18. (Jha)

In a male dominant society, Dalit women also suffered unimaginable oppression, not only through caste, but gender too, from which there was no escape. The laws of Manu and other Vedic scriptures close all economic, political, social, educational, and personal channels through which Dalit women could be uplifted (27). Agarwal (1) states that Manu justifies the treatment of Dalit women as a sex object in the following quote:

*A Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaishya man can sexually exploit any Shudra woman.*

Manusmriti IX.25. (Jha)

Moreover gender inequalities were linked to the concept of ritual purity. Because of biological functions such as menstruation and reproduction, the women were regarded as polluting. Manu states:

*If a man has touched a 'notorious by day (untouchable), a menstruating woman, anyone who has fallen (from his caste), a woman who has just given birth, a corpse or anyone who has touched any of these objects can be cleaned by a bath.*

Laws of Manu, 5.85. (Doniger and Smith).

In the fifteenth century, it was common for Hindu women to commit sati; the meaning of the word sati is righteous. Sati is described as a Hindu custom in which

the widow was burnt to ashes on her dead husband's funeral pyre (16). During this time widows were considered as an ill omen and they were reduced to beggars or prostitutes. The custom of sati was believed to be voluntary act in which the women decides to end her life after the death of her husband however Rait (18) states that there were many incidents in which women were forced to commit sati, sometimes even dragged against her wish to the lighted pyre. Conversely men were allowed to practice polygamy, but widows were not even allowed to remarry.

Child marriage and female infanticide (the killing of girl at birth) were also practiced. Inheritance of the family's property was limited to males and dowry was prevalent. Furthermore the practice of dowry provided a substantial material reason for anxiety over the birth of daughters. Therefore female infanticide was practiced as the girls were considered lifelong burden, as a girl child only brings dowry debts and misfortune.

#### **Sikh Gurus attempt to raise the status of women**

The concept of equality is promoted through the teachings and practices of Guru Nanak and the succeeding Gurus. Gender equality is highlighted in the following quote:

ਨਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਭ ਨਾਰੀ ਸਭੁ ਏਕੋ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥

*Women and men, all the men and women, all came from the One Primal Lord God.*

AGGS, M 4, p 983. (Thind).

To raise the status of women Guru Nanak challenged the ascetic and monastic traditions of Hinduism and did not regard woman as an obstacle in the path of salvation. Guru Nanak rejected the idea of taking *sannyas* (asceticism or renunciation) and regarded family life in favour of seclusion in order to attain salvation (26). Therefore, Sikh teachings stress the importance of family life which provides an ideal place for practising social as well as religious duties and obligations:

ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰੁ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੨॥

*In the midst of children and spouses, they attain emancipation.*

AGGS, M 1, p 661. (Thind).

Additionally Sikh gurus disregarded the concepts of ritual pollution associated with menstruation and childbirth for which women were socially and religiously isolated from society. Pruthi and Sharma (17) highlight that the Sikh scripture does not debase or disdain the female body and does not place taboos around menstruation, childbirth or any other female functions. Guru Nanak emphasised that pollution lies in the heart and mind of the person and not in the natural process of birth:

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥  
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਉ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਕਾ ਦਿਲਿ ਹਛੈ ਮੁਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ॥  
ਅਵਰਿ ਦਿਵਾਜੇ ਦੁਨੀ ਕੇ ਬੁਠੇ ਅਮਲ ਕਰੇਹੁ ॥੧॥

*If one's clothes are stained with blood, the garment becomes polluted. Those who suck the blood of human beings-how can their consciousness be pure? O Nanak, chant the Name of God, with heart-felt devotion. Everything else is just a pompous worldly show, and the practice of false deeds.*

AGGS, M 1, p 140. (Thind).

Additionally, the Gurus also prohibited the practice of sati as this custom reinforced the belief that women had no identity of their own without a male (4), (14). The Gurus allowed widows to remarry and abolished the custom of sati. This is clearly highlighted by the following Hymn:

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮਤਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ ॥੧॥  
ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹੰਨਿ ॥  
ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮਾਲੰਨਿ ॥੨॥

*Do not call them 'satee', who burn themselves along with their husbands' corpses. O Nanak, they alone are known as 'satee', who die from the shock of separation. They are also known as 'satee', who abide in modesty and contentment. They serve their Lord, and rise in the early hours to contemplate Him.*

AGGS, M 3, p 787. (Thind).

Female infanticide was a common practice in India during the times of the Gurus. The leading cause of this practice was the expense of the dowry for daughters and the difficulty of finding suitable husbands. The Gurus denounced this practice and also found solutions for its causes that are of discarding the dowry system. Hence elevating the position of women led Guru Ram Das to condemn the practice of dowry:

ਹੋਰਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦਾਜੁ ਜਿ ਰਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਹਿ ਸੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਕਚੁ ਪਾਜੇ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਮੈ ਦਾਜੇ ॥੪॥

*Any other dowry, which the self-willed manmukhs offer for show, is only false egotism and a worthless display. O my father, please give me the Name of the Lord God as my wedding gift and dowry.*

AGGS, M 4, p 79. (Thind).

The custom of *pardah* (veiling) came to the Punjab with Islam. *Purdah* was a form of covering, which took different forms such as the *burkah* (body cover); the *chadar* (shawl) and the *jhund* (face covering). It was a custom strictly enforced upon women, as a protection

against the lustful eyes of men (18). Guru Amar Das however believed that the *pardah* made women anonymous and ultimately powerless. As a result, the custom of *pardah* was condemned. Guru Amar Das did not allow the Queen of Haripur to come into the *sangat* (religious assembly) wearing a veil. Jhutti-Johal (12, p 36) states that "the immediate effect of the removal of *pardah* was that women were no longer viewed as a temptress or a helpless individual who had to be suppressed, but instead as a responsible individual being endowed with a will of her own". Also, act of wearing the veil did not make women religious, it was what they practiced:

ਰਹੁ ਰਹੁ ਰੀ ਬਹੁਰੀਆ ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਾਢੈ ॥  
ਅੰਤ ਕੀ ਬਾਰ ਲਹੈਗੀ ਨ ਆਢੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਕਾਢਿ ਗਈ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਗੈ ॥

ਉਨ ਕੀ ਗੈਲਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ ॥੧॥

ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਕਾਢੈ ਕੀ ਇਹੈ ਬਡਾਈ ॥

ਦਿਨ ਦਸ ਪਾਂਚ ਬਹੁ ਭਲੇ ਆਈ ॥੨॥

ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਉ ਪਰਿ ਸਾਚੈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਇ ਕੂਦਹਿ ਅਰੁ ਨਾਚੈ ॥੩॥

ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਬਹੁ ਤਬ ਜੀਤੈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵਤ ਜਨਮੁ ਬਿਤੀਤੈ ॥੪॥੧॥੩੪॥

*Stay, stay, O daughter-in-law- do not cover your face with a veil. In the end, this shall not bring you even half a shell. The one before you used to veil her face, do not follow in her footsteps. The only merit in veiling your face is that for a few days, people will say, 'what a noble bride has come; your veil shall be true only if you skip, dance and sing the glorious praises of the lord. Says Kabeer, the soul-bride shall win, only if she passes her life singing the lord's praises.*

AGGS, Bhagat Kabeer, p 484. (Thind).

At that time, knowledge and literacy was the prerogative of the powerful Brahman caste. Guru Angad strengthened the teachings of Guru Nanak and encouraged education for women. He preached that males and females were equal before God and they both can achieve *mukti* (liberation) through education and knowledge. Furthermore the Sikh Gurus invited women to join the *sangat* (congregation), to take part in the recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib. Women were given an equal right to participate in the congregation:

ਆਵਹੁ ਭੈਣੇ ਗਲਿ ਮਿਲਹ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਹੇਲਤੀਆਹ ॥

ਮਿਲਿ ਕੈ ਕਰਹ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਸੰਮੂਥ ਕੰਤ ਕੀਆਹ ॥

ਸਾਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਅਉਗਣ ਸਭਿ ਅਸਾਹ ॥੧॥

ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਤੇਰੈ ਜੋਰਿ ॥

ਏਕੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਜਾ ਤੂ ਤਾ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਰਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*Come, my dear sisters and spiritual companions; hug me close in your embrace. Let's join together, and tell*

*stories of our All-powerful Husband Lord. All Virtues are in our True Lord and Master; we are utterly without virtue. O Creator Lord, all are in Your Power. Dwell upon the One Word of the Shabad. You are mine -what else do I need?*

AGGS, M1, p 17. (Thind).

Women were allowed to work with men in preparing the *langar* (common kitchen). The tradition of *langar* goes back to Guru Nanak, but the third Guru emphasised this tradition as a device for expressing the theoretical notion of equality in a practical way (6). Guru Amar das further introduced the concept of *pangat* (row), where all had to sit in row and eat together irrespective of their gender, caste and status. Additionally, the concept behind the distribution of *karah parsad* further strengthens the idea of equality amongst all. (25)

Furthermore the importance of women participating in religious ceremonies is clearly reflected in the story of the founding of the Khalsa. When Guru Gobind Singh prepared amrit for the baptism ceremony, Mata Sahib Kaur represented women and added sugar crystals to the holy water (12). Hence, this action emphasised equality regardless of gender.

The Sikh Guru's encouraged women to fully participate in religious activities for example Guru Amar Das appointed fifty-two women missionaries out of one hundred and forty six to spread the Sikh message (13). Furthermore popular Sikh opinion holds that Mai Bhago was another believer who led soldiers and fought against Mughals on the battlefield. As the only survivor of the battle, Guru Gobind Singh recognised something special in Mai Bhago and took her on as one of his bodyguards. (20). Thus, through the action of these women, and the teachings of the gurus, women came to be regarded as equal with men, and were expected to shoulder the responsibility for their own action and spiritual progression (12).

### Gender Equality amongst Sikhs Today

Guru Nanak laid the foundations for what subsequently became the Sikh faith in the 15th century. Sikhism was amongst those faiths that promoted rights of women in religion and society. Even though Sikh Gurus promoted gender equality, prejudice amongst sexes still in existent today.

Takhar argues that "the very fact that women are debarred from performing *seva* (service) at Harmandir Sahib indicates that there is a harsh contradiction of philosophy taking place in the very heart of Sikhi" (26, p 13). The issue of *seva* at harmandir sahib was brought to light by two amritdhari Sikh women, Mejjinderpal Kaur and Lakhbir Kaur. They claimed that

they were forcefully prevented by *sevadars* from undertaking *seva* on 13th February 2003. According to Majinderpal "when she along with Lakhbir Kaur tried to touch the 'palki' they were pushed back by the SGPC *sevadars*, and were told that women were not allowed to perform this *seva* and said that only male members of the congregation are allowed to do so. Nikky Singh asserts this "moreover, public worship is also dominated by men. Almost always in Gurwaras male lenses interpret the scriptural passages. Men have the privilege to touch and read the textual body during all forms of public worship. Since men conduct rituals and ceremonies, their voices and hands have seized the sacred modality of the sacred word (22, p 201).

Sikh Gurus tried to eradicate female infanticide, however today; female infanticide has been replaced with female foeticide. The cultural preference of sons cannot be ignored. Takhar outlines the lyrics "*puttar mitte mevi, rabh sabh nu deveh*" devalues the status of a female baby (26, p 12). A son is viewed as an asset, the inheritor of the family name and wealth and is able to provide for the family and continue the family line, whereas a daughter is a drain on family resources due to education and dowry and will eventually belong to the family of her future husband (15).

The rate of female infanticide and foeticide are alarming. According to India's 2001 census Haryana had 819 girls (per 1,000 boy), Delhi 868, Gujarat 883 and the worst example was the northern state of Punjab with one of the worst gender ratios at 798 girls to 1,000 boys) (11). According to 2011 census, there has been an increase in female sex ratio, Punjab had 846 girls (per 1,000 boys) (5).

Among all major religious communities census figures for 2001 revealed shocking child sex ratio (the number of females for every thousand males below the age of six) had actually worsened since 1991. Among the major religious groups in 1991, Christians had the highest sex ratio of 1,009; they are followed by Buddhists (953) and Jains (940). Sikhs had the lowest sex ratio (893); the sex ratio among Hindus is 931, a shade lower than the national average of 933 while that among Muslims is 936. The figures drop quite significantly in 2001 except for Muslims who have a child sex ratio of 950; 964 for Christians, 925 for Hindus, 840 for the Jains and a truly shocking 786 for Sikhs, in comparison with the ratio of 894 to 1000 in 1961. (3).

One of the reasons attributed to the alarming rate of sex ratio is the rising popularity of sex determination tests despite these being barred by law. Therefore, amongst many Sikhs, gender-selection clinics further demonstrates that sons are preferred to daughters. A study published in the British medical journal (10) found

the boy-girl ratio changed after the introduction of ultrasound technology that was intended to diagnose foetal abnormalities and illnesses however it is being used to identify the sex of a child before it is born and this is leading to the gradual decline in the number of female births. Additionally, Dubac and Coleman (8) argue that Indian women in the United Kingdom are aborting unborn daughters. Dubac and Coleman suggest that between 1990 and 2005 1,500 girls were 'missing' from English and Welsh birth statistics. The report also highlights that the proportion of boys born to Indian-born mothers compared with girls has increased since the 1970s and this could be due to 'sex selective abortion'. Therefore as a consequence of this certain NHS trusts stopped telling the sex of the foetus to Asian parents. However, Asian couples have got around this by going to India for sex determination tests and aborting female foetuses (12).

Although the practice of dowry was condemned by the Sikh Gurus, however it is still prevalent today. As a consequence girls are seen as a financial burden and an economic liability. This perception has contributed to the rise in female foeticide (12). In the Sikh community, dowry is not demanded, however it has become obligatory. Rait (18) highlights that a woman who had been married without a dowry would be vulnerable in her marital home therefore a marriage without a dowry would reflect badly on family status and *izzat* (honour). Sen (19) argues that although dowry is supposed to be a voluntary gift, it is often demanded by the parents of the groom. Sen further states that in Indian media it is very common to read about 'kitchen fires', where murder of the bride takes place if the husband's parents were dissatisfied with the dowry given. There has been an increase in dowry abuse and violence over the last decade in the west and in Punjab. Demands made by potential in-laws before a marriage, and even after marriage, demonstrate that they have no respect for the woman as an individual and they see woman as a resource to get dowry. Jhutti-Johal (12) states that in the United Kingdom, it is clear from the number of domestic violence cases being reported to the authorities and cases coming before the court that dowry play a role in this violence. Therefore, in the west, dowry abuse is viewed as a cultural form of domestic violence. As a result anti-dowry legislation (dowry prohibition act 1961) was introduced in an attempt to curb the problem.

Additionally Sikhs are enormously influenced by Punjabi culture. "Culture is a collective way of life which develops gradually over centuries and is moulded by religion, history and other such influences and institutions" (18, p 14), Culturally Sikhs have shown a preference for sons, due to the notion of *izzat* (honour). Women are put under many social and

cultural restraints; such restraints are only expected of women, not men. Moreover a woman's identity is linked to her role as a daughter, daughter-in-law, mother, and a wife. *Izzat* is maintained by abiding these relational norms. Therefore, actions of women can damage family *izzat* whilst men's actions are not considered damaging at all. Daughters in particular are continually made aware that if they behave dishonourably, they will bring deep shame to their family. For Punjabi males, honour is attained through the behaviour of in particular their wives, daughters, sisters. Honour occupies an important role in maintaining the traditional patriarchal framework of Punjabi society (9).

There have been many incidents of honour based crimes linked to the notion of *izzat*. For example, a case of honour killing came to light in England when a 70 years old, amritdhari woman was sentenced to spend a minimum of twenty years in jail for the murder of her daughter-in-law. The mother-in-law murdered her 27 years old daughter-in-law because she wanted a divorce from her son, which her culture didn't approve of. For the so-called *izzat*/ honour of family, a young woman was murdered (21). This custom of *izzat* is responsible for forced marriage and honour killings. And it is to blame for grooming cases, too.

BBC (2) has uncovered evidence that there are young Sikh victims of sexual exploitation. The reason Sikhs rarely reveal incidents of abuse to the authorities has to do with family honour. So when cases of abuse occur "the majority of parents just want to shut up shop as if nothing has happened because they know that a girl who is tarnished with this kind of thing will never actually get married," says Mohan Singh (Sikh Awareness Society). According to Deputy Supt David Sandall of Leicestershire Police, "when it comes to faith-based communities, sexual abuse is woefully under-reported. We know it is going on but it is difficult to launch investigations when the victims and their families are refusing to talk.

The stigma around sexual abuse is so detrimental to a Sikh girl's future that children who are the victims of rape have been told by their own parents to keep quiet about it. BBC has spoken to a girl whose own mother told her not to go to the police, even though she had been subjected to sexual abuse by countless men. Fifteen-year old Jaswinder was under the control of a groomer for nearly two years. When she finally broke away and told her mother what had happened, she was warned against going to the police and forbidden from ever telling her father the full details (2).

BBC has also discovered that groomers are actually exploiting the fact that Sikh families are less likely to report incidents of abuse. The programme has spoken to

one man who recently broke away from a grooming gang and is now campaigning for greater awareness of the problem. He says there are groomers who specifically target Sikh girls because they feel they can get away with it. They see Sikh girls as 'easy targets' because they know codes of honour, mean the child will be too scared and ashamed to tell their parents about the abuse and "their parents would not even report it if they were to find out" (2).

### CONCLUSION

The practices which Sikh Gurus condemned in the 15<sup>th</sup> century are finding their way back into Sikh society. The practices of dowry, female foeticide, son preference are still practiced amongst Sikhs today. There is a difference between philosophy underpinning Sikh faith and what is practiced by Sikhs in contemporary society. Sikhs have failed to observe principles of Sikhi. On the one hand, Sikh faith is totally egalitarian, yet, it is evident that Sikh society remains patriarchal. How do we make sense of this? At this stage of my research, I am drawn back to answering this question with reference to the Punjabi culture of which *izzat* remains a dominant feature. *Izzat* relating to actions of a female may ultimately result in preference for sons. Therefore, to conclude this, it is evident that Sikhs are vastly influenced by culture and cannot differentiate between religious teachings and cultural practices.

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