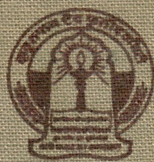


GURU NANAK

A GLOBAL VISION

Edited by
Dr. Inderpal Singh
&
Madanjit Kaur



Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar

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1997

Guru Nanak : A Global Vision

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Dedicated to

The Nation

**On the Occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations
of the Indian Independence**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge our profound gratitude to Dr. H.S. Soch, Vice-Chancellor of the University for approving the present project. We are also obliged to the scholars for contributing their valuable articles for this publication at a short notice. Some research papers of eminent Sikh scholars, who are no more with us have also been included in this collection.

We are thankful to Mr. Jagjit Singh Walia, Director, Press and Publications and his colleagues for bringing out this volume at a very short notice. The help rendered by Dr. S.S. Narang and Mr. R.S. Tak is also acknowledged.

Editors

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FOREWORD

Guru Nanak A Global Vision, is a collection of articles by eminent scholars reflecting various dimensions of Guru Nanak's teachings and philosophy representing God's Name, Universal Love and Service of humanity. In the context of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence, this Volume is an exposition of the secular and universal spirit of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, founder of the Sikh faith, giving a message for national integration and the welfare of the world community. In fact, global vision of Guru Nanak transforms us from baseness into sublimity.

In pursuit of this vision, Guru Nanak besides travelling over vast areas of the country made a mighty effort to share his humanitarian ideals to the greatest divines in the world. The message of Guru Nanak is a vision of eternal verities revealed to the souls of humanity. Wherever he went, the Great Guru inspired the sensitive souls with ardent, inextinguishable fire and with undiminished ardour.

This anthology comprises twelve articles exclusively related to the ideas and ideals propounded by the Great Master. I am thankful to Dr. Inderpal Singh, Pro-Vice Chancellor, and Prof. Madanjit Kaur for making available to readers such academic stuff for serious study on unity of God and equality of mankind. I am sanguine that this would greatly help the scholars and all those interested in national and international understanding.

Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar.
October 9, 1997.



(H.S. Soch)
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His prominent publications include *Parasharaprashna* (Eng.), *Sapta Shringa* (Pbi.), *Bahu Vistaar* (Pbi.) and *Saachee Saakhee* (Pbi.). Sirdar Kapur Singh contributed hundreds of research articles on Sikhism and Sikh Affairs. His published and unpublished works have been edited and published in four Volumes by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar under the title *The Selected Works of Sirdar Kapur Singh*. His *Sikhism for The Modern Man* has also been published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

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DIMENSIONS OF THE GLOBAL VISION OF GURU NANAK

Dr. Inderpal Singh

Guru Nanak represents global vision in terms of philosophy and teachings. His message is for one and all and for this he chose to use the current idiom of the times. As founder of Sikhism, he purified the belief of the people who were virtually lost in rituals, forms and idol worship. The people were priest ridden, depressed and demoralised. Guru Nanak, therefore, gave the message of unity of God and brotherhood of man while trying to free the man's mind from clutches of mythology and superstition.

Guru Nanak built a code for upliftment of human soul through truth and truthful living:

All else falls short of Truth
Yet higher still is truthful living¹

This is not only universal in nature but in terms of absolute truth is everlasting. As a saint and as a reformer, Guru Nanak is outstanding in his global vision as he attains the blissful emancipation through normal day to day life. He is against going to jungles for salvation which he believes comes through good deeds. The Guru is forthright in his approach when he says:

He alone, O Nanak knoweth the way who earneth with the sweat of his brow, and then shareth it with others.²

Guru Nanak's vision of man finds no divisions of caste and creed. He stands by the discarded low castes and his pronouncement is absolutely clear:

Lowest of the low am I, with the lowly identified.³

He gave voice to the pure essence of man's urge for the realisation of God and in the process, he denounced the injustice of caste and creed.

Guru Nanak's teachings are for all people and for all times. The sole cosmic Reality he calls *Nam* is universally accepted one way or the other. The *Nam* prevails and is the only ladder to reach the Lord. He teaches us to shed egoism and accept the direction of God. God's Will is supreme and it is through meditation of God (*simran*) and by following the universally accepted code of conduct based on human values like service, purity of body and mind and by seeking His Grace that one can reach the highest level of spirituality.

In the Indian setting, the great Guru sought an understanding and brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims to such an extent that he drew veneration of both Hindu and Muslim masses. This was his creative vision supporting the common man without distinction. The cardinal points of Guru's creed in respect of global vision may be that God is one and supreme and God's word is the most sacred. Good actions combined with Divine Grace give *Maha Ras* (Joy Supreme). It is here that service (*seva*) is of paramount importance. No mythology is accepted to represent the Lord which for Guru Nanak is the formless Absolute. Guru Nanak maintains that it is the man who determines the age and there are no demarcated Yugas.

Guru Nanak's message is simple and straight when he says that life of action is superior to that of contemplation. As human beings, our seminal aim is to develop the best in us which is God.

Likewise, Guru Nanak's Universal concept of prayer is of great significance in the spiritual framework. The worshipper has always to seek God's support through sincere prayer. It speaks of absolute faith in the Lord and total surrender to Him. The message of Guru Nanak as it emerges out of his *Bani* (holy compositions) is not only rational but also universal. The vision of Guru Nanak knows no barriers as it speaks of God the only Creator.

How the great Guru's Word is blissful for humanity can be gauged from the following few hymns which speak volumes in this context. These are examples to explain the global vision of the great Guru:

God created Himself,
And assumed a Name,
Second besides Himself,
He created Nature.
Seated in Nature He watches,
With delight what He creates.⁴

...

Nature is His Throne, created for Himself,
From here He dispenseth justice as the light of Truth.⁵

...

In Nature we see the Lord,
In Nature we hear His speech,
Nature inspires devotional reveries,
In Nature is essence of Joy and peace,
Earth, sky, nether regions comprise Nature,
The whole creation is an embodiment of Nature.⁶

...

Thou art the spirit that pervadeth all,
It's Thy light, that lights all hearts,
Through the Guru, O Nanak,
Is Thy Light revealed...⁷

...

Call not anybody bad,
Yea, this is the essence of knowledge.⁸

...

See Thou of each the light within and ask not his caste,
For, hereafter the caste is of no avail.⁹

...

One becometh not a Yogi by mere talk
If one looketh upon all the creation alike, he, yea,
is acclaimed as a true Yogi.¹⁰

...

And, of ourselves which high, which low,
O none can say.¹¹

...

That alone is man's caste and that his glory
are the deeds which he does.¹²

Notes and References

1. ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰਾ॥

Sri Guru Granth, p. 62

2. ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਬਹੁ ਦੇਇ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ॥

Ibid., p. 1245

3. ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗ ਸਾਬਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥

Ibid., p. 15

4. ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ॥
ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ॥
Ibid., p. 463
5. ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤਖਤੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ਸਚਿ ਨਿਬੇੜਣਹਾਰੇ॥
Ibid., p. 580
6. ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਦਿਸੈ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਭਉ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਾਤਾਲੀ ਆਕਾਸੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਆਕਾਰੁ॥
.....
Ibid., p. 464
7. ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ॥
ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥
Ibid., p. 13
8. ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਪਤਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ॥
Ibid., p. 473
9. ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ॥
Ibid., p. 349
10. ਗਲੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥
ਏਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਜਾਣੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ॥
Ibid., p. 730
11. ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਏਕਾ ਛਾਉ॥
Ibid., p. 83
12. ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥
Ibid., p. 1330

THEOLOGY OF GURU NANAK DEV AND UNIVERSALISM OF HIS TEACHINGS .

Madanjit Kaur

The origin of a religion has to be studied in the background of socio-political conditions of the society. The period in which Guru Nanak was born (1469 AD) is an important period in the history of mankind from many points of view. It was the period in which the foundations of the modern world were laid. The period is marked by stress and suffering in Indian society. Wars and invasions were frequent. There was a conflict between the people of this country and the newcomers from Central Asia. The local powers were gradually transformed into a central authority. However, fissiparous tendencies could not be eliminated in a country, having a fragmented society segregated on the lines of religion, sect, caste, language and subculture.

The milieu in which Guru Nanak lived (A.D. 1469-1539) was a crucial period of Indian history. The perception of cultural reality of the period and its challenges are transformed into a positive discerning vision and is clearly reflected in some of his hymns. Though Guru Nanak did not invent a new theological vocabulary yet doctrinal innovation is attributed to him. No doubt, the ideas and forms in which he expressed them are

derived from the Sant tradition and radical *bhaktas* of northern India but the basic issues of Sikhism are fundamentally different in substance and direction.

Sikhism is a theistic religion to fall under the category of 'Revealed Religion'. It comes out in the 'Disclosure of God to Nanak' universally familiar to the Sikhs. In order to understand the logic and unity of Guru Nanak's revelation we have to keep in mind two assumptions. Firstly, there is a level of Reality higher than the empirical. Secondly, that higher reality reveals itself to man to enlighten him.¹ Guru Nanak's revelation was an integrated system of faith and spirit, not a synthesized corpus of beliefs borrowed from others. In the era of conflicting faiths, he was calling upon none to abjure his faith to seek conversion. He sought to impart to all men the vision of a common moral authority irrespective of denominations.²

The religion of Guru Nanak is neither a one-dimensional continuation nor of a complete break with the past. In its metaphysical aspects it is not derivative or syncretic but original.

Sikhism is an original religion in the primacy of revelation and the purity of its message. It was given to the mankind by prophet Guru Nanak who directly received it from God and passed it on to mankind in the form it was received from God. There are repeated references in the *bani* of Guru Nanak which indicate that Nanak was in direct communion with God. Guru Nanak's hymns addressed to his disciple Lalo confirm his claim.³

Guru Nanak's religion is based on the vision of reality which is set forth in '*Mul Mantra*'⁴ (the basic creed of Sikhism, standing as the opening lines of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs). This Reality is One (*EK Oankar*). It is transcendent. It permeates the whole of nature (*Kudrat*), which is under the *hukam* (the binding laws)⁵ of the God

(*Nirankar/nam/Sabad*). God is the creator (*Karta Purkh*) of the universe. The world is real⁶, and every living being has its life task. Man has to play a role.⁷ Nature of man suffers from his *haumai* (self-centredness)⁸ which is the source of evil and suffering. By *Nam*⁹ (recitation of Divine God's Name) and living in the *Hukam* of God one can get rid of his *haumai*.¹⁰ Blessed with the *Nadar/mehar*¹¹ (Divine Grace), one can attain salvation (*mokh/mukti/nirvan/yog/chauthapad*.¹² *parampad*¹³, *amarpad*)¹⁴.

The concept of unity of the cosmos, pronounced by Guru Nanak, leads to the idea of universality of human spirit and the consequent equality of all human beings. The entire structure of Sikhism and its theology are based on the fundamental experience of Guru Nanak, according to which God has been characterised by love.¹⁵ This characteristic of the Reality as experienced by Guru Nanak is "different from religious experience of other Indian religions in which the logic of that experience prescribes the goal of either merger in the Reality or a passive and blissful link with it as an end itself."¹⁶ In the case of Nanak the logic of 'God is love' leads towards an entirely different direction of life i.e. affirmation and acceptance of social responsibility where the way to God is through virtuous deeds¹⁷ and the goal is to establish brotherhood of man. This perception is dynamic, cohesive, directive and source of all virtues. Therefore, by implication Guru Nanak's doctrine of Ultimate Reality is fundamentally universal in nature and spirit. Sikhism is a religion of spiritual progress and its message is for 'Universal spiritualism'.¹⁸

Describing the situation of man at various stages of the evolution of Religion, Bellah writes:

The historic religions discovered the self; the early modern religion found a doctrinal basis on which to accept the self in all its empirical ambiguity; modern religion is

beginning to understand the laws of **the self's** own existence and so to help man take responsibility of his own fate.¹⁹

The great problem of modern religion is, the symbolization of man's relation to the ultimate conditions of his existence. Spiritual transformation through introspection and sublimation of the lower tendencies of the man is the ultimate goal of the modern religions. It is evident from the teachings of Guru Nanak that 'Religion' is inward and its basic stress is on the discovery of the spiritual 'Truth' and transformation of the way of life, which is a difficult but an essential task for the fulfilment of the purpose of human existence i.e. the ultimate aim of harmony with the 'Divine'. According to Guru Nanak the true religion is progressive subjugation of the man to higher level of understanding and spiritual experience. Guru Nanak says that 'the way to the Lord consists of stages; by climbing them one can align with Him'.²⁰ From his own spiritual experience Guru Nanak formulated a concept of spiritual journey through five stages *Khands* (realms).²¹ The actualization of the process of spiritual transformation is possible through the integration of human personality.

The right way is the development of a higher consciousness in order to become a 'whole man' (*gurmukh*) with a sense of kinship and total responsibility towards fellow beings. 'In Sikhism there is no dichotomy between revelation and reason.'²² Guru Nanak clearly indicates that reason is an instrument of religious progress. 'By discrimination one is honoured. By intellect one understands things'.²³ 'It is the essence of discrimination that it makes one charitable. This is the right way; rest is all wrong.'²⁴ Man is blessed with the light of reason and discrimination.²⁵ One in fear of God and discriminating between good and bad, appears sweet to God.²⁶

Man, according to Guru Nanak, is physical as well as

a spiritual entity and yearns to visualize the 'Oneness' behind this duality. For this experience man has to qualify himself through spiritual orientation to energise higher tendencies lying dormant in the unconscious. Spiritualization is not possible if we continue to be enslaved to outer restraints (formalism, taboos, rituals and customs) and inner weaknesses (evil impulses).

According to Guru Nanak, the ultimate end of spiritual transformation is to rediscover the limitless spiritual potentialities inherent in man. The pre-requisite for such an attainment is self-purification which is possible through loving devotion and adoration of God and by endless repetition of His Name (*nam Simran*).²⁷ In this way, regenerated by the grace of His *nam*, a man reaches the state of *vismad* (immense awe/ecstasy/state of eternal bliss). It is beyond the three *gunas* (*tamas, rajas and sattva*).²⁸ The highest stage of spiritual transformation is depicted as the merging of individual spark (of the 'Light') into the 'Light' of the Supreme Being.²⁹

The nature of this merger has been described like the mingling of a drop of water with the Ocean.³⁰ At this stage a man transcends his finite self and completely spiritualise himself. Only then he gets a vision of the Divine. Therefore, the spiritual consciousness in the teachings of Guru Nanak is a revelation of the 'inner unity' and 'identity' as well as the ultimate knowledge of the 'Truth' inherent in all beings and things.

After enlightenment a man gets transformed into a 'new-being'. He identifies himself with the whole creation. He is imbued with 'Divine Love' for the humanity.

Man's spiritual development depends on his deeds in this world.³¹ The practice of virtue is the way of God.³² It is stated in the *bani* of Guru Nanak that for a Godward journey one

need not take recourse to pilgrimages, penances, fasts, renunciation of clothes, walking barefoot, eating obnoxiously unhygienic food smearing ashes, displaying denomination marks on the body or seeking refuge in cremation ground.³³ On the other hand, the desirable life-style would include containment of ambition, truth-orientedness, continence in eating habits and non-acceptance of the world as an end in itself.³⁴ Those who regard the world as an end in itself mistake the husk for the grain.³⁵ To be able to reach the grain, one has to prepare the soil of the mind and body, train instincts and sentiments, inculcate compassion, accept the responsibilities of a householder, earn one's own living,³⁶ share wealth with others³⁷ and learn to live with the inner self.

In the theology of Guru Nanak, the development of union with God is not an end in itself. The goal is the development of a higher consciousness so as to discharge all the responsibility delved on man in order to create a world of harmony and happiness.³⁸

Guru Nanak's theology enunciates humanistic vision of religion which makes no distinction between the contemplative life and social service (*Seva*).³⁹ For it is by service in this world that one gets honour in His court.⁴⁰

The spiritual experience transforms an ordinary man into an 'ideal man' (*gurmukh*) who is equated with *braham gyani* in the *gurbani*. The ideal man gains self-elevation through the process of socialized spiritual training i.e. in the company of the *Sadh Sangat* (congregation).⁴¹

Therefore, as natural corollary, Guru Nanak's concept of spiritual orientation implies a sociological concept of great significance. This process of a devotee merging into the absolute 'Oneness' of Ultimate Reality is found in the *bani* of Guru Nanak.⁴² However, man in an integral relationship with God,

retains his self-identity : the self does not get sub-merged into the non-self. In sociological terms, this means that there should be no homogenisation of individual variety into uniformity. As such, in Guru Nanak's concept of society, the individual keeps intact his individuality in his relationship with collectivity. This is how both identity and integration is ensured in the social vision of Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak is an uncompromising monotheist. It is evident from the *bani* of Guru Nanak that his idea of monotheism is neither a continuation of the heritage he received nor a complete break with it. It is an original revelation. However, it finds expression in the given idiom of the time.⁴³

Guru Nanak's concept of Oneness of God is not only spiritual but also ethical. In fact, the monotheism of Guru Nanak is rooted in the real world. It is rational as well as practical. It is not confined to any particular name and form. The monotheistic God of Guru Nanak is not objective. It is transcendent as well as immanent in relation to the mundane world. It postulates the synthesis in the Supreme Being of the unattributed and the attributed aspects.⁴⁴ It can be visualized within the inner-most depths of one's heart through *nam simran* with the help of the *guru*.⁴⁵ It provides equal opportunity to all human beings to practice virtues for self-realization in order to attain union with God. Therefore, the monotheism of Guru Nanak is universal in nature and presents the idea of God of the whole mankind.

Guru Nanak rejected old forms of religious orthodoxy and made it possible to turn away from world-rejection. He proclaimed the world as God's own creation where man fulfills His Command (*Hukam/raza*).⁴⁶

Guru Nanak reinforced positive autonomous action in the world, instead of a relatively passive acceptance of it. In

Sikhism, the key test of spiritual growth is provided by the deeds of the person. Human life provides a sufficiently long opportunity to perform creditable deeds,⁴⁷ especially because the responsibility of actions is always that of the doer.⁴⁸ All deeds done must find retribution. From this law there is no escape. Every one should try to mould his life to ethically acceptable patterns.⁴⁹ The ultimate goal is always to carry out the 'Will of God' and continuous virtuous endeavour to bring meaning to human existence and unity with the structure of the cosmos.

In the earlier bhakti tradition, salvation was possible only within the structure of a rigid orthodoxy. In the teachings of Guru Nanak salvation (*Mukti/Mokh*) is not to be found in any kind of withdrawal from the world but in the midst of worldly activities.

Salvation is achieved when the self has been engaged in devotion and contemplation of (*nam*) of the Divine Reality.⁵⁰ Ritual performances of popular beliefs as means of liberation are disapproved. Although devotion is indispensable, *Mukti* comes only when Divine grace descends on the self.⁵¹ According to Guru Nanak one that follows the path and is blessed becomes *Jivan Mukta*.⁵² He lives for rendering service in a spirit of compassion and dedication, to be truly in a state of liberation.

What Guru Nanak did was, in principle to break the mediated system of salvation and declare salvation potentially available to any man no matter what his station or calling might be.

Unification with God is the central feature of the teachings of Guru Nanak. Religious action was conceived to be identical with active virtue. One has to lead a truthful life. All ascetic and special devotional practices as well as the monastic rules

that specialized in them were dropped. Instead the loving devotion of God and service to humanity became a compelling demand in every walk of life. The stress was on faith, internal quality of person, rather than on particular acts, clearly marked as religious. Guru Nanak did not stress on being 'religious' but to obtain 'religiosity' in everyday life.⁵³

The direct religious response of Guru Nanak to political and moral problems is clearly visible in his *bani*. The impact of religious orientation of society is also mediated by a variety of symbolic forms. In many of his hymns religious values have been expressed from which we can derive a model of the relation between religion and society. However, theologians engaged in Sikh studies have often failed to trace the subtle inter-connection between religion and society when pressures towards social change in the direction of value-realization were sporadic and often utopian. This is the reason why Sikh theologians totally ignore or even misinterpret the historical perspective of Guru Nanak's time and its relative importance in the study of Guru Nanak's teachings. That is why some Western scholars have questioned the validity of the originality of Guru Nanak's theology. According to McLeod, it is misleading to call Guru Nanak the founder of Sikh religion as he did not originate a new school of thought or a set of teachings. "What Guru Nanak offers us is the clearest and most highly articulate expression of the *Nirgun Sampradaya*, the so-called Sant tradition of Northern India."⁵⁴ An indepth study of Sikhism reveals that all these propositions put forward by McLeod are clearly in conflict with the basic doctrines preached by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a liberal theology within a protestant framework. Not only the obligation of doctrinal orthodoxy has been abandoned but also every fixed position (i.e. rituals, rites, sacraments, customs and ceremonies

and even adherence to classical languages) has become open to question in the process of making sense out of man and his situation. As a consequence we find

- (i) that there is a basic Reality different from the empirical one of cause and effect operating in human history;
- (ii) the world is real and a meaningful place for spiritual growth. Therefore belief in asceticism, mendicancy, polytheism and withdrawal from world was discarded;
- (iii) all doctrinal orthodoxy and ritualism are objected to;
- (iv) religiously supported objective system of moral standard is emphasised;
- (v) religious action in the world becomes more demanding;
- (vi) a search for adequate standard of religious action for personal maturity and social relevance is there;
- (vii) effort at self-interpretation is in itself the heart of Guru Nanak's quest for salvation;
- (viii) The religion of Guru Nanak can freely enter into inter-faith dialogues and cooperation with any religion which is based on ethical monotheism, humanism and universal spiritualism.

It is evident from the above observations that Guru Nanak presented clearly defined new set of doctrines and a religiously supported objective system of moral standards which has a universal appeal.

Notes and References

1. Daljeet Singh, *Essays on the Authenticity of Kartar Puri Bir and the Integrated Logic and Unity of Sikhism*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, p. 88.
2. Gurbachan Singh Talib, 'Guru Nanak and National Integration'

in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XI, No. I, February, 1984, p.8.

3. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 566.
4. The '*Mul Mantra*' enunciates the creed of Sikhism and which every Sikh on taking initiation, must testify by repeating it solemnly. It is an affirmation of faith like the *Kalima* of Islam, the *Gyatri Mantra* of theistic Hinduism, the *Om Padmane hum* of Buddhism and similar creeds of other faiths.
5. *Hukam* (Literally command) is a term of wide application standing for the cosmic moral force called *Dharma* for the operation of the law of retribution and the law of grace. Guru Nanak affirms the formative aspect of God as cosmic *Hukam*.
Ibid., pp. 223, 940.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 463.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 1092.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 1092.
11. In Guru Nanak's theology the 'Grace of God stands for Ultimate mystery. The characteristic term used to express this mystery is *nadar*. The same doctrine is expressed in terms like *kirpa*, *prasad*, *karma*, *bakshish*, *bhana*, *daya*, *mihar* and *taras*.
Ibid., pp. 2, 150, 421, 465, 469, 931, 1030, 1291.
12. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 686, 840.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 940, 1331.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 725.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
16. Daljeet Singh, *Essays...*, p. 97.
17. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 725.
18. This is explicitly derived from *pauris* 5 and 6 in '*Japuji*' and other hymns of Guru Nanak. (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 4.).
19. R.N. Bellah, "Religious Evolution" in *Sociology of Religion* (ed. Roland Robertson), Penguin Books Ltd., England, Reprint, 1969, p. 288.
20. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 7.

21. The ascent of human soul towards the Ultimate Reality is stated by Guru Nanak in five *khands* of 'Japuji' (*pauris* 34, 35 and 36. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 7-8).
22. Daljeet Singh. *Essays...*, p. 98.
23. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1245.
24. *Ibid.*,
25. *Ibid.*, p. 913.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 768.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3, 20, 38, 47, 99, 349, 480, 489, 505, 598, 721, 916, 941, 955, 1256 and 1342.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 686.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 1112.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 878.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 466.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 468.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 222, 962 and 1376.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.
38. Daljeet Singh, *Essays ...*, p. 108.
39. The concept of *seva* (service) has been given a special orientation in Guru Nanak's teachings. Here, *seva* is beneficent action unsolicitation of any rewards; the essence of the pure spirituality. This is an art of living directed towards finding fulfilment of the ultimate aim of life through beneficent action.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 354, 992, 1342.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 46, 415.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 414.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 930.
43. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib (In English Translation)* Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xiv.

44. *Ibid.*, p. Xlvii.
45. An important postulate of the teachings of Guru Nanak is the role of *Guru* (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 20, 55, 59, 137, 460, 519, 795, 943, 1024, 1027, 1170, and 1245). In *Guru Bani* we find a great emphasis upon the absolute necessity of the guidance of the *Guru* for spiritual upliftment of the disciple. Without *Guru* there can be no *bhakti*, no access to spiritual knowledge and no regeneration of the man.
Ibid., pp. 17, 20, 831, 1024, 1027, 1030, 1041.
46. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 463.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 462.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 4 and 468.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 1034.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
54. W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1975, p. 5.

GURU NANAK : PROPHET OF HARMONY IN FAITH¹

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In the next century we are looking forward to the emergence of a new society. We believe that the principles outlined by Guru Nanak will form the backbone of this society. Among a number of fundamental redefinitions that Guru Nanak preached to promote a productive human relationship includes his emphasis on oneness of religion. To him a religion was designed by our prophets to inculcate a spiritual relationship among the human being and between a human being and the Creator. Guru Nanak referred to the central teaching of the religion as,

You ought to school your mind through the teachings of the Guru on the Cosmic Soul of the humanity.³

The human body is a Creator's dwelling, in it is placed the Eternal Flame.⁴

Thus, to know oneself and one's relationship with the cosmic soul remained the objective of every world religion throughout the history of humankind. What varied from time to time was only the approach and the medium of communication. This variation⁵ was imperative to suit any religion to the peoples of different lands or times in the earth's history.

In the beginning, mythical stories were evolved to explain a religion. It became customary to answer questions and provide explanations of religious teachings by the best story people could concoct in their effort to give an order to their beliefs. The mythical stories of every religion varied to deal with the life issues of a certain period, but they always arrived at the logical conclusion that there must be a God responsible for the world order. Over time when populations expanded to different lands and there were great distances that separated people caused a breakdown in universal communication. This gave rise to local or ethnic religions. They were evolved to utilize the local vernaculars and tribal histories in order to pattern the mythical stories of their own. The only purpose in diversity was to develop their own rules for living that allowed people to lead a coherent existence in their own limited environment.

Now that the advances in technology are bringing the world closer again, there is felt a dire necessity of bringing the universality back in religion. In the process of adopting a religion for the past century people were overwhelmingly influenced by the power of their past which always related to an ethnic religion of their land. Whereas founders of the most religions meant to connect human beings with each other and with the Universal Divine, the innate tendencies of the followers, in conspiracy with those who used religion as an object of commerce, found it convenient to abuse religions to promote division and hatred. Guru Nanak was disturbed over this situation and he labeled this type of religion as *karam-dharam* in contrast to a *such-dharam* meaning a true religion that is a source of the true spirituality. *Karam-dharam* meant a religion of rituals and ethnic divisions which ignored and subordinated the Divine Reality. According to Guru Nanak's analysis, the whole humanity was being placed under the spell of an unholy ethno-céntric parenthesis by the religions of the time, Guru Nanak said :

The *karam-dharam* that I practice actually constitutes an unholy bondage.⁶

Such a *dharam* becomes a blind mixture of the duties prescribed by blind clergy and the moral or ethno-cultural edicts formulated by their institutions. The Guru described this state of affairs as,

Religions of rituals are mere entanglements; they form worldly bondage with what is classified as good or bad. They are performed for the sake of children and spouse, in ego and attachment, to form more attachments. Wherever I look, I find the noose of attachment to Maya.⁷ Says Nanak, without the True Name, the world is engrossed in blind entanglements.⁸

The ancient texts of India such as the *Dharmasatras* and *Dharmasutras*, or Books of the Law are replete with canons promoted by Hindu clergy. Guru Nanak joined by Bhagat Kabir warned us against such traps.

Most of the people are paying heed only to the bugle of 'karam kaand' sounded by the scriptures such as Vedas. Says Nanak, you should adopt the path of Naam as nothing else is so exquisite.⁹

Crowds of people are following the path that is laid down by the clergy. However, there is a distinct path to the Divine that Kabir follows.¹⁰

Similarly, the Guru saw Mid-Eastern religious traditions under the influence of Islam promoting its own ethno-religious laws prescribing every cultural norm. They were contained in the system of *shariat*. Christian scribes and Pharisees were similarly scrupulous in their rigid following of the Mosaic Law. Led by Guru Nanak, other leaders of reform also ridiculed canons of all ethnocentric religions of the time and urged people to rise above the rituals of blind faith and be wise to follow the reality instead.

*The Muslims praise their shariat law and they read and dwell upon it. But the Lord's bondsman is one who binds oneself with spiritual discipline to see the Lord's vision.*¹¹

*Among the two major religions of the world, the Hindu has become blind and the Muslim one-eyed each by following their ethnic approaches of religion. The Wise is (only) the one who attains knowledge of the Divine. The Hindu worships at the temple, the Muslim at the mosque, but, says Namdev, that one worships the God, who is neither in the temple nor in the Mosque.*¹²

Guru Nanak ridiculed the practices and claim of the clergy class of the time and predicted that the days of their influence would be numbered by saying,

*The days of the Qazi, the Islamic priest, and the Brahmin, the Hindu priest, are over, and the Devil himself is playing the priest.*¹³

The Gurus awakened us to the futility of hypocritical bondage disguised under the name of a religion and said,

*Studies of the Vedic scriptures are entanglements. So are scriptural discussions and resulting egotism. We continue to be entangled, and will perish in attachment to these evil entanglements.*¹⁴

Approach with No Prejudice

To give birth to a new society in the twenty-first century, people's faith has to be changed from the superficial rituals to search for True Reality. The Guru adopted this approach of not condemning any individual, as they were innocent victims of a very clever and well entrenched class of clergymen. Rather, he ridiculed the shallow practices which distracted a seeker away from the one God and promoted prejudices of religion,

gender, age, family lineage and trade among people. The Guru asked his followers to correct those practices without considering any one human being as evil. Guru Nanak said,

Do not speak ill of others, it leads to futile arguments and fights.¹⁵

Under the garb of reformation, for the centuries we have been dividing people into enemies and friends based upon their religious practices. However, if the prejudices on rituals that people perform are taken out of the picture no one will be considered an enemy. The Guru pointed out to this aspect very clearly and went a step further by saying,

Do not call anyone else evil; follow this way of life. Those who are true to this path are judged to be true by the True Lord.¹⁶

A true seeker sees one self as wrong and all the rest of the world as virtuous.¹⁷

First of all any recognition of the oneness of religion will dictate that no one be condemned as inferior or lower in any evaluation. Guru Nanak made this as a goal of a mass education.

By achieving literacy, you are urged to realize that no one deserves condemnation as the Creator manifests in every one.¹⁸

Further, no one may be discriminated based on the religious education they receive.

By himself, no one is literate, learned or wise; no one is ignorant or evil. When, as a humble, one praises the Lord, only then is he/she known as a poise human being.¹⁹

Guru Nanak said that if people in this world perceive

a realization of Divine in all creation, there would not be any prejudice, discord or inharmony in our outlook. Prejudices and discord come into our consciousness because of our continuous ignorance of the Divine Creator.

*Who shall I call an evil or good when through the
God orientation I see the Timeless every where.²⁰*

When Guru Nanak confronted the religious leaders (the leaders of the yogic sect considered most influential in Indian Subcontinent at that time) five centuries ago, he found them imprisoned in their exclusive bond of ritualistic *aayee panth*. The Guru re-oriented their thinking and counseled them to redefine their egoistic labels. He asked them to lay foundation of a new fraternity of the highest order, a fraternity whose practices were meant for elite and non elite alike.

*O'Yogis ! Let universal brotherhood of all be the
highest aspirations of your society and you will win
the world by winning your mind.²¹*

The Guru defined path to God as a path to love God's creation, love that is not limited only to Sikhs, while excluding others, such as Jews, or Christians, Muslims, Hindus, among others. He considered any prejudice practiced in the name of religion as truly irreligious. To love others whose beliefs are unlike ours will not imply any loss of a commitment to our own belief. As Jefferson said "It does me no injury if my neighbour thinks there are twenty Gods or that there is none."

Religion for All

Five centuries ago Guru Nanak launched a movement in the direction of a universal religion which rejected all prejudices. He did not condemn any one religion. The task Guru Nanak undertook was to separate the genuine insight for a vision of the true reality from the inevitable errors of ritualism

and materialistic selfishness that crept into the religious practices. To practice or preach a religion in order to promote ritualism or ethnicity was considered a grave contradiction. To begin with Guru Nanak laid foundation to a truly universal scripture. Many other holy men from Islam and Hinduism would author his holy book beside himself and his followers. It would use around 20 languages, contain little history and will not glorify its authors. It would preach simply the divine knowledge applicable to all humankind of all times, sections, countries, colours and creeds.

In speaking of the road to salvation, the Gurus taught Hindus to be better Hindus and Muslims to be better Muslims. To his Muslim followers he urged them to find the truth behind all rituals they practiced.

Let mercy be your mosque, faith your prayer-mat and honest living your holy book. Make modesty your circumcision, and good conduct your fasting. In this way, you shall be a True Muslim. Let good conduct be your holy place, Kaabaa, Truth your spiritual guide, and good deeds your Kalma prayer and chant. Let that be your rosary, which is pleasing to God's Will. O Nanak, then God shall preserve your honour. To take away what rightfully belongs to another is like a Muslim eating the forbidden pork, or a Hindu eating forbidden beef. Our Guru, our Spiritual Guide, stands by us only if we do not commit bad deeds (eat those carcasses). By mere talking, people do not earn passage to the Heaven. Salvation comes only from the practice of Truth. By adding spices to forbidden foods, they are not made the sanctioned ones. O Nanak from false speech, only falsehood is obtained. There are five prayers and five prayer times of day; they have five names. Let the first be

*truthfulness, the second honest living and the third charity in the Name of God. Let the fourth be good will to all, and the fifth the praise of the Lord. Repeat the prayer of good deeds, and then, you may call yourself a Muslim, O Nanak, the false obtain falsehood, and only falsehood.*²²

He further said,

*It is difficult to be called a Muslim; if one is truly a Muslim, then he may be called one. First, let him savor the religion of the Prophet as sweet; then, let his pride of his possessions be scraped away, Becoming a true Muslim, a disciple of the faith of Mohammad, let him put aside the delusion of death and life.*²³

To the Hindus who revered him, Guru Nanak gave similar advice. For example speaking the ritual of holy thread in Hindu tradition, he said.

*Spin the thread of contentment from the cotton of compassion, tie the knot of continence, and give it the twist of virtue. Fabricate in this way the sacred thread for your inner self, O Wise man. Such a thread will not break, burn or destroyed in any way. Blessed will be those who continue to wear a necklace of such a thread.*²⁴

*On the pious eleventh day of the lunar month, enshrine the One Lord within your heart. Eradicate cruelty, egotism and attachment, Earn the fruitful rewards by observing the fast of knowing your own self. One who is engrossed in hypocrisy, does not see the True Essence.*²⁵

Guru Nanak visualized that Individuals would reach Divinity by following insights, which will cohere with their

experience of the Divine, and with the values rooted in their culture and living styles. He promoted the timeless knowledge of Divine, which is translated in contemporary idiom and understanding. During the ministry of the Gurus, the process of spiritual convergence was made part of a discernible movement within the cosmos towards greater richness and complexity of consciousness. The prophet emphasized a common ground to allow God's creatures room for diversity. The Guru considered those who hold out against spiritual convergence as those going against the flow of the cosmos. In this respect, Sikhism represented the move to next century. In the New World, our own quarrelsomeness will be lifted and we will discover the radiant beauty of the Inner World, where only bliss resides.

Quite understandably, the emphasis in Guru Nanak's teaching was not on converting others and more on inculcating in all human beings freedom to find their own destiny and salvation. Sikhism has not generally been a proselytizing religion. Folk lore and tradition say that at the end of Guru Nanak's life, his Hindu and Muslim followers argued vehemently as each group wanted to claim Nanak as their own.

Sikh temples remain open to all. The prayer that a Sikh reads every day ends with a supplication for betterment of all humankind, not for Sikhs alone to the exclusion of anyone else. To hate any human being but to worship God or to pray to one God and promote divisions among the mankind are contradictory and perverse. The religion teaches us that the ultimate reality of God is to be attained through service to humanity and by accepting the diversity of His creation. This is the basis for a world religion that Guru Nanak provided. Move of His followers to a universal faith is motivated every where by their desire to fulfill their Guru's prophecy that all humans possess one urge towards the Divine truth. The Divine

truth is beyond various paths, religions and approaches but which countless people worship in countless ways, cultures and groups.

The praanic wind, water and fire sing; the Righteous Judge of Dharma sings at Your Door. Chitr and Gupt, the angels of the conscious and the subconscious who record actions, and the Righteous Judge of Dharma who judges this record sing. Shiva, Brahma and the Goddess of Beauty, ever adorned, sing. Indra, seated upon His Throne, sings with the deities at Your Door. The Siddhas in Samaadhi sing; the Sadhus sing in contemplation. The celibates, the fanatics, the peacefully accepting and the fearless warriors sing. The Pundits, the religious sages who recite the Vedas with the supreme sages of all the ages, sing. The Mohinis, the enchanting heavenly beauties who entice hearts in this world, in paradise, and in the underworld of the subconscious sing. The celestial jewels created by You, and the sixty-eight holy places of pilgrimage sing. The brave and mighty warriors sing; the spiritual heroes and the four sources of creation sing. The planets, solar systems and galaxies, created and arranged by Your Hand, sing.²⁶

Acceptance of critical accommodation towards various approaches for achieving the enlightened consciousness is a key stage in the evolution of more contemporary religions. Forms of faith that do not come to terms with this teaching are less evolved and will be forgotten in time. As saint Kabir echoed Guru Nanak's prediction that the clergy will cease to exert their influence in the next century. Followers of all religions will accept one God.²⁶

The Divine Master of both Hindus and Muslim is the one and the same. Neither clergies of one religion or the other would be able to do anything about it.²⁷

Notes and References

1. The verses from the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* are cited with the author, source, page and line numbers according to the *Granth* published by Shiromni Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, Amritsar. Each verse is followed by a brief commentary relating to the subject of this discussion and may be distinct from an exact translation.
2. Send reprint requests and address all correspondence to Dr. Harbans Lal, Ph.D., D.Litt. (Hons), Professor and Chairman, Department of Pharmacology, University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth, 3500 Camp Bowle Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76016 Dr. Lal is the Executive Director of the Academy of Guru Granth Studies, 6415 Amicable Drive, Arlington, TX 76016, USA.
3. ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝਾਈਐ ਆਤਮਰਾਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥
Dev, Guru Nanak, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 18, 1.8.
4. ਕਾਇਆ ਮਹਲੁ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਘਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਤਿਸ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਖੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਪਾਰ॥
Ibid., p. 1256, 1.4.
5. ਨਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ" The differences are made up of influences from the countries, cultures, customs or the clothes," --Said Guru Gobind Singh in *Akal Ustat*, *Chhand* 86. 1.2.
6. ਬੰਧਨ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਹਉ ਕੀਆ¹¹
Guru Nanak in : *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 416, 1.14.
7. Maya is the phenomenal world or materialism that is deceptive and illusory and that lures human souls away from the Divine reality. Under its influence the Creator is forgotten, worldly attachments take root and the duality becomes the object of interest. ਏਹੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਾਇਆ said Guru Amar, Das, *Ibid.*, p. 921, 1.3.
8. ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਸਭਿ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਪਾਪ ਪੁੰਨ ਸਨਬੰਧੁ॥ ਮਮਤਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਸੁ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੁ ਕਲਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੁ ਧੰਧੁ॥
ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਮਾਕਿਆ ਕਾ ਸਨਬੰਧੁ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਵਰਤਣਿ ਵਰਤੈ ਅੰਧੁ॥
Guru Amar Das *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 551, 1.3.
9. ਮਾਂਦਲੁ ਬੇਦਿ ਸਿ ਬਾਜਣੈ ਘਣੈ ਧੜੀਐ ਜੋਇ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਿ ਤੂ ਬੀਜਉ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥

Guru Nanak, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib.*, p. 1091, 1.1.

10. ਕਬੀਰ ਜਿਹ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਗਏ ਪਾਛੈ ਪਰੀ ਬਹੀਰ॥
ਇਕ ਅਵਘਟ ਘਾਟੀ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਤਿਹ ਚੜਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਕਬੀਰ॥
Kabir, Bhagat *Ibid.*, p. 1373, 1.7.
11. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਰੀਅਤਿ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥
ਬੰਦੇ ਸੇ ਜਿ ਪਵਹਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਬੰਦੀ ਵੇਖਣ ਕਉ ਦੀਦਾਰੁ॥
Guru Nanak, *Ibid.*, p. 465, 1.17.
12. ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅੰਨੈ ਤੁਰਕੂ ਕਾਣਾ॥ ਦੁਹਾ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਿਆਣਾ॥
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਪੂਜੈ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਮਸੀਤਿ॥
ਨਾਮੇ ਸੋਈ ਸੋਵਿਆ ਜਹ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਨ ਮਸੀਤਿ॥
Namdev, Bhagat, *Ibid.*, p. 875, 1.2.
13. ਕਾਜੀਆ ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਗਲ ਬਕੀ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ॥
Guru Nanak in, *Ibid.*, p. 722, 1.18.
14. ਬੰਧਨੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬਾਦੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ॥ ਬੰਧਨਿ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਮੋਹ ਵਿਕਾਰ॥
Ibid., p. 416, 1.14.
15. ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਆਖਿ ਝਗੜਾ ਪਾਵਣਾ॥
Ibid., p. 566, 1.5.
16. ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖਿ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਸਚਿ ਖਰਾ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੇ॥
Ibid., p. 1027, 1.11
17. ਮੰਦਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪ ਕਉ ਅਵਰੁ ਭਲਾ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥
Ibid., p. 991, 1.11
18. ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਪੜਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ॥
Ibid., p. 473, 1.13.
19. ਨਾ ਕੋ ਪੜਿਆ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਬੀਨਾ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਮੰਦਾ॥
ਬੰਦੀ ਅੰਦਿਰ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਕਰਾਏ ਤਾ ਕਉ ਕਹੀਐ ਬੰਦਾ॥
Ibid., p. 359, 1.17.
20. ਬੁਰਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਹੁ ਕਿਸ ਨੋ ਕਹੀਐ॥ ਦੀਸੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਚੁ ਲਹੀਐ॥
Ibid., p. 353, 1.10
21. ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ॥
Ibid., p. 6, 1.17.

22. ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ॥ ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ॥ ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜਾ॥1॥ਮ:1॥ ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਆਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ॥ ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ॥ ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ॥2॥ਮ:1॥ ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ॥ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ॥ ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੈ ਕੂੜੀ ਪਾਇ॥

Ibid., p. 140, 1.16.

23. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥ ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ॥ ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ॥ ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ॥ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥

Ibid., p. 141, 1.10.

24. ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥ ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ॥ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੇ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੈ ਪਾਇ॥

Ibid., p. 471, 1.2.

25. ਏਕਾਦਸੀ ਇਕੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਵਸਾਵੈ॥ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਮਮਤਾ ਮੇਹੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ॥ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਵੈ ਬੂਤੁ ਆਤਮ ਚੀਨੈ॥ ਪਾਖੰਡਿ ਰਾਚਿ ਤਤੁ ਨਹੀ ਬੀਨੈ॥

Ibid., p. 840, 1.4.

26. ਗਾਵਹਿ ਤੁਹਨੋ ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੈ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਈਸਰੁ ਬਰਮਾ ਦੇਵੀ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਵਾਰੈ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਇੰਦ ਇੰਦਾਸਣਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਦਰਿ ਨਾਲੇ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਸਿਧ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸਾਧ ਵਿਚਾਰੈ॥ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖੀ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਵੀਰ ਕਰਾਰੈ॥ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੜਨਿ ਰਖੀਸਰ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਵੇਦਾ ਨਾਲੇ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਮੋਹਣੀਆ ਮਨੁ ਮੋਹਨਿ ਸੁਰਗਾ ਮਛ ਪਇਆਲੇ॥ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਰਤਨ ਉਪਾਏ ਤੇਰੇ ਅਠਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਲੇ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਜੇਧ ਮਹਾਬਲ ਸੂਰਾ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਖਾਣੀ ਚਾਰੇ॥ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡਾ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਧਾਰੇ॥

Ibid., p. 6, 1.6

27. ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਏਕ॥ ਕਹ ਕਰੈ ਮੁਲਾ ਕਹ ਕਰੈ ਸੇਖਾ॥

Kabir, *Ibid.*, p. 1158, 1.10

HUMOUR AND SPIRITUALITY—GURU NANAK STYLE

J.S. Neki

In a China shop in San Francisco I happened to see the imposing image of the Laughing Buddha. Until then, I was familiar only with the Meditating Buddha whose images abound in India. As I looked intently on the Laughing Buddha, a smile automatically swept over my face and my soul felt spontaneously cheered up. Here, then, was a Buddha who was extending his happy grace to whosoever came to him, for he himself had set aside all the burdens of existence.

My thoughts, then, turned immediately from the Buddha to Guru Nanak whose prevalent portraits are also of a *meditative old Baba*—pensive and reflective, showering a silent grace with the blessing gesture of his hand. Immediately another similarity, between the Buddha and the Guru sprang up in my mind. Both of them, in the prime of life had left their homes, their pretty spouses and tender offspring and spent decades wandering around.

Yet, there was a difference too. The Buddha left his home in quest for salvation. The Guru, on the other hand, had already found his salvation and quit his home in order to save mankind. When he set off on his odysseys, he was far from an old Baba.

He was at the summit of his youth, full of vigour and courage. That is why he could undertake long tedious journeys, mostly on foot, as in those days there were hardly any roads. He went up to Tibet across the Himalayas and down to Kanya Kumari, the Southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, to Assam in the East and to Mecca in the West across the seas. He went around as a *Dhadi* (a minstrel) of the Lord, singing His praise in sublime verse he had composed. Crowds thronged to him and were charmed not only by his song but also by his captivating smile which reflected his inner Bliss arising from the unceasing experience of the Beauty of Truth (*sat suhan sada man chao*¹). He must have been the smiling, singing, sparkling, youthful guru, and not the pensive Baba which his pictures portray. The *Dhadis* are known for their sense of humour as well. The guru also had a splendid sense of humour of which there is ample evidence.

Humour has often been regarded as 'irrelevant and perhaps even hurtful to the finer aspects of emotions and spiritual life'. This is because of the belief that humour leads to a neglect of the more serious and noble side of life; that in its degradation, humour can treat the most solemn facts and experiences as mere subjects for laughter; that it tends to generate levity, flippancy and shallowness which qualities need essentially to be curbed in a person of spiritual pursuits.

Yet, that would be too simplistic a view. Humour which is devoid of coarseness, hyperbole and obscenity may well be geared to higher purposes of life. If it is well-intentioned and gracious, it would reform as well as elevate. If it is self-critical, it saves us from the folly of self-importance and the sin of self-righteousness. Even when gentle and subdued, it lessens the bitterness of failure and blundering. However, when it is sublime, it can be revelatory of higher truths. All these varieties are serviceable to a man with a spiritual mission and a reforming

zeal. And Guru Nanak knew how to make use of these.

The Guru's humour aimed at causing heart-searching and not heart-burn. He gave evidence of this even as a child. At his school, he is believed to have questioned his teacher, "Are you, Sir, well versed in the lore in which I seek to be instructed?" The teacher contacted the Guru's father to say, "I would not be able to instruct *your son*." The father thought, his son was ineducable, while the teacher wanted to convey that he could not respond to his son's yearning for spiritual knowledge.

One is here reminded of the Upanishadic story in which Svetaketu returns home conceited after receiving twelve years of instruction in various disciplines, secular and religious, and his father asks him : "Svetaketu, since you are now so greatly conceited, think yourself well read and arrogant, did you ask for that instruction by which the unhearable becomes heard, the unperceivable becomes perceived, the unknowable becomes known?"²

It is this kind of instruction that the child Nanak was seeking. His teacher appreciated this, though his father couldn't.

In the same vein who Nanak, a boy of nine, told the Pandit who came to invest him with the sacred thread, "O revered Pandit, I would like to be invested with a thread which would neither break nor get soiled nor be burnt nor lost." It appeared a comical demand, but then the Guru explained the thread he longed for :

Of the cotton of Compassion spun with Contentment,
Knotted with Temperance and twisted with Truth.
Such is the Sacred Thread, O Pandit,
Invest me with it if you have it !³

Again, in a closely similar fashion he addressed the

physician called in to examine him because he was believed to be sick :

O Physician ! what for are you checking my pulse?

The malady is not in the body, it is in my soul.⁴

The poor physician did not know how to palpate the soul.

The humour in each instance was subtle as well as sublime. In each instance, the apparently comic stance was revelatory of a higher truth.

As he grew up, Guru Nanak worked as a store-keeper in a public granary in Sultanpur. There, while he weighed his merchandize, he would go on counting aloud the weighings : one, two, three...However, when he reached thirteen, in Punjabi *tera* (which also means 'yours'), all subsequent weighings were pronounced *tera only*. Every pronouncement was thus a declaration, "O Lord, I am yours !" The pun in the word *tera* had wafted him into a spiritual experience.

During his sojourn at that place, his day would start with his morning ablutions in the river Bein which flowed by Sultanpur. Once he went to that river, but did not return for full three days. It is recorded in his chronicles that he had a profound mystical experience during that period wherein he felt commissioned by the Lord to "go and rejoice in My Name and teach others to do so." The first words that he uttered upon reappearance were, "*There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman.*" To most people it was a comical statement, absurd and non-factual. They only laughed it away. However, some discerned in it deep meanings :

- (i) It meant that all were human beings, children of the same Father, not distinguished as Hindus or Muslims in God's eyes.
- (ii) It also alluded to the fact that, by and large, both Hindus

and Muslims had forsaken the tenets of their creeds, and none was a true Hindu or a true Musalman.

- (iii) It also signified the folly of discriminating against people on the basis of their avowed religion.
- (iv) And, finally, it also seemed to indicate that Nanak wanted to reconcile the two mutually hostile communities.

The Guru's slogan was, thus, the call for reform, though some people's mental rigidity only saw it as a comical statement. The Guru had, perhaps deliberately, made a statement that looked comical as well as shocking. Such humour is common in the armamentarium of a reformer. Its reform-potential lies in the demand it makes for a change in outlook, it unveils the prevailing incongruity between beliefs and practices.

Yet, in the eyes of the 'orthodoxy' such humour is outrageous. So not unexpectedly, the entrenched Muslim orthodoxy of Sultanpur reported the matter to the local Muslim ruler that Nanak was pronouncing, "There is no Musalman". Guru Nanak was summoned and his explanation sought. Upon this, the Guru recited the following *shabad* :

It is not easy to be called a Musalman
 If there is one, let him be so known
 He should first learn by heart the tenets of his faith,
 And purge himself of all pride.
 He alone is a Muslim who pursues the path
 prescribed by the Prophet,
 Who has no concern for life or death,
 Who takes the Will of God as Supreme,
 Who reposes his faith in the Creator.
 And surrenders his self before Him.
 Only when he cherishes goodwill for one and all
 May he be called a Musalman.⁵

Thus, what appeared to be a ludicrous statement to many became revelatory of a higher truth.

Another familiar genre of humour is caricature. When you caricature someone apart from yourself, it causes great resentment, but if one caricatures oneself one can generate both amusement and inquisitiveness, and thereby enable people to read a message shrouded in it. The Guru knew this. This is why he made a caricature of himself as he set out on his first odyssey. He clad himself in a gown half mustard and half white; on one foot he had a proper shoe, on the other a worn out slipper; on his head he donned a Qalandar's cap, and around his neck a necklace of skulls; and upon his forehead he wore the saffron mark of the Hindu sadhus. What a diffusion of identity ! His composite garb belonged to no single community. It signified that he belonged to none of the prevalent orders. That he could be identified only as a human being. And all this his caricature did announce even while people were amused by it.

The Guru often indulged in shockingly irreverent behaviour through whose apparent comicality he would stir people's minds and then stamp them with the impress of sublime truth. One is immediately reminded of his visit to Hardwar where crowds of Hindus had thronged to make ablutions to their departed ancestors. Standing in the river, they were throwing handfuls of water towards the Sun in the east. Standing amidst them, the Guru began to throw water towards the west. People around him were surprised and asked him as to what he was doing. "I am watering my fields in the Punjab", he replied. They laughed at him and said, "How can your handfuls of water reach your fields that are over two hundred miles away?" The Guru replied, "If my water cannot reach even two hundred miles on this earth, how can yours reach your ancestors in the world beyond?"

A sudden truth was driven home and that through a detached appreciation of the whimsicality and contradiction in the blind folk-rituals. It promptly reduced the ritual to complete insignificance.

A similar device seems to have been adopted when the Guru made a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. Footsore and weary, he quietly lay down in the precincts of the mosque and there sunk into sleep with his feet towards the Kaaba. That annoyed other pilgrims, one of whom kicked him, saying, "You irreverent one, why have you turned your feet towards the House of God?" The Guru calmly replied, "Please be not amiss. I am an ignorant fellow. Just turn my feet in a direction where God is not." But where was God not? The *Quran* had asserted that "Allah is in the East and the West. So withersoever you turn, there is the face of God."⁶ He was then asked whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu. "Neither," he replied, "I am only an effigy made of the five elements." Every ring of the sublime truth leaves the question asked belittled. That was the style of Nanak's "higher humour."

Whenever he saw a moral incongruity practised, his soul got pricked and he unveiled the absurdity of the ostentation in the humour-tinged disclaimer. A Hindu, a Brahmin himself, had been employed by the Muslim rulers to collect the tax levies on Hindu pilgrims (including Brahmins) and cattle. Him the Guru saw "purifying" his cooking quarters by plastering them with cow dung. In a verse he portrayed the comical incongruity thus :

While you tax the cow and the Brahmin,
 How can the cow-dung save you?
 (On the one hand) you wear the *dhoti*, the saffron-
 mark and the rosary,
 (on the other) you eat out of the hands of barbarians.
 Within you worship (the idols), outside you recite the
Quran.

And observe the Turkish code.
Shed your hypocrisy, O Brahmin,
Only through the Name (of the Lord) you may swim
across.⁷

During his travels, the Guru met a multimillionaire, Duni Chand, who was mightily proud of his riches. Him the Guru gave a small needle to keep and return in the hereafter. Without thought he accepted it and took it home and gave it to his wife. He told her of his encounter with the Guru and the purpose for which he had been entrusted with the needle. "You are quite a simpleton," his wife said, "How will you take it to the other world?" Realizing his foolishness, he took the needle back to the Guru and pleaded his inability to take it to the other world. "If all your riches you will be able to carry with you, why not this little needle?" The message immediately went home.

A not unusual genre of humour is "riddle" and Guru Nanak knew how to employ this technique as well. Two incidents of his life come instantly to my mind. In the first, the Guru went to a village where he was shabbily treated, followed by another village where he was made heartily comfortable. He left the former village blessing its people, "May you, always prosper here". The people of the second village he apparently cursed, "May you be dispersed." Mardana, the Guru's companion, remarked, "I do not understand your pronouncements, Lord. Those who maltreated you, you blessed, those who welcomed you, you cursed." The Guru said, "Mardana ! I would like the wicked to stay put so that their wickedness remains contained in one place. On the other hand, I would like the virtuous to disperse so that they may spread their goodness wherever they go." The intent of the quizzical paradox became clear to Mardana who remarked, "Wise are your riddles, Master"

Another example that impressed me pertains to the time when the Guru made up his mind to install Lahina as his successor. When he first came to see him at Kartarpur, the Guru had enquired of Lahina his name. When he said it was *Lahina* (which in Punjabi means *the money due back*), the Guru said, "If you are Lahina, then I have *dena*" (*dena* in Punjabi means *to give back*). This was no witticism, it was indeed a prophetic statement. Lahina, then on, never left the Master and served him so dutifully that the Guru decided to rename him Angad (the limb of my limb) and install him as his successor. Thus he was to receive from the Guru what even his own sons could not.

But the sons were loth to give up. They assembled the elders among their kinsfolk to pressurise the Guru to revise his decision. The elders pleaded with the Guru, "Your sons are worthy individuals, both wise as well as spiritually inclined. Why are you preferring Lahina over them to be your spiritual successor?" The Guru said, they are worthy persons no doubt, but they do not have the vision of Lahina." He went to say further, "Do you want a proof?" and without waiting for a reply, he picked up a coin and closed it in his fist in the presence of everyone. Then he asked his elder son, Sri Chand, "My son, tell me what is in my hand?" He replied, "Father, I have no doubt, you are holding a coin in your closed hand." Then he turned to his younger son Lakhmidas and repeated his query. Lakhmidas dittoed what his elder brother had said. The guru then turned to Guru Angad Dev and posed him the same question. Guru Angad Dev said, "O Divine Master, I am unable to fathom what is in your hand. It contains all the nine treasures and the eighteen spiritual powers. It contains higher knowledge and benevolent action. It contains the entire universe, and even God Himself." Thereupon Guru Nanak turned to the assembled elders and said "Have you seen my sons cannot see beyond

a coin. Succession to this spiritual throne is only the right of one with the vision of Guru Angad. So he has rightly been installed."

Thus it was that Guru Nanak softened the irksome angularities of ticklish situations with humour. His humour always had the stamp of sublimity which ever introduced a kindly beneficence into social judgements. Argument yielded spontaneously to the genial influence of his humour. His humour had a subtle force that weakened the strength of whatever he sought to change. It was never a humour for humour's sake. It always had human upliftment as its aim. It was a rightminded antidote of sympathetic and sublime humour of Guru Nanak style.

Notes and References

1. *Adi Granth*, p. 4, line 16.
2. *Chandogya* VI.1 : 2-3.
3. *Adi Granth*, p. 471, line 2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 127, line 14.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 141, line 10.
6. Chapter II, Verse 116.
7. *Adi Granth*, p. 465, line. 15.

MAYA AND QUDRAT IN NANAK BANI

Wazir Singh

Maya belongs to the class of concepts that have acquired the status of philosophic categories. In the philosophy of naturalism, for instance, nature is regarded as the ultimate category, and reality to the super nature or transcendent being is denied. By contrast, the idealist asserts consciousness, experience or idea as the sole category of his metaphysics. These fundamental modes of existence, or ultimate principles of understanding and experience, are, in the final analysis, products of the human mental activity. They do not refer so much to one or another of the entities in the external world, as to the speculative realm of man's life. All philosophy, in this sense, is play of concepts supported by fancy and argument, and inspired by purposes that embrace the truths of life, the universe, or the totality of being. In one of the attempts to comprehend the nature of reality, some of the philosophic minds in India invented the concept of *maya* and, with the help of this child of speculation, offered an alternative interpretation of the world inhabited by man, adding to the charming diversity of theories contending for supremacy.

One of the thinkers and exponents of the characteristically Indian view of life, who not only continued the *maya* tradition

of thought in his own way, but contributed to its enrichment, was the poet-philosopher Guru Nanak. He employed the concept of *maya* in his poetry as part of his repertory, in order to bring home to mankind his message of ethico-spiritual life. As distinct from his predecessors in the region of philosophy proper, and in lines with the poet-devotees, Guru Nanak extended the area of application of the term *maya* by adopting it as a symbol in the conceptual framework of his poetry. He was not bound, in his poetic freedom, by the strictly metaphysical nuances of the term. Rather, he moulded the concept of *maya* to the needs of his composition and its content, making use of it in a symbolic sense to communicate his image of evil, sometimes investing the term with an enhanced meaning through its combination with another component, as in *moh-maya*, *maya-mamta*, etc.

Subject-Object of Maya

The problem of *maya* in philosophy is intimately linked with some of the other metaphysical problems, such as subject-object, appearance and reality, man and God. It is also connected with the issue of knowledge and ignorance. *Maya* is variously described as a veil or curtain concealing reality, appearance of the phenomenal world as against things-in-themselves, the grand illusion or the cosmic principle of illusion. In any case, it makes a necessary reference to living beings, in particular to man, whose vision is obscured by the spell of *maya*, or to whom the manifold world comes as an illusory experience. *Maya* as ignorance is essentially human ignorance, or more pointedly, that of an individual who has yet to work his way to illumination and knowledge. In brief, *maya* is assumed to stand between man and reality, producing error and illusion in the human mind, and creating difficulties in the individual's way to a state of knowledge and bliss. Thus conceived, it is the Indian counterpart of the devil, the evil incarnate.

Guru Nanak-*bani* presents *maya* from the objectivist as well as the subjectivist points of view. Firstly, as in common parlance, the term *maya* denotes wealth or riches. An individual engrossed in the worldly possessions is *mayadhari* who remains oblivious of the spiritual aspect of life. Such a one is castigated as blind and deaf in the *bani*. Secondly, attractions of the worldly life, in general, are characterized as *maya*. Their spell is cast not only on human beings, but on all forms of life, including *devi* and *deva* who long for the enjoyment of worldly charms. Thirdly, the phenomenal world of the universe itself is *maya* which is identical with nature at all levels—physical, biological, mental—created and established by the Divine ordinance. This view depicts *maya* at the height of objectivity, as a living, operating, seemingly endless, colourful world of names and forms. Human consciousness, which is a part of the phenomenal world of *maya*, not only mirrors this world, but engages itself in the uncovering of its depths and the discovering of its truths. All human endeavour, common sense and reason, all science and philosophy, all technological ventures and probes form part of the struggle to solve the riddle of this empirical but mysterious world.

If the external world of sense and inference symbolizes *maya* as the object, the inner, mental world of man represents *maya* as the subject. In the Nanak *bani*, one prominent subjective aspect of *maya* is the passionate self of man—his sensuous, possessive, egoistic nature. Another aspect is represented by human attachment with the world—the *moh-maya* or infatuations which prevent man from rising above his individuality and relativity. However, the summit of *maya's* subjectivity is shown as ignorance—the true character of *maya*, which also provides foundation to the doctrine of Illusionism. Here, the objective and the subjective of *maya* converge : the phenomenal world appears to human consciousness, and consciousness is of the phenomena of nature. Neither the

external world nor human experience is real : both are illusory. *Maya* is reflecting *maya*. Human ignorance indulges in the fanciful building up of the world of appearance. The subject (ignorance) is hooked up with the object (illusion)—both products of *maya* and both identical with *maya*.

The Traditional View

In considering the approach of Guru Nanak to the question of *maya*, it may be asked which of the two aspects, the subjective and the objective, has been emphasized in his *bani*. One interpretation classifies Guru Nanak with the exponents of the Advaita Vedanta school. This line of thinking strives to demonstrate the falsity of the world, considering it as the product of a creative illusion that is *maya*. Reality of this view is non-dual ; it is Brahman or the absolute ; nothing other than Brahman really exists or is really real. The other major interpretation of Guru Nanak's faith seeks to affirm that the natural world is real and true ; it is the product of God's creativity and cannot be dismissed as a mere illusion. God himself has assumed the manifest form of the cosmic order. The failure on our part to view the universe as God in his immanent aspect, is due to our ignorance or infatuation, which is nothing but *maya*.

It is true that the Advaitic doctrine considers *maya* from the subjective point of view and explains it in terms of *avidya* or ignorance of the human soul. When the individual frees himself from the influence of *maya*, he awakes to the reality of a single non-dual, eternal Brahman. To him, *maya* is no more ; it has come to an end. However, this is one part of the story. The other part treats of *maya* as *anadi* or beginningless ; it is also indescribable. The world of names and forms is a product of *maya*, which is indicative of *maya*'s unique powers of creation and of concealing reality. It is *maya* that misleads the human soul into taking a distorted view of

the essential reality. The human soul is of the same character as the universal Spirit, that is Brahman, but the influence of *maya* does not allow the individual to pierce the veil and realise this identity. He goes on mistaking the world as real in itself. This part of the theory portrays *maya* as an objective entity, whose nature, though partially grasped, remains on the whole indeterminate.

Thus, the Advaitic category of *maya* is designed to serve as the fundamental mode of existence endowed with supreme powers. Its being is conceived as parallel to that of Brahman, for both are treated as beginningless and beyond adequate expression. Only to a spiritually advanced individual *maya* ceases to be, and Brahman alone remains. By implication, *maya* continues to exist for the rest of mankind. Its objectivity and its powers of creation and deception must last as long as any of the spiritually less evolved creatures inhabit any part of the universe. It is this extreme objectification of *maya* in the Vedantic theory, to which Guru Nanak does not seem to subscribe. He does not assign to it the character of a metaphysical category in the framework of his poetic compositions.

***Maya* and Natural Order**

In his references to the external world, Guru Nanak has employed the terms *jagat* (or *jag*), *duniya*, *srishtee* (or *sirthee*), *khand-brahmand*, *qudrat*, as also *maya*. Some other terms, e.g. *lok*, *sunya*, *khel* and *rachanaa* also find place in the *bani*. All of these may be interpreted as referring to the creativity of the Divine. The phenomenal world emanates from Him and is the manifestation of His formless essence. The Guru refers to 'the entire world of observation as *maya-chhaayaa*—implying that the universe is not an ever-lasting entity; it is shadowy in character, subject to temporal process, and destined to end in 'four days' --as figuratively put. This emphasis

on the ephemerality and non-permanence of the cosmic order is perhaps the key to the interpretation of Guru Nanak's conception of *maya* and the world. *Maya* is that of which the essence is time ; it has come into being at the will of the Divine, and must disappear when He so ordains. In other words, nature as creation is neither beginningless nor self-sufficient. It rests in the Creator, whose embodiment it is.

Thus, *maya* and nature (*qudrat*) seems identical in the Nanak *Bani*. The world of nature may be taken as *maya* incarnate, denying any special or extra-ordinary existence to *maya*. This amounts to asserting that the world exists in its own right as established by the Divine Will, and not as a product of some supposed intermediary, namely *maya*. It also means that the order of nature is not to be considered an illusion, pure and simple. We must not associate any real value with the phenomenal world, because, as the teaching goes, it is not ever lasting or eternal. However, it may be 'illusory' in the sense that it appears to us permanent, whereas its real status is that of creation. Accordingly, the world is not rejected as illusion in the Nanak *bani*, inspite of its occasional characterisation in terms of *maya* or *chhaayaa*, or an edifice of smoke, etc. It is the *qudrat* of the *Qadir* whose creativity is not in doubt anywhere in the *bani*.

In the Western philosophy, Plato is credited with the view that treats of the phenomenal world as a veil or illusion. But Plato shows keen interest in the world and its affairs, especially the socio-political and moral life of the people. His rejection of the space-time world is only partial and is based on his dislike for sensory knowledge. In his attempt to establish the superiority of the rational faculty in cognizing the higher truths, he posited an ideal world of immutable essences, which formed the foundation for the imitative world of phenomena that was 'unreal'. The objective idealism of the modern period does not

assume another world that is real, apart from the world known to us in our commonsense experience. Its point of departure is the view that reality belongs to the concrete whole and not to any part abstracted from it. Parts are appearances treated as physical, biological, etc. The whole or the Absolute is 'experience' itself, which affirms the spiritual or ideal nature of reality. The absolute is taken as the single self-differentiating system, characterized by harmony and comprehensiveness.

In the first view, the order of nature is an imitation of the heavenly world of essences, whereas the second view considers nature as an appearance of the all-inclusive reality. By contrast, Guru Nanak's view presents nature as an order of creation, with the immanent creative Spirit observing it in freedom and joy. The self-differentiating principle of the Absolute, in the idealist theory, assumes in the *bani* the figure of self-installation of the supreme Self in the form of the natural order of diversity and multiple entities. Guru Nanak's cosmology views the cosmos as a manifestation of the unmanifest, a truthful embodiment of the supremely real, a concrete image of the power of Being that was pure spirituality, variously depicted as the Void, the Formless, the Origin and the True. The creative principle is symbolized as *Oamkaar*, *Nam*, as also the *Qadir*. The illusionism of the *maya*-theory is thus replaced with the principle of creativity and of self-manifestation.

The Governing Principle of Nature

The universe of Guru Nanak's conception may be interpreted as emanating from the individuating principle of ego in man, as alluded to in the *Sidha-Gosht*. If so, the world must be governed by processes of the human mind. However, this interpretation scarcely accords with the general intent of the *bani*, except in the sense that the appearance of the world cannot be disassociated from experience. Some sort of mental energy must be present to *experience* the existence; in the

absence of *sentient* capacity no allusion to or assertion of any sort of reality is possible. However, acceptance of a relation between existence and experience does not entail dependence of the former on the latter. How does the world appear? It appears in the consciousness of living being. But, who is the author of the world? Not human ego ; it is the Supreme Spirit itself. Accordingly, the governing principle of nature is the Ordinance of the Divine, the *hukam*, that maintains the elements, the land and waters, the stars and planets, in fact, the entire spatio-temporal cosmos and its process. All matter, life and mind obey the discipline of that single absolute authority which transcends all discipline, control or order. All else is under the 'fear' of the One that is fearless in Himself.

Guru Nanak depicts the power of the Divine in numerous dimensions, according to the poetic mood of the occasion. Sometimes he is addressing the Creator in His personified aspect, as the author of the universe, that is real and true. Whatever He has established, cannot be false or unreal. Rather, the True one himself has taken on the garb of the manifest nature. On other occasions, the creative power is portrayed as the Void, the formless indeterminate Being whose nature is beyond estimation or intelligibility. The extent of His Ordinance can hardly be imagined and measured, howsoever the wise, in their wisdom, and poets in their fancy may try. Guru Nanak, himself a poet of the highest order, expresses a deep sense of mystery and ecstasy when he comes to viewing the vastness of creation and its origin. Yet, there are occasions when he presents the outlines of his vision of the cosmic evolution, in terms of the air, water and fire originating from their only source that is Truth, bringing into being the multi-dimensional world of ours. Or it may be in terms of the nebulous darkness that prevailed while the formless Void remained in trance, prior to his act of creation ; naught was in existence then, neither land nor skies, neither gods nor men, neither faith nor knowing; when

the unmanifest so willed, the processes of nature came into being and became manifest with countless facets and appearances. The creative and governing principle of the universe is nothing but the inscrutable will of the mystery that is Divine.

Of course, the figures of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, as also of *maya* frequently find place in the *bani*, indicative of the link with the tradition of Indian thought. But these figures stand for the powers of the Divine in the frame-work of Guru Nanak's diction. Brahma cannot be taken in the literal sense of a creator with absolute authority. Likewise, *maya* as an independent creative power would be out of place with the spirit of Nanak *bani*. The only agency that governs the processes of nature is nature itself as an embodiment of the Divine Ordinance. If this aspect of nature were to be identified as *maya*, in the objective sense, no contradiction would be involved, since the existence of nature is recognized in the *bani* in the form of *qudrat* of the *Qadir*. However, if nature is viewed as an independent realm, final in itself, then the interpretation fails to cohere with Guru Nanak's over-all view of reality. He himself describes such a world as false—that is, a world which is falsely viewed as real in itself, without the presence of its creative Spirit. The thrust of the poetic depiction seems to be that the world is real if the Divine immanence is realized in every part and corner of it; the same world is false and unreal if we fail to observe Him residing in the natural order.

Ultimately, therefore, it is left to the human individual to look at the universe as mere nature devoid of God, or to view it imbued with his spiritual presence. Guru Nanak teaches man to adopt a way of life consistent with the intuitive vision of theistic immanence. Such a vision results in the ordering of the multiplicity of forms into a systematic unity. Alternatively, the

world of plurality without a unifying principle of harmony and coherence, is indicative of a vision confined to sense-experience alone ; it is governed by the individuating influence of the human ego. The Nanak *bani* is a constant reminder of the limits imposed upon man by his native ignorance ; it serves to awaken him to the spiritual truth of existence and its governing principle, namely the Divine Will. The order of nature that appears to the subjectivity of the individual is *maya*. Its essence, according to the *bani*, is not within the reach of the ego. It is only when the inner vision is in tune with the essence-in-existence that *maya* is dispelled, and illumination of the self is attained.

GURU NANAK AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Gurbachan Singh Talib

National Integration is a phrase which we have recently added to our social-cum-political vocabulary. While India has been divided and fragmented for millennia over religion, caste, language and region, attempts have been made by our Sufis and religious teachers from time to time to bring about cohesion and harmony. While at a particular period of history a fair amount of such cohesion was achieved by shared beliefs in what is called Hinduism, there nevertheless were tendencies of a centrifugal nature, as would inevitably exist in any society spread over such a vast area as our country. These were tendencies towards division of the whole mass into sects and castes and sub-castes. Partly the origin of such division was racial as between Aryan and non-Aryan. We need not go here into the bewildering varieties of these that have obtained in our country for centuries beyond precise determination. With the coming of Islam, which unlike the earlier influences that entered the country, could not be digested into the body of Hinduism, nor would agree to live in harmony with it, a new and continuing conflict arose, which in some form or the other is alive till today; and having entered the political field in the form of the pursuit of power and the creation of Pakistan, has

indubitably been intensified. Along with the two major groups that are loosely called Hinduism and the Islamic *millat*, may be reckoned other religious factors like Sikhism, Christianity and a number of tribal creeds. While numerous religions exist alongside of each other in most countries, in India their conflict and rivalry has taken a particularly violent form, mainly because of the centuries-old course of conquest of Islam and Hindu resistance thereto in various forms—military, social and credal. While present-day political ideologies try to minimise such conflict, it nevertheless has been real in history and has left bitter race memories particularly among non-Muslims, which at any time can be easily revived and made to start conflicts. With the Muslims it is a memory of lost glory and a crusading zeal. Part of the bitterness arose from the fact of the Hindu generally being the money-lender and the Muslim the insolvent debtor. Any attempt at bringing about National Integration must reckon with this fact rather than gloss it over by fine phrases and fancied appeals in the past for harmony.

A new factor of disharmony that has entered the Indian scene is the upsurge for human rights among the so-called untouchables and the other depressed classes, kept down by the sanction of religion. But this part of the conflict is a recent phenomenon and is the result of the arousing of the conscience of the higher castes among the Hindus themselves as a result of the spread of enlightenment brought in by modern humanism and science. The British rulers did little to ameliorate the condition of these classes, except indirectly and involuntarily as, for example, in common rail travel for all and recruitment of untouchables to the armed forces. The crux of it all is that while the caste factor is now important in disrupting harmony and retarding integration, the Hindu-Muslim conflict, added to which may be such conflicts as the Sikh-Hindu bickering in Punjab and Haryana, is the major cause of tension, and in

chalking out any programme of integration, the effort must be concentrated on diluting it. Perhaps with the passage of time and the emergence of new socio-political factors like the class-conflict, this side of the tension may be softened down, but at present it is strong and bitter, as resentment suppressed and open everywhere shows. To the Muslim's memories of the past and his theological bias is added his present-day feeling of being in a minority in India and subject to disabilities many of which are perhaps real, there is thus a continuing sense of conflict which shows little chance immediately of being lessened.

A happy feature of our social life in the past was that people living in the countryside, away from the influence of hate-spitting theologians did live at peace if not in a state of positive harmony. While the Muslims of foreign extraction did maintain superior stance those who were descendants of local converts and followed occupations parallel to their Hindu counterparts, seldom thought in terms of conflict. They had their system of faith and social customs paralleled to the Hindus, with a kind of co-existence. What kept all at peace was common subjection to the exactions of the feudal lords, Hindu and Muslim. Individually there was little to be gained on a class basis, and so unlike our present-day political conflicts, struggle was personal and individual or at best familial. At the folk level people even had common religious teachers in the form of local saints and hermits. It was the *kazis* and *mullas*, bigoted theologians who thought in term of suppressing *kufir* or heresy.

Among the seers of India the one who made the most potent and persistent effort towards reconciling the warring groups in the Indian populace was Guru Nanak. In respect of what we now term national integration and what in his day would be known as humanitarianism, his effort took a two-fold form. With regard to the caste conflict, while he upbraided the Brahmin for his claim of inherent purity and exclusive

guardianship of spiritual enlightenment, he declared spiritual instruction to be the universal right of all without distinction of caste. This in those times was a revolutionary step. Even in our day such a right has found only tardy and reluctant acceptance. Despite being a high-castes man himself, he felt deeply the deprivation of the lower castes from spiritual instruction. It was not their social degradation that primarily moved his compassion, but the fact that they were treated as without souls, who did not need the ministrations of religion.

Guru Nanak sought to integrate the lower castes into the mainstream of Indian humanity by declaring that untouchability inheres not in birth, but in actions. In one place he affirmed *Nanak navain bajh sanat* (those living without God are the really low-caste). In another place he called the lower tendencies of the mind such as foul thinking (*kubuddhi*), hard-heartedness (*kudaya*), wrath (*krodh*) and such others the real untouchables. How with these untouchables harboured in the heart, could it be called pure? He has actually used the figure of the Hindu's cooking-space, kept ritually pure, with such untouchables sitting in it. Guru Nanak identified himself in feelings with those considered low-caste and held in contempt. In one of his famous pronouncements he declared :

Lowest of the low am I, with the lowly identified.

Saith Nanak : Lord : thy glance of grace falls on the land where the lowly are cherished.¹

In an ecstatic mood of compassion he declared :

Great is the merit of those of the higher castes serving God :

One among the lower castes serving Him may even wear shoes made from my skin.²

The problem of untouchability and even of caste gradations

has not been solved with us yet. Certain economic and sociological factors however, are at play leading towards such an end. The effect of Guru Nanak's teaching has been that the castes considered low, without being untouchables, have had a better deal among the Sikhs particularly and in Punjab generally than elsewhere in India. Untouchability too here has been practised in a softened form compared to the rest of the country.

With regard to what is called communal rancour or the conflict of faith with faith, what Guru Nanak sought to achieve was reconciliation. Some writers on Sikhism, whose knowledge of the Sikh scriptural writing is only perfunctory have tried to show him in the role of a synthesizer of faiths. This is no way sustainable. His was a revelation of an integrated system of faith and the spiritual life, and not a synthesized group of beliefs borrowed from here and there. In a scene of conflicting faiths, while calling upon no one to abjure his faith or to seek conversion to another, he sought to impart to all men the vision of a common moral system for all humanity, irrespective of the faith anyone might profess. Rituals, sacraments and symbols there are. He did not interfere with them. If it was the Hindu holy bath, what he commended was purity of heart and not mere ontoward ablutions. With regard to the sacred thread of the Hindus, he did not ask anyone to discard the practice of assuming it, but adjured that it be made up of noble qualities of the soul, such as compassion, contentment, continence and purity of heart. These and not mere twisted yarn would make the sacred thread of the soul. A similar transmutation of ritual with moral and spiritual qualities did he commend in the case of the practitioners of *hatha yoga*. Their earrings, begging pouch, staff etc., he adjured them to make into contentment, modesty, meditation and such other attributes of the ennobled and enlightened self.

Coming to Islam which stood in a stance of straight confrontation contradiction with the Indian-born creeds cumulatedly known as Hinduism, he offered hold insights. Right from the dawn of his revelation he had declared his aversion to the barriers created by bigotry by raising thoery : 'There is no Hindu and no Mussalman'. Early he was charged with perverting both Hindusim and Islam by people who did not understand the gospel of a universal morality that he was preaching. During his visit to Mecca as the Muslim divines asked him which was superior, Hindu or Muslim, came the reply : 'without good deeds both shall come to suffering.' The query posited to him had in it the implicit answer that Islam was superior, for such was the conviction instilled in the mind of the Muslim faithful. Addressing Muslim groups he sought to guide them along the same path of a universal morality that he had indicated to the followers of popular Hinduism and Yoga. His affirmation to the Muslims are contained particularly in the *Var* in the measure *Majh*, a few of which may be given here in rendering. Addressing them in a group he affirmed :

Hard it is to become a true Muslim;
 Only one truly such may be so called;
 His first action, to love the way of the holy;
 Second, to shed off his heart's filth as on the grindstone.
 One professing to be a guide to Muslim must shed the
 illusion of life and death.
 To God's will must he submit:
 Obey God and efface his self.
 Such a one shall be a blessing for all,
 And be truly reckoned a Muslim.³

Again, transmuting the Muslim's articles of *shariat* into moral and spiritual qualities, he declared :

Make thy mosque of love of humanity;
 Thy prayer-carpet of sincerity;

Thy *Koran* of honest and approved endeavour;
 Thy circumcision of modesty;
 Thy *Ramazan* fast of noble conduct :
 Thus shalt thou be a true Muslim.
 Make good deeds thy *Kaba*;
 Truthfulness thy preceptor;
 Thy *namaz* and *kalima* pure actions;
 Thy rosary what pleases God--
 Thus wilt thou be honoured at the last reckoning.

Five are the prayers, five the hours to perform them,
 Five their different names;
 What are the true prayers
 The first is truthfulness, the next honest endeavour;
 The third prayer offered to God for good of all;
 The fourth is a sincere heart;
 The fifth, Divine laudation.
 One whose *kalima* is good actions is alone a true
 Muslim.
 Saith Nanak; All who are false within, in the end prove
 of no worth.⁴

Rising to a higher emphasis, he declared about the apparant divergences of creed, particularly as between Hinduism and Islam.

He who knows the two paths to be one,
 Shall alone find fulfilment
 The evil slanderer and caviller must burn in hellfire.
 The whole universe is Divine in essence.
 Merge yourselves into truth.

Tolerance comes easy to people who under the impact of intellectualism or some ideology have abjured faith in religion. To such all faiths naturally are equally unacceptable. Where people are deeply religious as in our country and over a great

part of the world, the only way to bring about goodwill and work for what may be called integration is Guru Nanak's way of propagating a Universal morality that may cut across the bounds of creeds and bind all men of goodwill in the practice of the gospel for the new man—the man of tomorrow.

Notes and References

1. ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੁ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਬਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥
ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ ॥
2. ਜਾਤਿ ਕੁਲੀਨੁ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜੇ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਕਹਣਾ ਕਹਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਵਿਚਿ ਸਨਾਤੀ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਛੁਆ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਸੋਇ ॥
3. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥
ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ॥
ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ॥
ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ॥
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥
4. ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥
ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥
ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜ ॥੧॥
ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥
ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥੨॥
ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ॥
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਧੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 15.

Ibid., p. 1256.

Ibid., p. 141.

ਚਉਬੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤ ਸਨਾਇ ॥
 ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੈ ਕੂੜੀ ਖਾਇ ॥

Ibid., pp. 140-41.

5. ਰਾਹ ਦੇਵੈ ਇਕੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਝਸੀ ॥
 ਕੁਫਰ ਗੋਅ ਕੁਫਰਾਣੈ ਪਇਆ ਦਝਸੀ ॥
 ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੁਬਹਾਨੁ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਈਐ ॥
 ਸਿਝੈ ਦਰਿ ਦੀਵਾਨਿ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਈਐ ॥

Ibid., p. 142.

GURU NANAK : FOUNDER OF A WORLD RELIGION

Sirdar Kapur Singh

There is an apocryphal *hadith*, a saying of Prophet Mohammad, that five kinds of men go to hell without being asked any previous reckoning : the rulers because of their injustice; the Arabs because of their racial fanaticism; the peasants because of their arrogance; the merchants because of their lies; and scholars because of their mental confusion and envy. It is, therefore, prudent to define one's terms before attempting to say something on them.

Herein, what follows, the term "founder" means not a follower, exegetist, syncretist, a metaphysician or a philosopher, but one who, while in direct contact with what Otto Rudolph in his *Idea of the Holy* calls "Numenon", and compulsively impelled by it proclaims, formulates and preaches a way to such a contact by others. A 'religion' is neither ethics, nor metaphysics, neither mystical awareness nor magic, neither theism nor worship of a deity or even the Deity; it is that which moves man to the depth of his being and yet has not its origin in the depths of human soul but moves it from outside. Just as the central concept in art is 'beauty', in ethics 'goodness', so in religion it is 'holiness', an intimate contact or union with

which is felt as utterly necessary for complete satisfaction and wholeness of man. A 'world religion' is that way of life on which all mankind may walk without the apartheid of race, colour, sex, age, caste, class, country and clan.

It is intended here to give, first, a briefest possible life-sketch of the historical man Nanak, who became Guru Nanak, the World Teacher, a short account of the nature of his prophetic claim and a bare outline of his teachings and their relevance to the modern human situation.

Nanak was born on 15th April, A.D. 1469 in the north-west of India in a village, now called Nanakana Sahib—the Holy Birthplace of Nanak—situated in Pakistan from where the Sikhs, his followers, were expelled, almost to a man, in 1947, when the outgoing Britishers divided India into the two separate countries by drawing a pencil line on the map of an indivisible India. As might be expected, Nanak, the son of a petty high caste revenue official, was, from the beginning, of an unworldly turn of mind, and many attempts of his parents to engage him in some gainful occupation, each time, ended in disaster, till he was persuaded to accept the gainful and important post of the Chief Supplies Master of a nearby Muslim Principality. The turning point in his life came when he was twenty seven years old. During these days, he would, while performing his duties, pass out into reveries, frequently becoming trances. On one such occasion, while supervising weighing of grain stores, he stopped dead at the count of measure thirteen, which in Punjabi language is the word *tera*, also meaning, 'I am thine', and he went on counting *tera, tera*, while measure after measure of stores was being passed out. As was to be expected, the government took a serious notice of it and an enquiry into his gross negligence was ordered against him. While the enquiry was still in progress, Nanak, as was his routine, went one early morning for his dip in the neighbouring

stream and disappeared into the bed of the river for full three days, when he was presumed drowned and a search for his body proved fruitless. All these days, he had sat, what in ancient texts on Yoga is called *jalastambhasamadhi* 'trance-in-water', a skill acquirable through prescribed techniques and practices and also available to gifted individuals from birth. There are many who possess this skill in India even today. On the fourth day he emerged from the depths of the waters and uttered the following words: "There is no Hindu, no Mussalman."¹ Whether he meant that deep down in the substratum of Aryan and Semitic religions there is an identity of base or whether he intended to convey that the truth of both had been obscured and lost to practitioners of both these faiths on account of verbal formulae and empty rituals, it was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission that demands acceptance of genuine dialogue rather than conversion as the goal of transcending particularisms or contending cultures and feuding religions, with a view to discover a universal concept, not synthesis or synthetic amalgam, but deeper penetration of one's own religion in thought, devotion and action, and thus to arrive at the realisation that in every living religion there is a point at which the religion itself loses its importance and that to which it points, breaks through its particularity elevating it to spiritual freedom and with it to a vision of spiritual presence in other expressions of the ultimate meanings of human existence. This is not the doctrine of the so-called 'fundamental unity of all religions', for such a claim has its limitations. Given fundamental differences in conceptions of Reality and attitudes towards the world, no real synthesis can be expected, there being incompatible elements in the cores of various religions. None of these religions can draw closer to the others, for each must claim itself to be the way and the truth for its own believers, even if not for all men. No world religion can seriously consider abandoning its own

absolutistic claim, for if it did, it would scarcely have the right to call itself a religion, much less a world religion. But a sort of reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect is possible, generating civilised tolerance and growing co-operation. It seems more likely that this is the true intent and meaning of what Nanak uttered on this occasion.

The genre of pious Sikh literature called *Janamsakhis*, "The Testaments of the Life of Nanak, almost unanimously describe the experience of Nanak during his 'trance-in-water':

As God willed, Nanak, His devotee, was escorted to His Presence. Then a cup filled with Liquid of Immortality was given accompanied by the command : 'Nanak, pay attention! This is the cup of Holy Adoration of My Name. Drink it...I am with thee and thee do I bless and exalt. Go, rejoice in My Name and preach to others to do the same...Let this be thy calling.'²

Nanak himself refers to this assignment with deep gratitude: "I, a jobless minstrel, was assigned a rewarding task."³

Nanak, now, had been exalted as the Guru Nanak, Nanak the World Teacher, and after resigning his government post, he set out upon four long and arduous missionary journeys on foot into the four corners of the then accessible parts of the world to him, India, Inner Himalyas, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Middle East, Eastern Turkey and Arabia, which lasted from the year 1497 to the year 1521, when he permanently returned to India to found a religious communitown, Kartarpur, where he passed away on September 22, 1539. These journeys have been held and described in Sikh pious literature as having been undertaken—

to purify and divinise the entire mankind on all parts of the globe.⁴

Guru Nanak had nine successor World Teachers who, through precept and practice, fulfilled and applied the teachings of Nanak, the First Guru, to the changing and growing politic social situations of the day, and in their own independent revelations and testaments explained and exegetised the contents' implications of Guru Nanak's revelations which they themselves compiled and recorded as the Sikh scripture, the *Guru Granth*. The Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind (1661-1708) was the last manifestation of Nanak who passed on the preaching and practice of Sikhism as world religion to the Collective Corpus of all the believers inspired and guided by the Word, as revealed and recorded in the Sikh scripture. Ever since, the central focus of all Sikh congregations and the body of the non-institutional Sikh Church is comprised of the collectivity of all the believers in Sikhism, and is called the *Panth*, 'the Way of Life'. Nanak the Tenth further ordained (1699) the Order of the Khalsa to establish, to perpetuate and to legitimatise the social pattern amongst governments, societies and states of the world, wherein the Sikh values of life—truthfulness, honesty, mutual trust and loyalty, productive labour and communal sharing, gratitude and integrity of conduct, authentic living, and, above all, spiritual transformations that raise man to what St. Teresa of Avila, the Christian mystic, refers to as "spiritual marriage"—prevail and wherein a God filled man returns to society for its service and edification⁵. These are the Sikhs whom one might meet in all parts of the world, bearded, unshorn and turbaned, symbolising natural, spontaneous, unmanufactured or fashioned pristine integrity of man. It is to this Order of the Khalsa that Arnold Toynbee, in his *History* points as the true prototype of the clan of the Communist Party of Lenin, while rejecting the latter's claim that his Communist Party was a unique phenomenon in the history of the societies of mankind.⁶

Nanak is the first born in India who claims that the religion he preaches is a revealed religion. "I am completely dumb as I am and I speak as I am made to, by God." "I utter and preach the Word just as it comes to me."⁷ Our knowledge of the psychological character of the religious experience and its matrix is so minimal that it is not possible for us to make positive statements about divine revelation. Quranic revelation is not a living experience between God and man, a happening into which God Himself enters, but it is a book. The first word of Mohammad's revelation is, "read" and the page of a book is shown to him, the book that the angel has brought down from heaven. Islam was a book-religion from the first moment on. Jesus left no written word to his followers and is merely reported as having claimed full authority of his Father, God; for what he was preaching. Moses, like a much earlier Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, received a material, an inscribed tablet of laws, through the agency of a burning bush and from the sun-god on high, *shams*, respectively. The seers, *rishis of Vedas*, grasped, without necessarily comprehending, eternal sounds, *shruti*, and then passed them on to future generations in mnemonic formulae and, therefore, the texts of *Vedas* are *apaurusheya* and eternal, co-existent with the beginning of existence, *anadi*. The "voices" heard by extraordinary men, throughout the ages, such as Socrates and Joan of Arc in the West, have been known to be of obscure origin, proven unreliability and dubious authenticity. Mysticism is a variety of human experience that might be interpreted, but in itself is non-sensory, non-intellectual and altogether non-verbal and ineffable. Guru Nanak claims direct contact with supra-sensuous Truth and the Divine Person which is sensory, intellectual and verbal, experienced with an immediacy and simultaneity that carries with it its own authenticity and which is, *sui generis*, fashioned into a mould of poetry and song. Bergson has well pointed out that "before intellection, properly

so-called, there is the perception of structure and rhythm." The nature of Guru Nanak's revelation is, thus shown as unique and mysterious in character and origin.

Prophets of religion, like other men, are also rooted in time and place. The teachings of a prophet may amount to unique contributions of enduring value to the thought of their age and they may say that it is a class by itself, without a precursor, without a successor, logically untraceable to antecedents, yet thereby a prophet does not cease to belong to his age; just as he is arising most above it, he is truly rooted in it. This is true of Guru Nanak also.

The central teachings of Guru Nanak may be briefly summed up as follows:

1. He teaches that it is not the intellectual formula or verbal assent to it that liberates man, but the deed and his quality of living. "Truth is higher than everything but higher still is truthful living ."⁸
2. Self-alienation is the most profound affliction, not only of the modern man but it has been so ever since man began to look within. In the most ancient recorded thought of man—the *Veda*—this self-alienation, *kilvish*, the primal fission where the One became many, is pinpointed as the basic problem of the human psyche, and the ritual technique of *yajna* is recommended for regaining this lost unity, and this is the beginning of the prestigious Hindu contribution of the techniques and systems of Yoga to the insights into the psychologies and religious practices of mankind. Religion always proceeds from an existential dichotomy between man and the world, between man and God, and man longs to overcome this dichotomy to achieve a wholeness which appears to him as necessary for a satisfying and authentic

living. Pascal describes the point well by observing that "all man's troubles stem from the fact that he cannot bear to stay in a room alone with himself". Each one of us, more or less, encounters a sense of despair, when he is forced to compromise his inner vision with the realities of a world he must share with others. It is one of the terms of a social being as it is the predicament of a lonely person and, therefore, part of adult life, particularly of the intellectual, whom Albert Camus describes as "someone whose mind watches itself", and in whom this disease of self-alienation is apt to run rampant. In the whole of the Sikh scripturè, as in the revelations of Guru Nanak himself, there are repeated references to this great wrench in human psyche and the cure is declared as a spiritual system and discipline based on the fundamental psychological insights of the Yoga and its adaptation to a secular, social life, thus discarding the necessity of turning one's back on the world, and full social participation in it in search for annulment of man's self-alienation. The system and way of life is the *Nam-Yoga* of Sikhism that constitutes the greatest contribution of Guru Nanak to the Religion wherein the secular and the spiritual are indissolubly married. This Yoga of the Name is the core of the 'Religion of the Name' which Sikhism is and which God commanded Guru Nanak to practise and preach to the world.

3. The third Central teaching of Guru Nanak is that the fully integrated person, the liberated individual, the deified man, must revert to the world and society to participate in its activities to guide and assist it in striving for achieving a situation in which human mind is free, human psyche is made whole, authentic living is facilitated and individuals may evolve into "deified men." When Guru Nanak

travelled deep into the Inner Himalayas crossing Nepal and some portions of Western Tibet, reaching the legendary Kailash Mountain and the celestial Mansarovar lake, the snowy and inaccessible abode of the perfected yogis who were amazed to see a mere mortal reach there, "How does the news go with the world of the mortals?" they asked Guru Nanak, "The society is rotten to its core", replied Guru Nanak, and then raised an accusing finger at these yogis adding, "And sires, you are guilty ones, for, it is men of high culture and sensitivity who alone can guide and sustain society, but you have chosen to be self-indulgent escapees?"⁹

4. When asked as to what power and competence there was for lifting society out of its incurable morass, Guru Nanak has gone on record as saying : "The two levers, that of organised confrontation with and opposition to evil and the right idea that must inspire it."

Thus, this fourth teaching of Guru Nanak furnishes the Sikh reply to the question : "Must the carriers of grace rise like lions or die like lambs? What is the relation of exemplary violence to exemplary martyrdom? Whether one person stands for all or all for one or a small pioneering elite act as standing for the rest? Whether the elite withdraw into an enclave or into a wilderness to bear witness or act as leaven to the lump? How is a balance to be struck between 'being' and 'doing', 'wisdom' and 'inner certitude'?"

Notes & References

1. *Puratan Janamsakhi* (ed. Bhai Vir Singh), 4th ed., p. 15.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
3. *Hau[n] dhadhi vekar(u) karai laia.*

(ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ)

4. *Charia sodhan(i) dhart(i) lukai*

(ਚੜਿਆ ਸੋਧਣਿ ਧਰਤਿ ਲੁਕਾਈ)

—Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, 1 (24/8)

5. *The Interior Castle.*

6. See *A Study of History* (Abridged), pp. 187-88. For a fuller reference and discussion confer Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna* (Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University), pp. XVII ff—editors.

7. *Hau[n] apahu[n] bol(i) na janada, mai[n] kahia sabh(u) hukmao jio.*

(ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ)

—Suhi, M 1, *AG.*, p. 763.

8. *Sach[ch]ho[n] orai sabh(u)ko, upar(i) sach[ch]u. achar(u)*

(ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ)

—Sri Rag, M 1. *AG.*, p.62.

9. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, 1 (29/6)

GURU NANAK'S CONCEPT OF *SABAD* AS GURU

Dr. Jodh Singh

Siddha Gosti, comparatively longer poetical composition of Guru Nanak, uses various words for *sabad*. These are *Guru-ka-Sabad*, *Su Sabad*, *Nam* etc. It is accepted in this hymn that through *Guru Sabad* the cosmic *Sabad*, present everywhere, is to be realised, understanding and shattering of lust (*kama*), anger (*krodha*) and avarice (*ahankar*)—is achieved through *Guru Sabad* or Guru's hymn¹ which is the *matrikaa* stage of the same internal *Sakshatkṛta-Shabad*, residing in the body and around it in subtle *vaikhari*, *madhyama*, *pashyanti* and *paraa* stages. Before we endeavour to explore what are these stages of *sabad* we see in *Siddha Gosti* that it is *Sabad* which annihilates all mental distortions and found worldly hopes and through *Guru Sabad* one is able to keep the internal flame burning continuously.² The ego is like poison in man; it is made extinct by *Guru Sabad* and then one goes to his own eternal home for good. It is through *Guru Sabad* that we understand the implications of the creation and the Creator.³ Thus for *Siddha Gosti*, *Sabad* and *Guru Sabad* are equally competent for liberation. It is through the Guru-Word that transmigration is ended.⁴ Yogis divided into different sects can be emancipated only when they die to the self being awake to the Word.⁵

Guru Nanak in *Siddha Gosti* accepts this 'Word' or *Sabad* as his Guru. It is clearly told in *Siddha Gosti* that by realising Him here and there and everywhere we can get across the ocean of the world through *Sabad Guru*.⁶ On being asked by the *Siddhas* about his Guru, Guru Nanak replied that *Sabad* was his Guru and his *surti* was the disciple of that Guru.⁷ It may be noted here that *sabad* and *surti* both are subtle items and in them there is no scope for the grossness of the body. The subtle here is linked with the subtle that transcends this body. Guru Nanak visualises this *sabad* as his *Guru*, the *pir* and he holds this *sabad* as a very considerable entity without which the world is drift of its senses.⁸

This conception of *sabad* as God and *Guru* by Guru Nanak is quite consistent with the *Upanishadic* tradition in which *Shabad-Brahman* principle has been widely accepted. The Supreme power has been identified as *omkar* from which the angles, the speech and the whole creation of the three words have emanated.⁹ The Fourth Gospel (*The Holy Bible*) opens grandly by saying that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God". These are the very words of the *Vedas*. *Praajaptir vaai idam aasit*. In the beginning was *Brahman*, *Tasya Vaag Dvitiya Asti* : With whom was *Vaak* or the Word, (she is spoken of as second to Him because to start with potential by there, and then as *Shakti* issues from Him) *Vaag Vai paramom Brahman*, and the Word is *Brahman*. *Vaak (Sabad)* is thus a *Shakti* or power of the *Brahman* which is one with the possessor of Power (*Shaktimaan*): This *Shakti* which was in Him is at the time of creation with Him and evolves into the form of the universe whilst still remaining what it is—the supreme *Shakti*.¹⁰

What is the Word or *Sabad*

The notion of the 'Word' is quite ancient. God speaks

the 'Word' and the thing appears. The Hebrew word for Light is *Aur*. The Genesis says 'God said : let there be light (*Aur*) and there was Light (*Aur*)'. The Divine Word is conceived of in Hebrew Scripture as having creative power. A further stage of thought presents to us the concept of another aspect of the Supreme that of One Who Creates. Thus we have the Supreme and the Logos, *Brahman—Shabad Brahman*. In the Greek Logos means (as does *Aparshabad*) thought and the word which denotes the object of thought. To Heraclitus Logos was the principle underlying the universe. To Stoics it was the 'World Soul' the uniting principle of all rational forces working in the world. According to Plato, the 'Logoi' were supersensual primal images or patterns of visible things. The Alexandrian Philo influenced by Platonism and other Philosophies of Hellenism combined the two conception and read into the *Old Testament* and Jewish theology a Being intermediate between it and the manifold universe. This intermediate being was 'Logos'. According to Philo, Ideas moulded Matter. God first produced the intelligible world of Ideas which are types of the physical world. Though in itself it is nothing but Logos, the latter is the author of the ideal world. Just as an architect projects in his mind the plan of a town (Polis) and then produces the real town according to the idea, so God acted when He created the world, the Mugalopolis (Brahmand).¹¹ In the words of Saint John,

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. All things are made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.¹²

In Islam we find that everything came into existence when God uttered the word *Kun*, meaning "be". This Islamic conception of the word *Kun* led to the creation of the Universe.¹³ In Indian Philosophy this Logos, the *Aur*, the Word is known by the name of *Omkar* or *Om*, (*Aum*), which is the all pervading

cosmic force. *What is Omkar ?* Guru Nanak considers this *Omkar* as the root cause of the whole creation. Brahma the so called Creator, the mountains, the time, the *Vedas*, all are created by *Omkar, Sabad*. This *Omkar* is the essence of the three words.¹⁴ In *Yogachuramani Upanishad*, it is said that *Omkar* absorbs everybody in Itself. 'A' (*akaara*) is gross, vast universe, 'U' (*ukaara*) is *Hiranyagarbha*, Illuminating and subtle and 'M' (*makaara*) is implicit cause, pertaining to pure intellect. *Akaara* is full of activity (*rajas*) red coloured and Brahma, 'ukara' is *satvika* white coloured, called Vishnu and *makaara* is inert (*tamas*), black coloured and is called by the name of 'Rudra'. This way Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are emanated from the same *Pranava*. *Pranava* is *Paraa Tattva*. Brahma merges in *akaara*, Vishnu in *ukaara* and 'Rudra' merges in *makaara*. Only '*Pranava*' remains stable and illuminating. In the man of wisdom it remains facing upward and in unwise man its face is downwards.

In *Raga Dhanasari* Guru Nanak says that the Light of the *Sabad Dipak* pervades all the three worlds and those who absorb this Light become pure without any dirt. Pure *Nam* (*Sabad*) effaces the ego of the mind and thus imbued in true devotion one receives eternal happiness.¹⁶

This *Sabad*—which is called *Omkar* or *Om* is there in our body also which as the cognizer and cognized force makes us realise the reality outside and within.

Jiva is being continuously influenced by hundreds of the impressions of the universe around it. The Mind selects the relevant impressions and sends them to *buddhi*. The mind itself becomes the object it perceives and its relevance corresponding to its (objects) meaning is conveyed to the *buddhi*. This identification of the mind with the object perceived is called the mental *Vritti* and thus this mind as *Vritti* is a representation

of the outer object. This means when the mind perceives a flower, it becomes a flower itself. Thus this external physical object is a gross object (*sthula*) and the mental impression produced by this gross is a subtle object (*sukhsama artha*). It means that the mind has two aspects of the perceiver and the perceived in the form of mental formation. The mental impression and the physical object correspond, exactly, for, the physical object is, in fact but a projection of the cosmic imagination, though it has just the same reality as mind has; no more and no less. Now one thing becomes obvious that the mind is thus the cognizer (*grahaka*) and the cognized (*grahya*) the revealer (*prakaashaka*) the denoter (*vaachaka*) and denoted (*vaachya*). So the mind which thinks of Divinity which it worships, through continued and sustained devotion is at length transformed into the likeness of Divinity;

The object perceived is called *artha*, a term which comes from the root, '*Ri*' which means to get, to know, to enjoy. *Artha* is that which is known and which therefore is an object of enjoyment. The mind as *artha*—that is in the form to mental impression—is a reflection of the outer object or gross *artha*. As the outer is *artha*, so is the interior subtle mental form, which corresponds to it. That aspect of the mind which cognizes is called *Shabad* or *Nam* (name) and that aspect in which it is its own object or cognized is called *artha* or *rupa* (form). The outer physical object of which the latter is, in the individual, an impression is also *artha* or *rupa*, and spoken speech is outer *Sabad*.¹⁷

NADA & BINDU : This subtle '*Sabad*' may be understood from one more angle of *nada* and *bindu*. All things are defined in terms of *sabdaartha* and of all the various causal forms which precede it. The first of such produced forms is *nada* which becomes *bindu* and then on the differentiation of the '*tattvas*' the 'hidden sound' (*avyaktaraava*), the Logos or

Cosmic Word utters 'the Garland of Letters' (*Varnamaala*) of which all *mantras* are formed. It traces the degree in which the ideating cosmic consciousness becomes, as Supreme Speech (*Paraavak*) the Genetrix of the subtle and gross 'Sabad' which are the 'Maatrikas' and 'Varnas' respectively. That Supreme Speech (*Paraa Vaak*) is without idea or language, but is represented as gradually assuming the state in which it utters both and projects from itself, into the sensual world, the object (*artha*) which they denote.¹⁸ In Shaiva and Shakta Agamas the will of Shiva is called *Nada* which is very subtle. This will is in the form of a vibration which in the language of the *Upanishad* is *aijan*. This *shabad* or *nada* is nothing but personification of this vibration and the *Shabad* listened to by the human ears is too gross a thing. That subtle vibration can be conceived only on an empirical level and that will is nothing but *nada* whose part and parcel is action or *bidnu*.¹⁹

Paraa Shabad, *Paara Vak*, *Shabad Brahman* are names for the Brahman as the cause of the manifested *Shabad*. *Paraa Shabad* is the casual body of sound. *Sabdatanmatra* is the subtle body of sound. *Akaasha* is the gross body of sound which (through a *guna* of it) is only apprehended through the medium of air, the sound waves, which strike the ear. Through the latter and the mind, the sensation of sound is experienced. '*Shabdatanmatra*' is pure natural sound as apprehended by *Hiranyagarbha* or Yogis who share this experience. Gross sound is of two kinds, namely *vaidik* sound (*shrauta shabad*) or a approximate natural sound which may be either primary or secondary; and the *laukika* sound, the speech of the ordinary mortals other than *vaidika shabad*. Taking cognizance to mean direct apprehension, *Ishvara* has cognizance of all kinds of *shabads* (*Paraa shabad*), *Shabdatanmatra*, *Shrauta shabad*, *Laukika shabad*,

Hiranyagarbha or *Sutratma* of the last three, *Rs* is of the last two and ordinary men of the last only. From *Paraavaka* or *Paraa Shabad* therefore proceed in their order *Sabadtanmatra*, *Shrauta Shabad* and *Lhaukika Shabad*.²⁰

PRANAVA : *Omkar* has been named as *Pranava* also. The language is helpless to describe it due to its extremely subtle nature. Dr. Dwivedi attempt to define it by supposing the first vibration as *nadarupa*. The subtlest syllable is *aakaara*. The grossest is *makaara* which besides closing the lips, takes the help of also the nose. Now we take *aakaara* as the fundamental sound which came out to be as the first vibration. If it goes on rolling, there would not be sound; for that, it needs a check position, *nada* is the rolling force and *bindu* is checking position force. This world is nothing but *nada* and *bindu* which is essential for the *Jagat Prapancha*. Now 'Aa' voice is checked and joined by 'Ma' coming from throat to lips. Consequently lips are closed in order to pronounce it. On the closure of lips it would become like 'U' (५६). This way 'Aa', 'U', 'Ma' will come out as first sound, which is endless because of its being the vibration. This trinity of 'Aa', 'U', 'Ma' is 'Om' or *Omkar*. Because it has been explained with the help of gross syllabus so the gross pronunciation will come before us; but, this is only one method and not the only one. At first the cosmic vibration must have been of some such nature being very subtle. Therefore this *Omkar* is the beginning of the universe, and may be taken as '*Navrupa*' of *Saguna Brahman*, *nav*, '*Navina*' etc. are very appropriate words, because that which is new is liable to be old also. The first vibration never grew old and is vibrating every moment. Therefore, only *nav* is not enough—it is *pranava*.²¹ Audibility of *Paraa Shabad* : How this *Paraa Shabad* becomes audible has been explained variously. *Paraa* is *Shabad* as *Paraabindu* and is motionless (*nispanda*). This *Paraa Sabad* becomes

three fold as *pashyanti*, *madhyma*, and *vaikhari*. Each of these is a manifested form of the Unmanifested *Paraabindu*, or *Shabad Brahman*. It is as Raghwa says, by shifting to another place, that *bindu* which is *paraa* when unmanifested and motionless, is called *pashyanti*, *madhyma* and *vaikhari* speech. *Paraa* is in the *muladhara chakra*, *pashyanti* in *svadhisthan* (and upwards), *madhyma* in *anahata* (and upwards) and *vaikhari* in throat. In *kundli shakti* is subtle (*sukshama*) in form of mere Light, and not an object of hearing. There she goes upward and becomes *pashyanti*, self manifesting (*Sayamprakasha*) in the *Sushumna-nari*. She again becomes *madhyama* as a form of *Nada* when reaching the Heart Lotus (*Anahata*). Then she goes upward as a mere undifferentiated 'hum'. It is she who appearing at the chest, throat, teeth, nose, palate and head assumes the form of all letters (*Varna*) issuing from the root of the tongue and lips, and thus becomes *vaikhari* the Mother of all sounds, audible to sense of hearing.²²

Literally the word *shabad* refers to sentence, words and letters which are the expression of ideas. Bhai Kahn Singh explains *shabad* as follows : (1) *Shabad-Noun-Dhavni*, Sound, Pitch, (2) *Pada* Syllable. (3) *Gosti* 'Guftgoo 'shabad hi Bhagat japde jin Ki bani sachi hoi (Asa M-3). (4) *Guru Updesa Bhavjal bin shabde kio tarie* (Bhairon M-1). (5) *Brahman, Kartar 'shabad Guru surti Dhunchela* (*Siddha gosti*). (6) *Sect, Dharma Jog shabdham gian shabdham Ved shabdham Brahmana*. (7) *Message Dhanvandi pirde* *nivasi Sat Gur pah shabad patai* (Malar M-1). (8) As the hymns of Namdev and Surdas are famous with the names of *Abhanga* and *Vishnupadas* respectively, similarly the hymns of *Guru Granth* are called *sabads*'. (9) *Religious life—gharie sabad sachi taksal* (*Japuji*). —Thus is made the religious life.

To understand the *shabad* further in detail one form of expression of individuality according to Goraknath may be explained as follows : The *shabad* has five stages viz. *praa*, *pashyanti*, *madhyama*, *vaikhari* and *maatrika*. In the *paraa*-stage the speech is nothing but consciousness, that is present in the form of an urge or will for self expression, without any manifestation even in the form of a subtle sound or idea. This *paraa* speech is *shabad Brahman* which is in complete union with its ultimate origin, *Brahman* or the Supreme consciousness, the soul of individual as well as of cosmic system. This *paraa vaak* is shining *Omkar* which is the origin and essence of all sorts of sounds. Commonly-*sabad* is the gross sound articulate or in-articulate emitted by men, animals and natural objects. This emitted *shabad* is called *vaikhari* sound which is a descendance from '*paraa shabad*' through *pashyanti* and *madhyama* sound. *Paraa shabad* is *bindu* and *pashyanti* is creative thought and action by that *bindu* which is the causal body of *shabad*. From this arises the subtle body of *shabad* which is *tanmatra* and *maatrika* which evolves into the gross body of sound and becomes letters (*varnas*) uttered by the vocal organs.

Pashyanti vaak is manifested in the form of subtle ideas, which the consciousness directly sees or perceives. It is not manifested in any articulated sound form. *Shabad* is here manifested on the mental plane, and not on the physical plane. But the urge or the will for self expression in these grosser planes powerfully acts upon the physiological embodiments. '*Madhyama shabad*' stands midway between the ideal form for speech and the articulate sound form of speech, between mental speech and vocal speech. At this stage certain subtle sounds are produced within the physiological system in course of the internal effort to give outer expression to inner speech. *Shabad* is still within the body and has no outer manifestation in the forms of words and sentences.

All human languages are embodiment of *vaikhari shabad*. At this stage *shabad* comes out through the co-operative efforts of the vocal organs in the form of articulate speech or uttered words audible to the sense of hearing of others. It is through *vaikhari shabad* that an individual can communicate his ideas to other individuals and enables others to know and share his thoughts, feelings and desires. At *maatrika* stage the *shabad* is represented through phonetic constituents of *vaikhari shabad*. Now *shabad* comes in the shape of verbal sound which are represented by *Varna* or *Akshara* (letters). They are the seeds (*bijas*) of all forms of articulate speech. They are called *maatrika* from which all kinds of words and sentences of the apparently diverse forms of languages in world are evolved²⁵ This *vaikhari shabad* may differ on the basis of different geographical conditions but the thought movement at perceiving a particular object is similar in men of all the different regions of the world. When a French, an Indian or an African thinks of an object the image formed is similar in all the cases; though the utterance of the name may differ. This is the reason that a man who has the power of thought reading may tell and appreciate the thinking of others without understanding their speech.

Gurbani as Paraa Shabad : We have seen how subtle the *shabad* is and how it comes to *vaikhari* and *maatrika* stages. The whole of this process is so involuntary and subtle that it is seldom distinctly realised by man though in him it goes on continuously. The same subtle *shabad* (*paraa shabad*) is Guru Nanak's *Sabad Brahman* whom in *siddha gosti* has been accepted as the Guru.²⁶ Before we undertake to explore that what are the aspects of *shabad* considered by Guru Nanak it will not be out of place to see what is the sense behind understading the *Guru bani as shabad Brahman* and how this was revealed to Guru Nanak. Dr. Bhai Vir Singh in the

foreward of *Gurmat Nirnaya* of Dr. Jodh Singh, an eminent scholar of Sikhism, explains the reason of the origin of *Guru Bani* and holds that the experience Divine and the knowledge Divine which were bestowed upon Guru Nanak from the very start, he shared with the people through musical vibrations and made people overwhelmed with a supernatural delight and gusto. Sometimes the Guru was asked questions by the spiritually weak people who did not have internal bliss. The Guru answered them through discourse but when they were found still unconvinced, the inspired Guru delved deeper in the depths of *atman* and appeared almost a different being with a shining and glittering face. As a result the Divine music flowed in hymns and the *paraa shbad* through the Divine dialogue went on pouring, drenching, melting and dyeing the onlookers in His steadfast colour. These Divine hymns covering long and small discourses with the seekers of the right path were written or got written by the Guru.

Guru—Wahiguru—the educator, giver of life, and Saviour, was unmanifested and resided in the invisible regions. We came to know him as Guru Nanak when he came on earth; that Divine Guru made the great men walk in His light and becomes the sustainer of the *bani (shabad)*. The Divine Guru—Light, collected the manifested hymns also of the earlier lights. After scrutiny and selection, much more was added to the selection. The problems of spiritual life, the groping steps of the *saadhaks* the experiences of man reaching Light from Darkness; such things were retained with appropriate comments. The *Guru Granth* became the manifestation of 'This is He, This is He'—the unmanifested. Finally, the fifth Guru compiled the 'Sarguna Sabad Brahman' in the shape of Scripture for all.²⁷ In a nutshell, Bhai Vir Singh emphasises that the holy Scripture *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* was first illumined in the heart of the Guru in the shape of Divine knowledge and from there through Divine Melody, becoming *rupaatmaka* in a musical order the 'Sabad

Brahman' was made incarnate as *Guru Granth Sahib*. For Guru Nanak, the word is accordingly the *gurupdesha*, that expression of God's truth which is imparted to man by Guru. All that concerns God, all that relates to the path, which leads to Him is the word. All the virtuous deeds, religious purifications, self-mortifications, devotions, austerities and pilgrimages abide in the *shabad*. Says Nanak that the True Guru unites the man with the Lord and then the sin, sorrow and death fly away.²⁹

In the hymns of Guru Nanak, *sabad* is described more in terms of what it does than in terms of what it actually is. Thus the function of the *sabad* concerns Guru Nanak more. The *Gurbani* says that the *sabad* is to be realised in experience and not merely known in any purely intellectual sense. The function of the Word is that it provides the means whereby man can know both God and the Path which leads to Him, the means whereby the individual may secure release from his bonds and so attain union with God.³⁰

Creation is due to *shabad*. The agitation in the primary substance projecting itself into the sensuous plane becomes audible as *dhvani* or Sound, but is itself only the possibility and substratum of Sound. Creation is said to be *shabad-prabhaava*, that is, it proceeds from, and is a manifestation of, the stress, of cosmic *shakti*. In this every movement or process in the universe is *paraa shabad*. A *shabad jagat* is a contradiction in terms. Whilst the stress or constituting force is one and the same, it manifests itself differently to different sense organs.³¹

Realisation of shabad : Thus we have realised why Guru Nanak gave so high a status to *shabad* by accepting It as Guru. In Nanak's hymns thoughts are abundantly available which tell us how the *Shabad Brahman* is realised and why the following of *shabad* is necessary. It is one of Guru Nanak's

teaching that we should not forget the *Nam* of *Hari* and try to attain the Lord. The Storehouse (Ocean) of *sabad* is inside. It can be obtained by surrendering ego and self conceit.³² Pearing that is, delving deep into the *shabad* is necessary by the *saadhaka* to attain the door of Lord, otherwise his all pleasures and pomp and show are useless.³³ When the bride decorates her with Truth, wears the garments of Love;³⁴ gathers in the *Chandan* like God in her conscious mind and lives in the temple of inner consciousness—tenth gate, then the soul flowers through the Word and Lord's Name enshrines in her heart. He who dies in the Word, does not die again. Through *shabad* do we attain the Lord and His love. Without the Word, the World is led astray and is born to die again and again. Further, Guru Nanak says that if one realises the Word, one prides not on oneself.³⁵ Ego, avarice and love of the self are the main impediments on the way of *sabad* realisation. If good is to be received, the leaving of these bonds and dwelling on the Word are required.³⁶ It is through the Guru that we meet the Lord Who makes us understand the reality of the universe. The mind, of its own, does not understand the infinity of His power; it is possible only when ego is put off by realising that there is nothing but *sabad* in all the three worlds.³⁷ Guru Nanak says that with the recitation of the True *sabad*, unstable mind is restrained and Nectar is realised. Through *sabad* the dignity of salvation is obtained and pride is lost.³⁸

From apprehension point of view, the *shabads* are of two kinds. *Shabads* may be either directly or indirectly apprehended. In the latter case they are received; the ordinary individual does not hear the natural name or sound of *agni* or *Ram* directly, he is told it is so, having received it from those who have heard that sound. It is 'received' (*aapta*) and not directly apprehended (*Sakshatkarta*). So from the point of view of apprehension, *Shabads* are of two kinds, *sakshatkarta* and *aapta*.³⁹ *Guru Granth's* hymns are *aapta* hymns for the

followers which were *sakshatkarta* for the Gurus. Guru Amardas says that only the seeing of the Guru in person will not help in reaching salvation because the Guru may be seen by the whole of the world. So long as one does not reflect, ponder and follow the 'Guru Sabad' (*aapta vakya*), emancipation is not possible.⁴⁰ Thus we see that the realisation of *shabad* and its practice are necessary for a liberated life. We have already seen that *Siddha Gosti* accepts as the true Guru of Jiva.

Like Guru Amardas, contemplation upon 'Guru sabad' is deemed necessary by Guru Nanak for attainment of *mahasukha* and *mukti*. The emancipated 'gurmukh' never loses anything.⁴¹ Guru Nanak goes beyond the stage of mere reflection and contemplation in *Siddha Gosti* by saying that contemplation alone does not help so long as we do not practise the 'Guru sabad'. Through practice alone the iron shaped world can be enjoyed.⁴²

Now who are those who have contemplated and practised the 'Guru sabad'. They are those who know the one alone pervading all and the True Word abides within their heart.⁴³ In the views of Guru Nanak, the Yogi who is not imbued with the Lord's love, does not taste His essence in the real sense. One who not know the 'Guru Sabad' is consumed by his inner fire. He who has not chewed word cannot become chaste, and his deeds of self-mortification are in vain.⁴⁴ So we see that it is the reflection upon 'Guru Sabad' which is helpful in getting rid of one's ignorance and when one meets the Guru one attains the door of salvation.⁴⁵

This 'Guru Sabad' takes us towards that 'Sabad Brahman' who itself is the *paara* stage of *maatrika* and *vaikhari-shabad* of the enlightened Guru. In the beginning of *Siddha Gosti* the importance of that *paara-shabad* is stressed without which

mukti is not possible.⁴⁶ Without surrender before "*Sabad*", the world ocean cannot be crossed.⁴⁷ and carvings of the mind cannot be stilled.⁴⁸ Yogis enjoyed *mudra*, but Guru Nanak says that deep rooted internal '*Sabad*' is the continuous *mudra* which shatters ego and attachment.⁴⁹

Who is concealed in everybody and who is liberated ? Who is the unified from within and without ? The Guru answers that it is the God who is latent in everyone and the '*Gurmukh*' is the one who may be said to be liberated. But it is the '*Sabad*' only which unifies the man from within and without with the Supreme Reality. Mergence in the True Word and attainment of highest state of bliss is identified with each other, though this all is possible by following the True Guru. That Yogi who know the one alone and obliterates ego and the sense of otherness, distinguishes the '*Guru Sabad*' and the lotus in him illumines automatically.⁵¹ Those who do not understand the '*Sabad*' are *manmukh*. Such ego centrics are strayed by doubt and wander about in wilderness. They recite in cartations at the crematoriums and so lose everything. They speak evil. They who are imbued with the truth alone know peace.⁵² On the other hand those who know the word come to wisdom (*gian*).⁵³ They are '*Gurmukhs*'; they pierce through with Word, know the Word themselves and make others also understand the Word.⁵⁴ It is not possible to get honour without true World and one can not merge in Truth save through the Name.⁵⁵

In stanza 32 and 33 or *Siddha Gosti*, '*sabad*' is identified as Name which is the source of enlightenment, the way of Yoga and eternal delight. But this Name again is not possible without a perfect Guru. When Guru's *Sabad* is inhaled and digested, it gives a moral force to the body and activises the internal '*Shabad Brahman*' which illumines the moon inside infinitely. In the house of ignorance (moon) comes the light of the Sun

(the *Shabad Brahman*). So knowing the Guru's instructions (*Sabads*) the merger in the Truth is attained.⁵⁶

How unmanifested Word becomes manifested is also explained by Guru Nanak in *Siddha Gosti*. One should fill up the breeches of nine doors and so fulfil, oneself and arrive at the tenth. Then within one's mind rings the unstruck music of bliss and then one sees the Lord's presence permeating all. Here at this stage the unmanifested word becomes manifested and one comes to know the True Lord, the only God. Here a clarification has been sought by the *Siddhas* from Guru Nanak as to where does that *Sabad* abide through which one is ferried across the sea of existence ? the Guru replies that Word pervades all being and it is through His grace that *Guru sabad* abides in the heart and consequently all the doubts within are dispelled. Our body and mind are purged of evil and *Nam* (*Sabad*) is cherished inside'. Through this Word—the Guru, one is ferried across and comes to know One alone here and hereafter. On the realisation of '*Sabad*' one goes above caste, colour and illusions of the World.⁵⁷

Further in stanza 65 the of *Siddha Gosti* the abode of '*sabad*' is accepted in Self and through the Word the light of three worlds is supposed to be seen. When there was no form, no sign, no individuation, the *sabad* in its essence abided in the Absolute God and all distinctions and all forms abided in the One Wondrous Word.⁵⁸ According to Guru Nanak *gurumkukh* alone knows and realises *sabad*.

In the last but one stanza *sabad* and *Nam* have been used in the same line. Here *sabad* is used in the sense of the dialouge or *gosti* and it is said that, this the quintessence of the *gosti* (*sabad*) that without '*Nam*' Yoga is impossible. He alone attains Bliss who is imbued with *Nam*. All things and wisdoms becomes manifested through the *Nam* and though

one may wear many sectarian garbs yet one is strayed from the Path without Name—the 'sabad'.

Notes and References

1. ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੈ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁ ਸਮਝ ਪਰੀ॥
Guru Granth, p. 939
2. ਮਨਸਾ ਆਸਾ ਸਬਦਿ ਜਲਾਈ॥
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਪਾਈ॥
Ibid., p. 940
3. ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਰੈ ਤਾ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਵਾਸੇ॥
Ibid.
4. ਆਵਾਗਉਣੁ ਮਿਟੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਆਪੇ ਪਰਬੈ ਬਖਸਿ ਲਇਆ॥
Ibid.
5. ਬਾਰਹ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਗੀ ਭਰਮਾਏ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਛਿਅ ਚਾਰਿ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਏ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੁ॥
Ibid., pp. 941-42
6. ਸਬਦਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਇਤ ਉਤ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ॥
Ibid., p. 944
7. Cf. Machinder Gorakh Bodh.
Gorakh Bani, p.187
8. ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰਾ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਗੁ ਬਉਰਾਨੰ॥
Guru Granth, p. 635
9. *Dhyanbindo Upanisad*, 16th Sloka.
10. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*, p. 4.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
12. *The Bible*—The Gospel of Saint John Ch.1.1-3.
13. *Quran*. II. III.
14. ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਤਪਤਿ॥
ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ॥
ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸੈਲ ਜੁਗ ਭਏ॥
ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਨਿਰਮਏ॥

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਉਧਰੇ॥
 ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਤਰੇ॥
 ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥
 ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਰੁ॥

Guru Granth, pp. 929-30

16. ਸਬਦੁ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ॥
 ਜੇ ਚਾਖੈ ਸੇ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹੋਇ॥
 ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਮਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਲੁ ਧੋਇ॥
 ਸਾਚੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ॥

Guru Granth, pp. 664.

17. Arthur Avalon. *Serpent Power*, p. 88.
 18. Sir John Woodroffe, *Garland of Letters*, p. 144.
 19. Dr. Hazari Prasad, *Nath Sampradaya*, p. 156.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.
 22. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters* (1963), pp. 194-95.
 23. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, p.156.
 24. Akshaya Kumar Bannerji, *Philosophy of Gorakhnath*, p. 148.
 25. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.
 26. *Siddha Gosti* 44 'Sabad Guru Surat Dhuni Chela'.
 27. Bhai Vir Singh, Foreword of *Gurmat Nirnya* by Bhai Jodh Singh.
 28. W.H. Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion*, p. 193.
 29. ਸਗਲੇ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੰਜਮ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਬਦਿ ਵਸੈ॥

Guru Granth, p. 1332

30. W.H. Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion*, p. 192.
 31. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*, p. 35.
 32. ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਮੁਢਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਮਤਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰੀ॥
 33. ਸਭਿ ਰਸ ਭੋਗਣ ਬਾਦਿ ਹਠਿ ਸਭਿ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਵਿਕਾਰ॥

Guru Granth, p. 939

Ibid., p. 19

34. ਸਾਚੁ ਧੜੀ ਧਨ ਮਾਡੀਐ
ਕਾਪੜੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ॥
Guru Granth., p. 54. to p. 88
35. ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਸੋ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੈ
ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਏ ਕਿਉ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਇ॥
Ibid., p. 58
36. ਹਉਮੈ ਮਮਤਾ ਜਲਿ ਬਲਉ ਲੋਭੁ ਜਲਉ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥
Ibid., p. 153
37. ਗੁਰੂ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਹਮਰਾ ਵੀਆਹੁ ਜਿ ਹੋਆ ਜਾਂ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਜਾਨਿਆ॥
ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਕਾ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਰਵਿਆ ਹੈ ਆਪੁ ਗਇਆ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ॥
Ibid., p. 351
38. ਚਲਤਉ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਖੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਚਾਖੈ॥
Ibid., p. 352
39. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*, p. 44.
40. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥
ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥
Guru Granth, p. 594
41. ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮਹਾ ਸੁਖ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥
ਗੁਰਮਖਿ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਹਾਰਿ॥
Ibid., p. 942
42. ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਖਾਈਐ ਸਾਰੁ॥
Ibid., p. 943
43. ਸਚ ਭੈ ਰਾਤਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੈ॥
ਏਕੋ ਜਾਤਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੈ॥
Ibid.
44. ਰੰਗਿ ਨ ਰਾਤਾ ਰਸਿ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਤਾ॥
ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਤਾਤਾ॥
ਬਿੰਦੁ ਨ ਰਾਖਿਆ ਸਬਦੁ ਨ ਭਾਖਿਆ॥

ਪਵਨੁ ਨ ਸਾਧਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਨ ਅਰਾਧਿਆ॥

Guru Granth., p. 945

45. ਕੁਬੁਧਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੈ ਮੇਖ ਦੁਆਰ॥

Ibid., p. 944

46. ਸਾਚ ਸਬਦ ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥

Ibid., p. 938

47. ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ॥

Ibid.

48. ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਮਨੁ ਟੇਕ ਨ ਟਿਕਈ
ਨਾਨਕ ਭੂਖ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥

Ibid., p. 939

49. ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਮੁਦ੍ਰਾ
ਹਉਮੈ ਮਮਤਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰੀ॥

Ibid.

50. ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਗੁਪਤਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੁਕਤਾ॥
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁ ਜੁਗਤਾ॥

Ibid.

51. ਏਕੇ ਕਉ ਸਚੁ ਏਕਾ ਜਾਣੈ
ਹਉਮੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਕੀਆ॥
ਸੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਪੁਗਾਸੁ ਬੀਆ॥

Ibid., p. 940

52. ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਭੂਲੇ ਜਮ ਕੀ ਕਾਟਿ
ਪਰ ਘਰੁ ਜੋਹੈ ਹਾਣੇ ਹਾਟਿ॥...
ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਚੀਨੈ ਲਵੈ ਕੁਬਾਟਿ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚਿ ਰਤੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਜਾਟਿ॥

Ibid., p. 941

53. ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਰਚੈ ਸੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ॥

Ibid.

54. ਸਬਦਿ ਭੇਦਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਜਾਣਾਈ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਲਿ ਸਮਾਈ॥

Guru Granth.,

55. ਸਾਚ ਸਬਦ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਵੈ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਕਿਉ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ॥

Ibid.

56. ਨਉ ਸਰ ਸੁਭਰ ਦਸਵੈ ਪੂਰੇ॥
ਤਹ ਅਨਹਤ ਸੁੰਨ ਵਜਾਵਹਿ ਤੂਰੇ॥
ਸਾਚੈ ਰਾਚੇ ਦੇਖਿ ਹਜੂਰੇ॥
ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਸਾਚੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰੇ॥

Ibid., pp. 943-44

57. ਚਿਹਨੁ ਵਰਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਛਾਇਆ ਮਾਇਆ
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ॥

Ibid., p. 944

58. ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ
ਤਉ ਅਕੁਲੀਣਿ ਰਹਤਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁ ਸਾਰੁ॥

Ibid., p. 945

GURU NANAK'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS HUMAN PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Prof. Harnam Singh Shan

Guru Nanak, as is well known, was a highly enlightened, dedicated, benevolent and universal Teacher of mankind. His life-long endeavours, noble exhortations and all-embracing teachings contributed much, therefore, to the thought and activity, to the peace and prosperity of humanity. Says Puran Singh, the blessed bard of the Land of Five Rivers-

Nanak, the Master, sowed the seed of Nam
 in the hearts of men;
And the fields are ripe with the golden corn.
The harvests shall come, and the harvests shall pass;
But the seed is of God and is growing.
He gave Angad his own love,
 his own face and name and soul.¹
He gave him his own throne
 in the hearts of men.
He called him "Born of my loins",
 and made another Nanak on this earth
This is Nanak, the Master, the Spirit of God that fashions
 Himself for ever in the image of man.

The harvests shall come,
and the harvests shall pass;
But the seed is of God and is growing.²

The divine seed and status which the Master bestowed upon his chosen disciple, Lehna, renamed Angad,³ flourished during the apostolate of his subsequent eight spiritual successors through whom God continued to speak. They also called themselves 'Nanak',⁴ took up his torch disseminated his message, strengthened his mission and consolidated his community which grew, in due course, into a new, distinct, revealed and complete religion, called Sikhism. "The harvest which ripened", tells Narang, "in the time of Guru Gobind Singh had been sown by Guru Nanak and watered by his successors. The sword which carved the Khalsa's way to glory was, undoubtedly, forged by Gobind (Singh); but the steel had been provided by Guru Nanak".⁵

Besides, "the combination of piety and practical activity which Guru Nanak manifested in his own life, he bequeathed to his followers and it remains characteristic of many who own him as Guru today. At its best, it is a piety devoid of superstition and a practical activity compounded with determination and an immense generosity. It explains much", adds McLeod, "that has happened in the Panjab during the last four centuries and it explains much that can be witnessed there today."⁶

2

Hence, the life, work and teachings of such a great Man and Master who, in the words of Cust, "by his actions and precepts has influenced the ideas and conscience of a large number of his fellow-creatures,⁷ both during his life-time and for centuries after his death, can never be devoid of interest. When that influence has not been owing to his wealth, rank or power but simply to his own merits, that Man must be called truly

Great; and, when we find that his motives were unselfish, that after a long life devoted to the instruction of others in the paths of virtue and Moral Purity, he died poor, delegated his office not to his children but to one of his disciples whom he considered most virtuous, that Man must be considered truly Good, as well as truly Great".⁸

Only a truly Good and great Man could have begged from God, the Creator, such things to sustain himself, such powers to serve his fellow-creatures and such virtues to dwell upon His praise, as we find enumerated in his following appeal—an appeal the like of which we have yet to find elsewhere:

I beg from You, my Lord !
 The alms of continence and truth as rice;
 compassion as wheat;
 good deeds as milk, contentment as butter;
 and attainment of Your grace
 as the receiving of charity in a leafy bowl.
 Pray let the calf of my mind
 suck in poise the milk of the milch-cow
 of forgiveness and forbearance.
 Please bless me with the cloth
 of Your praise and modesty
 so that I may ever dwell upon Your merits.⁹

The tenets and teachings of such a Man and Master met with, naturally, the challenges not only from the moral and religious degradation of the natives but also from that of the political and cultural onslaughts of the aliens. They faced not only the situation that confronted his own age but also set a pattern for meeting with the same under such situations in times to come.

3

Guru Nanak's message, in fact, revolutionised human

thinking and enthused a new spirit in human activity. It made the people conscious of their situation and position, duty and responsibility by exhorting them in inspiring and invigorating verses such as the following :

Let us deck ourselves with the silks of merits
And adopt our arena (i.e. the field of duty),
sticking to our ideal steadfastly.¹⁰

He made them fearless by telling them, so clearly and authoritatively :

He who is immersed in the fear of God,
Becomes fearless.¹¹

Reiterating his firm belief in the equality of all human beings and conceding their fundamental right to be free from all sorts of fear, oppression and tyranny, the Teacher in Nanak assured them that:

By lodging the fear of God in the mind, all other fears of the world as also of the Yama are vanished from it. So, what fear is left to frighten us any more?... To be possessed of any fear other than God's, is vain; For, all other fears are only perturbation of mind.¹²

Addressing the seekers of the path thus shown by him, the Master told them frankly and unambiguously that:

If you are keen to play the game of love,
step into my street with your head placed
on your palm.^{13-A}
Having set your foot upon it,
lay down your head without fear or grudge.¹³

Guru Nanak, thus, freed humankind from all sorts of fears and fetters, mental as well as physical, social as well as political.

He liberated them from the age-old shackles of mythology, ritualism, casteism, spirits, superstitions and the like, to such an extent that the holy compiler of his sacred writings in *Guru Granth Sahib* observed a little later that:

The egg-shell of doubt has shattered,
and the mind is illuminated.

The Master has cut off the fetters from our feet
and has thus freed us from the bonds.¹⁴

"Thus Guru Nanak extricated his followers", held Cunningham in 1849 after actively participating in the Anglo-Sikh wars, "from the accumulated errors of ages, and enjoined upon them devotion of thought and excellence of conduct as the first of duties. He left them erect and free, unbiased in mind and unfettered by rules, to become an increasing body of truthful worshippers."¹⁶

This is what its learned amanuensis, Bhai Gurdas (Bhalla), also affirmed in his own inimitable style :

On the appearance of the True Guru, Nanak,
the mist vanished
and light shone forth ever the world.¹⁶

And this was what actually happened about five hundred years ago. His revolutionary message threw into relief the universal truths of higher religion and the errors of misguided doctrines. He strengthened the national conscience by turning it once more towards buoyant realism. He roused the people to a sense of dignity of man as the creative genius behind world history and as builder of human destiny, culture and civilization.¹⁷

He told people rather in challenging terms :

There is no joy or point,
in just coming and going,

if one comes into the world
and passes out,
without accomplishing anything
good and beneficial. ¹⁸

He roused their feeling of human responsibility for resisting evil and aggression, for defending their own honour and safeguarding the right and respect of others. He told them in very clear words that one who compromises with one's self-respect, is not worth even the salt that one eats :

If one lives without self-respect,
All that one eats goes to waste. ¹⁹

He therefore, exhorted them to remain ever alert and wide-awake, always up-and-doing for safeguarding their rights, aspirations and convictions.

Guru Nanak himself protested vehemently against the invasion by the foreign forces²⁰ and the onslaught of the alien culture.²¹

In this distressful Kali Age,
the Shariat Law (of the Muslims) is operative;
And the Qazi (the Muslim judge) is exalted
as Krishna (i.e. a Hindu deity).²²

Condemning the incursion in 1526 A.D. of Babar, the first Mughal Emperor of India, Guru Nanak stated in very bold and forceful verses.

Babar has rushed from Kabul
with the wedding-party of sins;
And demands forcibly
the possession of our motherland.
Modesty and righteousness have gone into hiding
and falsehood is strutting about in sham glory.²³

Commenting, similarly, on the demoralising effects of such barabrous invasions and the socio-religio-cultural onslaughts that followed, he observed in his usual bold and straightforward manner :

In the present Kali Age,
Quran and other Mohammedan scriptures
 have become the Approved Books.
 The Brahmins, the *Vedas* and other Hindu scriptures
 are not being given due respect.
 The Name of God has also been changed into Rehman...²⁴

Guru Nanak felt so strongly about all that, that he himself took up the challenge of the time and succeeded in evoking socio-cultural awareness and effective response to meet the terrible situation. According to Gokal Chand Narang, "After centuries of subjection, (he) was the first among the Hindus (to arouse such a feeling and also) to raise his voice against tyranny and oppression".²⁵ Assessing such a historic role and unique contribution, Anil Chandra Banerjee also rightly claims that Guru Nanak resembled other medieval reformers, in revitalising religion and morality; but he was alone in creating a distinct and self-conscious socio-religious community which was destined to play a fruitful and glorious role in his country's history.²⁶

4

But that too is not all. The grandeur of the Guru's personality, width of his vision, strength of his spirit, vastness of his knowledge intensity of his experience, piety of his life, purity of his actions, beauty of his hymns and universality of his teachings ushered in and organised, in the course of time, a new, conspicuous, most modern and 'ever-green' religion—the religion of love, light, service and social justice—in the world. He created a distinct notion and "a new human type"

which played a distinguished and historic role in the past and has a still more prominent role to play in the future. Says Arnold Toynbee, the great historian of our times, "If human race survives its follies at all...Sikhs (i.e. the followers of Guru Nanak) shall surely be there on this planet as a vigorous, hardy and go-getting homosapiens."²⁷ The history of Sikhism and the prophesy of Toynbee go a long way to prove the fulfilment of the lofty wish once cherished by Harrison in 1908 in the following words : "We need a reformed education resting on a scientific philosophy, revised and purified domestic manners, a new series of social institutions, a reformed and new commonwealth. But above all, we need a reformed religion—social in its origin, in its object and in its methods, human, practical and scientifically true."²⁸

It was, in fact, Guru Nanak and his enlightned teaching that gave rise to such a modern, universal and non-sectarian religion, five centuries ago, which is 'social in its origin, in its object and in its methods': which is 'human, practical and scientifically true': and has generally been called the 'house holders' religion' and even 'an enlightened humanism'. It was again Guru Nanak, the Divine master, who vigorously pleaded that a householder was in no way less qualified and acceptable to God than a hermit; and that temporal and secular activity did not stand in the way of spiritual pursuit and salvation. Mentioning the distinguishing quality of the True Teacher, he, therefore, held:

Contemplation of the True Lord
brings that illumination
which enables one
to remain unattached
in the midst of worldly pleasures.
Such is the distinctive greatness of the True Master
that through his grace and guidance,

one can attain salvation
 even while living with one's wife and children.²⁹
 (i.e. while leading a normal domestic life)

This clearly counters the observation of Hugh McLeod that Guru Nanak "stands firmly within the...*Nirguna Sampradaya*, the so-called Sant Tradition of Northern India"; and that he did not originate any "school of thought" and hence cannot be considered the "founder" of a new religion, called "The Sikh religion."³⁰ McLeod seems to have conveniently overlooked the fact that in several material aspects the doctrine propounded by Guru Nanak not only goes far beyond what the Saints of the said tradition professed but also runs counter to certain basic tenets of the Nath as well as the *Vaishnava* traditions which, as McLeod himself says, constituted the basis of the Sant Tradition. Without entering into details at this stage, it may safely be pointed out again that Guru Nanak alone laid considerable emphasis on man's truthful conduct and beneficial actions; his basic duties and obligation towards his fellow-beings and the society at large. He was the one who repeatedly emphasised the part a man or woman has to play as a householder and not merely as a recluse preparing himself or herself for the next world while escaping his/her obligations towards his/her family and fellow-beings. As a matter of fact, Guru Nanak was absolutely against asceticism. He did not consider the world as unreal but observed, on the other hand, that—

This world is the abode of the True Lord.
 The True Lord Himself abides in it.³¹

And also that—

One should keep on communicating
 with one's fellow-beings,
 So long as one lives
 in this world.³²

It was he alone who maintained, "Worldly life, without being informed by the force of spirituality, is barren; and spiritual life without its expression in the world, is just sterile."³³

This was certainly a very bold step, quite contrary to what his predecessors and other religious teachers of the time had ever thought of. Time and again, he emphasised that God was not only in heaven but was very much present on the earth itself, prevalent in Nature and enshrined in the very heart of every human being. According to him—

God created Nature
and pervades it. ³⁴

God is hidden in every heart
And every heart is illumined by Him. ³⁵

God is not far off.
He is here as your own essence. ³⁶

A careful and unbiased comparison of the doctrine of the Sant Tradition to that of Guru Nanak, taken in its totality, at once brings out the original, distinct and far-reaching contribution that Guru Nanak made to the religious thought of the world. It was this new and revolutionary school of thought that, in due course, impelled his followers to play an important part in the history of India, culminating in the glorious achievement of his ninth successor, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), by instilling an indomitable spirit in the hearts of the down-trodden and helpless Indians to free themselves of the cruelties of their oppressive rulers and horrors of the foreign invasions. Hence said Dorothy Field, sixty years earlier than McLeod, that the religion founded by Guru Nanak is not only "a distinct world religion" but "is also one which should appeal to the Occidental mind. It is essentially a practical religion. If judged from the

pragmatical stand-point, it would rank almost first in the world. Of no other religion can it be said that it has made a nation in so short a time. The Sikh Religion is one of the most interesting at present existing in India, possibly indeed in the whole world. That it should have transformed the outcaste Indian into a fine and loyal warrior, is little short of a miracle.³⁷ And that miracle came about just a century and a half after Guru Nanak, who, according to Bhai Gurdas, "had been made manifest for the welfare of all mankind,"³⁸ and "who struck his coin in the world and instituted this Nirmal (Pure) Panth".³⁹

By instituting the *Nirmal Panth*, that is, the Panth of Truth or the Sikh Way of Life, "what Guru Nanak sought to accomplish was a regeneration of the decadent Indian people through bringing them back to abiding spiritual and moral values—the worship of the Supreme Being Who is Uncreated and Eternal as against the primitivism and polytheism prevalent in the land; to mould the individual life on the principle of the search for emancipation which means spiritual and moral purity; and to bring about a just and equitable social system as against the crying injustice of caste inequalities and passive submission to the tyranny of various kinds from those in power. This spirit of idealism was given by the Guru its acient name of *Dharma*, whose pillars are *daya* (compassion, humanity) purity, humility, contentment, renunciation of worldly objectives and lures, and action in the way of God. Guru Nanak gave voice to the deep agony and suffering of the people and instructed them in the meaning of *Dharma* as pure and righteous conduct in the individual sphere and the wider context of human relations. To the dumb masses suffering from the tyranny of priest and feudal lord for millennia and now also religious persecution, he brought spiritual light, a sense of human dignity and the faith and courage to create a better world by sacrifice and suffering borne in the way of God... While to the Hindu, the Guru gave an enriched

and purified vision of spirituality, to the Muslim, he taught the essence of morality and humanity, as against the bigoted and narrow teaching of the priests of his faith. This vision of people permeated with the spirit of tolerance and brotherliness, and putting away the hatred born of creeds, was a unique nation building effort in an age of manifold fragmentation of those who inhabited our land."⁴⁰ In the words of R.C.Majumdar, Guru Nanak's "was the first and also the last successful attempt to bring together the Hindus and Muslims in a common fold of spiritual and social brotherhood."⁴¹ Hence said Toynbee, paying him and the religion founded by him a glowing tribute for this glorious achievement, "The Sikh religion might be described, not inaccurately, as a vision of this Hindu-Muslim common ground. To have discovered and embraced the deep harmony underlying the historic Hindu-Muslim discord has been a noble spiritual triumph, and Sikhs may well be proud of their religion's ethos and origin."⁴²

6

There is nothing hyperbolic or flatterical, therefore, in what Kurt Leidecker said in 1961, while addressing the Sikhs of America on the occasion of their Founder's birth-anniversary: "It is my belief that only India could have produced the Sikhs and only Bharata could have given birth to Guru Nanak. What other country provided conditions such as permitted this great leader to be what he was and the Sikh community to practise what they believed? Could the West have played host to either?"

Let us scan the cultural and political history of Europe at the time of the revered Guru Nanak. This is, let us briefly survey the Europe of the period A.D. 1469 to 1539. We can leave America out of this for the moment because it was only being discovered in 1492...India's history, likewise, was edging forward from crisis to crisis owing to greedy hands stretching

out towards her riches. But one of the brightest spots in that age, which gave us a Kabir, was doubtless the birth of Guru Nanak at Nankana Sahib in the Panjab...Europe may have painted well, printed well, translated well, sailed the seas well, and conquered and colonized well, but it was Guru Nanak who dreamed of universal brotherhood and sang his song of unity of all faiths to the accompaniment of his minstrel Mardana. His garments, too, betrayed his universal outlook as A. Charistina Albers put it in verse:

But why that motlev dress the Master weareth,
 Half of the Hindu, half of Muslim Type?
 It was to show that he was both or neither.
 The Truth Eternal does not rest on dress.

No Goan adventure was needed to introduce into India the concept⁴³ of the Fatherhood of God *Ek pita ekas ke hum barik*,... i.e. 'there is only One Father of us all, and we are all His children', said the great Guru and proclaimed it far and wide till it become the basic principle guiding your conduct to this day and wherever you are in your homeland, in Singapore, Hong Kong or America...That is not only your stand; that you recognise as your obligation. And it is well in a world in which all values, even primary ones, are being assailed."

Regarding Guru Nanak's emphasis on the worth, liberty and dignity of man and woman, Leidecker observed" Freedom-loving America also is glad that Guru Nanak and you, his followers, recognise the true value and worth of man not merely in the abolition of slavery and untouchability and in extolling the virtues of the good Samaritan, but in independence of thinking. The contribution of Sikhism to the elimination of caste so vigorously pursued by India today, can never be forgotten by your countrymen nor by the world. One saying by Guru Nanak to which hearts in East and West are surely

attuned is that 'Nobody is without some worth. How can you call woman inferior when it is she who gives birth to great men?'¹⁴⁴ Each human being, even the lowliest, has some worth, and you Sikhs have demonstrated that in innumerable instances in the past."

Drawing their attention to the Divine Preceptor's views on the dignity of labour, altruistic attitude and democratic practices, he explained, 'To earn one's livelihood honestly,' said Guru Nanak, 'is the source of happiness, and the right way consists in practising non-injury and sharing with others.'¹⁴⁵ "Democracy, thus, is natural to you Sikhs. Your wealthy eat with the poor, you wait on him who may work for you. In humility and chivalry you are demonstrating in your quiet way the finest characteristics of man. In the new world that is shaping, you, therefore, will be contributing the valuable ancient heritage of Guru Nanak. It would, thus, seem impossible that a Sikhism grounded deeply in the spiritual nature of his creed, would not be an ardent defender of democracy and the values which a free world cherishes. With your battle-cry, *Sat Sri Akal* you will never be found on the side of the godless. Our hope for a better future is made brighter by virtue of Guru Nanak, whose birth you have given me the privilege to celebrate with you."

Referring also to the Master's stress on the qualities of fearlessness, selfless service and sacrifice, he concluded: "We in America often speak of freedom from fear, but expect that freedom to come to us without, from improvement in the social order or favourable economic conditions. The Sikh Gurus, inspired by and in the spirit of the first one, Guru Nanak, looked within for stamina, and have prompted you to do the utmost in heroic deeds of valour and even more heroic sufferings of martyrdom which are inscribed in gold on the glorious pages of India's history, from Guru Arjan's tortures to the massacre

at Amritsar. "Death is the privilege of the brave, provided they die for a worthy cause,"⁴⁶ said Guru Nanak. Indeed, a country is well off that can boast of men who for the sake of their fellow-men, not necessarily their co-religionists or compatriots, will fight and lay down their lives because they espouse a worthy cause. Guru Gobind Singh, said: *Sar dadam, magar sir-e-khuda na dadam*,⁴⁷ i.e. 'he gave his own head, yet did not relinquish what *Khuda* (i.e. God) entrusted him with.' Hence, Rabindranath Tagore, in his *jana-gana-mana adhinayaka*... did not forget among those gathered round the throne of the Dispenser of India's destiny, you Sikhs. Vijay a Guru Nanak!"⁴⁸

Keeping all that and much more in view, Bradshaw has therefore acclaimed the religion founded by Guru Nanak as "the Faith of the New Age" and has stated unambiguously : "Sikhism is a universal world religion with a message for all men..It is the *summum bonum* for the modern man. It completely supplants and fulfils all the former dispensations of the older religions..The other religions contain Truth, but Sikhism contains the complete Truth. The older faiths were good in their days; but that is now in the past, and we are living in the dispensation of Guru Nanak. Just as we appreciate the discoveries and convenience of the modern living and do not want to exchange our modern jet airliners, automobiles and electricity for the horse-drawn carriages and candles of the past, we do not want to exchange the New Age Faith of Guru Nanak for any of the Old Age religions and their antiquated philosophies. The Sikh Faith is the universal religion for the present space age. The Sikhs religion is truly the answer to the problems of the modern man."⁴⁹

This is also so because this most modern World religion embodies the universal spirit of altruism, liberalism and tolerance to such an extent that its followers seek blessings for the peace,

prosperity and welfare of everyone—irrespective of his caste, creed, colour, country or calling—in their daily personal as well as congregational prayer to God, concluding the same with the following couplet:

Says Nanak :
 May Your Name, Your glory, O God!
 be ever in ascendance!
 May the whole humanity be blessed
 with peace and prosperity,
 in Your will, by Your grace.⁵⁰

There lies, in fact, the greatness and distinctiveness of Guru Nanak's contribution to human peace and prosperity, to the welfare of man and woman for all times to come.

Notes and References

1. The choosing and formal installation of Angad was the first step in the process which ushered in the founding of the Khalsa, and ultimately in the emergence of a Sikh Nation (McLeod W.H., *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford—1968, p. 143.
2. Puran Singh (Prof.), *The Book of the Ten Masters*, London, 1926, p. 29.
3. Fancifully derived from the Persian *Ang-i-Khud*, that is part of his own body, his ownself.
4. Its use implied and maintained, most prudently and effectively, the Master's supreme position as well as continuity of his mission, lasting value of his message and continuing influence of his personality and prophethip.
5. Narang, Gokal Chand, *Transformation of Sikhism*, Lahore—1912, 2nd. ed. 1945, p.1.
6. McLeod, *op.cit.*, pp. 231-232.
7. "There is no doubt that in his life-time, Nanak saved millions of human beings from committing sins and indulging in worldly vices", Sinha S.N., in *Guru Nanak*, ed. by Gyan Singh and published by the Publications Division, New Delhi, 1969, p. xiii.

8. Cust, R.N., *Pictures of Indian Life*, London, 1881, p. 194.

9. ਜਤੁ ਸਤੁ ਚਾਵਲ ਦੈਆ ਕਟਕ
ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਪਾਤੀ ਧਾਨੁ॥
ਦੁਧੁ ਕਰਮੁ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਘੀਉ ਕਰਿ
ਐਸਾ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਦਾਨੁ॥
ਖਿਮਾ ਧੀਰਜ ਕਰਿ ਗਊ ਲਵੇਰੀ
ਸਹਜੇ ਬਫਰਾ ਖੀਰੁ ਪੀਐ॥
ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਰਮ ਕਾ ਕਪੜਾ ਮਾਂਗਉ
ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਵਤੁ ਰਹੈ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1329.

10. ਪਹਿਰੇ ਪਟੰਬਰ ਕਰਿ ਅੰਡਬਰ
ਆਪਣਾ ਪਿਤੁ ਮਲੀਐ॥

Ibid., p.766.

11. ਭੈ ਰਚਿ ਰਹੈ
ਸੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਹੋਇ॥

Ibid., p. 223.

12. ਡਰਿ ਘਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਡਰੁ
ਡਰਿ ਡਰੁ ਜਾਇਮੁ
ਸੋ ਡਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ
ਜਿਤੁ ਡਰਿ ਡਰੁ ਪਾਇ?...
ਡਰੀਐ ਜੇ ਡਰੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਹੋਰੁ॥
ਡਰਿ ਡਰਿ ਡਰਣਾ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਸੋਰੁ॥

Ibid., p. 151.

13A. That is, with complete surrender and fervour.

13. ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਟਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1412.

14. ਝੂਟੇ ਆਂਡਾ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ

ਮਨਹਿ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ॥
ਕਾਟੀ ਬੇਰੀ ਪਗਹ ਤੇ
ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1002.

15. Cunningham, J.D., *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of Sutlej*, London, 1849, p. 48.

16. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ
ਮਿਟੀ ਧੁੰਧੁ ਜਗਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਆ॥

Var I, st. 27.

17. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Nanak's Religion : A Comparative Study of Religions*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 5.

18. ਮਾਣੁ ਘਲੈ ਉਠੀ ਚਲੈ
ਸਾਦੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਇਵੇਹੀ ਗਲੈ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1412.

19. ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਈ ਜਾਇ॥
ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ॥

Also rendered as : He who lives in ignomy, whatever he eats is illegitimate.

Ibid., p. 142.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 360, 417, & 722.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 471-72, 663 & 1191.

22. ਕਲਿ ਕਲਵਾਲੀ ਸਰਾ ਨਿਬੇੜੀ
ਕਾਜੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਹੋਆ॥...

Ibid., pp. 722, 903.

23. ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਝ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ
ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ
ਕੁੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ॥

Ibid.

Also rendered as : "the submission of our womanhood."

24. ਕਲਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਕਤੋਬ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ॥

ਪੋਥੀ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰਹੇ ਪੁਰਾਣ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਰਹਿਮਾਣ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 903.

25. Narang, *op.cit.*, pp. 40-41.
26. Banerjee, in his 'Introduction' to *Guru Nanak's Moral Code* by Shan, Harnam Singh, Chandigarh, 1969, p. 24.
27. Toynbee, Arnold, *East to West*, London, 1958; quoted by Kapur Singh in *Contributions of Guru Nanak*, ed. by Shan, Harnam Singh, Chandigarh, 1976, p. 25.
28. Harrison, Frederic, *National and Social Problems*, London, 1908, pp. 461-62.

29. ਸਚਿ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ॥
ਤਾ ਤੇ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਮਹਿ ਰਹੈ ਉਦਾਸੁ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਐਸੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ
ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 661.

30. McLeod, W.H, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 5-7.

31. ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ
ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p.463.

32. ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਰਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ,
ਕਿਛੁ ਸੁਣੀਐ, ਕਿਛੁ ਕਹੀਐ॥

Ibid., p. 661.

33. Daljeet Singh, *Five Gifts of the Gurus*, Patiala, 1994, pp. 2-3.

34. ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ
ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ॥

Ibid., p. 84.

35. ਘਟ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਲੁਕਾਇਆ
ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਬਾਈ॥

Ibid., p. 597.

36. ਸੋ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਦੂਰਿ ਨਾਹੀ

ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 354

37. Field, Dorothy, *The Religion of the Sikhs*, London, 1914, pp. 34-35.
38. (i) ਕਲਿ ਤਾਰਣਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਇਆ॥
 (ii) ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਸੋਧਣਿ ਧਰਤਿ ਲੁਕਾਈ॥
 (iii) ਜਾਹਿਰ ਪੀਰ ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਬਾ॥
- Var 1. st. 23, 24, 27.*
39. ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ
 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਆ॥
- Ibid., Var 1. st. 45.*
40. Talib, Gurbachan Singh, *Guru Nanak : His Personality and Vision*, Delhi, 1969, pp. xvi-xviii.
41. Majumdar, R.C. in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. VI, Bombay, 1960, 2nd ed. 1967, p. 569.
42. Toynbee, Arnold in his 'Foreword' to Unesco's *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, London, 196 p. 10.
43. ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ
- Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 611.
44. ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ
 ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥
- Ibid.*, p. 473.
45. ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ॥
- Ibid.*, p. 1245.
46. ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੁਰਿਆ ਹਰੁ ਹੈ
 ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਨਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੈ॥
- Ibid.*, pp. 579-80.
47. Guru Gobind Singh 's own verse, in original, reads as follows:
 ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ॥ *Sri Dasam Granth*, 'Bachitar Natak', canto V, st. 14.

48. Leidecker, Kurt F., 'Guru Nanak' in *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, December, 1961, pp. 42-45.
49. Bradshaw, H.L., *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta; Singh, Gurbakhsh, 'Sikhism : Universal Message', Richardson, 1991, p. 8.
50. ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ
ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ॥
Ardas, that is, the Sikh Prayer, its concluding verse.

GURU NANAK IN BENGALI LITERATURE

Himadri Banerjee

The impact of Sikhism on different Indian regional languages (with the exception of Punjabi) has so far received only a cursory look from scholars. It may be partly due to the fact that, in spite of Guru Nanak's different Indian *Udasis*, Guru Tegh Bahadur's visit to Assam and the birth of the *Daswan Padshah* at Patna Sahib, even today the Sikhs predominantly live in the Punjab. The Punjabi Hindus, though many of them share a common cultural heritage with the Sikhs, have hardly shown any interest in this field. A possible explanation may be found in this general declining interest in the religion of the Sikhs due to a growing secularism among them in the post-independence decades. Further, the much publicised success of the Green Revolution and its resultant socio-economic tensions in the countryside have been the principal concern of social scientists working on Punjab; this may have kept many of them away from this interesting field of investigation.

A careful study of Bengali literature would, however, reveal that a modest attempt was made in this direction long before the dawn of the present century. The life and teachings of the Sikh Gurus often figured prominently in the writings of

many eminent Bengali literateurs; this process may be said to have begun with Raja Rammohun Roy and it continues even today. In Bengali there are nearly fifty monographs, tracts and pamphlets highlighting the history of the Sikhs, which remain scattered in the different Calcutta libraries. The present paper tries to bring to the notice of scholars some of these works dealing with the life and mission of Guru Nanak with the expectation that a serious research in this field may be undertaken in the near future.

I

It may be noted that a few Brahma leaders did some significant spadework during the first half of the 19th century. It was Raja Rammohun Roy who first drew our attention to the affinities between different Indian religious creeds. In this connection, he also referred to some interesting points of resemblance between the teachings of Guru Nanak and Brahma religious symbols and precepts.¹ After the Raja's death, some well-researched articles were published in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, the mouthpiece of the Brahmos. They pointed out the relevance of the message of Guru Nanak Devji in the Brahmos' search for a unitary God.² In his autobiography, *Maharishi* Devendranath Tagore also noted with reverence the significance of the message of the *Japuji*. His description of the religio-cultural atmosphere of the Golden Temple complex (1857) may be regarded as an excellent piece of literary craftsmanship of the later 19th century. There was an element of poetic exuberance in his observation which even today appear fresh.³

This enthusiastic admiration of Devendranath Tagore for Sikhism had an equally brilliant manifestation in the writings of his youngest son, Rabindranath. Tagore wrote as many as five poems and four major essays on different aspects of the history of the Sikh faith—two of them directly relevant to the life and

mission of the founder of the Sikh faith. The first one was an article entitled '*Kajer lok ke*' ("Who is a man of real worth?") published in the *Balak* (a leading children's magazine) in 1885 and it centred on the significance of the *Sachcha saudha* episode in the Guru's life. According to him, the Guru was unsuccessful in his hereditary caste calling, for which he was rebuked by his father Kalu Bedi. This did not necessarily suggest that his life was a failure. On the contrary, his message of love and tolerance continues to apply a healing touch to suffering humanity.⁴ The second essay however gave rise to a debate in the academic world. It was originally written as an introductory note to Sarat Kumar Roy's book dealing with the general history of the Sikhs since the birth of Guru Nanak Dev.⁵ In this essay, while praising Guru Nanak, Tagore passed some uncharitable comments on Guru Gobind's policy of growing militarisation among the Sikhs. According to Tagore, once the Sikhs took up the profession of arms, they began ignoring the message of Nanak. Instead of becoming pious men with liberated souls in accordance with the teachings of Nanak, the Sikhs became worshippers of arms, ready to fight in any corner of the globe, as per the 'mundane' directives of the *Daswan Guru*.⁶

While the House of Tagores⁷ was going ahead with its various writings on the philosophy and history of the Sikhs, other leading Brahmos of Calcutta also continued to evince interest in this field. The pioneering contribution of *Bhai Mahendralal Bose* of the *Nababidhan* group merits our special attention. Under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen, this group took a special interest in Brahmo missionary activity in the Punjab and their leading *pracharakas* (of whom viz. Mahendralal was one) were advised to learn Punjabi so that they could forge closer social contact with the Sikhs. Bose had been working in the Punjab as early as 1871 and gradually picked up the language. One of its immediate results was the

publication of the *Nanakprakash* in two volumes in 1885 and 1887. Based on the *Bala Janamsakhi*, *Nanakprakash* reviewed the life of the Guru in great detail. Bose's writings were marked by a note of 'scientific detachment' which many of his predecessors lacked.⁸ He was also closely associated with the major English sources of his times and made a good use of them in his introduction to this volume. He also sharply reacted to the comments of Dr Trump on the *Adi Granth* and Sikhism in general. It seems likely that his observations were greatly influenced by the contemporary Punjabi Press.

Our discussion on the contributions of the Brahmos would perhaps remain incomplete without any reference to the writings of Krishna Kumar Mitra of the *Sadharan Brahma Samaj*. A close associate of Surendranath Banerjea, Mitra had also been in the Punjab by the close of the 1870s. He visited some of the important Sikh centres of worship, including the Harmandir Sahib, and returned to Calcutta with a profound respect for the teachings of Guru Nanak. He sat down to write a biography of the Guru in the early 1880s, and in his memories gave a graphic account of his repeated attempts to complete it till the 1910s.⁹

II

Another stream of contributions came from non-Brahmo authors. Among them, in the chronological order, Raja Rajendralal Mitra comes foremost. With the financial assistance of the Vernacular Literary Society, he started *Vividhartha Sangraha* (The Miscellany Magazine) in 1851, the first penny magazine in India. It was a copiously illustrated monthly publication. In the very first issue of this journal, Mitra wrote a brief but critical life-sketch of the first Sikh Guru though his main focus was on the Sikh warriors who had lately fought against the British and lost their independence.¹⁰ Within a decade of its publication,

the Calcutta School Book took up the task of translating Robert Cust's scholarly article 'The life of Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh Sect' (First published as an 'educational tract' in 1859-60, subsequently reprinted in 1863 in the April issue of the *Oriental Christian Spectator*).¹¹ Ramnarayan Vidyaratna was requested to undertake the translation. It was published in 1865 and was immediately included in the school level competitive examination. But Vidyaratna's introductory note suffers from a few serious historical inaccuracies, three of which may be mentioned here. In the first place, Vidyaratna recorded that all Sikhs were known as the *Nanakpanthis* in the history of the Punjab. Secondly, he was not sure of the correct relationship between Jats and Sikhs in the *Majha* area. Finally, the author concluded his note with the curious remark : 'Ranjit Singh increased the military might of the Sikhs by fighting against the English'.¹²

Rajanikanta Gupta was another noted Bengali historian who worked on the different aspects of the history of the Sikhs. His writings were characterised by a deep patriotic note; they were published over a period of nearly twenty years and still remain scattered in different monographs. The earliest one was life-sketch of Guru Nanak and it was included in one of his early anthologies published in January 1880. According to him, the Sikhs represented an integral part of the vast Hindu community, and he described Guru Nanak as one of the messengers of God fighting for ameliorating the distress of the Hindu Punjabis at a time of their national spiritual crisis.¹³

Guru Nanak figures as an incarnation of God, in the writings of Kshitishchandra Chakravarty, a moderately successful lawyer of the Midnapur district bar. In his private life he was a man of religious temperament with a definite bias towards the cult of *Bhakti*. This largely explains his interest in the life and message of the founder of the Sikhs faith. He was of the

opinion that Nanak played a pivotal role in the 16th century *Bhakti* movement, spreading the gospel of love and devotion among the different religious communities of the Indian sub-continent. With this conviction he wrote a biography of Nanak in verse, which was published in 1916. In his preface to this poem, he asserted that this had nothing to do with the Nanak of history. He made no secret of the fact that his book would not satisfy those who portrayed the Guru minus the various hagiographic tales associated with him. The entire poem is imbued with an informal and personal touch which one hardly comes across in the pages of Mahendralal Bose's *Nanakprakash*.¹⁴

Perhaps the last major biography of Guru Nanak came from the pen of Rakhaldas Kavyananda in the late 1920s. Unfortunately very little is known about his life and other literary works. It seems likely that the author undertook the task from certain politico-religious considerations. He saw Nanak as a messiah propagating the cause of Hindu-Muslim co-operation in an age of religious persecution and communal hatred. He was of the opinion that a proper evaluation of the teachings of the Guru would help us in strengthening the bonds of intercommunal co-operation and understanding. To that end, wrote Kavyananda, the Guru once attended in the court of Ibrahim Lodi, the last Lodi ruler on the throne of Delhi, where he presented his philosophy of universal love among Hindus and Muslims and requested the ruler to help to achieve this. He was immediately imprisoned for propagating something that went against the will of the sovereign. It was Babar who subsequently released him after the Mughal victory at Panipat, wrote Kavyanada. This gross historical inaccuracy is a major blemish of this monograph. But Kavyanada also tried to project the life history of the Guru with an informal poetic touch which brings his book closer to Chakravarty's *Nanak* published nearly a decade before.¹⁵

III

During these years, the life and teachings of the Guru continued to be reviewed either in connection with the study of the religious history of ancient and medieval India or with reference to the general history of the Sikhs fighting against the declining Mughal authority during the later middle ages. Such works are too numerous to merit individual attention and their writers came from Brahma and non-Brahma ranks. Here we take note of only three categories because they have some special characteristics of their own.

The first kind is represented by Debendranath Mitra of Chandernagore whose work was published in 1909. Sikh militancy, in the opinion of Mitra, owed as much to Guru Gobind Singh as to Guru Nanak's protests against the social oppression and religious maladies of his times. The author was of the view that Nanak's inspired leadership made Sikhs a 'bold, assertive and dominant race ever ready to defend the cause of religion'.¹⁶ Thus Mitra's thesis that the basis of Sikh radical politics may be traced back to the time of Nanak, was a counterblast to Rabindranath's views on Guru Gobind's mission and the birth of the Khalsa.¹⁷ Like Debendranath Mitra, Kumudini Mitra also traced the history of Sikh militarism partially to Guru's message during the period of the *Bhakti* movement.¹⁸

Another group of writers viewed the Guru in the light of his preaching the message of Hindu-Muslim solidarity in the sub-continent. They pointed out that Nanak's commitment to a unitary God and his attempts at communal harmony were not a radical departure from the Indian cultural tradition. The Vedas and later Lord Buddha in the sixth century B.C. had said the same thing and during the middle ages, the tradition continued uninterrupted through the preachings of Tukaram, Namdev, Ramananda, Kabir and Mirabai. The Guru inherited

this rich religious legacy and made Hindus and Muslims aware of their common cultural heritage. This peculiar Indianness of his teachings explains his quick acceptability among the people of the Punjab and gave them the resilience to survive foreign invasions, internal strife and anarchy throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Leading Brahmo authorities like Kshitimohan Sen and Sarat Kumar Roy also reiterated that this cultural synthesis continued even after Nanak, and Raja Rammohun Roy was one of its exponents in the early 19th century.¹⁹

Interestingly enough, the Sanatanist writers of these years were no less prompt in projecting a closer religious bond with the teachings of Guru Nanak. Like the Punjabi Arya Samajists of the later 19th century,²⁰ they praised him for breathing a new spirit of enthusiasm into Hinduism in a time of its crisis. Following the lead of Rajanikanta Gupta, these twentieth century writers argued that Guru Nanak was a Hindu and advised Bengalis to read the history of the Sikhs, for they fought for the defence of Hindu religion and kept its flag flying in the north-west against foreigners. While systematically analysing the message of the Guru, they argued that Sikhism was in fact one of the innumerable cults of Hinduism; it freed its contemporary Hinduism from the trammels of superstitious priests. In their opinion, the founder of Sikhism preached nothing contrary to the message of the sacred Vedas, nor was he opposed to idol worship and the practice of Sati. The Guru's reformist missionary zeal also never discouraged Sikhs from coming closer to Hindus for the two communities continued to share some common festivals, customs and religious symbols. This continued over-lapping of these two dominant communities, these writers concluded, suggest their common origin and hence the attempt of some English authorities to project the Sikhs as a community different from the Hindus is nothing but an irrational and highly fallacious historical hypothesis.²¹

IV

The translation of the *Japuji Sahib* was also inseparably associated with the literary enterprise of Bengalis. It was *Maharishi* Devendranath Tagore who perhaps, played the pioneering role in this field. He was well conversant with some of the popular languages of northern India and his writings bear eloquent testimony to it. His interest in the hymns of Nanak also left behind a permanent imprint on the minds of two of his sons, viz., Jyotirindranath and Rabindranath. Both translated at least one each of these hymns and these were included in the Brahma musical compendium edited by Satishchandra Chakravarty.²²

But it was Sashibhusan Mukherjee who first published in three instalments a full length translation of the whole text of the *Japuji* in the *Nabajiban Patrika* in 1295 B.S. (1888 A.D). While introducing it to the Bengali-speaking world, Mukherjee wrote that it was a matter of great regret that this thought-provoking book had not been rendered into Bengali earlier. According to him, a systematic study of it would generate a spirit of confidence in the mind of even the defeatist intellectuals of his generation. He was however of the opinion that the *Japuji* did not essentially suggest any coherent representation of Guru Nanak's basic philosophical doctrine because it was never contemplated in its present form. The text owed its origin to the various answers provided by the Guru to the questions raised by his disciples from time to time on different theological problems. The whole text was made further confused by the conflicting interpretations of a particular *pauri* by the *Gianis and Bhais* over the years.²³

At the threshold of the present century another interesting edition of the *Japuji* was brought out by Lalbehari Singh, Jailor, Baharampur Jail.²⁴ It was published for the benefit of the Nanakpanthi Sikhs of Bengal and Assam who had very little

access to the *Japuji* in the Gurumukhi scripts. The translation was in an archaic prose and the translator used quite a few uncommon Bengali words.

Translation of the *Japuji* continued to receive intermittent boosts from the disciples of Vijaykrishna Goswami.²⁵ At least three of his followers took up the task with all earnestness; the first one in this series came out in 1915 under the editorship of Kiranchand Darvesh, a poet of considerable eminence. He rendered the text into poetry and the demands of meter necessitated frequent departures from the original writings of the Guru. There was also a short life sketch of the Guru at the outset of this work, highlighting his message of equality among Sikhs. The second translation was completed by Jynanendramohan Dutta and was published in 1925. Like the earlier volume this also included a biography of Nanak for the benefit of his readers. He however gave the text in prose and provided annotations of some important terms in Punjabi. It may be noted in this connection that this was the first annotated edition of the *Japuji* in Bengali.

The most important in this series was the work of Professor Haranchandra Chakladar who carried on his research on the *Adi Granth* for nearly forty-five years. He was an erudite scholar of history, had a first-rate knowledge of different Indian and European languages and served the Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta over a period of nearly twenty years (1917-37). His association with Sikhism went back to the days of the First World War and by the end of the Second, he is said to have finished his translation of Macauliffe's six volume *Sikh Religion* (Oxford, 1909). In 1945 he devoted himself to the translation of the *Faridkoti Tika* of the *Adi Granth* and the work continued till his death in 1958. He completed the monumental project, though it has yet to go through the press nearly twenty-five years after his

death. He only lived to see the publication of his *Japuji Sahib*, still considered to be the best edition in Bengali. In translating the text, keeping intact the spirit of the original, the editor took pains to make it lucid and readable. His introductory note to the text bears eloquent testimony to his scholarship and mastery in handling the different varieties of source materials available in different Indian languages.

V

This study highlighting the various books in Bengali on the Guru's life leads us to the study of the source materials made use of by the authors during the period under review. Many of them had access to the primary sources in Gurumukhi. The first who made use of them was *Bhai* Mahendralal Bose whose association with Sikh devotional literature and religious institutions may be traced back to early 1870s. In the main text of the *Nanakprakash*, he wholly relied on the *Bala Janamsakhi* sources and sought to explain some of the hagiographic stories of the Guru's life as critically as possible. Tinkari Banerjee, author of *Guru Gobind Singh*, also depended on other primary sources like the *Adi Granth*, *Dasam Granth*, *Panth Prakash* and *Suraj Prakash* in reconstructing the history of the Sikh under the tenth Guru.²⁶ A good number of translators-cum-editors of the *Japuji* were acquainted with some of these sources and, in this connection, the names of authorities like Abinanshchandra Mazumdar and Haranchandra Chakladar merit our special attention. The former was a long time resident of Lahore and served the Lahore branch of the Brahma Samaj for more than decade. His preface and some of his critical editorial notes relating to the *Japuji* may safely be taken as an index not only of his mature scholarly exposition of the primary sources in a lucid style, but his intimate association with the typically *Majha* social custom and value system. As regards Chakladar's handling of the primary source

materials, his long introductory notes to the text are a modest pointer to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of medieval literary history in the 1950s.

A study of these books would also reveal that many of these writers were well aware of the sources available in English. They had universally a high regard for Cunningham and there was hardly any major author who owed directly or indirectly nothing to his writings. They also critically consulted authorities like Malcolm, McGregor, Cust and Macauliffe; and the writings of Dr Trump, General Gordon and Henry Court were not altogether unknown to them. There are also a few cases of plagiarism. In this connection one may very well refer to the writings of Sarat Kumar Roy on Nanak's philosophy (page 13-14) and Tinkari Banerjee's depiction of Talwandi's physical geography on the eve of the Guru's birth (pages 4) taken respectively from McGregor (page 63-64) and Cust (page 96).²⁷

While writers like *Bhai* Mahendralal Bose and Haranchandra Chakladar were making some commendable experiments with their source materials, there were, however, a few litterateurs who showed very little interest in this direction. Kshitishchandra Chakravarty, for example, made no secret of the fact that he had collected all his materials from Annie Besant's *Children of the Motherland* and his work had nothing to do with the Nanak of history. A similar uncritical reliance also characterised the works of authorities like Kavyananda and Rajnarayan Bhattacharya, resulting in frequent chronological inconsistencies relating to the Guru's date of birth, the different Indian *udasis* and even about his death.²⁸

VI

This brief resume of Bengali literature of the last 150 years brings to the surface a few interesting points which may

conveniently be summed up for the benefit of readers. To begin with, it was the identity crisis and search for roots of the early Brahma leaders that brought the study of the Sikhs and teachings of Guru Nanak in particular into the arena of modern Bengali literature. They virtually dominated the scene till the close of the last century. A few non-Brahmo luminaries did join their ranks in the study of the Sikhs, but it seems doubtful whether their extent of participation ever surpass that of the Brahmos of these years. As the early enthusiasm of the Brahmos towards the Sikhs died down, orthodox Hindu litterateurs gradually replaced them in this field. Incidentally these were the years of growing popularity of Hindu militant politics in Bengal, which enjoined upon these writers a greater emphasis on the Indian military tradition in their writings. Thus along with Guru Nanak's voice of social protest against the caste system, ritualism and priestly domination, Guru Gobind's heroic military exploits and self-sacrifice also found a greater favour in the writings of these writers. As the years rolled on, they increasingly projected the tenth Guru as one of the saviours of Hinduism in a critical time of its existence. This positive Hindu colouring in the writings of Tinkari Banerjee and Bipinchandra Nandi²⁹ added a new dimension to their understanding of the Sikhs, which we do not come across in the Brahma monographs or essays of the 19th century.

Accordingly, by the turn of the last century, the early emphasis on the biographical study of Guru Nanak highlighting his message of love and tolerance came to be rivalled and latter on eclipsed by the interest in the *Daswan Padshah* and the Sikh War of Independence of the 18th century. A new swing in Bengali politics after the partition of Bengal in 1905 largely explains the absence of a first rate biography of Guru Nanak in the present century compared to the scholarly weight of the *Nanak Prakash* of the later 19th century. The later writings on Nanak's life and achievements were by men like

Chakraverty and Kavyanada who were serious about neither source materials nor the chronological sequence. Whatever enquiry or research was carried on, it primarily centred on the study of the *Japuji* inspired by its devotional appeal and it concerned only some religious groups.

These writings in Bengali on the mission of Guru Nanak gradually prepared a permanent basis for a future research on the history and culture of the Sikhs under the aegis of the University of Calcutta. Long before the other Indian universities, in the mid 1930s the University of Calcutta introduced a paper dealing with the Sikhs at the post-graduate level, and some pioneering research project were also undertaken by the department of History. Professor Indubhusan Banerjee, Professor Narendrakrishna Sinha and Professor Anilchandra Banerjee took the lead and brought out a few significant title on the history of the Sikhs, some of which remain unsurpassed even in the 1980s.

Notes and References

1. Rammohun Roy, *Collected Works of Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 8 and 262.
2. *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, *Saka* 1769, p. 92; *Saka* 1772, p. 176; *Saka* 1773, pp. 48, 99, 135, 137, 154 and 155; *Saka* 1774, p. 7; *Saka* 1825, pp. 88-96; *Saka* 1833, pp. 65-66; *Saka* 1829, pp. 10-14; *Saka* 1835 pp. 165 and 175.
3. Devendranath Tagore, *Atmajibani*, Calcutta, 1962, pp.113, 182-87, 212 and 233.
4. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Kajer Lok Ke', *Balak*, April-May, 1885.
5. Sarat Kumar Roy was closely associated with Rabindranath Tagore's *Brahmacharyasram* in Santiniketan. He was a teacher there and wrote a general history of the Sikhs beginning with the birth of Guru Nanak in 1469. He continued his account of the Sikhs till the annexation of the Punjab after the Second Sikh war in 1849. His *Sikh Guru O Sikh Jati* (Calcutta, 1909) was

characterised by a spirit of critical insight in the analysis of historical source materials. Subsequently he also wrote another essay reviewing the mission of the founder of the Sikh faith in the light of ancient Indian cultural heritage. In his opinion Nanak was a true representative of it and it was his message of love and communal amity that brought Hindus and Muslims closer in the middle ages. Nanak also maintained an equidistant position from these two communities and criticised them alike on different socio-religious issues. Roy was the President of the Barendra Anusandhan Samiti devoted to historical research on the northern part of Bengal. For Roy's views on Nanak, see his 'Nanak', *Bharatiya Sadhak*, Calcutta, 1914, pp. 24-33.

6. This essay of Rabindranath Tagore was subsequently published in the *Prabashi*, a leading Bengali monthly in 1909. It was translated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar into English under the title 'The Rise and Fall of the Sikh Power', and published in the April issue of the *Modern Review*. While analysing the rise of the Sikhs as military power in the Punjab, he frequently, quoted from this essay in his *History of Aurangzib* (Volume III, Calcutta, 1928). Rabindranath's thesis was sharply criticised by Professor Indubhusan Banerjee in his *Evolution of the Khalsa* (Volume II, Calcutta, 1946). Recently Professor Anil Chandra Banerjee has also reacted bitterly to Sarkar's view on Sikh history. For details, see his *Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh*, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 183-197.
7. The House of Tagores always took a special interest in the history and culture of the Sikhs. Rabindranath alone wrote five poems, four essays and two songs (hereafter referred to as P, E and S respectively) and their names, year of publication along with the names of the journals (hereafter J and books hereafter B) are given below :

Name of the journal/book and the year of publication

- | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|--|
| 1. 'Kajer Lok Ke' (Life of
Guru Nanak) | Balak (E) | (J) | April-May 1885
(Baishakh 1292 B.S.) |
| 2. 'Bir Guru' (Life of Guru
Gobind Singh) | Do (E) | (J) | July-August 1885
(Sraban 1292 B.S.) |
| 3. 'Sikh Swandhinata' (Sikh | Do | (J) | September-October |

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| War of Independence (E) | 1885 (<i>Ashwin</i> -1292
B.S.) | |
| 4. 'Sivaji O Guru Gobind Singh' (A comparative study of the two great heroes; this essay points out that Guru Gobind's mission was a failure which sparked a controversy in the academic circle) (E)
(see also note 5 for a further discussion on this point). | <i>Prabashi</i> (J) | 1911 |
| 5. 'Guru Gobinda' (Guru's penance leadings to the birth of the Khalsa) (P) | <i>Manashi</i> (B) | 1888 |
| 6. 'Nishfal Upahar' (A Presentation to the Guru which failed to win him over). (P) | Do | Do |
| 7. 'Bandi Bir' (Banda's war with the Mughals and his tragic end) (P) | <i>Katha</i> (B) | 1899 |
| 8. 'Prarathanatita Dan' (Martyrdom of Bhai Toru Singh). (P) | Do | Do |
| 9. 'Sesh Siksha' (Guru Gobind's assassination by a Pathan who was forgiven by the Guru) (P) | Do | Do |
| 10. 'A Hari Sudara' (Based on a Sikh hymn of a similar wording written by Guru Arjan). (S) | <i>Rabindra Rachanabali</i>
(Centenary Edition) | |

- 11 'Baje Baje Ramyabina Do
Baje' (Based on a Sikh
bhajan Badoi Badoi Ram-
yabina Badoi) (S)
12. 'Gaganer Thale Rabi Do
Chandra' (Based on the
'Gagana Moi Thalu' of
Guru Nanak). (S)

According to Satishchandra Chakravarty, editor of the *Brahma Sangit*, Jyotirindranath Tagore, an elder brother of Rabindranath, translated item No. 12 into Bengali. For details, see *Brahma Sangit* (Eleventh Edition, Calcutta, 1931), p. 200. There are also the writings of Devendranath Tagore mentioned in note 3.

8. Bhai Mahendra Lal Bose, *Nanakprakash*. Volume I, Calcutta, *Saka* 1807 and Volume II, Calcutta, *Saka* 1815. For a further discussion on Bhai Mahendralal Bose's career, see Dilip Kumar Biswas's contribution to the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (forthcoming).
9. As a lecturer of the City College, Calcutta, he started writing it in the 1880s. But the manuscript was lost while he was on his way to his native village now in Bangladesh. He decided to start afresh as soon as he was back in Calcutta. When he had nearly completed it, he was arrested by the police for the association with militant politics. The police took away the manuscript, never to return it. Finally, when he was put in Agra jail in 1908, he began again with renewed confidence. He even managed to procure a copy of the *Janamsakhi* from the Jail authorities and sat down to writings as soon as he had finished the sacred text. His memoirs give us a regular record of the progress of his writing. Unfortunately Mitra mentioned nothing about the fate of this manuscript. It seems likely that like the earlier ones, the author could not send the manuscript to press due to unknown reasons.

For details, see Krishna Kumar Mitra's *Atmajibani* (Calcutta, 1937). It may be noted in this connection that his daughter Kumudini Mitra (who also wrote a very popular account of the Sikh martyrs) had first training on the history of the Sikhs from

her farther. Her *Sikher Balidan*, Calcutta, 1904, was very enthusiastically received in the contemporary press and it ran for five quick editions in the course of a short period of only twenty years. It is argued that Kumudini was encouraged by her father to undertake this task, and that the younger Mitra performed her task quit efficiently.

10. *Vividhartha Sangraha*, Volume I, Numer I, Saka 1773.
11. S.S. Bal, *Guru Nanak in the Eyes of Non-Sikhs*, Chandigarh, 1984, p. 94.
12. Ramanarayan Vidyaratna, *Nanaker Jibancharit*, Calcutta, 1865, p. iv.
13. Rajanikanta Gupta, *Prabandhakusum*, Calcutta, 1880, pp. 33-39. For a further discussion on this point, see the author's article on Rajanikanta Gupta to published in the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*.
14. Kshitishchandra Chakravarty, *Nanak*, Calcutta, 1916. See also the author's contribution on Kshitishchandra Chakravarty in the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*.
15. Rakhaldas Kavyanada, *Guru Nanak*, Calcutta, 1929.
16. Debendranath Mitra, *Sikh Parichaya*, Chandernagore, 1909, pp. 3-4.
17. For a detailed discussion of Rabindranath's view, see *Itihas*, Calcutta, 1956, 61-74.
18. Kumudinini Mitra, *op.cit.*, p. 2.
19. Kshitimohan Sen, *Bharatiya Madhyauge Sadhanar Dhara*, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 73-74. Sarat Kumar Roy, *Bharatiya Sadhak*, Calcutta, 1914, p. 24-33. See also his essays on Raja Rammohun Roy' included in this volume.
20. This point has recently received much scholarly attention and the works of Jones and Barrier deserve our special attention. K.Jones, 'Ham Hindu Nahi' *The Arya Sikh Relations, 1870-1905*, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Volume-XI, number II, pp. 330-355. See also N.G. Barrier, *The Sikhs and Their Literature*, New Delhi, 1970.
21. This view found its most detailed expression in the writings of Tinkari Banerjee. His *Guru Gobind Singh* was first published in

1896. It had second edition which was published in 1918. For a detailed discussion on Tinkari Banerjee, see the author's article in the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. A similar conservative and orthodox view was put forward by Matial Ghosh in his book *Yuga Guru*, Calcutta, 1933.

22. I have consulted the eleventh edition of Satishchandra Chakravarty's *Brahma Sangit*, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 1053-1057.
23. Sashibhusan Mukherjee, 'Japuji', *Nabajiban*, Volume V, numbers 5-7, pp. 267-272; 328-383 and 397-414.
24. Besides the edition of Lalbehari Singh (Baharampur, 1900), there were at least ten more editions of the *Japuji* in Bengali. They are listed below for the convenience of readers :

Editor/Translator	Years of Publication
1. Anonymous	1912
2. Kiranchandas Darvesh	Ist Ed. 1916; 2nd Ed. 1937
3. Abinashchand Mazumder	1918
4. Jyanendramohan Dutta	1925
5. Satishchandra Banerjee	1937
6. Jatindramohan Chatterjee	1948
7. Haranchandra Chakladar	1958
8. Sudhir Gupta	1967
9. Amar Chakravarty	1973
10. Ranajitprakash Ghosh	1977

There are also a few editions published in the different journals and they are too numerous to merit special attention.

25. Vijaykrishna Goswami was an enthusiastic member of the Brahma Samaj. He was born in 1844 and died at the age of 65 in 1909. At one time he was a close associate of Keshavchandra Sen, but he came into conflict with him over Sen's daughter marriage with the son of the Maharaja of Coach Behar. This also led to a sharp division within the Brahma Samaj. He also played a pivotal role in the formation of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj under the leadership of Shivnath Shastri. Jyanendramohan Dutta, one of his disciples recorded that Vijaykrishna came to know about the *Japuji* when he was associated with the *Sangat Sabha* of

Keshab Sen. Later on when he went to Lahore and Amritsar, he came to know more about this book. He learnt Gurumukhi for a couple of months from a teacher in Dacca. He requested his followers to read at least one *pauri* regularly from the *Japuji* and encouraged its translation into Bengali. For a further discussion on this point, see Junendramohan Dutta, *op. cit.*, p.iii Kiranchand Darvesh, *op. cit.*, p.i

26. Tinkari Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 21, 238.
27. Regarding Sarat Kumar Roy, see *Sikh Guru O Sikh Jati*, Calcutta, 1909. I have consulted S.S. Bal's *Guru Nanak in the Eyes of Non-Sikhs* for McGregor and Cust.
28. Kavyananda, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 55, 149; Rajnarayan Bhattacharya, *Pajabetihas*, Calcutta, 1847, pp.86, 89, 96 and 110.
29. Bipinchandra Nandi, *Sikh*, Calcutta, 1909. See also Jatindranath Sammadar, *Sikher Katha*, Calcutta, 1912.

THE INTERPRETATIONS OF *MUL* *MANTRA*

Prof. Pritam Singh

No manuscript written in Guru Nanak's own hand is known to exist. The ravage of time has done such tremendous damage to our manuscript-treasures that not even a fake claim seems to have been put up about the existence of any of the great Guru's personal records, although such a ruse, successfully played upon Sikh royalty or aristocracy, would have ensured a bumper crop of cash and kind for any clever fabricator. However, in view of the almost universal medieval practice of writing anything in Gurmukhi or Devanagari scripts without separating different syntactical units from each other, we may justifiably presume that the fair copy of the Guru's own compositions was also similarly written, unless it is proved that the Guru used *Lande* or Persian scripts, in which case our presumption about the Guru's unbroken, continuous writing, may become infructious, but the point made below about the difficulty in its legibility may still remain valid. The old Gurumukhi calligraphic system did not need many punctuational marks. That is why, we find most of the old manuscripts, whether of poetry or prose, using only one such mark, namely, the full-stop, represented by two short vertically-parallel lines. Correct reading of unseparated words used to be a difficult

task and readers needed a long period of training to be able to read a written text correctly and fluently, improvising stops, signifying punctuation, such as commas, hyphens, question marks, exclamation marks or full-stops at appropriate places. In spite of all the training when it came to reading sutras, such as the one with which the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sacred Book of the Sikhs, opens, differences could not be avoided. This sutra, created by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, seeks to present, in capsule form, some attributes of God. It begins with the Gurmukhi numeral one (ੴ) and ends with the word *prasaad(i)*, after which there is a full stop. It is called the *mul* i.e. basic or root mantra. Different linguistic units, of which this mantra consists of, are neither punctuated nor separated from each other, except that the initial numeral, on account of its physiology, had to stand apart from the text that follows it. Manuscripts are not wanting in which the next unit, namely 'O' (ੴ) also stands separated from the succeeding text, but that, probably, owes its independence not to any doctrinal or mystical importance attached to it, but to the normal propensity of the calligraphists to be more ornamental with opening letters. The rest of the text upto the last unit, *prasaad(i)*, is normally found written as one continuous calligraphic whole, subject to the constraint of space.

Another prominent characteristic of the *mul* mantra which makes for the multiplicity of readings and, therefore of meaning, is the complete absence of independent prepositions, conjunctions and adverbs. In fact, even the verb is missing and the reader is left with one numeral and some nouns and adjectives only, to some of which are attached vowel symbols, namely *i(f)* and *u(-)*, which according to some, carry prescribed grammatical values¹ and according to others, have no value at all.²

Further, the author of the *mul* mantra betrays a clear

preference for the non-purist, *tadbhava* linguistic tradition. The phonetic construction of *sat(i)* (ਸਤਿ>ਸੰ. ਸਤਯੁ) *purakh(u)* (ਪੁਰਖ>ਸੰ. ਪੁਰੁਸ਼), *bhau* (ਭਉ>ਸੰ.ਭਯ). *ajuni* (ਅਜੁਨੀ>ਸੰ. ਅਯੋਨਿ), and *saibham* (ਸੈਭ>ਸੰ. ਸ੍ਰਯੰਭੁ or ਸੰਭਵ), in this not very long formula, for instance, confirms our view about this particular feature of the Guru's language. This tendency to own folk-pronunciation may also have provided some scope to a few self-educated interpreters to imagine far-fetched folk-etymologies in the case of some, at least, of the terms. A greater semantic rub is created by classical scholars, when they begin indulging in their intellectual pastime of imagining various textual permutations and combinations. The most confounding category of interpreters, however, is the one which exults in parading, rather pompously, all the possible meanings of the terms used in the *mul* mantra without pinpointing the right one. The purpose of the following section of this paper is to show how confounding the interpreters become when a comparative study of their exegesis is attempted.

II

The *mul* mantra, as given in the beginning of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, consists of 14 units, including the initial numeral 1(੧). Textual variations exist in the two-volume Goindwal manuscripts, now lying in Patiala and Yahiyapur respectively. The text, sought to be made current by the Meharban School through their *Jap(u) Parmaarth*, also differs with the authentic version in certain details. For the purposes of this study, these and other versions of the mantra, being unauthorised, have not been taken into consideration. We shall, therefore, base our discussion on the authorised version only. This version is reproduced below, with only one change, namely the provision of space between each linguistics unit:

1 (pronounced as 'ik' or 'ek') O *sat(i) nam(u) karata*

*purakh(u) nirbau nirvair(u) akal murat(i) ajuni
saibham gur prasad(i)*³

Our trouble starts with the starting numeral 1 (ੴ) itself. Professor Sahib Singh treats it as the modifier of the next unit 'O' (ੴ) because it signifies the latter's quality of oneness. He explains '1O' (ੴ) as 'the Being that is One'⁴ and again as the 'One Timeless Person'⁵ clearly classifying '1' as the adjective of 'O'. So do a host of other commentators. We refer to only three of them here, namely Shri Vinoba Bhave,⁶ Dr. Gopal Singh⁷ and the learned translators of *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*⁸. The late Bhai Vir Singh, on the other hand, did not subscribe to this view. He puts a comma between '1' and 'O'. According to him :

He (Guru Nanak) has not used '1' at the very start of the *Jap(u)* as a numeral adjective; it has been used as a substantive which signifies His quality. It is His name,...⁹

There are other scholars, such as Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh¹⁰, Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi¹¹ and Wazir Singh¹² who agree with Bhai Vir Singh in putting a comma after the numeral. Whether treated as an adjective or as a noun, the reference in both cases is to the oneness of God, but Swami Harnam Das elbows the numeral out of the *mul mantra* by treating it as a pointer to the authorship of the *Jap(u)*. Says he :

It stands for *mahila* 1, i.e. Guru Nanak... In the absence of sound research on the Scripture, this digit was made a part of the text (of the *muul mantra*) by the people. The fact is that it is not connected with the text at all; it stands for the first Guru...If this (1) were not there, it would be difficult to ascribe the authorship of this text to Guru Nanak Dev.¹³

The ponderous Pandit Tara Singh Narottam alludes to an unusual interpretation, which has been current in a section of Udasi and Nirmala scholars :

... According to some persons, this message is meant for men and women alike, though in the case of the Veda, women, to whatever caste they may belong, and all male members of the Fourth Varna, are debarred from uttering *Om*. In order, therefore, to be able to convey the message to all men and women, without violating the vedic ban, a sort of curtain has been hung (by placing '1') before *Om*, so that everyone may utter it in its veiled form. Speaking from behind a curtain is no sin...¹⁴

Giani Badan Singh and others, who prepared the first complete commentary of *Guru Granth Sahib* seem to give credence to the above statement of the learned Pandit.¹⁵ Giani Bakshish Singh is another Nirmala stalwart, who subscribes to the same view in his commentary of the *Jap(u)*¹⁶

As if all these schools were not sufficient, there exists a school of Omitters, one member of which, Dr. Ernest Trumpp, dispenses with the numeral '1' altogether and treats the following symbols *O* (ੴ) the *mangal* the general invocatory superscription, having no intrinsic connection with the *mul* mantra.¹⁷ Thus, for him the *mul* mantra proper begins with *sat(i)* and not with 1 (I) or 'O' (ੴ). There are others who resort to a total black-out, not only of the numeral 1, but also of 'O'. We quote now from Dr. Balbir Singh :

Sadhu Mul Ram's *Tika* (1842) begins with *sat(i) nam(u)* No explication of ੴ occurs in it. Sir Attar Singh Bhadur's *Tika* in Urdu (1874) also starts with *satinam(u)*. The same is the case with Bihari Lal's *Jap(u) Parmarth* (1876).. *ariji's Pothi* also omits all commentary on ੴ^{ms}

How fertile is the ground for multiple schools of interpretation to grow on the basis of syntactical value granted to a particular unit of the text by the interpreting authority ! The differences, as we shall soon see, get wider and deeper and begin covering grounds other than the syntax, including pronunciation, etymology, doctrine, etc. Of necessity, we shall be selective rather than exhaustive, while attempting to document the differences that exist between one interpretation and the other.

'O' (ੴ) is believed to be the initial Gurmukhi character of the age-old mystic Indian term *Om*. It is pronounced as *O*, *Om* or *Onkar* (*Omkar*), according to the predilection and cultural affiliation of the speaker. Swami Harnam Das quotes *Taittiriyaopanishad* to corroborate his view, but claims Vedic sanction for assigning the phonetic value of 'O' to 'ੴ'¹⁹ Some readers, especially those belonging to Udasi and Nirmala denominations, generally pronounce 'O' as 'Om' : while most of the Sikhs pronounce it as *Onkar*.²⁰ Normally, etymologists explain *Onkar* as the combination of *Om+kar* or *Oan+kar* (ੴਮ+ਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ੴਮੰ+ਕਾਰ)²¹ but Sohan Singh believes that *kar* should be read as '*akaar*' Says he :

Ikoamkar = 1 (Ik) + Oam+akaar...

Oamkar. The word has been explained in many different ways by many different writers. But so far as Sikh writings are concerned, the prefix *Oam* makes its meaning clear. *Oam* consists of three letters O, a and m--O standing for *urdham*, i.e. above; a for *adham* i.e. below; and m for *madham* i.e. between. Thus the word *Oam* means that which is above, below and between i.e. the entire universe. The word *akaar* means the visible expanse or simply the expanse. Taking the three components of *Ik Oamkar* together, then, we can say that it means the One Universal Being.²²

The late Giani Sher Singh appears to anticipate Sohan Singh's break-up of *Oamkar* into *Oam+akar* when he seeks to explain it as "the Creator of *akar*."²³ The two, however, differ vastly in their explication of it.

For Pandit Gurmukh Singh, the *mul* mantra is a direct revelation from God and has, therefore, to be explained as God's own testament. He explain 'O' thus : "I am the One who grants protection to the people at the mere utterance of this phoneme..."²⁴ Apart from the difference in meanings, the Pandit's first person singular turns into the second person singular in Giani Budh Singh who explains it as, "You are an embodiment of felicity and a treasure of bliss..."²⁵

Sant Ganesha Singh, using the third person singular says : " 'O' means that He is the Supreme Spirit who is felicity incarnate,..."²⁶ For Nihal Singh Suri, it stands for the "meta-Brahman, the Supreme Lord."²⁷ Kartar Singh elucidates it as, "...One God, the glow of whose light is incessant. He who pervades everywhere immutably."²⁸

In spite of the unmistakable figure I which precedes 'O' in the *mul* mantra, the commentators, who possess even a smattering of Sanskrit, do not forget to refer to the trinity of gods represented by the three sounds, of which 'Om' is believed to be constituted, namely, *a*, *u*, and *m*. Bawa Hari Prakash for example, explains that :

akaar (a), *ukaar* (u) and *makar* (m), with a half *maatras* added to them, make *Oamkar*. *Akaar* (i. e. a) means Brahma (the Creator), *ukaar* (i.e.u) stands for Vishnu (the Sustainer) and *makaar* (i.e.m) represents Shiva (the Destroyer), while the half *matras* is to be understood as the Fourth State...²⁹

Sant Sute Prakash, while accepting the 'Trinity Formula' prefers to explain the *kaar* or half-circle above ॐ as, "pure Brahma, known as *amatrika*."³⁰

Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh suggests "transcendent-immanent" as the intended meanings of 'O' + 'kar'³¹ Bhai Santokh Singh had expressed the same earlier in his own style while contending, rather vehemently, that the Guru did not at all deviate from the Veda : "O is *purusha*, fortified with his *maya*..."³² He also provides the following interesting information:

...All the Upanishads, Shastras and Puranas recommend the worship of *Oankar*. Each of the Seven Independent Schools (of Philosophy) has its own nine brands of *Oankaar*, thereby raising their number to 63. The reference here is to the attributive and grosser aspect of *Oankaar*... His 64th aspect is subtle, non-attributive and without any trace of falsehood...*Oankaar*, has ten nomenclatures...If all of them are to be explained that will mean padding the book unnecessarily. We, therefore, confine ourselves to explaining one nomenclature, namely *Oankaar*. When *Oankar* is uttered, the whole body from the feet to the head, experiences an elevation, that is why it is called *Oankaar* : the mere utterance of *Oankar* makes the flow of lifewind blow upwards--that is why it is called *Oankar* the more *utterance* of *Oankaar* also directs the vital wind to the Tenth Door--that is why it is called *Oankar*.³³

Narottam believes that the beginning with '1 O' and ending with *prasaad(i)* is the original revelation granted by Lord Vishnu to Guru Nanak and represents the mystic essence of the Veda. Says he :

The Grammarians explain ॐ as the *Parmeshwara* who protects in lieu of its utterance. They trace it from *av* which means 'protection'...there are authors who derive it from a combination of three phonemes *a*, *u* and *m*,

a+u becoming 'O' and *m* turning into a dot (representing nasalisation) to form the symbol 'ॐ'... Thus this composite unit comprises three constituents (*a, u* and *m*) *akaar* representing *Viraat-Ishwara* and *Vishwa-jeeva ukar* standing for *Hrinyagarbha-Ishwara* and *Taijas jiva* and *makaar* meaning *Maayaapati-Ishwara* and *Praagya jiva*... This *Oankaar* is identified in books as half *mantra*. When the three *matras* are relieved of their stations and bodies, what remains intact is *Parmaatma*.. which is also called *Turiyaa*...³⁴

The style and idiom adopted by the category of commentators who had proper training in the theological seminaries of the last century such as, for instance, Bhai Santokh Singh and Pandit Tara Singh Narottam, are all out of fashion these days and what overawed their readers till four or five decades ago, on account of their command of classical vocabulary and their plentiful knowledge, appears flat and incoherent to many of the modern Sikh readers, who accept, quite avidly the interpretations offered by scholars, well-grounded in Western philosophy.³⁵ For example, when Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh translates 'O'+*kaar* as 'Transcendent-Immanent'³⁶ or 'Being-Becoming',³⁷ or when Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi translates it as 'Logos-Creator',³⁸ they seem to make sense for them.

We move now to the next constituent of the *mul* mantra, namely *sat(i)*. There are persons who regard *Ek Oankaar sat(i)* (ॐ ਸਤਿ) as one compact unit. According to them, the first comma in the text should be applied after *sat(i)*. Bhagat Singh Hira for instance, prefers to join *sat(i)* not with *naam(u)*, but with what precedes it (i.e ॐ and ॐ). According to him *I O sat(i)* (ॐ ਸਤਿ) means "*ik Oankar* alone is *sat(i)*."³⁹ Llate Dr. Sher Singh does one better by placing the first punctuation mark after the next unit *naam(u)*, thus making "I

O sat(i) naam(u)" as the first unit of the *mul* mantra. His Punjabi rendering of the text reads as follows in English : "The One Brahman's is the only existence which pervades everywhere."⁴⁰ The late Pandit Kartar Singh of Dakha was sure that *sat(i)* enjoyed an existence, independent of the immediately following unit, *naam(u)*. Says he in his *Jap(u) Nisaan* :

To regard *sat(i) naam(u)* as one complete unit and explain it as 'True name' or 'True is whose Name' is against all canons of *Gurbani* Grammar...⁴¹

There are others, such as Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh,⁴² Mohan Singh Uberoi⁴³, Gopal Singh⁴⁴ and Sohan Singh⁴⁵ who also grant *sat(i)* the status of an independent attribute with commas before and after it. Bhai Sahib Dharmanant Singh,⁴⁶ Harbhajan Singh⁴⁷ (Former Principal of Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar) and Parmanand⁴⁸ also opt for separating *sat(i)* from *naam(u)*, the next unit. But, according to the reading acceptable to an equally impressive group of scholars, *sat(i)* must be joined with the next unit, *naam(u)*, to form the compound *sat(i) naam(u)*, meaning 'True Name' or 'Truth is whose name' or 'True is whose name.' This group includes such commentators as Professor Sahib Singh,⁴⁹ Teja Singh,⁵⁰ and Taran Singh⁵¹ besides Bawa Hari Prakash,⁵² Macauliffe⁵³, and others. Among these is Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia who in his paper on *akaaal muurat(i)* finds in *sat(i) naam(u)* "the identity of being and cognition".

The late Dr. Bhai Vir Singh, after having treated *sat(i)* and *naam(u)* as independent units in his *Santhyaa*, informs his readers that :

The *bani* also permits the reading of the combined word '*sat(i) naam(u)*,' viz :

O my mind; always recite *sat(i) naam(u)*, *sat(i) naam(u)*.

Writes Bhai Gurdas : 'The true Guru Nanak caused the True Lord to be remembered in the form of *sat(i) naam(u)*..⁵⁴

Bhai Vir Singh leaves the matter there, without clinching the issue under discussion. The inevitable result is that his readers remain in two minds even after going through the whole learned discourse on the subject.

We shall quote only four other scholars now. All of them are in favour of *sat(i)* and *naam(u)* being treated as one compound whole, *sat(i) naam(u)*, but the shades of their differences need be noted :

Nihal Singh Suri

Whose personal, real, primordial name is *sat(i) naam(u)*⁵⁵

Kahn Singh

...*sat(i)* (Truth) is His name or True is the name of the Eternal Being...At the time of meditation and recitation, it is not the word *sat(i) naam(u)* which is used, it is only *sat(i)*⁵⁶

Jodh Singh

The main thing about Him is that He has no name and that is why we always call Him *sat(i)*⁵⁷

Bakhshish Singh Nirmala

..Real are His name and Form, all other Names and Forms are unreal.⁵⁸

We have been able to cover almost half of the next adjoining constituent *naam(u)* within our discussion of *sat(i)* but some of the most interesting etymological surmises remain to be introduced. Let us, for example, scan what Giana Singh Gayani (*sic*) has to say on this point :

Now we shall start explaining the vocable *naam*. It means God is 'well-known' : further, it means that He is the 'root' of all creation; furthermore, *na+aam* (i.e. *na* meaning 'negation' and *aam* meaning 'disease') also means 'free from disease', alternatively, *na* stands for 'not', *aam* means 'common', therefore *naam* also has the connotation of 'something which is special'...⁵⁹

Most of our commentary writers agree that *naam(u)* is followed by a comma, but the writer happened to come across an old Udasi Mahant, Gopal Dev of Dhariwal (Distt. Gurdaspur), who insisted that the comma had to be replaced with a question mark. His reading, as that of a number of other traditionalists, was : "*Sat(i) Naam(u)?*" "He is the only ever-existent Truth. But what is His Name ?" The reply, according to the Mahant's version, is available in the next constituent of the mantra i.e. His Name is *Karata* (the Doer or Creator). According to still another version, there has to be a hyphen between *nam(u)* and *karataa*, *naam(u)-karataa* i.e. the Creator of the Name.⁶⁰ Pandit Gurmukh Singh accepts the hyphen but gives his characteristic twist to its import. According to him the compound *naam-karataa* means "I, the supreme spirit, *am* the Creator of this universe of names and forms."⁶¹ Incidentally, Swami Parmanand had suggested that "the word *rupa* may be added after *naam(u)*, because all created things in the universe have names and forms...Therefore, the vocable *naam(u)* of the original text is expressive of *rupa* (form) also..."⁶² but Sohan Singh castigates the Swami and others of his thinking about the essentiality of the concomitance of *rupa* with *naama* by telling them that "a universal Being cannot be identified with any particular form and, hence, He is simply the Name 'i.e. the Spirit'.⁶³ Dr. Trumpp hyphenates *karataa* with the previous word but that word for him is not *naam(u)*, it is *sat(i) naam(u)*, so that his reading is *sat(i) naam(u)* and translates it as "The true name is the Creator".⁶⁴

There is another set of scholars, including Bhai Sahib Dharmanant Singh,⁶⁵ Kartar Singh,⁶⁶ Dr. Sher Singh,⁶⁷ Sahib Singh⁶⁸ and Harnam Das,⁶⁹ for whom *karataa* is preceded and succeeded by commas and should stand on its own legs as an independent unit. The compilers of *Shabdaarth*, on the other hand, think that the Creator of the *mul* mantra intended *karata* to be joined with the next unit *purakh(u)*. They quote quite a few verses from the Scripture to prove that *karataa* and *purakh(u)* are one unit.⁷⁰ M.A. Macauliffe too joins *karataa* with *purakh(u)* but translates the compound simply as the "Creator", consciously ignoring the presence of *purakh(u)*. This is what he has to say in justification of his stand :

It is perhaps not necessary to translate the word *purakh(u)*. It means male or creative agency. The all-pervading spirit in union with a female element uttered a word from which sprang creation.⁷¹

Harbhajan Singh⁷² and Surinder Singh Kohli⁷³ also fight shy of *purakh(u)* like Macauliffe. Trumpp puts a wedge between *karataa* and *purakh(u)* but his reading differs from all others in that he joins *purakh(u)* with the next unit *nirbhau* and translates the compound *purakh(u) nirbhau*, as 'the spirit without fear'.⁷⁴ Pandit Gurmukh Singh puts a question mark after *karataa* and makes us believe that *purakh(u)* is the Guru's own reply to it. For him *purakh(u)* means, the 'soul'.⁷⁵ Giani Sher Singh's synonym for *purakh(u)* seems to be 'a male person or husband'. He quotes from the *Guru Granth Sahib* the text which says, "There is only one *purakh(u)* in this world, all others are women."⁷⁶ But more than any one else, we must hear what Giana Singh Gayani has to say about this word :

He, who permeates wholly in the smallest as well as the biggest creatures, is called *purakh(u)*; *purakh(u)* also signifies the person who possesses *purakhatva* or virility;

purakh : *pu* is the name of a hell and *rakh* stands for protection i.e. He who saves from hell; then, *pur+kh*: *pur* means a habitat and *kh* means 'prevalent' i.e. He who is prevalent in all the *purees*, namely, the human bodies, is called *purakh(u)*; *pur* means the *purees* which stand for human bodies and *kh* means 'destruction': thus it also means 'He who destroys *purees* or human bodies' And last of all, it means 'He who is the Lord of the *purees* i.e. of the human bodies...'⁷⁷

Of course, the Gyani does not come to the aid of the readers about what Guru Nanak wanted *purakh(u)* to mean in the sacred text.

Dr. Gopal Singh trying to be non-literal, translates the portion '*naam(u) karataa purakh(u)*' as the All-pervading *purusha* the Creator".⁷⁸ Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh translates *karataa* and *purakh(u)* simply as "Creator, Person..."⁷⁹ Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi, renders them as "Creator-integrator..."⁸⁰, while Sohan Singh does it as "the Creator, the controller and enjoyer..."⁸¹ For Prof. Sahib Singh *purkh(u)* signifies the omnipresence of God"⁸² but Dr. Sher Singh's emphasis is on its omniscience,⁸³ Giani Kirpal Singh is one of the tribe which provides interestingly far-fetched interpretations. One in the present case is that '*pur*' means 'full of' and '*khu*' means 'like the sky'. "*Pur*", says Swami Parmanand, "means body. He who resides in the body in the form of effulgence, free of all its bonds, like an observer, is the *purusha*."⁸⁵ Vinoba Ji, reading *karataa-purakh(u)* as one word, explains it as. "...God is the Creator of the Universe. Also he is All-mind. '*Purukh*' specifically implies that not Nature but God is the Creator..."⁸⁶

The first negative attribute, *nirbhau* (a compound of *nir-*+*bhau*) which is the next unit in the text, has already been

touched upon. It is the same word which the founder of Arya Samaj misused when he mounted an unmerited attack on Guru Nanak, and which, in turn, led to the souring of relations between the Sikhs and the Arya Samaj.⁸⁷ However, this aspect of *nirbhau*, not being our concern here, we revert to the subject proper with the caution that Swami Ji's statement is based on incorrect and untenable surmises and prejudice.

Swami Harnam Das summarises the different meanings ascribed to this unit by indigenous scholars, thus :

Nirbhau is interpreted as, (i) *nirbhaya*, *nir* meaning 'without' and *bhaya* meaning 'birth or 'origin' that is 'He is without birth or origin'; (ii) He is without the bondage of wordly things; (iii) He is the embodiment of unadulterated fear, and (iv) nothing but the world is His form.⁸⁸

This quotation provides another peep into the wild adventurism of some of our old interpreters. Now let us see what the modern commentators have to say about *nirbhau*. Sohan Singh interprets it as "not being under an imposed discipline or restraint"⁸⁹ and "beyond restraint, the spontaneous". Dr. Wazir Singh renders it as "contradicted by none"⁹⁰ while Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh translates it as "Non thesis"⁹¹ This scholar translates the next negative attribute *nirvair(u)* as "Non-antithesis",⁹² though generally speaking, its most obvious interpretation, "without enmity" or "without hatred" holds the ground among the majority of writers. Sohan Singh, arguing his case against this common interpretation protests that the reference here is to the absence of "internal antagonisms," "internal inconsistencies" or "contradictions". It should, therefore, mean, "internal harmony."⁹³ As usual, we come across inventive minds even in the case of this word of common use. For example, some traditionalists explain it as "One who is known for His specialization in enmity" "Absolute Rancour"⁹⁴ and so on.

Nirbhau and *nirvair(u)* are the two attributes about which no punctuational controversy exists, but as soon as we arrive at the ninth unit, *akaal*, we find ourselves face to face with the same difficulty. Is it another independent negative *a+kaal* (sans+time) or has it to be paired with the tenth unit, *murat(i)* ? Avtar Singh Vahiria⁹⁵ Giani Sher Singh,⁹⁶ Budh Singh,⁹⁷ Gulab Singh,⁹⁸ Shivdayal Singh alias Panna Lal Khatri,⁹⁹ and Hari Singh Gurmukh,¹⁰⁰ as also Teja Singh,¹⁰¹ Sahib Singh,¹⁰² Swami Hartam Das,¹⁰³ etc., are in favour of the paired reading. Ranged against them are Sodhi Hazara Singh,¹⁰⁴ Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh,¹⁰⁵ Khushwant Singh,¹⁰⁶ Sohan Singh,¹⁰⁷ Dr. Sher Singh,¹⁰⁸ Bhagat Singh Hira¹⁰⁹ and Dr. Wazir Singh,¹¹⁰ who regard *akal* as a complete entity in itself.

The question is, do these schools differ in their understanding of *akaal* and *murat(i)* units of the *mul* mantra? Yes, will be the answer, if one were to depend upon the evidence provided by scholars. Says Swami Parmanand :

a is negation, *kaal* is time and *murat(i)* is anything whose form is mutable; which exists at one time and does not at another,...He who is immutable and retains its wholeness in space, time and substance, and remains unchanged throughout time--past, present and future, is called *akaal murat(i)*...¹¹¹

Bhai Santokh Singh explains *akaal murat(i)* thus :

'*a*' according to *Akaaksara Kosha* means Vishnu, '*k*' means Brahma and 1, on account of the inherence of *laya* (merger) in it, stands for Shiva. *Karataa purakh(u)* assumes the form of *trimurti* here, hence *akal murat(i)*.¹¹²

Giana Singh Gyani conjures up a still more interesting etymology of *murat(i)*; when he says that *mu* means 'my' and

'*rat(i)*' is 'love', so *akal murat(i)* will mean, "I love the timeless."¹¹³ According to Sodhi Hazara Singh, "*Nirankaar* is formless but *Ekankaar* has a form. *Muurat(i)* means 'gender', 'shape' or 'form'."¹¹⁴ Giani Kirpal Singh gives four alternative meanings and the fourth is the one which had eluded all other previous commentators. He borrows the negating prefix 'a' from *akaal* and transfers it to *murat(i)* which then is made to mean, "sans time, sans mass."¹¹⁵ Teja Singh explains *akal murat(i)* as "an existence (*hastee*), beyond the beat of time,"¹¹⁴ Sohan Singh ridiculing those who combine two words into a compound, says, "...*Akaal-murat(i)* can only imply a timeless embodiment and it is for the reader to judge if we may call God a timeless embodiment?"¹¹⁷ Dr. Gopal Singh translates *murat(i)* as "the Being,"¹¹⁸ Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh does it as "Form"¹¹⁹ and Dr. Mohan Singh as "Form-manifester."¹²⁰ Trumpp takes *akaal murat(i)* to be one unit having a timeless form."¹²¹ Khushwant Singh renders *murat(i)* as "His Spirit pervades the universe,"¹²² probably confusing *murat(i)* with *purakh(u)*, while Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia in his paper on '*akal murat(i)*' understands it as "Supra-temporal, time-transcendent nature of God".

Next in the serial order come *ajuni* and *saibham*. Usually, they are read as separate units. Dr. B.B. Chaubey suggests in his article that *ajuni* should be interpreted as "not bound by place" rather than relating it to God, non-appearance in the uterus. "But" warns Sodhi Hazara Singh "the *ajuni-saibham* pair has been used as a compound also..."¹²³ Swami Harnam Das is firmly of the opinion that "the whole context goes in favour of regarding *ajuni-saibham* as a single whole..."¹²⁴ Bawa Hari Prakash comes forward with the suggestion that "*sai*" meaning '*sansai*' (doubt) [*Sk-sanshaya*] and '*bham*' meaning '*naasha*' destruction, *saibham* would mean 'without doubt...' ¹²⁵ Dr. Trumpp derives *saibham* from

sambhava (birth, production) and refers also to its other forms used in the scripture, such as ਸੰਭੂ, ਸੰਭੋ, ਸਭਵਿਉ¹²⁶ Swami¹²⁶ Parmanand's interpretation is :

...he, who is born of the womb is *yoni sai*... but He whose birth is unrelated to the womb and always remains immutable is called *ayonisah* and *bham* means 'light'. God is free from any contact with the womb and is Himself light, therefore, He is called *ajuni saibham*.¹²⁷

After explaining *saibham* as "He is His own creation, not anybody else's" Anand Ghan adds that "*sai* also means a hundred or innumerable; *bham* means from (*rup*), effulgence (*tej*) and light (*prakaash*)". Therefore, *saibham* will further mean, He who has innumerable forms, immeasurable effulgence and limitless light.¹²⁸ A novel interpretation is offered by Giani Badan Singh and associates :

What is He ? (He is) *akaal*...He is free from *Kaal* (time), which destroys everybody. *Murat(i)* : What is His Form or in other words, what sort of a person is He ? *Ajuni sai* i.e. He is free from *maya*, has immaculate form (*sudh sarup*) and is causeless *Sai* in the Bangar region means *hai* (i.e. 'is')...¹²⁹

The learned Gianis have introduced *sai* here as a verb in the *muul* mantra. Those who trace the etymology of *saibham* to *svayambhu* (self-created) are, of course, legion and we need not quote them. Among the moderns we come across such shades of difference as "Being of His own Being",¹³⁰ "Self-existent",¹³¹ "self-expression"¹³² and "self-dependent"¹³³

With *gur prasaad(i)* we reach the penultimate pair of units in the *mul* mantra. Here also, we find among others, the Comma and the Hyphen schools joining issue with each other. Scholars, such as Sodhi Hazara Singh¹³⁴ and Giana Singh¹³⁵

give both the readings. Sohan Singh Galhotra chooses to join *saibham* with *gur* and *prasaad(i)* and makes this combination yield the following meanings :

...born of itself, He is my Guru, through whose courtesy (I have been able to say this and am going to say or write more of it now).¹³⁶

For Sant Gulab Singh *gur prasad(i)* is a propitiatory invocation (*vastu nirdesh mangalacharan*) meaning "May the Gurus', (i.e. God's) kindness visit us!"¹³⁷ Prof. Teja Singh, conscious of the Muslim tradition of placing *bismillah* at the head of any writing, explains, *gur prasaad(i)* as, "I begin with the grace of the Guru whose attributes have been given from *Ik Oankaar* to *saibham*"¹³⁸ According to Bhai Vir Singh,¹³⁹ Sahib Singh,¹⁴⁰ Parmanand,¹⁴¹ and a number of earlier scholars, such as Hari Ji¹⁴² and Anand Ghan,¹⁴³ *gur prasaad(i)* means that God is achievable through the grace of the guru. Nihal Singh Suri, forgetting that *mul* amntra is Guru Nanak's own composition, explains *gur prasaad(i)* as "God can be attained through the Guru (namely Sri Satiguru Nanak Dev Ji) only".¹⁴⁴ For Trumpp, the *mul* mantra ends at '*saibham*' and '*gur prasaad(i)*' is in the nature of a second invocation : "By the favour of the Guru",¹⁴⁵ the first being, *Om* ! Dr. Gopal Singh places full stop after *gur* which he translated as "the Enlightener" and carries *prasaad(i)* to the beginning of the mantra, so that his translation reads as "By Grace of the One Supreme Being...The Enlightener"¹⁴⁶ The UNESCO translators render *gur prasaad(i)* as "by the grace of the Guru, made known to men."¹⁴⁷ Khushwant Singh translates the compound as "by the Guru's grace shalt thou worship Him",¹⁴⁸ Macauliffe translates *gur prasaad(i)* as "by the favour of the Guru",¹⁴⁹ but as he explains it in a foot-note, he does it under a sort of duress. He says :

We have translated these words in deference to the opinions of the majority of the Sikhs; but with several learned *gianis*, we have no doubt that they were intended as epithets of God the great and bountiful.¹⁵⁰

With this we come to those who regard *gur* and *prasaad(i)* as two separate units. *Gur* has been interpreted as one who spreads light (of knowledge) in the darkness (of ignorance)¹⁵¹ is greater than all others,¹⁵² is consciousness incarnate¹⁵³ and is worshippingable¹⁵⁴, while *prasaad(i)* has been understood to mean sitting with tranquility¹⁵⁵; propitiatory food¹⁵⁶; above all sensual tastes¹⁵⁷; everybody's resort like a temple¹⁵⁸; delight and compassion¹⁵⁹; 'Grace on all'¹⁶⁰ and free from impurities of form, colour, caste, creed and ignorance.¹⁶¹

III

It is evident from the foregoing survey that a category of scholars has always been in the habit of receiving messages of their own choice from a given text, unmindful of what the author might have intended it to communicate. We all know that in its connotative function, religious language differs substantially from the lay idiom; we also know that with the passage of time, languages undergo morphological and semantic changes and further, that newly acquired connotations are often retrospectively imposed, consciously or uncounsciously, upon old meaningful linguistic units. Such facts only rubricate the imperativeness of considering religious texts, or for that matter any old text, in the original contexts only. Some obviously funny distortions, in the interpretation of *mul* mantra, can be easily traced to the non-observance of the contextual rule. Whether the confounding multiplicity of interpretations has been due to the old calligraphic system of the misappropriation of the functions of a lexicographer by the exegetist and the commentary-writer, or the weakness of the annotator-commentator to indulge in scholastic exhibitionism or even due to the sheer

ignorance of the person trying his incompetent hand at a work which is much beyond his reach, the situation as it obtains today, is anything but satisfactory and poses a big challenge to Sikh scholarship. In fact, it was this challenge which prompted the writer to convene a get-together of scholars of Sikh Studies so that they might arrive at a consensus about the ideological implications of the *mul* mantra. The differences do exist but it is difficult not to have a feeling that the re-interpretation of the whole Sikh Scripture is around the corner. This may or may not come about in actual practice. The writer is of the firm opinion that the key is available or, at least, can be reforged from the Sikh Scripture itself, which is the repository, not only of the complete works of Guru Nanak but also of five of his successors. It is in the Scripture that we come across all the constituents of the *Mul* mantra used severally and collectively. Similarly, Bhai Gurdas's work is another important source, contemporaneous with the Scripture, which should have been exploited thoroughly for dependable material on the subject. It is indeed surprising that no interpreter has ever thought of exploring fully these obvious sources. If at all, these have been used only as corroborative evidences and never as a primary source.

Notes and References

1. Teja Singh, *Sabdantak Lagan Matran De Gujjhe Bhed*, and Sahib Singh, *Gurbani Viakaran*.
2. ਅਰਥ ਕਾਲ ਮੈ ਸਿਆਰੀਪਨਾ ਔਰ ਮੁਕਤਾਪਨਾ ਫੇਡ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਜੈਸਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੈਸਾ ਅਰਥੁ ਕੀਆ ਜਾਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਵਤ ਸਿਆਰੀ ਔਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਰਥੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਤੇ।
Giani Badan Singh et al, *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Satik*, Vol.1, p.3.
3. ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥
Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1.
4. ਉਹ ਹਸਤੀ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਹੈ
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan, Vol. 1, p.44.
5. ਇਕ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਰਸ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ।
Ibid., p. 46.
6. "There is but one God..." *Commentry on Japuji*, (Tr.) Gurbachan Singh Talib, p. 2.
7. "...the One Supreme Being..." *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol.1., p. 1.
8. "There is One God..." *Selections From The Sacred Writings of The Sikhs*, (Tr.) Trilochan Singh et al, p. 28.
9. ਇਹ 'ੴ' ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੰਢ ਵਿਚ 'ਸੰਖਯਾ ਵਾਚਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਣ' ਕਰਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਰਤਿਆ, ਪਰ 'ਸੰਗਯਾ' ਕਰਕੇ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੈ; ਜੋ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਦਾ ਲਖਾਯਕ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ।
Santhya Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. 1., p. 2.
10. "1 ...""---"The Essentials of Sikhism" in Gopal Singh (Tr.), *op.cit.* Vol. II., p. IX.
11. "...the one", Gopal Singh (Tr.), *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 1, (fn. 6). See also Dr. Mohan Singh's *Panjabi Bhakha Vigian Ate Gurmat Gian*, p. 21.
12. "The One Positive Essence." *Aspects of Guru Nanak's Philosophy*, p. 83.
13. 'ਇਕ ਅੰਗ' (ਮਹਲਾ ੧) ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਅਰਥ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ... ਇਹ ਏਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਘੱਟ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਠ ਮਿਲ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਵਾਸਤਵ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਹ (ਮਹਲਾ ੧) ਦਾ ਲਖਾਯਕ ਹੈ... ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਹ ੧ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਜਪੁ ਨੂੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ।
Ad(i) Sri'Guru Granth Sahib Satik Arthat Sri Jap(u) Ji Sahib Satik, p. 8.

14. ਕੋਈ ਏਕ ਅੰਗ ਆਦਿ ਮੇ ਕਹਨੇ ਕਾ ਬੀਜ ਯਹ ਕਹਤੇ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਯਹ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਕੋ ਸਾਝਾ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਵੇਦ ਮੈ ਤੀਨ ਵਰਣੋ ਕੇ ਪੁਰਖੋ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਿਖਲ ਵਰਣੋ ਕੀ ਇਸਤਰੀਆ ਅਰ ਪੁਰਖੋ ਕੋ ਓ ਕੇ ਮੁਖ ਸੇ ਉਚਾਰਣ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਯਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਯਾਤੇ ਸਾਝਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਭੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਐ ਪੁਰਖ ਵੇਦ ਮੈ ਕਹੀ ਅਪਨੀ ਆਗਯਾ ਭੀ ਸਹੀ ਰਖਨੀ ਯਹਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੇ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਨੇ ਓ ਕੇ ਆਦਿ ਮੈ ਪੜਦਾ ਰਖ ਦੀਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪੜਦੇ ਸੇ ਸਭੀ ਬੋਲੇ ਪੜਦੇ ਸੇ ਬੋਲਨ ਮੈ ਦੇਖ ਨਹੀਂ...

Tika Gur Bhav Dipaka, p. 11.

15. *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

16. *Jap(u) Ji Satik*, p. 5.

17. *The Adi Granth*, p. 1.

18. ਸਾਧੂ ਮੂਲ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਟੀਕਾ (ਸੰਨ 1842) 'ਸਤਿਨਾਮ' ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। 'ਓ' ਦਾ ਟੀਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਰ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਦੋਤ ਦਾ ਉਰਦੂ ਟੀਕਾ (ਸੰਨ 1874) ਵੀ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਤੋਂ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਹਾਲ ਬਿਹਾਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਦੇ 'ਜਪ ਪਰਮਾਰਥ' (ਸੰਨ 1876) ਦਾ ਹੈ। ...ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੋਥੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ "ਓ" ਦਾ ਟੀਕਾ ਨਹੀਂ।

Nirukt Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 6.

19. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

20. i) "ਓ" ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਣ ਹੈ "ਇਕ (ਏਕ) ਅੰਕਾਰ"।

Sahib Singh, op. cit., p. 46.

- ii) ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਣ 'ਇਕ ਅੰ' ਸਹੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਪਰਦਾ ਵਿਚ 'ਇਕ ਅੰਕਾਰ' ਉਚਾਰਣ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

Bhai Kahn Singh (Compiler), *Gurmat Martand*, Vol. 1, p. 98.(fn.1)

- iii) Teja Singh, *Satigur Nanak Dev Di Bani Japu Ji Sahib Da Tika*, p. 37 (fn.)

21. Santhya, *op. cit.*, p. 6; *Gurshabd Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, Kahn Singh, Bhai, p. 16; *Sahib Singh, op. cit.*, p. 44.

22. *The Seeker's Path*, p. 2.

23. ਅਕਾਰ (ਜਗਤ) ਨੂੰ ਉਤਪੰਨ (ਪੈਦਾ) ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ॥

Tika Sri Jap(u), p. 1.

24. ਏਕ ਓ ਐ॥ ਅਰਥ ਮੈ ਏਕ ਹੁੰ ਓ ਐਕ ਹੀਏ ਉਚਾਰਣ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਰਖਯਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੂੰ॥

Sri Guru Nanak Sidhant Dipaka, p. 3.

25. ਤੂੰ ਮੰਗਲ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ਹੈ॥

Jap(u) Ji Sahib Satik, p. 5.

26. ਇਕ ਜੋਹੜਾ (ਓਕਹੀਏ) ਮੰਗਲ ਰੂਪ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੈ॥

Jap(u) Ji Satik, p. 1.

27. ਇਕ ਹੈ, ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ

Gurumat(i) Bhau Prakashani Tika, p. 8.

28. ਇਕ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਪਰਕਾਸ਼ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਇਕ ਰਸ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ॥

Jap(u) Ji Sahib Satik, p. 1.

29. ਅਕਾਰ ਓਕਾਰ ਮਕਾਰ ਅਰਧ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਸੰਜੁਕਤ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਰ ਕਹੀਏ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥ ਉਕਾਰ ਕਹੀਏ ਵਿਸਨੁ। ਮਕਾਰ ਕਹੀਏ ਸਿਵਾ। ਅਰਧ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਕਹੀਏ ਤੁਰੀਆ।

Sri Bodh Arthavali Tika Jap(u) Ji Ka, p. 8.

30. ਅਰਧ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਕਾ ਸੁਧ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਕਾ ਵਾਚਕ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕੋ ਅਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਕਹਿਤੇ ਹੈ।

Sant Sute Prakash Sadhu, Prayadi Ad(i) Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.3.

31. *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, (fn. 1).

32. ਏਕ ਜੋ ਮਾਯਾਸਵਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਓਅੰ ਓਚਾਰਨ ਕਰਤ ਭਯੋ॥

Garab Ganjani Tika, p. 6.

33. ਸੂਬ ਓਪਨਿਖਦੇ ਮੇ ਅਰ ਸ਼ਾਸਤ੍ਰੋ ਮੇ ਪੁਰਾਨੋ ਮੇ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਪਾਦਨ ਕਰਯੋ ਹੈ। ਸਪਤਮਤ ਜੋ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ। ਤਿਨ ਸਪਤੋ ਨੇ ਨੋ ਨੋ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਕੋ ਬੁਨਨ ਕਰਯੋ ਹੈ। ਇਸਤੇ ਭੇਦ ਤ੍ਰੇਸਫ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਸਗੁਣ ਸਬੁਲ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ...ਚੋਸਠਵੇ ਰੂਪ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਕਿਲਹ ਹੈ।...ਐਰ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਸ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਸੂਬ ਹੀ ਸਾਰਥਕ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਭੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਹੈ। ...ਸੂਬ ਨਾਮੋ ਕੇ ਅਰਥ ਕਰੀਏ ਤੋ ਭੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਬਧਤ ਹੈ। ਤਾਤੇ ਏਕ ਜੋ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੋ ਹੀ ਅਰਥ ਕਰਤੇ ਹੈ। ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੋ ਜਬ ਉਚਾਰ ਹੋਤਾ ਹੈ। ਤਬ ਚਰਨੋ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਰ ਮਸਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਯੰਤ ਸਭ ਸ਼ੀਰ ਕੇ ਉਚਾਰ ਕਰ ਦੇਤ ਹੈ। ਤਿਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਕਹਨੇ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਉਰਧ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਤੇ ਹੈ। ਯਾਤੇ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ। ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਉਚਾਰਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਦਸ ਦੁਆਰ ਕੋ ਸ੍ਰੇ ਭੀ ਪਹੁਚਤੁ ਹੈ। ਇਸਤੇ ਭੀ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ।

Ibid., pp. 9-10.

34. ਓਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਬਯਾਕਰਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਮ ਲੇਨੇ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਸੇ ਰਖਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਕਹਤੇ ਹੈ ਅਵਧਾਤੁ ਸੇ ਇਸ ਕੋ ਬਨਾਵਤੇ ਹੈ ਅਵ ਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਰਖਯਾ ਹੈ ਯਾ ਤੇ ਰਫਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਓ ਕਹੇ ਹੈ ਐਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੋ ਵਾਲੇ ਅ 'ਉ' 'ਮ' ਇਕ ਤੀਨ ਅਖਰੋ ਕੇ ਮੇਲ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਕੋ ਬਨਾਵੇ ਹੈ ਅ 'ਓ' ਕਾ ਓ ਮੰਮੇ ਕੀ ਬਿੰਦੀ ਹੋ ਕਰ ਓ ਬਨੇ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਰ ਉਕਾਰ ਮਕਾਰ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਇਨ ਤੀਨੋ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਮਾਤਾ ਓਮ ਅਵਯਵ ਕਾ ਹੈ) ...ਅਕਾਰ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਬਿਰਾਟ ਈਸੁਰ ਐ ਬਿਸੁ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ...ਉਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਨਕਾ ਹਿਰਨਯ ਗਰਭ ਈਸੁਰ ਐ ਤੈਜਸ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ...ਤੀਸਰੀ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਮਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਮਾਯਾਪਤਿ ਈਸੁਰ ਐ ਪ੍ਰਗਯ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ, ਗ੍ਰੰਥੋ ਮੇ ਇਸ ਓਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਅਰਧਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ ...ਪੁਰੇ ਤੀਨ ਅਵਯਵ ਹੈ ਉਨ ਅਵਯਵੋ ਕੇ ਜਬ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਐ ਸਰੀਰ ਭਾਗ ਦੂਰ ਕੀਯੇ ਤਬ ਉਨ ਕਾ ਆਧਾ ਭਾਗ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਸੇਖ ਰਹੇ ਹੈ ਆਧਾ ਭਾਗ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਐਰ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਹੈ...ਇਸੀ ਕੋ ਤੁਰੀਆ ਕਹੇ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., pp. 11-15.

35. The writer feels tempted to quote here Mr. Niranjan Singh Saral's devastating attack on all traditional Schools of Interpretation in his

Jhatka Parkash :

ਅਰਥ ਔ ਅਨਰਥ ਕੀ ਤਨਕ ਭੀ ਨ ਸੂਝ ਪਰੀ, ਸਾਤ ਸਾਲ ਸੱਤੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਪੁੱਟ ਮਾਰੀ ਹੈ।
 ਏਕ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਖਾਡ ਔ ਇੱਕੀਸ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਬਾਲੂ ਰੇਤ, ਫਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੀਕਾ--ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਹੈ।
 ਕਾਟ ਪੇਟ "ਮਾਲਾ" ਕਾ, ਅੰਤ੍ਰੀਵ ਅਰਥ ਕਾਵ ਲੀਨ, ਐਸੀ ਕੂੜੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਕਾ ਭਿੰਡਰ ਭੰਡਾਰੀ ਹੈ।
 ਅਰਥ ਖਿੰਡਾਏ ਔ ਅਨਰਥੋ ਕੇ ਢੇਰ ਲਾਏ, ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਈ ਗਿਆਨੀਓ ਕੀ ਕਥਾ ਹੀ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਹੈ।

36. *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1. p. 1 (fn. 1).

37. *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. ix.

38. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1 p. 1 (fn. 6); see also the same author's *Punjabi Bhakha Vigian Ate Gurmat Gian*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22, where it has been explained as "shabad jan bani hai, ese duara srishti rachda hai..."

39. *O Darshan*, pp. 27, 49.

40. ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਹੀ ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਹੈ।

Jap(u) Ji Darshan, p. 15.

41. "ਸਤਿਨਾਮ" ਇਸ ਸਮਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ 'ਸੱਚਾ ਨਾਮ' ਜਾਂ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਨਾਮ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਇਉਂ ਅਰਥ ਕਰਨਾ ਏਥੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਹੈ।

Pandit Kartar Singh (Dakha), *Sri Jap(u) Nisan*, p. 14.

42. "Truth" *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. ix.

43. "Truth-existence" *Ibid.*, Vol. 1. p. 1 (fn. 6).

44. "The Eternal" *Loc cit.*

45. "The Real" *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

46. *Jap(u) Parmarth Te Sada Suhag*, pp. 21-22.

47. *Gems Of Thoughts From Guru Nanak Bani*, p. 9.

48. *Sri Jap(u) Ji Sahib Satik*, p. 24.

49. *Op. cit.*, 45.

50. *The Japuji or Guru Nanak's Meditation*, p. 21; also *op. cit.*, p.38.

51. *Guru Nanak Bani Prakash*, Vol. 1, p. 1.

52. *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

53. "Whose name is true", *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. 1, p. 196.

54. ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ 'ਸਤਿਨਾਮ' ਇਕਠਾ ਪਦ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜਪਣ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਬੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ। ਯਥਾ:
 ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ॥

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਸਤਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜਪਾਇਆ॥

Op. cit., p. 16.

55. ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਜਾਤੀ, ਅਸਲੀ, ਪਰਾ ਪੁਰਬਲਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ...
Op. cit., p. 7.
56. ਸਤਿ (ਸਤਯ) ਇਹ ਨਾਮ, ਅਥਵਾ ਸਤਯ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ...
ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਪ ਸਮੇਂ 'ਸਤਿਨਾਮ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇ, ਕੇਵਲ ਸਤਿ ਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ
ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।
Op. cit., p. 129.
57. ਇਹ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਹ ਦਾ ਕਦੀ ਨਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਦਾ ਉਹ ਨੂੰ 'ਸਤਿ'
ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਪੁਕਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ।
Tika Jap(u) Ji Sahib, p. 7.
58. ਸਤਿ ਹੈ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਰੂਪ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਔਰ ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਬੁਠੇ ਹੈ।
Op. cit., p. 5.
59. ਆਗੈ॥ ਨਾਮ॥ ਪਦ ਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਚਲਿਆ ਜੇ ਹੈ 'ਨਾਮ' ਕਹੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧ ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ॥
ਵਾ॥ ਨਾਮ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਮੂਲ ਹੈ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਨ॥ ਆਪ ਨ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਮੇਂ॥
ਆਮ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਰੋਗ ਸੇ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਮ॥ ਵਾ॥ਨ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਆਮ ਖਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ...॥
Giana Singh Gyani, *Adi Bani Sri Japu Sahib*, p. 6.
60. i) Parmanand, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
ii) Sant Ganesha Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
61. ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੂੰ
Op. cit., p. 1.
62. *Op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
63. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
64. *Loc. cit.*
65. *Op. cit.*, p. 22.
66. *Loc. cit.*
67. *Op. cit.*, p. 47.
68. *Op. cit.*, p. 80.
69. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.
70. *Sabdarth, op. cit.*, p. 1.
71. *Loc. cit.*, (fn. 2).
72. *Loc. cit.*

73. *A Critical Study of Adi Granth*, p. 335.
74. *Loc. cit.*
75. ਇਸ ਜਗਤ ਦਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੌਨ ਹੈ?...ਸਰੀਰ ਰੂਪੀ ਪੁਰੀਓ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਰੂਪ ਪੁਰਖ ਮੈਂ ਜੀਵ ਹੂੰ।
Op. cit., pp. 3-4.
76. ਮਾਲਕ ਯਥਾ, ਇਸ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਕ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰ ਸਥਾਈ।
Op. cit., p. 3.
77. ॥ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਰਬ ਸੂਖਯਮ ਅਸਬੂਲ ਜੀਵ ਜੰਤੋ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਮੇਂ ਪੂਰਣ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਵ ਬਾਲ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ॥ਪੁ॥ ਰਖ॥ ਪੂ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਜੋ ਨਰਕ ਪੁਨਾਮਾ ਹੈ ਤਿਸ ਨਰਕ ਤੇ ਜੋ॥ ਰਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਰਖ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਰਖ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੈ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਪੁਰ॥ ਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਦੇਹ ਰੂਪੀ ਜੋ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਹੈ ਤਿਨਾ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਮੇਂ ਜੋ॥ ਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਇਸ ਬਿਤ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਪੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਦੇਹਿ ਰੂਪੀ ਜੋ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਹੈ ਤਿਨਾ ਕੇ ਜੋ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਸ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ॥ ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਸਾਰੀਆ ਜੋ ਦੇਹਿ ਰੂਪੀ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਤਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਨਾਥ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖ॥
Loc. cit.
78. *Loc. cit.*
79. *Loc. cit.*
80. *Op. cit.*, (fn.6).
81. *Loc. cit.*
82. ਜੋ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਗ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ
Op. cit., p. 46.
83. ਉਹ ਹਸਤੀ ਜਿਹਤੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ 'ਪੈਲੇਨਰ ਤੇ ਡੀਜ਼ਾਈਨਰ' ਹੈ
Op. cit. p. 81.
84. *Sampardai Tika Ad(i) Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*, p. 89.
85. *Op. cit.*, p. 25.
86. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.
87. "The aim of Nanak was no doubt, good; but he did not possess any learning and was merely acquainted with the dialect of the (Panjab) villagers among whom he was born. He was quite ignorant of the Vedas and the Shastras and of Sanskrit, otherwise why should he have written *Nirbhau* instead of *Nirbhaya*. Another proof of his ignorance of the Sanskrit language is his composition called '*sahskrit*' (sic) hymns (*satotras*). He wanted to show that he had some pretensions to the knowledge of Sanskrit. But how could one know Sanskrit without learning it. It is possible that he might have passed for a Sanskrit scholar before those ignorant

villagers who had never heard a man speak Sanskrit. He could never have done it unless he was anxious to gain public applause, fame and glory. He must have sought after fame or he would have preached in the language he knew and told the people that he had not read Sanskrit. Since he was a little vain, he may possibly have been resorted to some sort of make-believe to gain reputation and acquire fame..." *Light of Truth, or An English Translation of the Satyarth Prakash*, (Tr.) Dr. Chiranjiva Bharadwaja., p. 443.

88. (ਅ) ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਯਕ : 'ਨਿਰਭਵ' ਅਰਥ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। 'ਭਵ'=ਪੈਦਾਯਜ (ਉਤਪਤਿ) ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੈ, (ੲ) ਭਵ=ਮੌਜੂਦਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੈ। (ਸ) (ਨਿਰ) ਕੇਵਲ 'ਭਯ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ, (ਹ) (ਨਿਰ) ਨਿਰਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹੀ (ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ) ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 34.

89. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

90. *Loc. cit.*

91. *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. IX.

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Loc. cit.*

94. (ਨਿਰ) ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵੈਰ ਵਾਲਾ,

Swami Harnam Das, *loc. cit.*

95. ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਬੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਮਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਵਦਾ...

Guru Dhandhora, nd., p. 25.

96. "ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਮੂਰਤ (ਸਰੂਪ) ਕਾਲ ਜਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ"

Op. cit., p. 3.

97. "ਤੂੰ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਭ ਜੁਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਨ।"

Op. cit., p. 3.

98. "ਜਿਸ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਹੈ..."

Jap(u) Prakash, pp. 13-14.

99. (ਸੰਪੂਰਣ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਵੱਸ ਹੈ ਪਰੰਤੂ) ਤੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ

Jap(u) Ji Sahib Satik, p. 8.

100. "Yeh pad alif, harf-i-nafi aur kal aur murat do ismon se murakkab hai. In men se kal ba-maani waqt aur maut ke hai aur murat ba-maani surat aur sarup ke hai, jo murad hasti aur zindgi se hai. Pas akal ke mani us zat-i-pak ke hain ki jis ka koi waqt paidaish

aur maat ka nahin hai. Arabi zuban men is lafz ka tarjumah Hai u-la-Yamut our Sanskrit men aamma aur 'ajar amar' hai. Pas is tamam pad' ke maani yeh hue kih sri akal purakh ji ki-zat-i-pak akal murat hai yani woh la funah aur azali aur abadi aur hameshah qam biz-zt hai" - Rahnumi-i-Didar-i-Haq, Pt. 1 (Urdu), p. 181.

101. ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ।

Satigur Nanak Dev Di Bani Jap(u) Ji Da Tika, op.cit., p. 39.

102. ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਮੂਰਤਿ' ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਲਿੰਗ ਹੈ, 'ਅਕਾਲ' ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਣ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਭੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਲਿੰਗ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਅਕਾਲ' ਇਕੱਲਾ ਹੀ 'ਪੁਰਖ', 'ਨਿਰਭਉ', 'ਨਿਰਵੈਰ' ਵਾਂਗ 1ੳ ਦਾ ਗੁਣਵਾਚਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਪੁਲਿੰਗ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ () ਹੁੰਦਾ।

Op. cit., p. 46.

103. ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਕਰ, ਪਾਲ, ਮਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ, ਉਹ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 41.

104. "ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸਮਾਂ, ਖਉ, ਨਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।...ਇਕ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ।"

Jap(u) Bichar, p. 14.

105. "Beyond Times",

Op. cit., Vol. II.

106. "He is beyond time Immortal", *Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 43.*

107. "The Timeless", *Loc. cit.*

108. "...ਉਹ ਜੇਤਾ ਮਰੇ ਨਾ।"

Op. cit., p. 84.

109. "...ਕਾਲ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਸਿਰਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਤ੍ਰੈ-ਹਦੇ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹਸਦਤੀ ਹੈ।"

Op. cit., p. 95.

110. "Reality, transcending time" *loc.cit.*

111. *Op. cit., p. 26.*

112. ਵਾ ਏਕਾਖੁਰ ਕੇਸ ਮੇਂ ਅਕਾਰ ਬਿਸਨੁ॥

ਕਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਵ ਕੇ॥

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਤੀਨ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਬਨਿ ਬੈਠਯੋ ਯਾਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ॥

Op. cit., p. 14.

113. *Op.cit., p. 7.*

114. *Op. cit., p. 15.*

115. *Op. cit., p. 91.*

116. *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

117. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

118. *Loc. cit.*

119. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

120. *Ibid.*, Vol. I.

121. *Loc. cit.*

122. *Loc. cit.*

123. ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਨਾਮ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਭੀ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ॥

Op. cit., p. 17.

124. ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਿੰਧੀ "ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ" ਇਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 44.

125. ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੰਸੈ ਭੈ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਸ॥ ਸੋ ਸੰਸਿਯੋ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 10.

126. *Op. cit.*, (fn. 1).

Loc. cit.

128. ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਕਿਸੀ ਕਾ ਕੀਆ ਹੂਆ ਨਹੀਂ...।...ਸੈ ਨਾਮ ਸੈਕਤੋ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, ਅਸਿਖ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, 'ਭੰ' ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, ਤੇਜ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰਕਾਸ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ।

Gurbani Tike, (ed. Rattan Singh Jaggi), p. 106.

129. ਵਹੁ ਕੈਸਾ ਹੈ (ਅਕਾਲ) ਸਭਨੇ ਮਾਰਨੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਲ ਸੇ ਭਿੰਨ ਹੈ (ਮੂਰਤਿ), ਸਰੂਪ, ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਪੁਨਾ ਕੈਸਾ ਵਹੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ। (ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈ) ਮਾਯਾ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਸੁਧ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਬਾਂਗਰ ਦੇਸ ਮੈ ਹੈ...।"

Op. cit., p. 3.

130. UNESCO, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

131. Gopal Singh, *loc. cit.*

132. Kapur Singh, *loc. cit.* Vol. II.

133. Mohan Singh Uberoi, *loc. cit.*, Vol. I.

134. ਗੁਰ-ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਧੇਰੇ ਦੀ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ-ਮੁਲਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਪੂਰਾ ਵਾਕ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੁ ਪਰਸਾਦੁ ਕਰੇ, ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਵੈ...ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ--ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਧ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ, ਸੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ,... ਵਾਕ ਅੱਸ ਭੀ ਵਰਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।

Op. cit., p. 18.

135. 'ਗੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਏ ਵਡਾ ਹੈ...॥ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਕੇ ਦੇਨੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਵ ਵਕਤਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਕਿਆ ਅਨੰਦ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ਵਾ॥ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਿਆ-ਮੰਦਰ ਆਧਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ ਭਾਵ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਹੈ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਗੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਬਡਾ ਹੈ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਮੰਦਰ

ਜਿਸਕਾ ਬੈਕੁੰਠ ਰੂਪੀ।\ਵਾ।ਗੁਰ।। ਕਹੀਐ ਬਡੀ ਹੈ।। ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।। ਕਹੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਜਿਸਕੀ ਭਾਵ ਦਇਆ ਜਿਸਕੀ।।'

Op. cit., p. 7.

136. ...ਉਸਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪੇ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। (ਉਹ ਹੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ) (ਮੈਂ) ਐਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਾਲ (ਇਹ ਕੁਝ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਤਬਾ ਅਗੋਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਜਾਂ ਲਿਖਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਹਾਂ)

Jap(u) Ji Sandesh, p. 13.

137. ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਵਸਤੂ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ ਮੰਗਲਾਚਰਨ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਗੁਰ (ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ) ਦੀ ਹਮ ਪਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਹੋਵੈ।।

Jap(u) Prakash, pp. 14-15.

138. ਉਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ (ਅਰੰਭ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ) ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ "ੴ" ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ "ਸੈਭੰ" ਤਕ ਦਿਤੇ ਹਨ।

Op. cit., p. 40.

139. ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ=ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 32.

140. ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ (ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ)

Op. cit., p. 47.

141. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

142. "ਓਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਈਐ--

Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Vol. II, p. 262.

143. 'ਜੇ ਗੁਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਤਬੀ ਤੋ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਵਰ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ...

Op. cit., p. 107.

144. ਕੇਵਲ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ) ਗੁਰੂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 7.

145. *Loc. cit.*

146. *Loc. cit.*

147. *Loc. cit.*

148. *Loc. cit.*

149. *Loc. cit.*

150. *Ibid.*, (fn. 4).

151. ਅਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਿ ਜੋ ਗਯਾਨ ਦੇਇ ਸੋ ਗੁਰ।।

Bhai Santokh Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 14-15.

152. ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰ=ਵਡਾ ਹੈ॥
Sant Kirpal Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 92.
153. ਗੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਚੈਤਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥
Giana Singh Gayani, *op.cit.*, p. 7.
154. ਪੂਜਯ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਵਡਾ ਹੈ।
Giani Badan Singh, et al, *op.cit.*, p. 3.
155. ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਬੈਠਣਾ ਹੈ॥ ਜਦੋਂ ਜਗਿਆਸੂ ਦੀ ਮਨ ਭੁਧੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਤਮੋ ਦਾ ਹਨੇਰਾ ਤੇ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦੀ ਭਟਕਣਾ ਮੁਕ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।
Satbir Singh, *Jap(u) Te Uhde Pakkh*, p. 5.
156. ਭੰਡਾਰਾ॥
Giana Singh Gayani, *loc.cit.*
157. ਸੁਆਦਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ
Sant Kirpal Singh, *loc.cit.*
158. ਮੰਦਰ ਕੀ ਨਿਆਈ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਸ਼ਠਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥
Ibid.
159. ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਾਮ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਹੈ ਦਯਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ॥
Bhai Santokh Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
160. Wazir Singh, *loc.cit.*
161. ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਕਹੀਏ ਸੰਪੂਰਣ ਚਕ੍ਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਬਰਣ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਯਮਲ ਔ ਅਗਾਯਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਕਾਰਣ ਮਲ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੋਨੋ ਤੇ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ॥
Tara Singh Narottam, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONCEPTUAL STATE OF GURU NANAK

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The growth of Sikh religion has been a multi-dimensional phenomenon. In the process of its becoming Sikhism and to achieve definite goals it had to overcome various difficulties. Many institutions were founded by Sikh Gurus from time to time. These institutions were raised to enable the followers to discharge their duties in accordance with the human principles laid down by Guru Nanak in his *Bani*.

Guru Nanak conceived the principles on which later on Sikhism grew. The institutions which were involved through the process of growth of Sikhism, were basically to transform the fundamental principles given by Guru Nanak into human actions. Even the institutions like *Meeri Peeri*, *Panj Pyaras* and *Sarbat Khalsa* which were evolved later have their germination in the perceptions of Guru Nanak; all that is evident from a close study of his *Bani*. Therefore, the total Sikhism as a totality does not deviate from the cosmic vision of Guru Nanak Dev Ji as enshrined in his *Bani*.

The second point that I wish to emphasise is that Sikhism is not the religion in the traditional sense. In the traditional sense of a religion, the mode of worship is specified and certain rituals

are essential to it. In certain cases ritual becomes more important than the content of worship. Guru Nanak raised his voice against the ritualisation of religion and vehemently opposed such fixation of the form. In his opinion such a religion enslaves an individual and engrosses his mind in fear in timidity and in superficiality. Nor does such form of religion becomes the source of an enlightened growth of an individual. He scorns at such trends which were prevalent in both the powerful religions of his time i.e. Hinduism and Islam.

The traditional religions are normally myth-oriented. Myth is a symbol of human infirmity; an individual seeks to get his deeds sanctioned through mythical references. The seeking of confirmation of present action by value patterns of the distant past means reversing the process of historical change. Such tendencies result in accepting the status quo where the scope of growth is closed. It is because of this reason that Guru Nanak first of all, de-mythified his religion. He did not accept myth as a source of inspiration or a way of confirmation of human deeds. By rejecting a recourse to myth, he made religion, history-oriented and conceived it in such a way so as to maintain its contemporary character in all given situations and at all times. It could thus be said that Sikhism is both fundamental and contemporary at the same time. It is the sense of history that made the process of its growth absolutely dynamic.

Most traditional religions, particularly Indian, always look upward. That means the primary concern of religion is spirit and its sole motive is to obtain liberation from material bondage. Such religions are criticised for being indifferent to this worldliness which is deemed as worth neglecting. The idea of treating the world as illusion extends to a total negation of human body. On the contrary, Guru Nanak believes that life-negating ideology is detrimental to the natural and healthy

growth of an individual and society. This ultimately leads to escapism. Guru Nanak in his *Bani*, has repudiated such tendencies as were being preached by various religions, particularly by those which advocated a life of renunciation. He considered this body or this world as the abode of God, which means that it is liveable and adorable. Logically, human body is as important as mind because without body the manifestation of mind is impossible. For a healthy growth of human kind, healthy body, healthy environment and healthy base are essential. Guru Nanak emphasised upon the harmonious growth of the mind and body. Both are vital for each other. They are inter-dependent and indispensable for each other. It is impossible to conceive one without the other. Therefore, Guru Nanak in his *Bani* preached for the integrated growth of the mind and body. Even otherwise he was not interested in fragmentation. He conceived that universe in its totality and similarly the embodiment of the universe i.e. an individual also in its totality. His concerns, therefore, are not for the other worldliness or the liberation after death of an individual. He is interested in the liberation of an individual while living in the given social context. It is in this context that he expressed his concern for almost every important institution of the society. He thought about the political situation, the social situation and religious situation of the country of his time. He found that society as a whole was facing a crisis. The social, political and religious conditions of the time were so de-generated that it symbolised the total death of the civilization. His concern was, therefore, the total situation. In that dark age, such a concern about the total situation is reserved for the house of Guru Nanak only. Of all the spiritual leaders of his time, only Guru Nanak spoke of the political anarchy resulting in oppression and the disintegration of society. The social, political and the religious de-generation find frequent references in his *Bani*. Guru Nanak, therefore, was committed to giving a

spiritual basis to the total being of an individual and to the society. His concern for this worldliness was meant to give society a healthier base. In order to provide an alternative to the prevalent de-generation he conceived of a complete alternate system.

Human rights are such a delicate problem that if left to themselves they cannot be protected affectively and completely. Most of the time and history is full of such examples, when human rights are given and taken away at the same time and by the same authority. In this way they are violated by those who profess to have given these to the people. Guru Nanak was interested in enlisting the human rights and then seeking to get them protected from the powers that were more keen to violate them. He evolved a system in which these rights are not given but are defined and are not merely protected but are difficult to be violated. The system should be such in which violation becomes impossible. It appears as if his main concern was to evolve and give such a system. Change of power or one institution was not enough for this purpose, and therefore it was not his primary concern.

For this purpose, firstly, he conceived of a state and sovereignty. In his *Bani*, he has written that real power rests with God. He is the real sovereign. Everyone else is within His jurisdiction and under His command. The kings or the worldly rulers are the subjects of Real sovereign exactly in the manner as other people are the subjects of their rulers. Guru Nanak reiterates that the status of a king is not higher than a beggar, because a king and a beggar are equal before the Real sovereign. This attitude was a source of great strength to the ordinary mortals who were greatly oppressed by their rulers.

Such a cosmic kingdom is elaborated to make it workable, Guru Nanak opines that territorial limits are for the

purpose of management. Each unit is carved out so that it can be managed easily and effectively and the king (ruler) of a particular area is not the real king indeed. He is just the custodian of his territory and the people who reside within that area. This custodianship is given by God (In Guru Nanak's system it is given by the *Sangat* also). His sovereignty is supreme and he can withdraw the power delegated to the king, the ruler, the moment He decides to do so. He can reduce the authority of a so-called king to the extent that a king can fall to the status of a beggar. Obviously, according to Guru Nanak a king does not have any divine status. A king is reminded again and again, in his *Bani* to keep this in his mind while governing.

Similarly, the other functionaries of the state are not independent authorities. They draw power from the Real authority for a specific purpose. If they cross the limits of this specific purpose, they are violating the very principle of authority under which they are appointed.

In the system of Guru Nanak, God is represented by the *Sangat* (Congregation). The *Sangat* offers Five beloved ones (*Piaras*) as their representatives. The *Five Piaras* have the authority to select, choose and offer a person who rule on their behalf that is on behalf of the *Sangat*. The *Sangat* then is the highest authority. The *Five-Piaras* are the executive authority, given by *Sangat*, and a ruler derives a power from *Five-Piaras*. It is in this context that a king (ruler) is suggested to be custodian of certain powers which are given to him. Such powers do not originate from him. In this way the state of Guru Nanak has a cosmic horizon, the *Sangat* represents universal brotherhood; the *Five-Piaras* are the nominees of the *Sangat* and a ruler is the nominee of the *Five-Piaras*. Territorial jurisdiction is primarily for the purpose of management. No individual can claim ownership rights.

To understand the system evolved by Guru Nanak we should proceed from the fact that an individual is at the centre of all human activity. The Guru also has prescribed daily routine for an individual. His day begins very early in the morning. He has to perform his *Nitname* (daily course) quite early, then he has to go to the congregation (*Sangat*) in a Gurudwara. After that he has to work to earn for the day. In the evening he is required to participate in the congregation again. Before going to bed he has to perform his *Nitname*.

As a political being an individual is part of the *Sangat*. This gives him the status of both the ruler and the ruled. That makes every individual a sovereign unto himself. He is the son of God, is ruled by Him through the *Sangat*, and is part of the *Sangat*; he is answerable to the *Sangat* or God only. The system gives freedom to an individual not to accept the ruler's oppressive commands and he is supposed to guide and teach him. Because a ruler is one amongst the equals, he has no right to dictate his subjects to live in the manner of his liking. All are to live in accordance with the system given by *Sangat*.

In social relationship, Guru Nanak recognises the relationship of service only. All other relations like master and servant, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, are baseless and false. The real relationship is the relationship of service. It is the service that signifies social relationship. The relationship of blood, of politics or of any other type as sanctioned by society is ephemeral. The act of service is given so much importance in the system of Guru Nanak that no other act is comparable to it. It is the only true act which can bring the desired fruits. Even liberation from all kinds of bondage can be achieved through this act. Howsoever high one may be, without doing service, his existence is meaningless.

Guru Nanak has specified the ideal for which an individual has to yearn. The highest ideal for an individual is to become a *Sachiar*. Truth is high, still higher is the truthful living. Certain philosophers treat God and truth as synonymous. The system of Guru Nanak gives truthful living a greater significance. This is the meaning of a *Sachiar* as it occurs in *Japuji Sahib*. The Guru cares more for the day to day living of an individual, where truthful living transcends any sermon, for one is expected to practise what one preaches. There should be no gap between the word and the deed. Such an individual is an exalted being.

A ruler has to be a *Sachiar*. He has to be just beyond suspicion. His deeds should not go contrary to his words. Such a person does not need to be elevated to a higher position by ill means; his merit will put him there. The *Sangat* will have no option but to select him. But, he can hold his power position so long as he maintains this standard. If he betrays the *Sangat*, he is likely to be recalled. He has to discharge his duties honestly, efficiently and dispassionately. His duty is to implement the system given by the *Sangat*. The ruler is under obligation to perform his duty; he cannot escape it. Even in his capacity of a ruler, he continues to be the part of the *Sangat*.

By laying emphasis on daily labour for living the Guru leaves no scope for renunciation. He says that an individual has to earn his livelihood out of the labour with his own hands. Secondly, he has to share his earnings with others especially with those who are in need. An individual is not to hoard and create conditions of scarcity in the society. These two principles are to delineate the nature of relationship between individual and society. Thirdly, an individual is required to mediate upon the name of God. It is to purge the mind from basic temptations and to be spiritually sound and socially useful. Such principles help in the development of an integrated society and the establishment of an integrated State.

The above discussion brings forth the following points:-

1. The conceptual state is a world state.
2. The ruler is neither divine and nor does he hold absolute authority.
3. The *Sangat* is the real authority.
4. The *Five-Piaras* are a link between the *Sangat* and the ruler. They are the nominee of the *Sangat* and guide to the ruler.
5. The Selection of the ruler will be through consensus through election.
6. The *Sangat* will have the right to recall the ruler.
7. Similar will the status of those who will be the functionaries in the institutions like legislation, judiciary, defence, administration, education etc.
8. The society, thus structured, will be a sacred society and not a secular society.
9. Service is the main identifying factor between many wings of this structure.
10. Every individual will have the right to employment.
11. It will be the states' responsibility to guarantee to the basic necessities of an individual may be, through the institution of *Daswandh* (a common pool). Every individual will contribute one tenth of his income to the Common pool.
12. An individual will be provided opportunities to cultivate himself/herself in such a way that the mind and the body are fully integrated. He neither exploits others nor is exploited by them.

The concept of *Sachiar* in the course of history, transformed into the model of a Saint Soldier. He is expected to reflect constantly and become both a Saint and a Soldier. A *Khalsa* is a soldier who is fighting for the protection of *Shastra* (Granth/Principle), for the protection of the oppressed and is constantly remembering the name of God. He is the ideal citizen of the ideal state of the Guru's system. It is his duty to defend the operating principle ever at the cost of his life.

As every individual is expected to deposit his surplus into the common treasury the state will look after the individual's needs through this common treasury. Then there is a concept of common Kitchen (*Langar*). This Kitchen will look after the physical needs of every body. A common state, a common treasury, a common kitchen and ten percent voluntary contribution to the collective pool, in the form of kind or cash, are to provide the state with the required resources to look after the needs of every citizen.

Guru Nanak conceives of a world society in which national boundaries have no significance. Whenever he refers to the redemption of humanity from evil, oppression or discrimination he does so as a member of the world society. He does not speak about the redemption of a Punjabi or an Indian. A human being for his is the representative of God. The boundaries given by society are not acceptable to him. In this way, he treats all humanity as member of one single society.

Guru Nanak says that this world is a laboratory for testing the individual's merit. On this earth, there is a variation in all kinds and aspects of human life and this is the basic characteristic of the universe. In his *Bani*, Guru Nanak refers again and again to the diverse modes of life and its manifestation.

Such variety is God's creation. For instance, in *Japuji Sahib* he speaks of the variety in almost every form of creation. In essence, this multiplicity of human life and universal manifestation warrants co-existence, which cannot be confined only to territory, religion, community or an individual. Mutual adjustment is required at every stage and in every sphere of life. It is dangerous for a people to think of assimilating those who are in minority. In the conceptual structure of Guru Nanak's system the tendency to assimilate the smaller groups by larger groups must be eliminated. It is a futile exercise and always brings unaccountable miseries to the people who succumb to this desire of assimilating minority. Guru Nanak affirms that there are countless shades of peoples with various religions, cultures and languages and there has to be mutual acceptance in order to evolve a meaningful social order. It is not a question of co-existence as an option but the idea has to be accepted as a reality and to put it in practice. Only mutual acceptance can be helpful in the growth of a principled society. Guru Nanak even accepts the existence of evil-doers in society as a fact of life. He does not detest an evil-doer simply because he feels that such a person is already a victim of such a serious disease. Such a person rather deserves sympathy. Thus he conceives of a society in which variety is the natural law, mutual acceptance is a spirit of life and mutual respect is the mutual necessity. The *Gurbani* has conceived this social milieu in a state in which every individual is expected to play a given role. An individual is not to be loved or hated because of his status based upon number or religion. Everyone has to be provided equal opportunities to play his role and thus in this laboratory everyone is expected to test one's metal. In this way Guru Nanak discarded the principle of discrimination against anyone on any ground.

The problem of human rights is an age-old one though

the concept of human rights is modern. Modern man is more conscious of his rights and has more opportunities to be vocal and active when his fundamental rights are violated. For the protection of human rights steps have continuously been taken in the form of organised resistance groups against the system which violate these rights. Guru Nanak ensures that human rights are not violated in his conceptual state. Any violation of human rights would be an inescapable in this system.

Guru Nanak enables an individual to be free in terms of his mode of worship, his choice of occupation and desire to communicate. Because in such a state, everyone is involved in the functioning of the state, therefore, everyone is answerable to the super-sovereign i.e. *Sangat* only. By everyone means a ruler the ruled in the same way.

In this conceptual state of Guru Nanak no discrimination such as of caste, colour, sex, area is allowed. Every human being is made of the same elements, same spirit and is the son of the same father (God). He is equal in every respect. It is in this context that Guru Nanak conceives of a state which transcends all boundaries. At the same time he is of the opinion that this world is full of varieties in terms of religion, culture, custom and habits etc. and no attempt on disturbing it bears any good fruits.