

**GURU NANAK  
COMMEMORATIVE VOLUME**

# Guru Nanak Commemorative Volume

*edited by*  
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## INTRODUCTORY

In the history of nations it is usual to treat millenia and half-millenia as natural landmarks for computing the passage of time since occurrence of some great or significant event. As one such point of time approaches, the human mind is aroused to a new expectancy, a sense of the imminence of some momentous developments in history. That an institution, a system or faith should have survived among mankind for such a long period of time is itself looked upon as a momentous happening in this world where everything is devoured by the inexorable process of time, and is rolled up into the past and oblivion. Where the might of a system has withstood the onslaught of time, that is looked upon rightly as an occasion of triumph, to be celebrated. In our own country, the completion of two and half millenia since the Advent of the Buddha was rightly celebrated as an event of global significance. Guru Nanak stepped comparatively late into history. But during the half millenium since his birth, our country has passed through tremendous changes in its history and culture. Guru Nanak illumined the spiritual and moral darkness of medieval India with the light of his vision and Divine Insight which dispelled the fog of ignorance, in the noble words of great Bhai Gurdas. He emphasised the brotherhood of man taught that through love and service of mankind one could attain the Supreme Bliss—the real purpose of life. The Quincentenary of his birth therefore, is looked upon by the people of the Punjab in particular and by the generality of our countrymen as an event of extraordinary significance. Being celebrated on a vast scale, it led to a great deal of activity in the religious and cultural fields and was the inspiration behind many acts of public beneficence. One example of this last has been the organizing by the Guru Nanak Foundation of a camp for the free treatment of the blind at the hands of highly qualified surgeons—some eye specialists were even called from abroad. All such multi-faceted activity needed to be recorded and put into a handy volume.

The present volume carrying reports drawn from various authorities, organizations and cultural institutions from within our own country and from those countries abroad where Indians are present in considerable numbers, in being published at the instance of the Punjab Government which took a leading share in organizing on a big and vast scale the Quincentenary Celebrations of Guru Nanak's birth during 1969. As will be evident from this Volume, the Quincentenary as was befitting such a momentous occasion, sent a wave of enthusiasm among our people of all creeds. The celebrations were spread over a number of months in the form of functions of a religious character and those arranged under the auspices of the Union and State Governments and public,



educational and cultural organizations. These were marked also by the production by a number of publishing firms and cultural institutions of a great deal of literature hearing on the presentation of the thought and teaching of Guru Nanak and the dissemination of his Message.

In respect of the celebrations perhaps the most significant and spectacular functions have been held in Amritsar on the eve of the actual date of the Quincentenary (23rd November, 1969) when a birthday procession originating from Burj Baba Phula Singh passed through the city and terminated in Gol Bagh where, on an unprecedentedly vast scale indeed a public gathering was held to pay tributes to the memory of the Guru whose personality and vision helped to shape the mind and the soul of the Punjab besides spreading the light of spirituality over vast areas of our country. The procession referred to was a memorable event and at least five lakh persons, including followers of the various religious groups in the city and its neighbouring areas marched in their colourful costumes and with spontaneous fervour to pay their homage to the Guru's memory. This procession marching for several hours, was joined by personalities of great public importance, besides the vast surging masses. The huge concourse gathered in Gol Bagh listened to speeches which brought out the Guru's greatness. Among the speakers was Dr. V.V. Giri, the President of India, Cabinet Ministers and public leaders. In Amritsar also on this occasion was laid the foundation of a new University named after Guru Nanak.

Every town and village in the Punjab as also in the Capital, Delhi and other towns such as Kanpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta and Patna saw the celebrations on a similar pattern and scale. Besides India, wherever we have a Mission or Embassy, gatherings were held to celebrate the event, at some of which besides our own Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Charges 'D' Aggaires, foreign dignitaries also spoke. It was a truly world-wide phenomenon and one's heart leaped up to witness the grand event which like a heavenly light illumined the whole globe.

Within our own country the Information Services of the Government, the Radio and the Press duly highlighted the event which assumed a truly national character. This was as it should be, for Guru Nanak is claimed to be a teacher of mankind—"Jagatguru"—and not the Founder only of a sect or a narrow tradition. The values he gave to mankind are of an abiding and universal character, and to spread his message is one important way to bring about national integration. Of this aspect of the celebrations a glimpse is provided in the pages that follow.

Schools, Colleges and Universities similarly took up the theme and with varied programmes the significance of the event was impressed on the public mind. Writers and poets came out with books and other writings in several languages particularly

English, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, though work in some other Indian languages also was done on differing scales. Among the books produced are learned studies, explications of the Guru's Word, translations, biographies, dramatized versions of his teaching and books for children. In these last fields particularly, though the output has not been very voluminous, a good beginning has been made. Out of this literature a good part is of continuing value. The momentum thus given is still powerful and good research and creative work is being done by scholars in several places. In the field of art also a new portrait of Guru Nanak was commissioned by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee by the artist Sobha Singh which, because of its distinctive character has set the tone for representing the Guru's personality.

Although a number of Universities organized celebrations, two particularly stand out in respect of the great deal of work done in the literary field on Guru Nanak. The Panjab University, Chandigarh formulated and carried through a scheme to get books on Guru Nanak written. These are in English and Punjabi. Besides, this University was also the first to establish the Guru Nanak Chair for the study of the Guru's thought under a scheme adopted by the Punjab Government in its Department of Education to establish several such Chairs at a number of Universities in the country. The Chair at the Panjab University started functioning in 1970. For this scheme the credit must go to the devotion to this idea shown by Shri Suraj Bhan, the Vice-Chancellor of the Panjab University.

The Punjabi University, Patiala must however, take the first place for the vast amount of literary and creative work done in respect of the Quincentenary Celebrations. A great deal of research and the publication of a large number of volumes on Guru Nanak in English, Punjabi and Hindi was accomplished by this University. It has further, the unique distinction of conceiving and organizing an International Seminar on Guru Nanak. This was reminiscent in scale and vastness of the earlier occasion of the 25th centenary of the appearance of Gautama Buddha and gripped the public imagination as hardly any other event in the cultural history of the Punjab had done. The Seminar, which was attended by over fifty delegates drawn from all over India and countries like the USA, Great Britain and Australia was continued for three days in the newly completed splendid building of Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan at the University Campus, dedicated to the nation by the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Gurnam Singh on the eve of the Seminar. This edifice which is symbolic of India's catholic spiritual outlook and is a structure with an aura of distinction in its opaque glass and points towards the celestial regions, has since been made the centre for carrying on advanced study of several religions traditions. The Seminar was inaugurated by Shri Yashwantrao Chavan, the Home Minister of India. Present on the occasion were the Punjab Governor, Ministers, Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala, the entire University Senate and a cross-section of the intellectual elite of the State. Among those who presided over the sessions

were Dr. V.K. R.V. Rao, Education Minister of India, Dr. D.S. Kothari, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Director of the Department of Religious Studies at Harvard University and Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh, veteran scholar and former Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University. The addresses presented at the inauguration of the Seminar along with other details are reproduced in the pages of this volume. The entire conception of the Seminar and its execution besides allied activities like the vast production of literature on Guru Nanak was owing to the initiative of the then Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang and the Head of the Religious Studies Department, Professor Harbans Singh. Happily these two distinguished persons are still available to the University.

The Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust came out with publications and the Sahitya Akademi held five Seminars of a high scholarly level at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Ludhiana. A selection of the papers presented at these Seminars has recently been published under the title *Homage to Guru Nanak* edited by Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Vice-President of the Academy. Over three of these Seminars Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, President of the Academy presided. Invited to present papers on these Seminars were distinguished scholars. Their papers are a valuable treasure-house of thoughtful literature on the theme of Guru Nanak.

A few distinguished books came out on the occasion. In this connection mention may particularly be made of books by Professor W.H. McLeod, Professor Harbans Singh, Professor Niharranjan Ray, Professor A.C. Bannerji, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib and Dr. S.S. Bal and collections of valuable essays edited by the late S. Gurmukh Nihal Singh and Professor Sant Singh Sekhon. The Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee of Delhi, besides sponsoring a biography of Guru Nanak, published the translation of Guru Nanak's great spiritual composition *Japuji* in several languages. An important direction in which the Quincentenary has resulted in starting beneficent activity is the establishment of the Guru Nanak Foundation at whose disposal ample funds have been placed by the Government besides some organizations. This body has opened an Institute for the education for the Master's degree of scholars in Religion at Patiala. It is planning to establish an Institution for research in Religion, at Delhi.

The above statement provides just a glimpse of the vast amount of cultural and social activity inspired by the event of the Quincentenary. As already said, its influence is continuing to grow in the form of more studies and creation of literature and the general awareness of the integrated life, spiritual experience and uplifting thought in the light of Guru Nanak's teaching. It is hoped that the reader will get some idea of the event in its effects over a vast field from the pages of this volume. Perhaps some of the reports are not full; some are even sketchy. This could

not be helped as the sources of information available were in many cases inadequate. After the celebrations were over, it was not possible to get fuller details, particularly from abroad. This handicap was faced particularly with regard to Pakistan with which our contacts were lost not long after the Quincentenary year. With this handicap and with the due apologies the book is commended to the readers. Thanks are due to the Punjab Government for making this book possible and to Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University for accepting this work to be executed in his University. It is to be hoped that this record now preserved, will guide not only the general reader particularly outside the Punjab, but also the historian of our culture in the future with regard to the upsurge of spontaneous enthusiasm which veneration for the personality of Guru Nanak has aroused at the close of the half millennium since his birth in 1469.

Punjabi University, Patiala

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

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CHAPTER I

IN ACCOUNT OF THE GURU NANAK QUINCENTENARY  
CELEBRATION WITHIN INDIA

(STATES, UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, SCHOOLS, SOCIETIES AND  
OTHER ORGANIZATIONS)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

To celebrate the historic occasion in a befitting manner the Government of India set up a National Committee constituted of the following members :

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Smt. Indira Gandhi, <i>Prime Minister</i>  | <i>Chairman</i> |
| 2. Shri Jagjivan Ram, <i>Minister for Food and Agriculture, Community Development and Co-operation, New Delhi</i> | <i>Member</i>   |
| 3. Sardar Swaran Singh, <i>Defence Minister</i>   | <i>Member</i>   |
| 4. Shri Satya Narain Sinha, <i>Minister of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi</i>                            | <i>Member</i>   |
| 5. Sardar Gurnam Singh, <i>Chief Minister, Punjab</i>   | <i>Member</i>   |
| 6. Shri P.C. Sethi, <i>Minister of State for Finance</i>  | <i>Member</i>   |
| 7. Shri I. K. Gujral, <i>Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting</i>                                   | <i>Member</i>   |
| 8. Professor D.S. Kothari, <i>Chairman, University Grants Commission, New Delhi</i>                               | <i>Member</i>   |
| 9. H.H. Maharaja Yadvindra Singh, <i>Maharaja of Patiala, President, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi</i>         | <i>Member</i>   |
| 10. Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, <i>President, Indian National Trade Union Congress, New Delhi</i>                     | <i>Member</i>   |
| 11. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, <i>Member of Parliament</i>  | <i>Member</i>   |
| 12. Shri Z.A. Ahmad, <i>Member of Parliament</i>  | <i>Member</i>   |
| 13. Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, <i>Member of Parliament</i>   | <i>Member</i>   |
| 14. Sardar Karnail Singh, <i>General Secretary, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi</i>                              | <i>Member</i>   |
| 15. Professor V.K.R.V. Rao, <i>Minister for Education and Youth Services.</i>                                     | <i>Member</i>   |

The inaugural function of the celebrations was held at Rabindra Rangshala, New Delhi on November 20, 1969 under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President of India, Shri G.S. Pathak. The programme included speeches, *Bhajans* and *Kirtan Darbars*. The Sahitya Akademi also held four regional seminars at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Ludhiana and one National Seminar at Delhi on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak. In all these seminars the broad subjects dealt with by the scholars in their papers were as under :

1. The Age of Guru Nanak.
2. The Message of Guru Nanak.
3. Guru Nanak and his Poetry.
4. Mysticism of Guru Nanak.

The following were the other features of the programmes :

The Government of Punjab set up the Guru Nanak University at Amritsar with assistance from the University Grants Commission. The UGC has also asked all the Universities to raise an Endowment for annual Guru Nanak Lectures as National Lectures.

All-India Radio broadcasts included special feature programmes in English and all the Indian languages on Guru Nanak's life and teachings.

A special commemorative stamp was released by the Post and Telegraph Department.

Under arrangement with Unesco, an English translation of some of Guru Nanak's Hymns by Shri Khushwant Singh was published.

Further programmes undertaken in this connection are as follows :

The Ministry of Education and Youth Services planned a scheme of the Student Service Institute to be set up at selected places in the country. The Institute will be housed in buildings to be named as 'Guru Nanak Bhavans'.

The National Book Trust, India in conjunction with the Guru Nanak Foundation undertook to bring out a selection of Guru Nanak's poetry entitled *Nanak Bani*. Dr. Gopal Singh's biography of Guru Nanak in different Indian languages, was released by Prime Minister at the inaugural function held at Rabindra Rangshala on November 20, 1969.

A Guru Nanak Institute for Comparative Study of Religion and Musicology is being set up in Delhi by the Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi, for which the Government of India will make available to the Foundation a building grant of Rs. 26 lakhs.

The Lalit Kala Akademi organized an exhibition of paintings pertaining to the life of Guru Nanak.

A total sum of Rs. 50 lakhs was earmarked to be spent on the celebrations.



## DELHI ADMINISTRATION

*Celebrations in Schools and Colleges*

1. The Delhi Administration arranged lectures on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, which were delivered daily in all educational institutions in Delhi for fifteen minutes after morning prayers beginning from November 21, 1969, and continued upto 1970.
2. A small booklet on the life of Guru Nanak was issued to every student of Delhi schools. This was printed in Punjabi, Hindi and English versions.
3. The Delhi Administration held an All-India Hockey Tournament. The Challenge Shield was donated by the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee in honour of Guru Nanak.

## GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA

1. A State level function was organised at Ambala on November 23, 1969 to celebrate the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.
2. *Kavi Darbars*, symposia, and art exhibitions were organized in almost all the District headquarters of the State.
3. An impressive function was held at Sirsa in which the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Gurnam Singh also participated.
4. The Public Relations Department of Haryana issued a booklet *When Guru Nanak Visited Kurukshetra—Places of Pilgrimage sanctified by Nine out of Ten Gurus*, by Rajinder, as a Quincentenary homage, with translations in Hindi and Punjabi, for free distribution.
5. Foundation was laid of the Guru Nanak Park at Narnaul.
6. Free Eye-operation Camps were organized in the State and medicines were distributed among the poor.
7. The English translation of *Japji* by Khushwant Singh was published for free distribution.
8. The Haryana Government decided to erect a Guru Nanak Bhavan at Ambala at an estimated cost of Rs. 5 lakhs.
9. A documentary film *Nanak Sabh da Sanjha*, was purchased by the Government for public exhibition.
10. The Government Calendar for 1971 was printed with pictures pertaining to Guru Nanak's life.
11. It was decided to bring out a comprehensive book on the life and various aspects of the teachings of Guru Nanak.

## GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

All the educational institutions in the state celebrated the day by organizing lectures on topics relating to the life and mission of Guru Nanak. The libraries and other cultural bodies also participated.

## MADHYA PRADESH GOVERNMENT

*Bhopal*

1. A sixteen-member (State level) committee was constituted by the Government to celebrate the occasion throughout the State, with Shri S.C. Shukla, Chief Minister, as Chairman.
2. 23rd November, 1969, was declared a public holiday in connection with Guru Nanak's birthday celebrations.
3. It was decided to erect Guru Nanak Bhavan in Bhopal at an estimated cost of Rs. 5 lakhs.
4. A huge colourful procession was taken out at Bhopal on November 21, 1969. Thousands of citizens belonging to various faiths joined.
5. *Mushaira/Quawali* programme was arranged at *Saifia* College Hall, on November 22, 1969. Eminent poets and Qawals participated to recite their compositions on Guru Nanak.
6. *Sabad, Kirtan*, speeches, mass prayers and *Guru-ka-Langar* marked the main function at Bhopal, which was organised at the Gurdwara Nankar, Hamidia Road. Chief Minister Shri S.C. Shukla also attended the function. The programme was relayed from AIR.

*Ratlam*

Sri Guru Singh Sabha in collaboration with the Municipal Committee organised :

1. Open Table-Tennis match on November 20—21, 1969.
2. Declamation Contest in the Rotary Hall on November 21, 1969.
3. A citizens' meeting to pay homage to the Guru on November 22, 1969.
4. *Shabad, Kirtan*, speeches and *Langar* on November 23, 1969 in the Gurdwara.

*Mhow*

Celebrations were arranged by the citizens with much enthusiasm. *Shabad kirtan* and *Langar* were organised on November 23, 1969.

*Indore*

A colourful procession was taken out on November 23, 1969 displaying peagants connected with the life of Guru Nanak. It was followed by a *Langar*. In the evening the leaders of various parties spoke on the life and teaching of Guru Nanak in a largely attended public meeting.

The newspapers like *Madhya Desh* (Hindi), *Chronicle* (English), *Hitavada* (English), *Jagran* (Hindi), *Nav Bharat* (Hindi), *Dainik Bhaskar* (Hindi) gave comprehensive coverage to the celebrations.

## GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

The Government set up a State level committee under the Chairmanship of Shri V.P. Naik, Chief Minister, for the celebration of 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

It was decided to donate a piece of land at Nanded to the Guru Nanak Foundation for construction of a Medical College and Hospital at Nanded.

The University of Bombay resolved to establish a Chair named after Guru Nanak at the University.

It was decided to allot a suitable place for the Guru Nanak Foundation for construction of a Hostel, which would cater to the needs of the students coming from all over India to study at the College in Bombay.

The Director of Publicity arranged speeches on All-India Radio on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, as follows :

English : Tarkateerth Shri Laxmanshashtri Joshi, Bombay  
 Hindi : Shri Balasaheb Bharde  
 Punjabi : Sardar Gurbaksh Singh  
 Urdu : Maulana Ghazi

A special issue in Marathi and English of *Lokrajya* was issued by the Director of Publicity on 23rd November, 1969 on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

The Director of Education was asked to purchase copies of the Marathi biography of Guru Nanak, published by National Book Trust and distribute it to all schools in Maharashtra. Similarly, the Director of Libraries was asked to purchase these copies and distribute them to all libraries in Maharashtra.

A public meeting was held on November 23, 1969 in Bombay at Chowpatty under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Education. Speeches at the meeting were delivered by eminent persons, head of religions, on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

In the entire state of Maharashtra, on October 23, the birthday of Guru Nanak was the occasion marked by holy congregations, public meetings and lively speeches and exhortation to dedication to the teachings of Guru Nanak.

#### GOVERNMENT OF UTTAR PRADESH

Besides constituting two non-official celebration committees, the Fifth Guru Nanak Centenary Celebrations Committee, Lucknow and the Guru Nanak Foundation, Kanpur, the Government of Uttar Pradesh issued instructions to all the District Magistrates in the State to organise public meetings, seminars, declamations and speeches in the educational institutions and public places. It also published a small booklet on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

#### *Sitapur*

Guru Nanak Five Hundreth Birthday Celebrations Committee of the citizens organised a function at the Gurdwara. Shri Swami Prasad Singh, Minister for Justice spoke on the occasion. After the *Shabad Kirtan*, *Langar* was also served.

#### *Kanpur*

The Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebrations Committee was constituted in collaboration with the Guru Singh Sabha, with Sardar Trilok Singh as convener.

The celebrations commenced in April 1969 and were intensified on November 16, 1969. A big *Diwan* was organised on November 22, 1969 on the lawns of Moti Jheel. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan addressed the gathering and exhorted the people to follow the ideals and precepts of the Guru. Guru Nanak, he said, was not the Guru of the Sikhs alone; even the people of the Frontier Provinces consider him as their teacher. In the afternoon a huge procession was taken out from La Touche Road Gurdwara. The procession terminated at Moti Jheel. Fireworks were displayed. The concluding ceremony was held on November 23, 1969 at Moti Jheel with *Langar*.

#### *Lucknow*

*Kirtan, Katha* and *Shabad* recitation marked the Quincentenary Celebrations, on November 23, 1969.

A mid-day *Langar* was arranged to distribute free food to all.

Under the auspices of Shri Harimandar at the Nari Shala in Lal Bagh, a large scale *Langar* was arranged, which was visited by Governor, Shri B. Gopala Reddi, and Shri C.B. Gupta, Chief Minister. Shri Baba Mohan Singh laid the foundation-stone of Guru Nanak Girls College.

The Governor addressed a gathering at a specially erected pandal at the Bal Sangrahalya ground.

Fireworks and a poetic symposium were other highlights of the celebrations.

#### *Allahabad*

A big procession was taken out on November 23, 1969. *Akhand Paths*, poetic symposia and *Shabad Kirtan* marked the celebrations.

Similar programmes were organized at Varanasi, Moradabad, Jhansi, Balrampur and a number of other towns of the State.

### STATE OF PUNJAB

#### *Guru Nanak Mandal, Patiala*

1. A convention was called on September 15, 1969, in which the representatives of almost all the organisations proposing to celebrate the quincenary celebrations participated. Maharaja Yadvindra Singh, President, Guru Nanak Foundation, Delhi; Sant Fateh Singh, President, Shiromani Akali Dal; Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala; the Nawab of Malerkotla; Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Prof. G.S. Talib, Professor, Guru Nanak Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh and Prof. Abdul Majid Khan spoke on the occasion. This Convention proved a successful coordination conference.

2. Low-priced biographies of Guru Nanak in Hindi and English versions were got prepared for children by Dr Ujjagar Singh and Professor G. S. Talib.

3. At the suggestion of Guru Nanak Mandal, Patiala, the family of Sardar Mohan Singh of Coca-Cola organisation, Delhi offered, as their homage to the Lord, to award, the undermentioned prizes to authors of books adjudged the most outstanding :

1. GURU NANAK BEST BOOK AWARD : Rs. 5,100  
*Guru Nanak—His Personality and Vision* by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, published by Gurdas Kapur & Sons, Delhi.
2. GURU NANAK DISTINGUISHED BOOK PRIZE : Rs. 3,100  
*Guru Nanak in History* by J.S. Grewal, published by Panjab University, Chandigarh.
3. GURU NANAK GOOD CONTRIBUTION PRIZE (TRANSLATION): 1,100  
*Hymns of Guru Nanak* by Khushwant Singh, published by Orient Longmans, Bombay.
4. SPECIAL PRIZE : Rs. 1,000  
*Guru Nanak Through Pictures* by Phulan Rani, published by Modern Sahit Academy, Amritsar.

5. SPECIAL PRIZE : Rs. 1,000  
*Jiwan Britant Shree Guru Nanak Dev Ji* (Punjabi)  
by Professor Sahib Singh, published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar.
6. SPECIAL PRIZE : Rs. 1,000  
*Mukti Doot* (Hindi) by Shri S.K. Bhatia, published by the Author.

The panel of judges consisted of the following :

1. Professor Niharranjan Ray, Director Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla
2. Shri Suraj Bhan, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh
3. Dr. Ganda Singh, Patiala
4. Sardar Harbans Singh, Professor of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Sardar Mubarak Singh, Member, Punjab Public Service Commission, Patiala acted as the Convener of the panel.

#### PUNJABI SAHITYA AKADEMI, LUDHIANA

The following five books in connection with quincentenary birth celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji were published by the Punjabi Sahitya Akademi, Ludhiana :

1. *Guru Nanak Sidhant* (Punjabi) by Dr. Wazir Singh
2. *Japuji Da Visha Te Rup* (Punjabi) by S. Ram Singh
3. *Chalia Sodhan Dhart Lokai* (Punjabi) by S. Gurcharan Singh Jasuja
4. *Guru Nanak Sahib Dian Janam Sakhian Da Tarkik Adhyayan* (Punjabi)
5. *Sikh Inklab Da Modhi—Guru Nanak* (Punjabi) by S. Kishan Singh

In addition to above a special Guru Nanak Number of *Alochana*, 500 pages in one volume was also brought out.

A dramatic performance to mark the occasion was also held in the Panjabi Bhavan, Ludhiana.

#### SHIROMANI GURDWARA PRABANDHAK COMMITTEE, AMRITSAR

1. The Committee celebrated the occasion with great eclat. Special ceremonies were held at Nankana Sahib (W. Pakistan), Sultanpur Lodhi and Amritsar. Besides

millions of devotees, the President of India, Shri V.V. Giri, the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Dalai Lama, and Sarvodaya leader Shri Jai Prakash Narain participated in the celebrations.

2. The Hari Mandir (Golden Temple), Amritsar was decorated with sound and light arrangements, at a cost of Rs. 4 lakhs and the *son et lumiere* programme was initiated on November 23, 1969.

3. The four-storey 'Guru Nanak Niwas' was erected costing about Rs. 5 lakhs near the offices of the Committee at Amritsar, and a similar 'Guru Nanak Niwas' with pucca ghats at the Bein rivulet was built by the Punjab Government at Sultanpur Lodhi.

4. It was decided to build two Guru Nanak Halls costing about Rs. 5 lakhs each at the Khalsa Colleges in Bombay and Amritsar.

5. The Prabandhak Committee opened a separate clinical laboratory at the Guru Ram Das Hospital, Amritsar and decided to add a 25-bed wing to it.

6. The Committee decided to spend Rs. 75,000 yearly on the maintenance and repair of the historic Gurdwaras.

7. It was decided to spend Rs. 75,000 annually on the welfare of the backward classes instead of Rs. 25,000 as was the provision heretofore.

8. An exhibition truck carrying mementoes connected with the life of Guru Nanak was sent to all the principal cities of India for display.

9. A film entitled 'Guru Nanak Darshan' was got prepared and was screened on November 23, 1969 along with two other films, 'Gobind Darshan' and 'Sach Khand Vasai Nirankar.'

10. An Eastman Colour film 'Nanak Nam Jahaz', produced by Kalpana Lok Ltd., Bombay, was approved by the Committee.

11. About Rupees one lakh were given in aid to the new colleges, in addition to Rs. 22 lakhs being annually spent on the spread of education through schools and colleges.

12. The following books on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak were got prepared :

- (a) *Guru Nanak Vichar Adhyain* : Professor Pritam Singh
- (b) *Saying of Guru Nanak (English)* : Dr. H.S. Shan
- (c) *Thoughts of Guru Nanak (English)* : Principal Harbhajan Singh
- (d) *Guru Babe di Bani (Punjabi)* : Dr. H.S. Shan
- (e) *Puratan Janam Sakhi (Edited)* : S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok

In addition, the committee purchased books written by various scholars for free distribution to the libraries in India and abroad.

13. Three special numbers of *Gurmat Parkash*, highlighting the Bani and other aspects of Guru Nanak's teaching were issued at the cost of Rs.61,000.

14. Two special numbers of *Gurdwara Gazette* were published at the cost of Rs. 42,000.

15. A three-day 'Guru Nanak Langar' was held at Gol Bagh, Amritsar at the cost of Rs. 40,000.

16. A portrait of Guru Nanak was got prepared by Sardar Sobha Singh, the well-known artist for free distribution on November 23, 1969, the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

#### GURU NANAK FOUNDATION, DELHI

The Guru Nanak Foundation was established in 1965 for disseminating Guru Nanak's message of peace, love and universal brotherhood.

The Foundation set up branches both in India and foreign countries. Persons of various religious and linguistic communities were actively associated with its working and organisation.

In connection with the celebrations of 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the Guru Nanak Foundation drew up a comprehensive programme :

##### 1. *Establishment of Guru Nanak Institutes*

(a) It was decided to establish Guru Nanak Institute of Comparative Study of Religions with a centre of Indian Classical Music incorporated in it, at Delhi. The National Committee for the quincentenary celebrations of Guru Nanak was set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister.

(b) *Guru Nanak Institute of Religious Studies at Patiala*

The Institute at Patiala was got affiliated to the Punjabi University, Patiala and an interim Governing Body was nominated. The Punjab Government decided to provide adequate financial assistance to the Institute.

The Institute has three departments :

- (i) Research Department : To prepare student for the Ph.D. degree after three years of study.
- (ii) Gurmat College in which graduate students will qualify for Master's Degree in Religion after two year's course of study.
- (iii) Publications Department in which books on Religion and allied subjects will be published.



## 2. *Guru Nanak Lectures and Chairs*

At the initiation of the Foundation, the U.G.C. decided to assist the establishment of Guru Nanak Chairs at the universities of Aligarh, Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Patiala (Punjabi University) and Chandigarh (Punjab University), Varanasi (Banaras Hindu University) and also arrange for the holding of lectures on Guru Nanak's teachings in at least, one University in each state during the Centenary year.

## 3. *Eye-Cornea Grafting Project*

Arrangements were made with Dr. R.U. Hingorani, the President of the Guru Nanak Foundation, U.K. Branch, to bring a team of ten surgeons to India to perform eye operations for replacement of cornea for blind persons. As a symbol of the 500th birthday of the Guru, it was intended that on this occasion at least 500, if not more, blind persons should be helped to have their sight restored. Beds for patients were arranged in hospitals at Delhi, Amritsar, Patiala, Kanpur, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Bhuvaneshvar, Secunderabad, Ludhiana, Jammu and Bangalore.

The Guru Nanak Foundation issued a nation-wide appeal for donation of eyes to the eye-banks all over the country.

## 4. *Documentary Film*

The Foundation arranged for the production of a documentary film pertaining to Guru Nanak.

## 5. *Publications*

The following books were published :

(a) *Guru Nanak Quincentenary Volume*, with a foreword from Dr. Zakir Hussain and introduction by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. This volume has been edited by Sardar Gurmukh Nihal Singh and includes the articles of eminent scholars like Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh, Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, Dr. Trilochan Singh, Dr. M. Mujeeb, Dr. C.H. Loehlin S. Balwant Singh Anand, Dr. Mohan Singh, Dr. R.K. Das Gupta and S. Khushwant Singh.

The book has been published in English, Hindi and Punjabi versions.

(b) *Guru Nanak's Religion*: This book by Dr. Trilochan Singh has been published in English, Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kanada, Bengali and Urdu.

(c) *A Life-sketch of Guru Nanak* by Dr. Hari Ram Gupta in English, Hindi and Punjabi versions.

- (d) *Teachings of Guru Nanak* by Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh in English, Hindi and Punjabi versions.
- (e) *Life of Guru Nanak* by Mrs P.M. Wylam specially written for readers of the younger age-group, illustrated in English, Hindi and Punjabi versions.
- (f) *Hymns Guru Nanak* by Sardar Khushwant Singh has been published in collaboration with UNESCO.

#### GURU NANAK VIDYAK SOCIETY, BOMBAY

Guru Nanak Vidyak Society planned an elaborate programme of celebrations during the months of October and November, 1969.

Shri V.P. Naik agreed to be President of the Quincentenary Celebrations Committee of the Society.

The Celebrations commenced with a grand procession arranged on October 17, 1969 early morning in which 4000 pupils, members of staff drawn from the schools of Nanak Vidyak Society and the parents participated. Immediately after the procession and *Kirtan* programme, the *Akhand Path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib* commenced.

The Sampat Path was concluded on October 19 at midnight followed by a largely attended *Dharmik Diwan*, where besides *Kirtan* and *Katha* the prize-winning speakers at the declamation contest delivered talks about Guru Nanak.

Shri Madhukar Rao Chaudhri, Education Minister, gave a learned talk on the life of Guru Nanak.

Programme of the Grant Festival of Tournaments in three indigenous and three international games went on for over a month and attracted 37 teams from the secondary schools Greater Bombay.

Shields, cups and certificates as Quincentenary mementoes were awarded to the winners.

A Quincentenary Declamation Contest was planned and pupils of secondary schools and colleges in Maharashtra were invited to participate.

The contests were held in four languages : Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi and English.

Preliminary contests were held locally at Nanded Hazur Sahib, Poona, Nagpur and Bombay on the 11th of October, 1969 wherein 117 contestants from twenty five schools and six colleges in the State participated.

The final contest was held in Bombay on October 18, 1969 in which 71 contestants from all the above-mentioned places in the State participated.

The best speakers were asked to give talks to the public on October 19, when the Education Minister attended the *Dharmik Diwan* and on October 24, 1969 evening when the Chief Minister came to participate in the *Utsav Mela*.

*Prakash Utsav Exhibition*

The Exhibition inaugurated by the Education Minister on October 19, 1969 was organised with a two-fold purpose :

- (a) To present the complete story of Guru Nanak in a visual, attractive and easily comprehensible form.
- (b) To give to parents and the general public the idea of many-sided curricular and co-curricular activities of the institutions.

*Prakash Utsav Mela and Evening Cultural Shows*

From October 19, 1969 for about a week, *Utsav Mela* was held which provided the following attractions :

Exhibition

Amusement Park

Canteen run by the pupils of various schools

Variety State Programme and Orchestra

Films—*Gurdwara Darshan, Gobind Darshan* and documentaries

Physical display.

Shri Vasant Rao Naik, Chief Minister, Maharashtra State and President of the Celebrations Committee visited the Mela on the eve of October 24, and stayed at the site for about an hour.

*Show at Shanmukhananda Hall*

Shri Harpal Tiwana of the *Punjab Kala Manch*, Patiala staged the play *Miti Dhund Jag Chanan Hoya* on November 18, 1969.

The total sale of tickets was Rs. 10,800.00

*Bal Mitra—Special Issue*

The Committee also had a special Quincentenary Issue of *Bal Mitra*, containing article of the life and teachings of the Guru.

*Programmes on AIR*

The pupils of Guru Nanak school presented an interesting programme on AIR Bombay on December 12, 1969, depicting the various aspects of Guru Nanak Devji's life and teachings.

GURDWARA PRABANDHAK COMMITTEE DELHI  
(GURU NANAK GURMAT VIDYALAYA)

The Committee decided to start a "Guru Nanak Gurmat Vidyalaya" for training *Ragis* and *Granthis* to adopt a career as missionaries and to conduct refresher courses for those who are already in this profession.

*Publications*

1. The Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee published *Life of Guru Nanak* written by Dr. Trilochan Singh.
2. A book entitled *True Humanism of Guru Nanak* by Dr. Trilochan Singh, was published in English.
3. The Committee approved the publication *Japji Sahib* translated in all Indian languages and some of the European languages.
4. A book in English on Guru Nanak by a writer of U.P., Shri S.C. Verma, partly in verse and partly in prose was published by the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUNJABI SAHIT SABHA ( REGD ). MAISUMA, SRINAGAR

1. A kirtan was arranged by the Sabha.
2. Lectures on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak were delivered.
3. *Kavi Sammelan* was arranged in which local poets participated.
4. An essay competition was held on October 5, 1969.
5. The Punjabi Sahit Sabha brought out its magazine.

*Heemal* with its first issue as 'Guru Nanak Number' in which eminent writers of the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir contributed their articles on the life, teachings and philosophy of Guru Nanak.

ACADEMY OF ART CULTURE AND LANGUAGES, JAMMU

The Academy brought out a Commemoration Volume which contained Punjabi and English portions. In addition to above a *Kavi Darbar* was held in which Punjabi, Dogri, Hindi and Urdu poets took part and paid their tributes to the Guru.

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir arranged two special lectures on Guru Nanak, one each at Srinagar and Jammu. These were delivered by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib.

## SAHITYA AKADEMI NEW DELHI

Five seminars on Guru Nanak were held.

- (1) A National Seminar was organised in Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi on December 9, 10, and 11, 1969.
- (2) A two-day seminar was organised on December 10 and 11, 1969.
- (3) A seminar was organized at Calcutta on December 15, 1969.

The Sahitya Akademi in collaboration with the Guru Nanak Foundation organised four Regional Seminars and a National Seminar on Guru Nanak's teachings during the Quincentenary year. The National Seminar, of three days duration were held in Delhi while the four Regional Seminars of one day each were held at Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta and Ludhiana from December 1969 to February, 1970. The highlights of these Seminars were the reading of special papers by eminent persons on Guru Nanak's teachings and discussion among them. A special number of *Indian Literature* was brought out by the Akademi containing a special English translation of two great compositions—*Bara-Mah* and *Pahre* of Guru Nanak by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib.

## SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI, DELHI

The Sangeet Natak Akademi held a special music programme on November 20, 1969 consisting of rendering of *Nanak Bani*, *Kirtans* and *Bhajans* in the traditional classical style. Smt. Siddeshwari Devi and reputed artists from Jullundur, Patiala and other places participated.

## LALIT KALA AKADEMI, DELHI

The Lalit Kala Akademi held an exhibition of old and new paintings of Guru Nanak and also paintings depicting various features of his life and activities.

## NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA, NEW DELHI

The National Book Trust, in collaboration with the Guru Nanak Foundation brought out a selection of Guru Nanak's poetry entitled *Nanak Bani* compiled by Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh and also a biography of Guru Nanak by Dr Gopal Singh in all the Indian languages.

## BANGALORE UNIVERSITY

A special lecture on Guru Nanak by Professor Surindar Singh Kohli was arranged in the University on November 24, 1969.

A book on Guru Nanak in Kannada was brought out by the University.

## BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY, VARANASI

1. Extension lectures on the life and teaching of Guru Nanak were organised during the month of November, 1969. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi on November 14, 1969. His topic was 'Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak'.

2. The Guru Nanak Quincentenary celebration committee was constituted with Dr. S.S. Saluja, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, as convener.

3. Lectures, debates and Essay Competition were held with three prizes of Rs. 125, Rs. 75 and Rs. 50 were fixed for the best essays.

4. The main function was celebration on November 30, 1969 with the completion of the *Akhand Path* of Guru Granth Sahib followed by Kirtan, speeches and poems. The function concluded with a *Langar*.

## BHAGALPUR UNIVERSITY, BHAGALPUR

1. Dr. A.C. Banerjee of Jadavpur University delivered a special lecture on *The Heritage of Guru Nanak*.

2. An inter-college essay competition was held on the subject *Mazheb nahi sikhata apas main bair rakhna*

3. An All-India Seminar on the Relevance of Guru Nanak's Teachings for Modern Times was organised at which teachers of the University spoke. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib of Punjab University, Chandigarh delivered two special lectures. The Vice-Chancellor presided.

## CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Trilochan Singh delivered three lectures on the "Ethical Philosophy of Guru Nanak" in the first week of February, 1970.

The sub-topics of his lectures were :

1. The Dynamic Principles and Nature of Guru Nanak's Ethics.
2. Moral Values and Moral Responsibility in Guru Nanak's Ethics.
3. Guru Nanak's Code of Conduct and Ideal Sikh Character.

## DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY

The Dibrugarh University formed a committee to celebrate the Quincentenary of Guru Nanak. The committee decided to celebrate the same on 9th December, 1969 in the University Camps. Arrangements were made to invite eminent persons from outside for delivering lecture on the life, philosophy and teachings of Guru Nanak. There was a very good gathering, and people from the town also participated. Tracts on Guru Nanak were prepared in Assamese, English and Hindi with the help of local Sikh Association and were distributed. The University Library has also purchased books on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

At the end, the students sang the *Shabads* of Guru Nanak and later light refreshments were served.

## JIWAJI UNIVERSITY, GWALIOR

Two lectures were arranged on the teachings of Guru Nanak—one by Dr. Taran Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala and the other by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib of Kurukshetra University on December 5, 1969 and December 12, 1969 respectively.

## KURUKSHETRA UNIVERSITY, KURUKSHETRA

1. Illumination of important University buildings on the evening of November 23, 1969.

2. Dr. Amiya Chakravarty delivered a talk on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak Devji on August 27, 1969.

3. A grant of Rs. 2500/- was received from the U.G.C. and utilized for the purchase of books on Guru Nanak.

4. A volume of poems *Rock and the Pool* on Guru Nanak was written by Dr. B.S. Gupta.

## UNIVERSITY OF INDORE

On the suggestion of U.G.C. the following programmes were arranged :

1. On October 30, 1969, a cultural programme which included devotional songs and bhajans on *Guru Nanak* was arranged.

2. On November 4, 1969, Shri P.V. Dixit, retired Chief Justice, Madhya Pradesh High Court delivered a lecture on the life of Guru Nanak.

3. On November 22, 1969 a lecture was arranged on Guru Nanak and Mission by Dr. Trilochan Singh of Ludhiana. On December 3, 1969. Dr. Taran Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala delivered a lecture on Guru Nanak's life and teachings.

ORISSA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY,  
BHUBANESWAR

This University organised a seminar and Essay Contest in English and Oriya, on the following topics :

1. In English—"Guru Nanak and Bhakti Movement".
2. In Oriya—"Impact of Guru Nanak on Indian Society".

On September 12, 1970 a seminar was organised in the University auditorium. Several eminent persons were invited to take part in this seminar.

PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH

The following books were published on the quincentenary of Guru Nanak birthday celebrations :

1. *Guru Nanak : Jiwan, Darshan ate Kav Kala* (Punjabi)
2. *Guru Nanak Patshah* (Punjabi)
3. *Philosophy of Guru Nanak* (English)
4. *Travels of Guru Nanak* (English)
5. *Krantikari Guru Nanak* (Punjabi)
6. *Life of Guru Nanak* (English)
7. *Guru Nanak in the Eyes of Non-Sikhs* (English)
8. *Guru Nanak in History* (English)

A lecture was delivered by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, Professor of World Religions, State University College, New York on August 28, 1969.

A play *Gagan Mai Thal* written and produced by Balwant Gargi was staged at the Tagore Theatre in November, 1969.

A *Kavi Darbar* was organized in the University Auditorium in which twenty prominent poets participated.

The Guru Nanak Chair for Sikh Studies was established in the University in collaboration with the Punjab Government. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, an eminent Sikh scholar has since been appointed Guru Nanak Professor.

PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, LUDHIANA

A sum of Rs. 25,000 was set apart by the University in connection with the Quincentenary celebrations. The following programmes were conducted by the University :



*Symposium/Seminars*

1. A Symposium organised by the Teachers Study Circle was held on 26th November, 1969. The following papers were read and discussed :

- (a) *The Objectives of Guru Nanak's Teachings* by S.S. Kahlon
- (b) *The Concept of Naam* by S.S. Dosanjh
- (c) *Aesthetic Beauty of Guru Nanak's Poetry* by S.N. Sewak

2. Another Seminar was organised on the subject "Guru Nanak's impact on Indian Social and Cultural Life" on May 12, 1970. The following scholars read papers :

- (a) Dr. Fauja Singh; Professor and Head of the Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala
- (b) Dr. Gobind Singh Mansu Khani, Education Officer, U.G.C.
- (c) Dr. Taran Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala
- (d) Dr. Dalip Singh Deep, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana
- (e) Dr. S.S. Dosanjh, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana
- (f) Dr S.S. Kahlon, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana
- (g) S. Hazara Singh, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana
- (h) Mr. S.N. Sewak, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana

3. One more Seminar sponsored by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi was held in this University.

4. Special lectures on Guru Nanak were delivered by Dr. J.S. Grewal and Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib.

5. Two separate exhibitions of paintings on Guru Nanak were arranged in the University. Paintings worth Rs. 5000 were purchased for the University.

6. The University Library arranged an exhibition of books written on Guru Nanak.

7. A special number of the Punjab Agricultural University magazine was brought out.

8. The following three books on Guru Nanak's life and teachings written by Dr. Dalip Singh Deep, were published :

- (a) *Japji—Ik Tulnatmak Adhiyain*
- (b) *Jagat Guru Baba*
- (c) *Sukhala Marg*

9. The non-teaching Workers Union of the Punjab Agricultural University organised a special function to mark Guru Nanak quincentenary celebration.

10. Foreign students of the Punjab Agricultural University also organized a function at which Dr. C.A. Lamb, Chief of USAID Mission, spoke on the message of Guru Nanak.

## PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

In view of the unique historical and cultural significance of the Quincentenary of the birth of Guru Nanak falling in 1969, the Punjabi University initiated special programmes of research and scholarly publications on his life and teachings, which are briefly outlined as under :

*Guru Nanak Commemorative Lecture*

The University formulated in 1965 a scheme of annual lectures on Guru Nanak. Each series consisted of three or four lectures, delivered each year by a selected invitee. Following is the list of the lectures delivered :

Year	Speaker	Topic
1966	Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh	Guru Nanak and Indian Religious Thought
1967	Principal B.L. Kapur	Message of Guru Nanak in the context of India's Sanatanist Tradition.
1968	Principal Balwant Singh Anand	Guru Nanak's Religion and Ethics.
1969	Professor Niharranjan Ray	Sikh Gurus and Sikh Society—a Study in Historical Sociology

The lectures were later printed by the University, and published in book form, both in Punjabi and English versions.

*International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings*

An International Seminar on Guru Nanak was convened by the University from September 3 to September 6, 1969. More than fifty distinguished scholars in the fields of Religion, philosophy and History from Universities in India, the United States, Great Britain, Canada and Australia participated. The papers presented at the Seminar are expected to be published in book form.\*

*Opening of the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan*

The inauguration of the International Seminar was marked by the opening, at the hands of the State Chief Minister, Sardar Gurnam Singh, of the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan, a building specially designed to house the University Department of Religious Studies. This was formally and solemnly dedicated to the service of the nation on this occasion.

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\*A few form part of the present publication.

### *Exhibition*

During the last two years the University has been making photostat copies of rare *Janamsakhis* and has been having reprints taken of paintings of Guru Nanak Gardwaras, private collections and museums in the Punjab and in other parts of India. An Exhibition of this material was organized at the time of the International Seminar.

### *Punjab Historical Conference*

A session of the 1969 Punjab History Conference, which meets annually under the auspices of the Punjabi University, was devoted to papers on the life and work of Guru Nanak.

### *P.E.N. Conference*

A session of the 1969 P.E.N. All-India writers' Conference, hosted by the Punjabi University, was devoted to speeches and papers on Guru Nanak.

### *Monthly Meetings*

Monthly meetings to study the *Bani*, thought and life of Guru Nanak were held in the University through the initiative of the Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies. The programme continued for one year.

### *Nanak Prakash Patrika*

A special journal entitled *Nanak Prakash Patrika* was brought out by the Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies to cover the Quincentenary programmes undertaken by the University. Since then it has been issued periodically. It also published articles, other than those of the seminar on the life and philosophy of Guru Nanak.

### *Guru Nanak Week*

Week-long programmes, designed specially to secure participation of students of the University, faculty members and teachers of affiliated colleges were undertaken in the month of November, 1969. These included hymn singing and poetical contests, speeches and a symposium on Guru Nanak in which the Principals and teachers of Colleges and University and Faculty members took part.

### *Affiliated Colleges*

Appropriate programmes comprising lectures, seminars, declamation contests etc were taken up in Colleges admitted to the privileges of the University.

*Programmes at Other Indian Universities*

On a motion by the Vice-Chancellor, Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, the Inter-University Conference in 1969 recommended that the Quincentenary of Guru Nanak's birth be suitably celebrated at all the Indian Universities. The University Grants Commission set apart funds for this purpose and decided that a grant of Rs. 5000/- would be made available to any university undertaking programmes in observance of the Quincentenary.

The Punjabi University has been helping other universities with literature and speakers for this purpose.

*Lectures and Publications by Faculty Members*

The Vice-Chancellor and members of the Faculty in Departments such as History, Punjabi, Linguistics, Translation, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Religious Studies and Literary Studies delivered lectures about Guru Nanak at various places in India and abroad. They also participated in Seminars at different universities and contributed articles, in English and Punjabi, to various journals and newspapers.

*Publications*

The University specially undertook a comprehensive and substantial programme of literary and scholarly publications. This included publication of old manuscripts, *Bani* of Guru Nanak and biographical and interpretative works. The following is the list of such publications :

1. Guru Nanak Bani Prakash (Two parts)
2. Guru Nanak and the Origins of Sikh Faith (English)  
(Punjabi and Hindi versions under preparation)
3. Guru Nanak (French)
4. Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan
5. Guru Granth Vichar Kosh
6. Japuji (Vinoba Bhave)
7. Dhammapada
8. Sikh Dharam Darshan
9. Bhagat Namdev
10. Kabir Vachnavli
11. Guru Nanak Simriti Vakhyan
12. Sikhism
13. Hinduism
14. Buddhism
15. Christianity
16. Islam

Collection of Essays published by the Guru Gobind Singh  
Department of Religious Studies.

17. Guru Granth Ratnavali, Illustrated (English, Punjabi and Hindi versions)
18. Guru Nanak : Religion and Ethics
19. Nanakayan (an epic)
20. A Concordance of Guru Granth Sahib—Two Vols.
21. Ethics of the Sikhs

#### RAVI SHANKAR UNIVERSITY, RAIPUR

1. Shri B. L. Pande announced the decision of the University to publish the important works of Guru Nanak on November 23, 1969.

2. A three-day lecture series was organised in the University in which several scholars read out papers on various aspects of the philosophy of Guru Nanak. Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao, Professor of Comparative Religions, Punjabi University, Patiala spoke on the teachings and philosophy of the Guru.

#### SAMBHALPUR UNIVERSITY

This University organised a Seminar on the 'Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak' on the September 5, 1970. Several scholars, historians, teachers and students participated in the Seminar. The following persons spoke on various aspects of the life and teachings of Guru Nanak :

Dr. S.C. Behera	: Place of Guru Nanak in the Bhakti Movement.
Shri Siba Pr. Das.	: Religious Philosophy of Guru Nanak.
Dr. I.S. Kumar	: Practical aspect of the teachings of Guru Nanak.
Sardar Anup Singh	: Life of Guru Nanak
Dr. N. K. Sahu	: Role of Guru Nanak in the Emancipation of Women

#### SARDAR PATEL UNIVERSITY, VALLABH VIDYANAGAR (GUJARAT)

A seminar (financed by the University Grants Commission, New Delhi), was held on January 16 and 17, 1970 in the University. Light was thrown on the subject by the various speakers on the philosophy and teachings of Guru Nanak.

A number of papers in Hindi on Guru Nanak were presented by various speakers.

#### SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY

A committee was set up by the University to celebrate the Guru Nanak Quincenary. The Committee arranged Lectures, Essay and Elocution Competitions. The

function was largely attended by people from the town. Two scholars, Dr. Avtar Singh Lecturer in Sikh Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala and Professor Jagjit Singh, Head of the Department of History, Khalsa College, Bombay were invited and they gave lectures on *Guru Nanak and his Philosophy of Life*; and *Guru Nanak and a Historical Survey of Sikhism* respectively. The lectures were very well received by those present.

#### VIKRAM UNIVERSITY, UJJAIN

Quincentenary celebrations were celebrated by University for three days from November 29, 1969 to December 1, 1969. The celebrations consisted of (1) *Akhand Path* for three days, (2) *Kavi Sammelan on Guru Nanak*, (3) Extension lectures on the teachings of Guru Nanak, (4) *Bhajans* and *Shabads* from *Guru Granth* by Ragis.

#### D.A.V. COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR WOMEN, AMRITSAR

The whole day of November 23, 1969 was devoted to various activities to celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the College. It started with the performance of *Havan Yajna* followed by the singing of *Shabads*. A Declamation Contest cum Poetical Symposium on the life and teachings of the great Guru was organised. Priti Bhoj was arranged, which was well attended.

#### D.A.V. COLLEGE, BHATINDA

Two phases of a symposium were held during the celebrations.

As the first phase an Inter College Symposium was organised and topics dealt with by the participating students were: "Guru Nanak's message of fraternity to the world," and "Importance of Guru Nanak's teachings for students". In the short interlude between the two phases of the Symposium, Shri Gurcharan Singh 'Shaheed', a Pre-Medical student, recited his inspiring poem invoking the Spirit of the Guru.

In the second phase of the symposium, two guest-speakers namely, Shri Bachittar Singh of Rajindra Government College, Bhatinda, and Shri Harbans Lal of this College, delivered discourses on the topic; "Guru Nanak as a Social Reformer." Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University was the chief guest. The Vice-Chancellor, along with the audience, observed a minute's silence to pay homage to Guru

Nanak before making his speech. He described Guru Nanak as a great teacher — first and foremost a teacher, the true teacher — the *Satguru*. In the course of his speech Shri Kirpal Singh Narang stressed the point that the Guru spread the message of truth, love and fraternity.

#### DAYANAND MATHRADAS COLLEGE, MOGA (PUNJAB)

The Guru Nanak Quincentenary was celebrated with enthusiasm. Principal Sujan Singh, the well-known Punjabi writer, presided over the function.

The programme comprised *Shabad-Kirtan*, poems and speeches on the life and work of Guru Nanak.

A number of prizes were awarded to the participants who presented poems or sang religious songs. A number of local devotees of Guru Nanak attended the function and some of them paid homage in speeches to the great teacher.

#### KHALSA COLLEGE, AMRITSAR

1. *Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev* Vol. II was brought out.
2. *Guru Nanak and His Japji* was published.
3. *Sri Guru Nanak Devji; His Life and Teachings* – a tract of 24 pages was published.
4. Professor Dewan Singh brought out two books : *Guru Nanak's Japji* (in English) and *Japji da mool updesh* (in Punjabi).
5. *Guru Nanak Kav Adhyain* by Shri Satinder Singh which got best literary award from the State Government was published.
6. A special Guru Nanak issue of the College Magazine *The Durbar* was brought out.
7. *Kirtan Darbar*, Essay Competition and lectures were arranged.
8. A play *Orak Sach Rahee* written by Sardar Gurdial Singh Phul was staged by the students.

#### GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, LUDHIANA

The following lectures were delivered :

- (1) The importance of Guru Nanak.
- (2) *Guru Nanak Sahib di Dharam Sadhna*.
- (3) The Travels of Guru Nanak.

- (4) The Life and Mission of Guru Nanak.
- (5) Guru Nanak and Mahatma Gandhi.
- 2. On October 22, 1969, a *Kirtan* was arranged.
- 3. On October 22, 1969, a *Kavi Darbar* was arranged.
- 4. On October 21, 1969, an Essay Competition was held.
- 5. A drama was staged by Shri Gursharan Singh of Amritsar in January, 1971.
- 6. An Exhibition of paintings concerning Guru Nanak was arranged on October 21, 1969 in the College.
- 7. A painting of Guru Nanak Dev was purchased at a cost of Rs. 1000,00.

#### GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, PATIALA

In celebration of the 500th Birth Centenary of Guru Nanak, in 1969 a Karatoplasty Ward has been established which has been named as "Guru Nanak Karatoplasty Ward". As a part of the Celebrations, 27 patients were operated upon by foreign surgeons who brought with them some frozen eyes.

#### GOVERNMENT RIPUDAMAN COLLEGE, NABHA

Guru Nanak Quincentenary was celebrated in the college from November, 1969 to November, 1970 by organising :

- (1) *A Series of Extension lectures.*

The following eminent scholars delivered lectures on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak :

- (a) Shri Piara Singh Padam, Research Fellow, Department of Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
- (b) Dr. Kirpal Singh, Reader, Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala.
- (c) Dr. Jeet Singh Seetal, Reader, Department of Punjabi, Punjabi University, Patiala.
- (d) Dr. Avtar Singh, Reader, of Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
- (e) Dr. Fauja Singh, Professor, and Director, Department of History and Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
- (f) Dr. Taran Singh, Head, Department of Guru Granth Sahib Studies; Punjabi University, Patiala.



- (g) Dr. Surindar Singh Kohli, Professor and Head, Department of Punjabi, Panjab University, Chandigarh.
- (h) Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, and Head, Guru Nanak Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

(2) *Festival*

A four-day festival was organised in a befitting manner to commemorate the Quincentenary in November, 1969. The celebrations opened with a Kirtan Darbar, in which Kirtan Mandlis, Radio Artists and College students recited the sacred hymns of Guru Nanak. This was followed by three successful Inter-College functions.

In Shabad Gayan Contest, the trophy was bagged by Government College for Women, Patiala whereas Savita of this College was adjudged second. The Punjabi University Campus bagged the trophy in verse recitation contest. Government College, Malerkotla won the trophy in the Declamation Contest and Savita again was awarded the second prize.

(3) *Publication*

In continuation of this celebration, a special Quincentenary Issue of the College Magazine was also brought out.

GURU GOBIND SINGH REPUBLIC COLLEGE, JANDIALA

(1) *Report of celebrations :*

- (a) November 7, 1969—A meeting to discuss the philosophy of Guru Nanak's teachings was held in the College. Dr. Niharranjan Ray, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, Dr. Harjit Singh Gill, Director Linguistics Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, Professor Surinder Singh Narulla and Professor Tejwant Singh Gill read their articles on Guru Nanak. The same day during the night a drama entitled *Jin Sach Palle Hoe* was staged by the Amritsar Natak Kala Kendar, depicting the teaching of Guru Nanak, which was highly appreciated by the audience.
- (b) November 28, 1970—On the occasion of Guru Nanak's birthday a seminar on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak was held. The Education Minister of Punjab, Sardar Surjit Singh presided over the function. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib of the Panjab University, Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, Director, Punjab State University Textbook Board, and Dr. Amarjit Singh of the Panjab University Evening College, Jullundur, read their articles.

- (c) December 14, 1970—Dr. Haribhajan Singh, Professor of Punjabi, Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi and Dr. Attar Singh also of the Delhi University, were invited to deliver lectures on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

(2) *Book Published on Guru Nanak :*

A book entitled *Guru Nanak To-day* edited by Principal Sant Singh Sekhon for the Student Body of Guru Gobind Singh Republic College, Jandiala (Jullundur) was released by Sardar Surjit Singh, the then Education Minister of Punjab on November 28, 1970.

GURU NANAK NAV BHARAT COLLEGE, NARUR PANCHAYAT (KAPURTHALA)

1. A seminar was organised in March 1969 under the Presidentship of Dr. Gopal Singh, M.P. The seminar was inaugurated by Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University.
2. A collection of paintings of Lahora Singh, Artist was published. It was edited by the Principal and the Introduction was written by Sardar Khushwant Singh. The originals of these paintings are lying in the Punjab State Archives.
3. An exhibition of paintings and manuscripts regarding the life of Guru Nanak was also held.
4. Drama show conveying the message of Guru Nanak was organized.
5. Shri Prithpal Singh, Principal, wrote a booklet entitled *Guru Nanak at Sultanpur Lodhi* for the Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebrations Committee, Punjab State.

MATA GUJRI COLLEGE, FATEHGARH SAHIB—GURMAT VICHAR SABHA

- (1) A series of lectures was organized in which several scholars took part. These included :
  - (a) On September 9, 1969 Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli on “*Sri Guru Nanak-Mat Te Hor Bharti Te Videshi Mat-Matantar*”.
  - (b) On September 20, 1969 *Nanak Vani Vich Gurmukh da Sankalp* by Dr. Taran Singh.
  - (c) On October 8, 1969, Dr. Vishwanath Tewari on *Guru Nanak da Samaj ute Parbhav*.
  - (d) On October 19, 1969 by Dr. Fauja Singh on *Guru Nanak in History*.
- (2) A special issue *Fatehgarh* was published commemorating the occasion. It contained poems, essays and articles on various aspects of teachings and philosophy of Guru Nanak.

## HOME SCIENCE COLLEGE, CHANDIGARH

A number of lectures on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak were delivered by persons drawn from the city and teachers from Punjabi Department of Punjab University, Chandigarh, Kirtan and Bhajans were sung in homage to Guru Nanak. Prayers were held and *Shabad* was read from *Guru Granth Sahib*.

## NEHRU MEMORIAL COLLEGE, MANSA (BHATINDA)

The College celebrated the Quincentenary of Guru Nanak on 23rd, 24th and 25th December, 1969. An Akhandpath was held. Besides this, the students of the College recited hymns and made speeches throwing light on the life and philosophy of Guru Nanak.

On this occasion, Dr. Gurcharan Singh, Principal, Khalsa College, Patiala gave talk on the life and philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev. According to Dr. Gurcharan Singh, the essence of Guru Nanak's greatness lay in opposing the wrong values of his time.

The programme which was held on the 24th December, 1969 was presided over by Sardar Randhir Singh, S.D.M. Mansa and the function on 25th December, 1969 was presided over by Sardar Sukhbir Singh Bedi, Deputy Commissioner, Bhatinda. The Deputy Commissioner gave away the prizes to the students.

The closing ceremony of this three days' programme was marked by *Guru ka Langar* at which besides Sardar Sukhbir Singh Bedi, Deputy Commissioner, Shri Lakha Singh, M.L.A., Sardar Randhir Singh, S.D.M., the college students and the members of the staff and prominent citizens were present.

## PUNJAB GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, PATIALA

1. An inter-house declamation contest was organised in the college on October 27, 1969. All the topics covered the life, philosophy and teachings of Guru Nanak.
2. The students of the College organised an Akhand Path on November 28, 1969.
3. Festivals and matches between the staff and students were organised.
4. A lecture on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak was delivered by Principal S. S. Amole.

## RAMGARHIA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, PHAGWARA

1. In January, 1969—an All-Punjab Inter-School Hindi and Punjabi Declamation

Contests were held in the College. A large number of participants came from different schools and paid their homage to the great emancipator.

2. A special number on Guru Nanak in December, 1969 of the College Magazine *Giansar* was brought out. The College staff and students contributed articles, poems on the life, philosophy and teachings of Guru Nanak.

3. To commemorate the Quincentenary of the great teacher, a Souvenir was also brought out by Ramgarhia Educational Institutions, Phagwara in 1969-70.

4. In October, 1970, an exhibition depicting the life of Guru Nanak, as a friend of the lowly and the down-trodden, was organised and a large number of people came to see it.

5. In December 1970, Guru Nanak Day was celebrated in the College. On this occasion a feature *Gur Parmeshwar Nanak* — depicting the message of love and truth given by this teacher was staged by the students.

One-Act-Play — *Ik Moorat Ek Jot* revealing the special evils and decisive forces of the Guru's time, was presented on the stage. An exhibition earmarking Guru Nanak's life, philosophy, teachings and messages of universal love and brotherhood was also arranged by the students.

6. Besides these programmes, the students and the teachers of the College paid homage to this great spiritual philosopher through their talks, speeches, poems, *Shabads* in the weekly, morning assemblies which were held throughout the academic session of 1969-70.

#### S.G.N. KHALSA COLLEGE, SRI GANGANAGAR

1. A fairly good number of extension lectures were organised in the College. Several scholars from Punjab were invited to deliver lectures on the life and teachings of the great Guru.

2. A book *Sahib Mera Neet Navan* on the life and mission of the revered Guru was published.

#### SHAHEED UDHAM SINGH DEGREE COLLEGE, SUNAM (PUNJAB)

The 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was celebrated in the College in November, 1969. Distinguished persons from several shades of life spoke on the various aspects of Guru Dev's life. Sweets were distributed to the students at the end of the function.

#### SHAHZADA NAND COLLEGE FOR GIRLS, AMRITSAR

1. The Guru Nanak 500th birth anniversary celebrations week was inaugurated and celebrated with enthusiasm. Teachers, social workers and religious heads participated in

the function and dwelt upon the life and teachings of Guru Nanak. The staff and students participated in full strength.

2. An Album was prepared. Cuttings of various episodes and happenings of the life of the Guru were collected by students and kept in the shape of an Album.

3. An All-India Essay Competition was held and wide publicity was given to it. Students of different Colleges in Punjab and the neighbouring states took part. Mohinder of Desh Bandhu College, Kalkaji got the first prize of Rs. 100/- while Hind Roshan of Government College for Women, Amritsar, was awarded the second prize of Rs. 75/- Prem Nath of M.L.N. College, Yamuna Nagar got the 3rd prize of Rs. 50/-.

4. A special Souvenir Edition of the College Magazine *Sahitya Jharnai* was brought out. Thought-provoking and standard articles on the life and teachings of the Guru were published in it.

5. Tracts on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak written by Sardar Gurbax Singh of *Preet Lari* were distributed amongst the teachers and students.

6. The College building was illuminated on two successive nights at the birth anniversary.

7. The students took part in the celebration organised by the Guru Nanak University, Amritsar, and a student of this college was awarded special certificate in the competition of *Gurbani Kirtan*.

#### S.S.D. GIRLS' COLLEGE, BHATINDA

This college celebrated the 500th Quincentenary of Guru Nanak Dev on February 10, 1971 with a great zeal. In this connection a seminar and a debate was held. Different aspects concerning "The Spiritual Discipline. According to Guru Nanak Dev Ji," his philosophy, his teachings, his concept of truth and his impact on Indian society were highlighted.

A committee of the Judges was also appointed to give its judgement about the performance of the students.

Principal A.N. Sharma, the President of the day expressed his reverence for the life and the spiritual aspects of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

#### THAPAR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, PATIALA

A two-hour programme of tributes and Shabads was organised on March 28, 1970 to pay homage to the great Guru and to remind ourselves about his teachings and sacrifices.

The function was presided over by Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala.

A skit, written by Professor J.S. Bedi of the Electrical Department entitled *Guru Nanak—the harbinger of peace* was presented.

#### DHUDHIAL KHALSA HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, PATIALA

The 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was celebrated by the School with great zeal. Speakers included Principal S.S. Amole, Dr. Taran Singh of Punjabi University, Professor Dhian Singh, PES, Professor Tanjit Singh and several others who spoke on the teachings of Guru Nanak. The School Managing Committee took active part in the celebrations and gave Rs. 250/- as donation to the School Gurburb Committee. About 33 local schools participated in the procession organised by the School.

A *Guru Nanak Yadgiri Ank* of 68 pages was published by the School on the occasion and was distributed free.

A largely-attended *Diwan* was held in the School compound under the presidency of Sardar Rawel Singh, Health Minister, Punjab on November 29, 1969. In the evening a *Kavi Darbar* was held in the School in which about 30 poets participated.

A Guru Nanak Bhavan was constructed by the Management at the cost of Rs. 20,000 towards which the School donated Rs. 1000/.

#### GOVERNMENT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL (TOWN HALL), AMRITSAR

An elaborate programme was chalked out to celebrate the birth day quinquenary of Guru Nanak by this School.

1. This School was the first in the country to publish a Souvenir on the Guru's life. The Souvenir contained a map including Guru Nanak's travels, articles on Guru Nanak's teachings, and illustrations of quotations from the *bani*.
2. A standard wall-map in calendar form was prepared on the Guru's Travels.
3. A Declamation and Essay-writing contests was held in the School.
4. An exhibition of paintings on Guru Nanak Dev was arranged.
5. *Guru Nanak Darshan Album* containing 101 paintings and photographs of the Guru was prepared.
6. A drama *Jin Sach Palle Hoi* written by Sardar Gurdial Singh Phul was staged.
7. The School staged a play *Tain ki dard na aya*.
8. A series of extension lectures were delivered by a number of invited speakers.

## GURU HARKRISHAN PUBLIC SCHOOL, NEW DELHI

The School celebrated the birthday Quincentenary celebrations of Guru Nanak Devji. A series of functions, spread over a number of days were arranged as per details below :

October 6, 1969	A painting competition was held in the School.
October 7, 1969	<i>Kavi Darbar</i> was held at which poems on the life of Guru Nanak were recited.
October 8, 1969	A programme of <i>Sakhis</i> and speeches on the life of Guru Nanak was organised.
October 9, 1969	A <i>Shabad Kirtan</i> was organised.
November 15, 1969	The students and staff of the School organised a <i>Diwan</i> in which the <i>Bhog</i> ceremony of the <i>Sadharan Path</i> commenced earlier was performed.
November 20, 1969	The Divinity teacher of the School gave a talk on the life of Guru Nanak Devji.
November 21, 1969	<i>Shabads</i> were sung by the Music Teacher of the School.
November 22, 1969	A group of 150 children took part in the procession.
November 23, 1969	<i>Deep Mala</i> was arranged in the School premises and illuminations were arranged bringing out in light the following verse : "The darkness of sins, superstitions and ignorance fled as Guru Nanak kindled the light of True Knowledge."

## GURU NANAK KHALSA HIGH SCHOOL (GUJARKHAN), MODEL TOWN, LUDHIANA

Mass recitation of *Japji* by all the students and staff of School (*Gutkas* were provided by School) in the morning Assembly was started on the January 1, 1969 and continued till November 1, 1969. More than a hundred students, who had learnt *Japji* by heart were awarded medals and certificates, supplied by Guru Nanak Vidya Bhandar Trust, Delhi.

Cash and book prizes were also awarded to such children of the School, as wrote the best essays or made speeches and recited *Shabads* on Guru Nanak's life and teachings.

Copies of the biography of Guru Nanak (in Punjabi) by Professor Kartar Singh, printed especially on this occasion, were purchased by the school and were given to the students for study.

The play *Guru Bin Ghor Andhar* by Surjit Singh Sethi was very successfully staged by the School Amateur Dramatic Club under the direction of Sardar Kartar Singh Shant.

## KHALSA COLLEGE HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, AMRITSAR

1. A book *Guru Nanak Sadian Nazran Vich* (Punjabi) was published.
2. A beautiful model of the 'Four Travels of Guru Nanak' (Four Udasis of Guru Nanak) was prepared.
3. Daily recitations of *Japji* were arranged.

## CELEBRATIONS AT MADURAI UNIVERSITY (TAMIL NADU)

A Seminar on Guru Nanak was arranged at Madurai University on February 6, 1970 to celebrate the Guru Nanak Quincentenary at which the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. T.P. Meenakshisundaran, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Sardar Ujjal Singh and Shri P. Kumaraswami spoke. Others present were the Vice-Chancellors of Indian Universities who had come to attend the 45th Annual Conference of the Inter-University Board of India and Ceylon. The speeches made on this historic occasion are reproduced below. This was the most important celebration in connection with this great event in the South. The summary of one of these is as follows :

Guru Nanak observed the conditions of his times with meticulous care, as he was on constant travel throughout India and abroad for twenty-four years. He was a missionary in the truest sense of the term and he never criticised any other prophet or saint belonging to any other religion.

Guru Nanak's teachings did not wean man away from his worldly duties, accomplishments and responsibilities. The so-called threat from science to religion has no meaning when one understands Guru Nanak's principle, that life will have to be lived as it is, all the time feeling the presence of God without and within. Therefore, scientific discoveries and technological progress are not inconsistent with religious and ethical principles adumbrated by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak belongs to the world. He would not tolerate injustice or oppression in any form, but he emphasised the dignity of labour and social justice. In a world of commotion and conflict, he preached peace and tranquillity; in the midst of darkness and gloom, he brought light and hope; in the midst of superstitious and hypocritical beliefs, he brought Truth, Love and Equality. Though it is now 500 years since the advent of Guru Nanak, his principles and practice, are as much applicable to the modern times as they were during the days he lived.

We would like to draw special attention to the three fundamental principles and directives of the Sikh religion which are (1) kirt karo (2) nām japo and (3) vand chhako. Guru Nanak's teachings thus exhort his followers to work for a living, to recite constantly the name of God and to share their earnings with others. This clearly illustrates why Guru Nanak upheld the householders' life as against that of ascetics.



Each and every man must do his duty. Dignity of labour has been enjoined upon and stressed. Idleness and lethargy are to be discarded. Sikhism is a dynamic religion which emphasises the need for working and earning for one's livelihood. Sikhism enjoins upon every man and woman to chant the name of God constantly. This means that one should always walk in the shadow of God. The second injunction is a call for man to rise above materialistic living and become spiritual in outlook. The third directive is an expression of social justice. Man is a social being and has therefore to live among his neighbours. He should suppress selfishness and promote fellow-feeling. That is why the great Guru specially asked his followers to share their wealth with others. This is the highest expression of civilized life and is intended to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. This principle embodies in a way the doctrine of Trusteeship. The eternal validity of the Guru's teachings is amply illustrated in these principles.

On the occasion of the celebration of the 500th year of the birth of Guru Nanak, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the great ideals that he preached and practised, and render service to the nation by propagating his principles of Love, Tolerance, Equality and Justice which are vital for the life and conduct of the people.

## GURU NANAK

by

P. KUMARASWAMI

Born in 1469 in the family of a petty official in the village Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib, located some 35 miles from Lahore, Guru Nanak, even as a child, evinced a definite inclination towards "other-worldness". Not for him the daily role of corporeal exercises that human life is subject to; instead his interests were centred in matters spiritual. The Pandit and the Maulvi, who were in charge of the boy's education, were confounded by the intriguing questions posed by him about the nature of the Ultimate Reality.

School days over, Guru Nanak preferred in his daily life the company of sadhus, mendicants, and fakirs to friends and relations. He read avidly the Hindu and Muslim scriptures and visited the holy places of the two religions. Guru Nanak's quest for a mission in life took him to the remotest corners of India and even outside the country, including a pilgrimage to Mecca. Many a myth nurtured by the fanatic among the religious heads he exploded, and the number of people who accepted his doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man were vast indeed.

However, it was the last phase of his life, the final eighteen years he spent at Kartarpur that found Guru Nanak in full bloom. Some of his major works found expression during this period. Himself engaged in a ceaseless search for the eternal

truth, he advised the multitudes of followers, who thronged at his feet, to accept truth as a way of life.

Like all savants before him, Guru Nanak too upheld that the "search for truth" was the ultimate aim of human life. The "Search" in his case, however, was not one of theory or of speculation as to be detached from the ordeals of daily life, but rather one closely akin to, nay the very purpose of one's life. For him it is life's mission and motion.

While maintaining that "search for truth" is all that life is meant to be, he is all set against that kind of life, which is governed by passions, driven by impulses, having no definite aim or ambition except that the bodily needs are satisfied. No more earnest homage to truth can we find in the world's literature than Guru Nanak's. He was against the formal and meaningless renunciation of the world.

He condemned idol worship like Sivavakkiyar who asked, "Will the idol speak to you, when the Lord is within you?" Like St. Appar and Siddhas like Sivavakkiyar he condemned the soulless and heartless rituals, pilgrimages, baths in the holy waters without trying to realize when one follows the routine, the presence of the God within oneself.

He was a cosmopolitan and this reminds us of the Tamilian view expressed so beautifully by an early Sangam poet who sang, "Every village is the village of my birth and everyone is my kith and kin". He had no regard for kings like Babar and condemned other kings who indulged in manslaughter, euphemistically called war. This reminds us of St. Appar refusing the orders of the Pallava King and finally converting that king himself to the path of God and love. He like our Alvars and Nayanmars he believed in the one community of men without any further distinction. This reminds us of Tirumular who stated, "There is but one God and one community". He, like the exponents of Bhakti in Tamil land, sang musical compositions in the language of the common man. Music and the vernacular are thus elevated.

There is bridal mysticism in his composition, but it is devoid of any unbecoming eroticism and this has been a characteristic feature of the love poetry of the saints of Tamil land. In all these ways Guru Nanak is nearer to the Tamil heart and this Madurai University which was inaugurated only in 1966 is proud that it has got this opportunity of paying this homage to Guru Nanak, one of the greatest men of the world.

### GURU NANAK AND HIS TEACHINGS

*(Sardar Ujjal Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu)*

Five hundred years ago, when Guru Nanak was born in this world, political and social conditions in the country were far from normal. Political strife and religious fanaticism dogged the steps towards progress and peace. Religious persecution was

rampant and the people were subjected to political tyranny and harassment. Society was in a state of disarray. People had lost sight of the essential principles of religion. Religion as it was practised then was devoid of spirituality. Priests concerned themselves more with the rituals and formal religion. The core of religion was forgotten and the non-essential elements held sway over the people who were tending to be superstitious and selfish. Untouchability was practised in a pernicious manner. Society was caste-ridden. Religion was no longer an elevating force, but tended to demoralise and accentuate the division among men. Women were not looked upon as equal citizens. A society in which half the citizens were in a degraded condition could not hope to survive long in peace.

He observes that only he who has accepted the pursuit of truth as a way of life is a true disciple—a Sikh; while others just exist, he alone lives.

That he founded a religion, a powerful and dynamic one, is a great accomplishment indeed. But he belongs to the entire human race; neither caste, nor creed, nor national barriers could question the wisdom and compassion in the words he uttered. In him his co-religionists found a fatherhood; in him his co-humans found a spiritual teacher dedicated God.

The Society he sought to evolve was one in which man gets the kind of education that would not only educate him, but would also help him to find self-expression and fulfilment in himself. The true man, according to him, should lead an honest and purposeful life and should cast away lust, anger, infatuation, greed and egoism which are the source of all misery and troubles that ail man. His teachings are there for the entire human race to imbibe and benefit by. No one religion or nation could claim an exclusive prerogative on Guru Nanak and his teachings. He belongs to the world and the world compliments by belonging to him. He had abiding faith in the essential man and complete trust in man's capacity to live in the image of God. The love of God and the love of man are the two principal strands that run through the teachings of Guru Nanak. He insisted that the poor should be served, but also laid down the condition that such service should be free from flamboyance, ostentation and fanfare. This indeed was the first great teaching of Guru Nanak.

According to Guru Nanak, the way to solidarity and the integration of man is in the love of God and the love and service of God-in-man. The human body is the temple of God, in which not only man, but God Himself dwells. The whole is the abode of God and God dwells there.

This man of God sought to defy the prejudices of the whole human race. His faith in man's inherent goodness and capacity to ennoble his very being knew no limitation. "God", he said, "dwells in every human being. All that is required of us is that we have the vision to perceive Him". Guru Nanak was particular that man realise this affinity that he has with God, for he would have then built up his moral fibre and develop

the courage to resist evil and cultivate virtue.

He had contempt for pelf-gatherers. He pin-pointed man's desire to amass wealth as the root cause of all misery, and it was this greed of man that was the cause or the commission of most social vices. Man should find his livelihood from the work of his own hands, and whatever he earns in excess of his needs he should share with his less fortunate brethren.

As Guru Nanak saw it, the world was only a symbol and not substance. He felt the world's events and happenings as ephemera. All the time he was keen that man should look beyond the show of things and events and feel the significant, the immanent, the universal behind them.

It is great to remember that such a one as Guru Nanak had lived amongst us so very close to our age, striving for ever to reach Godhood by the path of truth and faith. It would do us good to remember also that this man of God sought to build a community that should be free from the cobwebs of superstition and should allow men to find their true oneness in God. For the benefit of mankind, he revealed God and the nature of creation in very simple words that bear to be borne in mind by all mankind. "God is absolute. He is 'Onkar' or all life, all the knowledge and all joy. His other name is Truth. He is Creator and Ideal Personality. He is fearless or is all love. He is immortal, self-enlightened, unborn, the Teacher and compassionate. He is Truth in Origin, and Truth in Manifestation. A reality now, he will remain a reality for ever. All are subject to His commands. So He alone should be meditated upon."

The advent of Guru Nanak was aptly described by Bhai Gurdas as "the light that scattered the mists of that time". Guru Nanak's main purpose was to re-establish Dharma which was slowly dying down. The Guru laid stress on the fundamental truths in all religions and never asked anyone to give up his own faith. He found no palpable distinction between man and man. He could not find any difference between one who described himself a Hindu and the other who called himself a Muslim. He believed in perfect equality of all men and would not countenance any practice which hailed one as high and condemned the other as low. The Guru himself was an embodiment of humility and modesty which he described as the essence of goodness.

The Guru was a crusader against social evils that had bedevilled society. He was convinced that the divisive forces such as the caste system and the practice of untouchability were eating into the vitals of the body politic. He called for immediate obliteration of caste divisions and insisted on people who came to see him to partake of a meal from the free common kitchen which he organised for the purpose. He summoned everyone to sit together on a common platform, obliterating the distinction between high and low. To him man was moulded in the same way everywhere and a representative of the topmost creation, who could look forward to understanding God and attain final bliss by spiritual effort.

Guru Nanak did not believe in renunciation. The Sikh religion upholds the dignity of the householder. Though abject materialism should be discouraged as such, the life in this world is worth living. He believed in earning a livelihood by honest efforts and hard work but sharing the wealth with other—"GHAL KHAI KICHH HATHON DE NANAK RAH PACHHANE SE". There was no need to practise any austerities or fasts or to undergo any physical suffering, or undertake 'teerth yatras' to holy places, etc. Guru Nanak's teachings contemplated the gradual unfoldment of the Divine in man by the process of continued remembrance of God (Nam Simran) while carrying on the daily avocation. He, however, laid great stress on moral principles. According to him, "Truth is higher than everything but higher still is truthful conduct".

Guru Nanak was a person of extraordinary moral courage and independence, and above all, was a very great mystic and poet. His sweet and sublime poetical compositions in which were contained his teachings, attracted large masses of people to him and captivated their hearts. He was loved and respected alike by both Hindus and Muslims. He was often called 'Nanak Shah Fakir; Hindu ka Guru, Mussalman ka Pir'. He successfully spearheaded a vigorous spiritual and social reform movement. The Guru attached supreme importance to right conduct and repetition of and meditation on the name of God. Guru Nanak's teachings and ideals can very appropriately and profitably be applied to present-day conditions. To him religion was not only a spiritual experience, but also a way of life. He advocated constant 'simran' and 'jap' and pleaded for harmony between thought and action, purity in life and service of humanity. "VICH DUNIA SEV KAMAIE TAN DARGAH BAI SAN PAIE."

The outstanding feature of the spirit of tolerance and catholicism in Sikh religion is best illustrated in the holy scripture of the Sikhs, "GURU GRANTH". It contains not only the verses of the Sikh Gurus, but also those of the contemporary religious teachers like Kabir and Farid (Muslim), Namdev (Marathi saint), Raidas (low-caste by birth) and other saints, none of whom was Guru Nanak's disciple. The only test for inclusion of the writings of these saints in the sacred volume of GURU GRANTH was that these verses were sung in praise of the Almighty.

It was at such a time that Guru Nanak appeared on the scene to remind man of his spiritual heritage and the real purpose of living, to give a dynamic lead to the people for realisation of God, and to instil in man the great truth that he is in essence the Divine Spark. "MANN TUN JOT SARUP HAIN APNA MUL PACHHAN." He stressed the 'Nam Marg' as the most suitable for man to know himself and a panacea for all human ills. He asked society to abjure all superstitious beliefs. He gave them the clarion call to rise above all materialistic and selfish thoughts and actions and asked them to live their lives in dedication to God.

It appears that even in his childhood, Guru Nanak had been of a mystic disposition and was much given to contemplation. He was sent to school early, but he often

surprised his schoolmasters and parents by his unusual behaviour. He took little interest either in his conventional studies or in the secular tasks assigned to him. He began to pass more and more of his time in religious practices. An anecdote has been recorded to illustrate how God-inspired he had been even from the beginning : When young, Nanak fell ill and the loving parents sent for a physician. He accosted the physician with the mystic words : "The physician is sent for to prescribe a remedy; he taketh my hand and feeleth my pulse. Physician, go home, few know my malady. The Creator who gave me this pain will remove it...I feel first the pain of separation for God, then the pang of hunger for contemplation of Him. O ignorant physician ! give me no medicine".

With his enormous spiritual dimensions, Guru Nanak established direct communion with God and obtained enlightenment. The episode of his physical disappearance from Sultanpur and his re-appearance represented the divine call he had received for embarking on his destined mission. He thereupon gave up his worldly pursuits and took to preaching his spiritual message of love and peace. The Guru travelled extensively, mostly on foot, to convey his inspired message from Mecca, Medina and Baghdad in the West, to Dacca and Kamrup (Assam) in the East; from Kashmir and Tibet in the North to Kanyakumari and Ceylon in the South. He widely propagated his message of Oneness of God, brotherhood of man and of love and tolerance. He held dialogues with holy men in all these places and impressed them with the fundamental truth and basic unity of all religions. He emphatically proclaimed the Oneness of God in these words :

"Were I given a hundred thousand tongues instead of one  
And the hundred thousand multiplied twentyfold,  
A hundred thousand times would I say, and say again,  
The Lord of all the world is One and repeat His Name."

Guru Nanak is one of the world teachers of outstanding eminence and his message is of universal application and has validity for all time. He stimulated thought on right conduct and correct behaviour and upheld the glory of God under all circumstances. His message of love and peace was listened to with great respect and attention. By his gospel of "Brotherhood of man" and "Fatherhood of God" he envisaged the emergence of a nation from out of a compartmentalised society.

Let me recall on this occasion the words of Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the great historian of our times, regarding the role of Sikhism founded by Guru Nanak :

"Mankind's religious future may be obscure; yet, one thing can be foreseen : the living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in

these days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of the human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion, and its scripture the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world.”

The relevance of the teachings of Guru Nanak in the context of the present-day affairs is not far to seek. As Dr. Radhakrishnan observed : “Nanak tried to build a nation of self-respecting men and women devoted to God and their leaders, filled with a sense of equality and brotherhood for all. The Sikh Gurus transcend the opposition between the Personal and the Impersonal, between the Transcendent and the Immanent. God is not an abstraction but an actuality. He is revealed through creation and through grace to anyone who seeks Him through devotion”.

Guru Nanak declared that constant devotion takes man nearer to God. He said that by conquering the mind we shall conquer the whole world. He who controls the mind through the Guru knows the essence of the three worlds. All these go to show that the Guru preached and practised restraint in public activities. Mind is the instrument which moves matter and as such if it is held under restraint, several of the woes that are inflicted on mankind could be avoided. He advocated that one should experience the living presence of God and that in every thought and action the vibrations of God should be felt. By initiating the doctrine of equality Guru Nanak planted the seeds for the growth of a nation. In spite of our fight against untouchability from all fronts, we still find that much has to be done to eradicate completely, this blot of untouchability. Guru Nanak's axiom about equality of man should be studied in the present-day context, so that all inequalities could vanish.

At a time when religious rivalries were rampant, Guru Nanak was born. He did not see any difference between the various religions and would not countenance the celebration of ceremonial piety or the observance of meaningless trivialities. He taught that men are the sons of the one Father and did not find any distinction between a Muslim and a Hindu. We have to learn again and practise in our life the great principles of Guru Nanak particularly at this time of the history of our country when now and again there is a tendency for extreme communal elements to become fanatical.

## CHAPTER II

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE GURU NANAK QUINCENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OUTSIDE INDIA

In a number of countries, where Indians are settled or where our country has mission, the Quincentenary of Guru Nanak was celebrated with fervour and enthusiasm, and various items of programme were gone through, such as singing of hymns, lectures and devotional works like the holding of Langars (Free Kitchens). In these celebrations Indians as well as foreigners participated. Details are reproduced below :

#### AFGHANISTAN

##### *Kabul*

The information Services of India, Kabul, issued a special number of "News Bulletin" on November 23, 1969, containing excerpts from 'Guru Nanak Bani'.

#### ALGIERS

The Indian Community celebrated the 5th Birth Centenary of Guru Nanak at the Indian Embassy premises on November 23, 1969. Shri Prem Shankar, Charge d' Affaires spoke on the teachings of the Guru.

#### ARGENTINA (Buenos Aires)

1. The Fifth Centenary of Guru Nanak was celebrated at the Embassy of India, under the presidentship of Shri Bimalendra Kumar Sanyal, Indian Ambassador, on November 23, 1969.
2. The Embassy's monthly bulletin in Spanish, *India*, contained the Spanish translation of Balwant Singh Anand's English article "Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak".
3. The 'La Razon', of November 23, 1969, the 'La Nacion' of November 23, 1969; and the 'La Nacion' of December 22, 1969, published detailed reports of the celebrations.
4. The ten Indian resident at Rosario, Santa Fe (three from Hoshiarpur, five from



Jullundur one from Kapurthala, and one from Amritsar), assembled at 'Aquilares', and celebrated the occasion with recitations from the Guru Granth Sahib.

#### BHUTAN

A fortnightly official Bulletin of the Royal Government of Bhutan *Kuensel* (Lungtenzampa), published an article on the universality of Guru Nanak's teachings in its issue dated November 30, 1969, (Vol. II, No. 22).

#### BURMA

##### *Mandalay*

A committee was formed for the celebrations with Sardar Naranjan Singh (of Rangoon) as Chairman and Sardar Ojagar Singh as Joint Secretary, which set up an office at the Mandalay Temple in September, 1969. A 'mandap' was erected in the fore-space and the entire building was illuminated. A portrait of Guru was set up high on the top of the building, which could be seen from a long distance.

1. The main celebrations were held at Mandalay as an All-Burma occasion from 13th to 23rd November, 1969, under the auspices of Khalsa Diwan, Burma. Besides the Sangat at Mandalay, over 700 delegates from Rangoon, Taunggyi, Myitkyina and Central Burma Areas participated.

2. Seven Akhand Paths, the final one being on November 23, 1969; competitions for recitation of Bani and recitation of *Shabads* and *Gataka* competition were organised.

3. A function was organised at the Gujarat Mandir Hall on November 22, 1969. Several Burmese dignitaries attended the meeting. Refreshments were served to about 400 persons.

4. The main Diwan was held on November 23, 1969. After the Kirtan there were speeches on the life and mission of Guru Nanak.

5. Another function was organised by the Hindu community at the Sanatam Dharma Mandir on November 23, 1969 in the evening. *Shabd*s, *Bhajans* and poems were recited.

##### *Rangoon*

1. The functions were organised from 24th to 30th November, 1969. A public meeting was arranged at the Ramakrishna Hall on the 20th. The Indian Ambassador, Vice-Admiral R.D. Katari presided over it and addressed the gathering.

2. A large number of pamphlets with Guru Nanak's portrait on the title cover and

short write-ups were printed in English, Burmese and Hindi, together with a booklet of English translation of 'Japji', for free distribution.

3. The Hindu Central Board; Hindu Association, Buddhist Association and Shri Nepalese Association extended full co-operation during the celebrations.

4. The Sanatana Dharam Swayam Sevak Sangh (Burma), Rangoon, issued a six-page cyclostyled account of Guru Nanak's life and teachings.

5. *The Thadin Journal* (in Burmese) brought out special articles on Guru Nanak in its November 22, 1969 issue.

6. *The Brahma Bhoomi* (Hindi and Burmese) of November, 1969, published articles on Guru Nanak.

7. Similar celebrations were held at Myitkyina, Mogok, Tauanggyi, Lashio, Minbu, Maymyo, Shwebo, Monywa and Pyabwe.

#### CAMBODIA

##### *Phnom Pneh*

1. The Indian Ambassador presented a set of books, gramophone records, recorded tape in French, photographs and articles on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, for the Guru Nanak Darbar Library, an Indian organisation in Phnom-Pneh.

2. A photographic exhibition, depicting the life and work of Guru Nanak, was arranged at the Guru Nanak Darbar on November 23, 1969.

3. The entire Indian community and some French nationals of Pondicherry assembled at an impressive function starting with taped devotional music sung by Ragis (Sikh minstrels) and recitations from the Guru Granth Sahib. The Ambassador was the main speaker at the occasion. The ceremony concluded with the serving of *Langar*.

4. A 16 mm film 'Dil Ek Mandir' was shown.

#### CANADA

##### *Montreal*

1. Guru Nanak's 500th birth anniversary was celebrated at Montreal on November 23, 1969 at the Slovak Hall and the Indian Pavillion at the 'Expo'67' site. Nearly 3000 Canadians and 500 Indians participated in the celebration.

2. The Sikh Temple Association of Montreal celebrated the occasion at a function in the Indian Pavillion at 'Man and His World' on November 21 and November 23, followed by *Bhog* and *Langar*.

3. *The Montreal Star*, carried report of the celebrations along with a brief biography

of Guru Nanak in its issue of November 29, 1969.

4. Thind-Mirchandani, a local firm issued gold, silver and bronze (plated) medallions to commemorate the occasion, which were later released in U.K. and Singapore.

Toronto : (I) Shiromani Sikh Society, 269—Pope Avenue, Toronto, Ontario published and distributed the following writings :

- (i) *An Introduction to Sikh Belief*, Mrs. P.M. Wylam.
  - (ii) *Know India, Weekly* (Ed. Veerendra Adhiya) brought out a special issue on November 23, 1969.
  - (iii) *The Canadian India Times*, carried articles on Guru Nanak and his teachings on November 20, 1969.
  - (iv) *Toronto Daily Star*, carried article on Sikhism on August 2, 1969.
  - (v) International Sikh Youth Federation, Canada Circle, issued a tract on Guru Nanak.
  - (vi) Shiromani Sikh Society organised the Quincentenary Celebrations in Toronto from November 21, 1969 to November 23, 1969. Speeches, singing of Shabdās, a Diwan and Langar were arranged. The programme was shown on the T.V. Special Radio broadcasts, were arranged.
2. The Canada Sikh Research Centre in Ottawa sponsored a Seminar on the Philosophy and Message of Guru Nanak and of Jesus Christ on November 23, 1969 in the Main Lounge, University of Ottawa. Dr. John E. Robbins, Canadian Ambassador to the Vatican, Professor A.S. Sethi of the University of Ottawa, the Rev. C. Daniel Matheson of the Westbore United Church and Mr. Don Dainty of the Bahai group spoke.
  3. The Shiromani Sikh Society of Toronto organised a cultural programme consisting of folk songs and dances of the Punjab and exhibition of Indian documentary films.
  4. The Ottawa Sikh Society held a solemn ceremony on November 24, 1969 at the Woodroffe United Church. The Rev. D. Phol, Acting High Commissioner for India was the main speaker.
  5. Similar functions were arranged by Indian Students' Associations of Edmonton and the India-Canada Association of Saskatoon and British Columbia.

*Vancouver*

*Khalsa Diwan Society*, distributed free, an eleven-page pamphlet entitled *An Introduction to Sikh Belief* by Mrs. P.M. Wylam.

*Vanier City*

Canada Sikh Research Centre (Centre De La Recherche Sikh Du Canada) Vanier City, Ontario.

The Centre Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. R.S. Chopra, Barrister and Solicitor, Associate Director of the Canada Sikh Research Centre, arranged the celebrations. The items included were as below :

1. Television and radio interviews were conducted on Guru Nanak's message in Toronto, Vancouver and other major centres in Canada and the U.S.A.
2. A lecture tour was organised in co-operation with the Guru Nanak Foundation. Dr. G.S. Mansukhani gave talks on Sikhism in Canada and the U.S.A.
3. Two books entitled (a) *Guru Nanak—the World Teacher* and (b) *Introduction to Sikhism*, written by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani, were published under the aegis of the CSRC.
4. *Universal Sikhism* by Professor Amarjit Singh Sethi of the University of Ottawa and Director of the CSRC was published. The book is meant mainly for the Western readers.
5. A study of the philosophy of optimism entitled '*Charhdi Kala*' by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani, was published.
6. A parallel study of Sikhism and Christianity by Sister Catherine Mornoy, from the University of California and Professor A.S. Sethi of Ottawa, was initiated.
7. A collection of articles by eminent theologians and experts in various disciplines in Canada and U.S.A. entitled "Inter-faith Dialogue", was prepared for publication.
8. A comprehensive world survey of the major characteristics of the Sikh views on current issues, was initiated in ten countries.
9. Seminar on "Gospel of Jesus and Nanak" was held on November 23, 1969 at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa.

## SRI LANKA

*Colombo*

The High Commissioner for India in Ceylon brought out the Guru Nanak Quincenary special number of *India News*, 1969 in English, Sinhalese and Tamil versions containing six articles on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak and extracts from *Nanak Bani*.

## FIJI

*Suva*

1. Guru Nanak's Quincentennial was celebrated in all the main towns of Fiji. In particular, the functions in Saya, Lautaka and Lambasa were marked by multi-racial participation. The Public functions at Lautaka was addressed by the Chief Minister, Hon. Ratu Sir Kamisess Mare and by Hon. Mr. S.M. Koya, Leader of the Opposition.

2. Samabula Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Suva, brought out a tract, *Universal Brotherhood* for free distribution.

3. Shri J.S. Kanwal, Principal, Shri Guru Nanak Khalsa High School, Ba, issued a booklet in Hindi, *Guru Nanak Dev Aur Unka Jeewan*.

4. *The Fiji Times*, published articles on Guru Nanak on November 2, 1969 and the report of the celebrations by J.S. Kanwal on November 24, 1969.

5. The Sikh Women's Association, Suva organised a commemorative meeting on November 22, 1969 in the New Suva Town Hall. The Function included speeches and recitations. Refreshments were served at the end.

## FRANCE

*Paris*

1. A function to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Guru Nanak, was organized jointly by the Society L' Homme et La Connaissance and the Indian Embassy on December 10, 1969 at the Domus Medica Hall. The meeting was addressed by the Indian Ambassador, Hon'ble Dwarka Nath Chatterjee, in French. Madame Maryse Choisy, President of the World Alliance of Religions dwelt in her speech on Guru Nanak, upholding the human values.

2. Bhajans and Shabdas were recited by the student community at Paris. These alternated with recitations in French.

3. Portraits of Guru Nanak were displayed.

## HONG KONG

1. The Khalsa Diwan, Hong Kong, organised Akhand Paths from October 17, 1969 onwards and after the culmination of each Akhand Path, big Diwans were held. The last Diwan on November 23, 1969 was largely attended by about 2,000 Indians, Europeans and Chinese.

2. *The Sunday Post Herald* brought out an eight-page supplement on November 23, 1969 in which articles were published on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.
3. A 15000-dollar bed was established in the Hong Kong Blood Bank, Childrens' Hospital.
4. A 3500-dollar (annual) Guru Nanak bed was established in the T.B. Hospital, Hong Kong.
5. 25,000 dollars were handed over to the Education Department for the creation of a "Guru Nanak Scholarship".
6. A "Guru Nanak Centenary Trophy" was presented to the winners in a special Hockey Tournament. Hockey Tournaments in Guru Nanak's memory will be an annual feature.
7. Childrens' tournaments were also arranged.
8. The Information Service of India, Hong Kong issued a twelve-page Guru Nanak Quincentenary Number on November 21, 1969 containing two articles, viz "Vignettes of India--Sikhism", and "Guru Nanak--The Prophet of a New Synthesis" by Dr. Gopal Singh.
9. *The Post Herald*, Hong Kong, issued an eight-page Guru Nanak supplement on November 23, 1969 which included articles on the Sikh Gurus and the teachings of Guru Nanak.

#### INDONESIA

##### *Djakarta*

1. The Indian Embassy issued a booklet *Guru Nanak Dan Agama Sikh* in Bhasa Indonesia about Guru Nanak and his Mission.
2. *The Djakarta Times*, on November 22, 1969 and the *Sinar Harapan* on November 22, 1969, published articles on Guru Nanak.
3. Jajasan Sikh Gurudwara Mission of Djarkarta arranged Akhand Path, a Hockey Tournament and Essay Competition to celebrate the occasion.

##### *Medan*

1. Indian Jajasān Sikh Gurudwara Mission, Djakarta released a 104 page booklet on Guru Nanak in Bhasa Indonesia entitled "Guru Nanak Dan Agama Sikh" on November 23, 1969.
2. *The Anoka Minggu* (November 28, 1969), the *Waspada* (November 25, 1969), the *Bukit Barisan* (November 24, 1969), the *Bintang Indonesia* (November 24, 1969), the *Mimbar Umum* (November 25, 1969), the *Duta Rakjat* (November 24, 1969), published detailed

reports of the celebrations and articles on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

## IRAN

### *Teheran*

1. Bhai Ganga Singh Sabha, Teheran, organised the celebrations from November 21 to November 24, 1969 : Akhand Path, Diwans, Sports for children and Langar formed part of the programme.

2. The following newspapers and journals brought out special issues, highlighting the proceedings of the celebrations as well as publishing special articles on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak :

- (i) *The Teheran Journal*, December 18, 1969.
- (ii) *The Kayhan* (Persian) (International edition) on December 18, 1969.
- (iii) *Sadai Mardum, Teheran*, December 18, 1969, special article Payam-i-Nanak.
- (iv) *The Farman*, Persian, December 18, 1969 reports of the celebrations.
- (v) *The Ahang*, December 18, 1969.
- (vi) *Mehar-i-Iran*, December 18, 1969.
- (vii) *Aaindagan*, December 18, 1969.
- (viii) *Madood-i-Mubariz*, December 18, 1969.

3. At a colourful ceremony held at Hilton Hotel in Teheran on December 17, 1969, the Indian Community presented a Kirpan to the Shahenshah of Iran, which was received by the Iranian Court Minister, Mr. Assadollah Alam, on behalf of the Emperor.

4. The local news media, including the Press, Radio, Television gave extensive and prominent coverage to this function.

5. The Information Service of India, Teheran, brought out a special Guru Nanak issue of its monthly magazine, *Ain-i-Hind* in Persian.

## IRAQ

### *Baghdad*

1. *The Baghdad Observer*, published an article 'Guru Nanak, Prophet of New Synthesis' along with the photograph of the slab commemorating Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad in its issue of November 24, 1969.

2. The Arabic daily *Al-Jamhuriyya*, published an article in Arabic.

*Guru Nanak—The Indian Socialist Revolutionary* in its issue bearing the date November 28, 1969.

3. The *Baghdad Observer*, published T.L. Vaswani's article "Guru Nanak and Bahlol" on December 23, 1969.

4. Celebrations were arranged in the Indian Embassy premises on November 23, 1969. Dr. Salim al Alousi, Director-General in the Ministry of Guidance and Information was the main speaker.

## KENYA

### *Mombasa*

1. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Mombasa, under the presidentship of S.R.S. Suri, organised the celebrations.

2. A 78-page booklet on the life and teachings of the Guru was brought out by Siri Guru Singh Sabha.

3. In addition to Sports and other activities organised for children, a garden party to which 500 distinguished persons of all communities were invited, was arranged by the Singh Sabha on November 25, 1969. The Mayor of Mombasa was the guest of honour.

4. The Municipal Council of Mombasa have approved a proposal of Siri Guru Singh Sabha for the erection of "Guru Nanak Clock Tower" at one of the prominent roundabouts of Mombasa, in honour of the Guru Nanak.

### *Nairobi*

5. Three hundred Akhand Paths were held in the five Gurudwaras in Nairobi. Eminent preachers and musicians had been invited for India. *Guru-ka-Langar* had been started in many temples weeks ahead of the birthday of Guru Nanak. The large gathering included non-sikhs.

6. A remarkable feature of the great event was the celebrations held at the Sikh Temple, Makindu, a tiny township a hundred miles from Nairobi on the Mombasa Road. A very small Gurudwara built during the pioneering era was revitalized, even though there is no Sikh permanently resident in Makindu. Food and shelter were made available to passers-by.

7. The Voice of Kenya Broadcasting Service presented special programmes for an entire month. Programmes were inaugurated and concluded by the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Avtar Singh.

8. The Sikh Students' Society held a large stall in September, 1969, at the Agricultural Society annual show in Nairobi. Paintings and pictures of Guru Nanak and a large number of tracts on his teachings were distributed in English, Swahili, Gujarati and Punjabi versions.



9. The leading East African English weekly, *Sunday Post*, issued a 28-page supplement with its issue of November 30, 1969, with a large picture of Guru Nanak in colour on the cover page.

10. The Sikh Students' Federation issued a special bulletin. Articles were sent by distinguished Hindus, Africans, Europeans, Muslims and Sikhs.

11. Souvenir, brochures were issued by the Ramgarhia Sikh Board, the Punjabi Kavi Sabha, and Sikh Sangat of Mombasa.

12. A number of largely attended parties were also held at which the Vice-President of Kenya, Mr. Danial Arep Moir, the Chief Justice of Kenya, Mr. Kittli Mwendwa and H.E. Mr. Avtar Singh, Indian High Commissioner were the guests of honour. Three of the parties were held in Hotel International, Nairobi. Gifts were presented for hospitals and other needy causes.

13. A function was organized by the Punjabi Literary Society on November 14, 1969 at which Mr. Moi paid rich tributes to Guru Nanak.

14. The High Commission brought out an eight-page special "Guru Nanak Quincentenary Number" of its fortnightly publication, *India News*, containing articles on Guru Nanak and his teachings.

15. To round off the celebrations, Mr. J.N. Khosla, the President of the Indian Institute of Public Administration was specially invited from India to deliver a series of Guru Nanak lectures at the local University colleges.

### *Nakaru*

16. Sikh Temple (Nakaru) organised regular Akhand Path ceremony, lectures and Langars.

17. Gurudwara Ramgarhia Sabha, Eldoret (P. O. Box 86, Eldoret, Kenya) arranged Akhand Path, Kirtan, Art Exhibition, Paintings, Sports, Baby Health Competition, Debates, Film Shows, Photography and Knitting competition and Punjabi Handwriting and Gurubani competition.

18. The High Commission of India, Nairobi issued an illustrated special Guru Nanak Quincentenary number of the *India News*, on December 1, 1969, containing articles by Khushwant Singh, H.E. Avtar Singh, homage by President V.V. Giri, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Pearl S. Buck, Arnold Toynbee and others.

19. A special issue of *Habari za India* was brought out by the Information Service of India on November 25, 1969, containing articles on Guru Nanak.

## LAOS

*Vientiane*

1. The Managing Committee of Shri Guru Nanak Darbar, Vientiane, organised a function to which the Indian community, Laos dignitaries, diplomatic corps and the Press representatives were invited. Mr. Inpeng Suryadhoy, Minister of Justice, Planning and Economic Co-operation and President of the Young Buddhists Association, presided. Smt. Manorama Bhalla, Indian Charge d' Affaires, in her address emphasized the aspects of the universal brotherhood of Guru Nanak, his fight against superstition and ritual; and at the request of the Indian Merchants' Associations, announced the donation of eleven sacks of rice to the Ministry of Social Welfare. In the evening religious functions of prayers, Shabdas and Kirtan was followed by Langar.

2. A booklet, *Story of Guru Nanak*, was distributed by the Embassy.

3. An English translation of Guru Granth Sahib in four volumes was presented to the young Buddhist Association for the town library. Two volumes of Guru Granth Sahib were presented to the Managing Committee of Guru Nanak Darbar.

4. The Laos Radio Station broadcast the tape-records of Shabdas and Kirtan on November 23, 1969.

5. Two articles appeared in the *Laos Press*, the official organ of the Government, in French edition and *Xatlao*, the vernacular paper in Vientiane.

## MADAGASCAR

*Tananarive*

1. The 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was celebrated at Tananarive at the residence of the Indian Charge d' Affaires on December 6, 1969. It was attended by Indians as well as Malagasy nationals.

2. Pictures connected with the life of Guru Nanak were displayed and specially recorded music including Shabdas was played on the occasion.

## MADRID

*Velazquez*

1. *Quinto Centenario Del Sikhismo*, an article on Guru Nanak by Ana Barrio appeared in the local press with portrait of Guru Nanak, captioned "Guru Nanak, fundador dei

Sikhismo. En la pagina de enfrente, et 'Templo Dorado', de Amritsar, Corazon de la religion Sikh".

2. A Press release was issued at the time of celebrations on November 23, 1969.

## MALAWI

*Blantyre*

1. The Sikh Association of Blantyre-Limbe, under the patronage of the Indian High Commissioner, Shri M.M. Khurana, organised day-long celebrations to mark the Anniversary. The programme consisted of prayers, bhajans in the morning followed by speeches by (i) the High Commissioner (ii) Mr. Abdul Sattar Sacranie, Bar-at-Law, a prominent Indian leader and (iii) Mr. Harbans Singh, the Chairman of the Sikh Association. Flag-hoisting ceremony was performed by the Mayor of Blantyre, His Worship Councillor John G. Kamwendo. Langar was attended by prominent dignitaries.

2. Indian Sports Club organised Children's Games and fireworks.

3. Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and Press recorded and broadcast the programme and gave publicity in *The Times* of November 20, 1969.

## MALAYSIA

*Kuala Lumpur*

1. Guru Gobind Singh Foundation in Kuala Lumpur organised various functions to celebrate the Guru Nanak Quincentenary.

2. Tapes of Shabads and features on Guru Nanak, prepared by All-India Radio, were put on the air by Radio Malaysia.

3. News Bulletins carrying items on Guru Nanak were issued by the High Commission of India.

4. The Information Service of India, Kuala Lumpur brought out special issues of the news bulletin *Indiagram* as follows :

1. 151/141/69 Oct. 28, 1969 Guru Nanak—The Prophet of a New Synthesis, by Dr. Gopal Singh
2. 151/148/69 Nov. 12, 1969 Guru Nanak—Pioneer of Secularism, by Prem Kumar.
3. 151/149/69 Nov. 14, 1969 Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak, by Balwant Singh Anand.
4. 151/152/69 Nov. 18, 1969 Japji, by Kartar Singh Duggal.
5. 151/154/69 Nov. 20, 1969 The Message of Guru Nanak, by Sant Kirpal Singh.

6. 151/155/69 Nov. 21, 1969 Guru Nanak—An Apostle of Emotional Integration, by Kartar Singh Duggal.
7. 151/156/69 Nov. 24, 1969 Thus Spoke Guru Nanak, by Khushwant Singh.
8. 151/157/69 Nov. 26, 1969 Guru Nanak as a Poet, by Khushwant Singh.
9. 151/168/69 Dec. 24, 1969 The Prime Minister's Message on the occasion of the Quincentenary Celebrations of Guru Nanak's birth centenary.

## MAURITIUS

*Port Louis*

1. The High Commission of India issued a special supplement of the "*India News*" on November 7, 1969, on Guru Nanak.
2. A leading newspaper, *Advance*, published an article on "Guru Nanak" in its issue of November 22, 1969.

## NEPAL

1. The Indian Embassy, Kathmandu, issued a twelve-page special supplement of *Bharat Samachar* (Nepalese) on November 23, 1969, containing articles on the life and teachings of the Guru Nanak.
2. The Indo-Nepal Cultural Centre, Kathmandu, brought out a Nepalese translation of Mrs. P.M. Wylam's English booklet on Guru Nanak, written for children, entitled *Guru Nanak*; and the Nepalese translation of Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh's booklet entitled *Guru Nanak Ka Updeshahru*.

## MEXICO

*Mexico*

1. A bi-monthly magazine in the Spanish language *RUMBO* (Jenero-Febrero, 1970), published in Mexico City, contained an article "*Guru Nanak-profeta de una nueva Sintesis*" (Guru Nanak—Prophet of a New Synthesis, by Dr. Gopal Singh).

## NEW ZEALAND

*Wellington*

1. The small Sikh community in conjunction with the Central Indian Association

celebrated the Quincentennial Birthday Anniversary on November 23, 1969 at the War Memorial Hall, Bombay Hill, near Auckland, from morning till evening. People travelled long distances to attend the function.

2. The Sikh community settled in New Zealand have prepared plans to build a Gurudwara about seventy miles from the Bombay Hill.

## NIGERIA

### *Lagos*

1. The *Morning Post* issued a special supplement on Guru Nanak and Jawaharlal Nehru on November 15, 1969.

2. The *Daily Express*, issued a special supplement on November 15, 1969, containing the articles on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

3. The *Daily Express* on November 28, 1969, published a write-up on "Guru Nanak: Prophet of New Togetherness".

The Guru Nanak Quincentenary celebrations were held at Lagos, the capital of Nigeria on November 23, 1969. A brochure containing articles by several writers was brought out on the occasion, which makes highly interesting reading. The brochure contained a Foreword by H.E. Shri S.G. Ramachandran, High Commissioner of India in Nigeria as also an article by him on the Life of Guru Nanak. Other contributors are : Swami Rasajananda, Mr. M.B. Metharam, Mrs. Shantha Ramchandran, Shri Kartar Singh Duggal, Sant Kirpal Singh, Sardar Satnam Singh Bajwa and Dr. Gopal Singh. The brochure contains several photographs and line-blocks bringing out Guru Nanak's personality, important events on his life and places sacred to the Sikhs. The brochure is altogether a good contribution to the literature on Guru Nanak and is in its nature a good piece of literature.

## GUINEA

### *Conakry*

*L'Essor*, the daily newspaper of the Republic of Mali, published an article 'Guru Nanak—The Founder of Sikh Religion', in its issue of November 12, 1969.

## GUYANA

### *Georgetown*

1. Celebrations were arranged at the High Commission on November 23, 1969.

2. Radio Demerara and Government Broadcasting Stations beamed special programmes on Guru Nanak.

3. Two local newspapers, *The Sunday Chronicle*, and the *Guyana Graphic*, did a special coverage of the celebrations and notes on the philosophy of Guru Nanak in their issue of November 23, 1969.

#### GHANA

1. The *Ghanian Times*, dated November 17, 1969 brought out a special issue containing an article "The Message of Guru Nanak" by Dr. Gopal Singh.

2. The information Service, High Commission of India, Accra, in co-operation with Indian residents in Ghana, issued a special sixteen-page souvenir on November 23, 1969, containing articles on life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

#### HOLLAND

##### *The Hague*

The Embassy of India issued an eight-page special number of its quarterly in Dutch "Echo Van India" (Winter 1969/70), on the occasion of the Quincentennial celebrations containing an article on the teachings of Guru Nanak and Dutch renderings of *Gurubani* from Khushwant Singh's *Hymns of Guru Nanak*.

also brought out a life-sketch of the Guru and commissioned a special portrait of him which was given wide publicity. According to one report, a College named after Guru Nanak has been established by the State Government of West Punjab at Nankana Sahib.

An illustrated hand-out issued by the Government of Pakistan on the occasion of the Guru Nanak Quincentenary is eloquent testimony to the handsome way in which the State and the people in Pakistan, and West Punjab, in which Guru Nanak's birth-place Nankana Sahib is situated, celebrated the great event.

*From the Pakistan hand-out, translations from Guru Nanak's teaching :*

'Human life is bettered not by knowledge and learning, but by the insight of the heart :

"Not by thought but by action ;  
Not by power but by sincerity and love ;  
The search for Truth is the foundation of piety ;  
The knowledge of Truth is the zenith of human life."

'Today is the birthday of Guru Nanak Ji Maharaj :

That God-loving person—  
Who, encircled by forces of evil and waywardness,  
Put his feet on the path of righteousness;  
Whose eyes found the light even in the darkness;  
Who triumphed over all differences  
And taught humanity to unite”.

'Today the entire Sikh world is celebrating the 500th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Ji Maharaj and the hearts of his devotees are filled with the memory of their great religious leader. Today all God-loving people share the rejoicings of the followers of the revered Guru.

'Shri Guru Nanak Ji Maharaj was born at Rai Bhoie-ki-Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib, a well-known town of district Sheikhpura, 500 years ago in 1526 Bikrami, corresponding to 1469 A.D. His father was called Kalu Ji and his mother was named Tripta Ji.

'Guru Ji Maharaj has described the conditions prevailing during his own time in a verse in Var Majh Shlok which can be translated as follows :

"The world has become like a knife and the Rajas have adopted the role of butchers. Faith has flown away on wings. Falsehood prevails like a dark night, and the moon of truth is nowhere visible."

‘The land of the Punjab in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent had great importance in one particular respect. All those coming from outside first set foot in this very land. For centuries it was the rendezvous of invaders. All traders and travellers to the sub-continent passed through it. It was here that Greek philosophy spread itself. The religion of the Buddha gained its most glorious heights here and its impact was felt for a long period.

‘In their turn Muslims too came in contact with this soil. In the eleventh century, the Punjab had the distinction to become the first Muslim province. With the Muslims came the ulema and the saints who propagated Islamic ideas and beliefs and diverted the minds of the people of this land towards a new horizon. They aroused the urge to search for the truth, which is the common instinct of all human beings.

‘These changing conditions continued for a long time and faith and virtue went on gaining ascendancy over disbelief and evil. It was in such conditions that Shri Guru Nanak Ji was born.

‘The annals of history show that the parents of Guru Ji called a pandit to propose a name for him, in accordance with their family tradition. The pandit suggested Nanak as the name for the new-born child. The parents of Guru Ji told the pandit that the name suggested by him was common to Hindus and Muslims and asked him to suggest another name. The pandit replied that, according to his astrological calculations, the child would grow into a great personality and would be respected and honoured by Hindus and Muslims alike. That was why he had suggested the name.

‘From his childhood Guru Ji Maharaj felt disturbed in his mind, and the urge to seek out the Truth never left him. His being was filled with love for the Almighty and he spent his days and nights in meditation. He used to be so absorbed that often he went without food and drink. Physically he began to look weak and ailing. Taking him to be suffering from some illness, his parents sent for a physician. The vaid who attended Guru Ji, felt the pulse of the patient and tried to diagnose the disease. Upon this the Guru Ji exclaimed :

“You have called a vaid for my treatment. He has tried to diagnose my disease by feeling my arm. But this simple man does not know that my ailment pertains to my heart.”  
(Var Malhar Shlok; p. 1279)

‘The ailment which pertained to the heart of Guru Ji was nothing but a manifestation of his love for God. At one place in Sarang (p. 1232) he has expressed it in a verse which translates as under :

“My heart cannot feel any comfort without meeting the Almighty. It is He who gives solace and succour to crores of afflicted human beings, and it is He who is the best Judge, who shows us the right path.”



‘The parents of Guru Ji Maharaj gave him some money for trade in order to divert his attention. But Guru Ji spent the entire amount in feeding some hungry abdals, i.e. men of God.

‘Guru Ji spent the greater part of his life in travels. Mostly he journeyed on foot, and this was an act of sacrifice on his part. He saw the holy places of the Hindus and also visited the sacred shrines of the Muslims. It is said that during his travels Guru Ji also went to Medina and Mecca in Arabia and to Baghdad in what is now known as Iraq.

‘Guru Ji had intimate friendly relations with Muslim sufis and saints. According to Sikh historians. Pir Jalal, Mian Mitha, Pir Abdur Rahman, Pir Syed Hassan and Baba Budhan Shah were fast friends of Guru Ji. Sheikh Ibrahim, who is remembered by Sikh writers as Sheikh Brahm and Farid Sani, was his closest friend. A substantial portion of the writings of Sheikh Farid is included in Guru Granth Sahib.

Referring to the friendship between Sheikh Farid Sani and Guru Ji, Mr. T.L. Vasvani writes :

“To me the religion of Guru Nanak Ji stands for fraternisation and unity. He saw in Islamic teachings what other Hindus could not see for themselves. Guru Ji felt particular pleasure in associating with the Muslims. Sheikh Farid, along with Guru Ji, showed the way of God to the people for ten years.”

(Akhbar *Amrit*, January 18, 1931)

‘During his travels, Guru Ji Maharaj always kept a Muslim, called Bhai Mardana, with him. Mardana used to play the Rabab and Guru Ji used to sing the hymns of God.

‘Guru Ji spent the last part of the life at Kartarpur a place situated in Shakargarh tehsil of Sialkot district. He lived in this world for seventy-one years. On his death the Muslims demanded his burial according to Islamic rites.

‘Bhai Kesar Singh Chhibber has stated that the Muslims constructed a mosque and had a well sunk as a tribute to Guru Ji. Guru Ji personally saw this mosque and drank water out of the well and also bathed with it.

The sum and substance of Guru Ji’s beliefs and teachings are :

“Oneness of God and brotherhood of man.”

‘He believed in One God, the God who is the Creator and the Giver and Supreme Owner of all; who is alive and shall remain alive for ever.

“He is eternal and infinite.

He is beauty and love.

Purity and piety is essential to reach God—purity of body and soul”.

‘Like Muslim saints he also considered the human soul as the eternal ray of the same eternal light.

‘Guru Nanak Ji Maharaj is no more in this world, but his memory is deep-rooted in human hearts.

‘It is a tribute to his towering personality that after a lapse of so many hundreds of years his birth-place continues to attract thousands of devotees. Great men of the world pass away, but they leave behind the signs of their greatness.

‘As the Persian couplet says:

“He whose heart is alive with love, does not die;

Our immortality has been written on the book of time.”

#### PANAMA

The Guru Nanak Quincentenary was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Panama, which happens to have the largest concentration of Indian nationals in Latin America. Two meetings were held on November 23, 1969—one in Panama City and the other in Colon, the free port area of the Republic of Panama. There were readings of the Granth Sahib, ‘Kirtan’ and speeches highlighting the message of the Guru. The meetings ended with the serving of the traditional *Langar* for Indians as well as Panamians. The Indian Ambassador attended both the commemorative meetings.

#### PHILIPPINES

##### *Manila*

1. The Managing Committees of *Hindu Temple* and *Khalsa Diwan* jointly celebrated the anniversary at 1350 United Nations Avenue, Manila from November 21 to November 23, 1969. *Akhand Path*, *Shabad Kirtan* and *Langar* were organized.

2. *The Daily Mirror* brought out a special supplement containing article on the life and teachings of the Guru on November 22, 1969.

3. A special supplement was issued by *Manila Bulletin* on November 23, 1969.

4. A brochure entitled ‘Golden opportunity for Indians to pay tribute. . . in real sense to Guru Baba Nanak in the 500th year’, was circulated by B.S. Pabla, 917, Folgueras (Tondo) Manila.

#### SIKKIM

##### *Gangtok*

1. The Political Officer of India in Sikkim brought out three brochures containing articles on Guru Nanak on behalf of Information Service of India (Gangtok).

- |                             |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (a) <i>Himalaya Sandesh</i> | (Sikkimese Language)                 |
| December 1, 1969.           |                                      |
| (b) <i>Pragati</i>          | Oct-Dec., 1969 in Devanagri Script.  |
| (c) <i>Pragati</i>          | Oct-Dec., 1969, in Sikkimese Script. |

2. Celebrations were arranged on November 23, 1969 in Delong Cinema Hall. Bhajans, and Dances were the main items of the cultural programme. The Chogyal of Sikkim, Gyalmo and Political Officer of India, Mr. N.B. Menon were present.

3. At the function held in Bharat Bhavan, speeches were made highlighting the life and teachings of Guru Nanak. The Chogyal of Sikkim was the guest speaker.

#### SINGAPORE

1. The Celebrations Committee arranged a big reception to the V.I.P.'s and citizens at tea and lectures.

2. A big procession, displaying a Sikh Pageant was taken out on November 15, 1969.

3. A large meeting was held at the National Theatre, Singapore. Music, Drama and Speeches connected with Guru Nanak formed part of the programme.

4. The "*Strait Times*" published a special features on November 22, 1969 devoted to the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

5. Five *Akhand Paths* were arranged from November 11, 1969 culminating on November 23, 1969.

6. Fun-Fair for children was organized.

7. A large Diwan was organised in the Badminton Hall on November 11, 1969.

8. Five hundred Sikhs donated blood to the Blood Bank in the Singapore Hospital.

9. The celebrations programme was relayed by the Radio and Television.

#### SWEDEN

##### *Stockholm*

1. The celebrations were arranged in the Indian Chancery with the assistance of the local Indian Cultural Club, on November 23, 1969, lasting two hours. Besides the Indian Community, Swedes were present in considerable numbers. Representatives of the Swedish Radio and Swede-India Society participated.

2. The Children from the local Temtoloda Skola (Blind School) were entertained at a luncheon party at the Embassy by the First Secretary (Information) Shri Mohinder Singh.

3. A set of five books on Guru Nanak were presented to the local liberal daily, *Dagens Nyheter* with a circulation of over 450,000. It published excerpts from a Press Release of the Press Information Bureau supplied to them by the Indian Embassy, along with a portrait of Guru Nanak.

#### SYRIA

##### *Damascus*

1. Celebrations were held at the Indian Embassy in Damascus.
2. Arabic papers *Al-Thawra* of December 4, 1969, the semi-official daily, and the Syrian weekly magazine *Al-Fida* of November 18, 1969 carried article on the life and teachings of the Guru Nanak, entitled "Nanak—A great Indian Philosopher".
3. The Embassy of India brought out a fourteen-page booklet containing a report on the Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebrations, and an article entitled "Sikhism, Religion of Truth" by Nadira Ali Yazji.

#### TANZANIA

##### *Dar-es-Salaam*

1. A sixteen-page special Supplement was issued by the *Sunday News*, Dar-es-Salaam, and the influential English daily *The Standard Tanzania* on November 23, 1969 to mark the 500th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak. It included sixteen illuminating articles on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, besides messages from the President and the Prime Minister of India and the Mayor of Dar-es-Salaam, Mr. A.S. Chambuse and other leaders of Tanzania.
2. The official organ of the Tanganyika African National Union, *The Nationalist*, published articles on the Sikh faith and its founder by Mrs. Pamela Wylam and Barrister Avtar Singh in its issue of November 22, 1969.
3. *The Sunday News Magazine*, issued a special Supplement on the celebrations and carried pictures of the celebrations and the Sikh gatherings.
4. The special sixteen-page *Sunday News* supplement to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of the great Guru on November 23, 1969, carried messages from the Indian and Tanzanian leaders, pictures of the Sikh temples situated at Dar-es-Salaam, Arusha, The Morogore, Bukoba, Mwanza, Tanga, The Tabora, The Moshi and at Iringa, and seventeen articles on the life and work of the Guru by writers including Gopal Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Sadhu T.L. Vaswani, Sant Kirpal Singh, P.M. Wylam, Abdul Majid Khan and others.

## THAILAND

*Bangkok*

1. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Bangkok arranged a chain of 140 Akhand Paths during the celebrations.
2. Five hundred devotees of Guru Nanak, led by Dr. P.K. Banerjee, the Indian Ambassador donated blood to the Red Cross Society of Thailand.
3. Two fresh and nine preserved eyes were specially brought from India by Dr. Surinder Pal Singh and handed over to H.H. Prince Sukhuma, Vice-President of the Red Cross.
4. Baht ten thousand were allocated by the Religious Department of the Ministry of Education for providing a portion to Siri Guru Singh Sabha with books regarding the Sikh faith in the Assembly Hall for the use of various religious organisations in Thailand. The Hall christened as 'Guru Nanak Dev Memorial Hall', was inaugurated by the Minister of Education, Thailand on November 17, 1969, followed by a dignified tea-party on the occasion.
5. Their Gracious Majesties, the King and Queen of Thailand graced the commemorative function arranged at The National Theatre by Siri Guru Singh Sabha on November 18, 1969. 1,25,000/- Bahts were presented to Their Majesties and the income thus derived would be utilized for awarding scholarships to needy students and for charitable purposes. The Registered Foundation included two members from the Religious Department and five from the Siri Guru Singh Sabha.
6. A three-day *Guru-ka-Langar* (community kitchen) was held.
7. An elaborate programme of games was also arranged.
8. An Essay competition in the Thai Language on the life of Guru Nanak was arranged. Baht 2500, 1500, and 1000 fixed as the first, second and third prize respectively. A committee of five eminent scholars headed by Achan Sathian was formed to judge the entries.
9. A book containing stories based upon the life of Guru Nanak Dev and its translation in Thai was written by Sardar Kartar Singh, Principal, Sikh Vidyalaya for free distribution.
10. A 134-page souvenir, "Guru Nanak Dev 500th Birthday Anniversary Presentation" containing messages and articles from eminent men from India and Thailand was brought out in English and Thai versions on November 23, 1969 for free distribution.
11. A grand tea-party was arranged at Naral Hotel. Representatives of various religious, commercial and social organisations, high officials and the elite of Bangkok participated.
12. A thirty-page special supplement was brought out by the *Bangkok World* on November 23, 1969, commemorating the Anniversary.

13. The *Bangkok World* reported the celebrations on November 22, 1969.
14. The *Bangkok Post*, published an article on 'Guru Nanak, India's Greatest Accommodator' by Prem Kumar on November 23, 1969.
15. Radio Programmes were arranged from Thai Radio from October 31, 1969 except on Sundays.
16. A Television programme was arranged on November 17, 1969.

#### TURKEY

##### *Ankara*

1. A special release of *Hindustan* in Turkish and English on Guru Nanak was issued to the press, on November 18, 1969.
2. The Indian nationals organised a function to celebrate the occasion at the residence of the Indian Ambassador, Shri U.S. Bajpai at Ankara. Gurubani was recited and recorded music was played. *Karah Parsad* was distributed. The function concluded with a tea party.

#### UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

##### *Cairo*

1. The Information Service of the Indian Embassy in Cairo distributed a special issue of the bulletin, *The Indigram* in English and Arabic on November 17, 20 and 22, 1969 highlighting the mission of Guru Nanak.
2. A public meeting was organised at Cairo on November 23, 1969 in the hall of the Egyptian Geographical Society to mark the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. The meeting was addressed by H.E. Dr. Abdul Hamid Yunus, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, H.E. Sheikh Abdul Rahman el Naggar, Director-General of Mosques in U.A.R., Cardinal Stephanos of the Coptic Catholic Church, Bishop Amba Gregorius, Head of the Higher Institute of Coptic Culture and Scientific Research, Rev. Habib Hakim of the Evangelical Church, Professor Yahya Khashab, Professor of Oriental Studies, Cairo University, Dr. Clovis Maksoud, Ex-Arab League Ambassador to India and Joint Editor of *Al-Ahram* and Professor Mohieddin Alwaye, an Indian teacher of English at Al-Azhar University. The Indian Ambassador, H.E. Inderjeet Bahadur Singh presided over the meeting. The speakers underlined the importance of Guru Nanak's teachings and emphasised the need for secular societies in modern times.
3. The *Watani* on November 30, 1969 reported the celebrations. The *Akhbar-al-Youm* reported the proceedings in detail.

4. The *Watani* of December 7, 1969 published an article on Guru Nanak, entitled "Guru Nanak" by Bishop Amba Gregories, Bishop for Higher Theological Studies in Coptic Culture and Scientific Research. Abba Rucies Deir, Rameses Avenue, Abbasiya, Cairo, Egypt (UAR) delivered a lecture on November 23, 1969 at the Symposium.

5. The local Sikh Community held a religious function on the morning of November 23, 1969.

#### UNITED KINGDOM

The Guru Nanak Foundation held a Guru Nanak Quincentenary dinner at Grosvenor House, London, on November 6, 1969. Among speakers were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Earl Mountbatten of Burma and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala.

The Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebrations Committee of Leeds observed the occasion with a meeting held in Town Hall, on November 30, 1969. Professor Harbans Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala, was the main speaker. The same morning there was a *Diwan* in the Leeds Gurdwara at which His Excellency A.B. Pant, High Commissioner for India, and Professor Harbans Singh made speeches.

The Guru Nanak Quincentenary celebrations were held at Royal Albert Hall on December 6, 1969. Mr Justice G. H. Hidayatullah, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India, who presided over the function, and Professor Harbans Singh were among the speakers.

Five-hour celebrations were observed in the Town Hall, Birmingham on December 14, 1969. More than two thousand Indians participated in the celebrations. The Mayor of Birmingham, Ald. Neville Bosworth and Conon Leonard Schiff, Anglican Chaplain to Overseas People highlighted the message of Guru Nanak. Coun. Mrs. Sheila Wright, read out the hymns of Guru Nanak. Other speakers included S. Gurmit Singh, Chief Parliamentary Secretary, Punjab, Professor J.H. Hick, Professor of Theology, University of Birmingham and Mr. Mohan Singh Sohal, President of the Central Committee of the Sikh Temples in Great Britain.

The proceedings were reported by the *Milap Weekly (Urdu)* of December 15, 1969 and the *Birmingham Post* of December 15, 1969.

The Central Committee of the Sikh Temples in Great Britain, Leeds, organised lectures by Dr. Gobind Singh Mansukhani in the James Graham College of Education, Leeds in October, 1969. The lecture was later published by the Committee under the caption *Guru Nanak, World Teacher*.

The Committee published a fourteen-page booklet, *Brief Outline of the Sikh Faith* by Mrs. P.M. Wylam.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*California*

1. The Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, Stockton, organised the celebrations on November 23, 1969.
2. San Francisco and Bay Area Sikhs celebrated the Anniversary on November 16, 1969. Literature in English was distributed.
3. In Elcentro (South California) celebrations were held on November 16, 1969.
4. Yuba City (Sutter County) and Butte Yuba Counties, collected \$ 100,000 (One hundred thousand dollars) for a Gurdwara for 1500 chair-seats.
5. *The New York Times* of November 24, 1969 published the report of the three-hour celebrations in New York organized by the Sikh Cultural Society.

## UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

*Moscow*

1. The function to celebrate the Quincentenary Birth celebrations was held at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow on November 20, 1969. Shri Ramesh Bhandari, Minister in the Embassy of India, spoke on the occasion.
2. The *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, published the report of the celebrations along with the picture of Guru Nanak on December 3, 1969.
3. To study the work and heritage of Guru Nanak, a committee was formed in the Soviet Union under the chairmanship of ACADEMICIAN Babajan Gafurov, including many Indian scholars in Moscow.

## WEST GERMANY

*Bonn*

1. A committee to co-ordinate the Guru Nanak Quincentenary celebrations was formed, comprising :
  - (a) Indian Ambassador Khub Chand.
  - (b) Minister Dr. A. Seifriz, representative of Lend Baden-Wuerttemberg to the Federal Government and President of the Indo-German Society.
  - (c) Frau Oberkirchenraetin Dr. Else Graefin Von Rittberg, Bonn.
  - (d) Brig. U.S. Kang, Military Attache, Embassy of India, Bonn.



- (e) Prof. Dr. F.R. Hamm, Director, Indologische Seminar, Bonn University.
- (f) Dr. T.R. Chopra, President, Indian Association, Bonn.
- (g) I.B. Sangal, Second Secretary of the Celebrations.

2. Celebrations were held on November 24, 1969 in the Embassy, followed by speeches by Minister Dr. Seifriz, Professor Dr. Hamm, and Dr. Chopra.

### *Frankfurt*

The Indian Association, Frankfurt celebrated the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak on November 23, 1969.

Besides the Counsel General of India, Frankfurt, quite a number of other people from all walks of life spoke on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak.

## YUGOSLAVIA

### *Belgrade*

A function to celebrate the 500th Birth Centenary was held on November 29, 1969 at the residence of the *Charge d' Affairs* of India in Belgrade. Gurbani music was played and the function concluded with the singing of Guru Nanak's shabads.

## ZAMBIA

### *Lusaka*

1. The Indian High Commissioner formed a Guru Nanak Council of Zambia for celebrating the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in Lusaka which commenced on November 21, 1969 with Akhand Path at the Hindu Hall followed by *Langar* (community kitchen).

2. The Council raised funds through a Raffle, and a reception was held at Ridgeway Hotel. More than 300 invitees, including a large number of prominent Zambians attended the function. The Vice-President of Zambia, Mr. Simon Kapwepwe was the guest of honour. Apart from drawing the lucky number for the Raffle, an Ambulance Car was presented to him for the Maternity Wing of the Central Hospital. The Vice-President termed the idea of the gift as "the most symbolic thought of Humanism as preached by Guru Nanak".

3. The reception, presentation of the Ambulance and the speeches made on the occasion were reported and televised by Radio Zambia, Television and the press.

4. Radio Zambia broadcast a 30-minute programme on November 23, 1969.

5. Zambia Television allotted 45 minutes for a symposium on the life and work of Guru Nanak. Mr. Gulshan, a medical specialist, Rev. O'Conner, a Christian missionary and a Zambian officer participated.

6. The Government owned *Zambia Mail* published a special article on Guru Nanak, entitled "Symbol of Harmony" on November 21, 1969.

7. The *Times of Zambia* brought out a one-page supplement for the occasion on November 23, 1969.

8. In Kabwe and Ndola, the occasion was marked with religious functions.

Dr. Adalbert Seifriz described Guru Nanak as "another great son of India who preached tolerance, love and brotherhood".

Professor Hamm traced the evolution of Indian spiritual and religious life from the ancient times. Among the characteristics of Indian traditional life, he said, was the ability to foster new ideas and yet preserve the old culture. Guru Nanak's mission was in this typical Indian tradition and represented a new beginning to Hinduism.

Dr. Tilak Raj Chopra spoke on Guru Nanak's message of love, social service and respect for the basic values of life. Among German friends present at the ceremony were officials of the foreign office, professors and representatives of local institutions.

The proceedings were reported by the Bulletin of the Indian Embassy on December 2, 1969.

### CHAPTER III

## NOTES AND ARTICLES ON THE OCCASION OF GURU NANAK QUINCENTENARY CELEBRATIONS IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS, WEEKLY JOURNALS AND MONTHLY MAGAZINES

Below is given a list of the Newspapers, Weekly Journals and Monthly Magazines which brought out special issues on the occasion of the Quincentenary of Guru Nanak's Birth, along with the titles of the writings and their authors :

#### *DAILY NEWSPAPERS*

*Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Bhopal*

November 23, 1969. Article : *Guru Nanak Ka Shashvat Sandesh*, by Shri Inder Kumar Gujral.

*Hindustan (Hindi), Delhi*

November 23, 1969. Published a map showing travels of Guru Nanak.

*Hindi Milap (Hindi), Hyderabad*

Vol. 41, No. 13, November 23, 1969.

1. *Guru Nanak Ki Shiksha*
2. *Samdarshi Guru Nanak*

*National Herald (English Daily), Delhi, Vol. No. XXVII, No 315*

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|-----------------------|---|
| November 23, 1969 and | 1. Message of Peace, by Harbaksh Singh  |
| November 13, 1970     | 2. Guru Nanak and Vedanta, by Sher Singh  |
|                       | 3. University of Nanak's Thoughts by I.K. Gujral                                      |
|                       | 4. <i>Message of Guru Nanak</i> , by P.S. Sethi                                       |
|                       | 5. <i>Relevance of Guru Nanak Dev</i> , by Parkash Singh Badal                        |
|                       | 6. <i>Saviour of Mankind</i> , by Surjit Singh  |
|                       | 7. <i>Modern Prophet</i> , by K.L. Kapur  |
|                       | 8. <i>Hymns of Guru Nanak's Patriotic Vision</i> , by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib |
|                       | 9. A map showing tours of Guru Nanak was published on November 26, 1969               |

*Nav Bharat (Hindi Daily), Bhopal, November 22, 1969*

*Guru Nanak Ka Bhopal Pravas, by Jaswant Singh*

*The Pioneer (English Daily), Lucknow, November 24, 1969*

1. *Messages of Guru Nanak*, by Sant Kirpal Singh
2. *Thus Spoke Nanak* by Khushwant Singh
3. *Guru Nanak through the Perspective of History*, by K.R. Qanungo
4. *Apostle of Emotional Integration*, by K.S. Duggal
5. *The Guru's Followers and Freedom Struggle*, by Giani Gurmukh Singh Musaffir
6. *Prophet of a New Synthesis*, by Dr. Gopal Singh
7. *Guru Nanak's Concept of God*, by Gurnam Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab
8. *The Conscience of Mankind*, by K.K. Kaul

*Pradeep (Urdu Daily), Jullundur, Vol. IX, No. 246, November 23, 1969*

1. *Guru Nanak—Manavata Ke Nirmata*, by Paras Ram Joshi
2. *Mahan Sant*, by P.S. Sethi
3. *Guru Nanak Ki Siddhon Se Vivad*, by Manmohan Kalia
4. *Guru Nanak Da Paramatma Da Sarup*, by Gurnam Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab.
5. *Guru Nanak Aur Khalsa*, by Sat Pal Sharma
6. *Guru Nanak—Ek Mahan Shakshiyat*, by Sadhu T.L. Vaswani

*Pratap (Urdu Daily), Jullundur, Vol. 50, No. 319, November 23, 1969*

1. *The Propagation of International Brotherhood*, by Lala Dina Nath Akhtar
2. *Guru Nanak Avatar*, by Bhushan Sarhandi
3. *Guru Nanak and Bhakti Movement*, by Dr. Taran Singh
4. *Guru Nanak's Discussion with the Siddhas*, by Manmohan Kalia

*Rozana Quami Awaz (Punjabi), November 16, 1969*

1. *Guru Maharaj Ka Lazawal Paigam*, by Hasan Wasf Asmani
2. *Guru Nanak Aur Unka Zamana*, by Dr Taran Singh
3. *Guru Nanak ki Zindgi Aur Unki Talimat*, by Balwant Singh Anand

*The Times of India (English Daily), Delhi, Vol. No. (35) C555II  
November 22, 1969*

1. *Search for Truth is Way to Salvation*, by Gurnam Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab
2. *He Belongs to All Mankind*, by Sant Kirpal Singh

3. *Succour And Comfort to the Down-trodden*, by Sohan Singh Bassi, Minister, Punjab
4. *Sikhism Has Stood the Test of Time*, by Dr. Bhagat Singh
5. *The Guru's Dialogue with Yogis*, by Manmohan Kalia
6. *Obtaining Release from Bondage of Karma*, by Randhir Singh Cheema  
December 25, 1970
1. *The Relevance of the Guru's Teachings*, by Prakash Singh Badal, Chief Minister, Punjab
2. *A Life of Love, Devotion, Service and Sacrifice*, by Tirlochan Singh Riyasti, Minister, Punjab
3. *Permanent Imprint on Sands of Time*, by Surjit Singh, Education Minister, Punjab
4. *Karmayogi in the Truest Sense*, by Balwant Singh

*The Tribune (English Daily)*, Chandigarh, Vol. LXXXIX, No. 323

November 23, 1969

- (i) *Prophet of a New Synthesis*, by Dr. Gopal Singh, M.P.
- (ii) *Guru Nanak's Concept of God*, by Gurnam Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab
- (iii) *The Message*, by Sant Kirpal Singh
- (iv) *Sun of Righteousness* by Bansi Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana
- (v) *Guru Nanak and Siddhas*, by Manmohan Kalia
- (vi) *The Guru's Followers and the Freedom Struggle*, by Giani Gurmukh Singh Musaffr
- (vii) *Guru Nanak's Disciples*, by Ranbir Singh
- (viii) *Guru Nanak and Bhakti Movement*, by Dr. Taran Singh
- (ix) *Thus Spoke Nanak*, by Khushwant Singh
- (x) *The Universal Prophet* (From Bhai Nand Lal)
- (xi) *Relevance of Guru Nanak's Philosophy in the Modern Age*, by Dr. Donald G. Dawe
- (xii) *A Practical Philosopher*, by Dr. Bhagat Singh
- (xiii) *Music and Sikh Religion*, by Sant Prakash Singh
- (xiv) *The Voice of India's Soul*, by Suraj Bhan, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University
- (xv) *Jap Ji*, by Kartar Singh Duggal
- (xvi) *Guru Nanak, The Poet*, by Ramesh Chandra
- (xvii) *His Sublime Philosophy*, by Pritmohinder Singh
- (xviii) *A Great Humanist*, by Piara Singh
- (xix) *Guru Nanak's Sayings*
- (xx) *Travels of Guru Nanak*, by Gurmit Singh, Minister of State, Punjab
- (xxi) *Guru Nanak's Scientific Spiritualism*, by Dr. Sher Singh
- (xxii) *Writings of Guru Nanak in Hindi*, by Dr R.S. Jaggi
- (xxiii) *A Prophet of Reason*, by Professor Abdul Majid Khan.

- (xxiv) *Sultanpur Lodhi*, by Atma Singh, Minister, Punjab  
 (xxv) *Pioneer of Secularism*, by Prem Kumar

*Yugdharam (Hindi Daily), Nagpur*

1. *Nanak Darshan Ka Muladhikar*, by Dr Dharam Pal, Jullundur
2. *Rashtriyata Ke Agradoot—Guru Nanak*, by Ramji Mishra 'Manohar', Patna
3. *Shantidoot Guru Nanak Dev*, by Gopal Das Agarwal, M.P.
4. *Guru Nanak Vani and Srimad Bhagavat Gita*, by Dr. Manmohan Sehgal
5. *Yug Purush Guru Nanak*, by Dr. Mahip Singh
6. *Guru Nanak Aur Sanatam Dharam*, by Bhakt Ram Sharan Das
7. *Upanishad Darshan Aur Guru Nanak Dev*, by Dr. Dharmendra Gupta, Patiala

#### WEEKLY JOURNALS

*Spokesman (English Weekly), New Delhi* (Guru Nanak Quincentenary Number, 1969),  
 Vol. 19, No. 12-13

1. *Guru Nanak—Glory of India*, by Sadhu T.L. Vaswani
2. *Guru Nanak and Modernity*, by Hukam Singh, Governor, Rajasthan
3. *Guru Nanak and His Times*, by Ujjal Singh, Governor, Tamil Nadu
4. *Guru Nanak — A Great Benefactor of Humanity*, by K. Brahmananda Reddi, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh
5. *Guru Nanak and World Peace*, by Prof. Abdul Majid Khan
6. *Guru Nanak as a Teacher*, by Bhai Jodh Singh
7. *Guru Nanak's Teachings*, by Justice Pritam Singh Safeer
8. *Guru Nanak's Concept of Man*, by Dr. Mulk Raj Anand
9. *Guru Nanak at Kartarpur*, by Professor Harbans Singh
10. *Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak*, by Balwant Singh Anand
11. *Guru Nanak—The Reformer*, by Mrs. P.M. Wylam
12. *The Divine Bard—Guru Nanak Viewed As a Poet*, by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib
13. *Relevance of Guru Nanak's Philosophy in Modern Age*, by Dr. Donald G. Dawe

#### MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY MAGAZINES

*Hindu Vishva (English monthly), Bombay*

October, 1969 : *Guru Nanak*, by Dr. Mohinder Pal Kohli

*Jagriti (Hindi Monthly), Chandigarh (Guru Nanak Ank)*

- November-December : 1. *Yug-Purush Guru Nanak* by, Dr. Mahip Singh  
 2. *Guru Nanak Ka Yog-Dan*, by Devinder Singh Vidyarthi  
 3. *Guru Nanak Ke Shikshaprad Sansmaran*, by Durga Shankar Trivedi  
 4. *Sampardayak Ekta Ka Prateek—Guru Nanak*, by Dr Ram Singh  
 5. *Poems*, by Thakur Ghanshyam Singh and Babu Lal Sharma

*Himal (Quarterly)*

1. *Goshtian Guru Nanak Dev Ji*, by Professor Prem Singh
2. *Guru Nanak—Ik Samaj Sudharak*, by S. Gurcharan Singh Gulshan

#### SCHOOL AND COLLEGE MAGAZINES

The Magazines mentioned below carried special articles/poems on Guru Nanak and his teaching on the occasion of the Quincentenary :

*Bal Mitra (Guru Nanak Quincentenary Issue) Vol. XIII, No. 1*

Issued by Guru Nanak Vidyak Society, Bombay

*The Darbar (Guru Nanak Number), Khalsa College, Amritsar*

#### *Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak—World Teacher and Philosopher*, by Ujjal Singh, Governor, Tamil Nadu
2. *Guru-Nanak—A Man of Superb Commonsense*
3. *Guru Nanak's Humanism*, by Karnail Singh
4. *Humanism in Guru Nanak*, by Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib
5. *Places Associated with Guru Nanak Dev*, by Professor Parkash Singh
6. *The Problem of Evil and Guru Nanak Dev (A Study in Ethics)*, by Dr. R.L. Ahuja
7. *A Pilgrim of Eternity*, by Dr. R.L. Ahuja

*Giansar (Guru Nanak Number), Ramgarhia College of Education, Phagwara*

December, 1970

#### *Article*

*Guru Nanak Shows the Way*

*Government College for Women Magazine, Patiala (Guru Nanak Number Articles)*

1. *Guru Nanak*, by Kapur Singh, M.L.A.
2. *The Absolute Being as revealed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev*, by Kali Charan Bennerjee
3. *The Message of Guru Nanak*, by Dr. Indu Bhushan Bannerjee
4. *Guru Nanak—Prophet of Peace*, by Professor Abdul Majid Khan
5. *Guru Nanak and His Message—Saintly Relevance and Challenge*,  
by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty
6. *A Prophet of the People*, by Sadhu T.L. Vaswani
7. *Guru Nanak's Attitude towards Truth and Women*
8. *Guru Nanak Teachings*

*Hariawal (Guru Nanak Number) Guru Tegh Bhadur College, Sathiala**Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak—His Philosophy*
2. *Nanak—Great Teacher*
3. *The Greatest Poet, Guru Nanak*
4. *Guru Nanak, Apostle of Humanism*

*Mana Jeete Jag Jeet (Shanti Punj Guru Nanak Quincentenary Number) Shri Guru Arjan Dev College, Tarn Taran**Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak and Literature*, by Dr. Harinder Singh Gill
2. *Places Associated with Guru Nanak Dev*, by Prof. Parkash Singh
3. *The Teachings of Guru Nanak*, by W.H. Mcleod

*Souvenir (Guru Nanak Birth Quincentenary) Ramgarhia Education Institutions, Phagwara**Articles*

1. *The Concept of God and Guru Nanak*, by Dr. R.K. Arora
2. *The Japji of Guru Nanak*, by Kuldeep Singh Keer
3. *Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Hindi)*, by Chandra Mohan Kaushal
4. *Sanjha Guru Nanak (Punjabi)*, by Principal Amar Singh Viridi



*Sri Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Sri Ganga Nagar**Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak—The Saviour*, by Professor Gurcharan Singh, Mohindra College, Patiala
2. *Guru Nanak Dev—A Brief Sketch*, by Professor Kartar Singh
3. *Sri Guru Nanak Dev*, by Principal Nahar Singh Grewal
4. *Impact of Guru Nanak on Indian Society*, by J.S. Bawa
5. *Birth of Sikhism*, by Professor Harbans Singh

*Shardhanjali-Arpana, Government College, Karamsar, (Ludhiana)**Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak—His Times and Teachings*, by Professor Daljinder Singh
2. *A Short Life of Guru Nanak*, by Sarbjit Singh
3. *Message of Guru Nanak Dev Ji*, by Rachhpal Singh

*Shivalak (Guru Nanak Issue) Government College, Hoshiarpur**Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak—The Cosmopolitan and Humanitarian*
2. *“There is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim : Only Man”*—Guru Nanak
3. *Guru Nanak Dev’s Contribution to the Fine Art of Music*
4. *Guru Nanak—Planner of Planners*

*Ramsukh Das College Magazine, Ferozepore City, Vol. XLVI No. 1**Articles*

1. *Guru Nanak — A Prophet of Spiritual Renaissance*, by Professor S.S. Gupta
2. *Guru Nanak—Whence He Came*

## CHAPTER IV

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF GURU NANAK'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS, HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA, SEPTEMBER 3 TO 5, 1969

The International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings was convened at the Punjabi University, Patiala and was held from the 3rd September, 1969 to 5th September, 1969 in the building of Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan in the University Campus, which had been completed only a few days before the Seminar was held. The inauguration of the Seminar was a memorable event, over which Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan, Home Minister of India, presided. Present at the inauguration were, besides a large number of scholars and intellectuals, His Highness Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala, the Governor of the Punjab, Dr. D.C. Pavate, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Gurnam Singh and the delegates to the Seminar including a good number of those from abroad. Before the inauguration of the Seminar, the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan which was the venue of the Seminar, was dedicated to the service of the Nation by Sardar Gurnam Singh, the Chief Minister of Punjab. Other events connected with the Seminar were the opening of a Book Exhibition by Sardar Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs, Government of India and the release of an ornate volume, entitled *Guru Granth Ratnavali* by Sardar Hukam Singh, Governor of Rajasthan. Among other books released on the occasion were Punjabi translations of *Dhammapada* and Vinoba Bhave's Commentary on the *Japji* which is originally written in Hindi. Besides these, *Mahatma Gandhi and C.F. Andrews : A Study in Hindu-Christian Dialogue* by Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao and the Third Volume of *Punjab—Past and Present* compiled by Dr. Ganda Singh were also released. The speeches made on the occasion by Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala and Dr. D.S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, New Delhi are reproduced in this volume. At the Seminar itself, after the welcome address by Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, and the address of Dr. D.C. Pavate, Governor of Punjab, the Inaugural Address of Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan, Home Minister of India, were delivered. These addresses are reproduced below. A few selected papers published at the Seminar have also been reproduced in this volume.

The participants to the Seminar exceeded fifty, out of whom thirteen were foreigners. This list contains some famous names in the intellectual world. The papers were of a high order in range and depth, and constitute perhaps the most signi-

ficant contribution to the study of Guru Nanak's Teachings. The Seminar may compare with the most important events which have been held for the study of Religion in India or elsewhere. A list of the participants to the Seminar follows immediately after.

Among the Chairmen of the various sessions were Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, Education Minister, Government of India, Dr. D.S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, Dr. Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, Director, Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. USA and Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh, former Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University Patiala.

#### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Dr. Abdul Haq Ansari<br>Department of Islamic Studies<br>Visvabharti, Santiniketan, (West Bengal)        | New York State College, New Platz<br>N.Y.   |
| 2. Dr. Avtar Singh<br>Department of Religious Studies<br>Punjabi University, Patiala                        | 10. Dr. Roma Chaudhuri<br>Vice-Chancellor, Ravindra Bharti<br>University<br>Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Jorasanko,<br>Calcutta. |
| 3. Dr. A.C. Banerjee<br>P-288, C.I.T. Road, Calcutta-10   | 11. Dr. J.B. Chethimattam<br>Dharmaram College, Bangalore   |
| 4. Dr. (Mrs.) Sobharani Basu<br>Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi<br>(U.P.)                                | 12. Dr. J.B. Carman<br>Centre for the Study of World Reli-<br>gions Harvard University, Cambridge,<br>Mass. 02138, USA      |
| 5. Professor A. Bose<br>Head, Department of English<br>Calcutta University, Calcutta                        | 13. Dr. D.G. Dawe<br>3401, Brook Road<br>Richmond, Virginia 23227, USA  |
| 6. Dr. David Bradley<br>Department of Religion<br>Duke University, Durham, North<br>Carolina                | 14. Dr. Elit Deutsoh<br>Philosophy East and West<br>University of Hawaii<br>Honolulu, Hawaii, USA                           |
| 7. Rev. Marcus Braybrooke<br>'Ashram' 9, Personage Home<br>Rychester, Kent, U.K.                            | 15. Dr. Fauja Singh<br>Professor and Head of History Depart-<br>ment<br>Punjabi University, Patiala                         |
| 8. Professor Buddha Prakash<br>Director, Institute of Indian Studies<br>Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra | 16. Dr. H.S. Gill<br>Head, Linguistics Department<br>Punjabi University, Patiala  |
| 9. Dr. Amiya Chakravarty<br>Department of Philosophy and Religion,  |   |

17. Dr. Mushirul Haq  
Indian Institute of Advanced Study  
Rashtrapati Niwas, Simla-5
18. Dr. David B. Harned  
Chairman, Department of Religious  
Studies  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Va. 22903, USA
19. Professor Harbans Singh  
Professor and Head of the Department  
of Religious Studies  
Punjabi University, Patiala
20. Dr. Harbhajan Singh  
Head, Department of Punjabi  
Delhi University, Delhi
21. Dr. Norvin Hein  
Professor of Comparative Religion  
Yale University School, New Haven,  
Connecticut, USA
22. Dr. K. Ishwaran  
York University  
4700 Keele Street, Downsview 463,  
Ontario (Canada)
23. Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh  
496 L, Model Town, Ludhiana
24. Dr. L.M. Joshi  
Department of Religious Studies  
Punjabi University, Patiala
25. Sardar Kapur Singh  
2145-Sector 15-C  
Chandigarh
26. Shri J. J. Karam  
12/6, Patel Nagar (East), Delhi-8
27. Dr. D.S. Karunaratne  
Assistant Director  
Archaeological Department, Colombo,  
Ceylon
28. Sardar Khushwant Singh  
49-E, Sujan Singh Park, New Delhi-3
29. Mrs. Ursula King  
11/5, I.I.T., Hauz Khas, New Delhi
30. Dr. S.S. Kohli  
Department of Punjabi  
Punjab University, Chandigarh
31. Dr. D.S. Maini  
Head, Department of English  
Punjabi University, Patiala
32. Professor Kenneth Morgan  
Colgate University, Hamilton, New  
York, USA
33. Dr. Niharranjan Ray  
Director, Indian Institute of Advanced  
Study, Simla-1
34. Dr. K.A. Nizami  
3, English House, Aligarh Muslim  
University, Aligarh
35. Dr. G.C. Pande  
Head, Department of History and  
Indian Culture  
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur
36. Dr. R.C. Pandeya  
Department of Buddhistic Studies  
Faculty of Arts, University of Delhi,  
Delhi-7
37. Dr. R. Panikkar  
Hanuman Ghat, B. 4/36, Varanasi,  
U.P.
38. Professor E.G. Parrinder  
Department of Comparative Study of  
Religions  
University of London, London
39. Dr. Christanand Pillai  
Department of Religious Studies  
Punjabi University, Patiala
40. Professor J.R. Puri  
Department of Philosophy  
Punjabi University, Patiala

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| 41. Professor S.S. Raghvachar<br>Head, Department of Philosophy<br>University of Mysore, Mysore                                  | 48. Dr. K.R. Sundararajan<br>Department of Religious Studies<br>Punjabi University, Patiala                      |
| 42. Dr. S.S.A. Rizvi<br>School of Oriental & African Studies<br>University of London, London, W.C.-1                             | 49. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib<br>Department of English<br>Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra              |
| 43. Dr. M.P.L. Sastry<br>P.O. Malleswarm, Bangalore-3  | 50. Dr. Taran Singh<br>Head of the Department of Sri Guru<br>Granth Sahib Studies<br>Punjabi University, Patiala |
| 44. Professor K. Seshadri<br>UNESCO Project of Central Asian<br>Studies<br>University of Madras, Madras-5                        | 51. Dr. Trilochan Singh<br>486-R, Model Town, Ludhiana   |
| 45. Dr. R.V. De Smet<br>De Nobili College, Poona   | 52. Dr. J.P.S. Uberoi<br>Department of Sociology<br>Delhi School of Economics, Delhi-7                           |
| 46. Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao<br>Department of Religious Studies<br>Punjabi University, Patiala                                     | 53. Professor A.R. Wadia<br>96, Marine Drive, Bombay-2   |
| 47. Dr. W.C. Smith<br>Director, Centre for the Study of<br>World Religions<br>Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.<br>02138, USA | 54. Mrs. P. Wylam<br>28, Gloucester Circus<br>Greenwich, London, S.E. 10   |

## INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR : WELCOME ADDRESS

*by*

KIRPAL SINGH NARANG

*Vice-Chancellor*

Punjabi University, Patiala

Mr. President, Sir, Mr. Chancellor, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, Sardar Swaran Singh, Mr. Chief Minister, Shri Maharaja Sahib, Honoured Guest-participants, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I extend to you in the name of the Punjabi University and from myself personally a very warm and cordial welcome to this opening session of the Guru Nanak Seminar. Our overwhelming feeling at this moment is that of humble thankfulness. In scholarly participation and in the association with it of men eminent in the public life of the nation, this event has been singularly fortunate. I tender to our esteemed guests and distinguished scholars my deep gratitude for their kindli nessin responding so generously to our invitation. Their presence here is heartening for us. It is evidence of the grow-

ing interest in the kind of academic pursuit in which this new institution on our Campus represents a modest beginning. It also implies a fitting recognition of the great and inspiring theme to which this learned convocation is committed. A very special debt of gratitude is owed to our guest of honour, the Union Home Minister, for his graciousness in making time to be here this morning and associating himself with these inauguration ceremonies. Much gratitude is, likewise, due to the Union Ministers, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao and Sardar Swaran Singh, our Chancellor, Dr. D.C. Pavate, our Chief Minister, Sardar Gurnam Singh, His Highness the Maharaja Sahib of Patiala and other honoured guests. Before proceeding further, I wish also to take this opportunity to render homage to the memory of the great Master for whose 500th birth anniversary this programme was planned.

The Punjabi University feels privileged in being able to sponsor this Seminar in observance of this momentous anniversary. Under the charter of this University, we were charged with the responsibility of promoting the language, culture and literature of the region to which it belongs. To this end, it set up certain agencies and departments such as the Department of Translation, the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, the Department of Linguistics, the Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies and the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies. This last-named is the most recent of these and, in certain ways, most exciting. For one thing, this is the first Department of its kind in an Indian University.

The study of religion as a University discipline is of modern origin and, so far as our own country is concerned, almost non-existent. This however, is a subject which is of compelling importance and goes to the very roots of human culture. Religion, in spite of the divisions and conflicts which stain certain periods of its history, has been the most significant humanizing agent in the civilization of man. For the individual it is the source of moral insight and ethical action : it touches the higher key in his nature, opens his mind to verities beyond this world of physical phenomenon and provides a point of integration to his personality. In this age of scientific discovery and invention and technological virtuosity man's religious faith is facing severe challenges; and yet it has proved its fundamental relevance to the human situation. Values and standards given to man by religion still have their validity. In fact, the present dilemmas and hazards with which human society is confronted today arise from the fact that the hold on those principles is gradually slipping. The restoration of these values will bring to mankind that focus of security which it so badly needs today. In any case, the investigation of the Inner Reality and intuitions of religion which have been the most significant single factor in shaping the civilization of mankind is a legitimate intellectual and academic pursuit, worthy of the attention of any community engaged in the quest of truth and knowledge.

At the time when our modern universities began to be established, religious studies

were not admitted into the academic curriculum. But since Independence, leaders of Government and education have been seriously considering ways and means of giving this study its proper place in our educational structure and bringing to our youth, its healthful influences. Committees were appointed by the Government of India to go deep into this question. The University Grants Commission also took the initiative in this matter. In the year of the Tercentenary of Guru Gobind Singh's birth, i.e., 1966-67, this University made a formal proposal for the establishment of a Department of Religious Studies. I was fortunate to have met during my visit to the United States in 1966, Dr. Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, Director, Centre for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University. The idea took form as I visited the very fascinating institution he heads. His own deep involvement with the subject was inspiring. When I put up my plans to the University Grants Commission, the Government of India, the Punjab Government, and public institutions such as the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, the response was more than favourable. In the scheme the University had drawn up, it was proposed to undertake study of five major religion traditions, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. The University Grants Commission and the Punjab Government helped with funds. Their continuing support has been an important factor in the realization of the undertaking.

The building designed for housing this religious centre seeks to concretize the concept underlying the project. The motifs of the lotus and the pool, of the boat and the worldly ocean, of the eternal flame, of the white marble, of the heaven-gazing arches, the sculpture and such others, have been used, to what effect, it is for our honoured visitors to judge. Similarly, use has been made of the number "Five" which has special sanctity in our religious tradition, especially Sikh and Muslim.

This edifice conceived in 1966-67 was dedicated to the memory of Guru Gobind Singh. It was his Tercentenary year and the set-up, then in the process of establishment, could not have been more appropriately designated. Guru Gobind Singh epitomized, in his life and poetry, the essence and universality of religious truth. To quote from one of his hymns :

"Hindus and the Muslims are all one,  
 Have each the habits of different environments.  
 All men have the same eyes, the same body,  
 The same form compounded of the same four elements—  
 Earth, air, fire and water.  
 The Abhekh (formless) of the Hindus and the Allah of Muslims,  
 The Koran and the Puranas praise the same Lord.  
 They are all one in spirit :  
 The one Lord made them all."

The corner-stone of the Bhavan was laid in December, 1967 by India's late President, Dr. Zakir Husain, who exemplified in his person the highest traditions of learning, culture and tolerance. To his revered memory we hereby pay our respectful tribute.

To our present generation belongs the privilege of commemorating an important anniversary—the fifth birth centennial of Guru Nanak, seer and teacher, prophet and preceptor. As witness to Reality, he stands in human history as one by whom mankind has been able to know God more fully. He was the harbinger of a new age in man's religious quest. Through him has come to mankind a vivid message of love, unity and equality. Our century is one deeply concerned with increasing understanding among men, and easing the tensions that separate them. Communally-inspired hatreds we now can recognize as a denial of religion, not its fulfilment. Religious zeal, modern man knows, must be turned to deepening our commitment to human betterment and harmony. Such concerns were certainly not a part of the sixteenth-century world in which Guru Nanak lived. But he set out on his teaching mission with the pronouncement: "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman." In saying this he was pointing to the essential unity of men and calling them to a fraternity, a religion large enough to embrace all, and inviting them to search for that spiritually vital core which lay beyond all particularisms. In this sense, his message has great modern relevance. It is, however, regrettable that scholarly endeavour towards comprehending and interpreting it has so far been extremely meagre.

The Quincentennial now has stirred many a mind. In the Punjab and in India as a whole and, in fact, round the globe wherever there are the Guru's followers and admirers, plans are being worked out to mark the remembrance in a befitting and meaningful manner. The Punjabi University, in several of its departments, has undertaken several academic and literary programmes. Foremost among these is this conference under the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies. The plan goes back to the Seminar on the study of religions in Indian universities which was held in Bangalore in September, 1967. There I received support from many distinguished scholars who had assembled for that very interesting and productive meeting. We were fortunate to enlist their co-operation and of others whom we contacted subsequently. As it is, there are nearly 60 scholars taking part in this study, 15 of them from universities abroad. Among the foreign countries represented are the U.S.A., the U.K., Australia, Ceylon, and Canada. About 40 papers have been received. These have been divided into five broad sections. The first section will be on "Philosophy and Message of Guru Nanak". It will be presided over by the eminent Indian educationist, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, now the Union Minister for Education and Youth Services. The second section will address itself to "Mystical Tradition". The President will be the distinguished educationist and scientist, Dr. D.S. Kothari, Chairman of the University Grants Commission. The third section will



be on "Guru Nanak : Dialogue of Religions". Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, the well-known critic and scholar, who is now Professor of World Religions, State University, New Paltz, New York, U.S.A., will be the chairman. The next section will devote itself to the subject of "Guru Nanak : Society and Culture". The chairman will be Professor Cantwell Smith, who is the Director of Centre for Study of World Religions at Harvard University and who by his most thoughtful and effective writings on the theme of faith and understanding, is making a new and positive contribution to the intellectual culture of the age. The last section will be on "Guru Nanak : Language and Literature", chaired by the well-known educator and Islamacist, Professor M. Mujeeb, Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia University.

The most challenging theme to which the Seminar is dedicated has not been exposed to such broad-based and high-level scholarship before, and I have no doubt, the results will be more than satisfying. The papers along with the discussions that they give rise to will be published by the University. I must thank most heartily the learned participants for their valued co-operation and their labour of love. None of them will accept any honorarium for the papers they are presenting.

The Seminar was made possible by a grant of Rs. 1 lakh sanctioned by the Punjab Government towards its expenses. I must also make acknowledgement of the kindly help and personal interest in this conference of our esteemed Chancellor, Dr. D. C. Pavate, the Governor of Punjab, and our Chief Minister, Sardar Gurnam Singh. The University Grants Commission also sanctioned us a sum of Rs. 25,000 and we are grateful to it and to its Chairman, Dr. D.S. Kothari, for this help. I also venture to hope that if the Chairman of the University Grants Commission and the Union Education Minister find that this seminar has yielded some fruitful results and has succeeded to some extent in stimulating interest in religious studies, they will help this University and others in furthering similar enterprises.

On this occasion will also be released some publications of the University. The Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies has been working on introductory books, one each on the five major religious faiths. The books are now ready and will be released at the function this morning by Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao. Another publication to be released will be *Vichar Kosh*, a dictionary of the thoughts contained in the Guru Granth, which has been prepared by the Department of Guru Granth Sahib Studies, under the guidance of Dr. Taran Singh. Tomorrow, Dr. D.S. Kothari, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, will release the Punjabi version of Shri Vinoba Bhaveji's commentary in Hindi, on the *Japuji*. This is an eloquent and masterly presentation of Sikh thought and we are grateful to Shri Vinoba Bhaveji for permitting us to make a Punjabi translation of his work. We now propose securing its English translation rights. Tomorrow will also be released another publication of the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies, entitled "*Mahatma Gandhi and C.F. Andrew : A Dialogue between*

*Christianity and Hinduism*”, written by Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao. A special number of *Punjab-Past and Present* devoted to Guru Nanak, edited by Dr. Ganda Singh, will also be released on this occasion. This special issue reproduces exhaustively the source material on the life of the Guru as available in English, Persian, Punjabi, Urdu, Marathi and Oriya. We shall also be bringing out shortly a *Life* of Guru Nanak in English, Punjabi and Hindi, written by Professor Harbans Singh. He worked on this book at the Centre for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University.

I should like to thank all those who partook in this scholarly programme, especially Dr. D.S. Maini, Dr. Fauja Singh, Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao and Dr. Taran Singh. I must also mention in this behalf the contribution made by Sardar Hazara Singh, the Production Officer, and Sardar Kuldip Singh Sethi, Manager of the Press.

As has been indicated in the programme, this inaugural session will be followed by the opening, by Sardar Swaran Singh, Union Defence Minister, of an exhibition of relics and paintings connected with the life of Guru Nanak. The Exhibition will comprise manuscripts of old *Janamsakhis* and some original paintings, as also photographs of some rare paintings of Guru Nanak. The earliest of these paintings is dated A.D. 1658, falling within the period of Guru Har Rai. Also on display will be maps marking the journeys of Guru Nanak and a geneological table tracing the line of his descendants.

Before I close, I must express my appreciation of the great job of work done in preparation of this meeting by the University Faculty and the staff in the administrative and engineering wings. The Registrar, Sardar Amrik Singh, and the Executive Engineer, Sardar Jagjit Singh Kohli, took on more than their fair share of the burden. Owing to the short time for the anniversary, the work had to be done at a quick pace. Most important was the completion of the Bhavan building. There were bottlenecks and difficulties, but with the cheerful co-operation and enterprise of everyone in the University and the grace of Satguru, we were able to maintain the speed we had set ourselves. I wish also to take this opportunity of thanking the Rev. Father P.M. Lewis of the Church of our Lady of Fatima, Patiala, who has very kindly donated a Cross, a Crucifix and some Biblical literature for the meditation room in the Christianity block of the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan. Grateful thanks are also offered to His Highness the Maharaja Sahib of Patiala, and the Rotary Club for the receptions they are giving in honour of our learned guests and to Shri K. Subramanian, General Manager of the State Bank of Patiala for his manifold help. Thanks are also due to the S.G.P.C. for presenting a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib.

I once again offer my grateful thanks to all our guests participating in the inauguration of this mid-week of scholarly confrontation and discussion.

Jai Hind

## CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS

*Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Shri Chavan, Sardar Swaran Singh, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, Sardar Gurnam Singh, Your Highness, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As chancellor of this University, it is a great pleasure to me to extend a hearty welcome to the learned delegates, dignitaries and guests who have assembled here this morning, in connection with the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings, organised to make the quincentenary celebrations. This gathering of scholars, amongst whom I find international celebrities, is undoubtedly a historic landmark in the life of this University and, I am sure, the Faculty and the students will, in the years to come, recall with pride these memorable days of the Seminar.

That the Seminar should have been organised in the city of Patiala is, by itself, an event of great significance. This City has played a vital role in Sikh History and Religion, and continues to be a centre of intellectual and spiritual life. Not only is the name of Patiala redolent of the stirring memories of power and plumage, but it also brings to our mind the Dukhniwaran Gurdwara—a temple that relieves pain or suffering and provides solace to the pilgrims who visit it. Thus, the choice of this city as the venue of the Seminar, which will principally be concerned with the philosophical, theological or doctrinal concepts of the Founder of Sikhism, is, I am sure, a happy coincidence.

Again, it is appropriate that the privilege of holding this historic Seminar should be claimed by the Punjabi University which is adequately equipped to conduct an intelligent discussion on religions of the world. This institution, though young, has already forged ahead in several important and new directions, and has created a climate of scholarship which any older university might well be envious of. Not only has it set up Post-Graduate and Research Departments in Humanities and Sciences, but has also fanned out to more challenging disciplines, the foremost amongst which is the Faculty of Religious Studies. Other ancillary, but vital areas of interest which the Punjabi University is promoting include the Punjabi theatre, folk art, linguistics, etc. Again, the Punjab Historical Studies Department and the Punjab Economy Cell have brought a scholarly awareness to bear upon topical subjects that have, for some reason or the other, remained neglected in the past. In short, the Punjabi University which is beginning to emerge as a mirror of Punjabi culture and moorings, has taken a most imaginative step in organizing this international Seminar.

A glance at the printed programme of the Seminar will show its comprehensive character. Though Guru Nanak's life and philosophy have received considerable attention in this country, I doubt if this kind of scholarly and scientific treatment on the scale envisaged here has ever been attempted by any university in India. The principal topics to be discussed here include the Founder's philosophy and mysticism, theology and doc-

trine, language and poetry, ethics and social ideals, besides his message and impact in the context of world religions. Such an all-inclusive survey gives one an idea of his peerless genius. A saint and a savant, a Divine singer who sang the song of the Word and the song of the Cosmos, a thinker, a mystic and a family man, and a revolutionary, he was indeed the embodiment of all that was great and noble in life.

Thinking of Guru Nanak, one is inevitably reminded of his heroic and unending battle against political iniquity and oppression on the one hand, and against religious orthodoxy, superstition and tyranny on the other. Those acquainted with the medieval history of India know what it really meant to challenge the established social order. Positions at all levels and in all respects had become so rigid, that they seemed inevitable and immutable; for what couldn't be helped had to be endured. Ritualism had almost been canonised and even the slightest departure from institutionalised conduct invited wrath, indignity and excommunication. A tragic hiatus between the individual and society prevailed. An inner erosion had set in and caused spiritual dislocation. Guru Nanak's crusade, when viewed in the light of these prevailing conditions, assumes a prophetic aspect. He questioned the rationale of the empires built on greed, self-aggrandizement and exploitation. With his songs and sermons, he moved the hearts of millions and his abiding message enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib gave to medieval Indian society a character of new values.

I have had to refer to this well-known aspect of Guru Nanak's work because I find that the values he prized have once again been subjected to a severe strain during the last few decades. The threat or challenge this time stems not from the entrenched clergy, but from the priests of progress, who take a squint-eyed view of secularism, science and democracy. We find such a tendency particularly noticeable among the youth of today. I am no champion of the past in every field, and indeed find some extremely distressing things in it, but I cannot help feeling that there was, till a generation or two ago, a more positive response amongst the educated people to the finer values of life. This is not to say that there has been a decline in the quantum of intelligence or consciousness; on the contrary, the young today have extremely active and vigorous minds. And yet, the pursuit of easy pleasure has, in my opinion, warped the true values of life today. And for this we, educationists and elders alike, are chiefly to blame. We have allowed the study of religion to fall into a sad neglect, with the result that we are now witnessing a situation which doesn't augur well for the future of the human race.

At one time, philosophy, classics and religion formed an indispensable part of one's education. This ensured a smooth and harmonious development of personality. A kind of certitude and inner strength marked one's doings and actions. There was at any rate a degree of spiritual sufficiency we do not have today. The breakaway from this heritage undoubtedly started in the West, and has now hit our academic shores as well. However, after an agonizing experience of the two World Wars and the increasing incidence of vio-

lence in the house, in the street and in the college, more thinking educationists in the West are already making agonising enquiries into the nature of the malaise. It is being increasingly felt that wealth in the West has created its own peculiar imbalances and problems which tend to make the people unhappy. Material well-being appears to have blunted the moral edge and put the human conscience to sleep. In short, what we are witnessing there is the crisis of affluence.

The problem in the Western universities is being tackled at two different levels—inter-disciplinary studies and religious studies. For, even a slight blending of what C.P. Snow has called “the two cultures”—the humanistic and the scientific—brings about a deeper and a richer understanding of life. As the saying goes, a little leaven leaveth the whole lump. It is, however, increased interest in religious or spiritual studies which in the end is calculated to restore normalcy. Large sums of money are, therefore, being invested in what may be called salvage operations. This, the Western educationists are beginning to realise, is one area of investment, where ‘the law of diminishing returns’ is really reserved.

In our own country, which boasts of a long and continuous religious tradition for centuries, I fear, it is not being sufficiently realised that the absence of religion from our studies can eventually lead to the absence of religion from life and society. I feel a proper understanding of world religions is the surest way of curing the lacerated ‘psyche’ of man. Religion ought to be an aid to a richer and fuller life, leading to the absence of hatred and violence towards others. A scholarly study of the scriptures alone can break the stranglehold of orthodoxy, superstition and dogma. In reality, it is chiefly institutionalised religion which has driven sensitive and intelligent people to agnosticism, especially when it acquires a narrow, sectarian character. True religion is the music of the soul and the balm of wounded sensibilities. It must inevitably result in increased social and moral awareness.

To quote Swami Vivekananda, “so long as even a dog in my country is without food, my whole religion will be to feed it.” Mahatma Gandhi, whose birth centenary happily coincides with the birth quincentenary celebrations of Guru Nanak, not only spiritualized politics but declared that his aim was to “wipe every tear from every eye.” This, in my view, is the heart of any true religion.

The allergy of the modern youth to the direct teaching of Divinity and Theology is understandable. Sermons from the pulpit hardly leave any deep or lasting effect on the minds of the young. In fact, there is a built-in resistance in all sensitive minds to exercises in preaching. Honest doubt is far better than unthinking allegiance to a creed or doctrine. What the youth in the universities needs today is a climate of spiritual values. One of the ways to do this is to institute Departments of Religious Studies which may carry out research in various religions and philosophies in an atmosphere of academic freedom and intellectual integrity. I am glad, therefore, to note that the Guru

Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies established by the Punjabi University less than two years back has already begun to make its presence felt in a striking manner. Its scholars, I understand, are applying themselves vigorously to the task in hand, and a number of publications, some of which will be officially released today and tomorrow, bear ample testimony to this fact.

Befittingly then, the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan, the dedication ceremony of which was performed by the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Gurnam Singh, last evening, is going to house the Department of Religious Studies in this University. This building of lyric charm and grace couldn't have secured a more gracious tenant. I pray this lease be long and happy and fruitful !

Let me in the end thank all the distinguished delegates and guests who have graced the occasion. I am specially beholden to Shri Y.B. Chavan, Sardar Swaran Singh, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, Sardar Gurnam Singh, His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala, Dr. D.S. Kothari, Professor Cantwell-Smith and Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, who despite pressure of work and various engagements have found time to be here with us in Patiala. I also thank the Punjab Government and the University Grants Commission for financing the Seminar on a generous scale.

D.C. PAVATE  
Governor of Punjab and Chancellor, Punjabi University

ADDRESS BY SARDAR GURNAM SINGH, CHIEF MINISTER, PUNJAB

*Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,*

Standing here amidst you this afternoon of a memorable day in September under the shade of a unique and noble edifice erected with loving and respectful care to the memory of one of the greatest sons of India, Guru Gobind Singh, I feel overwhelmed by the honour you have done me. There are indeed moments in the life of a person when the sense of history becomes a compelling presence, and exacts a tribute which goes beyond mere ritual and ceremony. To find oneself in such a state is to acknowledge the force of circumstance. I do not know if I am worthy of the privilege you have afforded me in dedicating the Bhavan to the Indian nation; one feels inadequate and insufficient, realizing the magnitude of the moment. The Guru and the nation are to my mind, coterminous concepts in the context of Indian history. Few patriots have risen to the highest of service and sacrifice attained by the tenth Master. This ceremony, then, is indeed, an act of concentration which reiterates the mystique of the nation. The Bhavan whose foundation-

stone was laid by the late President of India, Dr. Zakir Husain, I hope, will remain an eternal symbol in concrete and mortar of the spirit of India.

That this project conceived in the tercentenary year of Guru Gobind Singh's birth should find fulfilment during the celebrations of the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak is in itself a most auspicious augury. In the Tenth Guru abides the First, and in this temporal reversal lies the truth of a great paradox. In the end is our beginning, and the beginning is with the Lord. The Gurus complete a cycle of divinity in time.

As you all know, we are sparing no effort at the public and state level to make the quincentenary celebrations a big event in India and abroad, but I can think of no single project or programme which captures the imagination so concretely and vividly as the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan. The Punjabi University and its Vice-Chancellor deserve our heart-felt gratitude for commissioning this marvellous mansion, and placing it at the service of the nation.

Let me, ladies and gentlemen, turn for a moment to the conceptual and structural features of the Bhavan, which, I am given to understand, have a deep, integral relationship. What you see before you here is more than a mere play of steel, concrete and glass, or an exercise in engineering as such. All buildings needs must use material and skill, but some acquire even at the level of the blueprint a distinctive character and *ethos*. The Bhavan was from the beginning conceived as a great dream whose lineaments were to find a spatial expression in as dignified and emblematic a form as possible. Thus, as you may see, the edifice rising to a height of 80 feet in the heart of the University complex and overlooking all the structures around has not only a topographical, but also a metaphorical significance. Since it will house the Department of Religious Studies, we may well ponder the value the University attaches to the subject of religion. Which is not to say, this young but vigorous seat of learning is in any way committed to the propagation of a particular creed. On the contrary, the mere fact that some of the great world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism will be studied here simultaneously testifies to the non-sectarian character of the Department. It's a matter of great satisfaction that the Punjabi University, thanks to the stewardship of an imaginative Vice-Chancellor, has taken the lead in the country by establishing the Chair of Religious Studies. This is a great beginning, and I hope, this step may well prove historic in effecting a spiritual renaissance in our universities. I hasten to add though, the scholarly research in religion as such does not militate against the idea of secularism. If anything, it helps reinforce those values which secularism cherishes. If the Bhavan proves a fount of faith, as I trust, it will, we shall have justified all the expense and effort in this behalf. It will then be truly a temple of learning in name and deed.

I may not dwell here on the importance of religion in life. No person or people can live by bread alone. To nourish the human soul, we need a different fare. Religion is not simply, as Guru Nanak observed, a question of form, style or ceremony. It is a

commitment to a way of life. Above all, it helps man to confront the chaos within and the challenge without. Any agency or measure which makes us sufficient and ready is to be saluted. The Bhavan, I guess, will in due course, assume the status of a national institution, and radiate light and warmth. I am sure, it will help bring communities and peoples closer to one another, so that all God's children have a rightful place in the sun. I, for my part, shall not like to see it become only a scholastic citadel fostering cloistered learning.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not on this occasion touch briefly on the publication activities of the Punjabi University which, in collaboration with the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation and the Guru Nanak Foundation, has undertaken ambitious literary projects. One of the most heartening features of the tercentenary celebrations in 1966 was the production of books of quality in Punjabi, Hindi, English and the regional languages. The uniform excellence of the literature then produced has left a deep impression upon my mind; and the Vice-Chancellor, Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, and his team of scholars and associates deserve our heartiest congratulations. I am sure, a similar scholarly endeavour will mark the quincentenary celebrations now under way. Nothing in the end has as abiding a value as the printed word. Whilst the speeches and lectures spend themselves, the Word's kinetic potential will never be exhausted. As you know, in several of his hymns, Guru Nanak sings of the power and beauty of *Sabda* or the Word. No doubt, it's the primal *Logos* which he has in mind, but any word which acquires wings shares the nature of eternity.

ਜੇਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਤਾ ਨਾਉ ।  
ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਥਾਉ ॥ (ਜਪੁ)

Thy Word extends to all Thou createst,  
No place where Thou may'est not pervade.

ਚਹੁਦਿਸਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਹੁਦਿਸਿ ਨਾਮ ਪਤਾਨੰ ॥  
ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਾਚਾ ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਬੈਆਲੰ ॥ [ਮਲਾਰ ਮ: ੧]

O God, on all the four sides worketh Thy Will, Thy Word pervadeth even the four sides of the under-world.

Yea, the True Word pervadeth all, and through Thy Grace meetest us Thou, Eternal one.

(Guru Nanak)

Today, this massive and splendid Bhavan, fresh and finished, is witnessing its "baptism", so to speak. Tomorrow, it will be the venue of the international Seminar on the



'Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak'—a scholarly get-together of the highest importance. This is a most promising and apposite beginning for a building which is going to be a centre of East-West learning. With some fifty-five scholars of repute from India and abroad, who will read papers on Guru Nanak and cognate areas of interest, the Seminar, I am sure, will go down in the academic history of this country as a great event. To have assembled so many wise heads under one roof is in itself a remarkable achievement, and when one considers the fact that the learned delegates include professors, writers, theologians, historians and philosophers, professing different creeds and views, one is struck by the beauty of the wide spectrum. Such dialogues and discussions, I may add, are the breath of intellectual life. Guru Nanak himself, as is well known, during his long and wide travels across the country and beyond, conducted soulful debates with saints and savants. Some of those are recorded in his great composition, *Sidh Gost* or "Dialogues with Sidhs".

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the distinguished delegates who have taken the trouble to come to Patiala from all parts of the globe. We, in the Punjab feel proud and privileged to have hosted this unique seminar.

Before I conclude, I may in passing draw your attention to the life and message of the Guru whose name adorns the Bhavan. Guru Gobind Singh, the final reincarnation of Guru Nanak was a religious preceptor with a rare kind of courage, wisdom and rectitude. The world can show few sagas of such heroism and sacrifice in the cause of creed and country. He was at once a man of peace and purposive action. He taught us to live with dignity and honour. He could never brook insult, cowardice, retreat or flight. Nor could he countenance bigotry, casuistry and obscurantism. In all his doings and compositions, we find a deeply compassionate and catholic mind at work.

Here is a part of one of his great hymns :

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਉ ਰਾਫ਼ਜ਼ੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਫੀ  
ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ ।

ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਉਈ  
ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ।

"Recognize all mankind, whether Hindus or Muslims, as one !  
The same Lord is the Creator and Nourisher of all.  
Recognize no distinctions among them.  
The monastery and the mosque are the same,  
So are the Hindu worship and the Muslim prayer.  
Men are all one !"

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY SHRI Y.B. CHAVAN, HOME MINISTER OF INDIA

*Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Chief Minister, ladies and gentlemen :*

Let me at the outset express my thanks to you, Mr Chancellor, for having done me the unique honour in asking me to inaugurate this international seminar on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak. This is not just one of the multitudinous engagements which a man in public life has to get accustomed to. This event carries a special significance, as it represents a unique congress of minds on a subject that has interest for all those concerned with the 'eternal' in a changing world. Therefore, when I stand before this congregation of eminent scholars, it is with a deep sense of commitment to the fundamental values of humanism enunciated by Guru Nanak.

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This brings me to the question of the place of religion in our lives. It is often said that ours is an irreligious Constitution and that we are promoting atheism in the country. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Let me point out that the most important of the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution are the rights of equality and freedom of conscience and religion. Secularism viewed in this context can neither be called irreligion nor atheism. While everyone is free to follow his own religious convictions and faith, the policies of the State are not to be guided by ecclesiastical pronouncements. Secularism is founded on the recognition of the fact that religion is necessarily a question of individual faith. With such a rational approach the State has to respect all religions equally, and, what is important, has to devote itself to promoting respect, understanding and tolerance among the people of different faiths. So far as the fundamental humanistic precepts of all religions—equality, freedom from exploitation, amity and tolerance—are concerned, we are duty-bound to take positive action to promote them, not as a part of this or that religion, but as the basic tenets which should govern the treatment of man by man.

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rationalism is extremely difficult to conceive, appreciate and imbibe. We are fortunate to have a deeply religious heritage. I, for one, would like it to be preserved and enriched further.

This takes me to the crisis of values that we are witnessing today. In a manner of speaking, no age or period in history has really been free from bedevilment. In fact, each generation considers itself singularly unhappy or unlucky. And yet some periods, relatively speaking, are more vulnerable to erosion of values than others. This phenomenon is not necessarily limited to one or two countries. Today, it is a world-wide trend. I can understand and appreciate the revolt of the younger generation against the older generation, because it is only through such processes that mankind makes progress. But the new industrial society and forces of modernism and science should not be permitted to imperil the basic values which ought to govern society. Discarding of these precious values without replacement by any others, equally acceptable to all people, is bound to result in a crisis. And no society can aspire to build up the superstructure of progress and modernism without a stable social order. In rapidly changing societies, the relationship between man and man is bound to be as important, if not more important than that between man and machine. At this stage of our history we are undergoing the very fundamental changes towards modernism and industrialisation. We have had the benefit of advice and guidance of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. In a sense, both these leaders underlined the two most important factors which I mentioned earlier. Today's seminar is, therefore, a valuable one. The synthesis of values which Guru Nanak symbolised is as relevant today as it was 500 years ago.

I am very glad to know that the Punjabi University has instituted a Department of Religious Studies in world religions. It's an imaginative step and I would like to congratulate the University authorities on it. A proper and scientific study of religion, I am sure, will succeed in separating the fundamentals from the superstructures of the creeds. I have no doubt that this effort would contribute towards promoting understanding and respect among the followers of different religions.

Before I conclude, may I say once again how happy I am to be associated with this seminar. I wish your deliberations all success.

YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN  
Home Minister of India

*Speech of Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala on the occasion of the release of books on Religion, prepared at the University.*

I seek leave to present to you and, through you, to scholars and other readers a Punjabi translation of Shri Vinoba Bhaveji's Commentary on the *Japuji*. The original, in Hindi, is based upon Shri Vinoba Bhaveji's exposition of the *Japuji* during his sojourn

in Punjab and Kashmir some years ago. The Punjabi version has been prepared by the University with his permission. The *Japuji* with which the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth, opens is the most philosophical of Guru Nanak's compositions and represents the core of his teaching. Many are the commentaries on this sublime text. Scholars count more than one hundred of them, beginning with the one written by Sodhi Meharban about 60 years after the passing away of Guru Nanak. In this exegetical literature the work of Shri Vinoba Bhaveji occupies a distinctive place. He himself is an awakened soul in tune with the highest spiritual truth. He holds in equal esteem all religions and their scriptures. He believes in peace and unity and has worked zealously and at great personal sacrifice for social justice and harmony among the Indian people. His life is an exemplification of the ideals preached by Guru Nanak. So his discernment of the truths revealed in *Japuji* will have a special relevance.

The second book is a Punjabi version of the Pali *Dhammapada*. This is the first edition in Gurmukhi script and first Punjabi translation of a Buddhist Pali text. The Pali *Dhammapada* has been translated into almost all the modern languages of the world. In our national language, Hindi, there exist at least half a dozen translations of it. This Punjabi translation has been produced by the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies. The *Dhammapada*, though modest in volume, rightly claims a place of honour not only in Buddhist scriptures, but also in the whole range of world literature. The teachings of the Buddha contained in it are ever fresh, and have a universal appeal.

We also present on this occasion another publication, *Mahatma Gandhi and C.F. Andrews: A study in Hindu-Christian Dialogue*. This book is written by a young Hindu scholar who brings out the unique significance of the friendship between Mahatma Gandhi and C.F. Andrews, the English scholar and missionary, and sees it in the perspective of what has often been called "the coming dialogue" between the great religions of mankind. An attempt has been made in this work, by Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao, to show how each of them sought a deeper and richer knowledge of the other's tradition and to promote a progressive reinterpretation of their own religious lives in the light of new thought and experience. It discusses in what sense their views of each other's religion underwent change and what aspect of life or teaching impressed them, and how each related them to his own need and experience. It also discusses how their views affected the problem of inter-religious relations in general.

The third volume of the History journal of the University *Punjab—Past and Present* is devoted to Guru Nanak. This special number is edited by Dr. Ganda Singh and exhaustively reproduces the materials in original on the Guru as available in Punjabi, Persian, English, Marathi, and Oriya.

I now request you, Sir, to release these publications for the public.

September 4, 1969

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## CHAPTER V

### A CROSS-SECTION OF THE LITERATURE PRODUCED ON THE OCCASION OF THE QUINCENTENARY OF GURU NANAK

I. A number of articles, both of a general nature and those with a scholarly approach were published on this occasion. Some of these articles were published by the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India, while others were prepared by scholars from within India and abroad for the Quincentenary International Seminar which was convened early in September, 1969 at the Punjabi University, Patiala. A selection of the articles got prepared by the Press Information Bureau comprises the following, reproduced in this volume:

1. Guru Nanak—An Apostle of Emotional Integration, by K.S. Duggal
2. Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak, by Balwant Singh Anand
3. Guru Nanak—Prophet of a New Synthesis, by Dr. Gopal Singh
4. Relevance of Nanak's Philosophy in Modern Age, by Dr. Donald G. Dawe
5. Guru Nanak—Pioneer of Secularism, by Prem Kumar

II. From the papers presented at the International Seminar referred to above, the following are reproduced :

1. The Nature of God. by Geoffrey Parrinder
2. Affinities between Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ, by R.V. De Smet
3. Guru Nanak—Dynamic Mystic and Reconciling Prophet, by V.K. Gokak
4. The Concept of Sahaj in Guru Nanak's Theology, Its Antecedents, by Niharranjan Ray
5. A Study of Guru Nanak's Teaching in relation to the Indian Spiritual Tradition, by Gurbachan Singh Talib
6. Guru Nanak and The Siddhas, by Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh
7. Tagore on the Sikhs, by Amalendu Bose
8. Guru Nanak's Impact on History, by Dr. Ganda Singh
9. Guru Nanak and His Message—Saintly Relevance and Challenge, by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty
10. The Religious, The Sacred and the Holy Guru Nanak and Secularization, by David B. Harned
11. Japji and Universal Mysticism, by K. Seshadri

12. Guru Nanak as Historical Memory and Continuing Reality in the Sikh Tradition, by Harbans Singh (This paper was presented at the Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, U.S.A. on April 30, 1969.)

III. Also against this great occasion a number of books, in English and the Indian languages have been published, sponsored by Universities and several organisations, in addition to those brought out through private effort. A select list of such books is given below :

*English*

1. W.H. McLeod : Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion
2. Gurbachan Singh Talib : Guru Nanak—His Personality and Vision
3. Harbans Singh : Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith
4. Surinder Singh Johar : Guru Nanak, A Biography
5. Hari Ram Gupta : Life-sketch of Guru Nanak
6. Jodh Singh : Teachings of Guru Nanak
7. Wazir Singh : Aspects of Guru Nanak's Philosophy
8. Trilochan Singh : Guru Nanak, Founder of Sikhism
9. Narain Singh : Guru Nanak and his Image
10. Narain Singh : Guru Nanak's View of Life
11. Gurmukh Nihal Singh (Ed.) : Guru Nanak His Life, Time and Teachings
12. Kartar Singh : Nanak, My Master
13. Kartar Singh : Guru Nanak's life and Teachings
14. Sahib Singh and Dalip Singh : Guru Ganak Dev and His Teachings
15. Gobind Singh Mansukhani : Guru Nanak—the apostle of Love
16. Surinder Singh Kohli : Travels of Guru Nanak
17. Surinder Singh Kohli : Philosophy of Guru Nanak
18. Sharad Chandra Varma : Guru Nanak and Logos of the Divine
19. Punjabi University, Patiala : Guru Nanak in Punjabi Works
20. Ishar Singh : Philosophy of Guru Nanak—A Comparative Study
21. Harnam Dass : Guru Nanak's Philosophy of Divine Life
22. Darshan Singh : Religion of Guru Nanak
23. Harbans Singh Chawla (ed. by) : Guru Nanak—The Prophet of the People
24. Sant Singh Sekhon : Guru Nanak Today
25. Khushwant Singh : Hymns of Guru Nanak
26. N.D. Ahuja : Great Guru Nanak and the Muslims
27. B.S. Virk : Guru Nanak, Prophet of Peace
28. Taran Singh : Guru Nanak and Indian Religious Thought

29. J.S. Grewal : Guru Nanak in History
30. Darshan Singh : Religion of Guru Nanak
31. Jogendra Singh and Raja Sir Daljit Singh : The Great Humanist Guru Nanak
32. Sarjit Singh Bal : Life of Guru Nanak
33. Sarjit Singh Bal : Guru Nanak in the eyes of Non-Sikhs
34. Gopal Singh : Guru Nanak (Published by National Book Trust, India and translated into several languages)
35. Gobind Singh Mansukhani : Guru Nanak—World Teacher
36. Trilochan Singh : True Humanism of Guru Nanak
37. Shamsheer Singh and Narinder Singh Viridi : Life of Guru Nanak through Pictures
38. Sohan Singh Seetal : Guru Nanak—A brief Biography
39. Bhai Jodh Singh : Guru Nanak and Indian Religious Thought
40. Balwant Singh Anand : Guru Nanak—Religion and Ethics
41. B.L. Kapur : The Message of Guru Nanak in the context of the Ancient Santanist Tradition

## URDU AND PERSIAN

42. Nazmi Mahdi : Hamd-i-Nanak
43. Lakshvir Singh Muztar : Munajat-i-Bamadadi

## THAI LANGUAGE

44. Narain Singh Shigufta : Life and Thought of Guru Nanak

*Punjabi*

1. ਤ੍ਰਿਲੋਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ—ਸਭ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ
2. ਮਨਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤੀ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ
3. ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ 'ਗੁਲਸ਼ਨ' : ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ
4. ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ (ਸੰਪਾਦਕ) : ਸੰਭੂ ਨਾਥ ਜਨਮ ਪਤਰੀ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕੀ (ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧ ਨਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ)
5. ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਫੁੱਲ : ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ
6. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ : ਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਤ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਕ
7. ਬੀਰਇੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ
8. ਸਰੂਪ ਦਾਸ ਭੱਲਾ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਹਿਮਾ
9. ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਛਾਬੜਾ (ਸੰਪਾਦਕ) : ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਕਲਿ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਗਟ ਹੋਇਆ
10. ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਹਲੀ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਨ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਤੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਕਲਾ

11. ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਦਮ : ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਇਰ ਏਵ ਕਹਿਤ ਹੈ
12. ਸਤਿਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ : ਬਲਿਓ ਚਿਰਾਗ
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14. ਸੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੇਵਕ (ਸੰਪਾਦਕ) : ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀ
15. ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ : ਬੰਦੀ ਛੋੜ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ
16. ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਸ਼ੋਕ : ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀ
17. ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ : ਸੰਖੇਪ ਜੀਵਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ
18. ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ : ਜੀਵਨ ਬਿਤਾਂਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ
19. ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ (ਸੂਚਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰਣ ਵਿਭਾਗ) : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ
20. ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਗੀ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ
21. ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਕਲਾ
22. ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰਾ : ਵਸਾਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਤਕ
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24. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੌਮਲ (ਸੰਪਾਦਕ) : ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀ ਅਧਿਐਨ
25. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ : ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ
26. ਸਤਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਵਿ ਅਧਿਐਨ
27. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ (ਸੰਪਾਦਕ) : ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਤਵਾਰੀਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ—ਭਾਗ ਪਹਿਲਾ—ਜਿਲਦ 1, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਨ
28. ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਗੀ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਣੀ
29. ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾਤਾ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ
30. ਗੋਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ
31. ਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੌਹਰ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ
32. ਉਜਾਗਰ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਰਤਾ
33. ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ—ਜੀਵਨ, ਯੁੱਗ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਖਿਆਵਾਂ
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### Hindi

1. ਸਹੇਂਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਕਰ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ
2. ਜੀਥ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼
3. ਪੀ॰ ਏਸ॰ ਕਿਲਸ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ
4. ਪ੍ਰਾਠ ਨਾਥ ਕਾਨਪ੍ਰਸਥੀ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ
5. ਦੇਵ ਰਾਜ ਬਰਮਾ : ਨਾਨਕ ਚੰਦ੍ਰੋਦਯਸ਼
6. ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾਤਾ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ
7. ਅਮਰ ਜੀਤ ਕੰਵਲ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਆਰ ਉਨਕਾ ਜੀਵਨ
8. ਜ਼ਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਨ : ਅਚੰਨ: ਨਾਨਕ ਅਚੰਨ
9. ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਨ, ਯੁਗ ਏਕੰ ਬਿਖਾਏਂ
10. ਹਰਕੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ : ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਥਾ ਸਿਖ ਬਰਮੰ ਕਾ ਉਦਯੋਗ



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## GURU NANAK—AN APOSTLE OF EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION

by

K.S. DUGGAL

Many many years ago, I remember, in our house in the village, there was a picture of Guru Nanak in the main living-room—Guru Nanak sitting under the shade of a tree with Bala, his Hindu devotee, on his left and Mardana, his Muslim disciple on his right.

Every time I remember this picture of late, I am reminded of another picture of Mahatma Gandhi with his right arm on a Muslim young maiden and his left arm on a Hindu young girl walking through the dismal villages of Noakhali and Bihar, devastated in the communal riots of 1947.

And this year when the world is celebrating the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak and the 100th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, these two images flash before my eyes time and again and sometimes intermingle with each other in a strange uncanny way.

Guru Nanak was an apostle of God. He was commissioned by the Almighty to be born to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. No such claim has been made for Mahatma Gandhi. But there is no denying that he was a man of God. He was God-fearing. In his eyes there was no difference between a Hindu and a Muslim. Day in and day out he sang—

Ishwar Allah Tere Nam  
Sabko sammati de Bhagwan

He did not distinguish between Ram and Rahim, Krishna and Karim.

### VISION OF GOD

While in the service of Sultan Daulat Khan Lodhi at Sultanpur, Guru Nanak used to go to the river Bain long before daybreak. One day when he was having his morning bath, he had a vision of God who, according to the *Janam Sakhi*, gave him a cup of *Amrit* (nectar) and ordained him;

“Nanak, I am with thee. Through thee will my name be magnified. Whosoever follows thee, him will I save. Go into the world to pray and teach mankind how to pray. Be not sullied by ways of the world. Let your life be one of praise of the word (*nam*), charity (*dan*), ablution (*isnan*), service (*seva*) and prayer (*simran*).

Guru Nanak heard it and went into a trance. In ecstasy, he sang :

There is one God  
 He is the supreme truth.  
 He, the Creator;  
 Is without fear and without hate.  
 He, the Omnipresent,  
 Pervades the universe.  
 He is not born,  
 Nor does he die to be born again.  
 By his grace shalt thou worship him,  
 Before time itself  
 There was truth.  
 When time began to run its course  
 He was the truth.  
 Even now, He is the truth  
 And evermore shall truth prevail.

The voice from the above spoke again :

“Nanak, he whom you bless will be blessed by me; he to whom you are benevolent shall receive my benevolence” I am the Great God, the Supreme Creator. Thou art the Guru, the Supreme Guru.

The *Janam Sakhi* maintains that God then gave Guru Nanak the robe of honour with His own hands.

Guru Nanak was missing from the two for three days and three nights. Nobody knew where he had disappeared. People thought he was drowned in the river. There was great anxiety and search parties set out to look for him. But Guru Nanak reappeared on the fourth day. This dramatic return of the Guru is recorded in the *Janam Sakhi*.

People said, “Friends, he was lost in the river; from where hath he emerged?” Nanak came home and gave away all he had. He had only one sheet left on him and kept nothing besides. Crowds began to collect. The Khan also came and asked, “Nanak, what had happened to thee?” Nanak remained silent. The people replied, ‘He was in the river and is out of his mind.’ The Khan said, ‘Friends, this is very distressing.’ and turned back in sorrow. Nanak went and joined the fakirs-with him went the Musician Mardana. A day passed. The next day he got up and spoke. ‘There is no Hindu, there is no Mussalman.’ Whenever he spoke, this is all he would say; ‘There is no Hindu, there is no Mussalman.’

## GANDHI AND NANAK

And today, 500 years after this event, the echo of Guru Nanak's words—'There is no Hindu, there is no Mussalman'—intermingles in my ears with "Ram Rahim Krishna Karim".

The Sikh theologian, Bhai Gurdas, who is believed to have been born a year after Guru Nanak's eternal sleep, has written.

The true Guru, Nanak, was then born :  
 The fog and mist evaporated,  
 And light shone on the earth.  
 As the rising sun dispels the dark  
     and outshines the stars,  
 As flees the herd of deer when then lion roars,  
 Without pause, without turning back for assurance  
     (So fled evil from the world).

These were the conditions when first in Africa and then in India Mahatma Gandhi's conscience was roused. The invidious distinction between black and white, high-caste and low-caste, the haves and the have-nots gave him a rude shock. The arrogance of a small alien nation ruling over a vast sub-continent against the wishes of its people was a sin in his eyes. He led a revolt against it and fought the foreigners relentlessly until they decided to quit the country.

Similar were the reactions of Guru Nanak when Babar attacked India during his time. Guru Nanak was returning after his long sojourn in Mecca and Medina and farther off to Baghdad. He passed through Saidpur, when the town was sacked by the invaders. It is believed that Guru Nanak courted arrest and admonished the king when he intervened on his behalf. He articulated his protest in an immortal poem called Bahervani.

"They who had beautiful looks and the vermilion dye on the parting of their hair have their tresses shorn with scissors and dust thrown on their heads. They who dwelt in palaces cannot find a place in the streets."

## CASTELESS SOCIETY

Mahatma Gandhi knew that social evils made a people weak and tempted foreign powers to invade this country. The only way to throw away the foreign yoke was to foster unity in the country. He had a fierce fight against thousands of years of injustice against the Harijans; undertook fasts and in the end gave his life for causes dear to his heart.



To be a Mussalman is not easy  
 Only he who is one should make the claim.  
 He should first follow in the footsteps of the holy  
 And accept their bitter words as sweet.  
 Rid himself of wordly goods  
 As sandpaper rids iron of rust.  
 A Muslim's faith is to follow the leader  
 Caring neither for life nor death;  
 To believe that there is a God above  
 Whose will is law,  
 And abandon all thoughts of self.  
 O Nanak, if the Creator is merciful,  
 Will you become a true Mussalman?

This is what Mahatma Gandhi told the Muslims in Noakhali. Exactly this is what he told the Hindus all the years that he lived. And this it is for which he laid down his life.

When Guru Nanak passed away, Hindus said, "We will cremate him, he was our Guru". The Muslims said, "We will bury him; he was our Pir". The whole night they were arguing. It is said that when they lifted the sheet in the morning, they found a heap of flowers and nothing else. The Hindus took half of the flowers and the other half went to the Muslims.

Amongst the holy men of the Punjab, irrespective of creed, Guru Nanak is remembered as the Guru of the Hindus and the Pir of the Mussalmans—

Baba Nanak Shah fakir  
 Hindu ka Guru Mussalman ka Pir.

### LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF GURU NANAK BALWANT SINGH ANAND

Guru Nanak's life can be divided into three periods; each distinct and significant. The first phase consists of his childhood and early youth, with marked predilections to the spiritual life. The second phase pertains to his travels; when he propagated the tenets of his faith. The last, covering a period of eighteen years was spent at Kartarpur.

Guru Nanak was born at Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib, situated on the bank of Ravi, some thirty-five miles from Lahore. He received his education both from a Pandit and a Maulvi, learning Prakrit and Persian.

According to the Janamsakhi tradition, he confounded both the Pandit and the

Maulvi by asking questions about the nature of the Ultimate Reality. When he was being invested with the sacred thread, he questioned its purpose and, later in life denounced adherence to rites and ceremonies. In a hymn of great subtlety and charm he asked for a sacred thread that would neither break nor burn nor get soiled and would even accompany the spirit after death. Similarly, after schooling, which he did not pursue for long, when his contemplative moods necessitated long periods of silence, which worried his parents and they called the village hakim and requested him to diagnose the ailment, Guru Nanak questioned him if he knew the pain that affected the spirit. The poor hakim was confounded and could give no answer.

Soon after his school days, Guru Nanak was drawn towards the sadhus, fakirs and medicants who inhabited the forest outside Talwandi. Not only he visited them often but because of an inner urge, he preferred to remain aloof from his friends and relations and spent considerable time in meditation.

#### 'SACHA SAUDA'

His father, Mehta Kalu, was naturally perturbed at the unusual behaviour of his son and tried to divert Nanak's attention from other worldliness by insisting upon his doing some work. If Nanak was not interested in studies, would he take the cows and buffaloes out for grazing? He obeyed but the result was that, while he sat contemplating, the cows entered a field and did much damage resulting in a complaint lodged to the village chief. Kalu thought of introducing Nanak to the world of trade and sent him out with some money to buy goods from a nearby town. Obediently Nanak proceeded as directed but on the way, he came across a group of hungry fakirs and used the money to provide food for them. For him this was "*Sacha Sauda*", the holy bargain.

Naturally the relations between the father and son were estranged; the father could not accept or understand the ways of his son and the son was too compelled by inner forces not to take to worldly professions.

As years passed and Nanak persisted in his spiritual quest, Kalu thought the only way to wean him away was to get him married. It was a calculated move; marriage bonds would serve as a restraining force and family life would awaken a sense of responsibility. Nanak was married and was blessed with two sons, Lakshmi Dass and Prithi Chand. Time passed happily but Nanak took to no work.

In the meantime Jai Ram, Nanak's brother-in-law, was employed in Daulat Khan Lodhi's service at Sultanpur, offered to help him find service in the Khan's commissariate. Kalu was too pleased and Nanak was sent to Sultanpur. Here he was engaged as a *modi*, i.e., put in charge of the granary. It is at Sultanpur that Mardana, the rabab player, joined Guru Nanak. While during the day, Nanak worked at the store, mornings and evenings were spent, along with a group of his associates, in singing the praises of the Lord.

## BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

Here, at Sultanpur, took place the great event which completely changed his life. One morning, long before sunrise, when he sat on the bank of river Wayyain in deep, contemplative mood, he had the unique mystic experience of standing face to face with God. It was a deep trance, lasting for three days, during which he experienced the meeting of the finite with the Infinite. There are no conceptual images to describe this experience; it is best described by silence alone.

When Guru Nanak regained consciousness and returned to the town, his first words were, "There in no Hindu and no Mussalman"; thus he proclaimed the brotherhood of man and the unity of Godhead. With this ended the first phase of his life. He gave up his job and decided to devote the rest of his life in preaching the message of God.

## JOURNEYS

During the second phase, Guru Nanak undertook four journeys; in the East he went as far as Assam, in the North to Tibet, in the West to Mecca and in the South to Ceylon. He visited most of the important pilgrim spots where he met leaders of various faiths and held discussions with them. He was accompanied by Mardana, who played on the rabab while he sang hymns and both by the music and magic of his personality, he transformed the lives of people.

These journeys were full of events, each event or incident, either changed the lives of persons involved or served as a means of presenting his concept of religion. At Hardwar he denounced empty rituals, at Kurukshetra he delivered a discourse on the futility of bathing at pilgrim sports, at Puri he sang the great *Arti* in which the salvar was the cosmos and star and planets were the lamps, on Mount Sumeru he preached to *Siddhas* that renunciation was no way of serving humanity and achieving salvation, at Mecca he preached the omnipresence of the Infinite. At Multan, he discussed spiritual problems with the descendents of Pir Bhauddin, at Pakpatten with Sheikh Ibrahim and at Panipat with Sheikh Sharaf. He turned the thug Sajjan into a disciple and at Saidpur, he exposed the ill-gotten wealth of Malik Bhago. Also at Saidpur, he witnessed the destruction caused by the armies of Babur and wrote four moving hymns expressing his deep anguish over the suffering of the people. During his wanderings, he met all manner of people, princes and nawabs, rich and poor, thugs and thieves, sadhus and fakirs, and each meeting served him to communicate his concept of God's relationship with man.

## MAJOR WORKS

The last phase of his life covers the eighteen years that Guru Nanak spent at

Kartarpur. In the fulness of his experience, Guru Nanak wrote some of his major works during this period. He also practised what he had taught. He had rejected caste system and he opened his doors to one and all. It was a glorious consummation; here came people to live steeped in the mystic atmosphere generated by the presence of Guru Nanak; busy in the simple demands of community life and tasted the peace and quiet so essential for the functioning of the inner life.

Guru Nanak was a mystic and for him religion had no meaning without the mystical experience. Mystical experience was the one and only way of achieving union with God, which was the ultimate purpose of all life and religion. To this end, Guru Nanak worked out a system of ethical living coupled with Nam-Simran, which led to the exalted state of mind wherein such union was possible.

Guru Nanak described his concept of God in the *Mul Mantra*: "The One and Only God, whose name is Truth, the Creator, the All-pervading, without fear, without hate, Immortal, Unborn, Self-existent, Enlightner, Gracious, True in the beginning, True in the primeval age, True He is and True He shall be." He developed the idea of abstract God to *sargun* (with attributes) and *Nirgun* (without attributes) and finally he formulated a concept of personal God in the form of lover, father, mother, brother, companion and friend, the God who can be won over through love and devotion. God manifested Himself through his creation and particularly through His indwelling in human soul. He was revealed to man through the assistance of the Guru, meditation on the Name and finally through the Grace of God.

The relationship of God and human soul is described as:

Thou art the Spirit that pervadeth all.  
'Tis Thy light that lights all hearts.

OR

O my mind, thou art the embodiment  
O Light; know thy essence.

Tremendous importance is attached to the Guru; he is the ship by which one crosses the sea of life; he is the ladder for achieving spiritual heights and he has the power to communicate his experience to the disciple.

I am a sacrifice to my Guru, a myraid times a day,  
Who made angels of men and, yea. without delay.

And Nam or Name is the fountainhead of all inspiration, the mystic formula for meditation, the talisman that helped man to cross the sea of *Samsara*, the comfort of all souls, the medicine of all ills and the one and only link with the Ultimate Reality. Name



is also synonymous with *Sabad*, which is *anahad*, the soundless sound, a mystical vibration audible only to the initiated. *Sabad* is, however, the medium of communication and Nam the object of communication.

Thou, O Lord, art the Supreme Person, Infinite tree on which is perched  
the bird of my soul,

Bless thou Nanak with Thy Immaculate Name that he may praise thy word  
forever.

Again,

Thy Name is my luminous lamp, in it is the oil of pain,

As the lamp burns bright, it sucketh up the oil,

And no more thereafter in my meeting with Yama.

The concept of the Grace of God runs through all the works of Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak subscribed to the *Bhakti Marga* (devotion) mainly, though he incorporated in his teachings *Jnan Marga* (knowledge) and *Karam Marga* (action). And Bhakti means self-surrender through love and devotion. But notwithstanding the twin disciplines of Bhakti, *Simran* and meditation, *Nadir*, or the Grace of God is given the highest place by Guru Nanak. Deliverance or *Moksha*, which is the ultimate goal of human life, is obtained through the Grace of God. Guru Nanak subscribed to the theory of *Karma*; transmigration was based on *Karma*, i.e., man's actions in the past life. But, at the same time, man was free to act and change his destiny through leading an ethical life, through service to man and finally through *Siman*. Human life was regarded as sacred as this provided the opportunity to work for salvation.

Guru Nanak preached the philosophy of world and life affirmation. The world was not a vale of tears; it is a place where the Lord himself lives and, therefore, life should be rich, full of work and activity. Guru Nanak condemned renunciation and monasticism and through his own example, supported the life of a householder and taught that salvation could be obtained through a life of noble actions. He believed that the human soul was part of the Divine soul and the aim of each successive life was to rise higher and higher spiritually until the human spark was absorbed in the Eternal Fire of which it was a part:

When the Lord shows mercy, one contemplates Him;

And tender becomes the soul one and is attuned to him.

And then one's soul merges in the Absolute.

And the complexes of the mind are reabsorbed in the mind.

## GURU NANAK — PROPHET OF A NEW SYNTHESIS

### DR GOPAL SINGH

Guru Nanak's distinct contribution to the religious idea was not so much to the philosophy of religion as to the psychology of it. He rid religion of the discursive theories about God and brought the soul of man face to face with the Supreme Reality called God, which he identified with Truth, Beauty and Love.

Every man and woman in his/her faith was sacred, irrespective of one's birth, station, mode of life, colour, caste, nationality or nature or work. He refused to divide the world into black and white, the faithful and the infidel, and rejected the divisive theories held so firmly by vast masses of men. His contention was that it was fruitless to argue about the origin of man or the universe, or even as to the life hereafter. Man and the Universe, both, were here before us to be dealt with. And, even though the world for an individual was not real except for a brief few moments, its essential reality and timelessness could not be denied.

If God is real, as indeed He was according to Nanak, so is the world, His creation. To withdraw from its activity was to deny the benevolence of God and the beauty that surrounds us all and the consciousness which is a miracle of nature which man alone has in its highest and most refined form, expressed through his love. Of course, there is pain and evil in the world, but these rather than being impediments, are a challenge to the soul of man to fight and overcome. For, man essentially is neither a sinner nor impious. He is in his essence purest of the pure, like his God. Only his innerself has to be awakened so that he may see himself in his total reality.

#### RELIGION — SOCIAL REALITY

For Nanak, therefore, religion became an experience, not merely individual, but a social reality. That is because, if religion is confined to man's individual beliefs and idiosyncracies, and the society is not permeated by the religious idea, the civilisation of man would cease to progress. Guru Nanak, therefore, took to the household as against the run of renunciation then current. He travelled on foot for nearly thirty years, visiting the holy places of both Hindus and Muslims (besides others) with a unique message on his lips: "I see here neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim". This implied that mankind must not be divided along artificial barriers.

At Haridwar, he threw water towards the west, which the devout did towards the east. When questioned, he answered inimitably: "If the water of my detractors can reach the high heavens to propitiate their dead ancestors, why cannot mine irrigate my farms only a few hundred miles away?"

He refused to participate in the *Arati* ceremony performed to propitiate Jagannatha,

or the Lord of the Universe, with earthen ware lamps, incense and flowers, on the plea that "when in the salvar of the sky, the sun and the moon and the stars light the path of my Love, and the cool mountain winds wave fragrance to Him and the Unstruck Melody of His Word rings in every heart, where then is the need to worship Him without insignificant tantrums? The need is indeed to enter into ecstasy in the midst of such breath taking wonder that was God's creation both as nature and as man." Nanak refused to wear the sacred thread even while a child saying: "I'd wear the Thread which is soiled not, nor burnt, nor lost".

When asked to participate in, the Muslim prayer he joined in, but said not the prayers and just smiled. When asked to answer for this impertinence he replied: "If compassion be the mosque, and faith the prayer-mat, and honest living one's Quran, and humility one's circumcision and continence one's fasting, then only would one be a true Muslim."

What is even more remarkable about him is that he did not merely enunciate the truths in which he believed, but lived them. He preached against caste, and lived with those reckoned low-caste when out on his travels, and partook of their food, and built them into his new messengers of hope. A Muslim low-caste drummer, Mardana, was his constant companion. He not only protested against Babur's initial bloodshed, but courted imprisonment at his hands and refused to leave the prison unless others were also set free. Unless a rich man pledged to forego his pleasures and his craving for more and more and his pride and showmanship and extortionist ways, he would refuse to deal with him. But, when a cut-throat vowed to him to change his course of life, Nanak anointed him as a Gurmukh (The Awakened one).

When he had finished his travels, he settled down at Kartarpur as a small farmer. For ten years, whosoever came to see him, would have to serve, and partake of the food prepared, in the community kitchen along with men of all castes and creeds. It is said, when the end came, the sheet covering his body was divided equally by Hindus and Muslims, the former consigning it solemnly to the fire, and the latter burying it in a grave.

#### SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY

Thus for Guru Nanak religion was a realisation an inner illumination, which brought man and man together, not removed him even from his own self. He believed that reason without faith, intellect without intuition, experiment without experience, and economic advance without value judgements would not bring man either freedom or happiness. And it was not the outer coat or denomination that determined a man's place in society or even before God, but the inner purity of the soul. No one was permanently condemned, or saved, merely because of his beliefs. There were more ways than one to see the

Face of Reality so complex and so subtle.

But, to divide mankind on the basis of for and against, on the touchstone of one's own predilections (which are themselves based on the accidents of birth, station and environments) was to deny the omnipotence as well as the omniscience of God. No Individual withdrawal or goodness of heart would bring certainty to one's soul unless one made an honest and wholehearted endeavour to bring about social conditions in which man's highest potentialities could be expressed.

Thus, Nanak was not merely a spiritual teacher, or a reformist, but a social revolutionary who yet judged the worth of men and societies not from what they had, but what they were in their inner core. He emphasised that our deeds (*Karma*) built our destiny, and deliverance or emancipation (*Moksha*) could be attained here, not through one's cherished beliefs, but through the nobility of action. Said he: "Truth is above everything, but higher by far is the living of Truth."

## RELEVANCE OF NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE MODERN AGE

DR DONALD G. DAWE

India has a rich religious heritage. Its spiritual teachers in every age have brought people an ever fresh realisation of God and His demands on their lives. In the face of this heritage a strange new phenomenon is to be found amongst the most sensitive of India's young people. In its mildest forms, it can be called a disillusionment with religion. For some it is the out-right cutting free of all life from religious ideals or hopes. For some religion has become part of the problems of the nation, rather than a key to their solution. Young people are quick to express the sources of this disillusionment. They see that religion has been used as the reason for continuing communal tensions and outright violence. With the spread of scientific education and knowledge, the popular religious conceptions seem to them riddled with superstition. Too often they see religion as a search for personal salvation at the expense of social concern.

As the nation pauses to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, it is important to look at what such teachers can say to the religiously disillusioned student and young person today.

In the 16th century, India was having a unique religious reformation. It was the time in which Guru Nanak gave concrete form to the longing for true community that had been expressed before by others. When Guru Nanak said "there is no Hindu, there is no Mussalman", he was giving expression to the very search for human community that we are caught up in today. He was not simply asking men to ignore their religious beliefs in the search for human community. Nor did he advise a kind of cautious mixture of elements from all traditions so that men could accept some new

religion without stress. His intention was far more radical. He urged every man of faith to penetrate more deeply into his own traditions to find within them that core of moral and spiritual truth, that is basic to all human religion. His call to transcend communal differences has stemmed from a deep sense of God and not an indifference to human religious effort. His concern was not with changing man from one religious community to the other. Nanak was concerned about change from the superficial religion of ceremonial to a deeper religion of moral transformation.

### LANGAR

Guru Nanak spoke repeatedly against the bounds of caste that kept men from finding their real oneness in God. But he did more than philosophise on this topic. He built a kind of religious socialism in his community at Kartarpur. He recognised that social differences came to their sharpest focus in the matter of eating together. So he established the community kitchen or *langar* in which prince and pauper shared a common table. He pointed in the direction of translating a religious ideal into the reality of community life.

The real wisdom of Nanak lies in his realistic understanding of the gap men are willing to leave between their religious ideals and the facts of everyday life.

Nanak turned his attention to eradicating religious superstition. Unlike many reformers, he did not so much thunder against these evils as to chide, often with humour, man for ideals that were absurd when viewed in the light of reason. With the spread of scientific education and knowledge, the philosophy of Guru Nanak has a kind of fresh relevance. To fail to rid popular religion of its superstition is a false piety and disservice to the past. Many in his own day looked upon Guru Nanak as a critic of religion and of the established ways of life. By asking the hard questions of truth and righteousness of every religious practice he was not a spoiler but a builder of faith. In a way that must seem strange to many religious traditionalists, Guru Nanak would find himself very much at home with the young person whose searching questions so often confuse or annoy their elders.

Guru Nanak brought into fresh and creative perspective a question that had vexed the best religious minds of the past. What were to be the claims of every day life upon the man who was seeking to be deeply religious? Was the life of man as husband and father, as farmer and merchant, as prince and leader, to be for ever an inferior part of life? His answer was no. Instead of fleeing the responsibilities of everyday life, man was to lift them to a higher level of reality by obeying God in them. Nanak saw the dangers of a religion that ignores or down-grades any aspect of human life. Such religion will inevitably degenerate into irreligion. Instead of turning from the affairs of this world to the realm of spirit, the affairs of this world are to be transmuted into new spiritual strength.

There is a deep irony in the history of Guru Nanak and his religious teachings. A few myopic crusaders try to find contentment to see Nanak as a teacher of only one community. It is almost with a sense of relief that the average man today rightly says: 'Nanak! Oh, He is not only for the Sikhs but mankind'. It would have been ironic to compartmentalise his influence which Nanak just wanted to avoid, and now modern historical studies have amply shown his teachings draw on the whole history of Indian spirituality. His language, his poetry, and his ideals are not parochial. On this occasion of remembering his 500th birth anniversary, it is well to grasp this fact anew. No historian will think of him as the teacher of only one community at the expense of others. He is instead a teacher of all mankind.

His call for religious reformation is issued to all—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jew, Parsee and Jain. Nor is a man on any safer grounds when he tries to banish Guru Nanak to a remote past. Nanak lived in an age of world crisis and deep change. Foreign invaders were exploiting communal differences for their own selfish ends. Religious indifference and cynicism were the characteristics of those in high places. Every one who would ask deep or searching religious questions or who expressed new ideas was quickly branded as a heretic, if not a downright subversive member of the community. Precisely these questions were the ones Nanak forced man to confront. Today we are again having a similar crisis of faith and conviction and descriptions of the past bear a vivid similarity to those of the present. If India hopes to retain its leadership before the world in matters of religion, it must recapture the courage to ask the most searching questions and to deepen its faith in finding moral and spiritual truth to answer them.

The anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak can be passed in empty ceremonial observance and still emptier religious words that fail to recapture his living message. Yet this need not be the case. For, here is a prophet of a religion that can build community, strengthen socialism, sweep away the cob-webs of superstition and allow men to find their true oneness in God. His is not an invitation to turn from the present, but to transform the present.

## GURU NANAK—PIONEER OF SECULARISM

PREM KUMAR

"I see here neither a Hindu nor a Mussalman : only man", said Nanak when he came out of his trance in which he had seen the vision of God. The *qazi* of Sultanpur, where this unusual utterance was heard, got panicky.

Nanak, who had been given the title of Guru by God in a vision, asked his Muslim companion Mardana to play music on his rebeck while he sang :

“Some say that I’m wild, others that I am out of step :  
 And some say that I’m but a mere man, poor and lowly.  
 O men, I’m crazy after my King, my God,  
 And know not another than Him, nay, not another.”

Guru Nanak appeared on the scene at a time of great spiritual ferment and intellectual dynamism. His message of one God and of love and unity of all mankind—Hindus, Muslims or followers of any other religion—came as a blessing. He spoke against external ritual torn from its significance and did not believe in untouchability. His message held a great appeal for the people of India as also for those outside.

The Guru’s life, as well as his teachings, reflect a spirit of secularism. At the time of his birth, an astrologer appeared who was said to have worshipped him. He regretted that he would not live to see young Nanak’s eminence, worshipped as he would be by Hindus and Mussalmans alike, and not merely by the Hindus.

#### PERSIAN SCHOLAR

At five years old Nanak had started talking about divine things, both Hindus and Muslims lavished on him their characteristic language of religious adulation. He was said to have made acrostics on alphabet in Hindi as well as in Persian. At one place in one acrostic, he made it clear that: “He who appointed creatures to their duties, made worldly love sweet. He giveth food and sustenance equally to all, and ordereth them as He pleaseth.” In the acrostic on Persian letters, he said to his Persian teacher, “Renounce heresy and walk according to the Shariat. Be humble before every one, and call no one evil.”

Numerous Persian words found in the Granth Sahib prove that he became a fairly good Persian scholar.

His idea of equality of men was reflected in his choice of minstrel, Mardana who served him till death. Mardana belonged to the tribe of Dūms who were minstrels by heredity. He accompanied Guru Nanak during his travels to distant lands and helped him spread his message. While Guru Nanak sang his hymns, he would play music on the rebeck.

However, Guru Nanak was not against the prevalent religions. He told the qazi of Sultanpur. “To be a Musalman is hard; if one be really so, then alone may one be called a Mussalman.....When he is kind to all men, then Nanak, shall he be indeed a Musalman and a blessing for others.”

The Guru was equally frank to Hindus. He would not hesitate for a minute to announce to the listeners, to whatever faith they might belong, that there was only one Supreme God.

During the Guru’s wanderings he stayed with Lalo, a low-caste carpenter of

Saidpur and ate with him. During the stay, Malik Bhago, Hindu chief, arranged a great feast where Hindus of all the four castes were invited. A Brahmin told the Guru about the feast and suggested that he should also join it. "I belong not to any of the four castes; why am I invited?" He did not attend the feast.

While travelling towards the east, he put on a mango-coloured jacket over which he threw a white sheet. He wore the hat of a Muslim Qalandar (anchoret) and imprinted a saffron mark on his forehead in Hindu style.

Replying to queries by the Siddhas, the Guru defined religion thus :

"Religion consisteth not in mere words;

He who looketh on all men as equal is religious. Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation; Religion consisteth not in wandering foreign lands, nor in bathing at places of pilgrimage.

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way of religion."

In one village, no one except a poor leper received the Guru. He stayed with the leper in his hut. The leper, despised by all, was grateful for his company. The Guru explained, "Nanak, the True One, is beneficent to all" and blessed him. The leper was healed.

The Guru visited Babar's camp during one of his conquests and sang hymns for the benefit of prisoners. Babar was impressed by him and set the prisoners free on his plea. In reply to his request for instruction, the Guru asked him to deliver just judgments, respect holy men, forswear wine and gambling, be merciful to the vanquished and worship God in spirit.

In Mecca, qazis and mullas wanted to know from where he got his strength and whether Hindu religion was superior or the Muslim.

He replied, "Without good acts those professing either religion shall suffer. Neither the Hindus nor the Muslims shall obtain entrance into God's court. All their devotions shall vanish like the fleeting dye of the safflower. Both sects are jealous of each other. The Hindus insist on uttering Ram and the Muslims on Rahim, but they know not the one God. Satan hath led them both along his own flowery way."

The above statement is ample proof of what he thought of the prevalent faiths and of how the people practised them. He did not differ on principles, but on the faulty practice of religions. What he offered was simple enough to be followed in one's normal life and he invited people belonging to all faiths to be his followers. All his life retained the reverence of both Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus said they would cremate his body after his death, the Muslims said they would bury it. He said, "Let the Hindus place flowers on my right, and the Muslims on my left. They, whose flowers are found fresh in the morning, may have the disposal of my body."



It is said that the Guru drew a sheet over him uttered the Divine Name and blended his light with the Creators'. When the sheet was removed next morning, there was nothing under it. The flowers on both sides were fresh. It is stated that a shrine and a tomb were erected by Hindus and Muslims on the bank of the Ravi in his honour. Both the structures have since been washed away by the river. Perhaps this was in the fitness of things, for he did not believe in idol worship.

## CHAPTER VI

### A SELECTION FROM THE RESEARCH PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON GURU NANAK'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS, HELD AT THE PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

(September 2 to 5, 1969)

#### THE NATURE OF GOD

GEOFFREY PARRINDER

##### *Symbolism*

In 1963 a little paperback book was published in England which caused a great stir in the religious world. This was *Honest to God* by John Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich. Nearly half a million copies of this work were sold in the first year of publication. It was said to be the best-selling theological work of all time, and I myself had inquiries about the book from as far away as Cairo and Honolulu.

Bishop Robinson attacked the notion of God as living "above the bright blue sky". He declared that the Bible speaks of God "up there", though in fact the Bible does not use this expression. "Down at the right hand of God", though St. Luke does not say this and such a description is only to be found in the spurious ending later added to St. Mark's Gospel. However, no doubt the Bishop was correct in thinking that many ordinary people use terms about God and heaven, as "up there" and "out there", which are not strictly correct. And such descriptions may not be suitable for a theology which tries to be in harmony with modern astronomy, one might now add, especially after men have landed "up there" and on the Moon.

The Bishop went further, in speaking of "living without God in a secular world", a world in which "man has come of age", and where he has arrived at "the end of theism". His words now became less clear, more complex than his early slashing attacks on popular mythology, and they were dependent upon critical theologians, mostly German, and not always well translated. From Bultmann he had learnt to criticize the form and mythology of the Bible, from Tillich he turned from God "up there" to God as "the depth of our being" and with Bonhoeffer he tried to cope with important questions "without recourse to God as a working hypothesis". To some critics it appeared that the Bishop had become an atheist, and no doubt this suspicion accounted for the

phenomenal sales of his book. Practically all the ideas that he put forward had been advanced many times by writers of less ecclesiastical eminence. But coming from a Bishop, they enjoyed a scandalous success. Both his office and his provocative statements helped to sell *Honest to God*.

In retrospect some comments can be made. One is that much of the first part of the Bishop's attack on popular religious symbolism had been made before, not only in our own times but centuries earlier, and it was in fact a commonplace of theology. The great Alexandrian thinker Origen, in the third century, and Martin Luther in the sixteenth, both said that the idea of God sitting on a throne in heaven, surrounded by clouds and angles, was a child's picture book notice. And the first of the Thirty-nine Articles, in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, declared that there was but one true God, "without body, parts or passions".

A second comment that is relevant is that doctrines of the nature of God are not only a concern of Christian theology, but of all religion. And even more significant is the fact that in India discussions about the existence, nature, attributes or absence of qualities, duality or unity, of God and of man, have been pursued with rigorous intensity for many centuries. How have such determined attempts been made as in India to de-personalize and de-mythologize the idea of God, and yet the needs of religion for some kind of symbolism, and some manner of personal relationship with the divine, have remained insistent down the ages.

Theological discussion is not a local matter, and in these days all the world may join in the debate. It is essential for a student of religion to consider something of what has been said in this great sub-continent on the nature of God. In this context the declarations of Sikh thought and belief are particularly important for those who study other faiths as well.

### *Unicity*

"There is one God." "This Being is One." There is no other." "He is one though he has many manifestations." So declares the Mul Mantra, and there are many other verses in the Sikh scriptures which affirm as fundamental the unity of God.<sup>1</sup>

But what does unity mean? A theological term which has a limited currency speaks of "unicity" and while it is not yet in most dictionaries this word may be found a useful omnibus expression. It combines the notion of singularity or oneness in nature, with that of uniqueness in the sense that there is no other God. A further dimension may be

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<sup>1</sup>In my regrettable ignorance of Punjabi I have had to reply upon translations, as in the authorized *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, by Dr. Trilochan Singh and Others (1960) and Dr. W.H. MacLeod's *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* (1968).

added by including the belief of those Indian thinkers who have insisted that God was the only being, and that men despite their apparent difference from him were ultimately identical with him, or it. This advaita, and variations upon it, has long been debated, defended and denied, and we shall return to it later.

First of all, uniqueness. At many stages of religious belief men have trusted in a variety of gods. This was so in ancient Greece, among the Cannanities and Hebrews, and in Indian religion, for example, as reflected in the *Mahabharata*. Belief in many gods may arise from the personification of nature, with its many manifestations in sky, sun, storm, mountain, earth and sea.

Most often, however, the gods were differentiated from natural phenomena, which remained as their abode or the vehicle of their power. Still, the multiplicity of gods has been held, even at high levels of culture.

There soon appeared, however, a tendency, it may not be called a law, of human thought, which tried to reduce the many gods to one, or to look for a single principle behind them all. The assertion of the unicity of divinity was not only more elegant or simple theologically, it had ethical advantages also because it provided for moral consistency within the Godhead. So Plato looked beyond the pantheon of Mount Olympus, whose immoral myths he criticized, towards the Being, the One, the Good. Among the Hebrews it was the work of the reforming prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries to declare that "the Lord thy God, the Lord is one", and they said that all the gods of other nations were only idols. In the Upanishads, one of the most fascinating dialogues reduces the number of *devas* from 3,306 to one, the one that was the neuter Brahman, and indescribable, *neti neti*<sup>2</sup>

It has been rightly said that Sikh thought is monotheistic, but that this term should not be used in a Semitic sense.<sup>3</sup>

It is not simply that the existence of other gods is denied, in the manner of the condemnations uttered by the Hebrew prophets. Belief in the unicity of the divine being is not based upon argument, but upon mystical experience :

"It is not through thought that he is to be comprehended,  
Though we strive to grasp him a hundred thousand times."

How then can men know God and appease the hunger of their hearts? God reveals himself through His will, by which all things are created, which shapes all life, and which is written in the heart<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3,9.

<sup>3</sup>McLeod, op.cit., p. 165.

<sup>4</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 29

The relationship of the one God to the universe is of first importance. God is creator, who established the world at his own will and pleasure, for his own purposes. But he is not simply transcendent, a great but distant architect, a God "up there". Nor is he, as the Bishop of Woolwich rightly insists, a "working hypothesis", a "God of the gaps", a hypothesis that is needed to fill in some of the questions which science has not yet answered, but which may be answered one day. God is the Sustainer, who watches over the world; but more, he pervades it, upholding all its life, directing its affairs, and dwelling in the human heart. God is the Destroyer too, who casts down what he has built up, when it seems good to his inscrutable aims.

Yet this same great God, creator, pervader and destroyer, not only fills the human heart, he has a relationships of care and fellowship with men.

"The one God is the Father of all we are all His children."<sup>5</sup>

It is because of this close relationship that men can come to God as their refuge and give all their hearts to him. So the divine Name is sweet by the blessing of the Lord.

Nevertheless, in himself God is eternal, absolute and incomprehensible. He is without beginning and end, unborn and deathless, pervading all things, and remaining the incorruptible reality. God is the Mind of the universe, greater than the universe and all human minds, as the ocean is greater than the fishes that swim in it.

### *Divine Attributes*

The unicity of God indicates also his essential oneness or singularity. Does this mean that he is so unified that no differences can be affirmed of his nature and no attributes may be predicated of him? In Christian doctrine this caused the endless debates on the Trinity and the person of Christ. In Islam there were comparable debates on the eternity of the divine attributes of the Quran.

In India there have flourished the interminable discussions of Nirguna and Saguna, God without attributes and with attributes.

It seems necessary to affirm that in his true nature God is without form, unconditioned by attributes, and beyond human understanding.

"God has no form, outline, or colour; he transcends these three modes."<sup>6</sup>

Before creation God existed in and for himself alone, and man can say nothing about him then. Even after creation God remains formless :

"In the realm of Truth dwells the Formless one who, having created, watches His creation.

<sup>5</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 187

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 169

And where He looks upon them with Grace;  
And His creatures are happy".<sup>7</sup>

Now creation has taken place, the world exists, and man has multiplied. Man believes that he has some relationship to God, and though he cannot by himself attain to any knowledge of the divine being, yet God reveals himself to his saints. It is this self-revelation of God, the act of his grace, which is at the basis of all religious experience. Even at the most primitive level, the existence of religious experience is a sign that there has been an approach from God to man. An eminent anthropologist says that "all religions are religions of revelation".<sup>8</sup>

This implies the Saguna aspect of God. Guru Arjan said that God is "*both nirguna and saguna*", and this statement expresses the thought of the other Gurus. While God has no attributes in his own nature, yet in relationship to man "the Pure One became manifest; from Nirguna he became Saguna".<sup>9</sup>

And again,  
"Manifest in all things,  
He is also the Unmanifest Ground of all things  
(*Sargun-nirgun*).

He is Formless : He is Transcendent. Out of Himself, Nanak, He made all things : Into Himself all things are again absorbed".<sup>10</sup>

God takes on attributes, in relationship to man, in order that man may comprehend something of the incomprehensible. Otherwise man could know nothing of God, and would be incapable of any religious experience. But God reveals himself, by acts of grace on the divine initiative alone, and so man can understand something of God through his Saguna aspect.

So Principal Teja Singh says that "God is described both as *Nirgun (nirguna)* or absolute, i.e. without attributes and *sargun (sarguna)* personal, i.e. with attributes.

"Before there was thought of making Himself manifest in creation, He entered into the realm of relation".<sup>11</sup>

The importance of this Saguna aspect of God becomes manifest still further when considering a third meaning which may be attached to Unicity, the belief that God is the only Being non-duality, Advaita, to which we now come.

### *Duality and Non-duality*

The unity of God, or the divine Mind, is central to much philosophy. The many

<sup>7</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 50

<sup>8</sup>E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965), p. 2

<sup>9</sup>Quoted by McLeod, *op. cit.*, p. 167

<sup>10</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 172

<sup>11</sup>*The Religion of the Sikh Gurus* (1963), p. 5

gods of popular religion are seen to be aspects of the One; either the gods do not exist at all, or they have no existence apart from the underlying Reality. The affirmations of Monotheism, or Henotheism, appear in many widely separated religions.

The gods can be reduced to unicity, and the uniqueness of God is asserted. But there remains the multiplicity of human minds, as plain fact of the phenomenal world. Therefore, it has seemed to some thinkers that the urge to unification must be pressed further, the many individual minds must be merged into the one divine, and the existence of the visible universe must be denied as illusion.

It has been disputed how far the Upanishads are monistic, how fully they teach Advaita. Certainly there are considerable differences between some of the classical and early Upanishads, for example between the Chandogya and the Svetavastara. Yet the later philosophical schools of Vedanta, whether non-dualist, modified non-dualist, or frankly dualist (Advaita, Visishtadvaita, Dvaita), all claim to be based upon and to interpret the true meaning of the Upanishads. And the *tat tvam asi* (thou art That) of the Upanishads is the text of all later Advaita.

The Advaita doctrine comes to its fullest realization in the work of Sankara, where the divine alone is regarded as real, and all difference or separation is due to illusion, *maya*. Yet it is remarkable that even Sankara recognized the need of ordinary religion for some object of devotion, and he himself wrote hymns in praise of Govinda. A philosopher writing hymns would be astonishing in the western world today, though Thomas Aquinas did so in the great ages of scholastic philosophy, and perhaps western philosophy has now become so divorced from religion that it is isolated from life itself. Yet for Sankara the value of hymns, and religious worship in general, was that they provided for some people a means of concentrating the mind. This was one technique among others for achieving self-discipline.

Such religious worship was inferior, he thought, to the true knowledge, which alone revealed the unreality of the world and the deep identity (advaita) between the soul and the divine. Even the God of religion, the Isvara, was regarded as ultimately unreal, or it was considered that he must be surpassed in the realization of the identity of all in the divine.

Indian religion in general could never be satisfied with philosophical abstractions. But there were also plenty of philosophers, like Ramanuja, who gave expression to belief in a more personal theism than was permitted by extreme Advaita. The works of Ramanuja reveal the importance of questions that are raised on the nature of God, the existence of his attributes, his relationships with men, and the nature of man, not in absorption into God but in eternal relationship with him.

Human life has reality, not in independence of God but by relationship to him. The goal of life is union with God, but not absolute identity with him. The difference between communion and identity is essential for an understanding of mystical religion,

as will be said Later. This is implied in Sikh teaching :

“He who knows God dwells undisturbed in the love of God,  
God abides eternally with the man who knows God”.

### *Revelation*

God is distinct from man, and has some attributes in relationship to him. But how can man best conceive of God, or rather, how is God mostly fully revealed to man ?

Sometimes in ignorance of the Advaita of the philosophers, and sometimes in reaction against it, the Indian Epics gave lavish illustrations of divine personalities and their activities. The gods were manifested to men in voices and visions, in embodiments and Avataras. In the Puranas these ideas were multiplied still further, many elements were introduced which had no basis in the earlier poems, some of which were valuable and others less so. In particular passionate and erotic themes appeared, which aroused intense religious feelings but which could be fraught with danger.

The Bhagvad-Gita, with its lofty teaching knew nothing of these erotic stories, and although it taught the appearance of the divinity in bodily form, yet it did not use the term avatara. Nevertheless the personal religion of the Bhagvad-Gita, which presents divine teaching as given to men directly, almost for the first time in Hindu scriptures, and which included one of the most terrifying divine visions in all religious literature, is recognized widely as one of the most potent early sources of devotional Bhakti religion.

Some opposition to the use of the term Saguna of God has been aroused because of its associations with Bhakti beliefs and practices of the later Vaishnavas, and especially in connection with the developed doctrines of divine Avataras. In Sikh teaching these are untenable. God is said to be unborn (ajuni), because to be born will in due time imply also to die, and God cannot die. Death is part of the round of Samsara, or transmigration, and by his very nature God is above and beyond the cycle of birth and death rebirth and redeath, coming into being and ceasing to be.

The Avatara doctrines seem to suffer both for what they say and what they leave unsaid. The Avatara is thought to be “a partial descent” (ansavatara) or “a full descent” (puranavatara) of the deity; in either case it is regarded as a divine action, undertaken to destroy evil in the world and redress the balance of right (dharma). Yet critics have pointed out that if God is the creator and sustainer of all, and man is powerless before him, there can be no imbalance of right and wrong, or if there is one, it is due to the all pervading deity. Surderanath Dasgupta says that the Bhagvad-Gita “does not seem to be aware of the philosophical difficulty of combining the concept of God as the unmanifested, differenceless entity with the notion of Him as the super-person Who incarnates Himself on earth in the human form and behaves in the human manner. It is



not aware of the difficulty that, if all good and evil should have emanated from God, and if there be ultimately no moral responsibility, and if everything in the world should have the same place in God, there is no reason why God should trouble to incarnate Himself as man, when there is a disturbance of the *Vedic* dharama. If God is impartial to all, and if He is absolutely unperturbed, why should He favour the man who clings to Him, and why, for his sake, overrule the world—order of events and in his favour suspend the law of *karma*.”<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, if the Avatara appears in the world, and takes on some form, that form is hardly human. Dasgupta speaks of “a God who could be a man”, and Krishna appears in the Great Epic and helps the Pandavas as a non-combatant, a charioteer. He speaks words of counsel and revelation to Arjuna. Yet the Avatara is hardly human, for in one verse of the Gita it is said that he has four arms.

How far the stories of the Avataras may be claimed as historical will doubtless remain a matter for debate. But the narratives themselves were composed, and much later written down, by poets and philosophers, who fashioned earlier material for their own purposes. We read, eventually, that the Avatara spoke to men, “the Blessed Lord said” (*Sri Bhagvan uvaca*). But the record of these words was made by the authors of the books, Vyasa and others. In somewhat similar fashion the Hebrew prophets not only spoke in the name of God, but they claimed that God himself had uttered their words. “Thus saith the Lord”, they said, when recording the teaching given by or coming through Isaiah, Amos and others.

But the reality of history, the true humanity of the teacher, and the accuracy of the words spoken by him, are of great importance even in mystical religion. This is why the avatara doctrine is not the same as the Christian faith in the Incarnation. The latter holds to the full humanity of the revelation, and it gives his words as a man.

In Sikh belief, we have seen, it is held that God was unmanifested and without attributes before creation :

“There was no one to think of any one,  
 Except God to think of Himself.  
 God was his own emanation,  
 He judged His own worth and rejoiced in his own beauty...  
 There were no ritual observances or pious forbearances,  
 Krishna was not, nor were his milkmaids...  
 Only the Unspeakable spoke of Himself to Himself.  
 Only the Unknowable had knowledge of Himself.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>*A History of Indian Philosophy* (1932), Vol. ii, p. 533

<sup>13</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 104

But when God thought of creation, then, as Prof. Teja Singh says, "God became *sargun* or manifest, He became what is called the Name and in order to realize Himself, He made nature, wherein He has his seat and is diffused everywhere and in all directions in the form of love."<sup>14</sup>

The revelation of God appears in creation, and particularly in the Word (*sabad*). By meditating on the Word man is released from the ocean of existence. The Word provides both the way of knowing God and path that leads to him, the means of salvation and union with God. The Word is the revelation of God, the object of contemplation, and the way of salvation.

### *The Guru*

The word of God, in Sikh belief, comes through the Guru, it is the Guru's Word (*Guru-sabad*). The Guru is perfect with a divine perfection, as Guru Nanak said : "Everyone else is subject to error; only the Guru and God are without error."<sup>15</sup>

Yet along side this perfection, the Guru was also a true man. Dr. Teja Singh insists on this point. "His humanity must be real and not feigned. He should have a nature subject to the same laws as operate in ordinary human nature, and should have attained his perfection through the same Grace as is available to all men and through perfect obedience to God's Will." Moreover, this perfection may come after struggle and progress. "The Sikh Gurus had fought with sin and had overcome it. Some of them had lived for a long time in error, until Grace touched them and they were perfected through a constant discipline of knowledge, love and experience in the association of their Gurus. When they had been completely attuned to the will divine and were sanctified as Gurus, there remained no defect in them and they became perfect and holy."<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Singh makes much of the unity of the Gurus, their historical persons merging into mystical oneness, and the perfect personality that inhabited the succession of Gurus being finally merged into the scripture and the community. So the Guru, in the singular, is the ladder to climb to salvation, the raft for crossing the ocean of transmigration.

The necessity of the Guru is stressed many times in the scriptures :

"The Word of the Guru is the inner Music; the Word of the Guru is the highest Scripture; the Word of the Guru is all-pervading."<sup>17</sup>

There is no Bhakti, no love, without the Guru, and no access apart from him to the

<sup>14</sup>Teja Singh, op. cit. p., 5

<sup>15</sup>Teja Singh, *Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions* (1951), p. 18

<sup>16</sup>*Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions*, p. 19

<sup>17</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 31

company of the saints. The True Guru brings freedom from sorrow and the fear of death, and he gives perfect faith and enjoyment of the love of God. So men are called to serve the Guru, for in following him comes knowledge of the nature of the universe.

The ten Sikh Gurus go back to, and in some sense embody, Guru Nanak. But who was the Guru of Guru Nanak himself? Dr. Jodh Singh says that it was "the infinite and supreme God" who was "the Guru whom Nanak has met". This took place when Nanak bathed in the Vein river near Sultanpur, and he "received the cup of the Name from the true court (of God)".<sup>18</sup> So ultimately the Guru is the ineffable and unsearchable God, who in grace reveals himself to men and teaches them his Word.

The True Guru is God himself, not in the form of a man, and the human Guru is so close to God that sometimes he appears to be identified with God. The Guru is the Word of God, the Voice of God, and the truth of God. The word is the divine revelation, without which one wanders in darkness, and with which one attains true knowledge of God.

It is not simply knowledge, of facts, but it is a saving knowledge, which brings men into direct touch with God. For men cannot save themselves, and they err in darkness and ignorance, but God saves men by his grace through the Guru :

"By merit alone, of our deeds, we could never be liberated, O Lord, every moment we err and sin.

O Saviour True, save us through thy mercy...

Our Saviour saveth; it is our Redeemer who hath saved us; at the feet of the Guru, all deeds become fruitful."<sup>19</sup>

### *Mystical Union*

To a student of world religions a striking feature of Sikh doctrine is its historical element, in the events in which the Ten Gurus played so great a role. This is in contrast to some other forms of Indian religion, where history seems to have had little importance, and where pure mythology mingles freely with legends of semi-historical persons.

It has even been said sometimes that emphasis upon history is a hindrance to mystical religion, which needs to be free from earthly concerns and so enabled to engage in the "flight of the alone to the Alone", after the manner of the Neo-Platonists.

The importance of history for religion is manifold. One reason is that it provides an anchorage for devotion, by concentration upon a historical manifestation of the divine. The historical narrative serves as a protection against those wild flights of fancy to which the human imagination is prone. Even historical narrative, of course, may tend to become mingled with legend, but the history provides the basis for recurrent reforma-

<sup>18</sup>Jodh Singh, *Gurmati Nirnay*, p. 114 quoted by McLeod, *op. cit.*, p. 198

<sup>19</sup>Sacred Scriptures, p. 185

tions of religion, by means of which men can return to the historical sources and rediscover the original purity of the faith.

It was said earlier that in mystical religion there is a fundamental difference between union with God and identity with him, and the historical element of the revelation helps to reserve this distinction. Union, or communion, is the goal of mystics in all theistic religions. Identity with the Absolute is the goal of the Advaitin or monist. If the Advaita doctrine is accepted, then both the personal God revealed by the Guru, and the Guru himself, would be ultimately unreal.

There would be no possibility of a Saguna aspect of God, and no eternal Guru. Both of these would be illusory, like the Isvara of the extreme Advaitin.

Yet at the other extreme from Advaita stands Dvaita, complete duality. Belief in God as the Wholly other, with a gulf fixed between himself and man, is held by some prophetic religions, but it does not seem to encourage mystical devotion. Between these two extremes stand various forms of qualified non-duality.

Guru Nanak denounced Duality (*dubidha*), because it is opposed to union with God. By the illusion of *Maya* man becomes involved in the deceitfulness of this world, in temptations and lies, and things that are passing away. This leads to death, to the endless round of transmigration, and to separation from God.

But God reveals himself to men in creation, in his Word and in the Guru. Through his grace man enters into communion with God, in which all illusion and separation are done away. This is due to the divine initiative, and the goal for man is union with God, through loving devotion. This union demands some distinction of God and man, in which relationships can flourish. As a great modern mystic, Martin Buber, has said, there must be an "I-Thou" relationship. Certainly this is demanded for all those relationships of love in which mystical writings delight :

"O my Beloved, sleep hath fled from me,  
I lie awake and I sigh for thee—  
Saith Nanak : 'The Lord entered my heart,  
I have found the Jewel of Life, the Beloved hath shown me His Face.'"<sup>20</sup>

R.V. DE SMET

## AFFINITIES BETWEEN GURU NANAK AND JESUS CHRIST

### *Summary*

Among the many similarities that can be found in the lives and teachings of Nanak and Jesus, the author chooses to emphasize 5 chief affinities which pertain to the very

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<sup>20</sup>*Sacred Writings*, p. 193

essence of either Sikhism or Christianity. These five are, (a) the invocation of the True Name, (b) the teaching of monotheism, (c) the divine forgiveness of sins, (d) the purification and “desacralisation” of religion, and (e) the virtues which build up genuine holiness. For each one of these topics sufficient evidence is produced, taken from the biblical New Testament or from the Life and the Hymns of Guru Nanak. The very parallelism of these two sets of evidence invites us to pursue further our inter-religious dialogue which is sustained by our common love for our Father, the one True God, and for our fellowmen.

#### AFFINITIES BETWEEN GURU NANAK AND JESUS CHRIST

The distance that separates Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ appears great in time, in space and the cultural origin. Yet there is a remarkable convergence of their teachings and it is a rewarding study to explore and expose their more outstanding affinities. In this study I have found not only intellectual satisfaction, but even more—a new incentive for my love of God in genuine communion with the whole Sikh community.

The more striking affinities which I wish to underscore concern (a) the True Name of God, (b) the teaching of monotheism, (c) the divine forgiveness of sins, (d) the purification and “de-sacralisation” of religion, (e) the kind of virtues extolled by both Teachers.

##### 1. *The True Name of God*

“I abide in the Name, and the Name abides in my heart”, says Nanak.<sup>1</sup> “There is but One Name, One God, One Light in the three worlds (155). “It is by meditating on the Word and repeating God’s Name that you will cross the world safely” (171). “They in whose hearts is the True Name, have the marks of it on their brows” (8). However, it is only “by God’s mercy that men obtain it, not by idle words” (9). “The greatness of the Name is bestowed according to your pleasure, (O God)” (20). Indeed, “truth, fervour, goodness, the excellences of perfect men, cannot be obtained in their perfection without you; (but) if your grace be obtained, none can be excluded” (24). Nanak has obtained it who sings, “O Lord, your name alone is the madder with which my robe is dyed” (26). From these sample passages taken from the hymns of Nanak, it seems clear that for him the Name signifies God considered as dispensing grace and mercy to his creatures. The Name is the very theophany of the merciful Lord. It is God with us and for us. It is also God as truly proclaimed in his unicity of greatness, divinity and creative power. The Name stands for the One God as communicated to us through his creative word, his permanent indwelling and his enlightening and saving grace.

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of easy reference, my quotations of Nanak’s words are taken from MACAULIFFE, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, recently reprinted and published by S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1963. After each quotation I simply indicate the page-number which, for the first, is 135.

Early Christianity also emphasized God's Name and proclaimed Jusus as the Name embodied among us. This is particularly true of the Palestinian preachers and believers substituted for Name the term Word, *Logos*, which was more consonant with the Greek turn of mind. But inside Palestine they continued to speak like Jesus himself of the Name. According to the usage of the Old Testament, about fourteen centuries earlier God had revealed to Moses that his proper name was YHWH, probably pronounced Yahwen and signifying "He who Is". But in the course of time the Hebrews had adopted the rule, out of respect for the sacred name, to abstain from pronouncing it and to substitute for it the name Adonai or simply the name (*Shem*). Accordingly, The Name was given the attributed of Yahweh himself, namely, holiness and glory. It designated God in his sanctifying presence in the Temple (Deut., 12,11).

The writers of the New Testament continued this usage. Thus in *Acts*, 15,17 Luke quotes *Amos*, 9,12: "My Name has been called upon the nations", and in *Acts*, 2,21 and 4,12 he quotes *John*, 3,5: "Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved". Paul mentions *Isaias*, 52,5 in his *Letter to the Romans*, 2,24: "Because of you the Name of God is blasphemed among the nations", and in the same letter, 9,17 he quotes *Exodus*, 9,16: "That my Name may be proclaimed throughout the whole world." Jesus himself prays, "Father, glorify thy Name", (*John*, 2,28), and teaches his disciples how to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name" (*Matt.*, 6,9). In the non-canonical writings of the early Judeo-Christians, the centrality of the Name in the religious Language and in the first attempts at theological speculation is everywhere evident.<sup>2</sup>

Another early Christian usage connected with the Name is the *sphragis* i.e., the signing of the newly baptized Christian with a cross-sign on his forehead. This cross-sign was not originally a symbol of the cross upon which Jesus had died on Calvary but the Hebrew letter *Tav* was then written as or sometimes x. Now *Tav* was the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and had on that account been chosen to represent the Name of God. *Revelation*, 7,2 looking back to *Ezekiel* 9,4, states that the saints are to be marked with this seal on their brow.

Concerning the interpretation of the Name there is a novelty which distinguishes the Christians from the Hebrews. For them Jusus is the very incarnation of the Name. He is indeed the Word of God the Father in his most merciful manifestation. When Paul and John designate him as the Name, they wish to signify his divine nature which he has in common with the Father and the Holy spirit and by which these three Persons are the one only God. It is only in the writings of the next generation of Judeo-Christians that the Name will designate the very divine Person of Jesus. Jesus, then, as the Name, is the very hope of Christians. They are told to do everything in his Name. They bear

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. J. DANIELOU, *The Christian Centuries*, Vol. I, London : Darton, 1964, and his *Theologie du Judeo Christianisme*, Paris, 1958, pp. 199-216.

this Name on their foreheads in the form of or so that they may be borne by him and attain salvation through him.

Later on, as Christianity progressed in the non-Hebrew milieu of the Greek and Roman world, the vigour of the conception of the Name become attenuated. It became almost restricted to signify the name of Jesus, whose etymological meaning is "Yahweh saves", and it was understood as expressing the saving power of Jesus due to the presence in him of the divine nature. As such, it remained one of the main invocations used in the public liturgy as well as in the private prayer of the Christians. Litanies of the Holy Name mark the piety of later ages and a sort of *Japa*, known as the mental repetition of the Jesus-prayer, has developed from the monastic centre of Mount Athos among the Hosophasts. The term 'desychast' means 'addicted to silence' and designates Christian monks who practise a sort of *yoga* focused on the mental integration of the Jesus-prayer: "Jesus, son of God, have pity on me, a sinner". In the countries of Eastern Europe, many lay-people adopted this way of spirituality centred on the saying Name.

## 2. *Monotheism*

The chief teaching of Guru Nanak is clearly set forth in the first lines of the *Japji*: \*"There is but one God, whose Name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, the Guru merciful. Repeat his Name" (195). This God whose unity and kanesty Nanak never ceases to proclaim is utterly transcendent; he is "the Unseen, Infinite, Inaccessible, In-apprehensible God" (330). But, although shrouded in mystery and spoken off in negative language, he is the Summit and the Source of all positivity, the "omnipotent, kind Creator" (154). "The heavens and the earth shall pass away; He the one God alone is permanent....The one God alone is our resting-place." (154).

His very transcendence allows him to be most intimately immanent in all his creatures. His omnipotent will directs the whole course of the universe, never to be frustrated. "It is God himself who acts; to whom should we complain? No one else acts" (99). This strong affirmation of the paramountcy of God's will borders on predestination but it only meant to vindicate the unicity of the Source of all power and activity, not to inculcate a fatalistic acceptance of God's decrees. Similarly, we know that Nanak's disciples never understood him to be a pantheist though he sometimes seemed to speak like one, as when he said; "He Himself is the Relisher: He Himself is the relish; He Himself is the Enjoyer" (265). Nanak, indeed, spoke the language of Hinduism as well as that of Islam, but only to express a very pure, very comprehensive and very balanced view of the one True God. This is the God whom he sometimes called "Father" (112) or even the Beloved: "Nanak says, the Beloved is not far from thee; behold Him thy heart" (85).

Nanak's singing of the true God seems like an echo across the centuries, of the monotheistic preaching of Jesus. Jesus himself had resumed the old Biblical teaching about God and expanded it. According to him, God is the Yahweh of Moses, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the One God whose unity is vigorously affirmed: "We know that there is only one God, the Father, who is the Creator of all things and for whom we live" (I *Cor.*, 8,6); "There is one God and Father of all men, who is Lord of all, works through all, and in is all" (Eph., 4, 6), "for in Him we live and move and are" *Acts*, 17, 128). The One God is spirit (*John*, 4, 24), Love (I *John*, 4, 8), Light (I *John*, 1, 5), the universal Giver: "Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. He does not change, nor does he cause darkness by turning away. By his own will he brought us into being through the word of truth" (*James*, 1, 17-18). Jesus said: "No one is good, except God alone" (*Luke*, 18, 19).

One day, a teacher of the Law asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" and Jesus replied: The most important one is this, 'Hear, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength'. The second most important commandment is this, 'You must love your neighbour as yourself'. There is no other commandment more important than these two." (*Mark*, 12, 28-31). This reply of Jesus is marvellously monotheistic as well as humanistic end, while ascending sheer legalism, it does not empty the Law but redeems it.

But what is proper to Jesus in his teaching about God is what he reveals of God's mysterious Trinitarian intimacy. Orthodox Christianity—he never understood its belief in the divine Trinity to detract in the least from its relentless proclamation of the unicity of God. For my purpose, it may be sufficient to point out this matter to Christian consciousness without entering into explanations which would claim too much of my limited time.

### 3. Purification from Sins

The third affinity which I wish you to notice between Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ refers to their teachings about sin and its forgiveness by God. Both of them affirm that "whatever a man sows, that he will reap", this very statement is found in the Guru's alleged reply to Mian Mitha (124) as well as in *Gal.*, 6, 7, which continues: "If he sows for his sensuality from that sensuality he will reap perdition; but sowing for the Spirit, from the Spirit he will reap eternal life" (6, 8). Beyond this essential part of the theory of *karman*, the two teachers differ, Nanak accepting the theory of rebirth without questioning it and Jesus rejecting it implicitly or even perhaps explicitly in rare passages. Even reduced to its essential core, the theory of retribution is prone to incite man to despair. For who shall escape the sway of his own actions? Who, indeed, unless the very law of



retribution can be transcended by the forgiving power of the merciful God ?

That God is merciful (62), that he is our Friend (134), that he himself pardons (126), is the good news preached by Nanak after Jesus. Sins can be washed away, not by ritual baths but by a sincere love for God : "He who hears and obeys and loves God in his heart, shall wash off (his impurity) in this place of pilgrimage that is within him" (206). "When the True Guru is merciful, man shall know no sorrow" (150). "By attaching himself to God's Name he is saved; he has not other resource. Even if he be drowning (in sin) God will still take care of him. Nanak says : the True One is beneficent to all" (107). To a sinner like Shaikh Sajjan the Guru said : "At the throne of God grace is obtained by two things, open confession and reparation for wrong". And the Shaikh confessed his numerous crimes and gave the poor all the property he had stolen. Thus he became a true Sikh (47).

In the life of Jesus, there are many similar events in which his teaching or his mere presence arouse sinners to repentance and they receive from him the assurance of their pardon. Let me recall at least one instance which parallels that of Shaikh Sajjan. "When Jesus was passing through Jericho, there was a chief tax collector, named Zacchaeus, who was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a short man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, who would be going that way. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to Zacchaeus, 'Hurry down, Zacchaeus, for I must stay in your house today'. Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy. All the people who saw it started grumbling, 'This man (Jesus) has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner !' Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Listen, Sir : I will give half my belongings to the poor; and to anyone I have cheated, I will pay back four times as much'. Jesus said to him, 'Salvation has come to this house today; this man, also, is a (spiritual) descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost'. (Luke, 19, 1-10).

In one of his parables, Jesus opposed the proud pharisee and praised the humble tax-collector against common opinion, which despised the latter and exalted the former. Both went up to the Temple to pray. "The pharisee stood up and said this prayer to himself, 'I thank you, God, that I am not greedy, dishonest, or immoral, like everybody else; I thank you that I am not like that tax-collector. I fast two days every week, and I give you one-tenth of all my income'. But the tax-collector stood at a distance and would not even raise his face to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'O God, have pity on me, a sinner' I tell you, this man, and not the other, was in the right with God when he went home.'" (Luke, 18, 10-14). The same humility that is praised here marks Nanak's prayer, as witness the following short selections from the *Granth* :

"I am a sinner; you alone are pure.

As full as the ocean is of water so many are my vices.

Bestow mercy, have compassion, cause the sinking stones to cross.”

“I am a sinner; You are the Pardoner.”

“May on me, the sinner and vicious man, favour be bestowed.

O Lord, be merciful to me that Nanak may cross.”

#### 4. *Desacralisation*

The term ‘desacralisation’ stands for a process by which a religion overgrown with superstitions, legalism, absurd commands and interdicts is freed from them and reinteriorised by an appeal to reasonable faith and the enlightened judgement of conscience. I find that both Jesus Christ and Guru Nanak have been great desacralisers. I find nothing in their teaching that could favour religious ethnicity and particularism but, on the contrary, a catholicity of truth and a call to those virtues that can unite rather than divide mankind.

Hindus and Muslims, Sadhus, Sannyasins, Fakirs and Shaikhs urge Guru Nanak time and again to adopt their special dress and way of religious pursuit, and every time he resists them and teaches that true dharma cannot be a matter of dress, or food, or particular habits. “Why should I tear my coat or adopt a religious garb? Men may stay at home and work in their ordinary costume and yet find the Lord if they fix their hearts on Him” (103). Cooking vessels, so-called pure fuels, foods or ways of cooking are of no account if the soul is not saturated with the true Name (133). The practices of the Yogins, Udasins, Audhuts, Vairagins are of no avail unless there corresponds to their external austerity the inner renunciation which conditions the rise of true humility and the love of God: “He who washes the filth of pride from his heart, he is an udasin” (159). “To be constant in devotion, penance, self-restraint, and remembrance of God, these are the marks of a yogin” (160). To followers of Gorakhnath who told him that a yogin should wear earrings, a patched coat, and carry a wallet, a staff and deer’s horn, he offered spiritual substitutes for all those externals: the guru’s words for earrings, forbearance as a patched coat, divine knowledge for a staff and God’s praise as the sound of the horn (162-3). Nanak rebukes the hypocrisy of those who put on a sacred thread, but tie no string upon their senses and their lust. It is useless to be painted on all sides but hollow inside and empty, or to be like a heron arrayed in white but devouring living creatures. Let religion be sincere and truly universal. Let us not draw sacred lines to keep away those we repute impure, but let the whole earth be our sacred lines and let us consider as pure all those who love truth.

The struggle of Jesus Christ against hypocrisy and pharisaism is well-known. Pharisees boasted of their uprightness which came from their meticulous observance of all the niceties of a very detailed law. They took the law which can only be a means, for an end in itself and forget the active love of God and fellowmen which it has to subserve.

Jesus opposed to the pharisees on points which were very sore with them : he healed men on the sabbath-day; he spoke in his own name rather than merely quoting Scripture; he even over ruled Moses, the Legislator. Jesus said that "the sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath" and added that He, "the Son of Man is also Master of the sabbath" (*Mark 2, 27-28*). Jesus stigmatised the pharisees' vain concern for ritual robes, tassels and phylacteries, their conceited desire for public praises and honours, for seats and beds of honour and for being called *Rabbi* (my master) or *Rabban* (our master). He derided their anxiety concerning external purity in food and drink, hands and plates, but Unconcerned with the internal purity of thought, desire and speech. "You, Pharisees", he said, "clean the outside of your cup and plate, but inside you are full of violence and evil" (*Luke 11,30*). "You give to God one-tenth even of your seasoning herbs, mint, dill and cummin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty. . . You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside, but are full of dead men's bones and rotten stuff on the inside. In the same way, on the outside you appear to everybody as good, but inside you are full of lies and sins." (*Matth. 23,23 and 27-28*).

Hypocrisy is but the offshoot of legalism. When people give first importance to the accidentals of the religious law, they soon take their observance as a mask to hide their own lack of inner conformity with the essentials of pure religion. So they parade as true disciples while in their hearts they betray the divine Guru. And this is why both Nanak and Jesus never cease to oppose legalism and to rebuke hypocrisy. To counteract these evils they invite all men to become true disciples by accepting the true faith, invoking the one true Name, and, as we shall now see, acquiring the genuine virtues that curb pride, selfishness and greed, and bring about true perfection.

##### 5. *The Virtues of Genuine Holiness*

When Jesus and Nanak desacralise the ethnic religions of their times, their goal is not to destroy religion but to make it genuine in the hearts of men. Rather than maintaining that things are sacred, they wish to make men holy. To the question, "what is a holy man?" Nanak answers as follows : "Recognize him as holy in whom are to be found friendship, sympathy, pleasure at the welfare of others, and dislike of evil company. Holy men entertain pure intensions, are pleased to hear the praise of others, save the virtuous, honour people of good counsel, crave for divine knowledge, love their wives and renounce other women, are peaceful, respectful, considerate, and search to associate only with the holy" (136-7).

Similarly, we know from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount that the holy and blessed are those who are inwardly poor, pure in heart, merciful, compassionate and meek, who work for peace among men, whose greatest desire is to do what God requires, and who

are glad even to suffer for doing it. (cf. *Matth.* 5,3-10).

Jesus says, "Blessed are the hungering and thirsting for righteousness; for they shall be satisfied" (*Ibid.*, 5,6) and Nanak says, "Nanak is hungry for God and cares for naught besides; I ask for God, I ask for nothing else" (57). Jesus says, "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me" (*John*, 4, 34) and "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (*Heb.*, 10.7). Nanak says, "I am a sacrifice to the Name" (75), "I am a sacrifice unto thee" (42), "To obey (God's word) is all sweet flavour; to hear it is salt flavour; to utter it with the mouth is acid flavour; and to sing it is spices" (97). Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is within you" (*Luke*, 17, 21) and "The real worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; because, indeed, the Father desires such to be His worshippers. God is Spirit; and those worshipping Him must worship in truth and spirit." (*John* 4, 23-24). And Nanak says, "You will not go to heaven by lip service; it is by the practice of truth that you shall be delivered" (39). "Abide pure amid the impurities of the world" (60). Jesus says "I tell you to love your enemies; bless those who ill-use and persecute you : then you will become the true song of your Father" (*Matth.*, 5, 44-45). And Nanak says, "He who looked on all men as equal is truly religious" (60) and "Nanak is with those who are low-born among the lowly" (186).

### *Conclusion*

Much more could be said about the five affinities I have emphasized in this paper and many other similarities could be brought forth regarding both the teachings and the lives of these two great Teachers of mankind. Dissimilarities also exist and should not be ignored. But my aim today was not to exhaust the subject but to associate myself with you all in paying homage to the saintly Guru Nanak. I have done it on the basis of what I consider most precious, namely, the teachings and personality of Christ Jesus. It is therefore in what you value and in what I value that we meet and can engage into a profitable dialogue. In an encounter of this kind, we are not left to our human resources but God presides and he assists us with his grace and light as the inner Guru whose Name is true. It is he who brings us together in spite of the barriers that seem to separate us. It is he who arouses in us the love for God and men which, even unknown to us, blinds us together in a blessed unity. For, in the words of Guru Nanak, "However much one may desire it, a meeting is not effected by words; but metal blends with metal and love hastens to love" (108-9).

### GURU NANAK : DYNAMIC, MYSTIC AND RECONCILING PROPHET VINAYAK KRISHANA GOKAK

The advent of Islam in India had generated a crisis in the very heart of Hinduism. Its idolatory, a simple path hewn for the simple ones to reach the Divine, had degenerat-

ed, in the minds of the ignorant, into a multiplicity of gods. Its ritualism had strangled, with its weedy growth, the flower of the human soul and that essence of religion which burgeons in the human heart. Its symbolism had congealed into mere images, losing all inner significance. The Buddha had led the revolt against idolatory and ritualism by pointing to an ineffable silence and transcendence as the goal of all human seeking. Basaveshwara had rendered such a service to twelfth-century Karnataka. Guru Nanak was the apostle of a similar gospel in the north towards the end of the fifteenth century in the Punjab. Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo were, later, to restore to modern India the synthesis even of the Personal and Impersonal Divine. A prophet of medieval India, Guru Nanak rendered to his country, torn by strife and ignorance, an invaluable service. He gave to the Hinduism of his time a simple form that made it as rational a religion as Islam, without detracting in any way from its profundity. This is how he became the founder of Sikhism, — a new and reconciling approach to Reality.

There is a curious parallelism between the careers of Basaveshwara of twelfth century Karnataka and Guru Nanak of fifteenth century Punjab. Both of them were extraordinarily sensitive as children. Both revolted against the sacred thread ceremony planned by their parents — Basaveshwara as a Brahmin and Guru Nanak as a Kshatriya. Said Guru Nanak as a boy: "If compassion be the cotton, contentment the thread, continence the knot and truth the twist, this then, would make an ideal thread for the soul." Both were married early. Basaveshwara was married to the daughter of his maternal uncle, who was a minister of King Bijjala's court. Guru Nanak did not marry into the family of Jairam, his sister's husband. But he was sent to live with Jairam in Sultanpur as a corrective measure. Guru Nanak served the Nawab of Sultanpur as store-keeper in charge of the rations of servants, even as Basaveshwara began as a clerk of accounts under Bijjala.

But their careers differ from here onwards. Basaveshwara rose to be prime minister under King Bijjala and was able to turn Kalyana, the capital, into a stronghold of Veerasaivism, the new creed expounded by him, by attracting to it saints from all over India. Guru Nanak became the founder of the Sikhism. But he did this after giving up his post and going into the wilderness, and after clarifying his own institutions to himself through discussions with faquirs and sadhus all over India and even abroad.

The followers of both the creeds suffered persecution at the hands of the orthodox. The suffering of the Sikh Gurus under the Moghul emperors is well-known. Veerasaivism suffered a set-back in Kalyana when some of the followers of Basaveshwara insisted on marrying a Brahmin girl to a Harijan boy, for, like Sikhism, Veerasaivism was out to build a casteless society. The Veerasaiva saints had literally to go into hiding in order to save themselves and their creed. It was only during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, under the Vijayanagara emperors, that there was a Veerasaiva revival.

It is not quite accurate to say, as Dr. Trilochan Singh does in his *Guru Nanak's*

*Religion* that, "for the first time in the history of religion and philosophy, Guru Nanak links together transcendence and immanence, and shows them to be inseparable from human experience". As Sri Aurobindo has shown in his *The Life Divine*, the Vedic conception of the Divine implied a triune unity, — the Transcendental, the Immanent and the Individual Divine. But it is certainly true to say that Guru Nanak's was a mediation between antagonistic cultures and civilizations and that his religion is a synthesis of many of the elements found in the Vedic and Semitic traditions.

Guru Nanak revolted against idol-worship and even against the concept of God revealed in human form. Basaveshwara had also rebelled against idolatry, saying :

"The clay pitcher is God, the trees God,  
The stone in the street is God,  
The comb, the bhil-woman is God,  
The brass vessel is God, tumbler God,  
There is not an inch of space to tread on  
Because of all these tinpot gods !"

Guru Nanak also exclaimed :

"Thousands Thy eyes, yet hast Thou eyes ?  
Thousands Thy forms, yet hast Thou form ?  
Thousand Thy feet, yet hast Thou feet ?  
Thousands Thy noses to smell,  
Yet, has Thou a nose ?  
O, wonder of wonders !"

He said about Shri Krishna :

"Krishna may be the god of gods. But higher still is man's self, yea, his soul !"

He wrote in Var Sarang :

"He installth gods and goddesses at home,  
He bathes them and worships them,  
He offers flowers, sandalwood and saffron,  
And falls at the feet of idols to seek favours.  
But for his own food he begs from door to door.  
Dark are the fruits of blind worship of idols.  
The idol neither feeds the hungry nor saves the dying."

It is this faith in an Impersonal God, or at least God as an infinite Person that distinguishes Basaveshwara and Guru Nanak from many traditional hindu mystics. The emphasis is on the impersonality of the Divine. God is both immanent and transcendental. But his form is invisible. Only his name can be on our lips.

The conception of the Avatar in human form, led to a great deal of confusion and

even to the assumption that an idol is, *ipso facto*, literally, God. This is what Basaveshwara and Guru Nanak set out to correct. The concept of the Impersonal Divine of Islamic theology also underlined the need for such an approach in the interest of harmony and tolerance. It was not till Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo arrived on the scene that the idea of the Person was revived in philosophical parlance and integrated with the rest of philosophy.

The concept of God as Person makes for devotion and self-surrender. Guru Nanak achieved this by emphasising the importance of the *nama* or name of the Divine. Omkar, the all-pervasive light, is the creative music, or *sabda-dhun* of the Absolute. Guru, the revealer of God's Word, is the next aid to the pilgrim of Spirit. The Guru is the teacher who has realized the Divine and is capable of leading other earnest souls to such a realisation.

Pilgrimages and fasts do not help to realise God. Guru Nanak moved away from all orthodoxy, from ritual and ceremony, in his discourses on the spiritual life. He insisted on the morality of the heart. All men are equal, whatever religion they may profess :

“The Hindus and the Muslims are all one.  
Men may have the habits of different environments,  
But they all have the same eyes, the same body,  
The same form compounded of the same four elements,  
Earth, air, fire and water,  
The One Lord made them all.”\*

Just as Guru Nanak discarded the *mayavad* or illusionism of Vedanta by giving immanence as prominent a place as transcendence in his metaphysics, (“O Thou, True King, True, True is all Thy Play ignorant”) he thought of man in his totality—man in his spiritual as well as mundane role. It is only when man knows himself that he is able to play his role in the world properly. He believed that whatever is found in the universe is also found in the human body. Spirituality has no significance if it leads only to personal salvation. When yogis who had retired into the Himalayan caves in the quest of spirit, ignorant of the state of affairs in the world of men, Guru Nanak replied to them : “When perfect men like you keep hiding in the mountains, who will save the world and what do you expect the world of men to be ?” This is the ethics of creative activism that Sikhism stands for.

Like Basaveshwara, Guru Nanak rejected the four-fold order of Hindu society and the caste-system and proclaimed the equality of man and man and man and woman. He set up the Guru-ka-Langar, the community kitchen in which prince and pauper and Brahmin and *Shudra* alike sat together for a common meal.

It was this concern for humanity that made Guru Nanak intensely aware of his age

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\* Guru Govind Singh

and his country. He was a dynamic mystic, like William Blake and Sri Aurobindo. Said Guru Nanak :

“The age is like a drawn knife,  
The kings are virtual butchers;  
Righteousness has taken wings,  
In the dark night of falsehood,  
I see nowhere the moon of truth.”

When Babar invaded India, it is said that Guru Nanak and Mardana, his disciple, were themselves captured as Babar was moving through the Punjab. Babar released them when he became aware of Guru Nanak's saintliness. Guru Nanak bewailed this invasion and accepted it only as an expression of God's will :

“Thus when Babar's word prevails, princes starve.  
Some have lost their prayer-time,  
And some even the hour of worship;  
How can Hindu women sit in sacred squares,  
And apply frontal marks on their foreheads ?  
Those who never had remembered Rama,  
Are not allowed even to utter Khuda.  
Nanak ! What can a man do ?  
Everything happens according to his will.”

It is interesting to recall that Guru Nanak travelled all over India, in search of truth and for the verification and propagation of truth. He also went to Mecca, Medina, Mesopotamia and Ceylon. In Baghdad he sat outside the City and uttered aloud his prayer : “There are millions of nether and upper regions, and no one hath found their limit. Only my God knoweth how vast is His expanse”. This enraged the Muslim priests who believed that there were seven upper regions and seven nether worlds. But there were quite a few who loved him there. A shrine still stands in Baghdad on the spot on which Guru Nanak sat, bearing the inscription : “In memory of the Guru, that is the Divine Master Babu Nanak Faqir Aulia, this building has been raised anew, with the help of the seven saints.” (1520-21 A.D.) Anandacharya, the Indo-Anglian poet, has a moving lyric on this subject.

It is said that, when Guru Nanak passed away, there was a quarrel between Hindus and Muslims whether he should be buried like a Muslim or cremated like a Hindu. This fact itself is indicative of the fulfilment of the mission for which he was born, — the active realization of the essential identity of the great religions of the world. As Guru



Nanak himself said :

“We read immense loads of the sacred texts for years upon years, and all life through, but only one thing is of account to our God — our heart — the rest is all vain prattle.”

In *Siddha Goshti*, Guru Nanak made a very significant statement : “It is for the God-man that our True God established the earth.” He also said in another context : “The God-man cometh and goeth as he willeth.” If one considers these statements carefully, one realises that the world has so far been only a caravanserai for the God-man. He has visited it at his will and left it to worldlings again. The earth is to be ‘Thy kingdom come’, the Kingdom of the God-man. The progeny of Man has to turn its mind Godward and transform itself so that no philistine can undo what the God-man will have achieved. Mankind has to turn itself into a race of God-men, generation upon generation. It is only then we can say that the purpose behind God’s creation has been realised; for God established the earth for the God-man. The greatness of prophets like Guru Nanak lies in that they remind us again and again of this quest of the ages, the dream that has transfigured humanity’s brow but has not yet become flesh of its flesh and bone of its bone. But to remember them, to climb in imagination the ladder of their lives and to experience the magic spell and potency of their creative word is to be with Adam in Paradise and to look forward to Adam reborn and to Paradise Regained.

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### THE CONCEPT OF SAHAJ IN GURU NANAK’S THEOLOGY—ITS ANTECEDENTS DR. NIHARRANJAN RAY

All knowledgeable Sikhs and students of sikhism recognize that the ultimate goal of the religious and spiritual discipline laid down by Guru Nanak was the experience of *sahaj*. *Sahaj*, according to him, was indeed the last reach of human experience, beyond which lay the realm of formlessness, of inarticulation.

What is this *sahaj* experience, what its nature and character? How does one achieve it, how does one recognise it?

In common with Kabir and many other *sants* of medieval India, Guru Nanak came

to recognise and accept that religious and spiritual quest was a matter which was altogether internal to man. Negatively speaking, it was not a matter of external practices and observances of traditional forms and prescriptions of religion. Positively, it was a matter first, of cleansing and purifying one's heart and mind; secondly, of filling them with an intense love for and devotion to God, the Ultimate and the Absolute, and waiting cravingly for His grace (*kirpa, prasad, bakhsis, daia, bhana, karam*, etc.), and thirdly seeking unceasingly a complete, unalloyed and absolute blending of one's individual self or *atma* with the universal self or *Paramatman*<sup>1</sup> who is none other than God Himself. For each one of these stages Guru Nanak laid down certain disciplines that each individual aspirant was called upon to go through to prepare himself for the final merger or blending. An analysis of these disciplines seems to indicate that what Guru Nanak was aiming at was a transformation of the individual psyche and will by bending and directing both towards the ultimate goal of achieving the merger with the Ultimate Absolute. It was only when the soil of life was made ready that the final ascent could be made. This ascent too, was in several *khands* or stages in spiritual progress, as Guru Nanak described them; they were five in number, namely, Dharam Khand, Gian Khand, Saram Khand, Karam Khand and Sach Khand<sup>2</sup>. For the purpose of this paper it is not necessary to go into an explanation and analysis of these *khands*; it would be enough to indicate that neither God's grace nor the merger or blending with Him was any matter of accident, happening as if in a sudden flash. To reach upto the ultimate state of *sahaj* or absolute union, merger or blending, one had to prepare himself through a rigorous process of *sadhana* or discipline and proceed stage by stage.

How does one recognise that one has reached the state of *sahaj*; what is the nature and character of *sahaj* experience?

*Sach Khand*, the last of the five *khands* or stages is the realm of Truth, the ultimate stage of human aspiration and experience in which one reaches a state of absolute blending with the absolute, a state which is beyond words, beyond articulation and can be known only in experience. It is beyond the three *gunas*;<sup>3</sup> *tamas, rajas* and *sattva*, and is hence called the *chautha pad*, the fourth state. It is also called the *turia pad* or *avastha*,<sup>4</sup> that is, the supreme state, the *param pad*,<sup>5</sup> the *absolute state*, the *amara pad*,<sup>6</sup> the deathless state. It is a state of absolute peace and tranquillity,<sup>7</sup> of changelessness, since it lies beyond the cycle of birth and death<sup>8</sup> and, of eternal wonder and bliss,<sup>9</sup> it is also a state of ineffable glory and light radiating beyond the *dasam duar*<sup>10</sup> or the tenth door. The *sahaj* blending or merger is like the blending of the light of the individual with the light of God<sup>11</sup>, "like that of a drop of water into the ocean."<sup>12</sup> It is a state of existence in which the *atma* of the individual is dissolved and absorbed in the *Paramatma*, and the inner duality dies within.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the *sahaj* state is not merely the Ultimate Reality, it is the Lord (*Prabhu*), the ultimate in-dwelling Beloved in whom one is merged or absorbed.<sup>14</sup>

The word in which this absorption or blending or merger is characterised is a very

significant one; it is either *samati* or *samauna* as in *sahaji samati*,<sup>15</sup> *sahaji samauna*, *joti joti samauna*,<sup>16</sup> *sabadi samauna*, *sachi samauna*. For instance, the root word in each case being *sam* which literally means to equalise, merge, blend, absorb, fill, pervade, unify; but from the context in which the word *samati* or *samauna* is used it is all but clear that what is meant is absolute absorption, unification, merger or blending in a manner so as to leave no trace or consciousness of duality or separate identity.

Apart from the characteristics of peace and tranquillity, of wonderment and bliss and of ineffable radiance by which one recognised the *sahaj* state of being, Guru Nanak recognized another, that of *anahad sabad*,<sup>17</sup> an unstruck sound which he used to experience within himself at that ultimate state of being.

All said and done, the fact remains that whichever it is, its real nature must elude understanding in humanly communicable language. The articulation of an experience which was essentially a mystical one and hence, according to Guru Nanak himself, was incapable of being translated in communicable terms, was indeed beyond human expression, had necessarily to be in traditional mystical terms made current and somewhat understandable by his predecessors belonging to various mystic orders of *sants* and *sadhus*, and in those of symbols and images that had some meaning, howsoever vague and generalized, to those whom these were addressed to.

What I have just essayed to do is to present, as faithfully and as clearly as possible, the nature and character of *sahaj* as sought to be articulated by Guru Nanak himself at different places of his enormous corpus of *sabads*, or *dohas* and *slokas*. Yet it must be recognized that in the ultimate analysis the essential nature of the experience lay in the experience of the actual absorption or union itself by one who experienced it in the lineaments of his being. That Guru Nanak was convinced that one did so by his senses and the mind, all physical entities, there is no scope for doubt. He is very clear, precise and definite when he says: "This body is the abode of God, His palace wherein He shines in infinite radiance. By *Guru's* word one is ushered into the palace. There alone one comes face to face with God."<sup>18</sup>

Was Guru Nanak absolutely original in what he said about *sahaj*, its nature and character? Were the terms and concepts like *sahaj*, *anahad sabad*, *samati* and *samauna* and the nature of the description of the experience of *sahaj* entirely his own? If not, where did he get them from? Did he accept and adopt whatever he received from his inheritance? If he did not, wherein did he differ and how did he state his position, in the light of his own personal experience, without doubt?

As attempt may be made afresh<sup>19</sup> to answer these questions, as briefly and as precisely as possible. There are many points of similarity and difference and divergence between Guru Nanak on the one hand and the totality of the Indian medieval protestant and non-conformist mystic tradition and the individual mystics belonging to this tradition or the other. Basically and in all fundamental matters these individuals and the orders

they represented, beginning from about the ninth and tenth to about the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of the Christian era, belonged to the same tradition and subscribed to the same attitudes and approaches towards religious and spiritual life in general and to Brahmanical Hinduism, traditional Buddhism and Jainism and Indian Islam in particular, especially in regard to the behavioural pattern of the followers of the respective cults and faiths. But for the purpose of this paper I shall confine myself to one concept alone, that of *sahaj*, and its nature and character, of the Indian medieval mystics, considered individually and collectively, and try to find out answers to the questions I have put to myself in respect of this one particular concept.

One of the tallest of Guru Nanak's predecessors, perhaps an elder contemporary, in the line of mystic *sants* and *sadhus*, and the greatest representative of what is called the Sant synthesis, was Kabir, and it was Kabir's way of life and thought that seems to have had the greatest impact on the life and mind of Guru Nanak, the Nathapanthi and Kanphata yogis and the leaders of the Bhakti movement, figures like those of Raman and Namdev, for instance, being the next formative influences on him. But in so far as the concept of *sahaj* is concerned it would be enough if we turn to Kabir and the Nathapanthi yogis in the first instance, and in the second, to the Sahajayani Buddhists and their spiritual descendants, the Sahajiya Vaishnavas and Bauls of Bengal, since all those sects and cults came to accept *sahaja* as the ultimate and absolute reality. The Sufi saints did not accept the term, but they too conceived ultimate reality in terms of the Supreme Beloved just as Kabir and Dadu, even Guru Nanak, and the Sahajiya Vaishnavas and Bauls of Bengal and other devotional sects and cults did under the impact of the Bhakti movement. The *sants* and *sadhus* of northern India seem to have had already achieved a kind of synthesis between the Sahaja and Sufi ideas when Guru Nanak emerged on the scene of medieval Indian religious thought and activities. Many of the medieval *sants* and *sadhus* including Guru Nanak, identified the Supreme Beloved who was none other than *sahaj* itself with Rama or Krishna with whom they sought a personal relation of intense love. But it must be pointed out at once that the *sants* and *sadhus* including Kabir and Guru Nanak were never tired of asserting that this Rama or Krishna was not any historical or even a mythological person, not any incarnation of God; indeed he had no anthropomorphic form whatsoever. As a matter of fact, they conceived their Rama or Krishna as an indwelling principle which was the ultimate, formless, colourless reality immanent in men; it was none other than God himself. *Sahaj* experience was indeed with them God-experience itself.

Kabir characterizes the experience of *sahaj* as the ultimate human experience, an experience of bliss and peace; he calls it *sahaj samadhi* which one can attain by finally arresting all the functions of the mind and hence creating an absolute vacuity within. He therefore, characterises *sahaj* as *sunni* (*sunya*) *sahaj* which he describes as a state of supreme peace and bliss, or *mahasukha*. It was a state of absolute merger, in which there

was left no trace of duality. What is significant is that the term for merger or blending or union that Kabir uses is *samana* which is *samauna* in Guru Nanak.<sup>20</sup> Speaking on *Sahaj*, Kabir says : Everybody speaks of *sahaj*, but nobody knows what *sahaj* really is. *Sahaj* really is when one gives up all desires, keeps the senses under full control, when his son, wife, wealth and desire are all kept aside and when Kabir becomes the maid of Rama; that is real *sahaj* when one is united with Rama, that is, with the Lord in a natural manner.<sup>21</sup>

It is to be noted in this connection that when Kabir speaks in terms of union or merger or blending of himself as the maid of Rama with his only beloved Rama himself, he is not thinking in terms of a physical union of the two physical sexes, though the imagery is one of such an union. All that he meant was the union of two principles : the individual self and the universal self, both innate and immanent in man's very nature, the reason why the union was called *sahaj*, a term which literally meant what originated with the birth of any entity (*sahajāyate iti sahaja*).

Dādu, a spiritual successor of Kabir, one of the front-rank *sants* and perhaps a younger contemporary of Guru Nānak, speaks of *sahaj* in the same strain and characterises it more clearly and emphatically. He too, says that this was the ultimate end of all religious and spiritual guests. He too asserts that *sahaj* which is *sunyā* or vacuity is the ultimate reality. *Sahaj* is the supreme Beloved, the Lord or *Sāmī* (Sans. *svamī*) or Rāma who is none other than the formless non-dual God with whom one seeks absolute blending through intense love and devotion. This state of union, blending or merger is the state of *sahaj* experience. "When consciousness reaches the *sahaj* state", says Dādu, "waves of duality vanish, hot and cold become the same, everything becomes one." Elsewhere he says : "Where there is no two there is *sahaj*, there joy and sorrow become one. *Sahaj* neither lives nor dies; it is the state of complete *nirvāna* . . . . Amidst all duality hold your consciousness in the vacuity of *sahaj*, and drink nectar when you have attained the final state of arrest and then there is no fear of death or of the flux of time." In a number of *dohās* Dadu goes on speaking endlessly as if it were of the nature and character of *sahaj*, more or less in the same lines as Kabir does, using more or less the same images and symbols. "One's self is a tender plant wherein blooms the flower of *sahaj*; the *true guru* teaches how to achieve it in a natural way, but very rare are the persons who can understand it." Elsewhere he says : "*Prāna* and *pyāndā* (the vital breath and body), flesh and blood, ears and nose, all play wonderful sport in *sahaj*."<sup>22</sup>

Did Kabir and Dādu, or for the matter of that, the *sants* of the *Nirguna samprādāya*, speak of any yogic practices as helpful and necessary for reaching the state of *sahaj*? It is not absolutely clear that they did. Indeed, an analysis of the *dohās* of Kabir does not show very clearly if he had a regular system of physiological and psychological discipline or *yoga* which involved the hundred-petalled lotus, the *shat-chakra*, the control of the vital wind and the nervous system in connection with which he speaks of two channels refer-

red to as the moon and the sun or the Gangā and Yumunā, and a third, the three together forming what was called the Trivenī. The Trivenī was the middle channel or nerve that led to *sahaj*. To all Kabir refers nevertheless. He also refers to the drinking of nectar issuing out of the nerve called the moon and located on the Mount Meru or spinal chord.<sup>23</sup> Kabir called his system *sahaj yoga* and the *sahaj*-experience *sahaj samādhi*, but as one looks closely into the system and the context of the terms and symbols he uses to describe it, one does not feel absolutely convinced if Kabir had come to accept the yogic tradition of Tāntrik *Hathayoga* made current by the Sahajayānī Buddhists and the Nāthapanthīs, for instance. Recent researches<sup>24</sup> have tried to prove that leading *sants* of the Nirguna-sampradāya did all come to accept what is usually known as the Tāntrik yogic practices as an integral part of their religious and spiritual discipline, their imagination and intellect. Indeed, a comparative study of terms, phrases, imageries and symbols and even of the language itself of the *sants* and *sādhus* of the medieval period show a remarkable similarity between them on the one hand and the Sahajayānī Buddhists and the Nāthapanthīs, for instance, on the other.<sup>25</sup> In fact, some of the *dohās* of Kabir and Dādu read almost as translations or transcreations of the *padas* and *dohās* of the Buddhist Siddhācharyas. Even so, I am not absolutely certain that the Tāntrik yogic terms, concepts and phrases used by Kabir and Dādu, for instance, were anything more than just images and symbols, figures of speech, so to say, made use of since they had a symbolical meaning well-understood by those to whom these words were addressed. But in this paper, I should not be dealing with Kabir or Dādu, but with Guru Nānak alone.

### III

There were many elements in the *sant* tradition, in a number of other protestant and non-conformist sects and in Guru Nānak which were common to the Nāthapanthīs and their predecessors, the Sahajyānī Buddhists. It is perhaps necessary to mention them here since, to my mind, they were the pre-conditions of *sahaj* experience, that is, these elements constituted the stages of preparation and of the psychological climate which led to the experience of that state of peace and bliss, happiness and radiance which was called *sahaj*. Negatively speaking, these were (a) sharp criticism and rejection of all external formalities in regard to religious practices and spiritual guests, and (b) protest against and rejection of priestly and scriptural authority, celibacy, penances, austerities and the like. Positively, the most important elements were (a) recognition of the *guru* as essential for any spiritual exercise and quest, (b) recognition of the human person as the seat and habitat of all religious and spiritual experience, indeed of the Truth or Ultimate Reality and hence rejection of any transcendent reality external to man, and finally, (c) recognition of the experience of the Ultimate Reality as one of

inexpressible happiness and ineffable radiance, waveless equipoise, absolute peace and tranquillity, and of absolute non-duality or complete unity. The Sahajyānī Buddhists, the saintly poets of the *sant* tradition, Kabir and Guru Nānak knew this experience of the Ultimate Reality as *sahaj*; indeed the *sants* and Guru Nanak seemed to have received the term and concept as an inheritance from the Sahajyānī Buddhists who in their turn seem to have received not the term but the concept of the resolution of the duality through an absolute union of two principles, one male and another female, as well as the nature and character of the ultimate experience, from the older Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition.<sup>26</sup> The Sahajyānīs knew this experience also as mahāsukha.

The Nāthapanthīs however, did neither accept the term, nor the concept in its entirety, though the description of the nature and character of the ultimate experience roads more or less the same. Yet the fact remains there are yogic terms and concepts in the Nāthapathī tradition, that were accepted and adopted by the *sants* like Kabir and Dādu as well as by Guru Nānak. This tradition therefore, deserves a certain consideration.

Judging by the regional literatures on the Nāthasiddha *yogīs* and the variety of myths and legends connected with them, it would seem that the Nātha movement was at least a pan-north Indian one, and if Matsyendranāth is regarded as one of the originators of the cult, its antiquity must be at least as old as that of Sahajayāna. Apart from a general predilection towards occult practices and acquisition of supernatural powers, the Nāthasiddhas owed their religious affiliation to the Sīva-Sākti cult, but their religious discipline was that of *Natha yoga*, which was almost an article of faith with them. Yogic practices somewhat of the nature and character of those of Nāthayogīs were common to the Sahajyānī Buddhists and other esoteric cults and sects, but with the Nāthayogīs this was the most important means of achieving their goal, while with the others they constituted only one of the disciplines. With the former it was altogether physiological, while with the latter it was also a psychological discipline.

Besides, the greatest and most important difference lay in the ultimate goal itself. The ultimate objective with the Sahajyānī Buddhists, the *sants* like Kabir and Dādu and with Guru Nānak, was the achievement of *sahaj* experience which the Sahajyānīs identified with *mahāsukha*, but the Nāthayogī objective was to attain the state of *jivanmukti* or immortality in life, according to their way of life and its interpretation.

How did they propose to achieve this end? Bereft of esoteric complexities and scholastic niceties as recorded in relevant texts<sup>27</sup> their postulation may be stated, for our present purpose, as follows :

This ordinary human body is a raw, indeed a very imperfect, a most inadequate object for the achievement of *jivanmukti*, that is, freedom from bondage of decay and death, in other words, of immortality. But through the yogic processes of *ultā-sadhanā*, that is, by making the vital fluid flow upwards instead of downwards which is the natural

physical law, and of *kāya-sādhanā*, that is, by the disciplining of the muscles, sinews, ducts, nerves and nerve centres as well as of the mind through perfect control of the vital wind, this raw imperfect body can be transformed first into a *pakkva-deha* or ripe body, and then transubstantiated steadily into a *divya-deha* or divine body, which was the only way to overcome decay, destruction and death. This disciplining of the body and the mind involved a detailed classification and analysis of the entire human physiological system so well-known in *Hathayoga*; it also involved, according to Nāthayogic interpretation, a number of theoretical postulates and actual physiological processes which have all been studied, analysed and described in some detail by competent scholars.<sup>28</sup> For our purpose, I need not go into any of these very intricate details, except pointing out that the conception of the sun and the moon identified respectively with Śakti and Śiva on the one hand and with woman and man on the other, had an important role to play in the yogic scheme of things of the Nāthayogīs. The sun and moon were usually understood to stand respectively for the right and left nerve channels and their union as the union of the two channels of the vital wind. The sun is also supposed to stand for fire or heat or Agni and the moon for *Samarasa*, the nectar essence, the former being the consumer of the latter, the two in their balanced combination constituting the principle that was supposed to sustain physical existence—the one, that is the moon standing for creation and preservation, and the other, the sun, for decay and destruction. The moon was, therefore, supposed to stand for Śiva and the Sun for Sakti; also therefore for man and woman. The moon being the source of creation and preservation (Śiva-man), it was supposed to hold in its bosom the *amrita* or nectar which was otherwise called *mahārāsa* (or *bindu*, the vital secretion) which the sun (Śakti-woman) was always eager to consume. The Nāthayogic aim was to save this *amrita* from being consumed by the sun; their method of doing so was by a particular *mudrā* in their yogic practice which involved the conception of the *dasama dūar* or the body which was distinguished from the other ordinary doors. Since the sun was equated with Śakti—woman—who was always eager to consume the *amrita* (-*bindu*) of the moon, the Nāthayogis, tried to keep away from women as far as possible, indeed to shun them altogether, though they, in some of their yogic practices, had to use them but as mere instruments.

The attitude of the *sants* like Kabir, towards woman was certainly derived from and conditioned by that of the Nāthayogis. Kabir refers to women as tigresses always seeking men to prey upon to suck their vitality out of them. The general attitude of the other *sants* was not different.

#### IV

It is exactly here, that is, in their attitude towards woman that the Sahajayānī Buddhists differed most from the Nāthayogīs, as well as in another, namely, in the



ultimate objective of their spiritual quest and in the general approach towards it. Yet the practical *yoga* discipline followed by the Sahajayānists did not materially differ from that of the Nāthapanthīs.

The Sahajayānī objective was not immortality in any physical sense but frankly, the peaceful, blissful, radiant, changeless and hence waveless experience of *sahaja* which was one and the same as *mahāsukha*, the great happiness. By its very nature *sahaja* experience was indescribable; it was essentially non-dual in character and was, in their interpretation, the ultimate reality.

How does one achieve this *sahaja* objective ?

Sahajayanists in common with all other contemporary protestant Tāntrik yogic cults and sects, considered the human body itself as the seat of all human experience including that of *sahajamahāsukha*. According to them everything lay within this human frame, nothing outside of it, and this human body was but the microcosm of the macrocosm, universe. It was therefore in the nature of things that in their religious attitude and practice the body, that is, the physical system which was generally a common knowledge among all Tāntriks, will receive great attention from them. The six nerveplexuses or *shat-chakra* of yogic texts were reduced by them to three and identified with the three *kāyas* of Māhayānā Buddhism, namely, the *Nirmāna Kāya*, the *Dharma kāya* and the *Sambhoga kāya*, with a fourth, called *Vajra* or *Sahaja kāya* located in the *ushnīshakamla* (the *sahasrāra* of Hindu Tantra) known as the *mahāsukha-kamala* or *mahā-sukhachakra*. *Śunyatā* and *karunā*, otherwise known as *Prajña* and *Upāya*, were identified with the two nerve channels on the two sides of the spinal chord, the third channel which was the meeting channel of the other two being the most important, since it was supposed to lead to *sahaja* and was called *Avadhūti mārga* or *Avadhūtikā*. The union or blending of *Śunyata* and *Karunā*, or in other words of *Prajñā* and *Upāya* which together constituted the *Bodhicitta*, in the third channel, the *Avadhūtikā*, was therefore the aim of the *kāyā-sādhanā* or the physical discipline of the *Sahajayānīs*.<sup>29</sup> It was along this third or middle channel, the *Avadhūtikā*, that the *Bodhicitta* was supposed to be raised upwards the *ushnīsha-kamala*. But this esoteric yogic practice was not merely physiological in character; it was also supposed to have a strong psychological undertone, the union of *Sunyata* and *Karunā*, imagined as and identified with the male and female principles, being one surcharged with emotion.

Indeed, the identification of *Sunyata* with the male and *Karunā* with the female principle transformed the character of the physical discipline of *yoga* within the individual human body into a kind of *sexo-yogic* practice, thus introducing an external element into it in the shape and form of a woman. The image and practice of *mithuna* thus became the most important element in the yogic practices of the Sahajayānī Buddhists, an element which was not accepted and adopted by the Nāthyogīs. Woman therefore, came to occupy a significant place in Sahajayāna; indeed in the literature of this particular

*yāna* she is idolized and idealized.

The nature of the union or blending is however, described as having no trace whatsoever left of any external element, of duality in any sense; indeed it was characterised as *somarasa*, a state of non-dual unity, which is the same as Kabir's and Dādu's conception of the state and as Guru Nānak's *samāunā*. According to the Sahajayānī conception, the achievement of this state was indicated by an *anāhata dhavani* or *sabda*, an unstruck sound that produced it. The sound was supposed to be produced at the moment when the flow of the right and left nerve channels—*Sunyatā* and *Karunā* or *Prajnā* and *Upāya*—were controlled and made to flow into the third or middle one, the *Avadhūtikā*, thus enabling the Bodhicitta to rise upwards to the *ūshnīsha-kamala* or the *mahāsukha-kamala*.<sup>30</sup>

## V

The Sabads of Guru Nānak as compiled in the *Ādi Granth* do not lend themselves to the spelling out of the details of the kind of yogic practice that he may or may not have followed and laid down for his disciples to follow. From his use of such technical terms as *sahaja*, *dasam duār*, *samānā* or *samāunā*, *amrit*, *anahad sabad*, etc. one would tend to think that the Guru must have accepted and adopted some kind or other of the yogic practices of the Sahajayānīs, the Nāthapanthīs and the like, particularly in view of the fact that his immediate predecessor in the *sant* line, Kabir too, used some of these technical terms in his *dohās* in connection with his way of religious and spiritual pursuit.

Personally I cannot agree with such a view.

It is perfectly true to say that both Kabir and Guru Nānak not only used the term *sahaj* but also spoke of the nature and character of the experience in more or less the same terms and images as the Sahajayānī Buddhist. It is also true that both of them shared the general Tāntrik view of the importance of the human body as the seat and habitat of all religious and spiritual experiences and that all such experiences lay within and not outside. Both of them use also terms like *amrita* in the sense of the nectar of immortality, and *samarasa* or *samānā* and *samāunā* which means the same thing; that is, experience of absolute union and blending, and *anahad sabad* or *dhvani* in the sense of unstruck sound.

Kabir goes further even when he uses the imagery of Gangā and Yamunā to mean the right and left nerve channels, the Trivenī to mean the middle channel and the *śatadal* or the hundred petal lotus, the sun and the moon etc., and expresses his intense dislike of woman. That he borrowed these words, phrases and images and his dislike of woman from the Tāntrik yogic tradition, more particularly from the Nāthayogis, there could hardly be any doubt. Guru Nanak does not, however, seem to be using these words, phrases and images nor does he seem to have inherited the intense dislike of woman of the Nāthayogis and of Kabir.

Yet, the question remains even in respect of Kabir as to, to what extent these barrow-

ings were just echoes of a tradition, just uses of words, phrases and images that had more or less common currency among heterodox, protestant and non-conformist mystic cults and sects, sort of a language that was understood by them, and that they had no actual relationship with any kind of Tāntrik yogic practice. But from the closeness of Kabir, Dādu and a number of others belonging to the Sant tradition in so far as their terms and concepts, images and symbols are concerned, one may, for argument's sake, concede that they had adopted some kind of Tāntrik yogic practices, perhaps of the Nāthayogi tradition.

That it was *not* so at least in respect of Guru Nānak has been the impression left on me by the records left by the Guru himself, that is, by his own words.

Let me take the words and phrases, images and symbols used by the Guru, one by one, in their respective and relevant contexts.

Guru Nānak uses the term *amrit*, as I have already pointed out, in the sense of nectar of immortality, but nowhere do I find him using the term in the sense of *bindu* or *mahārasa* (=the semen virile), that is the vital secretion of which the moon happens to be the receptacle. Indeed, Guru Nānak does not seem to have used the images of the sun and the moon anywhere in connection with *amrit*. Rather, to my knowledge, the use of the term is found in association with the *Nām*, the name of God, His name being the Truth. "Whatever God has made is the manifestation of His Nām" says the Guru. "There is nothing in creation which is not such a manifestation."<sup>31</sup> This *Nām* is veritably the *amrit* (= *namamrita*) the nectar of immortality and it is in this sense and in this context that the word *amrit* is more often than not used. Nowhere do I find any yogic meaning of the term.

The term *samānā* or *samāunā* is, etymologically speaking, certainly related to the *sama* or *samarasa* of the Sahajayānī Buddhists. But it is significant that *samānā* or *samāunā* is never associated with *rasa*, that is, essence or juice. This term one finds used in such contexts or associations as in *sahaji samāunā*, *sabadi samāunā*, *sachi samāunā*, *avigati samāuna*, *joti joti samāuna*<sup>32</sup> etc. In all these contexts and associations the clear and simple meaning of the term *samāunā* is 'union' or 'bending' which is qualified or associated with such words as *sahaji*, *sabadi*, *sachi*, *avigati*, and *joti joti* for no other reason than to articulate the nature and character of the union or blending. Nowhere does one find in this word and its image any *yogic* association or significance.

Much more significant are the two terms and phrases *anahad sabad* and *dasam duār*, both being technical in their use and traditional association with esoteric yogic practices. Guru Nānak seems to have derived both the components from the Nāthayogīs and Kabir, but he seems to differ from both in regard to their meaning and use. Kabir uses the term *sabad* (literally, sound) by itself in the sense of the Word of God, just as Guru Nānak does at a later date, but when Kabir uses the term in association with *anahad* as in *anahad sabad*, he does so very closely it seems, with what the Nāthayogīs did, though in the utterances of Kabir it is by no means absolutely clear if it had any yogic signi-

ficance.

That in Guru Nānak's case the phrase had no Tāntrik esoteric yogic significance whatsoever, is more than clear. Let me quote a significant passage from the Guru wherein the component *anahad sabad* (unstruck sound) has been used.

“Throwing one's doubts aside when one meets the Guru (God), one can experience one's inner being. Prepare yourself even when you are alive for the place where you are destined to go when you die . . . . Through meditation on the Guru one hears the melodious *anahad sabad*. When one hears it, his *haumai* (or ego) is destroyed . . . . ”.<sup>33</sup>

Wherever the phrase occurs it is always in such contexts that it does, especially so when the Guru is addressing his words to the *Tāntrik yogīs* as if he was giving altogether a new twist or interpretation to the component by using one with which they were so familiar. In all such passages *anahad sabad* is just a phrase which was being used not to indicate any yogic experience, but one which could not be articulated in communicable language; in other words, which was inexpressible except in mystical but otherwise well-known phrases and images. In any case, in whatever context the component occurs, one does not seem to find any indication of any yogic association.

The same holds good in respect of the component *dasam duār*, the tenth door, one which occurs in a number of places.<sup>34</sup> But in each particular case all that the phrase signifies is that it is the tenth or last door to cross before one can attain to the state of *sahaj* experience, the door having no yogic significance. The component which is admittedly a yogic one, seems to have been used by the Guru more as an image, a symbol which had a meaning for those to whom his words were being addressed. Indeed, all such yogic technical terms and concepts that Guru Nānak makes use of, including that of *sahaj*, seem to have been for him at any rate, nothing more than just a convenient means of communicating an idea of a mystical experience which was otherwise incommunicable. Terms and concepts like *anahad sabad* and *dasam duār* or even *sahaj* as Guru Nanak makes use of, or Gangā, Yamunā, Trivenī, the sun and the moon, the hundred-petalled lotus etc. as Kabir uses them, were admittedly of earlier yogic origin and association, but with the *sants* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and perhaps with the Aūls and Baūls of contemporary and later days (not with the Sahajiyā Vaishnavas), those terms and concepts had become nothing more than figures of speech, with the potency and meaning of powerful images and symbols, but without any active association with the yogic practices of either the Sahajayānīs or the Nāthayogīs or any other Tāntrik cult and sect. Rabindranath Tagore in the twentieth century made use of many of these images, symbols and figures of speech; it would be idle to speculate that he was a practitioner of

*Hatha yoga.*

Reading closely through the utterances of Guru Nānak as compiled in the *Ādi Granth*, I do not find anywhere any evidence of his being a practitioner of *Hathayoga* or any other kind of Tāntrik *yoga*, nor does he seem to have prescribed for his followers any such practices. Yet he was certainly a *yogī* in the best and most perfect sense of the term, but his *yoga* or discipline was not a physiological one in the Tāntrik yogic sense; it lay altogether in the disciplining of the mind and the senses through their concentration in meditation directed towards God, the Ultimate Reality. Indeed, he seems to have laid down a systematic process for the purpose.

Basic in this discipline is the conquest of the mind: "Conquering the world's but the conquest of the mind," says the Guru.<sup>35</sup> The preparation for this conquest lies along the path of meditation of and concentration on God, and destruction or effacement of *haumai* that is, of the self or ego. God reveals himself indeed. He is the *Sabad* or the Word. He is the *Nām* or the of Name the Guru, the Hukam or the Divine Order, the *Sach*, the Truth. It is these and Unity that one must concentrate and meditate upon. God—experience is an inner experience; one must therefore cleanse and purify one's inner being. How does one do it? Guru Nānak's clear answer is, by loving devotion to and adoration of God<sup>36</sup>, and by endless repetition and remembering of His Name, *Nām Simaran*.<sup>37</sup> Filled by love for Him, saturated with His Name, enveloped by Him one reaches the state of *visamad*, of awe and wonder at the vision of the greatness of God<sup>38</sup>. Then begins the ascent towards the Ultimate Reality through the five *khands* or stages, stage by stage, until one reaches the *sahaj* state of mystic experience which is the Ultimate reality itself.<sup>39</sup>

Here there is nowhere the slightest trace of any kind of Tāntrik yogic practices. What there is, is a religious and spiritual discipline or *yoga* of the simplest and yet the most difficult kind, a discipline of self-purification, of love and devotion, of concentration and meditation on God, the One and the only Ultimate Reality, without a second.

By laying down this discipline and this objective, Guru Nānak saved the Indian world of medieval societies and religions from decay and disintegration and gave back to that world a much purer form of religious and spiritual quest. The leaders of the Bhakti Movement and men like Kabir, the greatest spokesman of the Sant synthesis, also tried to do the same and succeeded in doing so to a very great extent. But the former by bringing in the theory and concept of avatara or incarnation of the Supreme Reality and those of Rādhā, and hence elements external to man, compromised the transparent and undiluted unitariness of God. The latter, that is, Kabir followed the Nathayogi tradition and inheritance so closely as to cloud and mystify his vision of the Supreme Reality who never comes out clearly, vividly and unequivocally from his utterances. Guru Nānak's position and statements are precise, clear and unequivocal and their ethical import and socio-religious significance deep and wide.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

All references to the *Adi Granth* are from the Standard text of *Sabadarath Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji*, and follows its pagination.

1. *Dhanasari* 4, *Adi Granth*, p. 661
2. *Japjī*, 34-37, *Ādi Granth*, p. 7-8
3. *Dhanāsari Ashtapadī* 1, *Adi Granth*, p. 688; *Bilāvalu Thiti*, p. 840.
4. *Gaurī* 12; *Adī Granth*, p. 154; *Āsā* 22, p. 356
5. *Siddh Goshti*, pauri 24, *Adi Granth*, p. 940; *Prabhātī* 14, p. 1331.
6. *Tilang* 1, *Ādi Granth* p. 725
7. *Tukhārī Chhant* 2, *Ādi Granth*, p. 1110; *Tilang* i, p. 725; *Gaurī* 10, p. 154 *Sārang* 2, p. 1197; *Sūhī Ashtapadi* 2, p. 751 *Sūhī Chhant* 5, p. 766 *Āsā Asht.* 7, p. 414 *Mārū So hā* 20, p. 1040
8. *Tukhārī Chhant* 2, *Ādi Granth*, p. 1110; *Sūhī* 4, p. 729
9. *Mārū Solaha*, 15, *Ādi Granth*, p. 1036; *Malār* 5, p. 1256
10. *Guarī Ashtapadī* 15, *Ādi Granth*, p. 227; *Rāmakalī Asht* 3, pp. 903-4; *Mārū Solaha* 13, 16, 19, 20, *Adi Granth*, p. 1030-40
11. *Tukhārī Chhant* 5, *Adi Granth*, p. 1112
12. *Siri Ragu* 22, *Adi Granth*, 122, p. 22
13. *Dhanāsari* 4, *Ādi Granth*, p. 661
14. "Jākai antar basai Prabhu āpi/  
Nānak te jan sahaji samati/  
*Anthology of Nanak's Poems*, ed by Pritam Singh, Amritsar edn. p. 367
15. of. 14
16. *Tukhārī Chhant* 5, *Ādi Granth*, p. 1112;
17. *Siri Rāgu* 18, *Ādi Granth*, p. 21; *Āsā Chhant*, 2, p. 436
18. *Malar* 5, *Adi Granth*, p. 1256
19. To my knowledge the best and most comprehensive attempt in this direction was made by my late friend and colleague, Professor Sasibhushan Dasgupta in his two publications, *Obscure Religious Cults* (second edn., Calcutta, 1962) and *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism* (second edn., Calcutta, 1958). A somewhat partial attempt was made by P.D. Barthwal in his *The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry* (Banaras, 1931). But neither Dasgupta nor Barthwal dealt specifically with Guru Nānak, though both referred to his somewhat casually as one in the total milieu of medieval Indian mystical and obscure cults informed or uninformed by *bhakti*.
20. *Kabir Granthāvalī* (Hindi), ed. by Syamsunder Das, Nāgri Prachārini Granthmālā. pp. 89, 109, 111, 137, 138, 159, 199, 269, 316 and 318.
21. *Ibid*, pp. 41-42
22. *Dādū* (Bengali). ed. by Kshitimohan Sen, vishva-Bharti, Santiniketan, pp. 259, 313, 347, 282-84, 416, 422, 459, 461, 484 and 596
23. *Kabir Granthāvalī*, op. cit. pp. 88, 90, 91, 94, 110, 146
24. Barthwal, P.D. *The Nirguna School of Hindu Poetry*, Chap. III; Singh Mohan. *Goṛākhnath and Medieval Hindu Mysticism* (verses of Bonī, Namdev, Carapati and Guru Nānak reproduced as appendix).

25. Dasgupta, Sasibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Second edn. pp. 360-366.
26. Dasgupta, Sasibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Second edn., pp., 14-50
27. Dasgupta, Sasibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Second edn., Chaps. VIII and IX where all these texts and the yogic system of the Nathayogis have been fully analysed and explained.
28. *Ibid* 27. Also, Dasgupta, Sasibhushan. *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism*, Guenther, Herbert V. *Yugnaddha: or the Tantric view of Life*; Mallick, Kalyani, *Nāthasampradāyer Itihas, Darasan 0 Sādhanpranālī* (Bengali); Dvivedi, Hazari Prasad. *Nātha-sampradāy* (Hindi)
29. Dasgupta, Sasibhushan. *Obscure Religious Cults*. pp. 77-86 and Chap. IV, pp. 88-109.
30. *Ibid* 29. p. 98
31. *Ĵapjī* 19, *Ādi Granth* p. 4
32. cf 15 and 16.
33. *Siri Rāgu* 18, *Ādi Granth*, p. 21
34. *Mārū Solāhā* 13(1), 16(2), 19(4), 20(2) *Ādi Granth*, pp. 1033-40; *Gauri Āsht* 15, p. 227; *Rāmakalī Asht*, 3, pp. 903-4
35. *Ĵapjī* 28, *Ādi Granth*, p. 6
36. *Gujarī Asht*. 5, *Ādi Granth*, p. 505, for instance.
37. cf. 36; *Siddh Goshti* 32-33, *Ādi Granth*, p. 941, for instance.
38. *Ĵaplī* 24, *Ādi Granth*, p. 5
39. Besides the *Ādi Granth* which is the only original source I have gone to, I am deeply indebted to two secondary sources:
1. Dasgupta, Sasibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, second edn., Calcutta, 1962, and 2, McLeod, W.H. *Guru Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968.

## CHAPTER VII

# A STUDY OF GURU NANAK'S TEACHING IN RELATION TO THE INDIAN SPIRITUAL TRADITION

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### *Evaluation and Synthesis of Indian Religious Thought in Guru Nanak*

This paper will attempt to state the place of Guru Nanak in that long march of the spiritual evolution of the Indian people, whose beginnings are lost in hoary antiquity. This matter needs detailed discussion, as in the study of Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion, this particular aspect is generally given much less attention than is warranted by its overwhelming importance. In this connection one or two things may be mentioned right at this point, since the discussion which follows is in large measure their amplification.

Guru Nanak authentically belongs to the Indian spiritual tradition, and in his vision and teaching, the fundamental spiritual ideals which have given continuity to it, are seen to provide the root and the dynamic force. Further, as an aspect of the proposition just stated—while he is seen to accept and orientate in certain directions these ideals, he at the same time brings into play a highly sensitive, evaluative attitude of mind and soul, whereby much that got associated through the millennia with the totality of the Indian religious tradition, without harmonizing with its spiritual core, is rejected or given modified interpretation in fresh contexts. Even in the more purely spiritual aspects of this long tradition, such elements from primitive belief as were found to be agglutinated with it were cast off by him and only the genuine core of spiritual-idealistic thought was adopted as the basis of his own teaching. Further to amplify the terms of this thesis, Guru Nanak in formulating his vision and scheme of the spiritual-ethical life, gave to the Indian religious tradition a dynamic and synthesizing character, so that it could now operate as a force for a very wide spiritual-ethical humanism, whose inner urge was

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1. All the renderings into English of the Sikh sacred writings and philosophical terms are by the writer of this paper.
  2. Page references are in each case to the *Adi-Granth*, the sacred Scripture of the Sikh religion, in which the arrangement of pages is uniform in all its approved copies.
  3. Transliteration of words and names from the Sanskrit and Arabic and other sources is in accordance with their enunciation in Panjabi-Hindi, and not after the academic practice with regard to the respective languages.
  4. The renderings, while not literal, attempt to convey also the literal point of the original, which is in most places also elucidated in the foot-notes. The main effort has been to convey the sense and some part of the flavour of the original.



directed toward the uplift of vast masses, who had been left out by the older traditions. Here we may try briefly to define what has above been called the synthesizing character of Guru Nanak's vision: He interpreted and broadened the pre-existing spiritual idealism towards a deeper humanism and morality and at the same time purged it free of its constricting elements like codified caste and other taboos. Encrusted and narrowing traditions like the exclusivism of Sanskrit and the priestly caste were rejected. Religion was given an overwhelmingly ethical direction, so that the significance of belief and practice was seen to be in proportion to its furthering the objectives of the ethical ideals. Wide humanism, as said earlier, was made an integral element in the ethical vision, which in the older tradition had been confined to tribe, caste or race. Guru Nanak addressed his appeal for the search after such universal ethical values as much to the Muslim folk as to those who could be described as Hindu, of various denominations, including those branded untouchable and outcaste. The Muslim masses were comparatively recent converts from Hinduism, and like their Hindu counterparts were working folk. They had no vested interest in the more imperialistic aspects of Islam as in theory and practice it had got evolved during the centuries of the Muslim conquest of various lands; and would be content to practice their faith in pursuit of some spiritual and moral guidance. The Muslim ruling classes, with their foreign extraction, along with the Hindu converts of the higher castes, had developed the feudal imperialistic mentality, and would naturally not be amenable to the appeal of idealism and humanism. It was not these, but the humble folk among the Muslims, to whom the Guru's humanistic, ethical appeal may be seen to be addressed.

The personality of Guru Nanak has been venerated by Hindus as well as Muslims, as is well-known. To the Muslim his appeal, however, remained distant and broadly universal, as a holy man calling men to the higher values above the creeds. But such appeal, because of its being abstract and of no creed, could not be effective in winning for his teaching many adherents from among the Muslims. To the Hindu his appeal because of the Indian tradition in which it was rooted, was intimate, and from the inside. It was the appeal of one who was furthering and revivifying this tradition in a particular way. Hence it was that over wide areas beyond his native Panjab, his appeal was listened to, and he was venerated as Guru—spiritual Guide, Preceptor, Prophet. But at the same time a contrary attitude of mind was visible right in his own time, as witnessed by even his earliest biographers: He drew the criticism of orthodoxy for the very direction of his teaching wherein it meant an ascent for the human spirit—his rejection of primitivism, fetishism, and blind orthodoxy. The dynamic and idealizing force of his Word was not seen, but was viewed from a narrow, prejudiced angle. To some extent both these attitudes have persisted till this day. The Hindu mind has tended to view the teaching of Guru Nanak as somehow lying if not outside, anyway on the periphery of the tradition within which it finds itself. As this paper will show, such an

impression is erroneous, and is based upon wrong criteria of judgement which in this case are external and superficial, and fail to grasp the true spirit of his teaching. In Guru Nanak's teaching was expressed the living, dynamic spirit of the highest idealism of the soul of India, as the discussion which follows will attempt to indicate.

*Assertive and Recurrent Conservatism combated*

The quest for spiritual values in India, which while these have ranged from the primitive to the most enlightened which the human soul has visualized, shows at the same time a constant regression into the darker primitive forms of belief amidst the enlightenment of philosophy and culture. In the past, mythologies and dark, primitive creeds and sub-creeds by the hundred have flourished and formed the faith of the people. Along with such primitivist gropings has gone on man's idealistic quest to find out and rest in fundamental spiritual and ethical truths which should mean the evolution of his higher nature. This would mean man's progress towards the supreme goal called *Moksha* or *Mukti* (Emancipation) or *Nirvana* (cessation of the gross psychological processes). As a consequence of this age-old quest has developed in India the sublime conception called Dharma, which is as much the fundamental *elan* of the universe towards its final goal of the triumph of Truth and Righteousness, as the urge in the human soul towards transcending what is gross and material and identifying itself in thought, word and deed with this *elan*. In India this sublime conception has been the highest goal, the summum bonum of the spiritual-ethical quest of man, towards which the entire activity of his life is sought to be directed. This term, *Dharma* is extremely wide and comprehensive, and is at its highest the statement of a metaphysical ideal and a scheme of life. Its comprehensiveness makes it difficult to render it adequately into another language.

What is noticeable about the evolution of religious thought in India is the persistence, beside much that is primitive and unregenerate, of the higher and nobler aspects of the spiritual-ethical quest. By a strange process of assimilation, even among people whose thinking is otherwise enlightened and idealistic, there are vestiges of primitivist thinking in the form of superstitions and literal faith in ancient mythologies; surviving faith in magic, fetish and a totally anthropomorphic view of nature in the form of augury and propitiation—all forming an amalgam which not many have attempted to subject to a critical examination or to reduce to internal consistency. A total or near-total reappraisal of belief and faith, except rarely, is not known in India. There has been development in the form of an ever-expanding scholasticism, analytical and axiomatic at the same time; but no real progress in overthrowing the old lumber of outmoded belief by subjecting all life and thought to spiritual vision. Past stages of consciousness have continued to co-exist with later thinking, in juxtaposition, without reappraisal of values.

Each layer in such an amalgam may lie distinct and guide belief and conduct, which may show fantastic contradictions. Not synthesis, but only an amalgamation is achieved. Such contradictory levels of conduct, of course are known to most human societies, but their existence in India is perhaps more overwhelming and striking in creating the confusion of values and criteria.

The true synthesizing process has rarely been in operation. For the most part, conservatism has only reestablished old orthodoxies; given to their content intellectualized or allegorized interpretations, but has resisted real progress or the evolution of creative ideals. Where some new creeds have demanded a more fundamental adjustment as in the case of Buddhism and Jainism in the pre-Christian era, the eclectic and synthesizing processes in them have been more active. The new creative ideas thrown up by these creeds, such as Ahimsa and Nirvana (cessation of suffering through annulment of transmigration) have been assimilated into the existing corpus of religious beliefs, and what may be called the process of true progression has thus been at work. But the fundamental matrix of religious thought, representing various heterogeneous levels, has again been assertive, so that a recurrent and puissant conservatism has at last swallowed and assimilated into itself what began as movements fundamentally new. This is ultimately what happened to the two great creeds just mentioned, which rather took colouring from the older orthodoxy, with its numerous sects, with its set of deities, ritual, scholasticism and the general appurtenances of faith. Such has been the course of the evolution of religious thought and practice in India, which presents, as said earlier, a remarkable spectacle of the coexistence of numerous layers in the spiritual evolution of the people, without a distinct break and without what may properly be called a creative synthesis.

India presents perhaps the perfect form of a conservative society in which its beliefs have got firmly established, and despite cataclysmic changes of history, have survived. Certain fundamentals have got accepted by all Indians, some even by those professing faiths coming from outside. These are for example, caste divisions with religious implications of ritual purity and impurity; adherence to the distinct Indian forms of worship and ritual, such as bathing at certain sacred spots, faith in the religious postulates of astrology. Then there are beliefs, aversions and taboos shared largely in common.

### *Guru Nanak's Teaching—A Liberating Force*

An interesting question, religious as much as sociological in its bearing, is the precise kind of relationship in which Sikhism stands vis-a-vis Hinduism: There has been in the politico-religious history of the Sikh people a kind of assertion of distinct entity, which while it may not make them into a nation (the idea of Indian nationhood cuts across such an assertion), it does make them into a distinct faith, and not merely a sect or form of the vast world of Hindudom. From another point of vision, the Sikh faith

bears such a close relationship with what is loosely called Hinduism that it is anyway a part of that grand confederation which ideally constitutes Hindudom. Two considerations, each very relevant and significant to this issue, may be urged in this context. Sikhism has had a two-fold effect on its parent stem—Hinduism. First, Sikhism has acted as a purifying agent within Hinduism and has thus been the guardian of its spiritual integrity. This is true much more emphatically of course, of the north-western regions of India. It sought to purge Hinduism of its primitivism, its superstitious lumber and its heterogeneousness. It proclaimed the falsity and meaninglessness of mere ritual, and attempted to end the divorce between faith and the moral life which had enervated Hinduism. Again, Sikhism acted as the defender of Hinduism. This it did much more on the spiritual plane than on the more obvious plane of infusing its followers with the spirit of militancy which brought them into inevitable conflict with the oppressors of the day who happened to be Muslim by faith. Of this no doubt should be permitted to remain. It gave at least in the North-West of India the strength to Hindudom to save itself from what threatened to be inevitable dissolution. Sikhism did this in a manner which makes a highly interesting sociological study. Those who fought in defence of what they had learnt to call *Dharma*, which meant not only certain ethical values, but also the Hindu way of life and its decencies, were people drawn from what according to the caste code of Hinduism were reckoned among the unprivileged castes. The comparatively higher castes, despite this that Guru Nanak and his successors all came from the high Khatri clan, being privileged people, stood like all such, generally aloof from the Sikh creed, which came with an egalitarian message socially; and looked moreover to be a force for upsetting established orthodoxy. The under-privileged classes, however, drank the word of Guru Nanak avidly, and acquired a new spiritual and moral life from it. It was these people, therefore, who stood on the periphery of Hindudom and were excluded from the higher aspects of its social or spiritual life, that became under the inspiration provided by the Gurus (Guides, Apostles) of Sikhism its militant wing and its martyrs. Earlier, before taking up the sword pursuant to the call of Guru Gobind Singh, these very classes, low in the Hindu hierarchy, had listened to the spiritual idealistic teaching of Guru Nanak and his successors, and had thereby been rendered immune to the appeal of Islam which offered both credally and socially something superior to the dark primitivist creed and code of the phase and layer of Hinduism which alone they know. Imbued with the new spiritual vision given by Guru Nanak, and thus enlightened and inspired with a new-found human dignity and idealism, they could withstand the tide of Islamic proselytization. They thus become the firm base of the Hindu pyramid which stood otherwise exposed to the menace of the rolling tide of Islam; and so saved Hinduism in the Punjab and his adjoining areas from virtual extinction. Later, when after more than half a century's sacrifices, the Sikhs had established themselves as the rulers of Punjab, their power brought immense moral courage and

strength to Hindudom all over north-western India, and put an end to the aggression which had been a feature of Muslim rule in these parts for centuries. This role which Sikhism played in the course of its history, comparatively brief though, was inherent in its very character from the beginning. Sikhism was able thus to be the defender of Hindudom, because while it was integrally of Hindudom, yet because its outlook was so distinct from what had got crystallized as Hinduism; that it was not subject to those inherent weaknesses which had rendered the latter almost paralytic and unable to defend itself on the spiritual or social plane.

### *Sikhism vis-a-vis Islam*

One further word before a statement is attempted of the fundamental teachings and metaphysical and ethical ideals underlying Sikhism. While providing moral and spiritual stamina, so to say, to Hindudom, Sikhism at the same time did not preach hatred or bigotry against Islam or any other faith. It took its stand on the moral principles of tolerance and humanitarianism; and equally calling the Hindus and the Muslims to discover and to live the best and the noblest in the teaching of their respective faiths, created an atmosphere in which the higher human and spiritual values could flourish. The armed conflict with Islam which came later, was the result of certain historical accidents and was far from being inherent in the teachings of Guru Nanak which inculcated the broadest spirit of tolerance, so that he was revered by the Muslims no less than by the Hindus. This delicate relationship between Guru Nanak's teaching and Islam is something again, which would demand deep study, so that Sikhism without posing a hostile attitude towards Islam was yet the defender of Hindudom with which Islam was in inevitable conflict in India. Such conflict was a reality, despite the evolution of a common social life with some give and take in various fields, social and cultural. The Guru's inculcation of the spirit of tolerance and humanity to Hindu and Muslim was essentially the exhortation to each to search for a common, universally acceptable meaning in the numerous forms of established religions.

Yet, to Hindudom within which he had himself been born, the Guru brought a distinctive message of self-purification and soul-searching, so that it should discover out of its millennia-old history, a new life. This was an inculcation to Hindudom to shed off much of the dross and primitivism which was sticking on to it; to annul a great deal of its past, and so to find from the old roots a meaningful way of life. He thus sought, more perhaps than any other teacher or savant thrown up by Hindudom in recent centuries, to get Hindudom to make a distinct break with much in its past, and thus discover its soul, and a new life. Others did much less to disturb, to displace what was a miscellaneous heritage from the past. This is one of vital distinctions between the vision that Guru Nanak brought and the message of many others. Hence it is that what Guru Nanak

preached was in a much greater sense a new faith than had been the case with just other teachers within Hindudom. And yet, in a very vital sense, as has been hinted above, Guru Nanak and the faith which emerged from his vision are integrally related to the great spiritual ethical movement of Hinduism. It may be put thus : *His vision was no less an assertion of the spiritual idealism of India than was that of any other Indian teacher. Its sources and founts were Indian, and it sought to fulfil and realize the goals which were inherent in the spiritual urges of India.*

*Enunciation of a Creed by Guru Nanak imperfectly understood—Orthodoxy Repudiated*

It is from this point that one may conveniently take up the statement of the fundamentals of the metaphysical and philosophical thought which Guru Nanak gave to the people, fitted into the scheme of a creed, consistent and purged of those dark and primitivist elements which had been considered for thousands of years almost alone to be true religion. One reason why orthodoxy did not give wide assent to Gurunanak's message, and failed to see the deep implications of his role as the saviour of the basic values and decencies of Hinduism, was this very evaluative character of his teaching. In viewing Guru Nanak's religion closely, one is struck with the vast amount of pruning which he did, so that after the eliminations only the essence, the ideal, the spirit remains. This is given by him a fresh orientation, so that it acquires a rich humanitarian colouring and rests on values in which the universal aspects of the spiritual experience, compassion and idealistically motivated action remain as the principal constituents. On considering the exclusions, the excisions made by him, it may be seen that a great part of the lumber of past, dark beliefs would go by the board. Such a comprehensive process of exclusion is not to be seen in the teaching of any other faith, which has in comparatively recent times developed in India from the main tradition round which has been organized the religious experience of the people from age to age. As said earlier, it is the usual spectacle in India to find much from the past surviving in a kind of unresolved or unassimilated juxtaposition with any fresh religious ideas which may have evolved, so that a reformer would at the same time be a continuator of what in fairness to his logical position he must rethink and reject. Thus, with sects and sub-sects each having a distinct point of departure in its beliefs and ritual from the rest, there is a vast common ground between one and the other, so that the various faiths and sects are based upon subtle and narrow distinctions and not upon broad, creative ideas or freshly thought-out philosophies. Thus it is that a kind of assimilative attitude towards religion has got settled, making for the acceptance of vast masses of heterogeneous and unreconciled and unsynthesized beliefs coexisting in the faith of the various sects formed.

Guru Nanak began, as told in the early accounts of his life, in episodes not realistic according to modern criteria, but symbolically true, by rejecting much in established

orthodoxy, which had been looked upon as the essence of *Dharma*—faith. Thus was rejected ritual, called in common parlance *karma*, comprising ceremonial such as wearing the sacred thread, bathing at spots held traditionally sacred, observing ritual purity in food and touch, the general practice of untouchability, of apportioning merit in the social scale as well as in terms of personal sanctity by caste determined by birth; the paste-mark, rosary and forms of wear considered sacred; worship of the stone called *Shaligram*, believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu, and such others. Furthermore, as told of him, he also rejected much other ceremonial, such as the observance of certain dates annually in memory of the dead and charity associated with this in the belief that it benefitted the departed spirits. He rejected also the elaborate ceremonial and charities ritually prescribed for death obsequies. The idea of impurity associated with childbirth, as also with womankind in general, he denounced. He refused to adopt for himself, while engaged in his journeys to spread his message far and wide, any particular mode of holy man's garb, which might proclaim him of this or that sect. As told of him, his wear was an assortment of features Hindu and Muslim, so that quite often he was mistaken for a Muslim holy man. Also with regard to the ritual of the various monastic orders, such as Yogi, Sannyasi, Bairagi, Saraogi, Jangam and others his views were equally positive. Outer form he considered to be non-essential; something irrelevant to spiritual experience and ethical conduct, which alone he considered to be true religion. As to forms adopted and sanctioned by Islam, he was no less emphatic that without the spirit, the essence, these were meaningless and a snare for the soul; and hence must be transcended. His critique of Muslim forms however, is sporadic and less emphatic than of the various forms which were sanctioned within Hinduism, due no doubt to the fact of his examining the latter from within as by one who felt called upon to set in order the society in which he himself was born. Criticism of various forms of ritual may be met with in the recorded Word of Guru Nanak in the *Adi Granth* as well as in the traditions narrated of him. While in compositions like *Var Asa* such criticism is sharp and concentrated as though an assault is mounted on established and entrenched orthodoxy, in almost all places along with matter mystical, spiritual and ethical, one comes upon criticism of ritual and orthodoxy and a warning against accepting these as being identical with religion. It is everywhere shown to be a mere form, a snare, which must rather transcend forms to become one with the universal soul than rest in the shows of things, philosophically called *Maya* (Illusion, Phenomena).

In the eyes of the masses, steeped in the practice of ritual and orthodoxy, such rejection of their forms would be great impiety indeed, and the priests particularly as recorded in the tradition, expressed themselves with strong disapproval of the trend of the Guru's teaching which to them was a negation of all accepted ideas of piety and orthodoxy. The yogis and other anchorites of various orders were similarly critical of him in the first place, for preaching without being of an anchorite order, and secondly

for commending the way of spirituality without its mythology and form, the latter of which in medieval times was called *Hatha* or the yoga-path of forcible effort, through elaborate ritual and psycho-physical exercises. On the plane of thought and mystical emotion the public mind had been familiar with the criticism of form, ritual and orthodoxy, by devotees of various persuasions, Hindu as well as Muslim. But by a process only of partial assimilation of intellectual thinking, while the people participated on the emotional plane in the criticism of orthodoxy, they at the same time stuck on to its forms in daily practice. The contradiction, the anomaly did not trouble the average person's mind, as it does not trouble him in thousands of concerns of his daily conduct, showing a clear hiatus between his intellectual and ideal formulations on the one hand and his habitual mode or organising practical conduct on the other. The various monastic and mystical orders, the devotees, *Bhaktas* and *Dervishes*—to give them their genetic Hindu and Muslim labels—all shared in such contradiction and anomaly. They generated in themselves and in the masses passions which were in essence mystical and hence by implication out of step with the rigidities of code and orthodoxy. Yet in actual practice they furthered the beliefs, prejudices and practices of orthodoxy. Hence their mystical and emotional stance, while on occasion it bathed the soul in an elevated passion, and even left behind certain intellectual formulations like the conviction of harmony of all existence and the consequential attitudes of the brotherhood of man and the supremacy of the compassionate attitude—all such experiences and formulations were only momentary tremors of the soul, fitted within the framework of orthodoxy, Hindu no less than Muslim, as the case might be. The general life of belief and conduct was left undisturbed.

Such partial approach to the life of religion, such anomalous conduct, is not to be found in the teaching of Guru Nanak, which shows a consistency of belief and thought, born of deep meditation and absorption in the Absolute, so that all contradiction between the intellectual emotional planes and action is sought to be resolved. What Guru Nanak imparts through his teaching is not only an emotion, as would be the case with those engaged in arousing mystical frenzy; nor does he give only a metaphysics, a scholastic philosophy to satisfy the intellect, but a prophecy—an entire scheme of the conduct of life in which belief, thought and action are in harmony, and thought or emotion nowise contradict conduct. The emphasis on conduct as the final fruit of the religious life is everywhere to be met with in Guru Nanak's teaching. Equally strong is the emphasis in it on so purifying thought and belief that no vestige of superstition or illusion may be left to deflect conduct from the true path of righteous living into various forms of error, which to the wrongly instructed mind fail to appear as such. This approach, in its nature revolutionary, obviously called into question the very basis, the foundation of what orthodoxy held to be the essence of faith. Hence, to make over again a point which needs to be emphasized, what Guru Nanak was teaching was practically a new religion, and not merely a re-formulation of accepted and established orthodoxy,



as was the case with the sects and sub-sects with which the world of Hindudom was littered.

*Challenge to fundamentals of established orthodoxy*

Apart from the criticism and denunciation of ritual and form and their choking the spirit of religion, which might in part be met with in the pronouncements of other teachers as well—though in these latter usually only in the form of passing remarks and not as the result of an integrated scheme of the spiritual-ethical life as in Guru Nanak—the Guru brought his opposition to established orthodoxy to challenge many of its fundamentals. His denunciation of caste, which had been held almost to be synonymous with religion and still in an overwhelming measure is, and of other ancillary aspects of the practice of religion, each believed to exist by divine sanction, place him in a position apart from teachers and reformers working more in accordance with conformity to established beliefs. This by itself would have earned him the fierce opposition of orthodoxy. But his challenge went much farther and deeper, as said above, than mere form and ritual and such morally objectionable conduct as hypocrisy. He examined the foundations of much on which belief and religious faith rested. This latter challenge, the nature of which will shortly be examined, placed him almost outside the pale of established Hinduism, and has during the period of a little less than five centuries since his ministry began, given to his teaching the character of a separate religion, out of conformity with Hinduism as traditionally practised. For the religion preached by him, Guru Nanak, however, drew upon an idealism which itself was inherent in the higher aspects of what is called Hinduism, but which in the long history of Hinduism had been overlaid with much primitivism and had become only matter for the rare insight of mystic and saint. Guru Nanak removed the dark primitivism and enunciated the ideal, the highest vision attained by the soul of India. He no less firmly rejected the over-elaborate scholastic postulates, which because of their basis only in the desire to ramify endlessly concepts and assumptions which had no ethical or spiritual reality, became themselves a mystique, a mythology, greatly puzzling to the common man, and providing only that monopoly of the knowledge of religion to a class established by caste, which led to manifold abuses. These abuses are well-known in India—the main being the divorce of religion from the conduct of life and the assumption of substitutes for the spiritual and moral life, in the form of superstitions and much propitiatory ceremonial, linked to a great deal of primitivism.

The evaluative and purificatory teaching of Guru Nanak was a unique phenomenon in the history of religious thought in India, inasmuch as the ideal concepts to which he gave exclusive expression and emphasis had not before been isolated from the mass of primitivist thinking and scholasticism, but were entertained by sage and savant only in

rare moments of exaltation, in the context of much that contradicted these. This exclusive emphasis laid by Guru Nanak on the ideal conception of the Creator and the path of spiritual ascent, while a great achievement of the soul of man, became itself the cause of a kind of isolation of Guru Nanak and his teaching, which situation still continues, and if any thing, has been accentuated by the historical processes. Other denominations which make something like an approach to the teaching of Guru Nanak in this respect, have broken away from orthodoxy only partially, and hence continue to be considered much more emphatically within the pale of Hindudom. To the emphasis of Guru Nanak's teaching which makes for the isolation of his creed, have been added recent political tensions and prejudices, so that the break-away of Sikhism from the mainstream of Hindudom sometimes appears to be imminent.

Besides caste and ritual, which are externals, certain elements of faith are essential and integral elements of Hinduism. These elements are centred in mythology, which has been growing, accumulating and developing intricate and complex relationships and spiritual and moral overtones, over millennia. To the earlier mythology as reflected in the Vedas, was added the mythology of the non-Aryan peoples with whom the Aryans came in contact, albeit as conquerors. Later, within the Aryan tradition so amalgamated, developed further ramifications in later times, and found something like a culmination in the great epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which created new mythologies and related these to the pre-existing strains. After the period of the epics, it appears a more realistic interpretation of personality came into vogue, and the process of deification and apotheosis out of which had grown the older mythologies, was found untenable in ages grown critical. But the older mythologies continued to flourish, and to remain the very basis and idiom of the entire religious thinking of the people. Here and there even in later periods heroes and saints were deified, but there was at the same time a conviction of their humanity. This was a distinct note from the wholesale deification of heroes of legend and sages of the earlier ages.

The process of deification and mythologizing was later placed on a metaphysical basis, so to say, by the Incarnation theory which has reigned supreme in the post-Vedic thinking and belief of the Indian people. According to this Vishnu, the Preserver aspect of the Hindu Trinity, assumes in different periods some form—human or other—for the fulfilment of specific divine purposes. The acceptance of this principle sanctions and makes obligatory the worship of various deities thus admitted to the Pantheon. Such worship would, by the inclination of the human mind to fix on the concrete, the visible, leads to the propitiation of various gods and goddesses. There were numerous deities, generally embodiments of forces of nature, whose worship was at the basis of the Vedic religious tradition. But later, to these Vedic deities were added others, particularly the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and the incarnations of Vishnu. To this list would be added further formulations of the divine, such as the consorts of Vishnu and Shiva—

Lakshmi and Durga—each known to be in several manifestations, with different names, and personages allied to the Incarnations. The Vedic deities were all this while not superseded, but continued to be propitiated in the various rituals. Heavenly bodies, rivers, mountains and other features—all acquired the divine status. So did animals like the cow, the monkey and even the snake. To all these were added various other local deities, some beneficent, others maleficent and to be feared. This spectacle of numerous deities thought traditionally in India to run into millions, would be well-known to students of Indian religious history. From belief in incarnations and deities it necessarily follows that their representations in visible form—images, idols—should be made and worshipped. This of course, is too obvious to need any elaboration.

### *Guru Nanak's Conception of the Supreme Being*

The sages and savants of India, the great Rishis, who meditated the philosophy contained in the Upanishads, were led on by their spiritual insights into a firm conception of the Supreme Creator, above all deities and in his character Eternal, Immutable. To this they gave the names *Om* and *Purusha* handed down from the Veda. They also evolved the concept of Brahman or Brahman the Absolute without attributes and hence without any limitation whatever. *Om* was lengthened by the Upanishads to *Omkar*, interpreted as the modified conception of Brahman, with attributes; since the attributeless Brahman is beyond human conception, man can form some idea of Him only through realizing His attributes. Other terms for the Supreme Being met with in the Upanishads are *Kartar* (creator), *Niranjan* (immaculate), *Samyam* (not knowing differences).<sup>1</sup> He is also called *Pranav* (ever new, immutable). Among His attributes are *Amrita* (immortal, eternal), *Antaryami* (director of all), *Akshar* (immutable), *Dhiro na Shochyati* (He is beyond grief). *Purusha* is supreme over all, and ruler of past and present. This supreme Reality is also called *Atma* (self), into which the awakened individual self may merge. Such merging (called later *Mukti*) does not come to those who constantly think there is only this world and none hereafter. The knowledge of the Self (Brahman, *Purusha*, *Om*) cannot be acquired through the intellect, or study of learning; though hidden in all things, it can be seen only by those who are 'of subtle insight' (*Suksham-darshak*). Ultimately, confessing the helplessness of the human mind to grasp the illimitable and ineffable reality of *Om*, the Upanishads cry out, *Neti, Neti* (not this, not this), since no simile, metaphor, symbol or any other resource available to human language can render Him adequately.

While the seers of the Upanishads were evolving this sublime vision of the Supreme Being, the Absolute, former beliefs in deities had not been superseded. In the Upanishads

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<sup>1</sup>Such nomes in essence, for the Absolute, along with numerous others are found used in the spiritual compositions of Guru Nanak and his successors in the holy office.

themselves there is open or implied belief in the existence of deities of Vedic conception, so that the position of faith attained is that which has been called Henotheism—belief in the existence of the Supreme Being side by side with belief in parallel deities. This attitude of mind has continued in varying degrees of faith corresponding to levels of realization in the Indian mind in general. While the average person has propitiated some Gods or Goddesses (since quite often faith in more than one is held by a family, clan or tribe) there has by the same time been a vague conception of the Supreme Being, known by various names of later invention such as *Ishvara*, *Parmeshvara*, *Parmatma*, *Prabhu*, *Gobind*. Names of personages drawn from later mythologies such as *Shiva*, *Shankar*, *Shambhu*, *Rama* and *Hari* (this last stands particularly for Krishna, for whom numerous periphrastic expressions are current) and others have been employed rather to express the idea of the Supreme Being than particular deities.<sup>1</sup> A term like *Bhagavan* (Lord of Prosperity) stands on a somewhat ambiguous ground, as indicative occasionally of the Supreme Being, but more often of the great incarnation, Krishna. This situation obtains in India still. The average person has a vague awareness of the evolution of the idea of the divine from the deity stage to that of the Supreme Being.

#### *Idealization of Concepts, Hindu and Muslim*

A number of mythological names of deities have, as in common everyday speech, been employed by Guru Nanak and his successors also to designate the Supreme Being. Their original mythological meaning has in most cases been obscured by their imprecise use in common speech for what the ordinary person conceives, however dimly, to be the Reality above the gods and goddesses. Ram and Krishna two of the commonest god-names have been made by the Guru to express the Supreme Being. So is also, though sparingly, Krishna (vide pp 469 and 413 of *Adi Granth*). Numerous periphrastic and attributive names of Krishna and Vishnu especially, have been employed in this sense. The context in each case, however, makes it perfectly clear that no deities according to some mythology or theology, but the Supreme Being, the Creator is meant; and these names are only popular, short-hand expressions with the advantage of familiarity. Thus, to take a few examples, these names are found used. First, those indicating Krishna : Damodar, Madhusudan, Gopal, Banwari, Mohan, Murari. Then, those expressive of Vishnu : Gorakh, Srirang, Sridhar, Narayana, Sarang-Pani, Jagan Nath.<sup>1</sup> Direct formulations expressive of the Absolute Eternal are again there : Par-Brahm, Niranjan, Akal-Purakh (Purusha), Parmeshvar, Karta, Nirankar (the Formless), Sati-Nam (Satya-Namu) and a number of periphrastic names.

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<sup>1</sup>For Guru Nanak's use of 'Rama' and 'Krishna' as synonyms for the Creator, and not as mere names of deities of mythic heroes, for example the following texts from *Var Asa* may be quoted :

'Krishna is the name for the God of gods, the very soul of Divinity. 'Rama's Name is the sun among goods.'

It may be mentioned here that names descriptive of God, redolent of Muslim associations have also been used, by Guru Nanak. The use of such words has significance mainly in the context of the Guru's universal vision, of which tolerance formed an important aspect. The Guru's endeavour was to bring Hindus and Muslims together (as also the various warring sects within each faith) through the recognition of the universal human truths in the idea of God; in the higher universal spiritual truths, and in morality and noble endeavour. This is evidenced as much by the exhortation to Hindu, Yogi (and every class of anchorite) and Muslim to seek behind the forms of his faith the deeper truths of the soul and noble conduct. Thus, the sacred thread, bathing spots, paste-mark etc. of the Hindu, the ear-rings, ash-smearing and other symbols of the Yogi, and the namaz, circumcision and Ramadan fasting of the Muslim all are declared, without the spiritual and moral life behind them to be mere shows, a sham. The exhortation is to cultivate through these (rather than only these) the spiritual-moral life. Terms drawn from the beliefs and practice of Islam and its mysticism called Sufism had by Guru Nanak's time become fairly well-known among the common folk. Hence, the Guru used such terms in a grand endeavour to touch the heart and soul of the Muslim no less than of the Hindu. Thus, words like Allah, Khuda, Sahib (Lord, Master), Pak-Parvardgar (The Holy Provider), Kadir (Almighty), Karim (Bountiful), Rahim (Merciful), Sultan (King)—are used for the Creator. Attributes and words expressive of spiritual states and allied contexts : Nadar, Karam, Bakshish, Darbar, Nishan, Rah, Dargah, Dar, Divan (Diban), Kurban, Didar, Kudrat, Shair, Saza, Reza, Hukam, Firman, Zor—and numerous others. Sometimes these are used in combination with words of Indian origin, as in the phrase Karta Kadir Karim',<sup>1</sup> 'Bed (Veda) Kateb (Koran)', 'Jam (Yama) Jagati', 'Ratan Jawahar Manak' and others. Freely as these words of Muslim origin are used by the Guru,<sup>2</sup> the cardinal and key-terms for the expression of the spiritual vision and the path of enlightenment are of Indian origin, clearly implying that the core of the messages which the Guru brought to mankind is Indian in its deeper character and significance. Of course, he widened the spiritual appeal of this message to embrace in his wide love and compassion Muslim as much as Hindu. But the call to the Muslim distinctly is to search for the universal values in *his* creed, without going very far into its details. The creed of the Hindu, on the other hand, because the Guru belongs from the inside to this tradition, is

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<sup>1</sup>The Maharashtrian saint Namdev, in a hymn reproduced in *Adi Granth*, containing some Persian sentences, invokes God as *Mir-Mukand* (The Lord-Emancipator). Here *Mir* is Muslim and *Mukand* (Mukund) is Hindu—a well-known attribute of God as Krishna. Namdev also couples in a hymn *Kalandar* and *Keshava*—the former standing for a Muslim mystical personality and the latter for the Hindu god, Vishnu.

<sup>2</sup>The Guru's receptive attitude towards the devotional verses and lyrics of a Muslim saint like Farid proceeded as much from the desire to inculcate tolerance as to demonstrate the universality of moral and spiritual truths, irrespective of the source from which these came. (Farid's compositions were known to Guru Nanak and commented upon by him.)

subjected to detailed critique; its mythology in a way is adopted both as fact and basis for allegory, and the path of spiritual ascent is defined and chalked out in its terms.

This brings us back on the thesis that the Guru was presenting a vision which is essentially Indian, though a powerful eclectic and evaluative process had been at work in rejecting a great deal of what he felt was matter irrelevant to the spiritual path and was only an accretion sticking on from a past which was derelict. From the above discussion, the synthesizing and creative tendency of Guru Nanak's teaching would have been made amply clear. Fixing his adoration and worship on the Supreme Being, the Eternal, for whom he used the names already evolved in the course of the spiritual history of India, he rejected polytheism outright, and along with it as necessary corollaries, the Incarnation theory and image-worship. His position touches pure Monotheism in one aspect, though as explained in the course of this article, he assimilates mythological concepts to his faith. While, however, accepting mythology he considers its religious stances outmoded and superseded and even sinful, as deviations from the worship of the Eternal. The universe and all in it he views against the Eternal, the Timeless and hence rejects beliefs which proceed from immature thinking or ignorance. His absorption with the Eternal makes him reject the lure of the temporal as without meaning and sinful.

### *The Creed Elucidated – Quintessence of Indian Spirituality*

It is time now to consider certain aspects of Guru Nanak's creed as it emerges from, the outpourings of his soul, in the *Bani* or Word of his composition. While, as said earlier the Guru has used words and phrases drawn from various sources to express his experience of God, the cardinal terms in which he has defined his creed are those contained in the *Mul-Mantra* or Basic Formula or Creed, which appears at the head of the prayer-chant, Japuji and is repeated either in full or in a condensed form wherever a fresh chapter or canto begins in the Holy Book, it is used also on all occasions for invoking divine grace and blessing. This Creed, as is well-known runs as : Ek-Oankar, Sati-Nam, Karta-Purakh, Nir-Bhau, Nir-Vair, Akal-Murati, Ajuni, Sai-Bhang, Guru Prasadi. Rendered into English, it would be : The One Indivisible Supreme Being; Truth Eternal; Creator-Purusha; Without fear; Without rancour; Timeless form, Unicarnated; Self-existent; Realized through His own grace.

In this Creed, the term Oankar to which the Guru added the numeral 1 (Ek here) for indubitable emphasis on the indivisible character of the Supreme Being, whose power and eternity no deity may share or approach, was evolved in the Upanishads, as said earlier and goes back to the Veda as *Om*. No name is holier than this, and its praise is illimitable, as is evident from the *Dakhni Oankar*. 'Nam' in the second phrase comes from the mystical tradition of yoga, recognized by the Guru as the way of spiritual enlightenment, which however, he called upon its practitioners to divest of its ritual and the fatuous search

for power through arousing the suppositious *Kundalini* or serpentine power and other elaborate physical practices. 'Nam' stands for the total spiritual endeavour, for the truth, like *Shabad* (*Shabda*), which literally means 'word', but has a deep, esoteric meaning as eternal Truth. Karta (Kartar) and Purakh (Purusha) again have spiritual Upanishadic associations, and have through the millenia acquired deep significance expressive of the Supreme Being, as against the deities of polytheistic conception. Nir-Bhau (without fear) and Nir-Vair (without rancour) are self-explanatory. *Nir-Bahu* (*Nir-Bhayam*) occurs as an attribute of Brahm in Mandukya Upanishad, while Nir-Vair is particularly significant of the universality of Divine grace and compassion. *Akal* in the next phrase, literally Timeless (Immortal, Eternal) has become a key-term in Sikh spiritual thought. Here again the significant emphasis is on the Eternity of the Creator. *Ajuni* (Unborn-Uncreated) only further emphasizes God's eternity, and places Him apart from the gods and goddesses of common belief. Stanza 3 in Japji, as the opening verses in Var Asa and other compositions develop the theme of God's eternity and His uncreated character. *Sai-Bhang*, an altered form of the Upanishdic *Swayam-bhu* (self-existent) lays still further stress on the eternity of God. While deriving from Indian spiritual sources, it is remarkably parallel with the Muslim attributive phrase *Kaim-Bizzat* (existent by His own self, i.e. Might). Who will say if in adopting the concept 'Sai-Bhang' the Guru had also the Muslim phrase in mind and the desire to make Hindu and Muslim see that the God of all mankind could be defined in identical terms, irrespective of the barriers of language. All this must remain a mystery. The last phrase *Guru-Prasadi* not only places the key-word 'Guru' as the equivalent of the Supreme Being, but also brings in the term *Prasad* (Grace) hallowed by antiquity. This term itself and its Muslim Sufi equivalents, *nadar* (nazar, glance of grace) and *mehar* (kindness, love) are some of the most frequently employed terms in the Guru's holy text.

As may be evident, the basic creed is in terms of Indian spirituality and sacred traditions, ancient and those which in the Guru's time were more recent. In this creed the Guru gave to the Hindu a conception of faith and of God which was sublime; and in which after so many accretions had been lopped off, the essence, the highest enlightenment remained. This the Guru wished to give to Indian humanity, calling it away from darkness and superstition.

The creed is, by itself the expression of pure Monotheism. In the total context of the Guru's teaching however, this Monotheism is qualified in two directions. In the first place, as stated earlier, it is difficult to postulate monotheism to the Guru's teaching of the type as for example, found in Islam. The background of history as in the Koran is of the Jewish people, who since Abraham's time were monotheists in an uncompromizing manner.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>There is, however, an elaborate mythology, inclusive of angelology and demonology in the Semitic tradition, which is largely shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These faiths inculcate literal belief in these quasi-celestial and supernatural beings.

The background of history or mythology (for in the earlier phases the two would be identical) in India, was clearly one in which various deities or hero-gods had claimed worship and had stood for metaphysical concepts. The Guru rejected the idea of these deities etc. being treated as objects of worship, or being regarded as Divine incarnations. But he does not appear to have denied that these, from Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and the goddesses Lakshmi and Parvati downwards, had existed. The characters of Ramayana and Mahabharata also he accepts as having existed. Since all these personages were in a sense sacred, the Guru may be said to accept them as the objects of veneration and by no means as false or non-existent. Sita the ideal of sublime purity and nobility in womanhood, he holds up for veneration in Japuji (Stanza 37). The Guru's attitude towards the quasi-divine personages of mythology appears to be one of acceptance as illustrative of great moral qualities, but of course not as co-shares of sanctity with God.

While thus the Guru's attitude is not parallel with Abrahmic or Islamic Monotheism, it inclines mystically towards monism. Monism in Indian spiritual history is designated by the well-known metaphysical term *Advaita*, which literally means non-duality. The implication of this negative phrase is that the only real existence is that of the Absolute, Brahm (or Brahman, with the last syllable unstressed) and that the appearance of diversity is illusion born of the limited vision of man's ego, temporarily separated from the universal soul (Paramatma, Brahm) into individual existence. To overcome this illusion, to merge into the universal consciousness or soul is the goal of life's endeavour, the end of the spiritual quest. To the enlightened person—Yogi, Gyani (*Jnani*)—the illusion of diversity and separateness ceases to exist, and he sees all existence as one, and to him Mine and Thine or any other distinctions cease to matter. This illusion is called *Maya*, and the attitude of being under its influence is *Dvaita* (duality) which implies ego-centredness, materialism, worldliness. This is a somewhat crude statement of a highly subtle doctrine, perhaps the sublimest vision vouchsafed to man in his moments of highest spiritual awakening. *Advaita* is stated in the Upanishads<sup>1</sup> and was developed into a creed by the great Shankara, who illustrated it through the figure of the Serpent and the Rope.<sup>2</sup> The Rope appears to the eye of illusion as a Serpent. With illusion gone, the Serpent disappears and the Rope alone remains. Thus, with the illusion of *Maya* lifted, man sees the things and attractions of the world as of no value, and engages himself in realizing solely 'the highest gain' (*paramartha*) which is *Mukti* or emancipation. That is in essence escape from the illusion of *Maya*, and is the basis of spiritual as well as moral life. *Advaita* explicitly or led on to by the various systems, is at the basis of Indian spiritual philosophy. In the Samkhya system, a distinction is made between *Purusha* (the Eternal, conscious soul of the universe) and *Prakirti* (objective existence, matter both physical and psychical). *Prakirti*, which is mindless, is evolved only

<sup>1</sup>Mandukhya Upanishad, Kathopanishad.

<sup>2</sup>This simile is already found in Mandukya Upanishad.



through interaction with *Purusha*, the universal mind. *Gian* (*Jnan*, *Buddhi*) or enlightenment consists in removing the evil of ignorance from the self. Such evil consists in thinking that *Purusha* and *Prakiriti* are distinct. To remove this is spirituality as well as morality. In later thought, this duality to be resolved is known as *Shiva* and *Shakti*. All these terms—*Purusha*, *Shiva*, *Shakti*, *Gian*, *Buddhi*—are employed by the Guru in various context to express his spiritual meaning.

### *Ethical Determinism*

Another cardinal concept which figures prominently in the Guru's teaching is what may be called ethical determinism. This implies, as would be familiar to the student of Indian philosophy, the paramount importance of man's actions in determining his destiny. Numerous texts make not only bliss and bale, both in the wordly and the spiritual sense, dependent upon man's own actions, but also how man is to stand in his ultimate count with the Creator. In the Japuji, in the concluding stanza is affirmed :

Nearness to God or distance from Him depends upon man's actions.

In stanza 20 of the Japuji, man is exhorted through the figure of the cultivator, (a figure of frequent occurrence in the Guru's teaching) to cultivate good actions with a view to attaining bliss :

Sow thou the seed, and eat the fruit thereof;

Saith Nanak, by Divine ordinance dost thou come into the world and go out thence.

In the verse last quoted occurs the concept of Divine Ordinance. Elsewhere occurs the related concept of Divine Grace (*Prasad*, *Mehar*, *Nadar*) which is the manifestation of a mysterious beneficent power ruling over the universe. While man's actions are the determining factor in man's emancipation or bondage in the spiritual sense, there remains the factor of grace, a mystery which man can no wise penetrate. The Divine Ordinance does not determine individual destiny, but only lays down the moral law. Man's actions are retributed according to this law, in which there is nothing arbitrary. Even the inclination of man towards good actions is determined by grace. This insistence on the co-presence in human life of action and Ordinance or Grace is almost ubiquitous in the Guru's teaching, and is repeated endlessly. In the Japuji again, stanza 4, this relationship is stated :

Through good actions comes to man the vesture of the human life;

But through Divine grace alone is found to Door of emancipation.

Again, in the Japuji, Stanza 34 :  
 Reckoning is there made according to deeds :  
 Just Himself, just His court.

On page 147, mentioning the 'four rivers of fire' (already referred to) the Guru says that these can be crossed only 'through devotion acquired as a fruit of noble actions.'

Bhai Gurdas, a great poet and devoted scholar of the philosophy of Sikhism, and a close companion of the fifth Guru, in his celebrated canto I (Var), stanza 43, reports Guru Nanak in a discussion with the Yogis, as expressing the view that not a guide or preceptor can bring emancipation to any one, but his own actions alone. 'Had I the power that my mere word were to determine emancipation to whom I please—all, all such miracles are as shadows'. The meaning being not only that such a thing is impossible, but furthermore that the possession of miraculous powers is by itself not indicative of spiritual merit, which comes from devotion.

In Hinduism in general, these two concepts occur and recur, though in Buddhism there is almost exclusive emphasis on the determining nature of actions. A few more texts may be quoted on this theme. The fourth Guru, Ram Das, states the importance of action, thus :

Who hath power to provide sustenance to human beings ?

They partake of what they themselves sow. (Page 1264)

Again, Kabir whose compositions are included for reverent study in the Adi Granth, states this relationship thus :

Emancipation comes from God, though exhortation to devotion

To God comes from a human Guide 1 (Page 1373). Here 'devotion' is the 'action' which man must perform, to qualify for Divine grace.

Inculcating righteous endeavour, the Guru makes it clear beyond doubt that man may expect grace or emancipation, not without his own endeavour. He must engage in such action, though as stated above, such inclination itself comes from Divine grace. On page 415 occurs :

Turn wheresoever devotion to God may come to you/Through Divine Grace garner good actions, And dyed in the love of God, chant His praise.

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<sup>1</sup>Original, Sant.

In other places, the two concepts of Action and Grace are placed in conjunction :  
Man's accumulated actions are his treasure.

My heart yearns to beg this boon of Thee :

To fill the vessel of the heart with Thy love —

This from the Day of Creation is the true wealth give by Thee. (Page 378)

The reprobate man undergoes suffering in eighty four hundred thousand hells—  
To him comes such retribution for his actions :

Except through the light given by the True Preceptor,<sup>1</sup> no emancipation comes—man is in the grip of his actions which alone bind him.

### *Action as determinant*

Some are tossed about in transmigration, and find not a resting place in their real home, God;

Bound by their actions, they continue to accumulate further sins :

Blind, they see nothing, enveloped by the evil of avarice and egoism. (Page 1029)

Joy and suffering are caused by actions of previous births :

The mystery of this is known alone to God who has given these.

Man, whom canst thou blame for thy suffering ?

Bear now the hard retribution for thy own acts, (Page 1030)

All creatures carry with them what is destined for each;

This is determined by their own actions :

Only that will happen which God hath destined.

They are fools and idiots who think their will may operate.

Saith Nanak: The Eternal is the limitless treasury of good. (Page 1169)

Again, the mystery of the conjunction of Action and Divine Ordinance :

What God hath ordained, that is His will.

What He has recorded in Primal Time is ineffaceable.

Man, impelled by God's will engages in action :

Absorption in God's Word may however, merge him in the Eternal. (Page 1275)

Man remains ignorant of God's commandments, is like one blind, and is involved in evil;

Through Divine prompting he may acquire love of God, and thus through his actions achieve honour. (Page 1330)

Good or evil retribution is precisely the result of one's own deeds (Var Asa—Page 471).

<sup>1</sup>Stands here, as elsewhere for God.

<sup>1</sup>Emancipation, enlightenment are meant.

It may be noted that in common parlance among people professing various forms of Hinduism (also among the Sikhs) the usual word for destiny is *Karma*, which originally means 'action'. This is the strongest evidence of what has been called here ethical determinism—destiny being shaped by man's actions and not by the arbitrary fiat of a divine power.

*Ideal Action—Expectation of Reward disregarded—Duty*

One of the ethical principles, rooted in the spiritual vision of a whole race is the Indian idea particularly associated with the message enunciated in the Gita, inculcating righteous action without expectation of reward. This idea is too well-known in India to need elaboration here. Guru Nanak has called upon man, in various contexts, particularly in his critique of the doctrine and practice of Yoga, so to instruct the mind as to be above the lure of desire. That according to him, is true Yoga—the spirit and essence of this great path. Yoga is non-attachment to worldly objectives. The true Yogi is one who 'has given up attachment and transcended the lure of the world, and found his true home' i.e. in the soul. The Yogi is one 'who while living is as dead'—dead to passion. 'To him joy and sorrow are alike.' 'He consumes worldly desire in the word', i.e. in absorption in God.

'To live immaculate among the impurities of the world is the true Yoga-practice.'

(Page 1189)

He who surrenders unto God who made these, his desires truly attains Nirvana.

Saith Nanak : He who knows all to be God's is accepted by him, be he householder or recluse. (Page 1329)

Nirvana lies in leaving up to God the fruits of desire;

To leave all in the hands of the Creator: Such a one is acceptable to God, be he householder or recluse. (Page 1329—already cited).

Meditation on the Eternal illuminates the Soul; By this, one may achieve indifference to the world amidst its poison;

God is the Eternal Master—

He may grant the highest Bliss even while man is fixed in duties of daily life. (Page 661)

It may be pointed out that the author of the Gita too is exploring the true meaning of Yoga which he equates with enlightenment, devotion and disinterested endeavour rather than with any ritual. The Guru is giving his interpretation of the meaning of

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<sup>1</sup>Page 419

<sup>2</sup>Page 661

<sup>3</sup>Page 1256

<sup>4</sup>Page 413

true Yoga on similar lines. The theme of Yoga, its true meaning, and particularly the orientation of its idea in the direction of noble fruitful action, which the Guru has called *Seva* (service) is a prominent feature of the Guru's teaching, and perhaps the bulk of his compositions in elucidating its various aspects. The Guru, while elucidating Yoga, rejects ritual and particularly Hatha (the Yoga way of forcible or physical effort) but concentrates the seeker's effort on faith (*Manan*), and Absorption (*Samadhi*). The path and its means commended by him are spiritual processes and not any physical or mystagogic ritual. He, however, unlike the Gita does not lend countenance to the Incarnation principle, round which the Gita-legend is built. This point has already been stressed before. It may be pointed out here that in the Guru's composition the terminology of Yoga, particularly as it had been absorbed from the ancient philosophical literature on the subject and had been further evolved during the medieval period, is freely used, with a view to reorientating its idea and relating it to true spirituality. His own pronouncements on Yoga seek identification with the spiritual vision—enlightenment or achievement of non-duality—restraint of the passions and harnessing of the entire spiritual and moral energy to the performance of righteous action in the widest spheres of individual and social human relations. The Guru castigated the ideal of renunciation in the ordinary, obvious sense understood by the various orders of recluses, but commended the renunciation of desire, as stated already. Most of the teaching in relation to Guru Nanak is practically unknown to the average students of religion in India, and elsewhere. Such ignorance has inhibited that fully reverent understanding of Guru Nanak which is due to one who gave afresh to India, the spiritual and moral vision in term of the values evolved by her own seers.

### *The Vision and the Prophecy*

The spiritual vision of Guru Nanak is couched in poetry of devotion and meditation. This usually takes the form of song and is set to music, while equally it has the inner movement of meditation and the progress of the mind and soul from point to point of spiritual experience. In form and content this poetry further, is of the nature of prophecy. A prophet inspires his age with a fresh vision of those fundamental truths to which men are apt to grow indifferent amidst their material, egoistic concerns. With his insight he lifts the veil from reality and instils in the human spirit a new fervour, a passion for truth, and the heroism to live and die for certain ideals. This is the direction taken by Guru Nanak's vision from which his poetry proceeds. While in his own time and in the age proceeding his, there were religious teachers enough in India, who engaged themselves in various kinds of spiritual exercises and drew men to the practice of this or that code or ritual; they were like eyes struck with myopia, seeing only a little distance ahead and not aware of the longer and deeper issues of life, whether those con-

cerned the individual or the group. Particularly missing from their vision was that large and life-giving outlook which is called humanitarianism; and of which compassion, charity, fellow-feeling, forgiveness—all that in the visions of the seers of India had been called *Dharma* are the essential constituents. It was the husk, the outer shell, and not the spirit which the savants, recluses and those who set up as the guides of mankind were preaching and practising. Some others too, who had been disturbed with the inadequacy of the practice of creeds and tradition-bound faiths, had made humanitarianism and the relationship of man with God without the intercession of priest or preacher the main theme of their missionary activity. They did a great deal to bring the light of godliness and good living to the common masses. In place of the selfish priests, preaching hardened code and ritual, these devotees—Bhaktas—taught men the way of love and compassion. Their work was valuable indeed, but it too suffered from severe limitations. It was confined to the reform and purification of the individual life, and lacked what it would be justified to call perspective.

Enveloping the individual life was the malaise in the vaster sphere of the community, the nation, if one may use a term which at that time perhaps could not with justice be applied to the vast entity that was India. These good men of limited perspective were not inducted into the implications of what was passing in the larger spheres of the life of groups and nations. They were aware of the need for love, and had perhaps in a vague way faith in the succour of goodness by the Divine power. But no one in this age of moral and spiritual chaos remembered two of the cardinal principles enunciated in the Gita : One, that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of mankind whenever Truth and Righteousness begin to decline. Evil-doers are chastized and the good are succoured. Again, that not the life of the recluse, which in moral terms means escape and shrinking from duty, but of the man who undertakes action in a righteous cause, however unpalatable, is the life to be commended. In the Gita the first of these principles is mythologized through the mighty assertion of Krishna, the Incarnation of Vishnu—nay, the Supreme Being itself. The second is dramatized through the moral perplexity of Arjuna, which for him is resolved by Krishna in exhorting him to enter on action, casting aside the sentimental rationalization of his pacifism. As against priest, recluse and anchorite, each steeped in a partial and hence false philosophy of life, Guru Nanak enunciated mighty moral principles—prophecies for the age and for mankind in general. In the Japuji the final stage recounted by him of spiritual development is that of 'Heroism of Mighty Endeavour' (*Sarm-Khand*). Those undertaking such heroism are resplendent with spiritual and moral beauty which beggars description. 'They are subject neither to transmigration nor to the delusion of Maya' i.e. Wordliness. The sphere of these heroes is bliss attained through purity of conduct. In Var Asa is the examination and reappraisal of creed and ritual, the social and political scene, of false moral criteria, falsehood in thought, word and deed and the general moral blindness afflicting mankind. Side by side with the

expression of stern moral judgement are notes of devotion and humility before the Creator, which sound like the tuning of soft-stringed instruments amidst the clanging trumpets. The total meaning of this great disquisitional poem, Var Asa, is to subject all life to the vision of the higher morality and spirituality and to assert the imperativeness of the moral law, without which all ritual is meaningless and evil. Wordly glory is petty and futile before the might of God, who may take it away whenever it pleases Him. 'Should He withdraw His favour, monarchs He reduces to a blade of grass'. In the mighty quartet of poems known as *Babar-Vani* or Babar's Ordinance, the Guru who was witness to the carnage in the Punjab by the victorious soldiery of Babar, the Mughal, not only pours out a lament on the humiliation of a great people, the Indians, but enunciates again a mighty principle—what it would be true to call a moral-spiritual philosophy of history. Men and nations suffer because they lose virtue and truthfulness. The lure of luxurious living and wealth are the true enemy of man, who forgets that an hour might come wherein truth alone will be able to stand. Mysterious as the operation of the Divine Will is in situations like Babar's victory and carnage, it is unthinkable to accuse God of any injustice. His Law is in operation 'the just Law'—that of morality - and He watches unconcerned its operation. The lesson is for man not to let go of the moral anchor. As mentioned earlier, the Guru has called God in a number of places *Asur-Sanghar* (Destroyer of Demons). Truth and Righteousness must ultimately prevail. In a mighty vision says the Guru: 'Nanak, evil must be destroyed; Righteousness alone shall ultimately prevail'. This is borne out by the spiritual intuition of man as also by the evidence of history and mythology. This point has been illustrated earlier. But this entails on man the duty to endeavour in the way of God. Not the fatuous hope that Divine intervention will somehow set things right, but the sacrifice and heroism of God - inspired men will frustrate evil and make justice prevail. Heroic men may even lay down their lives in the cause of God. 'Blessed is the death of those heroic men, who lay down their lives in an approved cause'.<sup>2</sup>

Should thy heart be filled with the passion of love for God,  
 Step into it with thy head placed on thy palm;  
 He who treads this path—  
 Must prepare to give up life without demur. (P. 1412)

This is the enunciation of the duty of embracing martyrdom when the cause of truth so requires—the first instance in India of the enunciation of such a moral principle. The Guru cast repeated contempt on anchorites and recluses who withdrew from the scene of

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<sup>1</sup>Page 1283

<sup>2</sup>Page 579

human life to engage in what to him appeared to be a life of moral cowardice. Interpreting the Guru's view, the great savant Bhai Gurdas, puts into his mouth these words to the Siddhas (Yogis) whom he accosted in the higher ranges of the Himalayas: 'The Siddhas have concealed themselves in mountain-caves—who then may take mankind across?' That is, who may save humanity from evil and suffering? To him the spiritual life was not complete without man entering on the sphere of duty. This he called *Seva* (devoted service), as said earlier. It is commended in several places in the holy text :

I have learnt by the light given by the holy Master :

Recluse, hero, celibate or Sanyasi, none may expect to earn merit without devolved service—

Service in which lies the essence of purity. (P. 992)

Only through devoted service in this world may one find a place at the Divine Portal. (Page 261)

Through learning man may do good unto others. (P. 356)

Not many in his own day could he aware of the power and depth of Guru Nanak's vision with regard to the character of the Supreme Being, the true nature of the spiritual experience and the moral process. What he saw and spoke was entirely revolutionary and out of step with the established encrusted traditionalism and ritualism which passed for religion. His Word was a vision born of spiritual experience—new, yet related as is the fruit to the root, to the ancient spiritual thinking of India. It was thinking purified, rid of its primitive accretions and put in harmony with the Time-spirit, which called for a broad, tolerant outlook and emphasis on Action, as against the individualist escapism prevalent in the age. On this theme of the emphasis in Guru Nanak's teaching on Action, by which alone is faith or piety perfected, a vast discourse may be written. Here are only brief hints, indicative of the direction which his vision of life took, and by which his prophecy was guided. This aspect of his work, however, has not been fully understood. The true significance of his teaching was lost sight of in the blinding atmosphere of prejudice born of opposition to his rejection of what was false and spiritually irrelevant.

At the close the question raised in the beginning may be reiterated: What causes operated to resist the wider acceptance of Guru Nanak's Word and vision, particularly in the region in which he took his birth, and brought his message in its language which he made rich and vital, with lofty content and great poetic power, from a folk tongue which it before his time was?

This is a question which demands an answer, and perhaps points to a great failing in those who closed their minds and judged Guru Nanak by narrow criteria and dead traditional formulae rather than through minds opened to the influence of Truth.



Perhaps on the momentous occasion of this Anniversary, the spurt of devotional and intellectual activity may bring about a clearer, better understanding of what he has meant particularly for the purification of the soul of India.

## GURU NANAK AND THE SIDDHAS BHAI JODH SINGH

On going through Guru Nanak's Bani one finds a large number of hymns addressed to Jogis. A dialogue between the Siddhas and Guru Nanak consisting of 73 stanzas is recorded in the Ramkali measure. Two Siddhas are mentioned in it by name, Charpat and Lohari Pa. The former was a disciple of Sri Gorakh Nath and was himself one of the nine Nathas. In this dialogue Guru Nanak portrays the difference between his own creed and that of the Jogis. In the Asa measure three hymns<sup>1</sup> are addressed to Bharthri who founded one of the twelve sects of Jogis called the Vairag Ramkali measure hymn No. 5 is addressed to Machhindra. In the Var of the same Panth. In the measure besides Charpat and Bharthri names of Isar (Shiva who is designated as Adi Nath in the Siddha literature), Gorakh and Gopi Chand are mentioned. It appears that in these slokas Guru Nanak gives his own views.

Besides the long dialogue and the hymns alluded to above, there are many more hymns in which the Guru has addressed Audhus (Avadhutas), Rawals and Yogis explaining the uselessness of merely sticking to outer symbols and the craze for supernatural powers and long life. The 7th Paudi of the Japu and Paudis 28 to 31 deal with these subjects. In Siri Rag Hymn No. 1 para 3, hymn No. 2 paras 2 and 3 hymn No. 8 para 2 express his preference for the Name in contrast to pursuit of *Siddhis*. In Var Majh slok No. 1, paudi 4 and slok No. 1, paudi 19 refer to the same subject. In the Gauri measure Shabad No. 4, 3, 15 is addressed to a Rawal explaining the real way to Jog. In the same measure Gauri Ashtpadis No. 6 and 7 deal with the same theme. In the Asa Rag besides the three hymns addressed to Bharthri which have been already mentioned, hymn No. 8 portrays the right method of Jog.

In Bilawal Thittin Pauri No. 11 the real significance of symbols is explained. In hymn No. 4 and No. 11 in the Ramkali Rag and Astpadis No. 2, 8 and 9 and in para 3 of the 5th Astpadi discussion on the same subject is continued. In Paudi 15 of *Oankar* the right interpretation of Samadhi is stated. In Rag Maru hymns No. 9 and 11 the Guru gives his own method of the real union. In Maru Slok No. 22 stanzas 12 to 15 he decries sticking to the mere outer symbols. In Basant Hindol No. 5 he deprecates pride in the outer garb. In Parbhati Rag the right method has been explained to an Audhu (Avadhuta). In the first two lines of Parbhati Ashtpadi No. 3 he dwells on the uselessness of merely donning a garb and not living the real life of yoga.

These frequent discussions show the influence that the Yogis enjoyed over the

common people in the Punjab at the time of the advent of Guru Nanak. The Siddhas through a display a supernatural powers, the use of *Jantaras*, *Mantaras* and *Tantaras*, the expectation of blessing and the fear of curses created awe in their minds and the people in terror ministered to their wants and became their followers. Mostly they belonged to the split-eared sect of the Jogis. The Mussalmans, too, desirous of securing those powers were freely admitted to the fraternity.

Professor Dwivedi in his book *Nath Sampardai* quotes some remarks of Ibn Batuta, an Egyptian traveller, regarding these Yogis which bear out the statements made above.<sup>3</sup> This traveller writes, the hair on the head of these yogis reached upto their feet and their bodies were covered with ashes. Owing to ascetic practices they looked pale. Mussalmans, desirous of obtaining powers to show wondrous feats also followed them. In the first instance Batuta saw them in the camp of the ruler of Mavish Unnhar, Tarin Shirin. They were fifty in number, they lived in caves dug under the earth and came out only to answer the call of nature. They blew something like a horn in the morning; in the evening and at night Ibn Batuta saw their miraculous powers with his own eyes. On his evidence one could admit that since a long time common people have looked on them with a sense of fear. In those days a tiger was working havoc in a village near Gwalior. The people of that village told Batuta that he was a Yogi who assuming the form of a tiger who ate men.<sup>4</sup>

It appears that their methods did not change since the time of Ibn Batuta. Bhai Gurdas in his First Var has written an account of Guru Nanak's visit to the golden mountain where he saw an assembly of eighty-four Siddhas. They enquired of Guru Nanak what power brought him there. He replied that repeating the name of God and with loving devotion contemplated Him. On being questioned a second time about his name, he told them he was called Nanak. They then asked him how people lower down<sup>5</sup> conducted themselves. The Baba replied that in the dark night (Amavas) of falsehood, ignorance reigned supreme everywhere, and he was searching the world for the moon of truth. The earth has been overwhelmed by sin and the bull (of Dharma) underneath has sent forth a cry. "The Siddhas have hidden themselves in the mountains, who is going to save the world? The Jogis without gnosis know only how to keep their bodies covered with ashes day and night. Without a Guru the world is drowning."

"The dog-faced Kali age has come and carrion has become the food of kings. They commit sins and the hedge which was to protect the crop is eating it up. Their subjects blind an account of ignorance utter false praises of them. The disciples call the tunes and the gurus dance to them. The followers sit in their homes and the gurus visit them there. The kazis (judges) have become corrupt; they receive bribes and deprive the people of their just rights. The love between wife and husband depends upon money, the source of which is not questioned. Sin has taken hold of the world."

On hearing this reply, writes Bhai Gurdas, the Siddhas thought of converting

the Guru to their own creed. Such a Yogi, they thought, would add lustre to their Panth in the iron age. They wanted to create an impression of their miraculous powers on him and gave him a *khappar* (an earthen pot) to fetch water from a nearby pond. On arriving there the Guru found it full of jewels and rupees, but without water. They had calculated that the Guru would be tempted by the precious stones and might gather them. The Guru, on the other hand, came empty-handed and reported the absence of water in the pond. By his own teachings he satisfactorily answered their queries and established the distinctiveness of his own path, the path of the Name, which was the treasure-house of all happiness. According to Bhai Gurdas, after settling down at Kartarpur, the Guru put off the garb of an itinerant preacher and dressed himself in the clothes of an ordinary householder. Hearing of a fair at Achal near Batala, the Guru went there. The Jogis owned the place of worship and in fact it was their annual gathering. By that time Guru Nanak had become famous in that vicinity and people flocked to the place where he sat, to have a sight of him. As is usual on such occasions, they made monetary offerings in abundance. This aroused jealousy in the mind of the Jogis. A small incident enraged them further. A troupe of Ras Dharis<sup>7</sup> was engaged in their usual folk dances and people showed their appreciation by putting coins in a pot placed for the purpose. A Jogi surreptitiously hid that pot and the troupe sensing the loss of offerings were nonplussed. Guru Nanak who was also one of the audience, pointed to the place where the pot was hidden, and the Jogis took it as an insult to their Panth and made haste to have a discussion with him.

“Jogi Bhangar Nath twitted him with mixing acid in a vessel full of milk. The milk had coagulated and on churning would not yield butter. He had doffed the garb of an ascetic and had again begun to live a worldly life. The Baba replied that the mother (Guru) of Bhangarnath was not an adept. She did not know how to cleanse the vessel (mind) thoroughly and by this mistake lost the butter. “You boast of giving up the life of a householder and becoming an ascetic, but go to the homes of the house-holders to beg food. Without sharing with others what one earns no merit is gained.”

On hearing these words, the Jogis started uttering fearful cries. “Bedi Nanak in the iron age is refuting the teachings of the six schools of philosophy.” The Siddhas talked of medicinal roots and in a loud voice began to repeat their mantras and tantras. They assumed the forms of lions and tigers and made a show of their miraculous powers. Some grew wings and in sport began to fly in the skies like birds. Others became serpents and began to hiss and some more made fire to rain from the skies. Bhangar Nath made meteors run through space and some sitting on their deer-skins began to swim on water. The fire of anger in the minds of the Siddhas could not be quenched.

The Siddhas then addressed Nanak and said, “You showed miracles to the world. Show some to us. Why are you delaying? The Baba replied, “Venerable Naths, I have nothing to show. I take shelter with nothing except the word of the Guru and the

congregation (of saints). He added further, 'O, Venerable Nath, listen to the Word and speak the truth. Other than the True Name, I have no miracle to show. Even if I could clothe myself with fire and make my habitat in the snows of the Himalayas, eat iron and win the following of the whole world, increase my stature to such an extent as to make the earth move under its weight, wield so much power as to enable me to despatch to the other world whomsoever I wanted—without the true Name all these powers are like the shadow of a cloud'.

From the account given by Ibn Batuta and Bhai Gurdas it is clear that the common people lived in awe of the Yogis, who they thought possessed supernatural powers. The Siddhas lived high up in the mountain caves or thick forests and did not share the woes of the common people. They looked down upon them as ensnared in the nooses of worldly life, though for the supply of their physical necessities they depended on their gifts. The common folk administered to their wants in the hope of being blessed by them. The fear of their curses goaded them, even if they were unwilling to offer what they wanted. Guru Nanak taught that the lure of miraculous powers was a hinderance in the way of spiritual progress and by practicing truth and honesty in their daily activity men could get salvation without running to forests or caves.

Lately Professor Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, after analysing teachings of the scriptures of the Nath Samapardai has given an authoritative account of their beliefs and practices and before contrasting them with the teachings of Guru Nanak it will be useful to give a brief synopsis of these.

The Siddhas considered their creed higher than the creeds of the six schools of philosophy and Jainism and Buddhism. "The Vedantists, following hard reasonings are enveloped in their Maya. Bhatta Mimansikas are entangled in their doctrine "fruit of actions." The Vaiseskas have faced destruction on account of their belief of quality. Similarly the followers of other schools are devoid of Reality. The Sankhyas, Vaisnavas, followers of Vedas, Viras, Buddhists and Jains are wasting their time in making their bodies undergo various painful practices. Again, learned Pandits engaging in havans, naked ascetics and poor seekers of merit by going to sacred places, groaning under the load of pain have not been able to find the Reality. Therefore, it is proper to follow the Siddha Marga which follows the natural tendencies of the mind. This Siddha Marga is the Natha Mati. Dividing the word Natha into *Na* and *tha* it has been made to mean the way that is the cause of the stability of the three Lokas from the very beginning. It is therefore, that Shri Gorakh Nath has been called a Natha."<sup>8</sup>

Rahul Sankritayana, an eminent scholar of ancient lore, after studying Buddhist literature found in Tibet and India, had concluded that Buddhist Bhikshus of the Vajarayan Sect were the fore-runners of the Nath Panth. They practised Yoga to increase their mental powers and along with it to win the devotion of their followers they practised various disciplines of Hath Yoga and several kinds of Tratakas.<sup>9</sup> With tantras

and mantras they invented many new gods and goddesses for the same purpose.<sup>10</sup>

The Siddhas themselves, however, trace their origin from Adi Nath (Shiva) who had two disciples—Machhindra Nath and Jalundher Nath. Machhindra Nath was the Guru of Gorakh Nath, Charpat Nath, Reva Nath and Meena Nath. Jalundher Nath's two famous disciples were Kanippa and Gopi Chand, while Gorakh had five, namely Gehni Nath, Nag Nath, Bharthari Nath, Manik Nath and Bilashya Nath.

Gorakh Nath was the founder of these split-eared sects of Yogis. Jalundher Nath founded the Kapalik sect and Machhindra Nath revealed "the Kaul Gian" and was the originator of Kaula Marga. From Guru Nanak's hymns it is clear that he addressed them to split-eared Jogis, whose symbols are named in them. A brief description of 'Kapalik' and 'Kaul' sects however will not be out of place.

The 'Kapaliks' were so named because they ate and drank out of a cup made out of the human skull. Even their ear-rings were made of human bones. They generally lived in crematoriums and had a Yogini with them for sexual intercourse. Unfortunately no books dealing with their creed and practises in detail are available, but what can be culled from the dramas like 'Malti Madhva' and 'Prabodh Chandrodaya' about them can be expressed in these words:

A Kapalik Som Siddhant by name is made to say, "that as Shiva plays with Uma daily on the Kailas mountain, the same sort of intercourse with a woman is the highest salvation. In the creed of these people there is no other pleasure except intercourse with a woman. When Sadashiva is pleased, then no pain can spoil this pleasure. Therefore, this pleasure is termed everlasting. From 'Prabodh Chandrodaya' one learns that these Kapaliks offered oblations of human flesh with its fat and entrails and drank wine out of a cup of human skull and offered in worship to Maha Bhairava fresh human blood, and ever had a Kapalini with them. Liquor was considered by them a means of cutting off all the connection of the soul with the worldly life. A Kapalik in 'Karpur Manjari, is made to say that for a striver of 'Kul marg' there is no necessity of a repetition of a Mantra or Tantra, no need of knowledge or meditation, even no necessity of the Guru's grace. The Kapaliks drink liquor, have intercourse with women and easily get salvation."

Professor Dwivedi remarks, "There is no doubt that the dramatist has painted the picture of followers of this creed according to their own understanding of them and should be accepted with hesitation but wherever there is a description of a Kapalik, he is described as a Shaiva Yogi and consumer of liquor."

From an article of Bhadant Santi Bhikshu published in No. I Vol IV of 'Visva Bharti Patrika', Professor Dwivedi has given a quotation that shows that Kapaliks inherited these ideas from Buddhist Siddhas of the Vajaryan Sect. "For the striver who wishes to progress in practices of this path it is absolutely necessary to control his mind. If the mind is disturbed on account of non-fulfillment of the desires arising in it, then the

whole attempt will be useless. For this reason Vajrayan had laid down that we should tread the path in such a way as not to disturb the mind. If the jewel of the mind is disturbed, then there will be no accomplishment. Then how to overcome this disturbance? If desires are suppressed they are not killed, they hide themselves lower down in the unconscious. When an occasion arises they reappear and overwhelm the striver. Therefore, it is not proper to suppress them. The right way is to fulfil all desires; then alone the mental disturbance will be over and true success will be obtained. In "this way the fulfilment of desires entered the practical life of the strivers. The background of this accomplishment was 'Sunyavad'<sup>12</sup> The supreme aim of a striver is to achieve the state of the void and rid his nature of all affections and hatreds. To fulfil desires a woman is an absolute necessity. On account of this in 'Vajaryan' five Buddhas and innumerable Bodhi-Sattvas have been imagined accompanied by their Shaktis."

To achieve success, the Guru is a must. It is for this reason that all the Buddhists who have become Siddhas have a Guru. That Guru is absolute non-existence. As sweetness is the nature of jaggery, warmth the nature of fire, in the same way the Dharma of all Dharmas and nature of all natures is non-existence. A Vajarsatva is the image of non-existence. Vajar Satya, Vajar Dhar, Vajar Pani and Tathagat are the names of this void. These very Vajar Dhars are the gurus of all the Buddhas."

Machhindra Nath was the originator of the 'Kaul Gian' sect of the Siddhas in this age, otherwise this sect claims its existence since the world began. It appears the followers of this sect did not want to disclose who they were. A believer of this creed "should be a 'Sakta' inwardly, outwardly he should pose as a Siva and should conduct himself as a Vaishnava in his dealings with others. This is the Code of Conduct."

From the philosophic point of view they believe the doctrine of *Satkarya*, whatever never was can never be. Cause is the name of effect in its unmanifested state and effect is the name of cause in the state of manifestation.<sup>14</sup> When Siva desires to create, his wish takes the form of Sakti. This Sakti is called 'Tripura' and is the author of creation. The Tantrikas believe that though Parabrahman always exists he cannot do anything without this Sakti. This Sakti (power) of itself comes out of Parabrahman and of itself it manages the work of creation. Because Sakti is the desire of creating the world and because Para Brahman is conscious this Sakti that comes out of it is conscious also. The thinkers of this sect believe in thirty-six substances, twenty-five of which are identical with the Sankhyas.

For the fulfilment of the object of their life this sect believes that 'yoga' and 'bhoga' go together. They freely indulge in drink, eating fish and meat, sexual intercourse and its several poses. "Those who have acquired 'Advait Gian'<sup>15</sup> should have no hesitation to indulge in the objects of their senses. They should behave in the same way with all the Varnas and should observe no distinction in what is lawfully eatable and what is not. In every act he should think, 'neither am I anybody nor anything is mine,

no one is bound nor is there any bondage, nor am I doing anything.<sup>16</sup>

Guru Nanak, it appears got acquainted with the practices of this sect during his visits to Kamrup and Kashmir. In a hymn in Ramkali he has addressed the originator of this sect as under:

Hear O Machhindra, Nanak speaks.

Man should bring the five<sup>17</sup> under control and never waver. In this way, he should nourish his Yoga and save himself and all his forebears. He who follows this teaching is an Avadhut and day and night remains concentrated in Brahman. He begs for the alms of loving devotion and fear of God, and with invaluable contentment remains ever satisfied. His sitting pose is to become an image of meditation and he should concentrate his mind on the True Name. Nanak utters everlasting teaching : Hear O Machhindra, the characteristics of an Avdhu. He who roams desireless amidst desires, will certainly know the Creator. Nanak declares this Agam that having faith in the Guru he should become one with him. He who eats the food and drink of Guru's instruction will know the secret of all the six schools of philosophy.<sup>18</sup>

Gorakh Nath on the other hand, was a strict believer in perfect continence, but he went to the other extreme. He called woman a tigress, 'who destroys our sleep, deprives us of our vital fluid (semen) and thus weakens our bodies. This tigress is in continual search of beautiful men whom she eats', says Gorakh Nath.<sup>19</sup>

Though Gorakh was very strict on this point, yet somehow Vajarayan and Sahajyana practices have entered into his panth also. In 'Gorakh Paddhati' published by Mahi Dhar Sharma 'Vajrohi' and 'Sahajoli' Madras are mentioned. Surely they are a remnant of 'Vajrayani' and 'Shahjyani' practices. The Yogi who practises 'Vajroli Mudra' becomes a Siddha without observing any rules of Yoga and by behaving according to his own wishes. In practising this Mudra two things are a necessity, though they are not easily available to all men. They are, a woman obedient to one's wishes and pure milk. Just as a woman is necessary for the success of a male Yogi, a man is necessary for the success of female Yogi. This holy Yoga, inspite of its happy indulgence in Bhoga is the bestower of salvation. The Brahmanas, too, considered women to be Sudras. They could not wear the sacred thread and were not initiated in the study of sacred scriptures. Guru Nanak protested against this attitude of Jogis and Brahman priests. Says he in Assa-Ki-Var.

'Man is conceived in the womb of woman, born of her and is betrothed and married to her. Through a woman new relationships are contracted and the woman continues the race. When one woman dies, another is sought for, she binds together a household. Why to call her low, who gives birth to great men. Woman is born of woman, none was born but through her. God alone is independent of a woman, says Nanak. The mouth that always utters His praises is fortunate and beautiful, that face

will shine in the Court of the True One, says Nanak.

All own Him as their own, sort out those who are not His. All will have to account for the actions they perform. When we are not to stay in this world for ever, why to strut in pride. Let the result of our learning be not to call anyone low. We need not quarrel with a fool.<sup>21</sup>

According to Siddha comogny Para Siva or Swayaish is the Supreme Reality. When he wishes to create the world, Shakti comes out of him and he himself passes through five stages of Apar, Para, Sunya, Niranjana and Parmatman. Shakti also passes through the five stages of Nija, Para, Apar, Suksma and Kundli. Then begins the creation of 25 categories mentioned by Sankhyas, Purusa and 24 categories of Prakrti. They are Maha or Buddhi and Ahamkar in succession. From Ahamkar under the influence of Sattva *manas* comes into existence; under the influence of Rajas five senses of action and five senses of knowledge and under the influence of Tamas the five gross elements, Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Purusa or Jiva according to the Siddha scriptures is the supreme Reality itself under the influence of ignorance created by Sakti. But Saktas believe in 36 categories.<sup>22</sup>

Guru Nanak laid stress on two things in his discourses with Siddhas. One was that the Siddhas instead of withdrawing to high mountain caves and thick forests should live amongst the common folk and give them right guidance, so that tyranny of the rulers which they are suffering could be removed. Secondly they should not condemn householders who provided the wherewithal to support their physical life. We shall see from the hymns addressed to them that he wanted to cure them of the craze for miraculous powers and long life. He dissuaded them from the use of intoxicants as a help to concentration.

Gorakh and Guru Nanak both emphasised the need of the True Guru. Says Gorakh Nath, "Be firm in having a Guru; do not remain Guruless. None can obtain gnosis without a Guru. O, brother"<sup>23</sup>

Guru Nanak in his Asa-ki-War expresses it in this wise:

None found the way without the True Guru and none will find it.

God Himself has placed this truth in the True Guru and he has proclaimed it openly.

Those who get rid of Moha (attachment to things of the world) on meeting the True Guru get everlasting salvation.

The best thought is to devote one's mind to the True God.

They find the *Benevolent* Reality, the life of the Universe.<sup>24</sup>

The Lord God is a beautiful mansion, full of jewels and rubies, pearls and pure diamonds, a fort of gold that delights the heart.

How to climb into the fort without a ladder? You can have a view of it through the Guru with his mind intent on Hari.



The Guru is the ladder, the Guru is the boat and the raft laden with the name of Hari. He is the ship to cross the flowing river.

When it pleases Him, the soul goes to bath in the pool of truth and becomes pure.<sup>25</sup>

Both of them agree in preaching that the Word is the Guru and the mind concentrated on its vibrations is the disciple.

In Machhindra Gorakh Bodh Para 13, Gorakh puts the question :

O Swami what is the root, what is the time ?

Who is the Guru, who is the disciple ?

Where is the field, how is union attained ?

Which is the reality, grasping which one becomes detached ?

Machhindra's answer is given in para 14:

O, Audhu! Mind is the root, time is as long as the breath lasts.

Word is the Guru and attentive mind is the disciple.

Trikuti (the point between the two eyebrows) is the field, reversing the breath one gets united.

Grasping the indescribable Reality one remains detached.

In the Siddh Gosti the Yogis ask :

What is the root, of what creed art thou ? Who is thy Guru, of whom thou art the disciple.

Reflecting on what narrative, thou remainest detached.

The Guru answers :

Nanak speaks, hear O Yogi !

From breath (life) starts, now the time is of the creed of the True Guru.

The Word is the Guru, keeping attention glued to its vibrations one becomes its disciple.

Reflecting on the narrative of the Ineffable,

I remain detached.

Nanak, the Sustainer of the earth is the Guru through all ages.

Like Guru Nanak Gorakh, too, condemned mere wearing of outer symbols and emphasised self-control. When the mind is controlled, success is achieved.

O Audhu! When mind is pure, then water in the woden bowl becomes the water of the Ganges. When the mind which is in the bondage of illusion (maya) is controlled, the whole world becomes thy disciple, says Gorakh. Those who reflect on the formless become the image of Truth.<sup>27</sup>

Walking with wooden sandals on, the foot slips and wearing iron rings round the waist weakens the body. He who goes naked, remains silent, or lives on milk alone, will not achieve success in Yoga by these means. He who lives on milk always thinks of homes (from which he gets milk). He who goes naked always thinks of fuel. He who remains silent has his hopes fixed on his friend (through whom he communicates with others). By merely wearing a patched coat and without the Guru one is not confirmed in faith.<sup>28</sup>

In Ramkali Ashtpadi, Guru Nanak has expressed his views on the same theme as follows :

“They preach renunciation to the world, but establish their own *maths*. Leaving their own abodes how will they find truth? Attached to mineness they love women. They are neither Avadhuts nor householders. O Yogi! stick to thy seat to remove the misery of thy doubt. Art thou not ashamed of begging from door to door? Thou singst hymns but dost not know thyself. How can thy suffering be over? If thou with love in thy heart take to the Guru’s word instead of alms obtained by begging, thou wilt get the food of highest thoughts. Those who rub ashes and practise fraud will have to undergo the punishment of Yama for their attachment to Maya. In the broken bowl (i.e. disturbed heart) the gift of love would not stay. Bound by the ties of Karma thou wilt come and go. They call themselves *celibates* but do not practise continence. When begging they call women mothers, but cast lustful eyes on them. Cruel, they have not been illumined by Light. They are sunk head to foot in wordly desires. They wear a patched coat as the robe of their order. Like an actor they are playing their assumed parts. The fire of anxiety is scorching their minds. How can they go across without righteous deeds. They wear crystal rings in their ears but one cannot get salvation without real knowledge. Their tongues covet relishing foods. They have become beasts and cannot erase that stigma. All men are under the sway of three qualities and the Jogis too. Sorrow will be over by reflecting on the word. He who becomes pure through the True word knows the real way to Jog. Thou possessest all the nine treasures. Thou hast power to create and destroy. Whatever thou wishest will happen. When Truth fills the heart, celibacy, charity and self-control result. Nanak, such a Jogi is the friend of all the three worlds.<sup>30</sup>

Gorakh Nath like Guru Nanak, was against idol worship :

“I am a sacrifice to Thee, O unsculptured God!  
All serve chiselled images,  
They do not find His secret.

Thou art immortal and art known to be primeval, I have put my faith in thee;  
none hath fashioned thee.

Ten incarnations are said to be Thine, but they were not God.  
They got the reward of their own actions.  
The Creator is different from them.  
Thou are the Brahman, the Perfect Pursusa.  
All forms on earth are Thy images.  
I have not heard with my ears or seen with my eyes the person who created Thee.  
Thou thyself camest out of Thyself, seeing Thee one gets light.  
Says Gorakh, Thou alone coinest the word of the Guru.<sup>31</sup>

Guru Nanak's Bani also describes Him as self-created:

“He Himself created Himself, and He Himself created the Name,”<sup>32</sup> and  
“He cannot be installed, nor created by anyone, He the Immaculate one is self-existent.”<sup>33</sup>  
“Know the True One to be the everlasting creator and sustainer. He created Himself and is eternal, ungraspable by intellect and infinite.”<sup>34</sup>

Guru Nanak forbade idol worship :

He hath in his home the image of Narayana with all his courtiers. He worship-peth it and keepeth it washed. He offereth saffron, sandalwood, and flowers to it and falleth at its feet again and again to propitiate it. But he beggeth his food and raiment from men. The blind man is being punished for his blind deeds. The idol neither giveth food to the hungry nor can protect them from death. The blind crowd is engaged in a blind contention.<sup>35</sup>

Both Guru Nanak and Gorakh Nath admitted Hindus of all castes to their fold. Nay their doors were open even to Muslims.

As has been stated above, inspite of the teachings of Gorakh to the contrary, the Yogis in times of Guru Nanak drank liquor for concentration. In his Padi No. 164 Gorakh says :

If a Jogi indulges in calumny of others, drinks wine or bhang and eats meat, one

hundred and one forebears of his will go to hell.  
 Gorakh Rai truly declares this truth.  
 In a hymn addressed to Bharthri Guru Nanak says:

“Take the molasses of knowledge, Dhava flowers of meditation and the Kikar bark<sup>36</sup> of good deeds. Light a furnace in the Dasam Duar, plaster it with love and then distil nectar. Baba ! my mind drinketh the relishing Name and becoming intoxicated is enjoying the state of Sahj. Day and night this state endureth and keeping the love of God constantly in my heart, I cling to the indestructible word. This cup of Sahj filled with unadulterated truth is given to him on whom He showereth grace. He who tradeth in nectar, how can he have a taste for this despicable wine ? Drinking the nectar of testified words of the Guru I became acceptable to Him. What hath he who longeth for his vision to do with salvation or paradise. Constantly singing his praises he is ever detached and loseth not his life in gambling. Saith Nanak, listen O Yogi Bharthri, one drinking the constant flow of nectar is ever inebriated.<sup>37</sup>

But Gorakh preached renunciation of worldly activity whilst Guru Nanak was against it.

Says Gorakh :

If a householder discourses on knowledge,  
 If a man taking intoxicating drugs engages in meditation,  
 If an ascetic nourishes desires,  
 All three are tied in a tight noose, says Nath.<sup>38</sup>

Guru Nanak was against giving up of worldly activity. He taught that everybody should work for his bodily needs and share his earnings with others. The Jogis wandered from place to place singing songs of enlightenment, but they themselves remained ignorant. Says Guru Nanak :

Without knowledge himself, he sings songs (praising knowledge).  
 A starving Mullah turns his house into a mosque.  
 Unable to earn a living he has his ears split,  
 He becomes a mendicant and loses self-respect  
 Do not fall at the feet of one,  
 Who calling himself a Guru or Pir and goes abegging.  
 Those who earn their living by the sweat of  
 Their brow and give a portion in charity,  
 Know the right path, O Nanak !<sup>39</sup>

That hatha Yogins had left the path pointed out by Gorakh Nath and used the Hatha practices as a means of physical culture to prolong life, has been noted by Swami Vivekananda also on page 15 of his translation of Patanjali's aphorisms in English, called Raja Yoga.

"This portion of Yoga is a little similar to the Hatha Yoga which deals entirely with the physical body, its aim being to make the physical body very strong. We have nothing to do with it here, because its practices are very difficult and cannot be learned in a day, and after all, do not lead to much spiritual growth. Many of these practices you will find in other teachers, such as placing the body in different postures. The object in these is physical, not psychological. There is not one muscle in the body over which a man cannot establish perfect control; the heart can be made to stop or go on at his bidding, and each part of the organism can be similarly controlled.

"The result of this part of yoga is to make man live long; health is the chief idea, the one goal of the Hath Yogi. He is determined not to fall sick, and he never does. He lives long; a hundred years is nothing to him; he is quite young and fresh when he is 150, without one hair turned grey. But that is all. A Banyan tree lives some times 5000 years, but it is a Banyan tree and nothing more. So if a man lives long, he is only a healthy animal."<sup>40</sup>

Some padis of Gorakh Nath lend support to the above observations:

I ask one question, reply O merciful Guru: How can a man become a child again, when he has become old?

How can a flower fully blossomed again become a bud ?

He who answers this question is Gorakh.

O Nath, hear the reply, Give up all involvement in worldly affairs ;

Drink the nectar (trickling from the moon), then you will again become a child.

Irrigating the root with the Divine fire, the fully blossomed flower will again turn into a bud.<sup>41</sup>

Guru Nanak too was against this lengthening of life and passing it without achieving the real aim of life.

"If a man were to live for four yugas—nay even ten time more ;

Were he to become famous throughout the nine continents and have all men as his followers, winning a good name; if he were to have esteem and praise of the whole world.

None would call for him if he were devoid of Him grace".<sup>42</sup>

We shall end this paper by giving extracts from Siddha Goshti (a dialogue between Guru Nanak and the Siddhas) which portray the differences between his views and those of the Hatha Yogis (i.e. the split-eared sect) on important topics of religion and the religious life.

*A dialogue between Guru Nanak and the Siddhas*

Q. Who are you, what is your name, what is your creed, what is your purpose in (coming here). Tell the truth, we pray, we are a sacrifice unto the saints. Where is your seat, where do you live, O boy? Whence have you come, where will you go, what is your way?<sup>43</sup>

A. Nanak answers, hear O Vairagi, I abide constantly in Him, who pervades all hearts and in the love of the True Guru I walk. By His command have I come. I always follow His will. In due course I have come here. In the everlasting God I abide and sit, this I have obtained through Guru's instruction. He who understands the Guru's word, knows his self and then merges in the Truth of all Truths.

Charpat asks, The Ocean of the world is deemed impassable; how to get across it? O Avadhut (detached) Nanak! Give me your true thoughts about it.<sup>44</sup>

A. Him, who himself questions and himself knows what answer can be given. Speak the truth, do you not consider yourself having crossed it, why enter into discussion then? Just as the lotus flower and the duck swimming in a river remain unaffected by water, so by keeping your attention fixed on the Word and repeating the Name, this ocean of fear is crossed. With their thoughts fixed on one God, they live as if in a secluded place; amidst a sea of desires they remain desireless. Of Him who has realised the Unfathomable and Unknowable and makes others realise the Supreme Reality, Nanak is a slave.<sup>45</sup>

Yogi: Away from markets and thoroughfares we live in the shrubs and trees of forests; eat for food roots and fruits and an Avdhut should always discourse on gnosis. Bathing in the sacred places peace is obtained and no dirt remains attached to the mind. Loharipa, the disciple of Gorakh, says this is the way to Yoga.<sup>46</sup>

A. In markets and thoroughfares a man should remain alert and not let his mind run after others' women. Without the support of the Name the mind finds no rest, nor is its hunger (for worldly goods) appeased. The Guru has shown me the shop, the city and the home, where I peacefully trade in Truth. My sleep (of negligence) is broken and I eat little, and reflect on Reality, O Nanak.<sup>47</sup>

Yogi: Put on the garb of the school of Yogeshawaras, in the shape of ear-rings, a wallet and a patched coat of the twelve sects adopt the one (Ai-Panth), of the six schools and take to this path. Instruct your mind wise, O man, and you will not come in the womb again.<sup>48</sup>

Guru Nanak speaks: The God-oriented will understand that this is how the way to Yoga is found. Wear the earrings. By keeping your mind constantly fixed on the Word destroy your egoism and mineness. Get rid of lust, anger and pride, this is made plain by Guru's word. Let the thought that God pervades all be your patched coat and wallet. Thus Nanak, the One God will save you. The Lord is True.

His glory is everlasting. He testifies this teaching of the Guru to be pure. Let the heart turned away from sensual pleasures be your bowl and adoption of the qualities of the five elements be your cap. Let your body be the prayer-carpet of deer-skin and the disciplined mind the ropes round your loins and with charity, contentments and self-control, Nanak, cherish the Name through the Guru.<sup>49</sup>

Q. Who is concealed, who is liberated, who is united within and without? Who comes and who goes? Who pervades all the three worlds?<sup>50</sup>

A. God is concealed in every vessel (body). The God-oriented one liberated, he is liberated, he is united within and without through the Word. The self-oriented one dies and comes and goes again and again. The God oriented merged in Truth, O Nanak.<sup>51</sup>

Q. How (the soul) is bound and eaten up by the serpent (Maya)? How has it lost; how will it regain? How becomes it pure, how wanders it in darkness? He who discloses these facts is our Guru.<sup>52</sup>

A. (The soul) is bound by its evil inclinations and the serpent (Maya) eats it. The self-oriented one has lost, the God-oriented one has gained. The darkness is removed on meeting the True Guru. Nanak! he who obliterates his ego merges in God. Keep the mind constantly in the state of thoughtlessness. The swan (soul) will not fly nor will the body fall. If one knows that his true home is the cave of equipoise, then Nanak, the Lord is pleased and he merges in the True one<sup>53</sup>

Q. Why did you leave your home, O Udasi! Why did you don this garb? What merchandise you trade in? How will you take across your followers?<sup>54</sup>

A. I became an Udasi to seek the God-oriented. To have a vision of God have I donned this garb. I trade in the merchandise of truth. Nanak! through the Guru a man will get across.<sup>55</sup>

Q. How have you changed your life? For what purpose have you attuned your mind? How have you destroyed your desire and expectation? How have you found the constant Light? How can one chew iron without teeth? Nanak! give a true answer to all these questions.<sup>56</sup>

A. Being reborn to the True Guru my wanderings are over. By being imbued with the Everlasting, this mind was stabilised. Through the Word I burnt my desires and expectations. Through the Guru I found the constant Light. Iron can be chewed by warding off the influence of the three *Gun*as. Nanak the Emancipator (God) then emancipates one.

Q. How did life begin? Of what creed is now the sway? Who is your Guru? Whose disciple are you? What gospel keeps you detached? Expound to us the gospel, how through the Word one is ferried across.<sup>58</sup>

A. Speaks Nanak, listen to it now, O Yogis. From air life begins. The creed of the True Guru has its sway now. The word is my Guru, by keeping my attention glued to its vibrations I am its disciple. By attaching myself to the story of the Indescribable I remain detached. Nanak! The sustainer of the universe, the Guru, exists through all the

Yugas. He who reflects on the gospel of the Word gets rid of the fire of egoism through the Guru.<sup>59</sup>

Q. How can one chew iron with the teeth of a fish? What food will rid one of pride? A house of snow is enveloped by a covering of fire ; which is the cave where one can stay undisturbed? Whom should one consider pervading here and hereafter so as to merge in Him? Concentrating on what does the mind get absorbed in itself?<sup>59</sup>

A. One should destroy all egoistic tendencies and destroying otherness merge in the one. The world is hard for an ignorant self-oriented man. By practising the word one can chew this iron. When one realises One (God) within and without, Nanak! by the Guru's will is the fire extinguished. Imbued with the fear of the True one, one should destroy his pride. By reflecting on the Word, he should realise the Existence of one God all Round. When the True Word abides in the heart, all disturbance in body and mind is destroyed and they are dyed in the love of God. The poisonous fires of lust and wrath are stilled by the grace of the loving God.<sup>60</sup>

Q. How does the moon (of peace) cool the mind like snow? How does the sun (of wisdom) blaze in its splendour? How can one ward off the effects of time? What wisdom will secure honour to the God-oriented? Who is the warrior who destroys death?<sup>61</sup>

A. Nanak after reflection speaks these Words. By uttering the Word the moon (of peace) shines with Infinite light. When in the state of peace, the Sun of knowledge dawns, darkness is removed. Regard pleasure and pain alike, with the Name as your prop. Then God Himself will ferry you across. Through the Guru's instruction the mind will merge in truth. Then says Nanak, death will not consume you.<sup>61</sup>

Q. All talk of the state of thoughtlessness. But how can one get to this state for ever. What are they like who are en rapport with this state?

A. They are like Him, from whom they have emanated. They are neither born nor die, neither they come nor go, who, Nanak! through the Guru have instructed their mind. Having thoroughly closed the nine apertures one should fully enter the tenth door. There strains of unstruck music are heard. (Those who go there) are enraptured with the True One, seeing Him face to face. The True One who fills all hearts. The secret teaching becomes manifest and, Nanak! one can test the truth of it.<sup>62</sup>

Q. Where is the abode of the Word, through which one swims across the sea of *samsara*. What supports the breath, that goes out up to ten fingers. How can the inner being that speaks and sports be controlled to realise the Unknowable.

A. Listen, O Swami, Nanak utters the truth, how he instructed his own mind. Through the Guru's Word one's attention is fixed on God and He through His grace unites him with Himself. God Himself is wise. He is farseeing, and one merges in Him through perfect good fortune. The ungraspable Word pervades all beings; wherever I cast my eyes I see it. The Air presides in the Supreme Being, who is attributeless but has all powers. When He casts His look of grace, the Word fills the heart and all doubts are



removed. When the Name abides in the heart, mind and body become pure and the speech too. Through the Word of the Guru, one swims across the ocean of *samsara* and one realises the One here and hereafter. The Word reveals Him who has no distinguishing marks, colour or shade of Maya (illusion). Nanak! The True God is the support of the breath that goes out up to ten fingers. When the God-oriented one speaks he churns the Reality, for he knows the Ungraspable and Infinite God. When one wards off the effect of the three modes and enshrines the Word in his heart, egoism in his mind is finished. When one knows that one God is within and without, the love of the Name of God is enshrined in his heart. When God makes him know he understands the real meaning of *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sukhmana*. For the True God is above the three channels of breath and he is merged in Him through the Word of the Guru.<sup>63</sup>

Q. Air is said to be the life of mind, what essence does Air eat? What is the distinguishing mark of knowledge, what is the practice of a Siddha? O Avadhut.

A. Without the Word one gets not the essence, O Avadhut, and the thirst of egoism is not quenched. Those imbued with the Word taste nectar and get satisfaction in God.

Q. What wisdom will stabilise the mind, what food will satiate it.

A. From the True Guru one learns how to treat pleasure and pain alike and be not overwhelmed by death.<sup>64</sup>

Q. When there was no heart or body where did the mind abide? When the lotus of the navel held not the breath, where did air reside. When there was no form or line, to what did one attach himself through the Word. When there was no sepulchre of ovum and sperm the Supreme Being could not be evaluated. How can one know God, who has no colour, grab or forms?

A. Nanak! those imbued with the Name realised the Truth of all Truths then as they do now. When there was no heart or body, O Avadhut, the mind detached abided in God. When there was no lotus of the navel to hold it, then air abode in itself, without any attachment. When there was no form, line or species, then there was no form, line or species. Then the True Word was with God. When there was no motion, skies or time, the Light of the Formless One pervaded all the three worlds. All colours, garbs and forms were in one God and the wonderful Word alone was then. Without Truth none is pure, O Nanak! But this story is too great for Words.

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Abbreviation    S — Sloka    Ast—Astpadi    P — Paudi

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1. Asa 4.3.34 and 4.4.38, Asa Ast. Ghara 2,8,1.
2. Var Ramkali 5. 2-7, P. 12.
3. N.S. Page 21.
4. V.G. Var I.P. 28 to 31.
5. The Siddhas living in mountain caves higher up considered themselves superior to the Indians living in plains.
6. Rasdharis are folk dramatists of the Punjab who go from place to place and entertain people with open-air dances and presenting scenes generally from the lives of Sri Krishna and Ram Chandra.
7. N.S. Page 3.
8. Tratak—Looking at a minute object without working the eyelids with the mind concentrated till tears run down the eyes.
9. G.N. Page 3
10. N.A. page 96 and 97.
11. Sunyavad. The doctrine of absolute non-existence, of a sect of the Buddhists.
12. N.S. page 61.
13. N.S. page 61.
14. Advaita Gian—The doctrine that the jiva (the individual soul) and Brahman are one.
15. N.S. page 78.
16. The five are lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride.
17. Ramkali 4.5.
18. G.V. 3.43.
19. N.S. page 74.
20. Var Asa S. 2; p. 19 and p. 19.
21. N.S. Page 115.
22. G.V. page 128.
23. Vai Asa p. 6.
24. Suhi 3.9.
25. Siddha Goshti p. 43 and 44.
26. G.V. Pada 153.
27. Ibid padas 31 and 32.
28. Ramkali Ast.
29. G.V. Pada 58.
30. Vai Asa P. 1.
31. Japu p. 5.
32. Wadham Dhauhni 1.3.1.
33. Var Sarang S. 1 p. 9.
34. Molasses, Dhava flowers and Kikar bark are the ingredients from which wine is distilled.
35. Asa 4.4.38.
36. G.V. Padi 246.
37. Var Sarang S.I. p. 21.
38. R.Y. page 15.
39. G.V. Paddi 96 and 97.
40. Japu p. 7.
41. Siddha Goshti Ramkali p. 2.
42. Ibid p. 3.
43. Ibid p. 4 and 5
44. Ibid p. 7.
45. Ibid p. 8.
46. Ibid p. 9.

47. Ibid p. 10 and 11.
48. Ibid p. 12.
49. Ibid p. 13.
50. Ibid p. 14.
51. Ibid p. 15 and 16.
52. Ibid p. 17.
53. Ibid p. 18.
54. Ibid p. 19.
55. Ibid p. 20.
56. Ibid p. 43 and 44.
57. Ibid p. 45.
58. Ibid p. 46 and 47.
59. Ibid p. 48 and 49.
60. Ibid p. 52 and 53.
61. Ibid p. 58 and 59 and 60.
62. Ibid p. 61.
63. Ibid p. 66.
64. Ibid p. 67.

## TAGORE AND THE SIKHS

AMALENDU BOSE

### *Tagore and the Sikhs*

When I stand here to pay my humble and reverence-laden homage to the glorious child of God, Guru Nanak, whose holy birth five hundred years ago brought solace, joy, purity, strength to millions of people down the corridors of history, I seek your permission to bring to your notice the deep impact produced by the Guru's astonishing personality and by certain memorable events of Sikh history upon the mind and art of Rabindranath Tagore and, through his poetry, upon the thinking of generations of Bangalees. We cannot contain the waters of the seven seas in the tea-cup, we cannot see all of the rounded sky through a pipe-hole, we cannot limit the universalist meaning of the great Guru to the narrow angles of particular incidents or values. His greatness is transcendental, all-encompassing, timeless. But it is precisely this all-encompassing and transcendent quality of the Guru's personality that comes home to us when we consider how the creative imagination of a great modern poet blossomed forth in response to the Guru's teachings.

Bengal is about a thousand miles far from Guru Nanak's homeland. But what are a thousand miles to the universalist spirit of one who travelled thousands and thousands of miles, north and south, west and east, the east including Bengal and Assam? Four hundred years after the Guru's birth, a distinguished Bangalee, a man of deeply religious sensibilities, the poet Tagore's venerable father, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahma Samaj, went year after year to the Golden Temple of Amritsar in quest of joy and Truth. We learn from the poet's autobiography that for some years, the Maharshi's personal attendant was a fine-featured young Sikh named Lenu who accompanied his employer to Calcutta. A boy of barely ten, the poet became attached to this Sikh youth and entertained him by exhibiting his toy ship that could gently roll, right and left, in tune with a toy organ. Shortly, after his *upanayan*, the shaven-headed boy of eleven accompanied his father to Dalhousie, halting for a month in Amritsar. Let me quote here from the poet's autobiography :

The Gurdwara of Amritsar I remember as a dream. Many were the mornings when I went to the Sikh temple set within a tank. Bhajan was incessant there. Seated in the midst of the Sikh worshippers there, my father would join them in songs and they would greet him with pleased cordiality.

The poet further says that his father would often invite one or another of the Bhajan singers of the Temple to repair to his house and sing songs.

The recollection of this boyhood experience remained with the poet till his last days. Even as a teen-aged person, he rendered into Bengali several songs from the Japuji and some of these are, I understand from a scholarly Brahmo friend of mine, still sung at the Sunday prayers of the Samaj. It is my belief that the pure monotheism of the *Japuji* songs appealed deeply to the monotheistic mind of the youthful Brahmo, the poet Tagore, and, further, the Guru's beautiful exhortations of his followers to abjure all that is false and narrow and fissiparous and to imbibe all that is true and comprehensive and unifying, and especially the constant tone of absolute surrender to the One Deity, are the qualities, among others, of the *Japuji* songs that won the poet's heart. I may be permitted here to quote just two of these songs (as rendered into English by my young friend Purshottam Lal) :

Hundreds of thousands !  
 Of earth, of skies,  
 Of skies upon skies !  
 Hundreds of thousands :  
 They cannot be counted :  
 This is the one truth of the Vedas.  
 Ask the Kateba !  
 Eighteen thousand worlds !  
 Eighteen thousand, but the source is one !  
 Count them if you like !  
 You will die before *they* end.  
 He is great, says Nanak.  
 He knows.  
 Himself by Himself.            (*The Japuji*, fourteen religious songs, by P. Lal)

Like rivers rushing into seas,  
 Not knowing where they go,  
 They praise You, O Lord,  
 Without knowing who you are.  
 O King,  
 O my King of kings,  
 All the oceans,  
 All the mountains,  
 All treasures, all power  
 All like nothing, nothing  
 Compared even to an ant  
 Who has You in his heart.            (Ibid.)

What makes these songs great poetry is the white radiance and purity of their emotion, absolutely untrammelled by the pettifogging dogmas of conventional theology. Here is palpably a man of God who has felt and known and whose feeling and knowledge well up in spontaneous words. I have found that the impact of such devotional poetry—especially the songs of Nanak, Kabir and the peregrinating *bauls* of Bengal—on Tagore's own devotional poetry is considerable.

Tagore's reverence for Nanak was constant and I find passing references to the Guru in numerous places in his prose. In his middle period, he wrote a series of essays on Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikhs in general. These essays are not learned treatises, they were not meant to be so; they are written in a remarkably simple and direct prose style for the edification of Bengalee children. You will remember that eighty years ago, our school texts in history played down, for reasons of obvious political expediency, the teachings of the Sikhs. Tagore therefore sought to redress this imbalance by writing simple narrative accounts of the Guru and his followers, bringing their significance into luminous focus. And this has been of inestimable service to the growth of interest in Bengal in the Guru and his followers. There have been distinguished scholars among the Bangalees who have made important contributions to the history of the Sikhs but none, I can assure you, has rivalled these simple accounts of Tagore, both in prose and verse, in the matter of imparting a basic knowledge and understanding of the Sikhs to Bengalee children for the last six decades. One of these essays reads like a story, though it is scrupulously fact-based. It tells of the strange son of Kalu of Talbandi, the boy Nanak who preferred God's name to the gold that his father expected him to earn as a trader in salt. It tells of the Guru's disciples, Mardana, Lehna, Balasindhu and Ramdas. It tells of his wide wanderings and that profound reply that he gave to some Muslims in Mecca when they objected to his stretching his legs in the direction of the Kabah that they might be pleased to turn his legs to any direction where God is not. Tagore in the last paragraph of this essay tells his young readers:

The Sikhs whom you see around you today, men of sturdy build, handsome countenance, tough strength and unflinching courage, are the *sishtyas*, disciples of Baba Nanak. There were no Sikhs before Nanak. It was his noble personality and sublime spirituality that brought this race into existence. It is through his teachings that their temper is fearless, they keep their heads erect, and their character and countenance are brightened with magnanimity.

Tagore expects our children to proceed from the effect to the cause, to some understanding of the Guru's greatness from the admirable qualities, both racial and individual, of the followers who derive their strength from him. In illustration of this belief, that it is because of the purity and power of the source that the fruits are valuable too,

Tagore wrote a number of poems that rank among his finest compositions and are known to every Bengalee, man and woman, who has had some school education. In 1900 were published two volumes of ballads and narratives which are now combined in a single volume entitled *Katha-O-Kahini* (Tales and Legends). Some of these poems are based on Buddhist legends, some on Tod's Rajasthan, and some on Sikh history—one around Banda, another around Taru Singh, two others concern Guru Gobind Singh. I myself admire most the last two poems for their rare depth of understanding of Guru Govind's self-exploration and moral strength during two crises of his life; but the poem on Banda, with its stirring metre and diction, is a must for every school function or social get-together where poems are recited; there are lines in this poem that Bengalee revolutionaries for half a century have uttered while jumping into the fray of life and death. To give my audience here some idea of the quality of the content of the poem, I propose to offer a rendering of some of its portions in my hesitant English prose. The title of the poem is 'The Chained Hero', *Bandi Veer*, 'bandi' meaning a prisoner, but, I hope, my audience here will recognize the subtle sonal affinity between 'bandi' and the hero's name 'Banda' The poem goes somewhat thus:

"On the banks of the five rivers, inspired by their Guru's *mantra*, hair tied up on head, the Sikhs wake up as a unified people, fearless and dauntless. All around, a thousand voices cry, 'Jai Guruji'. Sikhs turn their gaze towards a new dawn. 'Alakh Niranjan', they cry, and that tremendous cry breaks down all fear, all inhibition, and their glad swords rattle next to their bodies. 'Alakh Niranjan' cries the Punjab on this day.

By the banks of the five rivers, this is a day when million hearts know no fear or care, when life and death are twin slaves at their feet.

By the banks of the five rivers, are the veins of blood now liberated in the bodies of a million *bhaktas*. And do their souls, like free birds, fly up to their nests? These heroes put the mark of blood on the forehead of their motherland. Locked in the embrace of a fight to the finish, Sikh and Mogul tighten their grips on each other's throats; the bitten eagle struggles against the serpent. In that deadly battle, the Sikh hero cries in resonant voice 'Jai Guruji' and the blood-smeared faith-intoxicated Mogul repeats 'Deen, Deen'.

(Banda is taken prisoner in the fort of Gurdaspur and is removed to Delhi).

At the head of the procession, Mogul soldiers march through the dust that they raise, carrying severed heads of Sikhs stuck on the pointed end of their separs; seven hundred Sikhs march behind, their chains tinkle but, heedless of the danger to their lives, they still cry, 'Jai Guruji'."

When in Delhi they are to be beheaded, there is rivalry among these prisoners as to who will precede the others in laying down his life. At the day's end, a hundred brave men cry, 'Jai Guruji' and part with their heads.

When in a week's time, seven hundred men have been beheaded, the Kazi placed a small son of Banda in the father's arms, and says, the father must kill the son.

Without a word, Banda hugs his child for a moment, puts his hand on the child's head and kisses his crimson turban. Then he draws out his dagger from the sheath and says, 'Fear not, my son, say "Jai Guruji"'. 'Jai Guruji, I have no fear', comes the clear voice of the child's neck and bends his left arm around the child's neck and with the right hand plunges the dagger deep into the small body. 'Jai Guruji' cries the child before his body rolls on the ground.

Stillness descends on the congregation in the court. The executioner begins to tear off flesh from Banda's body with hot pincers. Motionless stands the hero, dying without a single exclamation of pain."

I doubt if there are many comparably stirring poems in many languages and though I regret that it is beyond my capacity to render the tremendous power of the rhythm and imagery of the original. I think the incident itself is powerful enough to enter deep into the reader's sensibility. By contrast, the poem on Taru Singh is a brief piece of only sixteen lines. It goes thus :

The ground in Shahidganj became red with the blood of Sikhs taken prisoners in war and then slaughtered. Then the Nawab said, "Listen, Taru Singh, I wish to pardon you." "Why should you neglect me?" asked Taru Singh. Said the Nawab, "You are a brave man, I can't be angry with you. I shall let you off. My only request is that you will cut off your hair plait and leave it with me." Taru Singh replied, "I am so beholden for your kindness that, in return, I had better make a gift of my head along with the plait."

This is the poem, taut and terse in its verbal economy, offering us quick glimpses of the explosive passion that lies underneath the courteous exchange of compliments. And in Taru Singh we behold one who is more than an individual Sikh hero; we behold one who is also a symbol of his race, a symbol of his faith. A parallel story occurs in one of the poems in *Sesh Saptak* (The Last Gamut) belonging to the final phase of the poet. This is once again the story of the siege of the Gurdaspur fort. The Badshah's Lieutenants have planned to starve the handful of besieged Sikhs fighting under Banda Singh; all communication between the fort and the world outside has been snapped; the besieged soldiers are reduced to eating powdered barks and branches of trees and raw meat (if any meat be available). This infernal privation comes to an end when after eight months, the fort falls; soldiers in chains shout, 'Victory to the Guru' and day after day,



severed Sikh heads roll on the ground. The poet now turns the focus on to a teen-aged young man, Nihal Singh, one of the chained soldiers. His is a fresh, serene countenance lit by an inner light; in his eyes are congealed the morning song of pilgrims; it is as if some divine sculptor had carved out his eighteen-year old body; he stands like a young cypress plant, straight but lissom and an exuberant vitality almost overflows his body and mind. His hands bound, he is brought to the court of the victors, the executioner is ready with his sword. At this moment a letter arrives from the capital conveying Syed Abdulla Khan's order that the young man is to be set free. When they unloose the chains, Nihal asks why there should be such an order for him. He hears that his widowed mother has informed the authorities that her son is not a Sikh, that he has been forced by the Sikh to join them. The young man's face is flushed in shame and grief, and he cries. "I do not care for my life in exchange for falsehood, in truth is my final liberation, I am a Sikh."—This too is a great poem in which Tagore has abandoned metre and rhyme, as he did in most of his later poetry.

As if he challenges the reader to see if the stark prose rhythm cannot adequately convey the character of the incident—its dramatic development, the grim background against which stands Nihal Singh, the sharp contrast between his youthful vitality and its destruction in the offering, and, above all, his unflickering adherence to Truth which is the cardinal meaning of his faith.

Of the two poems on Guru Govind Singh, *Shesh Siksha* (The Last Lesson) tells the story of how the Guru had once in sudden anger killed a Pathan creditor; how, to atone for this act, he brought up the Pathan's son treating him as a son and how the young Pathan became deeply devoted to the Master; how the Guru tried to arouse the young man's vengeance but failed once, and how eventually the Pathan was made to fly into a rage and to plunge a dagger into the Master's body; and how the dying Guru said, 'My son, this is my last lesson for you, you must take revenge for a wrong done.' This too is a great poem bringing out the Guru's complex personality but the other poem entitled *Guru Govind* is, to my mind, the greatest of this group, great because of the rhythm and imagery, great because of the excruciating psychological self-exploration of the Guru during years of solitude. A man of action and organisation, Guru Govind has been passing his days in contemplation, in an endeavour to attain to that spiritual fullness which alone should entitle him to the difficult role of leadership of his people. A humanist rather than an ascetic, his heart yearns for life in the midst of multitudes; he wakes up in his sleep dreaming of calls from his people; his sword in the scabbard wriggles like a living thing as he watches the restlessness of his followers. Ah, what a joy it would be to throw himself in the midst of a crowd, breaking and making kingdoms, destroying tyrants, catching hold of fate as if it were a disobedient horse, riding through millions leaving behind indelible footprints on flame-crimsoned grounds, always jumping across death on to life. Sometimes it is a dark night and sometimes

it is a shiny day, once the sky above is thunder-laden, torn asunder by a relentless and insane storm. But heedless, the Guru sends his call to his followers, "Come ye all to me as the waters of the five rivers flow into the sea; come ye my *bhakats* and raise your intoxicated cry across the length and breadth of Punjab." The Guru's voice penetrates the remotest nooks of jungles lest there should be some timid one hiding there. As he advances, his followers swell in number, Brahmin and Jat abandoning caste consciouness, ready to lay down their lives—But these are visions of the future that cannot be worked out yet. Now he has to control his passionate natural humanistic desires, now he must ponder and thoroughly examine himself until he can say to all: "I have no more doubts and hesitations, I have leant what truth is, I have found my path and all obstacles including life and death clear off from my course. A voice within tells me to stand up in the effulgence of my truth. I call ye, my followers, to come to me, let in your Guru's life your own lives be enriched."—But all this is yet to be, and the Guru hardens himself to more days of strenuous self-examination. He must be like a lamp steadfast amid darkness, emitting its light in a stormy world. And therefore Guru Govind asks his followers Sahu, Lehari and Ramdas to leave him alone with his unremitting self-preparation.—This is a poem containing over half-a-dozen stanzas that are memorised by every Bengalee young man worth his salt; these offer us the crystallised essence of a resolute and courageous gospel of action.

In his prose and poetry, Tagore brings out some of the essential features of the Sikh character, especially the militant features. But these militant features acquire an unparalleled purity and nobility by virtue of their never-dimmed relation to their faith. For though changing times have necessarily brought about some modification or other in the social organisation of the Sikhs, there never been a deviation from the primal spirit of their faith which they received from that incomparable man of God, Guru Nanak. I submit to this learned audience the view that a remarkably inspiring direction to that primal spirit has been indicated by Rabindranath Tagore in his poems, prose essays, and in his devotional songs, a direction for which we in the eastern regions of our country are deeply indebted to him.

## GURU NANAK'S IMPACT ON HISTORY

GANDA SINGH

Over six million Sikhs playing a conspicuous role in the social and political life not only of India, their homeland, but also of all the countries in the east and west wherever they have domiciled as permanent immigrants or as temporary residents, are a living practical example of the impact of the life and teachings of Guru Nanak on history, Like the Guru himself they are a practical people, always up and doing,

bubbling with energy ready to be yoked to solve the problems of life. They are never afraid to put their hand to any type of work that comes their way and would strive every nerve to make it a success. And it is by sheer dint of hard work that they have won a place for themselves in their occupations and professions. The world knows them as some of its bravest soldiers, both of peace and war. With his hand at the handle of the plough or at the steer of the tractor, the Sikh is the hardiest peasant, who becomes one with the land for raising his crops. But he is at his best in the field of battle when he is called upon to fight in defence of his motherland or for the protection of the weak and helpless, at home or abroad. Guru Nanak's belief in the Unicity of God and selfless service of mankind had given to the Sikhs their character of unswerving faith in God and the Guru, and in patriotism and sacrifice with which they not only freed the Punjab from under the yoke of the oppressors and usurpers in the eighteenth century, but also carved for it, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in the first half of the 19th century, a place of strength and honour on the international map and made a gift of it to India to stand as a sentinel on its north-western frontier to defend it against all future invasions from that quarter.

The teachings of Guru Nanak related mostly to the spiritual uplift of mankind and social goodwill and understanding among people of different creeds and classes, based on the common fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. According to him, there is but one God who is All-Truth, Immortal, Unborn and Self-existing Creator, Fearless and Without Hate. He is neither the Allah of the Muhammadans nor Rama or Krishna of the Hindus, but God of the universe, of all mankind and of all religions. For the promotion and advancement of human goodwill and happy relationship Guru Nanak refused to recognize the man-made distinctions of castes and classes, of high and low and of rich and poor. And he condemned, with all the force at his command, the aggression of one over the other, of the rulers over their subjects, both in the field of politics and of religion. He stood for the freedom of conscience and expression. He was the strongest advocate of the cause of women. He would attach no impurity to them because of their sex, nor would he hold them in compulsory subjection to men. He gave them the fullest responsibility in all matters, spiritual and social, and regarded them in every way equal to men in the sight of God.

But Guru Nanak was not a visionary idealist or a speculative theorist. He preached no complicated philosophy couched in unintelligible language of the other-worldly people. He was a practical man—one with the men of this world. He spoke to the people in the language of the people and explained his ideas to them with examples drawn from the everyday common life. Guru Nanak's laboratories, both for the demonstration and practice of his teachings, were the institutions of *Sangat*, or congregations, and *Pangat*, sitting of all people together in rows for community dining. Both at home and outside, wherever he went, he established *Sangats* or congregations of his

followers and admirers. Therein they met daily, generally in the evenings, to hear the Guru's teachings and sing his hymns, and to pray to God, and to discuss and solve their common problems. The forums of the *Sangats* were known as Dharamsalas. These later on developed into Sikh missionary centres where the Guru's work of reformation and transformation was continued by subsequent Gurus and their leading representatives, popularly known as Masands. It was in these Sangats and Dharamsalas that Guru's Sikhs learnt practical lessons in Sikhism, freed themselves from the worship of gods and goddesses, and idols and images, and recited the hymns of the Master and his successors as the only way of the worship of the One Supreme formless God. It was here that the Sikhs, as the followers of the Gurus were known, shook off their old prejudices and rubbed off their angularities. Here they came closer to one another as brothers-in-faith and understood their real relationship as sons of the One common Creator. This popularised among them the use of the title *Bhai* or brother, by which Guru Nanak addressed his companions and disciples like *Bhai* Mardana, of Muslim origin, and *Bhai* Bala, *Bhai* Buddha, *Bhai* Lehna (his successor) coming from amongst the Hindus. The Sikhs ignored the monopoly of the Brahmans in matters religious and social as they did not subscribe to the Brahmanical faith. Maubid Zulfiqar Ardistani (Azur Sasani), the Parsi author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazaheb*, who had seen Sikhism in practice at Kiratpur under the direct guidance of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai in the forties of the seventeenth century, tells us ;

There is no restriction among them that a Brahman may not become the disciple of a Khatri, for Nanak was a Khatri, and no Guru among them was from the Brahmans as has been described, Similarly they placed Khatri under the authority of the Jats who belong to the low caste of the *Vaishyas*, as the big *Masands* of the Guru are mostly Jats. The Brahmans and Khatri become pupils and disciples of the Guru through the medium of a *Masand* and are accepted into the pupilage and discipline of the Guru (p.233).

Not only this. Some of the popular saints whose hymns the fifth Guru incorporated in the Sikh holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, were not only Muslims by birth, but also came from the lowest of the low Hindu and Muslim classes. For example, there are Sadhna, a Muslim butcher, Kabir a weaver, Ravidas, an untouchable cobbler, and Sain, a low caste barber, in addition to Muslim Mirasi rebeck players.

Thus, with the Fatherhood of God preached by Guru Nanak, was the real brotherhood of man recognized and established in practice by the religion of the Sikhs. The tenth and the last, Guru Gobind Singh in his time went a step further. On the introduction of the baptismal ceremony for the order of the *Khalsa*, he made the initiates sip the baptismal water, the *Amrita*, one after another, from one and the same vessel,

in a double round—the first man becoming the last to drink in the second round. This practice abolishes for the Sikhs the distinctions of high and low for all time to come and places them on a plane of absolute equality. And we have practical examples of this levelling in the subsequest history of the Sikhs. Within two years of the death of Guru Gobind Singh, when the Khalsa under the leadership of Banda Singh freed eastern Punjab from under the galling yoke of the Mughals and established therein the rule of the sons of the soil, no distinction was made in the appointment of ruling officials, and distribution of other offices.

William Irvine tells us in his *Later Mughals* :

In all the paraganas occupied by the Sikhs, the reversal of previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather-dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru, when in a short space of he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home.

(Vol. I, 98-99).

This was a thing unimaginable in traditional Hinduism and had a revolutionry effect upon the history of northern India. It created among the Sikhs a much stronger bond of unity and made a new people of them with a separate nationality which, within half a century of untold sacrifices at the altar of national freedom, developed into a group of republican states, growing ultimately into a full-fledged sovereign state of the Punjab. The ruler of this Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was a Sikh, no doubt, but the kingdom was not a theocratic Sikh state. It was a state of the Panjabis, whatever their religion. Its capital was at Lahore and not at Amritsar, the religious headquarters of the Sikhs, and its administration, both civil and military, was shared by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike, nay, a number of European and American Christians were as well employed in high offices. The Prime Minister of the then Punjab was a Hindu. The minister for foreign affairs, which included political transactions with the neighbouring Muslim states, hostile at times, was a Muslim. The army was commanded by officers drawn from all classes, the artillery being manned predominantly by Muslims.

On the religious side, there is no priestly class among the Sikhs. Anyone, man or woman, competent to recite and explain the hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, may conduct the religious services in the Sikh temples and lead the congregation in prayer. Men of all castes and creeds have free access to the *Gurdwara* or *Dharamsala*, as the Sikh temples are called, and they can, without any let or hinderance, join the congregations there and partake of the sacred *prasad* and of the meals served in the community kitchen or *Guruka langar*.

In the matter of eating, the Sikhs have greatly contributed to the freedom of the people and have removed all old taboos. The *Dabistan* tells us the story of Hindu boy, who, for freedom of eating the food of his choice, wished to become a Muslim. One Partap Mall Giani told him: "Why do you become a Muhammadan? If you have an inclination to eat everything, you may become a Sikh of the Guru and eat whatever you like" (p. 239).

The teachings of Guru Nanak were not individualistic in their outlook and attitude of life. They had a socialistic embrace with the result that not only the priest-oppressed Hindus, particularly of the third and fourth castes, the exploited Vaishya peasants and suppressed Sudras, were drawn to his new faith, but a number of Muslims were as well attracted by the teachings, and ways and manners, of the successors and followers of Guru Nanak. This became a cause of complaints to the Mughal Emperors, Akbar and Jahangir, by the closed-minded Brahmans and fanatical Muslim *Mullas* against the fifth Guru, Arjun. The liberal-minded Akbar found no fault with the Guru and his compilation of the Sikh scripture. On the other hand, he appreciated his efforts for the spiritual and social well being of the people and favourably considered his suggestion for reduction in the increased taxes that had become opperessive for the ry-ot (*Akbar* vol. iii, 514-515; Sujan Rai Bhandari—*Knlasat-u-Tawarikh*, 425).

Emperor Jahangir, however, for political expediency, succmbed to the pressure of the Muslim revivalists, evidently of the Naqshbandi Shaikhs, and ordered the arrest and execution of Guru Arjun. The Empror himself records it in his memoirs, the *Tuzuk i-Jahangiri*, p.35, saying :

There lived at Goindwal on the bank of river Beas a Hindu named Arjun in the garp of *pir* and *shaikh*, so much so that he had by his ways and manners captivated the hearts of many simple-minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims, who called him *Guru*. From all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations this shop worked. For years the thought presented itself to me that either I should be put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam. When this news (of the Guru having shown special favour to Prince Khusrau) reached the ear of our Majesty, and I fully knew his heresies, I odered him to be brought into my presence and, having made over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan (Shaikh Farid Bhukhari) and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures.

Very significant indeed, in this context, is a letter of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi *Majaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* to Shaikh Farid Bukhari, entitled Murtaza Khan, the governor of Lahore, referred to above. The Mujaddid writes :

The execution at this time of the accursed Kafir of Goindwal . . with whatever motive. . is an act of highest grace for the followers of Islam (*Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani*, Vol. I, Part iii, letter No. 193).

The execution of Guru Arjun for his religious activities was an act of high-handed tyranny aimed at the suppression of the Sikh movement and was a repetition of the oppressive policy of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century Sultans of India which the great Guru Nanak had fearlessly criticised and condemned in the strongest terms, saying:

The kings are butchers, and cruelty their knife. Sense of duty and responsibility has taken wings and fled (Majh Var-I, 116).

Again,

Kings are like leopards and their revenue collectors (behave like) dogs; they go and awaken people at all odd times; their servants wound the people with their claws and lick their blood like curs (*Malhar* Var I, 22-2).

The Guru felt shocked and outraged at the sack of Saidpur (Eminabad) during the third invasion of Babur in 1521 and burst out shedding tears of blood :

Babur rushed down from Kabul with the bridal procession of sin and by force demanded the hand of the bride (of India) . . People sing the paean of murder and smear themselves with saffron of blood (*Tilang* I, *Ghar* i, 5-1).

Guru Nanak was greatly moved to see the pitiable sufferings of Indian women at the hands of Mughal soldiers. "The women who wore beautiful tresses . . have their locks shorn with shears and dust is thrown upon their heads. dishonoured and with ropes round their necks, they are carried away by soldiers" (*Asa* I, *Asht*, xi).

"If a powerful person were to attack another powerful person" said the Guru, "There shall be no ground for grievance, but if a ferocious tiger were to fall upon a herd of cattle, the master (the Protector) of the herd has to answer for it" (*Asa* I, 39-42).

In equally strong language Guru Nanak upbraided the so-called 'masters of the heard', the Lodhi Sultans of India, for not standing up manfully for the defence of their subjects and allowing the precious gem of the country to be easily snatched away by the foreigner. To quote his own words: "The dogs (The Lodhi rulers) have thrown away the invaluable gem; when they are dead and gone, no one will remember them with regard" (*Asa* I, 39-2).

These sayings and other admonitions of the great Guru had come down as a heritage to Guru Hargobind who succeeded Guru Arjun after the latter's execution under the order of Emperor Jahangir. Guru Hargobind then felt that a stage had come in the development of the Sikh people when they should be able to demonstrate their will to

resist the evil of tyranny. As human history knows it, the tyrants are generally power-mad autocrats. No philosophies and religious teachings, however sublime and heart-touching appeal to their conscience hardened by repeated acts of oppression. They are dead to all sense of humanity and are a curse to society and the country at large. Bowing down to them is cowardice, and is an encouragement to and prolongation of *zulm*—injustice and cruelty—over the weak and helpless. This is what Guru Nanak had protested against and condemned. Guru Hargobind, therefore, decided to sanctify the use of arms like the operation-knife of a surgeon who uses it, as a last resort, to separate and save the healthy part of the body from a spreading ulcer. To initiate the community into martial ways, he himself wore two swords at the Akal Takht at Amritsar as emblems of spiritual and temporal authority—*Piri* and *Miri*—the combination of *bhakti* and *shakti*, of *deg* and *tegh*, the kettle of feed the needy and hungry and the sword to protect the weak and helpless. This was the first step towards the transformation of Sikhism into a militant church and its followers into saint-soldiers and soldiers-saints. According to the *Dobistan*, “The Guru had seven hundred horses in his stables; and three hundred cavaliers and sixty artillerymen were always in his service.” This was the first corps of Sikh volunteers raised by the Guru at Amritsar for service.

But Guru Hargobind was not a mere soldier. He was primarily a saint, a *Guru*, sixth in the line of spiritual inheritance from Guru Nanak, who had permitted no aggressive designs against anyone. Guru Hargobind’s martialization, therefore, was purely for self-defence and for the defence of the defenceless. When the great Maratha saint *Samarth* Ramdas, during his North-Indian rambles, met Guru Hargobind at Srinagar in Garhwal in about 1634 and questioned him on this change, he replied: “Internally a hermit, and externally a prince. Arms means protection to the weak and destruction to the tyrant. Guru Nanak had not renounced the world, he had renounced *Maya* (the sense of attachment and possession)”. This explained the Guru’s meaning of the change, hearing which Ramdas said, “*yeh hamare man bhavti hai*—this appeals to my mind.” Punjab Sakhian, No. 39).

Although Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh had to fight as many as eighteen battles, either against local chiefs or against the Mughal government, they were all defensive. Never, in any one of them, was the initiative taken by the Gurus, nor, as a result of their victories, was an inch of the enemy’s territories occupied or towns and treasures plundered or a single captive carried. Nay, when approached, Guru Gobind Singh was ever-ready for peace-negotiations. Not only this. When Bahadur Shah, after the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb, who had been responsible for the execution of the Guru’s father (Guru Teg Bahadur), approached the Guru, he readily agreed to help him with a detachment of Sikhs in the battle of succession at Jajau, June 8, 1707, in support of his rightful claim to the throne. This was the real Guru Gobind Singh, true, in word and deed, to the teachings of Guru Nanak.



“He who is imbued with fear of the Lord becometh fearless, for man becometh like the one he serveth”, was said by Guru Nanak in *Rag Gauri, Asht. vii-4*. And in his definition of God he says in the Mul-mantar that the True Creator is Fearless and without Enmity. And truly these two qualities have become an integral part of the Sikh character, as has been demonstrated time and again. Once convinced of the righteousness of their cause, the Sikhs will, in all fearlessness, be prepared to make every sacrifice—even the supreme sacrifice — to uphold it and would smilingly walk into the jaws of death so that the survivors in the community at large might enjoy the fruit of its success.

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh when the Khalsa, under the command of Banda Singh, was engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the Mughal empire for the liberation of the Punjab from under its yoke, they never reduced it to a communal strife against the Muslims whose co-religionists the Mughals were. The struggle of the Khalsa was purely a political one against the tyranny of the ruling people and not against the religion of the Mughals, although under the Emperor's orders of December 10, 1710, the Sikhs, on the other hand, were “killed at sight wherever found”. In April 1711, within four and a half months of the issue of this royal edict, the Sikh commander, Banda Singh, had proclaimed: “I am not opposed to Muslims” as such. The Mughal news-letter of April 29, 1711, tells us that “for any Muslim who approaches him (Banda Singh), he fixes a daily allowance and wages and looks after him. He has permitted them to read *khutba* and *namaz*, with the result that five thousand Muslims have gathered round him. Having entered into his friendship, they are free to shout their call (*azan*) and recite their prayers in the army of the wretched” (Sikhs). *Akbharat-i-Darbar-i-Mullala* (Jaipur); *Ruqaat-i-Amin-ud-Daula*, No. 3; *Dastur-ul-Insha*, 6a).

And when Banda Singh and his 794 Sikh companions were brought as captives to Delhi and were being executed at the rate of a hundred a day (March 5-13, 1716), they, with the name of God on their lips—“*Wahiguru, Wahiguru gavan*” fearlessly welcomed the executioner's sword and called him *mukta*, a deliverer. In the words of the British ambassadors Johu Surman and Edward Stephenson, who were eye-witnesses to this ghastly massacre, It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatised from this new formed religion” to save his muddy vesture of decay (Letter No. XII, to the President and Governor of Fort William and Council in Bengal, dated Dilly, March 10, 1716).

Now about Banda Singh. One June 9 1716, when the flesh of his body was being torn with red-hot pincers, the Mughal Prime Minister Muhammad Amin Khan questioned him on the fierceness of his struggle against the Empire. “I will tell you”, said Banda Singh, Whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the part of equity and abandon themselves to all kinds of excesses, the providence never fails to raise a scourge like me to chastise a race so depraved, but when the measure of punishment is full, then He raises man like you to bring him to punishment.” What a fearless

composure of mind and a peaceable calmness and stoic self-control, brought about by Guru Nanak's teachings ! (*Siyar ul-Mutakherin*, 404; Raymond, I, 91; Briggs, 79-80).

The institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat* (mixed congregations) and *Guru ka Langar* (mixed community dining) established by Guru Nanak, as mentioned earlier, had not only the levelling and equalising effect upon the Sikhs, but had also strengthened their cohesion as a separate nationality and democratized their social, religious and political organisations. The organization of the Dal Khalsa and the republican nature of the Sikh Misals during the eighteenth century also had their birth in the *sangats*. Sir George Cambell, who had seen this system in actual practice in the cis-Sutlej areas in the eighteen-forties before the annexation of the Punjab, tells us :

The Sikh system is very much like that out of which the German system sprang. They formed Misals or military confederacies. Each misal elected its own supreme chief and sub-chiefs, and every horseman had his rights and his share in the common conquests. The combined misals formed the 'Khalsa' or Sikh Commonwealth (*Memoirs of My Indian Career*, 46).

Speaking of the republic of Mehraj, which he knew intimately, he says :

Mehraj remained an independent republic till with the rest of the country, it came under British protection...It was really a very complete, fully equipped republic. It was diplomatically recognised as a state...There were no chiefs or hereditary rulers; the state was governed by its *punches* or representative elders. There was nothing of any feudal system, or any division into conquerors and conquered...Unhappily, as I think, this interesting reply was soon after wiped out, when all the smaller Sikh States were conquered and reduced to the position of British subjects (*Ibid.*, 42-43).

Even when Maharaja Ranjit Singh integrated and consolidated the territories of some of the misals into the kingdom of the Punjab, he said that the kingdom, in reality, belonged to the Guru and that he was only his *rakha*, a *chaukidar*. And, always remembering the words of Guru Nanak "*bhullan andar sabh ko abhull Guru Kartar*—Everyone is fallible, the Supreme Creator alone is infallible", Maharaja Ranjit Singh never behaved like an infallible autocrat. We have on record, reproduced in facsimile in *The Real Ranjit Sidgh* by Fakir Syed Weheeduddin, two of the Maharaja's *farmans*—and there might, be many more which have not come to light as yet—wherein he had authorised Syed Faqir Nuruddin and Sardar Amir Singh of Lahore to withhold and bring to his notice for amendment any order of the Maharaja himself, of the princes royal, the Prime Minister or of the chief Sardars, if in the opinion of the Syed or the Sardar, it was inappropriate. To quote, in English translation, one of them addressed to the Syed (p.30-32);

Sincere Well-wisher, Fakir Nuruddin Ji May you be happy !

It is hereby decreed by His Highness with the utmost emphasis that no person in the city should practise high-handedness and oppression on the people. Indeed, if even His Highness himself should issue an inappropriate order against any resident of Lahore, it should be clearly brought to notice of His Highness so that it may be amended. Protector of Bravery, Malawa Singh, should always be advised to dispense justice in accordance with legitimate right and without the slightest oppression and, furthermore, he should be advised to pass orders in consultations with the *Panches* and Judges of the city and in accordance with the *Shastras* and *Quran*, as pertinent to the faith of the parties for such is our pleasure. And should any person fail to act in accordance with your advice or instruction, you should send him a formal letter so that it may serve as a proof on the strength of which His Highness may punish him for disobedience...

Despatched from the Court of His Highness, 31st Bhadon, 1832 sambat (September 13, 1825 A.D.).

This was, perhaps, the only order of its kind in the history of the world issued by a king authorizing a subordinate officer of the state to withhold any order issued of the king himself which in the opinion of that officer appeared to him to be inappropriate and oppressive. The credit for this extreme humility in the interests of the people goes to the follower of Gurn Nanak who had enjoined upon the kings to take a vow of dedication to impartial justice (*Sarang Var I*, vii-2).

The Sikhs have also proved themselves to be no less formidable in non-violent moral warfare. In 1922, in the Guru-ka-Bagh struggle, they took a solemn vow at the holy Akal Takht at Amritsar to offer *satyagraha* and under all circumstances to remain non-violent in word and deed. On the refusal of their volunteers to disperse under the orders of the police interfering with their religious liberty, their parties of 100 each were mercilessly beaten day by day and thrown into road-side ditches to be picked up by medical relief parties. These non-violent soldiers included among them many a veteran of the Frontier campaign and of the First Great War. But not one of them raised his little finger against the police or uttered a word of complaint. The reports of eye-witnesses sent to the press from the place of occurrence stirred the conscience of the world. In the words of the Rev. C.F. Andrews, "a new heroism, learnt through suffering, has risen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world" by the followers of Guru Nanak.

At Jaito on February 21, 1924, the Sikh *Satagrahis* literally ran into the jaws of death in the face of machine-gun fire and, ultimately, came out successful in their twenty-two week long struggle against the Government.

In January 1922, after the success of the Sikhs in their non-violent struggle in the Golden Temple Keys affair, Mahatma Gandhi congratulated Baba Kharak Singh, the then President of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, saying :

“*First Decisive Battle for India’s Freedom Won. Congratulation*” (Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement, II).

“As regards non-violence, with its attendant conception of self-sacrifice,” wrote Lala Lajpat Rai, “They have given the most amazing proofs at Nanakana Sahib...and later at Ajnala and Amritsar. They have proved themselves worthy descendants of their Gurus and the examples they have set of self-sacrifice and courage, devoid of swagger, in the face of provocation, will be hard to beat.”

The above is a brief account of how the life of the people came to be transformed under the impact of the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. They had, in fact, stirred the inner soul of the people and had freed them from the thralldom of the priestly classes. Freed from the worship of idols and images, they came to their own, and introduced into the country a monotheistic casteless and classless society of manly servants of the people—an order of fearless saint-soldiers, the Khalsa—who in their turn, made innumerable sacrifices to free their land from its tyrannous rulers and foreign usurpers. And, they ultimately succeeded in creating on the north-west an independent sovereign state of the Punjab and made a gift of it to India to serve as the guardian of its honour and independence.

#### GURU NANAK AND HIS MESSAGE—SAINTLY RELEVANCE AND CHALLENGE AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY

“O Wonder of Wonders !  
Thou art the spirit that pervadeth all :  
‘Tis thy Light, that light all hearts.”<sup>1</sup>

Religion is rooted in man’s need to remove *avidya* or ignorance and offers to him a way to end the confusion he continually finds about him. In the course of dispelling *avidya* many problems arise allowing much speculation and diverse opinions. Yet behind the speculations and the many attempts to bring forth a greater understanding of the course of life lies the single Reality from which the diversity springs. It is in the diversity that confusion arises just in the realization of the underlying Reality all confusion is immediately lifted.

It was into such a situation of confusion over the multiplicity of things and deviational practices that Guru Nanak came forth in song to proclaim a single Reality,

“I see the Light hid within me, spontaneously.”<sup>2</sup> When I look carefully I see no other than God. The one God pervadeth all places; the one God dwelleth in the heart.”<sup>3</sup> With this firm realization of the light within the heart, of the light which illumines the universe Gurn Nanak was able to bring reconciliation and peace in the midst of conflict. He ceaselessly worked to bring out in others the realization of a deeper truth upon which limited perspectives could be easily understood for what they actually were.

Guru Nanak had a rigorous doctrine based on the sole aim of leading man from his ego-centred self into the court of the Lord. Through song, through devotion, through work and service Guru Nanak strove again and again to raise mankind to the unity of the transcendental Truth which was the very essence of his being. To do so he had to call upon mankind and oppose the folly of running “about intoxicated with pride greed and cravings engrossed in Maya.”<sup>4</sup> Men had to be saved from the obsession to following limited gains and accumulations. Guru Nanak saw that the people about him had no firm ground upon which to centre themselves, no sense of direction. “Without the Lord thou shalt trudge about wearily.”<sup>5</sup>

Man cannot live in two spheres of being. Either he will be firmly grounded in the work of the Lord where selfish motives have no sway, or he shall follow the passions and desires of his limited being missing out on the wider context of his life.

“The ego is opposed to the Name. Both cannot reside in the same place”<sup>6</sup>. “He alone is true.”<sup>7</sup> “Man forsake h God and indulgeth in sensual pleasures and this inviteth suffering.”<sup>8</sup> In that we cannot live in two places at one time arises life’s most difficult problem, for if one is ego-centered, he believes this to be life’s true home and gains an interpretation of things which somewhat satisfies the condition. Therefore, in a sense, the blindness is total, for all understanding is limited to fit the narrow set boundaries. It is here that those persons who have gained the direct sense of God, or Truth, have their great significance. Living fully in the light of the Real they are able to bring to bear the significe of the larger life and lead others beyond the limitations which have hindered us.

Although Guru Nanak found man in this weary condition he had great hopes in man’s ultimate capacity to win the higher life. Yet it was not solely man’s effort that was needed. The realization of Truth was not one-sided where through strenuous effort all that was desired would come about. Instead, with the knowledge of the nearness of God, one could win grace and salvation. “O thou ignorant bride, the Lord is near thee.”<sup>9</sup> “We, the meek and the lowly, belong to Thee, O Lord, save us, O save us, O save us, Thou Highest of the high.”<sup>10</sup>

There is no sepatation between man and God, only it appears to be so. “He is within and without His creation.”<sup>11</sup> Yet because we have become so engrossed in ourselves as we see only that side of our being which is limited to the things of the senses as the human reality. By becoming totally engrossed upon this single level of our being,

the rest of life is seen in the wrong proportions. We have lost the deeper light within the heart. "The Gateway to Him opens only when the fire of self is extinguished."<sup>12</sup>

The distance becomes set between "me" as the lowly creature indulging in "my self" as against the limitless Lord of unfathomable virtues. This distinction between the two, with the link between them, makes it possible for us to work out the salvation where the lower self becomes merged in the will of the Lord. We are helped to turn away from those factors of limitation and move towards "The Domain of Truth" where "the formless Abides."<sup>13</sup>

To offer peace here, where confusion abounded Guru Nanak asked that we mediate on the name; "If man apply his mind he shall find the comforting Name."<sup>14</sup> Here was the way to gain stability and begin to pierce into the Truth of things. The name became the central focus upon which to sing the praises of the Lord and win entrance into His court. The continual returning in devotion to the Lord through his Name sets the true direction and begins to lift one from the continual involvement with Maya into the higher realm of spiritual consciousness.

"With the Lord's Name is my mind pierced through, what else is now for me to dwell upon ?

In the consciousness of the word is Peace; imbued with the Lord, one is in utter Happiness.

Keep me as Thou wilt, Lord, for thy Name is my only Succour.

O my mind, submit thou to the Master's will; he who decked thy body and mind, on him thou Dwell.

Offer thou like incense thy every bit to the Fire (of the Lord);

Make thou thy body the Firewood and light it (with his love) night and day.

Nothing can equal the Lord's Name, even if thou practisest myriads of good deeds;

Even if thou cuttest up the body in a niche in the Himalayas,

The mind's Disease is cured not.

Nothing O nothing, can equal God's Name: I have tested (and found wanting) all other ways.

Abiding in the fortresses of gold, if thou dispensest fine horses and elephants in charity, and lands too, and many cows, the mind's ego leaves thee not.

If the Lord's Name pierces thy mind through, the Guru gives thee the Gift of Truth.

Thy intellect (may be sharpened) by the mind's hard discipline; and the Vedas thou may read through;

(But) thy soul is trapped by snares of many kinds: through Virtues alone the Guru opens unto thee the Door of Salvation.

Truth is the Highest of all Virtues; but living Truth is higher still.

Everyone is high, not one seems low to me;  
 For He, the only Potter, hath made all vessels; from His Light is the light of the  
 three worlds.  
 Through His Grace one Receives the Truth, and no one can erase the Gift of  
 Eternity.  
 When a Saint meets a Saint, through the Guru's love, he findeth Peace.  
 If one Merges in the True Guru, the Unutterable Truth is dwelt upon.  
 One Drinketh Nectar and is in Peace; at the Lord's Court he gets the Robe.  
 In all hearts rings the music of the Lord(s) Flute; and one loveth spontaneously the  
 World night and day.  
 Rare are they who know this; through the Guru is their mind made Wise.  
 Forget not the Name, O Nanak, for thou art Delivered by Practising the word."<sup>15</sup>

With this incentive to the spiritual life, a life which transcends the illusions and blindness of the *limited* self, Guru Nanak spoke of the necessity or moral preparation through devotion and service in the wider world. "Dedicate thyself to service in the world, And thou gettest a seat in the Lord's Court. Saith Nanak, 'Thus wilt thou live in Everlasting Joy.'"<sup>16</sup>

Here life in the world does not contradict life in the spirit. What is asked for is a change in one's attitude. Just as one can work for oneself or for another, so likewise one may work for the Lord of life. "Without Thee, O Lord, all is untrue."<sup>17</sup>

Guru Nanak never asked that one give up his life in the world by turning away from it. Again and again in his songs he speaks of only changing our attitude to the world and not to shun it.

"One is defiled not by hearing music or by uttering the Vedas,  
 Nor by the changing of the seasons through the movement of the sun or the moon,  
 Nor through good, nor through baths, Nor if it raineth all over.  
 O, one is defiled not by the earth or the waters;  
 Nor if the water mergeth in the winds.  
 Sayeth Nanak: "It is by turning one's back on God that one is defiled;  
 For, he, who is without the Guru, is shorn of all Merit."<sup>18</sup>

Guru Nanak asks that we cultivate our virtues always taking into consideration these around us. "Those who toil to earn their living and then share their earnings with others have found the true way."<sup>19</sup> Yet one's work may not be done directly for others, but rather should grow from one's devotion of God, for God is the source of all virtues.

The unity of all life is to be found by reaching outward with greater responsibility,

to take into consideration all peoples, "To be humble before everyone and call no one bad."<sup>20</sup> Guru Nanak equates one's life in the world with the lotus in the pond. The lotus grows through mud and water, and yet keeps detached from both."<sup>21</sup> It brings forth its flower of perfection above both.

Similarly, for man, Guru Nanak has said, "The body is the temple of God, within which he hath locked infinite Light."<sup>22</sup> "In thy Mansion liveth the Infinite Unfathomable God."<sup>23</sup>

Our sufferings are rooted in ungodliness, in turning away from the source of all that is. Turned towards the world of desire we can "Impute not blame to anyone, but rather to thine own karma. I have suffered the consequences of my acts; I may blame no one else."<sup>24</sup> With this sense of responsibility for our acts, there naturally arises a sense of co-operation in the workings of the greater world. We may set the direction outwards where we seek to consider others. Seen as a growing world "One gets in the next world only what one earns through honest effort, sharing it with others."<sup>25</sup> If we seek to compete with others, to take what we want for ourselves, then the unity is cut apart and limitations close around us as we attempt to hold to things acquired against others.

In reaching outward to the greater world the Lord of all must be the goal, else limits of some sort shall remain. "Praise Him whose limit cannot be found."<sup>26</sup> "The one Lord who created the world is the Lord of all."<sup>27</sup> Devotion to God becomes the supreme path leading to the revelation of the unity of all life. Moral preparation in the light of the Divine ever broadens one setting a selfless orientation capable of greater insight.

With the need to bring one's life into harmony with the Divine Will, the idea of only one way, one path, gains greater clarity.

From the point of view of the many, the diversity of ways and paths has its meaning, but Guru Nanak chose to emphasize the need to overcome one's small self and rise into the life of the Divine. From such an emphasis the insistence of One Way comes forth: that way whereby we overcome our limitations and gain salvation through greater and greater participation in the Court of the Lord. It is a turning inward that is a turning without. "When one seeth the Lord within and without, the (inner) fire is quenched."<sup>28</sup> What we gain through our realization we bring into the world. The peace we find with is a reflection of the peace without. We act in accordance with our inmost truth be well as with the outer world. There are no steadfast lines of demarcation between ourselves and the world at large. The interaction and involvement is such that it defies the descriptions of limiting boundaries.

"One must Hear, Believe, Love the Name,  
and bathe in the sacred fount within one's fame.  
For worship there cannot be till virtues shine."<sup>29</sup>



The cultivation of virtues leads to the highest of all virtues, devotion to the Lord. With the cultivation of virtues we control and remove actions initiated for selfish motives. Guru Nanak accepts the law of karma whereby a continuity is found within one's life where all one's actions shape one's life and character. By insisting on achieving merit through virtuous actions he is seeking to create within each person the capacity to reach into his deeper nature. Yet doing deeds for others can still become a deed, and where one seeks gratification and self-satisfaction in one's work. Service becomes meaningful and active when it is linked with the divine source of love.

The greatest of the difficulties we must conquer is that of the mind and its interpretation of things. "O my mind, know thou, that thou must also leave."<sup>30</sup> The mind's interpretation of things is far different from the things themselves, and far different from one's actual involvement with within life. The mind works through abstraction, dividing the world into units and creating symbols to represent the pieces held in salation. A short of puzzle is brought into being where the different pieces are juggled about into different patterns. As we manipulate these pieces, building various structures we wander very far from the truth of things, for "this alone is His Virtue that He alone is."<sup>31</sup> This does not mean that the intellect and the whole meaning of reason vanish in the light of the real. What Guru Nanak and the great saints have said is that the divine sight alone gives us the true relationship, the balance of valus which makes the material and the spirtual appear not as separate entities but as parts of the whole. But intellectual dogmas as well as unreal ecstasies take us further away from the unity of love. "Think not that thou shalt find the Lord by mere words."<sup>32</sup>

The extreme difficulty in achieving illumination is realized when we know that the mind and its thoughts can lead one away from the source of things to fragmentary and unrelated ideas. Guru Nanak frees us from this perplexity by insisting on the lowness and humbleness of man. For when speaking of man as man he is emphasizing that aspect of man's nature which is engrossed in the world of the senses. It needs discipline so as to be lessened and extinguished, thus bringing into greater focus that other side of man's nature which is in direct communion with the ultimate fruth. "I beg at Thy door ever and for evermore. I practice the way that illumineth me with Thy vision and I beg at Thy door for nothing else. Bless me with Thy Grace."<sup>33</sup>

In submission one turns away from the old self wandering aimlessly among the things of the world. The plea is to overcome the fleeting with the sustaining light at the root of all this. It is the comine into being of the new, of the Lord's Light and a diminishing of the ego—centred cravings. The one side of our being grows less as the other increases in brilliance. It is the sacrifice of the unreal and the blind for the Real and the True.

Guru Nanak asks that our life become a sacrifice upto the, Lord, that we work more and more to come into harmony with the Divine. "Yet through the Love of the

Lord's Name, throughout Truth and Posie does one get great Glory and one makes the Lord's Name one's Mainstay."<sup>34</sup> The more dedicated and devoted we become to the Lord, the less the distance between the two. But as revelation only comes after the distance which the self creates has been removed, the Lord, is "known" through His Name. "Myriads are Thy Names, O Lord, I know not their end. There is no other like Thee. There is no need to shout but to look within."<sup>35</sup> The Name becomes the drawing point, leading one ever closer to the chosen object. Each opportunity taken to praise the Lord through the Name with song and devotion creates greater strength within us and brings us ever closer. "These saturated with the Name rid themselves of the ego and ever abide in Truth."<sup>36</sup>

With the weakening of the power of the ego the sense of the meaning of the will of the Lord begins to glow and the mystery of life, of the creation becomes astoundingly wonderful, one comes to "know that God's doings are beyond the count of us beings."<sup>37</sup>

The culmination of one's efforts results in grace, the revelation of the Lord within one's heart.

It is won through the single-minded devotion which overcomes all the fluctuations arising from the passions and the desires. "He who sees this, contemplates, filled with joyous Zeal."<sup>38</sup> "Whoever dwelleth on His Name heareth the Voice of God within himself."<sup>39</sup>

But there is more than this inner revelation, for the unity of Reality is seen to be everywhere. It is not abstract knowledge where we rationally ascertain the unity from a few ascertained facts, but rather a spirit that permeates one's whole being, giving a new sense of our place and that of others in the world. "They who are detached and saturated with the Name know the True One residing everywhere."<sup>40</sup>

From this experience of beholding Truth everywhere, of the world as revelation' our attitude greatly changes; as we seek to realize the summit we must make a deliberate effort to do good. We must, through reason and belief, seek out the right way. But this does not hold for those who have mounted the summit. Here Divine Love so saturates one's being that his natural attitude is one of peace, joy and love for all. The depth of being is here so great that reconciliation is found for all diverging opinions. Disputes are transformed as by magic into seeking for deeper interactions, work in the world becomes the constant endeavor to remove the limitations and shackles holding so many others in the bondage of constraining attitudes and opinions.

"He alone can discourse on Him who knowth Him."<sup>41</sup> Too often we find interpretations of reality based on abstract reasoning. Here the presentation of Truth is a conglomeration of many things. But such views must lack the undivided unity which gives freedom and joy to the vast interplay of all that is. If we only experience intellectual understanding we cannot rise above mental preconditions. The need is for direct experience, or merging in the Divine so that a deep witnessing can come forth. And here

lies the unbiased witness seeking only to spread greater realization and understanding among others.

Here arises the place of the Guru, of the Divine witness. Such a being stands in two worlds as it were. His ultimate footing lies in the Court of the Lord, but he roams among mankind to relieve their sufferings and bring to them that attitude towards truth which lies hidden within. The Guru sees and knows that "God's wisdom pervrdeth all beings yet remaineth unperceived. Whenever I see I see Him."<sup>42</sup>

Yet the bare existence of the Guru is not enough. All mankind partakes of the Divine and all need to work ceaselessly to bring out this deeper side of their being. Without effort all is of no avail. "The whole world meets the Guru. But mere meeting the Guru does not bring salvation unless one meditates on the Guru's word."<sup>43</sup> Truth is merged in the Guru and reveals its nature through him, he being a finer embodiment of the Divine.

Even if we cling to the Guru himself seeking salvation, complete realization is blocked from us. "The Truth alone saves us, yea, the Truth alone."<sup>44</sup> But this embodiment of Truth which the Guru is saturated with helps to set the direction in those struggling to rise above selfish cravings. The Divine is "merged in the Guru and (is) revealed ...through him."<sup>45</sup>

It is this revelation which the Guru embodies that sets his teaching apart from teaching as it is normally understood. Generally we learn in order to reach towards some goal. And the goal becomes of prime importance. Spiritual leaders also lay stress on the goal to be obtained, but at the same time give great emphasis to the means used to reach that goal.

In a general sense we may say that people, in their own way, are seeking to achieve a better way of life, to rise above certain conditions in order to bring about a change. This is the meaning of man's work, through effort to create new and different situation with some sort of orientation which leads to a positive gain. From this we achieve history and civilization as the fruit of our effort.

If we set as our aim materialistic gains the goal is easily discernible, for the many achievements are ever present to the senses as the objects for our own satisfaction. Here civilization acquires an easily marked character or pattern as we observe the ever-increasing products building up. In setting such limits on man's work and effort, all too easily lose sight of man's relation to himself to others, and to the world about him. He all tend to minimize those spheres of man's life which are different from our sense of measuring achievement. Human relations then become factors only in the sense of contributing to the well-being of our materialistic gains, or a similar measurable centre of reference.

What occurs is that a meaningful place in life is lost sight of as we become more and more oriented to the goal we set before us. We become insensitive to the gross acts

which we commit at the moment, thinking almost exclusively of the world we are trying to bring about. It is into such a situation as this where mental hallucination distorts our actual life that the spiritual person offers a witness centred on man's ever-present life.

Nehru, in speaking of Gandhiji has written, "I have been attracted by Gandhiji's stress on the right means . . . perhaps ends and means are not really separable and form together one organic whole. In a world which thinks almost exclusively of ends and ignores means, this emphasis on means seems odd and remarkable."<sup>46</sup> It is to live in the world truthfully as it is that makes the spiritual man from those who seek to live elsewhere in some distant future. The world is what it is and not what we wish it to be.

Guru Nanak found himself immersed in a world bent upon disunity and petty squabbling where too many people sought their own good by carving it from others. In the blind desires of the times force, might and dogmatism had become the means to achieve wealth and prestige. The use of brute force, and religious dogma, buried human sensitivity in a sea of justificatory arrogance.

Guru Nanak was born in North-West India in 1469. The political condition of North India subjected it to attacks from Central Asia and Afghanistan. Many of the attackers had come for plunder, leaving behind them death and destruction. As they left, small states grew up quarrelling among themselves. It was during this period, and earlier that Islam brought its influence upon the social world of India.

Islam came as an aggressively militant Doctrine. Under the Islamic state "God is the only true ruler . . . and the earthly rulers are merely His agents whose sole duty is to enforce and spread the Quranic law, which is divine in the eyes of all Muslims."<sup>47</sup> The Hindus as people developed overly adjustive mental habits in order to get on in the world. In short, they suffered a great deal of moral and intellectual degeneration."<sup>50</sup>

Into this world where once sublime ideas were, which now suffered from gross limitations, infringing the lives of the people, Guru Nanak was born. His early years were spent in the spiritual quest where he had to overcome the temptations of living a narrow life. In his songs are found the ways he sought to overcome the narrow limitations surrounding others; he wanted them to see the familiar in a fresh light. Each time his family or friends tried to hold him down through some ritual or occupations, Guru Nanak would bring out for them the deeper significance of spiritual and therefore, relational truth, which they had missed.

One incident of this kind was the ceremony concerning the sacred thread. The upper class boys were put through the ceremony of great religious and social sanctions were given to it. But Nanak, as a child, made this comment :

"Countless thefts, villainies, falsehoods and blasphemies are going on, countless deceptions are practiced and countless secret sins are carried within the soul, day and night. And yet a thread is spun out of cotton and the Brahmin's duty end

with twisting it. A goat is killed, cooked and eaten then all think the thread is worth putting on."<sup>51</sup>

Nanak found the contradiction too blatant to accept the situation for what it was. He had to comment on the foolish way the ceremony was considered in itself to offer the greater life. But on the positive side, using the symbols of the ceremony, Guru Nanak sought to bring out the deeper significance that the ceremony should convey:

“From the cotton of Mercy make threads of contentment and then within the knots of continence, apply twists of righteousness. The thread prepared in this way will be of use to the soul. O Pandit, if thou canst really make such a thread put in on me. It will neither break, nor get soiled, burnt or lost. Blessed, Nanak, is the person who goeth about with such a thread on his nect.”<sup>52</sup>

As a student in the town school the insistence on learning was oriented towards becoming capable of earning wealth, influence and power. Again rather than contradict the whole system of education, Guru Nanak came forth with the plea for changing the values and orientation which he found so undesirable; he opposed an education that protected one from truthful living.

“Burn thy early attachment, break it into a powder to be thy ink and make the pure intelligence the paper to write upon with the pen of love; make thy mind a writer to write wisdom as instructed by the Guru. Write thou His Praises and His Name Write thou that He is Infinite and without end O, dear sir, learn to write such an account as should become a true certificate when checked up here before the people or hereafter at Guru’s Court.”<sup>53</sup>

It is wonderful that he asks that we seek to bring our life into harmony “before the people as well as before God’s Court.” Man partakes of two spheres, one side being rooted in this life shered with others, the other firmly grounded in the Divine. The world is the meeting point of the empirical and the Divine. Our life needs that orientation which reaches into both. On the one hand we are immersed in the world where joys and sorrows continually arise and cease, where no solid foundation is found. It is the ever-present change where we work out our personality. But fear arises if we live here with all our strength. Freedom comes from the Divine side of our nature, where permanence is found. In such a light personality takes on a new perspective as a growing and changing organism ever reacting with the world about us. It is with the sense of the real that the personalilty gains its proper stability. Otherwise it flounders upon the changing, divisive world of materiality and clings to the transient as real, mistaking the true nature of all that is.

In Guru Nanak's early life there are many incidents referring to his seeking to raise all aspect of the village life to a higher level of service and devotion. He never retreated from the situations which he encountered, but rather entered into all with his calmness and dignity. As a herdsman, as a farmer, and as a store-keeper he shows the same attitude. "Those who toil to earn their living and then share their earning with others, have found the true way."<sup>54</sup>

It is with such a background that Guru Nanak came to the fullness of spiritual realization. He neither held the tendency to shun the world nor became too engrossed with it. He developed a deeper and deeper commitment as he beheld the suffering and horror all around him. The contradiction between the peace he knew all life shared and the misery he found men to be immersed within brought him out of the village and into the larger world. Commenting on his times he said. "The Kali age is the kafe, the kings are the butchers. And righteousness hath taken wings."<sup>55</sup> To rekindle righteousness where the lamp had become dim became his task, and for twenty years he travelled across the then known world of India and the Near East, seeking to bring harmony into the life of communities separated by religious and economic barriers.

Guru Nanak knew that all men have the basis of righteousness within themselves, as well as within the tradition they followed. This allowed him great leeway and the ability to teach in the way he particularly followed.

He was never to ask anyone to renounce his way and take up the task of another. Instead his insistence was to see better that light which was a part of each person's inner being. He asked of every person the courage of root their lives in truth and cease to run about in the blindness of self-interest. The problems he found around him were deeply enmeshed in the mistaken notions and attitudes of religious bigotry as well as class and caste hierarchies. Guru Nanak strove to bring Hindu and Muslim fanatics to see clearly what they were doing with their lives and how such a way caused endless suffering and harm to all communities. Righteousness and truthfulness had to be followed at every moment to remove the contradictions of a false life attached to false social and moral sanctions. A truthful life leads to the direct sense of the real where we need not create in our minds distorted interpretations leading to mutual suspicion and misery.

At a time when Hinduism and Islam often behaved as hostile and irreconcilable faiths he would not side exclusively with either. Each had its inner depth and each system of religion and thought sought to bring through some traditions and actions deeper realization of true being. In this context Guru Nanak declared: "There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim."<sup>56</sup>

There were names which groups were attaching to themselves in defiance of others. Harmony was lost in the contest of maintaining surface patterns. Holding too strongly to the outer name of religion one is led away from inner cultivation. In such a

situation one's life becomes a blind interaction with the 'chosen names' and a negative reaction towards "other names" Here conflict has its roots.

But at the same time Guru Nanak did not degrade any way of life. He partook of all creeds in dress and attitude to the fullest extent possible so long as the spirit of fellowship was meaningfully held to. He would enter mosques and temples, continually to bring out the best in all that he encountered, for what he himself found he knew to be everywhere. He had no "new" teaching; instead he lay stress on the best that was already there.

On his travels among Muslims his participation with them extended as far as he found sincerity. When hypocrisy and dogmatism turned Islam into a formal creed, Guru Nanak would deliberately contradict the rituals so that he could arouse those in his presence to notice him. He knew that a person of deep devotion could not be upset by any or are attitudes of loving courage, but instead would welcome them.

But as the spirit of religion becomes stale, blind following does not allow for the richness of man's diverse ways. As Guru Nanak brought the wrath of the blind believers upon himself, he would take the opportunity to spread among them ideas which extended beyond the narrow conceptions they held to. His insistence was continually on an inner refinement, to bring the heart to rest in eternal peace rather than shuffling through empty rituals. His Comments on turning the outer aspects of Islam to inner cultivation bring this out well:

"Let mercy be thy mosque, faith thy prayer-mat; and honest living thy Quran.  
Humility thy circumcision; and good conduct thy fast.  
Thus dost thou become a true Muslim.  
If pious work be thy Kaaba, and Truth thy teacher and good deeds thy Prayer,  
And if thy rosary be of His will, the Lord, yea, will keep thy Honour."<sup>75</sup>

During Guru Nanak's involvement with Islam, certain characteristics of his belief show themselves as he agrees with parts of Islamic belief, and disagrees with other parts of it. Hitti has summed up Muhammad's teachings in these few words:

"There is only one God. He is the creator, all powerful, ever-living. Mohammad is His messenger. There is a judgement day. Splendid rewards in Paradise wait those who obey His commands. Terrible punishment in Hell is the lot of those who disregard them."<sup>58</sup>

Guru Nanak fully acknowledged the first parts of the teaching. In one of his songs he speaks of God in this way.

"He is Allah, Unknowable, Unfathomable, the Greater, the Cause, the Beneficent.

All the world cometh and goeth and only the Lord or Mercy stays.”<sup>59</sup> This fundamental aspect of all religions, of the vastness of the transcendental and immanent reality he had no disagreement with.

But concerning the place given to Mahammad, Guru Nanak could not agree. Guru Nanak never denied that Muhammad was a great spiriual teacher, he only questioned the exclusively high position given to a particular individual. “The first is the Name of God. There are many Prophets as His gatekeepers.”<sup>60</sup> Although Muslims admitted other prophets, the unrivalled and immutable position of Muhammad and the Quran was an integral part of their creed. It is this excludiveness which made Islam, for many Muslims, distinct from other religions and maintained its unique position. As Guru Nanak was thoroughly bent on removing all ideas of special statuses and distinctions in any religion he had to attack this stronghold exclusiveness.

He was never in conflict with the truth of Islam. For a gaeat part of his teaching reiterates monotheism. His idea of one God and one path testify to this. But he was careful on its interpretation.

“There’s but one Road and one Door; Yea to reach up the Self the Guru is the Leader. And Beauteous is the Master, whom ðne seeth there, and all Bliss is in His True Name.”<sup>61</sup>

Here is the fundamental tenet of Islam, as of Hindu monotheism, lacking only the name of a particular religious leader. The founder of Islam could easily be substituted for a supreme prophet or a “Guru”, but not as the only messenger of God. Yet Guru Nanak knew that a deeply spiritual Muslim reached an inner harmony which could even contradict this doctrine. Therefore, his insistence was continually on the inner purity which would bring the greater insight that leads to acceptance of the richness of the Lord’s greater reality. “Practice thou Truth and Truth alone: For vain is every other attachment.”<sup>62</sup>

Yet it needs to be kept in mind that Guru Nanak did not argue in the negative. He did not emphasize before others the ignorance and the misdeeds of any particular religion. Rather through example and song he ought again and again to lead all those he met to a greater understanding. Although we can find indirectly in his songs his attacks on fanaticisms they were usually to emphasize the deeper roots of Islam.

“It is difficult, indeed, to be a true Muslim. If a man possesseth the following qualities then alone is he a true Muslim. First, let the religion of the Prophet become sweet to him and then with the Scrapper (of humility) let him scrub himself clear of the possession of pride. And then with Faith in the funder of religion let him break the illusion about life and death, accept God’s will and believing the Creator as Supreme, lose his self, And lastly, if he is compassionate to all beings, he will be worthy of being called a true Muslim.”<sup>63</sup>



Guru Nanak continually spoke of the mark of religion as lying with each single person. He insisted it was one's duty to cultivate an ethic which brought one into harmony with all beings. Disunity and separateness and exclusiveness destroyed the true unity of all:

"Through false talks one gathered nothing but falsehood. Thou sayest thy prayers five times and giveth them five names. But let truth be thy first prayer, honest living the second and working for the good of all, the third. Let good intentions of the mind be the fourth prayer and the praises of the Lord, the fifth. Say thou the prayer of good deeds and thus become thou a true Muslim."<sup>64</sup>

In Guru Nanak's desire to bring greater light and understanding to the world, he travelled much in Muslim areas, going as far West—it is said as Macca, the holy city of Islam. He dressed as a Muslim pilgrim and shouted the Muslim call to prayer. This brought him into close harmony with those about him. But at night, while going to sleep he did not care in which particular direction his feet pointed to. This was considered by some to be a sacrilegious act. Guru Nanak simply asked those present to find a direction where God was not. Such an answer overcame their hostility and calmed them in their extreme outlook.

This same criticism which emphasizes the spiritual development of all persons, Guru Nanak brought into the Hindu community. Here also he found people holding to exclusive formulations as a way of life. And against this meant the pursuing of conflict as different personalities held to different formulations of the one truth. As different sects and individuals clung to their own narrow peculiarities they defied others. The outer side was solidified and mistakenly believed to be the inner, Guru Nanak persistently refused to side with any single formulation.

"God is neither pleased by making music, nor recitation of the Vedas;  
 Nor through Yoga, nor by becoming knowledge-conscious ;  
 Nor by abiding ever in sadness;  
 Nor through beauty, possessions and revelries;  
 Nor by wandering naked at the pilgrim-stations;  
 Nor by offering alms in charity,  
 Nor by sitting out, alone, in wilderness,  
 Nor by dying as a warrior on the battlefield.  
 Nor by rolling in dust;  
 Yea, God taketh only that into account that one Loveth the whole mind,  
 And if one is imbued with the True Name."<sup>65</sup>

The weakness of Hindu society lay in its divisions. The barriers set up did not allow a meeting of the people. Strength could not arise because unity and clarity were not encouraged in the social and religious order. This difficulty arose from two sides, the quibbling of the Hindu priests, and the persistently repressive attitude of the Islamic conquerors whose main intent was to maintain their privileged position.

When Guru Nanak had to face these problems he always worked towards a constructive policy. This meant the internal strengthening of the people themselves. He did not overstress the difficult attitude which existed between the Hindus and the Muslims. His emphasis continually lay in bringing out a strength and perception which would see and reach beyond the discordance. When among Hindus, as when among Muslims, he brought out the best to be found within the tradition

“Six are the systems, six their teachers, of six different kinds the way they teach;  
But the Teacher of teachers is He, the Lord alone, though manifested as many.  
Yea, in whichever way are His Praises sung, that way alone is worthy of their  
praise.”<sup>66</sup>

Guru Nanak's teachings were never exclusive. It was not outside of life and one's tradition that one should look for truth, but rather truth was its very foundation. This meant Nanak had to reinterpret that truth which always was. There was never a need to insist on something new and the giving up of what already was. Yet it meant a shattering of illusions and false traditions. It meant that greater effort was needed to see things clearly. It meant that the narrow outlook had to be dropped.

Commenting on the Vedas he asked those he met to see clearly their true import. “If one reads the Vedas and considers the holy word of Vyasa, One finds that all the Rishis, the Lord's Devotees and men of spiritual discipline were imbued with the Name, the Treasure of all that is Good.”<sup>67</sup> The identification that many persons made with different aspects of their tradition had only increased their ego causing incorrect interpretations. To see beneath the self which has grown imbued with a tradition is no easy task.

This contradicts so much of what seems to be taken for granted. But an attempt to bring the other side of man's being is the greatest of all teachings: “To slay the self, this yea is the essence of the six Shastras, and to Realize the Light of the All pervading Perfect Lord in all.”<sup>68</sup>

The slaying of the self did not entail the renunciation of life and living in the forest. Nor did it mean the life of the householder. Such distinctions could not be completely true. The household and the forest are alike for one who liveth in Poise.”<sup>69</sup> To live with set distinctions could not be to follow the inner light. If we continually follow the shadows of changing things we never reach out toward enlightenment.

Guru Nanak asks us to bring into the world, into the life we find ourselves immersed in, the stability gained through devotion to the Divine. It is not something contrary to the world of things, nor something opposed to it. It is fulfilment. Each and all share in the ultimate source of life. "Caste and power are of no account, for, every soul appears new or in its true colours before Him."<sup>70</sup> The distinctions only separate us and we misuse power to hold these false barriers setting man's mind far from the true freedom inherent in all.

Guru Nanak set a challenge to the world he found himself in. Travelling widely he sang of the joy of the Lord, seeking to bring the illumination he saw into the hearts of others. He knew he did not come with a secret that others before him had not found. He sought to Lead men's hearts toward the Truth that humanity had realized age after age in all lands:

"They, who hear of the Greatness of the Lord, say He is Great,  
 But he alone Knoweth who Seeth (Him).  
 O Priceless, Indescribable Thou;  
 They who describe Thee, Merge in Thee.  
 O Great, O high our Master,  
 Unfathomable, of Virtues Unmeasurable.  
 No one knows how vast is Thy Expanse.  
 The wise men of Intuition exercised their Wisdom and Intuition,  
 The valuations put value on Thee;  
 The wise, the seer, the holy holies  
 Could enunciate but little of Thy Worth.  
 All Truth, all penance, all goodness,  
 All miracles, all merits of the adepts,  
 The intuitive powers – without Thee, no one hath found.  
 He, on whom is Thy Grace, hath them; yea, in no otherwise.  
 Who, yea is the utterer  
 That can utter the whole of Thy Treasureful Virtues ?  
 Him, on whom Thou Bestowest (Thy Mercy), cannot but bask in it.  
 Sayeth Nanak, "The Truth alone Saves us, yea, the Truth alone,"<sup>71</sup>

The development of Sikhism after Guru Nanak offers a challenge to the student of its history. The contrasts which arose among its followers in comparison to its founder appear at times to be odds. Guru Nanak has asked that we kindle the light of God in determining our relationships to our fellow man. But the force of history seems to have added its weight in the shaping of some powerful Sikh followers.

The Mughal Empire was being established during the life-time of Guru Nanak.

The empire was aristocratic, militaristic and administrative. Its relationship to the people depended on the whims of its leaders. Under Akbar a great sensitivity to the peoples of India had developed. Akbar remoulded the strict interpretations of Islamic Law, offering greater opportunities to the Hindus. Here a sense of participation by the peoples of the empire could grow and a meaningful relationship to the administrative government could be established.

But Akbar's successors did not hold as great a sensitivity to the peoples of India. Therefore a distance was set up between the rulers and the ruled and antagonism gained its place. The government of later Mughal leaders became more and more dependent on military strength and the use of display of force to hold its away. Here the ruled people developed an attitude which went against the government which was no longer humanely related to them.

The richness of India's background became intolerant to the rulers following Akbar's death in 1605. Here some tolerance came only to those Indians who would pay some sort of homage to Islam and denounce their own heritage. The tradition the Indians had grown in had to be rejected for a change which allowed only the convert some sort of opportunity in life.

Against this policy many Indians took a strong stand, seeking to maintain the richness of their diverse ways. A harmony was greatly desired where each could work in his own way. This was possible under Akbar's rule, where cooperation with the government did not entail conflict with each person's commitment to life. But the later Mughal emperors demanded cooperation without consideration.

The ideals installed by Guru Nanak in his followers met in conflict with the later emperors just as Guru Nanak had to stand against Babar's insensitivity to India's people. The Sikhs could not reach a meaningful compromise with "the Emperor's avowed policy of religious persecution."<sup>72</sup> There could only arise a tremendous reaction to such a policy. The overwhelming strength which the government used to gain its sway made peaceful protest seemingly impossible. In this situation the naturally protesting attitude of the Sikhs developed into a military stand against the source of intolerance as seen in the Emperor's army.

In weighing the political conditions of the country, the Sikh community participated with the losing side in the rise of Akbar's great grandson, Aurangzeb. This only increased the emperor's fury and desire to persecute the rebellions community. The tension only increased.

Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Sikh leaders (Guru), has said :  
 "For this purpose have I come into the words;  
 To uphold and Spread righteousness,

To protect and save the good and saintly persons  
 And to destroy and uproot the villainous tyrant and evil-doers."<sup>73</sup>

In a way we could say that the upholding and spreading of righteousness is the mainstay of all spiritual leaders. But in its interpretation various formulations come forth. It is here that some parts of the Sikh community turned away from the guidance set up by Guru Nanak.

The Sikh community, when faced with the threat of the Mughal power, surrendered its peaceful ideals and took upon itself the same weapons that the aggressors had used to gain their sway. Throughout India the emperor's power was maintained by a ruthless show and use of brute force. This attitude became reflected throughout the land as dissent groups adopted similar means. The Sikh community followed suit and "to destroy and uproot the villainous tyrant and evil doers" it was seen as necessary to become more and more aggressively militant.

Guru Nanak had insisted on the need for action to bring the light of Truth to others. But he always refrained from adopting the weapons of hatred and anger which he saw dominating those enmeshed in passions and greed. Many times during his travels he had to face hostile persons bent on violence to his very being. But in his refusal to adopt such means and in his unbounded praises of the Lord he was able to win over large numbers of those he encountered. Had he returned the violence he found so prevalent during his lifetime he would only have increased the fire he found consuming so many.

Differences are natural to men in their physical appearance and mental outlook. It is part of life's infinite variety. There need to be no irreconcilable difficulties in regard to the diversity of cultures and social changes. Yet they do arise when the differences are misunderstood and taken to be ultimately real. When this happens and we mistake the distinct features as ultimates of reality we judge others by fixed standards and create eternal enmities where they do not exist.

When realization occurs these differences are understood as part of life's variety and not mistakenly held as the fixed reality. The whole of life with its many ways is firmly grounded in an indescribable reality. In seeking to convey its meaning particular notions are suggested, bringing forth diverse ways and views. But the views are not the final reality. Guru Nanak has brought this out vividly. He seeks to clarify difference between what we consider the way to the Truth and Truth itself.

"Build thou the boat of meditation and self control.  
 Then thou shalt cross unhampered the sea or life.  
 There is then no sea to be crossed, no tides to be contended with, so easy becomes thy path."<sup>74</sup>

And again :

“When a man possesseth the wealth and the capital of Truth and liveth naturally in God, there will be no boat, no water, no sinking and no loss.”<sup>75</sup>

The difference between life engrossed in the world and that found in the light of God are substantially different, although not absolutely separate. On the one hand relative judgements lead to siding with certain groups in contrast to others. In the case of Sikhism; as in any religion, we find some differences between the founder of the faith and the disciples.

In the search for truth there is the basic need to hold to some eternal doctrine, even if it is as simple as the Name of the Lord. It is still a bridge to gain that freedom which leaves behind all doctrines. According to Guru Nanak the sense of supreme identity is possible, man can gain transcendence love, he can change the world by accepting it as a miracle. Guru Nanak held the key of wonder :

“Wonderstruck am I to behold wonder everywhere.”<sup>76</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

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72. Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, *The Foundation of the Sikh Panth*, (Calcutta, 1963), p. 13
73. Randhir Singh, *Glimpses of the Divine Masters* (New Delhi, 1965), p. 219
74. Narain Singh, p. 239
75. Ibid., p. 235
76. Ibid., p. 95

CHAPTER XII

THE RELIGIONS, THE SACRED AND THE HOLY  
GURU NANAK AND SECULARIZATION

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In *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, Paul Tillich suggests that contemporary dialogue between the religious traditions of the world reflects the ways in which all of them have recently been attacked by "quasi-religions" such as nationalism and secularism. Consequently, he predicts that dialogue will become less an investigation of theological niceties than an inquiry into the situation of the modern world, as "particular theological points become of secondary importance in view of the position of defence of all religions proper."<sup>1</sup> The forces that presently conspire against traditional forms of piety are the consequences of "the invasion of all religious groups by technology with its various waves of technical revolution. Its effect was and is, first of all, a secularization which destroys the old traditions, both of culture and religion."<sup>2</sup>

The sort of argument requires qualification. The processes of secularization are far more hostile toward ideology than toward religion; in the long run, they are most hostile toward the most conservative ideologies. To the extent that the quasi-religions of which Tillich writes are conservative ideological movements—National Socialism, for example—it would be difficult to trace their paternity to secularization. Secularism is both conservative and ideological. No matter how various and beneficial some of the consequences of secularization may be, secularism is finally not one of them. It is important to recognise the tension between the two. Nevertheless, one strand of Tillich's argument is persuasive and significant—the contention that secularization means the transformation rather than the demise of man's religiousness, although probably not in the direction of quasi-religious ideologies. Secularization seems dialectically related to religion: hostile toward tradition but hospitable to something new.

But the Dutch missionary theologian, Arend Van Leeuwen, understands the modern situation in very different terms in *Christianity in World History*. He tells us of "the arrival of a new type of man" who views himself and his world without recourse to religious premises. Van Leeuwen suggests that the technological revolution is only one aspect of a more complex movement that is rapidly destroying the cornerstone of all traditional forms of society, whether primitive or civilized—religion. Man is *homo religious* no more. In this he sees no reason for lament, but argues that where the Christian message is believed, "there is the truth accepted that there can be no returning the age of 'religion.'"<sup>3</sup>



Secularization is a global phenomenon that profoundly distinguishes contemporary societies from their predecessors; it is an appropriate ground base for essays on the encounters of religious traditions in the modern world. The differences between Tillich and Van Leeuwen reflect the thoroughly diverse assessments of secularization now current in the West. Some writers stress the hostility towards traditional forms of faith, whereas others find equal reason to emphasize its connections with the Judaeo-Christian tradition and often interpret this relationship in more or less normative terms. Some write of secularization in the context of an analysis of social institutions, whereas others understand it very differently because their concern is with the members of society. The confusion suggests that we have not yet put our semantic household in order: the word is used in a bewildering variety of ways, and much the same must also be said of "religion."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the differences between Tillich and Van Leeuwen are more than semantic. With which one does the truth lie? Or is secularization so complex and ambiguous a phenomenon that their perspectives are complementary rather than conflicting? If so, what does this signify for the future of the religious traditions of man?

In the words of Peter L. Berger, secularization designates "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols." He adds that "as there is a secularization of society and culture, so is there a secularization of consciousness."<sup>5</sup> The latter often seems verifiable in the attitudes of our contemporaries and within ourselves, but with what accuracy or by what standards might one gauge the "secularization of consciousness"? Every attempt to measure it risks the danger of some restrictive definition of religion that would quite illegitimately exclude the creation of private structures of meaning which possess "ultimate" significance for individuals who are otherwise alienated from traditional religious symbols and establishments. It would be a mistake, for example, to employ a standard that would not admit the religiosity manifest in the ways in which institutions such as family or caste or nation are invested with mythic properties and function as objects of "ultimate" commitment.

There is considerable evidence that as the influence of traditional religious institutions declines, the secular aspects of society develop religious dimensions. In the United States, for example, a Manichean stance toward life that often appears in political affairs, a Pelagian faith in education as the panacea for all ills, a perennial tendency to celebrate the divinity of power, the sacralizing of the medical profession—these and much else bear witness to a religious impulse as powerful as it seems ineradicable. The putative "secularization of consciousness" may pertain to certain traditional systems of symbols rather than to the character of man. The passionate and often eloquent romanticism evident in the dissenting movements of alienated students, the cult of the

hero for a day drawn from the realm of entertainment of politics, the cult of youth with its pervasive cosmetic impulse and faith in drugstore magic, the Gnosticism manifest in certain types of reliance upon drugs, the hardiness of mythologies about sex and all of the *vestigia religionis* is imbedded in popular music suggest that man is *homo homo religiosus* still.

If Tillich's argument requires the qualification that the process of secularization is hostile towards ideology, the argument is valid in other ways: religion may be transformed, it has scarcely disappeared. Many of its contemporary forms profoundly endanger the health of man and his society.<sup>6</sup>

As the removal of sectors of society from domination by religious establishments and symbols, what secularization actually designates is institutional autonomy, *Egengesetzlichkeit*. Because of the impact of modernization and industrialization, segments of the social structure become independent. They liberate themselves from a "sacred canopy." The legitimation of the economic system, for example, is no longer derived from beyond itself; it is justified entirely in terms of its own functional logic. As Robert Nisbet writes, "The time has passed when technology needs to justify itself by its contributions to other spheres of society. Today the ends of technology are sufficient and autonomous."<sup>8</sup>

The movement towards autonomy by the primary social institutions is inevitably accompanied with the development of institutional specialization in religion. In other words, because the traditional complex of "ultimate" means and norms is no longer disseminated and affirmed by the primary institutions, the main job must be done by a special organization. But when the latter voices many of these meanings and norms, they are exposed as "mere rhetoric." They are not necessarily contradicted by the standards and functional logic of the primary institutions. There is simply no relation between the two at all. Sooner or later, the processes of secularization seem dramatically and irremediably to undercut the credibility of religious institutions. As the liberation of economy and the State and other segments of culture from the comforts and constraints of sacred cosmos, there is a sense in which secularization does mean the end of religion: primary institutions, if not individuals, become autonomous. This process eventually torpedoes the religious establishments it originally nourished. So Van Leeuwen's comments about "the arrival of a new type of man" have their justification. There is a new man abroad. He is new in the sense that the primary social institutions no longer function for him as they have for his ancestors. As Thomas Luckmann has phrased it:

Specific segments of an individual's daily conduct derive their meaning from specific institutional norms, but mutually reinforcing institutions no longer endow the individual course of life with "ultimate" significance. The social structure ceases to mediate in a consistent manner between the sacred cosmos and subjective consciousness.

## II

Although the structure of society are becoming secularized there is considerable evidence that the members of society are not. Nevertheless, secularization does involve the transformation of religion. Man's religious quest becomes a private affair in several different and unprecedented ways. It is scarcely nourished by a participation in the primary public institutions; most men must look elsewhere, if they are to find the meaning of their individual lives. "Personal identity becomes, essentially, a private phenomenon. This is, perhaps, the most revolutionary trait of modern society."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the way that the quest is resolved depends more upon private preference than upon traditional prescription. It is difficult to invest much confidence in traditional religious institutions when their "comprehensive" claims and norms are relevant neither to the functional logic of the primary public institutions nor to the performance of the individual within them. In the end, men tend to invest certain aspects of their private lives with a new freight of significance. The private realm is sacralized as the public grows profane. Religion becomes an eclectic affair in which some residual traditional values are combined with others that are new and drawn mainly from the private sphere.

The social form of religion emerging in modern industrial societies is characterized by the direct accessibility of an assortment of religious representations to potential consumers. The sacred cosmos is mediated neither through a specialized nor through other primary public institutions. It is the direct accessibility of the sacred cosmos, more precisely, of an assortment of religious themes, which makes religion today essentially a phenomenon of the "private sphere." The emerging social form of religion thus differs significantly from older social forms of religion which were characterized either by the diffusion of the sacred cosmos through the institutional structure of society or through institutional specialization of religion.<sup>11</sup>

Luckmann suggests that secularization can inspire a "mass withdrawal into the 'private sphere' while 'Rome burns,'"<sup>12</sup> Such withdrawal is essentially a religious phenomenon. It is a recoil from a system that offers the individual little in the way of either personal identity or structures of "ultimate" meaning. There is something Manichean about the sharp juxtaposition of two realms, one sacral and one profane, which must not be mixed because they have no intrinsic relation to one another. There is something Gnostic about the flight from the constraints of the public sector into the illimitable privacy of the self, where illusions of individual entonomy can be savored as shadowy compensation for the loss of real agency in the public sphere. Nor does the structure of "ultimate" meanings drawn from the private realm provide any motivation for greater involvement in the public realm, where individual agency has become problematical in any event. Religion becomes warrant for a flight from reality and social responsibility. The pressures of

secularization render religion even more ambiguous a phenomenon than it is in traditional society.

If secularization has a profound impact upon individual and institutionalized religiosity, it also raises serious problems for the health and wholeness of the individual. As Gabriel Marcel writes in *The Decline of Wisdom*, the primary danger of our 'modern' approach to the world is that reason tends to diminish to the proportions of functional reason. Reflection falls into discredit and both the wisdom it offers and the existential questions that it raises to the light of consciousness are no longer available to men. Vanished is the sense of wonder that sparks the awareness of transcendence in man's encounters with his world, with other selves, and with their ultimate source and end. The premium placed upon functional logic in the process of secularization precipitates a restrictive understanding of reason that vitiates man's ability to comprehend the depths of either himself or others.

A second problem is the privatization of the freedom of the individual. In secularised society, man achieves a new freedom and autonomy, but these are confined to the private sphere; in the realm of the public, he is patient rather than agent, and in his relationship to the functional norms of the primary institutions there is no trace of reciprocity at all. Juliam N. Hartt writes,

Man does not get on with his proper business in a mood of unrelenting self-seriousness

Contemporary Culture lays that mood upon us all.

That is a major triumph of secularism as a paradoxically religious force. For if there is no one else to keep an eye on our interests we cannot afford even to close both eyes or even to wink promiscuously.<sup>13</sup>

Such seriousness is exacerbated by the tension between increasingly unlimited power and responsibility and, because of the autonomy of primary institutions, the suspicion that the control of such power no longer lies with the rational decisions of free and responsible men. Still another problem is the quantification of time, the tyranny of the clock that deprives men of spontaneity, further erodes their freedom, and imposes an alien and mechanical pattern upon the rhythms of truly human life. Under the impact of technology, the traditional rhythm of existence is sacrificed in favour of speed and "efficiency". Time becomes a continuum in which man is inductably driven towards the loss of power and function, rather than a structure that always affords a "right time" or *kairos* for some expression of the varied cadences of life.<sup>14</sup>

The consequences of secularization are many and complex. For every society, the process is enormously beneficial. But all human affairs have their ambiguities. The reduction of reason to functional reason, the privatization of freedom and the quantification of the will serve to illustrate the ways in which some of the ambiguities of

secularization pertain to the inner life of the self, the agency of the self, and the ambience in which the self exists. Secularization is accompanied with the emergence of protean forms of religiosity, and this is the result of a whole new social form of religion for which there is no precedent in human affairs. Many of these versions of religiosity are retrogressive; all of them, like the new social form of religion itself, can threaten the health and fulfilment of self and society. In this new situation, much that once was sacred has become profane. Much that once was profane has been sacralized. Consequently, the variety of "ultimate" meanings available to the individual bristles with inconsistencies and conflicts between the old and the new.

If this is any way a persuasive account of the contemporary religious situation, it is evident that the distinctions between the religious and the secular and between the sacred and the profane require reassessment. It is not clear that, as conventionally employed, the polarities are useful for purposes of analysis. It is even less clear that defense of the religious or of the sacred can be associated with commitment to the holy. Consequently the life and teachings of the Guru Nanak, from whom the Sikh tradition has derived its inspiration, contain a lesson of crucial importance. In this age of secularization the lesson is no less relevant to the West than to the East. Nanak's devotion to the holy led him outside the territories where the *homines religiosi* dwell and beyond the precincts of the sacred. Guru Nanak learnt that before the holy nothing is sacred and nothing is profane. Religious wiles do not suffice to attain the holy, nor do secular ways bar man from it. In a time when old religious institutions, customs and beliefs are crumbling while new forms of religiosity proliferate the urgent need for sureness in spiritual discrimination is perhaps best satisfied by Nanak's protest against the religious and the sacred, and his insistence that, in the end, nothing matters except God.

### III

The distinction between the religious and the secular is unsatisfactory because it contributes neither to clarity of vision nor to the sensitivity of faith. What is conventionally regarded as "religious" is constantly a prey to various types of "secularizing." Religious obligations come to be performed mechanically, by rote, without passion and existential involvement. Motivation for their performance is secularized as the obligations themselves are understood in functional terms not as expressions of devotion but rather for the sake of gain, sometimes transcendent reward and sometimes mundane benefits such as psychological adjustment. So the "religious" is not religious at all. On the institutional level, the religious establishment become inextricably involved with the secular in many ways, representing and sacralizing the particular way of life of the people, serving purposes of social control and social integration, reaffirming common mores rather than exposing them to the judgement of God:<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, we have already commented upon the constant emergence of new forms of religiosity within the precincts of the secular. This is reflected in common linguistic usage, one can be "religious" in one's devotion to family or sports, to newspaper comics or to some particular brand of a commodity. Nor can religion be identified merely with certain rituals, for the secular has its rites and the most mundane activities are often highly ritualized. When "religious" is used, in any static or quantifying way, to designate of existential participation in these, it has very little meaning. So the distinction between religious and secular leads nowhere except to confusion. In the contemporary situation it is particularly dangerous, because it tends to involve the juxtaposition of public and private realms. Therefore, it suggests a "religious" or divinely sanctioned basis for alienation and withdrawal from the "religious" public realm—and so Rome may burn, indeed. Most important, it obscures the fundamental truth that man finds freedom and fulfilment in God alone, and not in any variety of *ortho-praxis* or *ortho-doxa*.

The life and teachings of Guru Nanak offer consistent evidence of his distrust of rite and ritual; few have recognized so well that faith in God does not commit a man to travel down religious way. Guru Nanak's protest is not directed against form as such, but against the assumption that certain forms have intrinsic and inalienable meaning simply because they are religious. His words, "At the place of pilgrimage no bath avails without his favour,"<sup>15</sup> betray neither romantic yearning for the boundless nor Gnostic recoil from the definite. His skepticism of the externalities of piety has a different focus: if religious practices have their own immanent and inalienable value, religion has dwindled to magic. It does not offer the individual access to the holy but bars him from it, by fostering the illusion that man can manipulate the will of God. At Hardwar,

Some people were throwing water towards the sun while they bathed in the Ganges. "O men, what are you doing?" said the Guru. "We are offering water to our dead ancestors living in the sun," said they. At this, the Guru began throwing water in the opposite direction with both hands. When they asked what strange thing he was doing, he replied, "I am watering my fields of wheat in the Punjab."<sup>16</sup>

When the crowd laughed, Nanak suggested to the pilgrims that his watering was probably as effective for the wheat in the Punjab as was theirs for the ancestors living in the sun.

While Nanak does not question the sincerity of the pilgrims at Hardwar, his protest against the formalities of religion in the *Japji* recognizes the ways in which observances can be "secularized" until no trace of existential involvement remains:

Pilgrimage and penance and free-will giving  
 Gain for one no single grain of merit,  
 Unless one harken and his heart be loving,  
 Cleansed within by a meditative bath<sup>17</sup>.

But Nanak's skepticism rests neither upon his conviction that forms are without meaning until they are invested with significance by human passion, nor upon his belief that religious forms contain no intrinsic power to offer man access to Ultimate Reality. His protest is rooted in a profound sense of the holy, its ontological immanence and moral transcendence.

On the one hand, God pervades the whole world and dwells in the minds and hearts of the faithful. He creates, sustains and cherishes all things: "The whole creation that I see, it came of his exertion."<sup>18</sup> When the rites and rituals of the temple function to render men indifferent to what lies outside the temple, so that the pervasive presence of God and his concern for the world are forgotten, religion is the enemy of the holy. On the other hand, the Lord acknowledged in the temple is one whose moral demands confront the self in every situation, and "Men's deeds indicate if God is near or far."<sup>19</sup> As the story of Nanak at Kurukshetra illustrates, when the practice of piety becomes surrogate for morality, religion has diverted men from the holy.

During a great fair, the Guru was at Kurukshetra. He asked Mardana to go and get fire to cook his meals, and Mardana went and touched the fire of an "orthodox." The orthodox cried out in a rage, and fell upon Mardana, whereupon the Guru said:

"The evil is still in his mind, hatred resides in the heart; and yet his cooking-square is pure! Of what use are these lines of the square when low caste thoughts still sit with him in his Mind?"<sup>20</sup>

In Nanak's own humility and teachings, there is a constant insistence of man's unworthiness before God and need for grace. This theme, more than any other, precludes every attempt to exalt the religious at the expense of the secular:

The Lord is true, plainly known, his living kindness infinite;  
 To those who crave and seek he gives, gives with full abandon.  
 What indeed must he be offered to throw his court wide open?  
 What words must lips be uttering to make his love responsive?<sup>21</sup>

In the end, the paraphernalia of religion is unavailing if man is without grace, and unnecessary if man has received it. "All good is thine, no single virtue have I, and without it what avails devotion?"<sup>22</sup> What are the grounds for confidence in any forms or practices, when "He bestows the virtue in whose hand the power lies?"<sup>3</sup> Consequently, a style of

life that betrays no acquaintance with things religious need not separate an individual from the mercy of God, as the tale of Duni Chand and his wife suggests.<sup>24</sup> This emphasis upon grace contains no hint of antinomism, as the incident at Kurukshetra reveals; its source is simply an overwhelming sense of the holiness of the ultimate.

In the christian tradition of the West, the fundamental justification of liturgies and other religious practices is that these represent the way of Jesus the Christ. In some sense, indeed, he is present within them. Their purpose is to acquaint believers so intimately with the Christ that they will be able to recognize and respond to the Christic shape of divine activity in the contemporary world. Liturgy and ritual, therefore, are oriented more towards the world than towards the temple; their meaning transcends the distinction between religious and secular. Nevertheless, these practices constantly become ends in themselves, their essential significance ignored; they afford opportunities for retreat from the world rather than resources offered for venturing into the world. Sociological studies of the social functionality of the churches and of the conduct of their members reaffirm the opinion of common-sense: the "orthodox" are with us always, and not only at Kurukshetra. And things religious offer no cure for what ails them.

Nanak sensed the presence of God pervading all creation and he believed in the concern of God for everything that was created. So he was drawn outside the precincts of the *homines religiosi* to espouse a sort of "Holy worldliness." He was overwhelmed by the mystery and cruciality of grace. So he recognised the powerlessness of things religious to offer man access to the holy. His awareness of the susceptibility of religion either to secularization or to declension into magic strengthened a skepticism that was essentially theological. In the name of God, Nanak became a critic of what was religious and a friend of what was not. He provides a paradigm for the man of faith in the modern world. The quest for the holy—as well as serious investigation of the actualities of our common life—transcends and invalidates the distinction between religious and secular. In an age when religiosity assumes protean forms but remains largely anchored in the private realm, when religious institutions grow secular or irrelevant, the skepticism and worldiness of Nanak provide two of the greatest resources in struggle for the humanity of man. The polarity of religious and secular is foreign to the spirit of the Sikh tradition; the West will be better when it has been forgotten there, too. The religious cannot be identified with the holy. The non-religious cannot be identified as the enemy of God.

#### IV

One who recognizes the tension between the religious and the holy is skeptical of either the emergence of new forms of religiosity on "secular" soil or the retreat from the



secular to a private realm for "religious" reasons. The commonness of both phenomena in the modern world confronts us anew with the distinction between the sacred and the profane. The inadequacy of this polarity is revealed by the fact that the sacred can be profaned until it is sacred no longer. Because it can be stained by dirty hands, the sacred is not essentially related to the holy. As Julian N. Hartt has well phrased the matter :

One might seriously believe that something really holy has in fact been profaned by a religious insistence that it is sacred; and thereafter one might devote great energy and skill to attacking that barrier in the hope that the holy might come into its own. If, that is, one believed that sexuality were holy, one might attack the sacred institutions that have effectively made it dirty and/or trite. And if one believed that freedom were holy one might well feel inspired to attack the sacred institutions that have effectively corrupted it. Thus the sacred emerges as that which men have arbitrarily demarcated as exempt from judgement and change; and thereafter used to protect a stake demonstrably narrower than the common good of mankind.<sup>25</sup>

The sacred emerges as the unstable and arbitrary, a realm within which the exercise of human agency and inventiveness is suspect, if not stifled. Distinctions between what is sacred and profane lead ineluctably toward idolatry. The meaning of the latter is simply that the sacred is confused with the holy, the symbol identified with what it symbolizes, the transcendence of the holy over any and all of its manifestations forgotten. The sacred is intended to point toward an element of ultimacy in human life towards which man might otherwise be indifferent. But the perennial human predicament is one not of indifference toward "ultimate" meanings but of idolatrous reverence for what is not truly ultimate. The demarcation of sacred realms is scarcely a cure for the disease.

The same dialectic appears in the relation of sacred and profane that exists in the relation of religious and secular. On the one hand, the sacred is either profaned or eventually becomes an idol, just as the religious is vulnerable to secularizing or to declension into magic. On the other hand, what has been profane is sacralized, especially in a revolutionary situation when processes such as secularization engender a redirection of the search for "ultimate" meanings. Sacralization may be initiated as a response to the holy-or it may have lesser motivations. Certain mores or institutions may be deliberately designated as sacred for purposes of social integration or control, quite without concern for the will of God. In any event, the polarity of sacred and profane does not serve the interests of the man of faith. It blunts man's power of discrimination, especially when employed in any static fashion. The distinction is

invidious toward the profane and obscures the important truth that profanation can be and often is an act of obedience to the dictates of God. Man finds fulfilment only in the holy, not in the sacred. The sacred robs him of his freedom.

Modernization and industrialization liberate persons and societies in countless ways. But it is no less true that one of the salient marks of this age is the individual's loss of agency and autonomy in the public sector under the impact of secularization. Insistence that one comes to the holy by way of the sacred simply increases the loss of agency and autonomy, exempting still other areas from reconstruction by man's inventiveness. Men's eyes are turned away from public affairs as they search for some putatively sacred realm. So the sacred becomes one of the factors that conspire toward the dehumanization of man; it is opposed to and by the holy, which is the source and sustainer of man's agency and freedom. A faith that transcends the polarity of sacred and profane is a necessary resource in the struggle against quasi-religions such as nationalism. It is equally necessary for the articulation of strategies of human renewal that will be unencumbered by shibboleths concerning what might appear sacred but is neither sensible nor significant.

In the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, skepticism and a sort of holy worldliness were nourished and supported by an passionate mysticism. While the latter can be defined in many ways, essentially it involves recognition of the inadequacy of the distinction between sacred and profane. It means a commitment not only to what lies outside the temple but also to what dwells beyond the temple. In the name of what is beyond, it is critical of what lies within the temple and the other sacred precincts in which *homines religiosi* conduct their affairs. Although the quest of the mystic can be fulfilled only by grace beyond deserving, the preparation for the gift of God is an exemplary instance and vindication of the freedom and agency of the individual.

Among the tales of the boy Nanak, there is a memorable instance of profanation—an insistence, in the name of God, upon the profaneness of what is held to be sacred. The holy will of God cannot be adequately expressed by what is commonly regarded as the realm of the sacred nor satisfied by man's participation in the sacred. When the family Brahman came to invest him with the sacred thread, he spoke again, subduing all that heard :

Oh, Brahmin ! You have no sacred thread.  
 If you have, give me the forgiveness of the Creator.  
 Draw round me a sacred line that no desires cross,  
 Unfold the Divine in me,

Which then will be a sacred thread—  
Never showing wear or break.<sup>26</sup>

When men are confronted by the mystery of the holy, faith calls them to venture beyond the precincts and distinctions in which they had once sought refuge or security. God discloses himself as omnipresent, pervading all of his creation as well as transcending it. He can be named in many ways and worshipped at many altars, but only when these are radically relativized by awareness that no name or altar excludes another, for the Lord is in all, beyond all, more than all :

There is no final knowledge of the forms He takes,  
Nor any limit within which to know Him.  
It is not possible to find his boundary,  
There is no one this sort of end to know.  
The more that is said leaves more yet for the saying.<sup>27</sup>

The sovereignty of God as well as his omnipresence renders suspect the idea of the sacred. The Lord who cannot be localized in time or space does not give himself over to be contained within walls. The tale of Nanak at Mecca suggests not only the folly of certain religious observances but also the irrelevance of the whole idea of sacred and profane. What is profane, when God indwells his whole creation and "everywhere is seat and everywhere his stores?"<sup>28</sup>

Nanak the Master was at Mecca. The Master slept out of doors with his feet turned inadvertently towards the *Quaba*, the House of God. The chief priest of the place came and said "O forgetful stranger! Awake and see your feet are turned towards the House of God!"

The Guru replied: "is it so? Pray, turn my feet yourself in the direction where the House of God is not."<sup>29</sup>

In fact, nothing is profane, unless the hand or eye of man renders it so; nothing is sacred, for those who will be content with nothing less than holiness.

The Lord who discloses himself as omnipresent and sovereign remains mystery in his self-disclosure. No rite can capture his way, no word or image express his nature. Even the richest wares in the realm of the sacred, therefore, consist of no more than

Symbols which at most have partial value,  
Falling short of power for describing  
That which of itself assumes incalculable forms;  
Who leans on words repents of their employment,<sup>30</sup>

Whoever leans on knowledge or austerities, on rituals or act of devotion on the capacities of the self or of human institutions, repents of their employment. In the end, neither the religious nor the sacred avail at all. Nothing avails, or prevails, except the mercy and grace of Sat Nam. While he remains a mystery, there is nothing arbitrary in his ways. If faith can never dispel his mysteriousness, it can discover a mingling of sovereignty with mercy that exposes the inadequacy of the idea of the sacred - just as faith has already discovered a constant and pervasive presence that transforms the profane into "many issues out of one source flowing—a hundred thousand rivers from one spring" <sup>31</sup>

Much more will be written about the one who, in the words of W. C. Smith, "in spiritually passionate and directly personalistic poetry and in a life of humane and humble service, preached sincerity and adoration and the overwhelming reality of God."<sup>32</sup> In the context of commentary on recent social change, this paper is intended to portray a man who was grasped by the holy and led away from the distinctions between religious and secular and between sacred and profane. In that adventure of Guru Nanak, there lies a profound moral for our time and perhaps, the greatest resources for the redeeming of the times. Nanak found reason and strength in the holy to venture outside and to venture beyond the temple. Beneath his mixture of skepticism and worldliness and mysticism lay the conviction that man is the architect of *his own destiny* of this earth, even though salvation comes from God alone. "A man's self sows and likewise reaps while under his command, saith Nanak."<sup>33</sup> God does not seem to be associated with *karma* and transmigration; instead, he is the one who liberates those who trust him from the control of *karma* and the cycle of rebirth. The holy is the liberator. As one who frees, he inspires and legitimates entrance into the world that he pervades.<sup>34</sup>

In commenting on the thirty-fifth through the thirty-seventh psalms of *The Japuji*, John Clark Archer writes :

Nanak proposes the superiority of the "way of truth", which Nirankar commends, over the "knowledge portion" and the "action portion," over the way of "knowledge" and the way of "works" He even commends this way of truth as superior to the bhakti-way of salvation - truth is more valid than devotion. And yet, Nanak was virtually preaching the bhakti or "devotion" way whose inspiration, support and destination would be realized, as he thought and said, in Sat Nam, True Name. The bhakti-marga is to Nanak, we might say, the true way if pursued in the True Name. He proposed, even though not deliberately, a *fourth* way of salvation, more instrumental and effective than any one or all of the other three.<sup>35</sup> A fourth way? Certainly a path that led outside the realm

of the religious and beyond the sphere of the sacred, a way that rejoiced in the density and texture of what less discriminating eyes might have regarded as secular or profane, for Sat Nam. "Seest even the little insect that crawleth, and Thou countest the little insect that crawleth, and Thou countest the corn he swalloweth with his little mouth."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps what Archer suggests might be rephrased in this way :

—If the way of works is pursued in the name of Sat Nam, men will await the initiative of God in the confidence that it awards them liberty and agency of their own.

- If the way of knowledge is followed in the name of Sat Nam, men will recognize that what seems secular or profane has much to yield careful scrutiny.

—If the way of devotion means devotion to Sat Nam, men will be satisfied neither by the religious nor by the sacred but only in the holy.

Secularization is the dynamic within the revolutions of our time. Five centuries after his birth, Guru Nanak's life and teaching seem strangely contemporary, their relevance undiminished and, perhaps, greater now than hitherto. When a new social form of religion that is the offspring of secularization threatens to provide religious sanction for withdrawal from the public realm, we must recognize that defense of what is religious cannot be identified with commitment to the holy. When the conflicts that have ravaged the modern world have originated in the sacralizing of caste or class or nation, we must recognize that loyalty to the sacred cannot be identified with faith in God. When secularization threatens much of life with dehumanization we must recognize that God calls men outside the temple, pervades his whole creation, and acts to liberate men as agent there. When the religious is secularized while the secular engenders new forms of religiosity, when what once was private and profane is sacralized while old ideas of the sacred dissolve, we must recognize that these polarities bring nothing to clarity of vision or sensitivity of faith. When secularization gives men reason to doubt the power of their agency in the public realm, the sacred looms as another barrier to that liberation of the self which represents the will of God. When the religious grows indistinguishable from magic and the sacred from an idol, the way of the mystic becomes instrument of divine judgement and primary means of access to God.

Perhaps no Mardana will accompany us in our pursuit of the holy, but the music of the psalms of Nanak haunts the world still. Let us sing with him.

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16. Puran Singh, *The First Master—Guru Nanak* (Punjabi University Press, 1969), p. 17
17. Psalm 21.
18. Psalm 6.

19. Postlude to the Psalms.
20. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18
21. Psalm 4.
22. Psalm 21
23. Psalm 33
24. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9
25. Julian N. Hartt, "Secularity and the Transcendence of God", in James F. Childress and David B. Harned (eds), *op. cit.*
26. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4
27. Psalm 24
28. Psalm 31
29. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 16
30. Psalm 36
31. Psalm 16
32. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 67
3. Psalm 20
34. In this connection, Archer's comments are particularly interesting : "The early records which *do* mention Nanak put no stress on politics. Rather, they represent him as avoiding it. And yet, there was something in him, in his movement and in his times as he affected them, which was destined to be tested by political affairs of state. Was there something worldly after all in Nanak ? And are not politics in the long run an inescapable and valid test of faith ? The final estimate of Nanak, therefore, is a matter of the centuries, including likewise the present fateful years, of India "history," *op. cit.*, pp 106-107
35. *Ibid.*, p. 133
36. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 23,

## CHAPTER XIII

### JAPJI AND UNIVERSAL MYSTICISM

K. SESHADRI

Mysticism implies a withdrawal, deep into one's own being. It suggests attunement and absorption. It is a movement towards a 'centre'. The 'Centre' is described as transcendental, as it lies beyond the reach of the senses and of common understanding, but paradoxically enough experienced in the depths of one's own heart. It is at once the 'centre' of the cosmos in its entirety and of the inmost soul and self of the individual. The mystic has awakened to the essential identity of the two. Hence he strives, in all appropriateness, to 'sense' the centre of Being and Reality by a plunge within the fathomless depths of his own consciousness.

The mystics belong to no particular time or country, though apparently they might have had a locus here or there, claiming for their birth or their life on earth a certain historicity relevant to time and circumstances. Their deeds, no less than their utterances reveal the unity of the spirit behind the bewildering variety of material phenomena. They speak in diverse tongues, 'diverse show of words, but they are all one in meaning and verity.' Their accents may differ, but their message is identical in essence. They have had a direct vision of Truth, an immediate, intimate spiritual perception, which is known as mystical experience. Indeed, it is the mystics that would testify to the basic unity of human thought and aspiration.

The *Japuji* is an authentic revelation of Reality, as vouched to Guru Nanak in the deepest moments of his God-consciousness, and reveals an inherent, mystical excellence, linking the inner world of thought and feeling with the other world of action. It demonstrates how the wisdom of the mystic not only reveals Truth, but inspires activity. The world of human affairs provides a field for enlightened action inspired and guided by an enduring, self-authenticated awareness of Truth. The mysticism of the *Japuji* is not one of passive contemplation. It seeks to fulfil itself in action, urging man to an active participation in the affairs of a dynamic world, whose dominant need is the integration of superior wisdom with self-less activity. This, we know, is the central theme of teaching of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. But the *Japuji*, too, is no less a gospel of action than a manual of meditation. It does envisage the return of the contemplative to the arena of action, after having replenished his resources at their fountain-head. Such a return would directly lead to dedicated action, possessing the power to trans-



figure society, as it would have transfigured his own personality in the sacred recesses of his inwardness. Emerging from the depths of his experience he does not find the world around him destroyed or annihilated. Indeed, he finds it radiant with a new meaning, ready to be remade in the light of his vision. What the mystic achieves is not merely a transition for himself from one level to another a total transformation, within and without. The transformation, of course, starts with and is centred in the individual, but it is by no means confined to him. The vision of the mystic, as the *Japji* shows, is an ever-widening vision, comprehending the whole of the cosmos and revealing the place of man in the pattern of universal harmony, affecting a radical change in the life and outlook of the individual and endowing him with infinite capacity to influence others, as well. The mystic brings to bear the fruits of eternity on the processes of time. "The created soul of man has also two eyes," says the *Theologica Germanica*, "the one is the power of seeing into eternity, the other of seeing into time." The mystic, according to the *Japji*, uses both these.

The *Japji* presents a gist of the Guru's teachings in thirty-eight principal stanzas, with an opening invocatory of two lines which with the emphatic declaration,

Ad(i) Sac(u), Jugad(i) Sac(u)  
 Hai bhi Sac(u), Nanak hosi bhi Sac(u),

affirms the eternal nature of the One Real. A general invocatory stanza, used in several texts of the Granth, is also included in the *Japji*, as its very head and front. These are the well-known lines beginning with the sacred sound *Aum* – "IK-Oamkar", and constitute a highly compendious presentation of the Guru's concept of God as the One Supreme Spirit, Universal Being, Creator, Governor and Enjoyer, absolutely spontaneous, beyond all restraint or antagonism, time less, though embodied, unborn, deathless, self-subsisting and finally "the fruit of Master's grace." Thus, even at the outset one hears intimate echoes of the Upanishadic Brahman following the familiar, all-comprehensive meditation on the mystic *Aum*. But the Brahman of the *Japji* is *Saguna* and *Saprapanca*, closer to the concept of *Esvara*, the Soul of souls, the cause and ground of all creation, the *Antaryamin*, who rules from within, who is the real *Karta* and *Bhokta* of all existence, than to the concept of Pure Consciousness of Pure Being. This invocation is regarded as the *mula mantra*, presenting God as infinite and timeless, yet manifest in innumerable finite forms within space and time, the ground of all change—Himself changeless, from whom "burgeons forth" the entire world of creation, which declares His glory. It reflects the meaning conveyed by the *Sutra*, *Janmadyasya Yatah*, and sounds like a commentary on the *Sruti Karanam-tu-dhyeyah*, which points out that the Jagatkarana, who is immanent in all things, is to be made the supreme object of one's devotion and dhyana. It also reveals a remarkable identity of

approach with many a line in *Nammalvars Tiruvoymoli*, where the Lord of Creation is spoken of as the object of all love and worship, and that such worship would open the inward eye to the hidden source of Being, from whom has burst forth the entire sense-presented world composed of the five elements.

Mannum neerum yeriyum, nalvayuveum  
Vinumoy-viriyum embiranaye.

The emphasis on loving devotion and genuine spirit of worship is reiterated at several points in the *Prabhandhas* of the Alvars, and the parallels are difficult to miss even in a cursory reading of a translation of the *Japuji* or the *Asa-di-Var*. The parallel is particularly striking, wherever we have reference to grace or to the miracle of transformation wrought by it. Side by side with the overriding necessity for grace, there is also abundant reference to the significance of human effort in the form of dedicated action and by way of unremitting worship and service. "Muyanru tho-hu nenje", "kathanmayal tho-hu," "Tho-huthu e-hu, enmanane". In all these the Alvar addresses himself; the exhortation is to one's own mind and heart, as it is at several points in the Granth to Nanak himself.

Guru Nanak's God is the God of attributes, of distinctive excellences, *Kalvanagunas*. 'Some glorify his qualities, the charm of his beautiful attributes', says the third line of the third stanza of the *Japji*. 'Let us sing the glory of this treasure-house of excellences' (*guni nidhanu*) says the fourth line of the fifth stanza. The next line significantly adds "hearing" and "reflecting" on the excellences of the Lord to the "singing" of His glory. "Gaviai Suniani man rakhiai bhao". Andal, the bridal mystic of South India, who has immortalised her love of God in the thirty stanzas of her song-effusion known as the *Tiruppavai*, gives expression to the same thought and in the same sequence, in the line "Vayinal padi, manattinal cinthikka", and it is noteworthy that even in her next line, "poya pi-haiyum, pugatharuvan-ninra navum theyinil thoosagum"—one could recognise the *Japuji* not of the sixth line of the stanza, without which the previous line would be incomplete, and which says, "Shed the misery of the world and move into that abode of happiness (by dwelling on the Glory of God)," Glorifying God through song and narrative, reflecting and meditating on the Divine excellences and thus developing an attitude of mind, by which one would constantly be living in the Divine presence, are the way to liberation. That is the mystic way of devotion, of God-experience, of "Sunan", "manan" and "man ka bhao" which correspond generally to *sravana*, *manana* and *dhyana* of the Upanishad. The first two are preparatory and provide for attunement, while the third secures *absorption*. These are elaborated to some extent in the subsequent stanzas.

The central theme of the *Japji* is thus the elevation of man to the heights of a

mystic vision, the vision of God. The consummation of a truly religious life lies in the attainment of oneness with God-head. Attunement is a state of anticipation. It implies a readiness to receive and respond to the impact of grace. Vision is a state of illumination. It implies a profound awakening, revealing the indissoluble bond of intimate union between the individual soul and the Supreme Spirit. The great mystics of the world, whether of the East or of the West, through the ages, have been illuminated souls united with God and delighting in the union. At every stage, there is need for effort and discipline. But the over-ruling factor, throughout, is the grace of God, which is not through mere learning or efficiency in the exercise of the intellect or any other instrument of empirical knowledge. Such knowledge may, however, be useful or helpful upto a point, or the sense-presented world is not dismissed as unreal or illusory in the philosophy of the *Japuji*. Metaphysical realism and moral idealism are as much features of the *Japuji* as mysticism or monotheism is.

The world of creation is itself a revelation of God, who has His seat in every one of the words brought into being by him, declares one of the stanzas. The Creator contemplates His creation as an object of His sport, says Guru Nanak, coming close to the "Brahma Sutra, loka-vat-tu-lila kaivalyam", but that is not to deny its reality or its value, for in the very next line we have the affirmation that it is real, in as much as it is His creation.

"This cosmic creation Infinite,  
 These scintillating starry hosts,  
 To Thy self-luminous radiance  
 And bounteous unity testify"—sings the poet Ghalib; and adds  
 "Hadst thou not willed to see Thyself  
 In 'thy creation's magic mirror  
 We'd not be here to wonder at it."

These are echoes of the *Japji*. Here is mysticism at its depths.

We hear more of them, when we listen to the melody of Sufism. The teachings of the Sufis, like Rabia or Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, show that a knowledge of God is an immediate experience transcending mere intellectual apprehension. Rabia describes it as "the beatific vision of God." Rumi sings of the attributes of God as distinctive and incomprehensible by human thought; and his perception of the soul as eternal and uncreated is closely akin to Guru Nanak's view and to the Hindu conception in general. Dhul-Nun-Al Misri visualises the goal as complete union with God-head ("tawhid"), and draws a distinction, between intellectual knowledge, which is described as traditional ('ilm'), and mystical knowledge, which is God-exmprience ('ma' rifat'). Mystical knowledge is a state of contemplation or realisation by the heart and not comprehension

by the intellect. This is a gift from God Himself, and an expression of His grace. "To those who behold God *with their hearts*. He reveals unto them what He reveals not to others in the world," says Dhul-Nun, in tune with the Upanishad, which declares "yamevaisha-vrnute Tena labhyah". Ibun al-Arabi links his conception of God, as 'Essence endowed with attributes' and as "Unity of Being," with that of the perfect Man. Abu Yazid or Bayazid Al Bistami emphasising inner purity rather than formal adherence to ritual as leading to love of God and union with Him. Nasafi stresses the need for the cultivation of virtues as excellences of character in the spiritual development of man. In Kalabadhi's ethics there is just room for obligatory rites, like prayer and fasting. Al-Hallaj's prayer is a reiteration of "Thy will be done, Oh! my Lord and Master" in a genuine spirit of surrender to the Supreme. Hujwiri points out the paramount necessity of a preceptor's initiation in the inward quest. According to Jili God's attributes are forms in which He manifests Himself and through which He may be known. The attributes of God are not really different from His essence, says Jili and proceeds to show that the names of God are identical with God Himself, being His outward aspects. The highest name of God is Allah, he affirms, for it comprises all the Divine attributes, and God has made it a mirror for the reflection of His own glory. All these are ideas germane to the *Japuji* and essential for any spiritual view or way of life. Wherever we go—to Buddhism or Christianity, to Islam or Hinduism,—if we go deep enough, we touch common ground, and that is the ground of mysticism.

The *Japuji* reveals a process, both of seeking and of attainment. The quest is inward, and the goal is God-experience. The sacred shrine is within the heart of man, but the imperative pre-condition for the fruition of the pilgrimage is ego-lessness. Hence the need for Dharma and the discipline of morality.

"The message of the *Japuji* is valid for all those who have an urge to break open their ego-hells, and merge themselves in that consciousness, which is a shoreless ocean", says Sohan Singh in the 'Seeker's Path', which is an interpretation of the *Japji*. This, indeed, is of the very essence of mysticism. What hinders mystical vision and militates against mystical union is the vainglorious, little ego of man. When the ego is shed, man is liberated, for then he rises to a region beyond the limitation of time and circumstance. The persistence of the ego is a symptom of man's pitiful subjection to the processes of Time, while an inheritance awaits him in the Eternal kingdom. Man naturally seeks to free himself by emerging in the Eternal, through attunement and absorption in that, which transcends Time. He is a child of Eternity and not a slave of Time. Hence the innate urge of his soul for oneness with God, the Akal.

#### CHAPTER XIV

### GURU NANAK AS HISTORICAL MEMORY AND CONTINUING REALITY IN THE SIKH TRADITION

HARBANS SINGH

Lecture on the occasion of the Guru Nanak Quinque-centennial under the auspices of Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, April 30, 1969.

For India 1969 is a year of centennials. The first on the calendar was poet Ghalib's—the 100th anniversary of his death which was observed in the month of February. The Government of India was the principal sponsor: constituents were the academic and literary associations and critics and scholars from inside the country and abroad. A few months hence, on October 2, falls the first centenary of Gandhiji's birth. Celebrations for this will be on an even larger scale and spill over to many other countries. On November 23—a date which the historian will continue to cavil at—will be commemorated the fifth centennial of Guru Nanak's birth.

Observance of the Guru's anniversaries is a conspicuous feature of the Sikh way of life. A line frequently quoted from the sacred texts reads: *babian kahanian put spu karen*, i.e., it only becomes worthy progeny to remember the deeds of the elders. The Sikhs have a special word for these celebrations—*Gurpurb*, or the holy festival in honour of the Guru. Among the more important annual events are the birth anniversaries of the First and the Tenth Gurus, Nanak and Gobind Singh, and martyrdom days of the Fifth and the Ninth Gurus, Arjun and Tegh Bahadur. Alongside these may be mentioned Baisakhi, or the first of the Indian month of Baisakh, which marks the birth of the Khalsa Panth, inaugurated on this day by Guru Gobind Singh. What happens on these occasions is a mixture of the religious and festive, the devotional and the spectacular, the personal and the communal. Over the years a standardized pattern has been evolved. Yet no special sanctity attaches to the form and variations can be, and are indeed, made depending on the imaginativeness and initiative of local groups.

At these celebrations, the Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth, 1430 pages in folio, is read through, in private homes and in the Gurdwaras, in a continuous ceremony lasting forty-eight hours. This reading, called Akhand Path, must be without interruption: the relay of reciters who take turns at saying the Scripture must ensure that no break occurs. As they change places at given intervals, one who takes over picks the līje from his predecessor and continues. When and how the custom of reciting the canon

in its entirety in one continuous service began is not known. Conjecture has traced it to the turbulent days of eighteenth century when persecution scattered the Sikhs to far-off places. In those exile, uncertain times, the practice of accomplishing a reading of the Holy Book by continuous recital is said to have originated. An interesting parallel is in Zen whose 600 sacred volumes are magically gone through in a single ceremony, the monks swinging the books overhead and reading the first and last lines.

Then, on *Gurpurbs*, there are special assemblies held in Gurdwaras, i.e., Sikh places of worship, and discourses given on the lives and teaching of Gurus. Sikhs march in procession through towns and cities chanting the holy hymns. The *langars*, or community kitchens in the Gurdwaras, become especially busy. To partake of the common repast there is reckoned an act of merit. For meals in the *Guru Ka Langar* everyone is welcome on these special, as on all other, days and all eat together without distinction of position, caste, creed, or religion. Programmes for baptizing those not regularly initiated into the order of the Khalsa Panth as consummated by Guru Gobind Singh are undertaken. Sikh journals and newspaper bring out special numbers to mark the event. There are public functions held, besides the more literary and academic ones in schools and colleges. On *Gurpurbs* commemorating birth anniversaries, there might be illuminations in Gurdwaras as well as in residential houses. Friends and families exchange greetings. Coming into vogue are the printed cards such as those used in the West for Christmas and New Year Day.

Sikh fervour for *Gurpurb* celebrations had an unprecedented outlet in the tercentenary of Guru Gobind Singh's birth in 1666. The Guru Nanak anniversary was then in sight: this reinforced the enterprise. There is no indication that similar occasions previously had come in for any special attention. References are traceable to a proposal for celebrating the second centennial of the birth of the Khalsa in 1699. Mr. Max Arthur Macauliffe, famous for his prestigious, 6-volume work on the Sikhs, made a mention of it in one of his lectures on Sikhism delivered towards the close of the last century. But apparently nothing much happened. For the Tercentenary two years ago there was vast popular enthusiasm. It was, generally, channelled along the set, well-worn course. But there were certain significant developments. One of these was the creation of the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation. Started with a substantial donation for the Punjab Government, the Foundation is autonomous in character and aims, broadly, at the promotion of study in the fields of Sikh literature and culture. Another consequential development was the establishment of the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious at Punjabi University at Patiala. Studies in this department embrace five major religious traditions — Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Sikh. This is the first programme of its kind set up at an Indian University and the possibilities it offers of initiating a meaningful intellectual pursuit are apparent.

Preparations are now afoot for the quicentenary of Guru Nanak's birth. To direct the celebrations and plan the format a central organization called Guru Nanak Foundations was established in New Delhi by the Sikhs, with Dr. Radhakrishnan who was then President of India as Patron-in-Chief. The Maharaja of Patiala is the President and Sardar Hukam Singh and Sardar Ujjal Singh, governors, respectively, of the States of Rajasthan and Madras, Vice-Presidents. The membership consists largely of scholars, educationists and public men. The Foundation enjoys the support of other Sikh institutions such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, which is tutorily responsible for the control and management of Sikh shrines, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the local Singh Sabhas. Somewhat intriguing is its relationship with the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation. It was in no sense necessary to have two separate societies, one named after Guru Nanak and the other after Guru Gobind Singh, for there is no distinction even made amongst any of the ten Gurus. Because of the two anniversaries following each other closely, there were things done in haste, even duplicated. This particular duplication is now perpetuated by technicalities arising from Government grants and donations. Otherwise, both associations have a common goal: some of the membership is common, too. At any rate, they converge at the apex and have a common President. Both have some Hindu, Muslim and Christian members.

Besides private enterprise, the Government, both at State and Union levels, the universities and other institutions are helping develop programmes to make the remembrance meaningful and broad based. The Punjab Government has announced its plans of opening, at Amritsar, Guru Nanak University. Seven of the existing universities in the country, including Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Punjab and Kurukshetra will set up Guru Nanak Chairs. Several more have endowed commemorative lectures. The Punjabi University at Patiala has sponsored a seminar with distinguished scholarly representation from all over India and other countries. Then Guru Nanak Foundation wishes to have in Delhi an institute, named after the Guru, for comparative study of religion. The Government of India will use the good offices of its ministries of Information and Broadcasting, Education, Communications, etc., to bring public eclat to the celebrations. Sikh communities in other countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, East Africa, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are making their own plans. In the United States, the occasion will be marked by starting construction on Gurdwaras in the cities of Washington, New York and San Francisco: so far there is only one Sikh Gurdwara in this country and that is in Stockton, built at the beginning of the century. All eyes will, of course, be focused on Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, now in Pakistan. A Center friend very generously gave me a few months ago a newspaper clipping outlining some of the preliminary arrangements that were being made in that country.

I realize that I owe the audience apologies for this rather heavy-paced recital of details, some of them admittedly trivial. Yet, they might have some relevance in reflecting the response of the Sikhs to the memory of the Guru which could aid in an understanding of him as well as the community that took shape around his vision. Visible in this response is an attempt at apologetics: also, the Sikh's deep, unwearied commitment to their faith, their emotional attachment to the Gurus, their joyous and urgent participation in their historical tradition, their communal cohesion and their love of the spectacular. The Sikhs have always felt that their faith is not as widely known as it deserved to be. They are conscious of the limitation of their own scholarly presentation of their tradition which has kept it confined within provincial bounds. The fact of their being a small group numerically also imposes upon them a defensive self-consciousness. In the anniversaries and centennials—chronologies are already being studied to locate further likely occasions—they see opportunities for assertion of identity and for the projection of a heritage which they think has a larger meaning than hitherto given it.

For the center for the Study of World Religions and, through it, for Harvard University to take notice of the quincentenary of Guru Nanak's birth is a kindly gesture. There is, I seek leave to submit, a special kind of appropriateness in this gesture. In honouring the memory of Guru Nanak, the Center is doing homage to one whose sympathies transcended all barriers, in whose integrative vision was realized the essential harmony of the religions amidst which he lived and who preached.