

# GURU NANAK IN HISTORY

J. S. GREWAL



PUBLICATION BUREAU  
PANJAB UNIVERSITY  
CHANDIGARH

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## **AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION**

**This in fact is a reprint. Scholarly work on Guru Nanak after the publication of this book in 1969 does not induce me to revise it. My own subsequent thinking on the subject confirms me in the belief that a revision worth the name is neither necessary nor easily possible. Therefore the obvious advantage of reprint has weighed with me more than the doubtful merit of tinkering for its own sake.**

*Amritsar*  
*February 28, 1979*

**J. S. GREWAL**

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 A.D. when the Lodis had firmly established themselves in the Punjab. His father, Kalu, a *Khatri* of the subcaste Bedi, was the *patwārī* of Rai Bhoi di Talwandi (Nankana Sahib in Pakistan) where a *pandit* and a *mullā* imparted elementary instruction to the *patwārī's* son with due care. As a precocious child, Guru Nanak easily learnt what they had to teach and, later, improved upon this early grounding through his own genius. And there was something in his genius that induced him to yearn for knowledge and truth. As a young man, he associated himself with itinerant *sādhus* and *sants* and this association marked the beginning of that deep understanding of contemporary religion which is reflected in his works. This association resulted also in a certain amount of dissatisfaction with traditional Hindu beliefs and practices.

As a married man, Guru Nanak moved to Sultanpur where his sister's husband, Jai Ram, was serving the Lodi administrator of that *pargana* (district) in the last decade of the fifteenth century. On Jai Ram's suggestion and recommendation, the stores of the administrator were entrusted to Guru Nanak who performed his duties to the entire satisfaction of his employer. At Sultanpur, Guru Nanak obtained an intimate knowledge of the Lodi administration at the *pargana* level, including the office of the *qāzī*. Enough of this experience is reflected in his works. More important than this insight into contemporary administration was Guru Nanak's contact with the representatives of Islam at Sultanpur.

His dissatisfaction with the existing forms of religious belief and practice grew stronger and led to a deep spiritual experience which culminated in his conviction that he had discovered the truth for himself. And his message was meant for both Hindus and Muslims.

At the age of about thirty Guru Nanak left Sultanpur to spend nearly twenty years in visiting numerous places in and outside the Indian subcontinent. He saw, as he says in his *bāni* (compositions), shops, cities, markets, *traths* and sacred places on river banks in all 'the nine regions of the earth'. Obviously, he came in contact with much of the religious belief and practice of his day. He discussed, debated and preached, testing and enriching his experience. The path which he had discovered through a long and deep searching was offered to all who came in contact with him.

In the early 1520s Guru Nanak settled down in Kartarpur (Dera Baba Nanak) on the bank of the river Ravi and gave a definitive expression to his beliefs and practical expression to his ideals. He visited some leading centres of the *Sūfis* and the Gorakhnāthis even from Kartarpur, but most of the time he imparted instruction to regular gatherings of individuals at Kartarpur itself. For his disciples he was of course an acknowledged guide. On his death in 1539 A. D., the mantle of guiding the old and new followers of the path laid down by Guru Nanak fell upon Angad (Lehna), a devoted disciple whom the Master had chosen for this role in his lifetime in preference to his own sons.

This monograph, *Guru Nanak in History*, is a study of the role which Guru Nanak assumed for himself and the legacy which he left to his successors. The first part of this study is devoted to the political, social and religious *milieu* of Guru Nanak on the assumption that it is necessary to know something of his times in order to understand the full significance of his life and work. The evidence presented by his own

compositions has not been used in this part. This has been done quite deliberately so that his response to the conditions of his times comes into sharp relief. In any case, for a proper appreciation of his moral fervour as well as the depth and scope of his experience it is desirable to make a distinction between the 'conditions' of Guru Nanak's times and his 'reaction' to those conditions. The second part of this monograph deals with the response of Guru Nanak to the political, social and religious conditions of his times. For a proper understanding of his positive aims and achievement, it is necessary first to examine his attitude towards the existing forms of religious belief and practice. A study of Guru Nanak's work in terms of his response to his *milieu* is likely to be more fruitful than a discussion of his teachings in terms of 'parallels' and 'influences'. This approach may bring out the distinctive quality of Guru Nanak's message in the context of his times as well as the originality of his response. The *Epilogue* deals with the response of Guru Nanak's successors and followers to his work, from the time of Guru Angad to that of Guru Gobind Singh, the last successor of Guru Nanak. Their work, in fact their very existence, was a homage to the founder of Sikhism. Howsoever briefly, their work has to be taken into account for a proper appreciation of Guru Nanak himself.

This monograph owes its publication primarily to the enlightened interest of Shri Suraj Bhan, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, in promoting serious work on Guru Nanak as a most appropriate commemoration of the quincentenary of Guru Nanak's birth.

Mr. Bal Krishna, Secretary, Publication Bureau, has given valuable suggestions and enthusiastic co-operation in bringing out this book. Mr. Panna Lal, Manager, Panjab University Press, has looked after its printing with great care and

interest. I am extremely thankful to both of them.

I am very thankful also to Mr. D. R. Grover and Miss Navjot Kaur, both of the Panjab University Library, for their substantial assistance, particularly for the second part of this work which would not have been so elaborate without their diligence.

I am indebted to several scholars and kind friends for their interest in this work. Dr. M. S. Randhawa, Vice-Chancellor, Punjab Agricultural University, has gone through the entire manuscript and given many valuable suggestions. An early nineteenth century drawing has been reproduced in this book through his kind courtesy. Mr. K. L. Malhotra, Dr. B. N. Goswamy and Dr. Gurdev Singh Gōsal have read parts of the manuscript and their suggestions have been very useful.

Dr. W. H. Mcleod, at the Baring Union Christian College, Batala, gave much of his time to a discussion of this project and his suggestions have been extremely valuable. I am deeply indebted to him as a scholar and a friend.

I may also express my great appreciation for the help which my research students, Miss Indu Banga and Miss Tripta Wahj and Mr. Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, have given to me in several ways.

Through the courtesy of the Director, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, I have been able to make use of two early nineteenth century drawings and I am thankful to him for this.

In the end, I must gratefully acknowledge the work of my wife, Harjinder, in connection with the preparation of this book.

*Panjab University  
Chandigarh*

J. S. GREWAL

## FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

One of the significant features of Indian culture is capacity to absorb different trends, blend them into a composite whole, and to maintain unity and diversity. When different traditions have combined together, what has grown is not merely the aggregate of these traditions—the interaction has led to the emergence of something which is much more and is characterised by freshness and vigour. Among the finest fruits of this process of cultural synthesis has been rise of Sikhism. Guru Nanak not merely imbibed various teachings of Hinduism and Islam, but his own teachings have a quality of their own whose mark on the personality of India remains very deep. Not only is the Sikh movement of great significance in the religious history of the country, but its impact on Indian society has been equally important.

Dr. Grewal has rendered a great service to the study of Indian history by presenting a study of Guru Nanak and his place in Indian history. The learned scholar has discussed the political, social and religious background of the rise of Sikhism and has analysed the religious and social content of Guru Nanak's teachings. With his erudition, research and discovery of new facts, he has combined a degree of objectivity and scientific outlook which is not common among the historians of such subjects. It is hoped that historical outlook will regain its balance with the publication of this work.

*Aligarh*

S. NURUL HASAN

## **PREFATORY NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION**

**Guru Nanak has a unique place amongst the spiritual leaders, preceptors, reformers and saints of India. His teachings have a universal appeal and they hold good for all ages.**

**The impact of this great Teacher on Indian Society during the last 500 years cannot be easily estimated. In the fields of spirituality and ethics, he has deeply influenced the lives, thinking and conduct of millions of people.**

**India—and more so the Punjab—can legitimately feel proud that this man of God was born in this land. But the great Master did not confine his mission to this country; he travelled far and wide, to far-off lands and countries, in order to enlighten humanity as a whole and deliver to them his message of love, peace, devotion to God, social justice, religious tolerance and universal brotherhood of man. For Guru Nanak no country was foreign and no people were alien.**

**We are fortunate that the 500th Birth Anniversary of the great Guru has fallen during our life. It is an opportunity for mankind to acknowledge its debt of gratitude to its great benefactor and teacher. It should be a matter of gratification for all concerned that the auspicious occasion is being celebrated, in a befitting manner, throughout India, as well as at numerous places abroad.**

**The Panjab University, Chandigarh, also decided to pay its respectful homage to Guru Nanak not only by holding the celebrations on a level which the occasion demanded, but also by publishing nine standard and scholarly books on the**

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**PART I**

**THE MILIEU**

## CHAPTER I

# POLITICS

By the time of Guru Nanak's birth in A.D. 1469, Bahlol Lodi (A.D. 1451-1489) had ruled from Delhi for more than fifteen years. Before occupying the throne in A.D. 1451, he had possessed Sarhind, Samana, Sunam, Hissar Firuza, Lahore, Dipalpur and perhaps some *parganas* of Multan.<sup>1</sup> In A.D. 1451, he had not only occupied Panipat, Hansi and Delhi but also added Sambhal, Mewat, Rapri, Etawah, Kol, Kampila, Patiali and Bhogaon to his dominions. He had considerably revived the power and prestige of the Sultanate of Delhi. But he had succeeded to a throne historically

1. The available evidence on Bahlol's control over Multan in the beginning of his reign is contradictory. According to the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Bahlol marched towards Multan in the first year of his reign to suppress a revolt there; but Ahmad Yadgar mentions Lahore, instead of Multan (Pandey, A. B., *The First Afghan Empire in India, 1451-1526 A.D.*, Calcutta 1956—hereafter cited as *The First Afghan Empire*—62 & n. 3). According to K. S. Lal, Bahlol marched towards Multan 'to bring that strategic region under control and secondly, to recruit fresh levies' (*Twilight of the Sultanate*, Asia Publishing House 1963—hereafter cited as *Twilight*—134). But K. S. Lal himself notices the contradictory statements of the chroniclers in a footnote. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 90, 95, 102, 292. It is almost certain that Bahlol never possessed Multan proper as a part of his dominions. The references to 'Multan' might actually be to some disputed territories between the cities of Lahore and Dipalpur on the one hand and Multan on the other. Cf. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 301, 307; *Tārikh-i-Firishṭa*, 176-177.

was still under their control. On his death in A.D. 1489, Bahlol left to his successor a kingdom nearly twice as large as it was in the beginning of his reign. He also left to his successor the legacy of a victorious struggle against the Sharqis. Sikandar Lodi (A.D. 1489-1517) carried this legacy to its logical conclusion by extirpating the Sharqi kingdom in A.D. 1495.

The territories of the southern neighbours of the Lodi Sultans formed the second important theatre of their political activity. Bahlol's warfare with some of the Rajput Chiefs and the Sultan of Malwa brought him mainly diplomatic gains, notably the nominal or occasional acceptance of his overlordship by some of the Rajput Chiefs.<sup>4</sup> Sikandar Lodi was not content, however, with merely a more effective reassertion of suzerainty over them; during a warfare of about eight years he occupied Dholpur, Mandrail, Narwar and Awantgarh.<sup>5</sup> The capture of Gwalior and the territories around it was reserved for Sikandar's son and successor, Ibrahim Lodi (A.D. 1517-1526). But if Ibrahim had the satisfaction of reducing Gwalior, which his father had failed to reduce in spite of his best efforts, he also suffered the humiliation of losing some of the territories conquered by his father. Sikandar had added Chanderi and Nagaur to his dominions at the cost of the Sultan of Malwa; Ibrahim lost Chanderi to Rana Sanga who was resuscitating the power of Mewar.<sup>6</sup>

Thanks to the preoccupation of the Lodi Sultans with the weightier affairs of the east and the south, they were unable to pay much attention to the west. Bahlol's hold over Multan

4. E.g., Gwalior and Dholpur.

5. *The First Afghan Empire*, 131-41; *Twilight*, 166-80.

6. *The First Afghan Empire*, 142-49; *Twilight*, 180-84, 209-11.

had never been complete or effective.<sup>7</sup> Qutbuiddin Langah had started ruling over Multan around A.D. 1454 and maintained his independent position till his death in A.D. 1469.<sup>8</sup> His son and successor, Shah Husain (A.D. 1469-1502), was bold enough to wrest Shor(kot) from Ghazi Khan and Bahlol was obliged to send an expedition under his son, Barbak Shah, instructing Tatar Khan Lodi to aid the prince with 'the army of the Panjāb'.<sup>9</sup> They failed to recover Shor(kot). Sikandar Lodi did not think it below his royal dignity to negotiate peace with Shah Husain Langah on terms of equality.<sup>10</sup> Later, when Jām Bayazid thwarted the authority of his Langah master, Mahmud Shah (A.D. 1502-1525), by reading the *khutba* at Shor(kot) in Sikandar Lodi's name, the Lodi Sultan instructed Daulat Khan Lodi at Lahore to go to the Jām's assistance. Daulat Khan mobilized his troops; negotiated with the Langah ruler; and enabled Jām Bayazid to keep the territory of Shor(kot).<sup>11</sup> But the Lodi Sultans never succeeded in subverting the kingdom of Multan.

The Lodi Sultans also failed in extending the boundaries of their Sultanate beyond the river Jhelum in the Punjab. For over half a century that river had formed the western boundary of the province of Lahore. It was only in A.D. 1506 that Sayyid Ali Turk surrendered Bhera to Daulat Khan,

7. See n. 1, above.

8. Majumdar, A. K., "The Origin of the Lankahs", *The Delhi Sultanate* (ed. R. C. Majumdar), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1960, 246-47; also *ibid.*, 226-30. Cf. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 293.

9. *Tabaqāt-Akbari*, III, 527; the phrase used is '*laskar-i-Panjāb*'. See also. *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 326; *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 293.

10. *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 327; *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 294; *Tabaqāt-Akbari*, III, 537.

11. *The Delhi Sultanate*, 229. Cf. *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 329; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, III, 537.

and Tatar Khan Gakhkhar acknowledged Sikandar's overlordship.<sup>12</sup> In A.D. 1519, however, the trans-Jhelum territories of the Lodi Sultanate were occupied by Babur, as a prelude to the eventual subversion of the Lodi Sultanate itself.<sup>13</sup>

From this brief consideration of the 'foreign' wars and conquests of the Lodi Sultans it appears that much of their time was spent in warfare in the east and the south; their western dominions enjoyed comparative peace for nearly half a century after Guru Nanak's birth.

During these fifty years, the internal peace too of the Punjab does not appear to have been seriously disturbed. In A.D. 1469, or soon afterwards, Tatar Khan Lodi was holding the *aqtā's* of Lahore and Dipalpur and probably also Sarhind.<sup>14</sup> He was a powerful and an effective governor. In the early 1480s he seized some *parganas* of the Sultan's *khālisa* and Prince Nizam (later, Sikandar Lodi) marched against him from Panipat. Tatar Khan was killed in a battle near Ambala in A.D. 1485 and his *aqtā's* were given to

12. Ahsan Raza Khan, "The problem of the North-Western Frontier of Hindustan in the first Quarter of the Sixteenth Century", Indian History Congress, Mysore, 1966 (ms. through the author's courtesy). Cf. *Twilight*, 180; Beveridge, A. S., *The Bābur-nāma in English*, 2 Vols., London 1921—hereafter cited as *The Bābur-nāma*—1, 382.

13. *Twilight*, 217; *The First Afghan Empire*, 198.

14. Cf. *The Bābur-nāma*, I, 383; *Tārīkh-i-Dā'ūdī* (Elliot, H. M. & Dowson. John, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. 1V, London 1872—hereafter cited as *Elliot & Dowson*—440-44); *The First Afghan Empire*, 130; *Twilight*, 215 & n. 117; Nijjar, B. S., *Panjab under the Sultans*, Delhi 1968, Appendix A, 223; *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 177.

Umar Khan Sarwani.<sup>15</sup> In his absence, for he was given other appointments later, his son Sa'id Khan Sarwani appears to have managed the affairs of the Punjab until A.D. 1500 when he was banished by Sikandar for his disloyalty to the Sultan.<sup>16</sup> Tatar Khan's son, Daulat Khan Lodi, was made the governor of Lahore, but not of Dipalpur and Sarhind.<sup>17</sup> He remained loyal to the Lodi Sultans for over twenty years. Thus, from A.D. 1469 to 1519, the province of Lahore was governed by only three or four governors without any serious or prolonged revolt to their credit, or discredit.

The most dramatic events in politics of the Punjab during Guru Nanak's life-time were connected with the political activity of Babur. From A.D. 1519 to 1526 he was, as he says, 'actively concerned with the affairs of Hindustan'.<sup>18</sup> In A.D. 1520, he crossed the river Chenab and occupied Sialkot without much resistance. Then he marched on Sayyidpur (Eminabad) which was 'taken by assault and put to the sword'.<sup>19</sup> Nothing is known of Babur's activity in the Punjab for the two years following. In A.D. 1523, he was invited by Daulat Khan Lodi to invade Hindustan. Towards the close of that year Ibrahim heard of Daulat Khan's rebellious designs and defection in Babur's favour. Bihar Khan, Mubarak Khan

15. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Rise of the Afghan Nobility under the Lodi Sultans, 1451-1526", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 121. Before Bahlol's death, Umar Khan Sarwani was the wazir (*Twilight*, 162). See also *ibid.*, 167, 169; *The First Afghan Empire*, 120, 124.
16. *Twilight*, 174; *The First Afghan Empire*, 133. Cf. *Tārikhi-Firishta*, 183; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 323.
17. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Rise of the Afghan Nobility under the Lodi Sultans, 1451-1526", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 131. Cf. *The Bābur-nāma*, I, 383.
18. *The First Afghan Empire*, 198.
19. *The Bābur-nāma*, I, 429.

Lodi and Bhikhan Khan Nuhani were sent to occupy the Punjab and Daulat Khan Lodi fled from Lahore on their approach. However, Babur had already crossed the Indus. He marched on Lahore and defeated the Afghan commanders near Lahore. The Mughal troops pursued the fugitive Afghans into Lahore, plundered the city and burned some of the *bāzārs*.<sup>20</sup> Within a week, Dipalpur too was stormed, plundered and put to the sword.<sup>21</sup> This happened in the beginning of A.D. 1524.

For two years now the political situation in the Punjab remained rather fluid. Babur made his own arrangements for the government of the Punjab.<sup>22</sup> Lahore was garrisoned with Mughal troops under Mir Abdul Aziz; Dipalpur was given to Alam Khan Lodi, the rival claimant to Ibrahim's throne, with Baba Qashqa Mughal, apparently to assist him but also perhaps to ensure his good behaviour; Khusrau Kukaltash was appointed to Sialkot; and Kalanaur was placed under Muhammad Ali Tajik. On Babur's return to Kabul, Ibrahim sent another army into the Punjab. Daulat Khan Lodi won over a part of this army and ousted Alam Khan from Dipalpur. He fled to Kabul and returned to Lahore with Babur's instructions to the Mughal nobles at Lahore for capturing Delhi. But Alam Khan himself was detached from Babur's side by Daulat Khan's son Ghazi Khan and some other Afghan nobles. Their aim of attacking Delhi was defeated but Ghazi Khan succeeded in occupying

20. *Ibid.*, I, 441.

21. *Loc. cit.*

22. Daulat Khan Lodi was given only Sultanpur and Jalandhar (*The Bābur-nāma*, I, 422). Later on, Babur refers to this arrangement by taunting Daulat Khan with the words, 'three krons I gave you from Tatar Khan's lands' (*ibid.*, II, 459). According to Erskine this amounted to £ 75,000 (*ibid.*, II, 459, n.4).

Kalanaur. Both Lahore and Sialkot were hard pressed.<sup>23</sup> Apprised of these happenings, Babur marched into the Punjab towards the end of A.D. 1525; reoccupied the province without any serious resistance from Daulat Khan or Ghazi Khan; and marched towards Delhi by April, 1526. Ibrahim Lodi opposed him, but only to lose his kingdom in the decisive battle of Panipat.

For fifteen years after the battle of Panipat, the Punjab remained virtually free from warfare and internal disorder. Babur appointed Mir Abdul Aziz to the Government of Lahore. After about two years he proved to be refractory and he was replaced by Mir Yunis Ali,<sup>24</sup> probably in A.D. 1529, when we also find Mirza Kamran in Lahore, serving Babur as his host and introducing the local chiefs as though he were the Governor.<sup>25</sup> It appears that in Babur's life-time the Punjab had come to form Kamran's *jāgīr*. On Babur's death in A.D. 1530, however, Humayun gave only Kabul and Qandhar to Kamran and Mir Yunis Ali remained the governor of Lahore on Humayun's behalf. But within a year, Kamran occupied Lahore with a clever military demonstration and Mir Yunis Ali, choosing to serve Humayun, left Kamran in peaceful possession of the province. Humayun,

23. *Ibid.*, II, 453. That Babur was worried about Lahore and Sialkot is evident from his 'censure and reproach' to Wali Qizil, who had gone neither to Sialkot nor to the Lahore *begs*.
24. Gulbadan Begam makes the definite statement that Mir Yunis Ali was appointed to Lahore through Babur's orders; she does not give the date (*Humāyun-nāma*, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, MS. M/977, f. 75). Babur visited Lahore in A.D. 1529, among other things, to quell Mir Abdul Aziz's sedition (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 698; see also 687-88). It was probably at this time that Mir Yunis Ali was appointed to Lahore.
25. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *Mirza Kamran*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1964, 7. Cf. *The Bābur-nāma*, II, 699.

on receiving a representation and a flattering *qasidah*, confirmed the Punjab on Kamran and added Hissar Firuza to his territories.<sup>26</sup> In A.D. 1528 Multan had been bestowed in *jāgīr* upon Kamran.<sup>27</sup> He now quietly replaced Langar Khan, the self-appointed governor of Multan, by his own men.<sup>28</sup> For ten years, Lahore remained a centre almost of royal authority. In A.D. 1540 it was evacuated by Kamran, as well as by the fugitive Humayun, without armed opposition to Sher Shah. Guru Nanak had died a year earlier.

The dominant impression of the politics of the Punjab during Guru Nanak's life-time—the impression of long spells of peace, punctuated by spasmodic armed conflict—finds support in the rehabilitation and resettlement of the province under the Lodis. In the reign of Akbar, Abul Fazl was to note that the province of Lahore was very populous and well cultivated.<sup>29</sup> The beginnings of this happy situation may be traced back to the times of the Lodis. Timur's invasion, regarded as a veritable scourge by many a historian, had taken place seventy years earlier. The worst ravages caused by the political activity of the Gakhkhars in the Punjab had been over by A.D. 1440. The Punjab had been under Bahlol's control for nearly twenty-five years. The recovery of Lahore

26. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *Mirza Kamran*, 8. Cf. *Akbar-nāma*, I, 125-26; *Humāyun-nāma*, ff. 96-97.
27. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *Mirza Kamran*, 6. The exact date given by Babur is September 18, 1528 (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 605).
28. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, III, 545. The author does not give the date but gives the detail that Langar Khan was called to Lahoré and given a *jāgīr* elsewhere. See also, *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 332; *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 291 & 294. It may be pointed out that Multan had suffered severely earlier when Mirza Shah Husain Arghun was trying to establish his hold over the city and the province (*Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 295).
29. Jarrett, H. S. (tr.); *Ain-i-Akbari*, II, 316.

as the most important city of the province was ensured by Tatar Khan Lodi's choice to make it the seat of his government; it grew further in size and importance as the royal seat of Kamran.<sup>30</sup> Assuming a general process of urbanization in the general conditions of peace, it may not be too much to suggest that the other administrative centres of the province also prospered in relation to their importance and location.

Sikandar Lodi is particularly credited with the founding of new towns in his dominions.<sup>31</sup> Instances of new towns founded by the Lodi Sultans or their governors in the Punjab are certainly not unknown. Bahlolpur on the bank of the river Chenab, for instance, had come into existence, as the name suggests, in the time of Bahlol Lodi to become the headquarters of a new *pargana*.<sup>32</sup> Tatar Khan Lodi founded Malot in the Siwaliks during the reign of Bahlol.<sup>33</sup> The best insight

30. Cf. *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, 65; Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb* (ed. Kirpal Singh), Khalsa College, Amritsar 1965, 275; Butay Shah, *Tārikh-i-Panjāb*, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, M/837, f. 41; Kanhaiya Lal, *Tārikh-i-Lahore*, Lahore 1884, 2426, *Tārikh-i-Mubārak Shāhi*, 197. For Kamran's position in Lahore, see *Mirza Kamran*, 11, 60-61.

31. Halim, A., "Sikandar Lodi as a Founder", *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, Calcutta 1939, 842-48.

32. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 168. Ganesh Das mentions elsewhere that his ancestor, Kaka Mal, was appointed to the *nizāmat* of the *pargana* of Bahlolpur. Babur mentions the town as the *khālisa* (probably of Ibrahim Lodi) and thought of 'bringing Sialkot to it' (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 454).

33. *The Bābur-nāma*, II, 457, n. 3. It may be mentioned here that Firishta ascribes the foundation of Sultanpur to Daulat Khan Lodi, Tatar Khan Lodi's ancestor, in the early fifteenth century (*Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 202). Butay Shah states that Sultanpur was a most flourishing town in the time of the Delhi Sultans (*Tārikh-i-Panjāb*, f. 15).

into the process of urbanization and rehabilitation in the Punjab is provided by Batala, the place where Guru Nanak was married. Ram Dev, a Bhatti Rajput, took large tracts of land in *ijāra* from Tatar Khan Lodi and concentrated his attention on the recovery of culturable waste in the upper *bāri-doāb*.<sup>34</sup> Batala was founded by him upon the mound of some ruined habitation. Soon, numerous villages sprang up around this new settlement, cultivation in the region flourished and Batala became the headquarters of a new *pargana*,<sup>35</sup> in due course to overshadow the neighbouring old town of Kalanaur.<sup>36</sup>

We may now turn to the nature of the contemporary rule in its bearing on the Punjab. The Lodis, like the majority of their predecessors, styled themselves on their coins as the Sultans;<sup>37</sup> but, at the same time, they acknowledged the authority of the Abbasid Caliphs as 'the source and sanction of the Sultan's legal authority'.<sup>38</sup> Their adherence to a fiction may be taken very largely as an indication of their desire not to depart from a well-established tradition. It is interesting to note in this connection that the extinction of the Caliphate at the hands of the Mongols had 'not only brought

34. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 66-67.

35. *Ibid.*, 67.

36. Grewal, J. S., *In the By-Lanes of History*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1977.

37. Thomas, Edward, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, London 1871, 333, 358-59, 366, 376-77. According to R. P. Tripathi, the highest title of the Lodis was 'Shah Sultan' (*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, 93).

38. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford University Press 1964, 10.

about the fall of its temporal authority but also of its religious recognition by the rulers of Persia even when the latter were converted to Islam.<sup>39</sup> It was this tradition that was followed by Babur and Humayun in India; on their coins the phrase *nāib-i-amīr-ul-mūminīn* does not appear.<sup>40</sup> The strength of this tradition, which was new to India, may be gauged from the fact that Sher Shah followed his immediate predecessors rather than the Lodi Sultans, or their predecessors.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the Lodi Sultans themselves were not aware of the implications of their acknowledgement of the Caliph's authority. This token acknowledgement was a symbol of their legitimacy at least in their own eyes. It is possible, however, that the Sunni Muslim community in their Sultanate, as elsewhere, appreciated the idea of the *khilāfat* as a symbol of the cherished unity of the Muslim world.<sup>42</sup>

The articulate members of the Sunni Muslim community in India were indeed an unacknowledged but important source from whom the Sultans affected to derive their support by occasional appeals to their religious sentiments. Even as a matter of policy, the Sultans did not hesitate at times to be over-zealous in presenting themselves as the champions of their faith. The most conventional and yet the most dramatic way of appealing to orthodox sentiment and imagination was

39. Siddiqi, A. H., "Caliphate and Sultanate", *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, II, 50.

40. Thomas, Edward, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, 380-83, 392-410.

41. The instances of the Sultans of Delhi not recognizing the *khilāfat* in the *khushba* or on their coins are very rare.

42. The political unity of the Islamic world was broken already in the times of the Abbasids; but the idea of the *khilāfat* as providing a bond that transcended political divisions remained very much alive in most of the Islamic countries.

to destroy some non-Muslim places of worship, particularly in times of war; or to adopt some public measures of discrimination against the non-believers and the heretics, even in conditions of peace. In the history of the Sultanate of Delhi, one may come upon several instances of such 'pseudo-religious vandalism'<sup>43</sup> and of sincere or insincere expressions of orthodox sentiments. The Lodi Sultans, as a rule, could ill-afford to adopt the posture of a *ghāzī*, for most of their wars were waged against Muslim Sultans. And in their struggle with their co-religionists, more than ever before, they needed the support of their non-Muslim vassals and allies, if not also of their non-Muslim subjects. One may readily agree with A. B. Pandey that in the politics of the Lodi Sultans, on the whole, there is 'predominance of a secular note'.<sup>44</sup>

However, Sikandar Lodi has been belauded by many a near-contemporary chronicler as 'a zealous' Muslim and condemned by many a modern historian as 'a fanatic'. The measures which are attributed to him on the point need careful examination; for some of the temples destroyed by Sikandar were destroyed in the conditions of war.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the details given of the case of the Brahman who was executed around A.D. 1500 through Sikandar's orders, for maintaining in public the equal veracity of his faith with that of Islam,

43. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, 87.

44. *The First Afghan Empire*, Preface. The author comes to the conclusion that the Lodis were 'far more liberal than their predecessors' in their treatment of the Hindus (*ibid.*, 293).

45. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 248-52; *Twilight*, 190-94. For instances of vandalism as an aftermath of war, see *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 183; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 325, 329.

suggest that his was quite an exceptional case.<sup>46</sup> Sikandar's keenness to destroy the Hindu pilgrims to Kurukshetra and to desecrate the place, which is attributed to him as a prince, was never clothed in action.<sup>47</sup> Some chroniclers attribute to Sikandar destruction of temples at Mathura and proscription of Hindu religious rites on the banks of the river Jumna.<sup>48</sup> If true, this may indeed be regarded as his attempt to buttress his position as an orthodox ruler, an attempt which may also be discerned in the prohibition of the annual procession of the spear of Masud Salar and of Muslim women's pilgrimage to *mazārs*.<sup>49</sup> No instances of persecution on religious grounds are on record in the Punjab. Whether or not Sikandar's measures or sentiments affected the attitude of his governors in the Punjab, or of their subordinate officials, is difficult to say.

46. See, for example, Firishta's account of this execution (*Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 185). Cf. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 322-23; *Tārīkh-i-Dā'udī* (Elliot & Dowson, IV, 464-65).

A. B. Pandey's suggestion that Sikandar wished to appear a devout Muslim and a true Afghan because his mother was a Hindu goldsmith's daughter is worth serious consideration (*The First Afghan Empire*, 112). Even more valuable is his significant reminder that the execution of the Brahman and the destruction of some temples took place at a time when a large number of nobles were conspiring to replace the Sultan by Fatch Khan (*ibid.*, 252).

47. In fact, Abdullah Ajodhani's stand on his particular issue is more significant than Sikandar's (*The First Afghan Empire*, 248). Cf. *Tārīkh-i-Dā'udī* (Elliot & Dowson, IV, 439-40); *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 187.

48. *Twilight*, 192. Cf. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 186-87; *Tārīkh-i-Dā'udī* (Elliot & Dowson, IV, 447); *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 335-36.

49. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 186-187; *Tārīkh-i-Dā'udī* (Elliot & Dowson, IV, 448). Cf. *Makhzan-i-Afghāni*, ff. 66-128.

For a most tangible, though not very obtrusive, expression of Sikandar's regard for the *shari'at*, one may turn to the Lodi administration of justice. Though Bahlol too is credited for a personal attention to justice, Sikandar is particularly marked for his devotion to judicial reform.<sup>50</sup> The Sultan himself presided over the royal court and consulted the expounders of the *shari'at*. This royal court had both original and appellate jurisdiction. The *wazir* in his own separate court acted as the Chief Justice of the realm. The provincial *dtwan* held his court in the provincial capitals to try revenue cases. In all important towns, probably in every town which had some Muslim population, the *qazi* administered justice, often with the help of the *mufti* (the expounder of the *shari'at*).<sup>51</sup> Some judicial functions were performed also by certain important civil and military officials like the *faujdaars*, the *kotwals*, the commanders of tribal armies, the *shiqdaars*. Sikandar appears to have made elaborate arrangements for the detection of crime and for avoiding needless delay in decisions. For the guidance of provincial and *pargana* courts, general rules were issued from time to time. 'In effect, the administration of justice during the regime of the Lodi monarchs had touched a high standard of efficiency'.<sup>52</sup>

However, though the control of the Lodi Sultans appears

50. Halim A., 'Justice of Sultan Sikandar Lodi', *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, II, 272-79. Also, *The First Afghan Empire*, 230-40.
51. The *mufti* usually propounded the law and the *qazi* passed the judgement. All the *qazis* did not have the assistance of the *mufti* and the latter occasionally performed the function of the *qazi*; but their functions, as a rule, were distinct.  
Cf. Goswamy, B. N. & Grewal, J. S., *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1967, 155, n. 1.
52. *The First Afghan Empire*, 239-40. Cf. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, 338.

to be the greatest over the administration of justice, it is difficult to say with any certainty that the general orders of the Sultans on judicial matters became really effective in the provinces. The governor's court was a replica of the royal court; he tried both civil and criminal cases and possibly heard appeals from the lower courts.<sup>53</sup> It may also be suggested that, in all probability, enough of adjudication was left to tribal chiefs and *panchāyats* and to caste *panchāyats* in villages and towns, particularly in the case of the non-Muslims.<sup>54</sup>

It is extremely relevant to our understanding of the nature of the Lodi Sultanate to know that the best public patronage of the Sultans was extended to the '*ulamā* or the *mashāikh* who were the recognized guardians of the *shari'at* or the supposed moulders of popular opinion.<sup>55</sup> The '*ulamā* were mostly employed in the service of the state, particularly

53. *The First Afghan Empire*, 231.

54. This statement is being made on the assumption that the existence of such *panchāyats* may be inferred from their existence in Mughal times, though for the earlier period there is no specific evidence. It is quite certain, however, that in medieval times there were powerful survivals of tribal organization in the Punjab and administrative policies revolved round this fact (Nurul Hasan, "Presidential Address", *Punjab History Conference*, Patiala 1966, 75-76. See also, *The Bābur-nāma*, I, 390, 383; II, 454.

Cf. Qureshi I. H., *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore 1942, 154.

55. An incident mentioned by Babur provides useful insight into the war in which the '*ulamā* and the *mashāikh* could create public opinion. Shaikh Sharif, very probably incited by Mir Abdul Aziz at Lahore, attributed oppression to Babur and obtained the signatures of the *imāms* of the provincial capital to a declaration drafted for the purpose; copies were sent to the various towns of the province and the situation called for Babur's presence in Lahore (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 688).

in the administration of justice, and they were paid through assignments of revenue-free lands. Firishta specifically refers to Sikandar Lodi's appreciation for those of his nobles who followed his example in giving stipends and *madad-i-ma'ash* (revenue-free land) to the needy and the deserving.<sup>56</sup> He refers also to Ibrahim Lodi's patronage of the pious through conferment of *wazā'if* (stipends or cash-grants) and *ā'imma* (revenue-free land).<sup>57</sup> We may be sure that royal patronage of the *'ulamā* and the *mashāikh* was by no means confined to Sikandar and Ibrahim. They were following a well-established tradition of the Sultanate. Indeed, it has been observed recently that before Akbar's time the *madad-i-ma'ash* grants were given in terms of entire villages probably as a general rule.<sup>58</sup> Though it is likely that in a few instances revenue-free grants of land or stipends were given also to non-Muslim religious establishment and individuals, such patronage was primarily, and almost exclusively, meant for

56. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 186. See also, *Tārīkh-i-Dā'ūdī* (Elliot & Dowson, IV, 446); Moreland, W. H., *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, 73.

Firishta mentions Jām-Bayazid at-Shor (kot) as a great patron of the *'ulamā* and the *mashāikh* (*Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 330). It is very probable that some of the nobles followed the example of the Sultans in patronizing the pious and the learned among the Muslims.

57. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 139. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 246. The patronage of the pious and learned Muslims was in fact a considered policy of all the Muslim Sultans of Medieval India (Ikram, S. M., *Muslim Civilization in India*, Columbia University Press, New York and London 1964, 113).

58. Irfan Habib, "Aspects of Agrarian Relations & Economy in a Region of Uttar Pradesh During the 16th Century", Indian History Congress, Mysore 1966 (*ms.*, through the author's Courtesy).

the Muslim.<sup>59</sup>

That the patronage of the learned of the pious among the Muslim by 'orthodox' rulers was taken for granted by their co-religionists is evident from the attitude of the mediaeval Muslim chroniclers on this point. Khwandamir, for instance, praises Humayun in these significant terms: 'his noble endeavours are always directed towards strengthening the pillars of faith, confirming the articles of the bright law, enlivening the brilliant doctrines of the prophet and rooting out ill-conceived innovations. And all his vaulable times and auspicious hours are devoted to comforting the learned and encouraging the *Qādīs* of Islam'.<sup>60</sup> It may be argued that his image of Humayun does not represent his actual attitude. But that precisely is the relevant point here: the conventional expectations from a real or alleged orthodox ruler on the point of patronage. Mentioning the *shaikhs*, *sayyids* and *qāzis* among the *ahl-i-sa'ādat*, Khwandamir goes on to add that 'regard for this honourable band, and association with this revered class secures eternal prosperity, and enables one to rise to everlasting dignity and rank'.<sup>61</sup>

59. Goswamy, B. N. & Grewal, J. S., *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 19-22. No instances of revenue-free grants to non-Muslim establishments or individuals during the Sultanate period in northern India are known. But the discovery of such grants should not come as a surprise.

60. Bains Prasad (tr.). *Quanun-i-Humayuni*, Calcutta 1940, 8-9, 20. It may be added that Humayun had appointed Maulana Muhiyuddin Muhammad to look after the affairs of the *mashāikh*, the *sayyids*, the *qāzis*, the expounders of the Law and other pious men (*ibid.*, 29-30).

61. *Ibid.*, 26. Firishta and Abul Fazl appreciatively credit Babur for sending presents and *nazrs* to Muslim holy places outside India; such as Mecca, Medina, Karbala, Najf, Mashhad and the holy *mazārs* in Khurasan and Samarqand (*Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 206; *Akbar-nāma*, I, 99).

The non-Muslim subjects of the Lodi Sultans, in contrast, had to suffer some disabilities.<sup>62</sup> From the very early days of the Sultanate its non-Muslim subjects had been given a major concession from the point of view of Islamic juridico-political theory; the status of the *zimmī* had been accorded to them, though they had never been explicitly mentioned among the people possessing revealed scriptures. This concession meant that they could secure their life and property by paying the *jizīya* to the Sultans. Though the Muslim subjects of the Sultan had to pay *zakāt*, from which the non-Muslim were exempt due to the very nature of that 'tax' and though the difference in the economic burden of the incidence of these two taxes was perhaps not much, there is hardly any doubt about the *jizīya* being a discriminatory tax in purely qualitative terms.<sup>63</sup> There is no evidence that the Lodi Sultans ever abolished the *jizīya*, though it is possible that they did not always insist on its payment. On the other hand, Sikandar is believed to have abolished *zakāt* on corn.<sup>64</sup> It is likely that pilgrimage tax was imposed upon the Hindus in some parts of the Lodi Sultanate. It has been observed

62. According to S. M. Ikram, the Hindus were 'burdened by certain handicaps' throughout the period of the Sultanate (*Muslim Civilization in India*, 108). Titus Murray also remarks that the Sultans of Delhi were either intolerant or indifferent in their attitude towards the Hindus (*Islam in India and Pakistan*, Calcutta 1959, 15-16).

63. Cf. Jaffar, S. M., "Tolerance in Islam". *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, II, 60-76. The author argues that *jizīya* was in fact a concession given to the *zimmīs*, for as Muslims they would have paid more to the state as *khamīs* and *zakāt*. For a brief exposition of the Muslim theory of taxation, see Tripathi, R. P., *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, Allahabad 1936, Appendix A, 338-48.

64. *The First Afghan Empire*, 226.

recently that this tax had 'no sanction in the Muslim canon law.'<sup>65</sup>

Probably more important than the difference in the attitude of the Lodi Sultans, as of their predecessors, towards their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects was the obvious fact that the political and administrative power was very largely the prerogative of the Muslims. It was in these spheres that the power structure had undergone the greatest changes in the past at the cost of the non-Muslim ruling classes. It may be possible to find some instances of non-Muslims employed in the army of the Lodi Sultans, besides the contingents occasionally supplied by their vassal chiefs.<sup>66</sup> The proportion of non-Muslim officials at the lower rungs, particularly in the revenue department, was quite considerable. But it hardly needs underlining that nearly all the key positions were held by the co-religionists of the Sultans. On the whole, the Muslims had a palpable predominance in the government and administration of the Lodi Sultans. It does not follow, however, that the proportion of non-Muslim officials was now necessarily smaller than in the fourteenth century.<sup>67</sup> It must not be forgotten that the Lodi had inherited this situation as a legacy from their predecessors.

In fact, we may grasp the situation much better by talking of 'Afghan', rather than 'Muslim', predominance. The very foundation of the Lodi Sultanate was intimately connected with the dominance of the Afghans in the cradle-lands of

65. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, 81.

66. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Rise of the Afghan Nobility", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 130. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 244-66.

67. Cf. Mahdi Husain, "The Hindus in Medieval India", *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, Calcutta 1939, 724.

their king lom.<sup>68</sup> During the Lodi times the Afghans continued to form the largest proportion of the nobility, both at the court and in the provinces. One of the basic political problems of the Lodi Sultans was to devise means of sharing power with the Afghan nobles. Bahlol secured their support not simply by humouring them with gestures implying their equality with the Sultan but by giving them enormous power in the areas assigned to them for administration. Relative to Bahlol, Sikandar increased the power of the Sultans as well as the distance between the 'ruler' and the 'subject'. He did not hesitate occasionally to prefer a non-Afghan to an Afghan for a particular appointment.<sup>69</sup> On the whole, however, he succeeded in asserting his power very largely by keeping the balance of the Afghan nobles in his favour.<sup>70</sup> In a very real sense the power of the Lodi Sultans rested on the good

68. Cf. Rahim, A., "The Origin of the Afghans and their Rise to the Sultanate of Dihli", *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, IV, 64-70. Bahlol himself could command 20,000 Afghans before he occupied Lahore (Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Rise of the Afghan Nobility", *Medieval Indian Quarterly*, IV, 117). It may be added that much earlier, Mubarak Shah had decided to place Lahore under Allahdad Kala Lodi (*Twilight*, 97).
69. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Rise of the Afghan Nobility", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 130. It must be emphasized, however, that an occasional preference for a non-Afghan does not contradict the general partiality for the Afghans which has been noted for instance, A. B. Pandey (*The First Afghan Empire*, 246). It may be interesting to note in this connection that Ibrahim Lodi employed one of his slaves to administer a *khālisa* territory (*Akbar-nāma*, 1,100).
70. Nizamuddin Ahmad states that Sikandar Lodi made changes in the assignments as a politic measure (*Tabaqār-i-Akbari*, I, 332). It has been observed by A. B. Pandey that Sikandar "usually did not disturb fief-holders in their possessions, but when the interests of the state demanded it he transferred, reduced, banished or dismissed them" (*The First Afghan Empire*, 219).

will and co-operation of the tribal chiefs among the Afghans. There was a limit beyond which they could not be easily coerced; they remained major co-sharers in the effective power of the Lodi Sultanate.

The provincial governors of the Lodi Sultans continued to enjoy a large measure of power in the areas under their administrative control. This power was in the first place, a corollary of the military organization of the Lodi Sultans. They did maintain a standing army of their own which was probably more powerful than the army of any single *aqta'dār*; but in the total strength of the fighting force of the Sultanate the proportion of the standing army of the Sultan was not very large. Just as the power of the Sultanate rested ultimately on the physical force at its command, so the importance of the Afghan *aqta'dārs* depended on their capabilities and strength as commanders. The Sultans in theory could and occasionally did, reduce the power of individual *aqta'dārs* or even dismiss them. They could not succeed to their fathers' positions without the formal orders of the Sultan. In some cases, they were transferred from the *aqta's* held by their fathers.<sup>71</sup> But there was a tendency towards hereditary succession, which may be taken as an indication of the regard which the Sultans paid to the wishes at least of their loyal *aqta'dārs*.<sup>72</sup> The Lodi Sultans never succeeded in introducing a radical modification in a system

71. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 151-52. 'Let Zain-ud-din understand', says a *farmān* of Sikandar, that the assignments are conferred on him in a purely personal capacity and not as a relation of the late Masand-i-Āli, his father (Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindūstān*, 175).

72. A. B. Pandey gives some instance of hereditary succession and adds that there are 'numerous other instances' (*The First Afghan Empire* 218 & n. 6).

which was from the very outset based on the interdependence of the Sultan and his Afghan nobles.

The system of assignments, which had become 'the most important agrarian institution' under the Lodis.<sup>73</sup> tended to buttress the *aqtā'dār's* importance initially bestowed upon him by the military organization. The peasant's fundamental liability now, as before, was to pay a share of his produce to either the king or the assignees.<sup>74</sup> Since the assignee was required to maintain a considerable body of troops to be made available to the Sultan when demanded, the assignments were 'fewer in number but individually more extensive'; and the assignee had a more or less free hand in managing the lands placed under him.<sup>75</sup> He could assign lands to his subordinates and he could grant revenue-free lands. Even under Sikandar Lodi, the assignee was allowed to keep any excess of revenues actually realized over and above the nominal valuation in the papers of the revenue department.<sup>76</sup> This general position of the assignee was qualified by occasional orders of the Sultan. Sikandar ordered once that the *aqtā'dārs* were bound to respect the existing tenures of

73. Moreland, W. H., *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, 67

74. *Ibid.*, 70. According to I. H. Qureshi the rate of assessment during the Lodi times remained less than 'a third' of the produce ("The State Demand on Agricultural Produce Under the Sultans of Dehli", *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, Lahore 1940, 249-50).

75. Moreland, W. H., *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, 67, 70. The assignee could adopt group assessment and farming (*ibid.*, 173).

76. To give an idea of military strength of the important Afghan nobles, it may be pointed out that at the time of Ibrahim's accession to the throne Darya Khan Nubani, Azam Humayun Sarwani and Nasir Khan were each commanding thirty to forty thousand soldiers (*The First Afghan Empire*, 242).

révenue-free grants of land to saints and scholars.<sup>77</sup> Ibrahim ordered the government's share of the produce to be collected in grain.<sup>78</sup> It is not certain, however, that the measures adopted by the Sultan became actually operative beyond the territories under their direct control, the *khālisa*. The jealous insistence of the Lodi Sultans was confined to two major items: regular submission of the stipulated revenues by the *aqtā'dārs* to the Sultan's treasury and supply of contingents on royal demand.<sup>79</sup> Thus, for good or evil, *aqtā'dārs* were left with a large measure of discretion and initiative in their respective areas.

The scope of oppression at the lower levels of revenue administration was not obviated by the administrative arrangements made by the Lodi Sultans. In the reigns of Sikandar and Ibrahim, the *wazīr* presided over the department of finance. His department was expected to maintain an account of revenue returns of villages, *parganas* and *āqtā's*. These returns were provided by the *dīwān* who was the *wazīr's* representative in the provinces.<sup>80</sup> The most important unit of revenue administration was the *pargana*, with its *shiqdār*, the *'āmil*, the *amīn*, the *ḥotādār*, the Persian and Hindawi *navi-sandas* and the *qānūngo*. Of these *pargana* officials, by far the most important was the *shiqdār*.<sup>81</sup> The Lodi Sultans

77. *Tārīkh-i-Dā'udī* (Elliot & Dowson' IV), 448. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 22A-25.

78. Moreland W. H., *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, 68.

79. This is evident from the detail given of the cases of disobedience on the part of the Afghan *aqtā'dārs*.

80. *The First Afghan Empire*, 22A-25, 231-32. The *Tārīkh-i-Dā'udī* contains a reference to the *dīwān* of Prince Nizam (Sikandar) at Panipat (Elliot & Dowson, IV, 440-44).

81. Tripathi, R. P., *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, 304. Cf. Qureshi, I. H. *The Administration of the Sultanate of Dehli*, Appendix L, 190, 191, 196, 201, 237, 238:

directly appointed the *shiqdars* in their *khālisa* for the civil administration of important towns and for the revenue and military administration of the *parganas*. The *shiqdār* received a certain porportion of the revenues and he was generally an important noble with the title of the *malik*.<sup>82</sup> From Babur's reference to Hamid Khan Lodi Khasakhail, the *shiqdars* of Hissar Firuza in A.D. 1526, it appears that he wielded a considerable military power.<sup>83</sup> Instances of the *shiqdars* colluding with their subordinates against the cultivators are not unknown.<sup>84</sup> It may be legitimately inferred that the treatment received by the peasant varied from *pargana* to *pargana*, depending upon the cupidity or the generosity of men under whom they happened to be placed. The majority of the Afghan nobles, according to A. B. Pandey, were only a moderate success as administators; they had little interest in public welfare; they were careless of finances; they were addicted to the pleasures of the flesh; and they tried to govern mainly by force.<sup>85</sup>

82. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Position of Shiqdar under the Sultans of Delhi," *Indian Hi story Congress*, Mysore, 1966 (*ms.*, through the author's courtesy).

83. *The Bābur-nāma*, II, 465.

84. Tripathi R. P., *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, 298.

85. *The First Afghan Empire*, 243-44. It does not follow, however, that each individual Afghan noble was neither cultured nor well-educated. Sikandar Lodi himself was a competent poet; he patronized literature and sciences (*Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 188). Even in the fourteenth century, Abdul Karim Sarwani had acquired good reputation as a scholar and taught the *Hidāya* to Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Delhi (Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi "Rise of the Afghan Nobility", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 115. Babur found the personal library of Ghazi Khan at Malot worth mentioning in his memoirs (*The Bābur-nāma*, I, 94).

The *muqaddams* generally belonged to the superior castes and the majority of them were Hindus. The term *khoti* of the fourteenth century was now being replaced by *muqaddami* and it implied a superior right over the village lands, entitling the *muqaddams* to a certain share of the revenues collected from those lands. This right was virtually proprietary and gave the *muqaddams* control over 'trees, fruits, water channels, tanks land cut in by stream,' but not over the land under habitation. *Muqaddami* was fully inheritable and alienable right, both among the Hindus and Muslims, in accordance with their respective laws of inheritance.<sup>86</sup> Thus the *muqaddams* were an important class of people and they served as link between the tillers of the soil and the revenue officials of the government in the *pargana*. The possibilities of collusion between the *muqaddams* and the revenue officials against the cultivators cannot altogether be ruled out.<sup>87</sup>

The predominance of the Afghans in the government and administration of Lodis, coupled with the tribal organization of

86. Irfan Habib, "Aspects of Agrarian Relations & Economy in a region of Uttar Pradesh During the 16th Century", *Indian History Congress*, 1966 (ns., through the author's courtesy). For the position of the *muqaddam* in medieval times, see also Goswamy, B. N. & Grewal, J. S., *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 142, n. 1; Qureshi, I. H., *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 126, 194, 195.

87. For the important position of the *chaudhari* in the seventeenth century, which may not be essentially different from what it had been in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1963, 126-27, 131, n. 10; 174, 231, 232, 235, 242, 246, n. 23; 252, 254, 255, 259, n. 8; 289-90, 291, 292, 293, 294, 297. For the *qānūngo*, See Goswamy, B. N. & Grewal, J.S; *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 90, n. 15.  
For the *'āmil*, *ibid.*, 63, n. 12.

the Afghans, had a serious consequence for the power structure in the Lodi Sultanate. The tribal sentiment of the Afghans encouraged concentration of men of the same tribe in areas where the chief of a tribe held important assignment.<sup>88</sup> Sarhind, for instance, had become a stronghold of the Lodi Afghans already in the reign of Mubarak Shah (A.D. 1421-1434) when Bahlol's uncle, Islam Khan Lodi, could raise an army of 12,000 Afghans.<sup>89</sup> Bahlol, as the *hakim* of Dipalpur, had settled the Afghans, probably of his own tribe, in district of Qusur.<sup>90</sup> Tatar Khan Lodi, who could muster 15,000 men, depended mainly on the men of his own tribe, the Yusufkhails.<sup>91</sup> Daulat Khan Lodi's appointment to Lahore might have been dictated by the predominance of the Yusufkhails in the administration of Lahore. Ghazi Khan's ability to raise thirty to forty thousand men in A.D. 1525 was an outcome largely of a long process of Afghan settlement in the Punjab.<sup>92</sup>

The settlement of the Afghans in the Punjab had a very important implication. The Afghan governors could delegate their military authority to a number of subordinate chiefs and assign

88. Rahim, A., "The Nature of the Afghan Monarchy", *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, IV, 119.

89. *Loc. cit.*; *The First Afghan Empire*, 48.

90. Butay Shah, *Tārīkh-i-Punjab*, f. 32.

91. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, "Rise of the Afghan Nobility", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 121.

92. *The Bābur-nāma*, II, 451, 453.

The fact of a considerable Afghan settlement in the Punjab has been recently emphasized by Nurul Hasan ("Presidential Address", *Punjab History Conference*. Patiala 1966, 78).

*jāgīrs* to them.<sup>93</sup> The soldiers of these subordinate *jāgīrdārs* too were paid through assignments of land. In this process, it is very likely that some of the *zāmindārs* were displaced by the Afghans. Firishta observes incidentally that in the reign of Sikandar Lodi the power of the *zāmindārs* of Hind was so effectively curbed that the powerful and the weak were reduced to the same position.<sup>94</sup> Howsoever partially, this statement could apply also to the Punjab. It has been remarked with reference to the Delhi Sultanate of the days of Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluk that so long as 'the horizontal base remained wide enough to encompass the whole of this vast land, the vertical implementation of authority was limited to the surface strata alone'.<sup>95</sup> Paradoxically, the smaller extent of the Lodi Sultanate made for a 'more intensive conquest' of the provinces. It is

93. For a few specific instances, see Rahim, A., "The Nature of the Afghan Monarchy"; *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, IV, 122-23. Firishta mentions Jamal Khan, the *hākīm* of Jaunpur, giving a *jāgīr* to an old associate and making him a commander of 500 horses (*Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 220-21). Babur refers to Dilawar Khan Lodhi's maternal uncles holding the Jaswan valley in Bisf-Jullundur Doab of the Punjab (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 462). Mahmud Khan Nuhani receiving a *pargana* in Lahore (probably from Babur) would be in conformity with the Afghan practice (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 455-56).

94. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 186.

Nizāmuddin Ahmad mentions a specific instance of Sikandar taking away certain *pargana*s from the *zāmindārs* and entrusting the administration to his own men (*Tābaqāt-i-Akbarī*, I, 320). This is not to suggest, however, that Firishta's general statement is to be taken literally. Even in the Samana region a *zāmindār*, Mohan, was strong enough to think of attacking and plundering the estates of the *qāzi* of Samana in Babur's reign (*The Bābur-nāma*, II, 700).

95. Misra, S. C., *The Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat*, The M. S. University of Baroda 1962, 53.

extremely likely that the Punjab was one of those areas of the Sultanate in which the process of the vertical implementation of authority' was at work.

The vertical implementation of authority did not necessarily mean the exclusion of non-Muslims from the administration. In fact, a two way process appears to have been operative in the Punjab during the Lodi time. If some of the *zāmindārs* were displaced from positions of a circumscribed but substantial local autonomy, the Persian knowing non-Muslims from the lower echelons rose to comparatively higher positions in the administration and to higher status. The Persian chroniclers praise Sikandar Lodi for obliging the non-Muslims to learn Persian. Firishta, for instance, observes that Sikandar forced 'the infidels to read and write the Persian script, which till then was not customary among them'.<sup>96</sup> Ganesh Das who fondly remembered the important positions held by ancestors in the Punjab during the Lodi time,<sup>97</sup> says that the Sultans of Delhi were keen to employ the *khatri*s in their administration, once they had realized that the *khatri*s were worthy of consideration as competent officials. Ganesh Das goes on to say, in fact, that only the *brahmans* and *khatri*s in Punjab were allowed to learn Persian and account-keeping. Consequently, some of them rose to very high positions and many of them were employed in the civil administration.<sup>98</sup> Making an allowance for Ganesh Das's anachronism and exaggeration, it may be inferred that the proportion of Persian-knowing *khatri*s in the administration of the Punjab during the

96. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 187.

97. Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Punjab*, 291-92.

98. Some of the positions mentioned by Ganesh Das are: *dīwāni*, *qānūngoi*, *tahsildāri*, *girdāwuri*, *sar-daftari* and *munshigari*.

Lodi times was probably larger than in the earlier administration. It may be assumed that now there was a closer contact and collaboration between the Muslim and non-Muslim officials in the Punjab.

## CHAPTER II

# SOCIETY

It may be frankly recognized at the outset that the student of the social history of the Punjab during the time of Guru Nanak is confronted with two major social entities; the Hindu and the Muslim. None of these can be treated as a unified whole, for both formed a part of much larger entities in the Indian subcontinent. The Indo-Muslim society in fact was a part of the still larger entity of the Islamic world. Furthermore, in certain levels of socio-economic life, a dogmatic distinction between 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' may not lead to a meaningful social analysis. However, once the problem of conceptualization and the complexity of social situation in the Punjab around A.D. 1500 is realized, it may be quite useful to talk of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' communities for a brief consideration of the social *milieu* of Guru Nanak.

Those who professed to be Muslims were relatively new to appear on the social scene in the Punjab. In retrospect, it is easy to see that their influx into the land had become virtually inevitable after the annexation of the province to the dominions of Mahmud of Ghazna. For some time, the Punjab became in fact the core dominion of Mahmud's successors. Then for three centuries it formed a part of the dominion of the Ilbari, Khalji, Tughluq, Sayyid and Afghan rulers. For nearly five hundred years some Muslim soldiers, administrators, traders, scholars, men of letters and learned and pious men had been adopting the Punjab as their home. Some of them had taken wives, concubin-

es or female slaves from amongst the indigenous peoples and, after a long stay in the country of their adoption, many of them had come to be 'Indianized': they had come to think of themselves as 'Indian Muslims'. The dramatic immigration of the Mughals and Persians in the early sixteenth century was more conspicuous only because of its rapidity. It was nonetheless a part of an old, albeit gradual, process.

However, the 'immigrants' do not appear to have formed a very large proportion of the Muslim community in the Punjab of our period. The proportion of 'native' Muslims was perhaps larger. Their existence may be attributed, obviously, to a long process of conversion. In the first place, forcible conversion and enslavement of women and children as measures of war added new co-religionists to the number of Muslim conquerors and immigrants from beyond the borders of the Punjab. Individual Muslims, in public or private positions, thought it meritorious to convert the natives to Islam through material inducement or mere suasion. The institution of slavery, both 'official' and domestic, brought a considerable number of natives into the fold of Islam. In the process of peaceful conversion, the *Sūfi shaikhs*, 'the most active propagandists of Islam', appear to have played a considerable role.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, there is some interesting evidence on the peaceful missionaries of Islam in the Punjab. Shaikh Ali al-Hujwiri,

1. Cf. Gibb, H. A. R., *Mohammedanism*, 134; Murray, Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, 36. Murray has observed that forced conversion was bitterly resented by the Hindus: *ibid.*, 30. This is most likely. See, for instance the sentiments attributed to Haqiqat Rai by Ganesh Das on the cruelty, discrimination and the misguided zeal of the Muslim rulers: *Chār-Bāgh-i-Punjāb*, 237.

for instance, had settled in Lahore during the Ghaznavid times. According to a later chronicler of the Punjab, the Hindu Gujjars of Lahore were converted to Islam by Ali al-Hujwiri.<sup>2</sup> Some detail of the increasing number and popularity of *Sūfī shaikhs* and of the proliferation of *khānqahs* in the Punjab will be given in the following chapter. It may be enough to say here that the process of gradual conversion through the *Sūfīs* continued throughout the medieval period. In the early sixteenth century, Shaikh Daud, for instance, established his *khānqah* at Sher Garh in the *bārī doāb* where Badauni was to see him converting the Hindu inhabitants of the area in large numbers.<sup>3</sup>

Probably all the major towns of the Punjab had come to have a considerable proportion of Muslim population by the close of the fifteenth century: Lahore, Multan, Dipalpur, Kalanaur, Patti, Qusur, Pakpatan (Ajodhan), Tulamba, Jhang, Chiniot, Shor(kot), Khushab, Bhera, Sialkot, Jallandhar, Talwan, for example, in the Punjab proper; on the left of the river Sutlej were Ludhiana, Sarhind, Pail, Rupar, Ambala, Shahabad, Thanesar, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak, Kaithal, Kuhram, Samana, Sunam, Narnaul, Hansi, Fatehabad, Bhatinda, Hissar Firuza and Abohar. The close connection of urbanization with administrative arrangements may impel us to infer that almost all the *pargana* towns of the Punjab contained a substantial proportion of Muslim

2. Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 279.

3. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, III, 28-39. It may also be added here that, according to Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, Sayyid Bahawal Sher Gilani Qadiri founded his *khānqah* in the 1540s at Hujra Shah Muqim in the (British) district of Montgomery: *Tārikh-i-Makhzan-i-Panjāb*, Lucknow 1877, 238. According to Ganesh Das, both Sher Garh and Hujra Shah Muqim were situated in the *bār* amidst the Dogar and Gujjar tribes: *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 302.

population. The proportion of Muslims in the urban population of the Punjab appears to have been much larger than their proportion in the rural population.

By and large whereas the 'immigrant' Muslims settled in cities and towns, the pockets of Muslim population in the countryside were formed by the native born, the converts. It has been remarked recently that several tribes in the Punjab were converted to Islam during the medieval times.<sup>4</sup> The Gakhkhars in the Sindh Sagar Doab present a good example: at the time of the Ghurid invasions, they were largely Hindus; by the end of the fifteenth century, they were largely Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the Jud and Janjuha tribes between the Nilab and Bhera, whose chiefs in the early sixteenth century bore the titles of *Malik* and *Rai*, had largely accepted Islam.<sup>6</sup> Some clans of the Gujjars and Jats as well as the Rajputs had been converted. Instances of Muslim settlements in the countryside are not unknown. In the reign of Sikandar Lodi some Baloch clans, for instance, settled down along the Indus between Sitpur and Dhankot.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the largest proportion of the Muslim rural population consisted of the native converts.

4. Nurul Hasan, "Presidential Address" *Punjab History Conference*, Patiala 1966, 79. The term "Punjab" is used by Nurul Hasan for the five *doābs*, the upper basin of the Ghaggar and the northern hills economically connected with the plains: *ibid.*, 74.
5. Shihabuddin Ghuri is believed to have converted some Gakhkhar tribes to Islam for the first time. For their position in the early sixteenth century, see *The Bābur-nāma*, I, 380, 388, 441. Cf. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 350.
6. Ahsan Raza Khan, "The problem of the North Western Frontier of Hindustan in the first Quarter of the Sixteenth Century", *Indian History Congress*, Mysore, 1966 (*ms.*, through the author's courtesy). Cf. *The Bābur-nāma*, I, 380.
7. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, III, 528-29; *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 293.

This is not to suggest, however, that the number of native converts in towns and cities was not considerable. Their proportion in the Muslim population of the towns was by no means negligible. Even among the government officials at the *pargana* towns and among the holders of assignments and *madad-i-ma'ash* lands the possibility of there being some 'native' Muslims cannot be ruled out. Among the traders and shopkeepers their proportion was likely to be much larger. Their preponderance among the Muslim craftsmen of those days may be taken for granted. Muslim weavers, dyers, ironsmiths, oilpressers, shoemakers and leather workers were most unlikely to have immigrated from outside India. The existence of such craftsmen in the towns of the Punjab need not be doubted.<sup>8</sup>

The Muslim society in the Punjab, as in some other parts of India, was as well marked by sectarian divisions as by racial differences. The sectarian differences were important to the contemporaries to whom it mattered much whether one was a *sunnī*, a *shī'a*, an *ismā'īlī*, a *mulhid*, a *bātinī*, an *ibāhatī* or a *mahdavi*. Undertones of moral indignation, or even open condemnation, may be easily discerned in the Sunni writers speaking of the minority sects during the Sultanate period. The Sunnis formed the largest proportion of Muslim population in the Punjab; but the Shī'as appear to have been well represented in proportion to their total numbers in the subcontinent.<sup>9</sup> The position of the well-known *qirāmata* of Multan during the Lodi times is not known; but the Ismailī Khojas, mostly

8. In fact it is now generally believed by the medievalists that urban craftsmen were among the early converts to Islam. For Lahore, for instance, see *Tārīkh-i-Lahore*, 48-50, 79-95.
9. For the diversity of Islam in India, see Murray, Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, 87-115.

Hindu converts, were likely to be found in small numbers in many a town of the Punjab.<sup>10</sup> Though the *Sūfis* can in no sense be treated as a 'sect', their differences with the '*ulamā*' could not always be concealed. Differences on the bases of religious belief and practice lent a measure of diversity to the Muslim society in the Punjab.

From a sociological standpoint, the horizontal stratification was more important than the sectarian divisions of the Muslim society in the Punjab. Here, the easy assumption that an 'Islamic' society was bound to be based on the idea of equality is refuted by the socio-economic facts.<sup>11</sup> It is impossible to equate a Muslim noble with a Muslim *bihishrī*, unless 'equality' is to be denuded of all social significance. In the Punjab, as elsewhere, a broad social stratification in the Muslim society is easily discernible. The nobles undoubtedly formed what may be loosely called the social elite and they enjoyed greater economic advantages than any other section or group. The craftsmen, personal servants and domestic slaves, both male and female, formed the lowest strata, while the middling strata were formed by the peasants, soldiers, traders, scholars, writers, the *sayyids*, the *shaikhzādas* and the administrative personnel. The word '*qaum*' in its application to the social groups among the Muslims was almost the equivalent of 'caste'.<sup>12</sup>

The Muslim society in the Punjab, as elsewhere in the world, was marked by the existence of slavery as its integral part. The slave was an important article of trade in the market.

10. *Loc. cit.*

11. Ashraf, K. M., *The Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 170.

12. This is evident from the use of the term by the medieval Persian chroniclers and, more so, from the legal documents of the Mughal times.

Though instances of 'official' slaves can be found even in this period, the great days of the official slave were over. The domestic slave, female as well as male, was very much there. There is a good deal of evidence on the institution of slavery in the Indo-Muslim society.<sup>13</sup> There is no evidence to suggest, however, that slavery was in any sense the economic basis of that society. On the whole, a humane relationship existed between the slave and the master.<sup>14</sup>

The *aqta'dars* in the Punjab, as elsewhere in the Lodi Sultanate, were the highest nobles and imitated, as far as they could, their royal masters in pomp and grandeur. The Lodi Sultans had their royal titles, the *khutba* and the *sikka*, the distinctive symbols of royalty, the court, the palaces and the *harem*, the household staff, handsome slaves and pages, astrologers, poets, musicians and, above all, their armies and their crown-lands. The *aqta'dars* obviously could not have all this; but they could have much—their lands and armies, palace-like mansions, *harems*, dancing girls and concubines, slaves, musicians and boon-companions. The other nobles differed from the *aqta'dars*, but only in degree. They all lived a life of luxury and ostentation. The morals of the age permitted them indulgence not only in 'wine and women' but also in sodomy with male sweethearts.<sup>15</sup> It may not be

13. It is not necessary here to refer to this enormous evidence to be found not only in secondary works but also in contemporary chronicles and non-historical works as well as in travel literature, which I once had the opportunity of collecting. A useful bibliography may be seen in the article on *ghulam* in the new *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
14. Gibb, H. A. R. (tr.), *Ibn Battuta : Travels in Asia and Africa*, 30-31.
15. K. M. Ashraf refers to the *Qabas-nama* which recommends sodomy to noblemen : *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 321.

too much to assume that some at least of the nobles in the Punjab did not deny to themselves the sensual pleasures tacitly permitted by the age. It may be mentioned, incidentally, that those who could not afford the luxuries of the privileged class of the nobles could find consolation in the association of public dancing girls and prostitutes, for the brothel was almost a recognized institution.<sup>16</sup> It must be added that the nobles expressed their piety in raising mosques, patronizing the 'ulamā and paying homage to holy men.<sup>17</sup>

The respectable representatives of religion, in contrast to the nobles, confined their pleasures to the lawfully wedded wife, or wives, and to the lawfully, or unlawfully, earned table.<sup>18</sup> The 'ulamā tried to perform the prodigious task of guarding the *shari'at*, which lent the appearance of uniformity to the Sunni Muslim community; they acted as a unifying force through public congregation and through the traditional system

16. The existence of brothels in medieval India is well known from the contemporary chroniclers. K. M. Ashraf remarks that the attitude of the state towards public prostitution was never influenced by moral or religious considerations and that no attempt was ever made to abolish or prohibit prostitution on ethical grounds: *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 321. In fact some chroniclers even defended the institution as a safeguard against attacks upon the honour of respectable women.
17. For instance in Lahore, Zulfiqar Khan built a mosque in the Lodi times: Daya Ram, *History of Lahore in Pre-Mughal Times*, 68. Shaikh Musa Ahangar in Lahore was popular among the nobles of Sikandar: *Tahqiqār-i-Chishtī*, 111.
18. It has been suggested in the previous chapter that some at least of the *qāzīs* were open to corruption. The plurality of wives among the 'ulamā or even the *mashāikh* is not unknown. K. M. Ashraf states that the Muslim theologian as much as the *brahman*, was known for his greedy appetite: *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 282.

of education.<sup>19</sup> *Madrasas* or *maktabs* were attached to large or small mosques in cities and towns; the main subjects taught in the *madrasas* were *tafsīr* (interpretation of the *Qur'ān*), *hadīs* (tradition: with regard to the sayings and actions of the Prophet, Muhammad) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence).<sup>20</sup> Many of the 'ulamā acted as *qāzīs* and *muftīs* in the service of the state; they were the recognized guardians of the traditional socio-religious system; and, hence, they were the most conservative element in the Sunni Muslim community. But perhaps a greater, and a more genuine, veneration was shown by an average Muslim to the *Sūfī pīrs* and *shaikhs* and to *pīrzādahs* and *shaikhzādahs*.<sup>21</sup> Instances of the *shaikhs* marrying into noble or even royal families are not unknown.<sup>22</sup> To an Afghan noble a *shaikhzādah* appeared to occupy the same status among the Muslims as a *brahman* among the Hindus.<sup>23</sup> The numerous *sayyid* families in the city and the district of Multan were held in great reverence by their contemporaries.<sup>24</sup> The Afghans respected the social status of the *sayyids*, and the concessions due to them, 'scrupulously, and even supersti-

19. Cf. Murray Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, 54-86.

20. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Asia Publishing House 1962, 93-94; Ikram, S. M., *Muslim Civilization in India*, 114.

21. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 187.

22. Several of the Persjan chroniclers refer, for instance, to the marriage between Bahlol Lodi's daughter and the son of Shaikh Yusuf of Multan. Shaikh Chuhar Bandagi of Lahore is believed to have married Sikandar Lodi's daughter and, upon her death, the daughter of an Afghan noble: *Tahqīqāt-i-Chishti*, 113-14.

23. K. M. Ashraf has given one specific instance: *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 187, n. 1.

24. *Gazetteer of the Mooltan District, 1883-84*, 52, 53-57.

tiously'.<sup>25</sup> All the *sayyid* families in the Punjab, as elsewhere, enjoyed an honourable social position which was not wholly unrelated to their economic means.

Differences on the basis of religion or race or occupation were reflected in the morphology of cities and towns.<sup>26</sup> Urban centres were divided into separate quarters for the various social groups. On the outskirts of the towns generally lived the scavengers, the leather dressers and the poor beggars. Within the walls of the towns lived in separate *muhallas*, often only with one entrance, the Muslims and the Hindus.<sup>27</sup> The respectable social groups among the Muslims lived apart from the common populace; the various trades and crafts were concentrated in particular wards.<sup>28</sup> Near the mansion or the fortress of the chief administrative officer of the town lived some of the other officials. The Friday Mosque was close to this part of the town. Those who would, could pray together in the Friday Mosque. But there were also numerous other mosques in almost all the Muslim *muhallas*, or even the wards, for the benefit of the '*aqwām*' living in them. A few of the towns had *imāmbāras*, close to the *Shī'a* quarters. In an average town, a *khānqah* or a *takya* was a popular place

25. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 185-86. The Afghans were not very exceptional in this respect. Even in the early fourteenth century, and outside India, registers of the descendants of the prophet were kept. Ibn Battuta had met one *naqīb-ul-ashrāf* from Najf whose duty was to keep such registers: *Travels in Asia and Africa* (ed. Gibb, H.A.R.), 81-85.
26. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 267-68.
27. This may be borne out by the morphology of almost every medieval town in the Punjab; but the statement is being made on the basis of a study of Batala in the Gurdaspur district.
28. *Loc. cit.*

for the devout or the indolent males. It may be pointed out that the towns were seldom pre-planned; they grew; but nevertheless the segregation of social groups was a reflection of the consciousness of social differences.

The cities and towns served as the centres of Indo-Muslim culture in the Punjab, as elsewhere. The contribution of pre-Mughal Lahore to 'literature and culture' was by no means negligible.<sup>29</sup> Multan was another important centre of learning; in fact its uniqueness appeared to consist in being a *mard-khez* city.<sup>30</sup> Some other towns of the Punjab were not far behind. Shaikh Abdullah and Shaikh Azizullah, both from Tulamba, were believed to have set new standards in the pursuit of *mantiq* (logic) and *kalām* (scholastic theology).<sup>31</sup> Shaikh Salih of Sarhind was among the '*ulamā*' who were consulted by Sikandar Lodi.<sup>32</sup> From the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* and *Ā'in-i-Akbari* it is evident that several other towns of the Punjab enjoyed the reputation of being respectable centres of Muslim learning and scholarship: Jalandhar, Sultanpur, Ajodhan, Thanesar, Samana,

29. Chaghtai, Abdullah A., "Pre-Mughal Lahore", *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, Lahore 1940, 248. The compiler of the *Gazetteer of the Lahore District, 1883-84* (52-53) rightly observes that during 'the latter Pathan' and Mughal dynasties, Lahore was celebrated as 'the resort of learned men, and not a few of the names of standard Persian writers bear the suffix of *Lahori*'.

30. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, III, 532; *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 327-28. It may be mentioned, incidentally, that the founder of the Raushaniya sect which gained popularity with some of the Afghan tribes, was born in Jalandhar in A.D. 1525 : Murray, Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, 111.

31. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, I, 323-24.

32. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 322-23.

Narnaul, for example.<sup>33</sup> It is highly probable that learned men of local repute were to be found in all the important towns of the Punjab.

The contribution of the Muslim scholars of the Punjab was not confined to the field of 'religious sciences'. Among them were to be found physicians, scientists and men of letters.<sup>34</sup> By the close of the fifteenth century, some Hindu works on astronomy, medicine, music and 'sexology' had already served as the bases of Arabic and Persian treatises in India.<sup>35</sup> Mian Bhua, an able physician and the *wazir* of Sikandar Lodi, prepared a standard work on medicine, combining the Indian and Greek systems: it was called the *Tibb-i-Sikandari* or *Maha-ayurvedika*.<sup>36</sup> Sikandar's patronage of literature is better known.<sup>37</sup> The early sixteenth century witnessed in

33. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, II, 460-80; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, III, 51-155; *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochmann, 2nd ed.), 606-17. This impression gets confirmed, further, from several of the authors included in the *Mughals in India* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1967) by D. N. Marshal; they were associated with Lahore, Multan, Sialkot, Sultanpur, Sarhind, Hansi, Thanesar, Panipat, Narnaul and Shahabad.
34. A few prominent names occur in the *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochmann, 2nd ed.), 606-17. The existence of lesser lights may be assumed.
35. Habibullah, A. B. M., "Medieval Indo-Persian Literature", *Indian Historical Quarterly* (1938), XIV. One version of the *Kok-Shāstra* in Persian had been given by Zia Nakhshabi in early fourteenth century. Ikram, S. M., *Muslim Civilization in India*, 117.
36. *The First Afghan Empire*, 155; Qureshi I. H., *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore 1942, 171-72.
37. Almost every Persian chronicler of the Sultanate has remarked on this, emphasizing his patronage of poetry and caligraphy in particular. See, for instance, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* I, 323. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, 156.

fact a revival of interest in Persian literature. The Punjab probably did not remain uninfluenced by this revival. In any case, the familiarity of an educated Muslim with the classics of Persian literature and with some historical works may be safely presumed. The most popular classics during the period were the *Gulistān* and *Būstān* and the *Sikandar-nāma*.<sup>38</sup>

A very notable aspect of the literary activity of the Muslims of the period was the use which some of them made of a regional language as the medium of poetic creativity, both secular and religious. The author of the *Wāqī'āt-i-Mushtāqī*, Rizqullah, learnt Sanskrit and wrote in Hindi as well as in Persian.<sup>39</sup> Malik Muhammad Jaisi prefaced one of his Hindi works with the remark that the *auliya* had always adopted the languages of the countries in which they settled; he specifically mentions Hindi and Punjabi.<sup>40</sup> A contemporary of Guru Nanak, Shaikh Ibrahim at Pakpatan, was writing Punjabi verses.<sup>41</sup> We may be sure that he was not alone.<sup>42</sup>

38. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 221.

39. Nizami, K. A., *The Life of Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis of Delhi* (in Urdu), 60. The Hindi books attributed to Rizqullah are *Paimān* and *Jot-Nirānjan*.

40. Abdul Haqq, Maulavi (Dr.), *The Role of the Sūfis in the Early Development of Urdu* (in Urdu), Aligarh, n. d., 8-9. The passage quoted is in Persian.

41. Rama Krishna, Lajwanti, *Punjābī Sūfi Poets*, 7. The author argues that the compositions of Farid in the *Adi-Granth* are in all probability of Shaikh Ibrahim who was known as the second Farid (*Farid-i-sāni*).

42. No conspicuous writer is known; but if in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries verses in Punjabi could be composed by some of the *Sūfis*, there is hardly any reason to believe that no *Sūfi* of the fifteenth century wrote in Punjabi.

The refinement and culture of the upper strata of the Muslim community in the Punjab was not accessible to the mass of the populace even in cities and towns. A certain amount of social mobility enabled individuals to rise in the social scale, but the broad strata remained unaffected.<sup>43</sup> In the countryside, life moved in the old grooves. The villages were never in complete economic isolation from the neighbouring towns; but they remained uninfluenced by the intellectual culture or refinement in the cities and towns. The means of communication, in the widest possible sense, were very much limited and imposed unmistakable checks on cultural radiation from the towns.<sup>44</sup> An average Muslim villager probably looked not so much to the town as to the nearest *khānqah* for the gratification of his psychological needs.

In the emotional life of the ordinary Muslim, fairs and festivals held an important place. A hearty participation in the 'Id festivals, or at places in the *ta'ziya*, was eagerly sought and easily gratified.<sup>45</sup> But only a few individuals could go

43. Shaikh Musa, for instance, who was popular among the Afghan nobles of Lahore, belonged to a family of ironsmiths; but the veneration given to him as an accomplished *shaikh* would hardly affect the social position of the Muslim ironsmiths as a group.
44. Quite apart from the physical limitations, the absence of printing presses made it impossible to multiply books rapidly; and the general lack of literacy brought the oral medium into prominence. The limitations become even more obvious when we remember that there was hardly any other medium of communication in medieval times.
45. In the nineteenth century, the *ta'ziya* in Lahore was associated with the *mazār* of Data Ganj Bakhsh, that is Shaikh Ali Hujwiri: *Gazetteer of the Lahore District, 1883-84*, 61. There is a great probability of its being an old tradition. The probability of the *ta'ziyas* being taken out in towns with some *shī'a* population is very much there, for quite generally the observance was not confined to the *shī'as*; the participation of the *sunnis* in the *ta'ziya* at times and places is not unknown.

on pilgrimage to Mecca; the *hājī* was all the more honoured for being rare.<sup>46</sup> The number of those who could visit the other religious or cultural centres of the Muslim world outside India was probably even smaller.<sup>47</sup> The *ziyarat* of *mazārs* and mausoleums was easier, and much more popular. The *rauzahs* of the Chishti saints, not only at Pakpattan but also at places like Hansi and Panipat, had a particular fascination because of the firmly established tradition of *samāʿ* among the Chishtis.<sup>48</sup> Numerous local annual gatherings at less sanctified places may be assumed from the evidence available on some of them.<sup>49</sup> If Lahore and Multan were less popular

46. In contemporary literature, voluntary pilgrimage to Mecca on the part of an individual is always mentioned in respectful terms; and many instances of such *hājīs* can be gathered from historical and non-historical literature. It is highly improbable, however, that an average Muslim could easily perform *hajj*.
47. Shaikh Jamali, for instance, had visited many such centres. But, as he states in the *Siyar-al-Arifin*, his experience was so valued by his contemporaries that some of them requested him to write a book on his travels, because not many could afford to go to those places. Other instances of 'Indian' Muslims travelling abroad are known but they do not add up to any appreciable number.
48. For the 'urs of Shaikh Fariduddin at Pakpattan, see the *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 279 and Bakhtawar Lal, *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Montgomery*, 26, 29. From contemporary references to the 'urs of Farid it is evident that the tradition had been kept up for several centuries. This was true also of the *rauzah* of Shaikh Jamaluddin Hansavi: *Tārikh-i-Makhzan-i-Panjāb*, 59-60. Of the twenty-two important Chishti shrines in the Punjab noticed by H. A. Rose (*A Glossary of Tribes and Castes in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province* Lahore 1919, I, 530-38), nearly half were in existence by the close of the fifteenth century.
49. See, for instance, *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 61-62, 62-63; *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Multan*, 62-125; *Gazetteer of the Mooltan District, 1883-84*, 44-48. See also, *Tārikh-i-Lahore*, 278, 291; *Tahqiqāt-i-Chishti*, 157-70.

than Pakpatan, the shrine of Sakhi Sarwar at Dhaunkal enjoyed a wider popularity.<sup>50</sup> It may not be too much to suggest that by the close of the fifteenth century the sainted dead loomed much larger in the emotional life of an average Muslim than the living 'ulamā.

This might indeed be expected from the psychology of the age which put a much higher premium on the supra-natural than on the natural. Belief in miracles was shared by almost all the Muslims of the time. The Sultans and nobles, as a rule, did not miss the opportunity of visiting the sainted dead for blessings.<sup>51</sup> They believed in auguries too.<sup>52</sup> Khwandamir, for instance, mentions Humayun's deep concern with auguries at a commendable trait; the city of Din Panah was founded 'at an hour which was selected by the most clever astrologers'.<sup>53</sup> Humayun's attitude was surely not exceptional. Belief in magic was not uncommon, particularly among the uneducated people who formed the bulk of the Muslim population, as indeed of other peoples in those days. It may be interesting to

50. Butay Shah, *Tārikh-i-Panjāb*, ff. 30-31; *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 248; *Tārikh-i-Zila-i-Montgomery*, 23; *Tārikh-i-Makhzan-i-Panjāb*, 285; *Tahqiqāt-i-Chishti*, 248; Rose, *Glossary*, 566-72. For some other saints of the Sultanate period who became the subject of popular legend, see Temple, R. C., *The Legends of the Punjab*, 3 vols., Language Department, Punjab, Patiala 1962, 1963 (reprint).

51. For Sikandar Lodi, for instance, see the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, I, 320; for Babur, *The Bābur-nāma*, II, 475.

52. *The first Afghan Empire*, 157.

53. *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, 24, 61. Sher Shah consulted the astrologer of the Raja of Orissa; *Akbar-nāma*, I, 148. Indian astrologers were often consulted for horoscopes: see, for instance, *Humāyun-nāma*, f. 25a; *Akbar-nāma*, I, 27. See also, *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh* 305.

know that 'the lamp and the *jinnī*' was already a part of the popular magic-lore.<sup>54</sup>

If the mental culture of the common Muslim consisted largely of beliefs which today appear to be 'the most primitive superstitions', their aesthetic culture did not progress much beyond folklore and ghost-stories.<sup>55</sup> But, in this respect, the mass of the Muslim populace in the Punjab was no different from the masses of people, Muslim or non-Muslim, in other parts of the contemporary world. In the Punjab, as elsewhere, there were several gradations between the highest and the lowest points of Indo-Muslim culture, not unrelated to the social gradations. And this was so in spite of the ideal norm of equality in Islam.

The ideal norm of the Hindu society, on the other hand, was social differentiation. Alberuni observed in the early eleventh century that there were four *varnas* (literally, colours) among the Hindus: the *brahman*, the *kshatriya*, the *vaishya* and the *shūdra*.<sup>56</sup> But he also observed a number of 'sub-castes' in each *varna*.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, he noted that below the *varnas* were certain crafts or professions: the shoemaker, the weaver, the washerman, the basketmaker, the fisherman, the sailor, the hunter, the juggler, for instance. The *chandālas*, and some other but similar categories of people, were still lower in the social order; they were rather outside the pale of Hindu society.<sup>58</sup> Obviously, the *varnas* did not cover all

54. Halim, A., "Justice of Sultan Sikandar Lodi", *Journal Pakistan Historical Society*, II, 278.

55. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 328-29.

56. Sachau, Edward C. (tr.), *Alberuni's India*, London 1914, 100.

57. *Ibid.*, 102.

58. *Ibid.*, 101.

the people.<sup>59</sup>

In Alberuni's account the four major castes, or *varnas*, have specific duties assigned to them.<sup>60</sup> The *brahman* was to learn and teach the religious scriptures, in fact the *Veda*. The duty of the *kshatriya* was to rule and to defend the subject people, to read but not to teach the *Vedas* and to act according to the rules of the *Purānas*. The duty of the *vaishya* was to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle and to relieve the *brahman* of his material needs. The duty of the *shūdra* was to serve the *brahman*. It is highly improbable that these classified duties comprehended all the professions followed by these social groups even in Alberuni's day. It is equally significant that the *varna* system was not acceptable to all the members of the Hindu society. An infringement of the *brahman's* privileges, for instance, was not a mere sin but a crime punishable by the ruler.<sup>61</sup> The provision of punishment itself poses the possibilities of infringement. The correspondence between the *varna* order, as it was conceived, and the meaningful social entities, as they actually existed, was never complete.

Nevertheless, the concept of *varna* was accepted and advocated throughout the medieval period by those who regarded themselves as the true representatives of Hinduism. At the close of the seventeenth century, Sujan Rai described

59. Cf. Thapar, Romila, *A History of India*, Penguin Books, I, 37-39; the first three castes were 'probably a theoretical framework' into which the various professions could be arranged. For the ramification of castes, see Upadhyay, Vasudeva, *Socio-Religious Change in North India (700-1200 A.D.)*, Varanasi 1964, 24. Cf. Ghurye, G. S., *Caste and Class in India*, Bombay 1957, 1-27, 43-72.

60. *Alberuni's India*, 136-37.

61. *Ibid.*, 137.

the *ahl-i-brāhama* as those who subscribed to the *varna* order of the *brahman*, the *chhatrī*, the *baish* and the *shūdar*.<sup>62</sup> In the nineteenth century, Ganesh Das ascribed the institution of the *varna* order to Raja Bharath with an implicit appreciation.<sup>63</sup> But he was himself aware that the Hindu social order of his day did not correspond to the *varna* order as it was originally conceived. The reluctance on the part of the 'orthodox' Hindus to discard the concept of *varna* as the ideal social norm, or even as a broad description of the Hindu social order from time to time, must not be taken to mean that the social order itself remained static all the time.<sup>64</sup>

At any rate, by the close of the fifteenth century the social situation in the Punjab had considerably changed under the impact of Turkish conquest and the rule of the Delhi Sultans. The Rajput ruling classes, the *kshatriyas* of the *varna* concept, had been dislodged from power. Some of them might have accepted Islam or migrated to the neighbouring hills or deserts. Their significant remnant could perhaps be seen in a few *zamīndārs* called the *Rai*. But even at this level, the chiefs of non-Rajput tribes or clans had come into prominence. To equate the Hindu *zamīndārs*, *chaudharis* and *muqaddams* of the Lodi Punjab with the *kshatriyas* of the *varna* concept would be the best, or the worst, way of glossing over a signi-

62. *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, 24.

63. *Ghār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 288.

64. This is not to suggest, however, that caste distinctions, as a rule, were not jealously maintained. What is being suggested is the possibility of absorption, upgrading or downgrading of actual social groups within the framework of the *varna*. The socio-economic position of certain social groups did not always correspond to their ritual status. This would be true, for instance, of the *khatris* of the Punjab. For social change with respect to castes, see Upadhyay, V., *Socio-Religious Change in North India (700-1200 A.D.)*, 365.

ficant social change. The occupation of the old *rājput* ruling classes with the vital politics of the Punjab was gone. At the close of the fifteenth century one could find individuals tilling the soil but styling themselves as *rājput*.<sup>65</sup>

With the loss of *rājput* sovereignty, the *brahmans* lost their traditional patronage. 'The position, and the legal and formal powers of the Brahmins had undergone a considerable change with the fall of the old-time Kshatriyas'.<sup>66</sup> Though some of the *brahmans* could still find favour with the new rulers for their knowledge of astrology, the new rulers were extremely reluctant or even unable, to patronize the *brahmans* as a class.<sup>67</sup> Some of them probably sought refuge and honour in the neighbouring Rajput principalities in the Punjab hills. Some others were obliged to seek livelihood in professions involving the loss of status.<sup>68</sup> The *brahmans* as a class, however, appear to have increased their influence over the Hindu masses. Notwithstanding the elimination of the Rajputs from power, the *brahmans* could consolidate their

65. Vasudeva Upadhyay has noted the professions of agriculture and trade among the *rājputs* even before A.D. 1200: *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 65.
66. Ashraf, K. M. *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 192-93.
67. It is very probable, however, that the *brahmans* were generally exempt from the *jiziya*: Qureshi, I. H., *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore 1942, 94.
68. Some of the European travellers to Mughal India noticed some *brahmans* in other than priestly professions. This would not be a peculiarity of the Mughal period or of only the parts other than the Punjab. Vasudeva Upadhyay has noticed that even before A.D. 1200, some *brahmans* took to the profession of arms, agriculture, trade and money-lending; *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 50.

informal authority and personal influence.<sup>69</sup> They expounded the scriptures now to a humbler but more numerous class of patrons; they looked after the old and new temples and taught in the *pāthshālas*; and they acted as family priests to perform various rites and ceremonies. Altogether, their influence was subtle but strong, unobtrusive but pervasive. The possibility of their being more meticulous about the observance of religious rites and social ceremonies now, than before the advent of the Turks, should not be ruled out.<sup>70</sup> It need not be supposed, however, that their's was the only religious voice in the Punjab even among the Hindus.

The *brahmans* as a priestly class enjoyed a status of honour and prestige which did not correspond to their economic means. For a closer correspondence between the economic means and social prestige, we may turn to the *khatrīs* of the Punjab of our period. Their importance in the civil administration of the Lodis has been noted in the previous chapter. But that was not their only title to importance. They traced their origins to the days of the *Rāmāyana*; they were some of the very old inhabitants of the Punjab; they were probably older than the *rājput̄s*. The profession of arms was no longer important to them; besides administration, trade and shop-

69. Cf. Ikram, S.M., *Muslim Civilization in India*, 108; Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, 92; Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 192-93. Also, *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, No. 24, 199.

70. At any rate, an extremely conservative attitude may safely be attributed to the *brahmans* in particular. In the early nineteenth century, Ganesh Das observed that the *ahl-i-dharm* among the Hindus were extremely meticulous about their food and drink being 'pure'; they refused to own a Hindu who associated with others; in fact they believed that any deviation from prescription was beyond redemption : *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 240.

keeping absorbed their best energies and interests.<sup>71</sup> Though they could be found in the country-side as landlords, or even as cultivators, and as shopkeepers in most villages, their concentration in towns and cities made them an important section of the urban population. The state did not deny to them the right to private property;<sup>72</sup> this served as an incentive to their acquisition of wealth which could be invested in landed and household property in the towns. Much of the urban trade and shopkeeping in the towns was in their hands. They were not reluctant to act as money-lending *shāhūkārs* and bankers, making use of the legally valid *hundīs* and *tamassuks*.<sup>73</sup> The ordinary percentage of interest on loans being ten to twenty, they were likely to make good profits.<sup>74</sup> In those days the trading classes did not like to miss the opportunity of earning even a dishonest penny and attempts at adulteration and fraudulent weights were not uncommon.<sup>75</sup> There is no reason to suppose that the *khatrīs* were always above such practices. In any case, their importance in the economic

71. Ganesh Das mentions service, writership, trade, shopkeeping, drapery and haberdashery, trade in silken goods and banking or money-changing as some of the old and important pre-occupations of the *khātrīs* of the Punjab: *Chār-Bāgh-i-Punjab*, 291.
72. Cf. Ashraf, K.M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 175; Qureshi, I.H., *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 193.
73. *Ibid.*, 218. Sujan Rai mentions also *bīmā* (insurance) as a commendable institution among the people of Hind: *Khulāsat ut-Tawārikh*, 24-25.
74. Cf. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān* 218. Romila Thapar remarks on the earlier centuries that the 'only category of commercial professionals whose prosperity increased were the money-lenders' and that the interest on money lent was normally fifteen per cent: *A History of India*, 251.
75. Cf. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 218-19.

life of the towns was unmistakable. According to a *khatri* chronicler, they were extremely cautious about property and life, as about honour and faith.<sup>76</sup> After the *brahmins*, they were probably the most 'orthodox' of the Hindus. Cautious and conservative on the whole, they were not unenterprising. If the Hindu subjects of the Delhi Sultanate were adjusting themselves to the conditions of Muslim rule in the late fifteenth century, as it has been remarked recently that they were,<sup>77</sup> the *khatri*s of the Punjab were among those who showed a considerable adaptability, and success.

The Hindu society in the rural Punjab was marked by a preponderance of the *jāts*, particularly in the upper Rechna, upper Bari and Bist Jullundur *doābs* and on the left side of the river Sutlej. Divided into numerous clans, they had their *zamīndārs*. *chaudharis* and *muqaddams*; but the bulk of the *jāts* consisted of ordinary cultivators. They were generally sturdy and loved manly sports. Not much reluctant to pay the ordinary dues to the state through its intermediaries, they resented oppression. Their spirit of 'revolt' against coercion was probably generally expressed in their appreciation for the 'rebel' heroes of folklore; also perhaps occasionally in taking up arms against their oppressors. There were gradual shifts in the relative importance of the various clans of the *jāts* during the medieval period. Unlike the *gujjars* and some other semi-nomadic tribes, the *jāts* were slow to accept Islam, which may be taken as a measure of their greater adherence to the Hindu social order. But religion sat rather lightly on them. They were neither less nor more 'superstitious' than the majority of their contemporaries. They

76. Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 285. According to Romila Thapar, the *khatri*s of northern India had accepted *vaishya* status much before A.D. 1200: *A History of India*, 253.

77. Ikram, S. M., *Muslim Civilization in India*, 78.

remained as little affected by the culture and refinement of the towns as by the formal legal system of the state. Their mental horizon was as narrow as the range of their experience. The monotony of their toil was broken by their own social ceremonies or the local fairs in which they could perhaps indulge their taste for song and dance, or the appearance of a wandering minstrel in the village or its neighbourhood.

The *rājputs*, the *brahmans*, the *khatris* and the *jāts* formed no doubt the most important social groups of the Hindu society in the Punjab of our period, but they did not account for its entire non-Muslim population. The popular tradition in Hindustan takes account of at least thirty-six social groups including the various subdivisions of the higher 'castes'.<sup>78</sup> Among these social groups are included the occupation of the brewer, goldsmith, weaver, tin worker, betel-leaf seller, shepherd, milkman, carpenter, smith, *bhāt*, dyer, flower seller, calico printer, barber, oilman, musician, juggler and the mountebank. There is no reason to be sceptical about the existence of these occupational groups in the Punjab, rural and urban. In fact some more occupations can be added to this list: those of the tailor, the potter, the *thathiār*, the mason, for instance.<sup>79</sup> Below them were the untouchable, divided into 'castes' of their own. The condition of the Hindu craftsmen, whether in towns or villages, was perhaps not much different from that of the Muslim craftsmen.<sup>80</sup> They all

78. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 193.

79. All these were to be found in medieval Batala, for instance.

80. 'The introduction of Muslim craftsmen', says K. M. Ashraf, 'may have done something towards removing the social disabilities of the class as a whole, but in the long run Muslim influence succumbed to the older traditions. When Babur came to Hindustan no appreciable modification in the social character of these vocations was visible, for he finds all the craftsmen organized in rigid and exclusive castes'; *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 202-203.

lived in poverty.<sup>81</sup> The condition of the untouchable was obviously the worst. They lived not only under the shadow of contempt but also below the subsistence level of human existence.

Alberuni noticed it as a strange custom among the Hindus that they consulted their women on all matters of importance.<sup>82</sup> There is indeed a great probability that an average Hindu lady was respected as a daughter, a wife and a mother among the *brahmins*, the *rājputrs* and the *khatris*. But woman was regarded as inferior to man; her position at best was a subordinate one.<sup>83</sup> This subordination was reflected even in her best virtues.

For instance, a respectable Hindu wife was expected to be completely devoted and dedicated to her husband. In certain situations, she obtained the supreme virtue of conjugal fidelity at the cost of her life. The rite of *jauhar* was not unknown to the *rājputrs*; but in the Punjab of our period there would hardly be an occasion for its performance. The custom of becoming *sati*, however, by immolation on the funeral pyre of the deceased husband, was noticed by Alberuni,<sup>84</sup> and Ibn Battuta also noticed the case of a *sati* in Pakpatan on

81. In medieval Batala, during the eighteenth, century, there were instances of the craftsmen owning household property. This might have been the position in the earlier centuries in some other towns as well as in Batala. But the poverty of the owners is reflected in the description of their property.

82. *Alberuni's India*, 179, 180, 181,

83. Cf. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 239-40; Pandey, A. B., *Society and Government in Medieval India*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad 1965, 203-204.

84. *Alberuni's India*, 155. It is significant to note that *sati* literally meant a 'virtuous woman': Thapar, Romila, *A History of India*, 152, n.

his arrival in the Punjab and several more elsewhere.<sup>85</sup> They also noticed that the act was regarded as extremely honourable and meritorious. Even Amir Khusrau had a general appreciation for this supreme sacrifice of the Hindu woman.<sup>86</sup> Several centuries later, Ganesh Das placed the widow becoming *sati* above even the gnostic and the martyr.<sup>87</sup> The veneration given to the *sati* was in fact carried to the point of worship.<sup>88</sup> Evidence on the existence of this practice in the Punjab is not lacking. It appears, however, that it was confined to the socially respectable groups.<sup>89</sup> All the Hindu widows did not become *satis*.<sup>90</sup>

85. *Travels in Asia and Africa* ed. H. A. R. Gibb), 191.

86. 'Ashiqah, quoted, Dharam Pal, "Poetry and Architecture in the time of Allauddin Khilji", *Islamic Culture* (July, 1945), XIX, 245-60. It may be interesting to note that another *ba'it* of Amir Khusrau on this point is quoted by Sujan Rai : *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 378.

87. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 197.

88. Ganesh Das depicts an interesting scene of a case of *sati*. The close relatives, accompanying the funeral pyre, were in tears; the woman pulled their hair in mourning; the *brahmins* struck gongs and the common people were struck with wonder and awe; the respectable citizens garlanded the widow and made offerings of cloth and gold and they bowed to her in reverence. The spot where this widow became *sati* became a place of worship: *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 188-200. For another example of a *sati* being worshipped, see *ibid.*, 252.

89. The cases cited in the previous note are of *brahman* and *khatri* widows; the practice was more common among the *rājput*s. It is improbable that the *jāts*, or the craftsmen, ever adopted the custom. It was confined, in all probability to *rājput*, *brahman* and *khatri* families. Cf. Upadhyay, V., *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 153-54.

90. Obviously, because otherwise there would be no widows. Sidi Ali states, for instance, that 'if the deceased leaves a wife, past child-bearing she is not burnt': *The Travels and Adventures of Sidi Ali Reis*, 59-60. Alberuni also observes that very old women and mothers need not become *satis*: *Alberuni's India*, 155.

The lack of sympathy with the widow was the reverse of the same psychological coin. Prohibition on her remarriage was a corollary of the Hindu attitude to female fidelity. Alberuni states that becoming *sati* was considered the preferable because the widow otherwise 'is ill-treated as long as she lives'.<sup>91</sup> Ibn Battuta clearly states that the widow who did not burn herself 'dresses in coarse garments and lives with her own people in misery, despised for her lack of fidelity'.<sup>92</sup> Among those social groups who honoured the *satis*, the idea of marrying a widow would indeed be outrageous. We have the testimony of Ganesh Das that no respectable *khatri* could ever marry a widow, or even a divorced woman, and still remain respectable.<sup>93</sup>

In fact the custom of *sati* and prohibition on the remarriage of widows had been sanctified by a background of several centuries. So had been sanctified also the 'child-marriage'. Even before A.D. 1200, it was common for the girls to be married before the age of puberty.<sup>94</sup> This practice appears to have been the rule throughout the medieval period.

It may be noted that polygamy was not unknown among the Hindus during the medieval period.<sup>95</sup> Also, it appears that the *Kok-shāstra* was studied with avidity. In fact Sujau Rai mentions the *kām-shāstar* among the important branches of Hindu learning.<sup>96</sup>

The branches of Hindu learning mentioned by Sujau Rai,

91. *Alberuni's India*, 155.

92. *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 191.

93. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 292. Cf. Upadhyay, V., *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 152.

94. Upadhyay, V., *ibid.*, 146-47.

95. *Ibid.*, 149-51.

96. *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikk*, 21.

on the whole, convey the impression of a sophisticated Hindu society. He mentions the study of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Purānas* as an important part of Hindu learning. He mentions also the six philosophical systems. Some of the other branches of knowledge cultivated by the Hindus were jurisprudence, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, grammar and prosody, architecture and music. At the same time, he mentions also palmistry, astrology and magic and even jugglery.<sup>97</sup> The terms in which Sujan Rai, like Abul Fazl before him, mentions Hindu learning do not enable us to say for certain that all these branches were actually cultivated in the Punjab of our period. Individuals learning and teaching several of these 'branches of knowledge' may be assumed; most of the scholars would be connected with institutions primarily of a religious nature. But this learning could not be accessible to a very large proportion of the Hindu population.

One stock idea, with necessary variations and modifications from time to time and place to place, was shared by nearly all the members of the Hindu society; the idea that they were living in the evil age of *kaliyuga*. The golden age of virtue and happiness was far, far behind; from the future, one could not expect anything better. Alberuni describes this fourth *yuga* of the cosmic cycle, as it was conceived by the Hindus, in the following terms: In the *kaliyuga*,

the dignity of the Brahmins will be gone to such a degree that a Śūdra, their servant will be impudent towards them, and that a Śūdra and Candala will share with them, the presents and offerings. Men will entirely be occupied with gathering wealth by crimes, with hoarding up not refraining from committing

97. *Ibid.*, 18-21.

horrid and sinful crimes All this will result in a rebellion of the small ones against the great ones, of children against their parents, of the servants against their master. The castes will be in uproar against each other, the genealogies will become confused, the four castes will be abolished, and there will be many religions and sects. Many books will be composed, and the communities which formerly were united will on account of them be dissolved into single individuals. The temples will be destroyed and the schools will lie waste. Justice will be gone, and the kings will not know anything but oppression and spoliation, robbing and destroying, as if they wanted to devour the people, foolishly indulging in far-reaching hopes, and not considering how short life is in comparison with the sins (for which they have to atone).<sup>98</sup>

There are some other variations on the theme. But in each description there is the regret that much had happened that should not have happened but, nevertheless, change was inevitable, a change for the worse.<sup>99</sup>

However, even the gloomiest ideas associated with the *kaliyuga* did not inhibit the common people in their pursuit of pleasure, if they could find the chance. Besides the religious festivals and social ceremonies, a large number of local or regional fairs provided the opportunity for mirth and fun.

98. *Alberuni's India*, 380-81.

99. In a Hindi version of the *Bhāgavata-Purāna*, the *Sukh Sāgar* published by the Bamba Bhushan Press, Mathura, for instance, some of the ideas associated with the *kaliyuga* are: degradation of the higher *varnas* and infringement of the four *ashramas*; preponderance of the *shūdras* and of charlatans parading as holy men; enormous number of insignificant places of worship;

Some of the fairs connected with places of religious significance attracted large crowds. Not many could go to the distant places like *Kāshi* and *Paryāg*; but there were sacred places nearer home. Hardwar was not very far; Kurukshetra and Jwalamukhi were nearer still.<sup>100</sup> Jogis even from outside the Punjab came annually to the *tilla* of Gorakhnāth in the Jhelum district. The primary purpose of the pilgrims was religious merit but many other people from the neighbourhood came with mixed motives. A somewhat detailed description by Sujan Rai of the annual fair at Achal, a *sthāna* of the Jogis, provides a good insight into the character of popular fairs.<sup>101</sup> To Achal came ascetics in thousands from many parts of the country; but so did the common people—the poor and the rich, the old and the young, the men and the women. Some of them found fulfilment of their hopes, for this world or the next, through medicines or blessings of holy recluses. Some others met old friends and appreciated the charms of ‘moon-faced’ damsels. There were fruits, sweets and drinks to taste, dances to watch, song and music to hear; there were arms to purchase for the adults and toys for the children; there were wrestlers, jugglers, jesters and story-

selfishness and covetousness as a common trait; indulgence in sensual pleasures; licentiousness among women and their degradation; sexual immorality; rule of *mlechhas* who oppress even the *brahmins* and slaughter the cow; severe famines and economic depression. However this description ends on a hopeful note: Lord Krishna's reincarnation to re-establish the *dharma*. Cf. *Shrimad Bhāgavata Mahā Purānam*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 151, 647-51. For this note, I am indebted to my student Dr. Indu Banga, now Reader in History, G. N. D. University, Amritsar.

100. The most important places of pilgrimage for the Hindus have been noticed in the *A'in-i-Akbari*.

101. *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, 70-71.

tellers; and there were exhibitors of painted scrolls. Achal was not the only place where such fairs were held.

K. M. Ashraf underlines some grave social evils prevalent among the people of Hindustan in medieval times: untouchability, becoming *sati*, child-marriage, sexual indulgence and perversion, and slavery.<sup>102</sup> He does not make it explicit, but the first three were almost exclusively prevalent among the Hindus. The fourth was common to both Hindus and Muslims. Though slavery existed among the Hindus also, among the Muslims it formed an integral part of the society.<sup>103</sup> However, in the Muslim society, inequalities were ignored, tolerated or occasionally denounced; in the Hindu society they were sanctified.<sup>104</sup>

102. *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 122.

103. For a brief discussion of slavery in Islam, see Reuben Levy's *Social Structure of Islam*, Cambridge 1962, 73-90; for slavery in medieval Muslim India, see the article *ghulām* in the new *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

104. Even before the Turkish conquest of Hindustan, the desire for exclusiveness on the part of the *brahmins* had become 'an obsession with keeping aloof from the lower castes in particular'. Not only the touch of the *chandāla* but even his shadow crossing the path of the *brahman* called for ritual ablution. 'Such social observances reduced still further the status of the shudra and the outcastes. Gradually, untouchability was extended to even the heretical sects of quite high caste but who were opposed to the brahmins': Thapar, Romila, *A History of India*, 252.

### CHAPTER III

## RELIGION : ISLAM

The Punjab in the time of Guru Nanak was marked by a rich variety of religious belief and practice, in both Hinduism and Islam. The appearance of some relatively new forms of belief was adding to the richness of that variety which, at any rate, had antecedents in a near or distant past. Religion, always a complex subject, in the Punjab was made more complex by the mutual, albeit peripheral, influences of Islam on some indigenous forms of belief and of the Indian environment on Islam. At certain levels and in certain spheres it was not easily possible to distinguish one form of belief from another. But to emphasize this would be to overlook the great strength which the entrenched 'orthodoxies', both in Hinduism and Islam, still possessed.

The majority of the Muslim immigrants to the Punjab had been the bearers of a well formulated faith and a highly developed civilization. The most important of these, in terms of numbers and influence, were the *sunni*s whose religious representatives for several centuries, by now, had been patronized by the Sultans of Delhi. They were heirs to a systematically evolved law and theology and to a form of worship which had long since crystallized into a set pattern of piety, at least as an ideal.

Four 'orthodox' schools of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) had developed in Islam before the close of the ninth century. The first to found a school of *fiqh* was Abu Hanifa, to be

followed by Malik Ibn Anas, Muhammad Ibn Idris al-Shafi and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. These schools had come to be known after the names of their founders, as the *Hanafi*, the *Māliki*, the *Shafi* and the *Hanbali*. The most popular of these in the Sultanate of Delhi and, by inference, in the Punjab was the first. A digest of *Hanafi* works on *fiqh*, called the *Hidāya*, had been prepared by Burhanuddin Marghinani of Transoxiana in the twelfth century and it came to serve as the standard work in the dominions of the Sultans of Delhi.<sup>1</sup> Of almost equal importance was the school of Shafi. Ziauddin Barani refers to both the *Hanafi* and *Shafi* schools as the law of the realm.<sup>2</sup> *Fiqh* in any case was 'an imposing corpus of legal principles' which were meant to regulate 'the personal, commercial, property, and sexual relations of Muslim to Muslim and of Muslim to non-Muslim'.<sup>3</sup> A strict and detailed application of the *shari'at* embodied in *fiqh* was not always easy; in fact deviation or transgression as well as neglect may be expected in practice. But no formal change was made in the *shari'at*, which may be taken as a clear indication of the 'orthodox' reluctance to modify the theoretical position in 'legal' matters. Consequently, the *qāzis* and *muftis* and the '*ulamā* in general were committed to uphold traditional relationships, including the relations of Muslims

1. Hardy, Peter, "Islam in Medieval India", *Sources of Indian Tradition* (ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary), Columbia University Press, New York 1958, 407. (This will be cited hereafter as Hardy, P., *Islam in Medieval India*).
2. It may be pointed out that Ibn Battuta's appointment in Delhi as the *qāzi* of *Māliki* law (*Travels in Asia and Africa*, 207) does suggest the acceptance of that school in the Sultanate of Delhi, but its importance was far less than that of the *Hanafi* and *Shafi* schools.
3. Hardy, P., *Islam in Medieval India*, 380.

to non-Muslims which, in theory, were discriminatory against the latter.

The *sunnīs*, like the bulk of the Muslims, believed in the uniqueness of Allah and in Muhammad as the last of His prophets; they believed also in the *Qur'ān* as the Word of God revealed to His prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. The ultimate authority in the religious life of the *sunnīs* was the *Qur'ān*. Its interpretation, obviously, was of crucial importance. Besides the *Qur'ān*, the principal source of religious life was the *sunna* of the prophet, his sayings and his practice. By the ninth century, critical collections of *hadīth*, embodying the *sunna*, had been prepared by al-Bukhārī and Muslim for legal and theological purposes; their work provided the standard texts of *hadīth* for the *sunnīs* in India as elsewhere in the Muslim world.<sup>4</sup> In *tafsīr* (interpretation of the *Qur'ān*) as in *hadīth*, the 'ulamā' in India followed the texts prepared by Muslim scholars outside India. Zamakhsharī's celebrated commentary on the *Qur'ān*, called the *Kashshāf*, remained popular in India; a more 'orthodox' text was Fakhrūddīn Rāzī's *Tafsīr-i-Kabīr*.<sup>5</sup>

As in *fiqh*, *hadīth* and *tafsīr*, so in *kalām* (theology), the standard works had been produced before the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi. Indo-Muslim theology was very largely the theology of al-Ash'arī (A.D. 873-935). 'When al-Ash'arī in his *Maqālāt* discusses the opinions of the several Muslim schools and sects, he does so with a view to

4. *Ibid.*, 374.

5. Nizāmī, K. A., "Supplement", *Elliot and Dawson's History of India* (Vol. II), Aligarh 1952, 773. For Rāzī, see Kraus Paul, "The Controversies of Fakhr al-Rāzī", *Islamic Culture* (1938) XII, 134-50.

vindicate the truth of what to him was orthodoxy'.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, his theology came to be accepted as the best formulation of orthodox belief and it 'leans heavily on the conservative side'.<sup>7</sup> If the Mutazilites had absolved God from causing man to go wrong in order to vindicate God's justice, al-Ashari upheld God's responsibility for both good and evil to underline His omnipotence; he insisted on an implicit faith in God's qualities derived literally from the *Qur'an*. His theology has been briefly summed up as:<sup>8</sup>

God is eternal; without beginning and without end and without a likeness. He knows by knowledge, lives by life, wills by will, sees by sight, and speaks by His word. These attributes are eternal, inhere in His essence, are not He and not other than He, yet they do not detract from the unity of His essence. The Quran is the speech of Allah written in books, preserved in memories, recited by tongues, revealed to Muhammad. The speech of God is increate but the speech of Moses or other prophets which God quotes in the Quran is created. Man's pronouncing, writing, or reciting the Quran is created, whereas the Quran itself is uncreated.

In orthodox theology, Allah's absolute transcendence over His creation as well as His uniqueness, power and majesty was asserted and emphasized with the support of appropriate quotations from the *Qur'an*. These quotations in due course became some of the most familiar verses as much to the educated Muslims as to the learned.<sup>9</sup> The first part of the

6. Grunebaum, G. E. von, *Medieval Islam*, The University of Chicago Press 1953, 337.

7. *Ibid.*, 101.

8. Hardy, P., *Islam in Medieval India*, 389.

9. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 276.

*kalima* was known of course to every Muslim: 'There is no god but Allah'. Several *Qur'anic* verses reinforced or amplified the unity of God. For instance:<sup>10</sup>

Say: He is Allah, the One  
Allah, the eternally Besought of all  
He begetteth not nor was begotten.

And there is none comparable unto Him.

Allah is the 'Lord of the Worlds'; 'Allah it is who raised up the heavens without visible supports, then mounted the throne, and compelled the sun and the moon to be of service, each runneth unto an appointed term; He ordereth the courses; He detaileth the revelations, that haply ye may be certain of the meeting with your Lord'; 'Not a leaf falleth but He knoweth it, not a grain amid the darkness of the earth, naught of wet or dry but it is noted in a clear record'; 'And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the seas with seven more seas to help it (were ink), the words of Allah could not be exhausted'; 'His is the command (*hukm*), and unto Him ye will be brought back'; 'Whom Allah will He sendeth astray, and whom He will He placeth on straight path'; 'Allah's is the final judgment'; 'Allah never changeth the grace He hath bestowed on any people until they first change that which is their hearts'; 'Allah surely wrongeth not but they wrong themselves'; 'They only are the true believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned'.<sup>11</sup>

However, though Allah is austere and He is hard towards His enemies and those who disobey Him, He is essentially just and righteous.<sup>12</sup> Even al-Ashari's 'determinism' is

10. Pickthall, Muhammad Marmaduke, *The Glorious Koran*, A Mentor Book 1953, cxxii, 1-4.

11. All these verses are quoted from Pickthall's *The Glorious Koran*.

12. Watt, W. M., *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*, London 1948, 33, 169.

pervaded throughout with the thought of Allah, who is indeed omnipotent and even inscrutable, but who is a personal God, and not an impersonal Fate.<sup>13</sup> Above all, He is the Compassionate One. It was to this omnipotent and inscrutable and yet merciful Allah that the Muslims addressed themselves in the most familiar verses of the *surah-i-Fātihah*:<sup>14</sup>

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,  
the Beneficent, the Merciful.  
Owner of the Day of Judgment,  
Thee alone we worship; Thee alone we ask for help.  
Show us the straight path,  
the path of those whom Thou hast favoured;  
Not the path of those who earn Thine anger nor  
of those who go astray.

The *Qur'an* was always a potential source of individual inspiration for emotionally religious life but the general conception of piety among the orthodox was as much ritualistic as their theology was formalistic. The chief 'pillars' of religious practice were the five daily prayers (*salāt*), the daily fast (*rozah*) during the month of Ramzan, the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) and the charity to brother Muslims (*zakāt*). As a form of worship, the first was obviously the most important; but the daily prayer was not an effort to achieve personal communication with Allah; it was rather 'a set of ceremonies expressing the Muslim's obedience, worship and devotion'.<sup>15</sup> Whatever the psychological, cultural or social significance of the other three observances, their scope for the evocation of religious emotion was even more limited. Thus, a mere external observance could enable a person to pass for a

13. *Ibid.*, 194.

14. *The Glorious Koran*.

15. Grunebaum, G. E. von, *Medieval Islam*, 114.

pious Muslim. This piety was nonetheless valued by the majority of the orthodox.

The most important of the 'unorthodox' sects in the Punjab, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, was that of the *shī'a*. The majority of them recognized twelve *imāms* in the line from Fatima and Ali. The last *imām*, Muhammad al-Mahdi, had disappeared from the world in A.D. 880 and he was expected to reappear to restore justice and righteousness. According to *shī'a* belief, the *imām* is an infallible and sinless being, possessing the Divine Light handed down from God to Ali and his descendants through Muhammad. The 'twelver' *shī'as* recognized the authority of the *Qur'ān* and the *sunna* and the finality of Muhammad's prophethood; but the authority of the *imām* tended to overshadow them. The death of Husain as a 'martyr' gave the *shī'a* not only a 'passion motive' but also the doctrine that his death had paved the way to Paradise.<sup>16</sup> The importance attached by them to the *ta'ziya* was intimately connected to this belief and overshadowed almost every other religious observance of the *shī'a*. A condemnation of the first three *khalīfas* was only a corollary of the *shī'a* belief in the exclusive legitimacy of Ali.<sup>17</sup>

Much more 'unorthodox' than the 'twelvers' were the Ismailis and the Qarmatians. The former recognized, instead of Musa al-Kazim, the son of his brother Ismail ibn Jafar as the seventh *imām*. The latter believed in Muhammad ibn Ismail as the last *imām* who was expected to reappear on the last day. The laws of the *shari'at*, according to Ismaili belief, were not meant for those who possessed esoteric knowledge and the *Qur'ān* itself had an 'inner meaning'.

16. *Ibid.*, 186-96; Hardy, P., *Islam in Medieval India*, 374-76; Levy, Reuben, *The Social Structure of Islam*, Cambridge 1962, 287-88.

17. The *sunnīs* paid equal reverence to all the four *khalīfas*.

Muhammad was not the last of the prophets. Through a chain of manifestations of the world intellect (God), the light had passed on to the *imāms* through Muhammad. The Qarmatians believed that it was quite legitimate to shed the blood of the orthodox. The majority of the *shi'as* had little sympathy with the Qarmatians or the Ismailis who appeared to compromise the unity of God and disregarded Muhammad as the seal of the prophets. Some of them regarded the *imām* as an incarnation of God.<sup>18</sup> They were generally abhorred by the *sunnis* and occasionally persecuted. The precise position of the *shi'as* in the Punjab of our period is not known but it is unlikely to have been much different from their general position.

Ibn Khaldun noticed a popular reception of messianic hopes among his contemporary Muslims: 'it has been commonly accepted among the masses of the people of Islam, as the ages have passed, that there must needs appear in the End of Time a man of the family of Mohammad who will aid the Faith and make justice triumph; that the Muslims will follow him and that he will reign over the Muslim kingdoms and will be called al-Mahdi'.<sup>19</sup> Though the *sunni* theology never made the Mahdi a part of the orthodox creed, the renovator of the faith (*mujaddid*) was as familiar an idea to the *sunnis* as the doctrine of the hidden *imām* to the *shi'as*. Al-Ghazali, for instance, refers to a well-known tradition (*hadis*) that 'God most high has promised to revive His religion at the

18. Hardy, P., *Islam in Medieval India*, 375-76; Grunebaum, G.E. von, *Medieval Islam*, 196-98; Levy, Reuben, *The Social Structure of Islam*, 288-89.

19. Quoted, Grunebaum, G. E. von, *Medieval Islam*, 194. See also, Rizvi, S. A. A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, Agra University, Agra 1965, 68-73.

beginning of each century'.<sup>20</sup> Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi's claim to be the renovator of the second millennium (*mujaddi d-i-alf-i-sāni*) around A.D. 1600 had the background of a religious atmosphere in which messianic hopes were shared by the *shī'as* and the *sunnīs* alike.

The appearance of the Mahdavis on the religious scene of northern India during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century has its peculiar significance. In the *Futūhāt-i-Firūz Shāhi* there is a reference to the Mahdi Rukn who was certainly regarded as heretical by Sultan Firuz Shah in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur, who proclaimed himself to be the Mahdi, met a different kind of response.<sup>21</sup> He had a considerable following; he was appreciated by many and opposed by the *'ulamā* but he was not executed as a heretic. In fact he was patronized by Sultan Husain Sharqi (1458-79); and Sultan Mahmud of Gujarat (A.D. 1458-1511) felt attracted towards him.

Sayyid Muhammad did not claim to have founded a new religion; his claim was to be the restorer of the pristine purity of Islam. He believed in God and His prophet and based his teachings on the *Qur'ān* which he interpreted according to his own lights. He also claimed to be the 'seal of the *auliyā'* and upheld in theory that the non-Mahdavis could be treated as *harbts* and, consequently, the *jiziya* could be realized from them. He claimed to have seen God, insisted on the love of God, recommended *zīkr-i-dawām* and some *Sūfi* texts and he established the *mahdavi dāira* with a strict discipline imposed on his followers and disciples. They were not allowed to go out for receiving offers (*futūh*), and patience (*tawakkul*) was

20. *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, 62.

21. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, I, 319.

emphasized as a commendable practice. All income was pooled together and distributed among the followers strictly in accordance with individual needs. Contrary to the expectation from the general idea of the Mahdi, Sayyid Muhammad did not dabble in politics.<sup>22</sup> No Mahdavi *dāira* was established in the Punjab, but the familiarity of a considerable number of Muslims in the Punjab with the existence of the Mahdavis may be assumed. As the bearers of a relatively new movement in Indian Islam, the Mahdavis had an importance of their own in the contemporary religious situation.

However, the most important forms of Muslim religious life in the Punjab, as elsewhere by this time, were embodied in the beliefs and practices of the *Sūfis*, the mystics of Islam. It has been observed by D. B. Macdonald, in *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, that the *Sūfi* way of life formed almost the whole of religious life in Islam.<sup>23</sup> 'Mysticism is such a vital element in Islam', says R. A. Nicholson, 'that without some understanding of its ideas and of the forms which they assume we should seek in vain to penetrate below the surface of Mohammedan religious life'.<sup>24</sup> Such general statements, though apparently a little too sweeping, appear to find ample support in the religious life of the Indo-Muslims during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

The importance of the *Sūfis* in India is reflected, first, in the recognition given to them by the chroniclers of the

22. The brief statement on the position of Sayyid Muhammad is based on Rizvi, S. A. A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, 82-84, 96-97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102-03, 105. For some detail of the Mahdavi *dairas*, *ibid.*, 106-34.

23. The University of Chicago Press, 1909.

24. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge 1921, vi; cf. Murray, Titus, "Mysticism and Saint Worship in India", *The Moslem World* (April, 1922), XII, 129.

Mughal times. In Minhaj-i-Siraj, Ziauddin Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif, for instance, there are only incidental references to the *mashāikh*, though one can read between the lines their increasing importance. In Badauni, however, there is a large separate section devoted to the *mashāikh*, quite consciously and deliberately. And Badauni was not alone, for Nizamuddin Ahmad, Abu'l Fazl and Firīšta do the same. This change in the attitude of the chroniclers betokened not merely a change in individual psychology, which in itself is significant enough, but also a change in the religious life of the Indo-Muslims between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Indeed, much of the information on the *mashāikh* was made available to the chroniclers by the *mashāikh* themselves or by their devoted disciples. Besides a considerable volume of *malfūz* literature, which we are going to consider a little later, popular works had been produced on what may loosely be called the biographies of *walīs*, 'arīfs and the *akhyār*. The best known of these, the *Siyar-al-Auliya* and the *Siyar-al-Ārifin*, were written between A.D. 1350 and 1550. Later, Abdul Haqq, who is known as the *muhaddis* for being well-versed in the study of *hadīs*, felt no hesitation in writing the *Akḥbār-al-Akhyār*. In the seventeenth century, the princess Jahan Ara could preface her *Mūnis-al-Arwāh* with the remark: 'Praise be to God who made the *mashāikh* and the *auliyā* the guides and exemplars of the people of Islam'.

Already before the mid-sixteenth century the influence of the *Sūfis* had penetrated nearly all the strata of Indo-Muslim society. The craftsmen who had accepted Islam at the hands of the *Sūfi shaikhs* naturally looked upon them as their *pirs* and the cult of the *pir* was becoming increasingly popular. The *khānqahs* of the *shaikhs* were frequently visited by the

midling classes—the soldiers, scholars and merchants.<sup>25</sup> The nobles too as a rule informally accepted one *shaikh* or another as a *murshid*.<sup>26</sup> Ziauddin Barani had regretted in the fourteenth century that ‘it never occurred to Alauddin (Khalji) to visit the *shaikh* (Nizamuddin) or to invite him’.<sup>27</sup> In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century the rulers were anxious to associate themselves with the *shaikhs*. Sikandar’s visit to Shaikh Samauddin on the eve of his accession to the throne is a well known example.<sup>28</sup> His visits to Sayyid Niamatullah and Shaikh Husain and his association with Shaikh Jamali leave no doubt about Sikandar’s general regard for the *mashāikh*.<sup>29</sup> Babur was proud to call himself a *qalandar* and *darvish*; Humayun’s association with Shaikh Bahlol is equally well known.<sup>30</sup> Shaikh Khalil, a descendant of Shaikh Farid of Pakpattan, was the *murshid* of Sher Shah.<sup>31</sup> It may indeed be said that the *mashāikh* lived ‘in more intimate touch with the social currents of life than any other class among the Muslims’.<sup>32</sup>

The association of the rulers with *Sūfi shaikhs* was, among other things, a token of their importance among the Indo-Muslims. According to Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, the Chishti *shaikhs* of the early medieval period had resisted the attempts of the Sultans at winning over the mystics out of expediency, to make use of their influence over the mass of the people;

25. Nizami, K. A., ‘Some Aspects of Khanqah Life in Medieval India’, *Studia Islamica* (1957), VIII.

26. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 346-47.

27. *Tārikh-i-Firūz Shāhi*, 366.

28. Ranking, G. (tr.), *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, Calcutta 1897, I, 411-13.

29. *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 185-86.

30. *Akbar-nāma*, I, 154-55.

31. *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, 217, 226.

32. Ashraf, K.M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindūstān*, 119.

but the later, and lesser, mystics accepted *jāgirs* and royal favours.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Shaikh Nasiruddin in the fourteenth century was regretting that some mystics had started wrapping themselves in costly cloaks and going to kings and high officials.<sup>34</sup> Some of the *shaikhs* did not hesitate to advise their royal believers on matters which had little to do with mysticism. Shaikh Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, for instance, asked Sultan Ghiyasuddin (A.D. 1392-1411) of Bengal to repeat the following prayer for forty days: 'Set right the affairs of the faithful through me, and give me victory over the infidels'.<sup>35</sup> Ashraf Jahangir wrote to Sultan Hushang Shah (A.D. 1405-1435) that, in a crisis created by the 'infidels', *jihād* was to be given preference over worship.<sup>36</sup> Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi's influence with the Lodi Sultans and his advice to Babur and Humayun were by no means exceptional.<sup>37</sup> Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus is believed to have helped Babur in capturing Gwalior.<sup>38</sup> Other instances of *shaikhs* advising, aiding or interceding between royals rival are not unknown.<sup>39</sup> This aspect of the *Sūfi* influence has not yet been sufficiently

33. "Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude Towards the State", *Islamic Culture* (Oct. 1948), XXII, 388.
34. *Ibid.*, 398.
35. Askari, S. H., "The influence of Two Fourteenth Century Sufi Saints of Bihar with the Contemporary Sovereigns of Delhi and Bengal", *Journal Bihar Research Society* (June 1956), XLII.
36. Ashraf Jahangir, *Maktūbāt*, 58 ; see also 93.
37. Moinul Haq, S., "Shaikh Abdul Quddus of Gangoh", *Proceedings Pakistan History Conference* (1952); Askari, S.H., "Correspondence of two 14th Century Sufi Saints of Bihar with the Contemporary Sovereigns of Delhi and Bengal", *Proceedings India History Congress* (1956).
38. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 207.
39. See, for instance, Siddiqi, I. H., "Rise of the Afghan Nobility", *Medieval India Quarterly*, IV, 133; *Humāyūn-nāma-i-Gulbadan Begam*, 44; *Humāyūn-nāma*, ff. 114b, 115a.

emphasized by the students of Indian *Sūfism*, but there is enough of evidence for it in our period.

Several *Sūfi* orders had come to flourish in India by the early sixteenth century. Abul Fazl took notice of more than a dozen. However, all of these were not equally important or popular. The oldest orders to be established in India were the Chishti and the Suhrawardi. The author of the *Siyar-al-Auliya* gives prominence not only to Shaikhs Muinuddin, Qutbuddin Bakhtyar, Fariduddin and Nizamuddin but also to Shaikhs Najibuddin Mutawakkil, Badruddin Ghaznavi, Hamiduddin Sawali Nagauri, Badruddin Ishaq and Jamaluddin Hansavi as the luminaries of the Chishti order in northern India. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dihli, the *khalifa* of Shaikh Nizamuddin, had been equally prominent as a Chishti *shaikh* of the fourteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The successors and *khalifas* of Bahauddin Zakariya, who popularized the Suhrawardi order in India, had been equally important in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>41</sup> Shaikh Samauddin and his *khalifa* Shaikh Jamali, the author of the *Siyar-al-ʿArifin*, were among the most prominent *shaikhs* of the Suhrawardi order in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century. At this time, the *shaikhs* of some other orders too were gaining popularity, notably the Shattaris and the Qadiris.<sup>42</sup> Besides the innumerable *shaikhs* of these and other numerous orders, there were many *be-shar'* (irregular, antinomian) *darvishes*.<sup>43</sup>

40. Muhammad Habib, "Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Delhi", *Islamic Culture* (April 1946), XX.

41. Nizami, K. A., "The Suhrawardi Silsilah and its Influence on Medieval Indian Politics", *Medieval India Quarterly* (July-Oct., 1957), III, Nos. 1 & 2.

42. Nizami, K. A., "The Shattari Saints and Their Attitude towards the State", *Medieval India Quarterly* (Oct. 1950), I, No. 2, 59-70.

43. They will be mentioned later in this chapter.

Altogether, the influence of the mystics of Islam was real and pervasive.

The *Sūfi* influence in the Punjab during the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century was as real and pervasive as in any other part of India. Before the Lodi times, besides Ali al-Hujwiri whose *Kashf-al-Mahjūb* had become a most popular *Sūfi* text, Shah Husain Zanjani, Shaikh Yaqub Zanjani, Sayyid Ishaq Gazruni, Sayyid Sarbuland and Shah Sarwani had settled, lived and died in Lahore.<sup>44</sup> In the Lodi times, Musā Ahangar was popular as a *shaikh* in Lahore, while Abu Ishaq Qadiri and Ishaq Kaku were on their way to rise into prominence.<sup>45</sup> Multan was even more venerable as the seat of the Suhrawardi *shaikhs*, besides others.<sup>46</sup> Shaikh Yusuf in the beginning of the Lodi period and his grandson, Shaikh Bahauddin Qureshi, at its end were the successors of Bahauddin Zakariya at Multan.<sup>47</sup> The district of Multan was now studded with several *khānqahs*.<sup>48</sup> But the most prominent *sajjādah* in the countryside was to be found at Ajodhan (Pakpatan), the seat of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar who was by far the most popular *shaikh* of the Punjab. In the early sixteenth century, Shaikh Ibrahim was on the *sajjādah* of Farid.<sup>49</sup> The veneration commanded by Shaikh

44. *Tārīkh-i-Mubārak-Shāhi*, 198; *Tahqīqāt-i-Chishtī*, 108; *Tārīkh-i-Lahore*, 164-66, 167, 304, 305-06.

45. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, III, 48-49, 51-53; *Tahqīqāt-i-Chishtī*, 108; *Tārīkh-i-Lahore*, 248-49.

46. *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Multan*, 62-64, 64-67.

47. *Loc. cit.*

48. *Ibid.*, 104-05, 106-07, 108-11, 113-14, 116-24.

49. Qureshi, Abdul Ghaffur, *Punjābī Zubān dā Adab te Tārīkh*, Lahore 1956, 97-98; Rama Krishna, Lajwanti, *Punjābī Sūfi Poets*, A.D. 1460-1900, O. U. P. 1938, 2; Mohan Singh, "Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar, Shaikh Ibrahim aur Farid Sani", *Oriental College Magazine*, Feb., May, August and November, 1938; Feb., 1939. See also *ibid.*, Feb., 1941

Ibrahim is indicated by the epithet used for him : *Farid-i-sāni*, or the second Farid. Several other places in the Punjab were associated with Chishti *shaikhs*.<sup>50</sup> Thanesar, Hansi, Narnaul and Panipat were particularly important on this side of the Sutlej.<sup>51</sup> Panipat was associated also with the famous Sharfuddin Bu Ali Qalandar whose successors in all probability continued to maintain his *khānqah* and to treasure his mystical *Diwān* for the posterity.<sup>52</sup> Not only the *shaikhs* of the two oldest *Sūfi* orders in India, the Chishti and the Suhrawardi, but also those of new Qadiri order were becoming popular in the Punjab, particularly in the city and the district of Lahore. Even in Panipat, Shaikh Aman Ullah, who was a follower of Ibn al-Arabi and an exponent of the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* was a *Sūfi* of the Qadiri order.<sup>53</sup> More instances of the *Sūfi shaikhs* of the Punjab can be easily added.<sup>54</sup> But, perhaps, it is enough to suggest that *shaikhs* of major or minor importance could be found in nearly all the important towns and in many a rural pocket of the Punjab before and after A.D. 1500.

It was remarked by Goldziher in the beginning of this century that *Sūfism* cannot be looked upon as 'a regularly organized sect within Islam'; in fact, it cannot be reduced to a 'regular system'; and, what makes it even more formidable as a subject of study, it manifests itself in different shapes in different countries.<sup>55</sup> The limitation of space in the present

50. Chapter II, above, n.53.

51. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, III, 3-4, 50; *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Montgomery*, 53.

52. The successors of Bu Ali Qalandar were patronized by Jahangir and his *mazār*, though virtually abandoned, still exists in Panipat.

53. Nizami, K. A., *Life of Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis of Delhi* (in Urdu), 65.

54. Some of them have been mentioned already in Chapter II.

55. *JRAS* (1904), 130-31.

monograph forbids any elaborate treatment of *Sūfism* even in the Punjab of our period but it is necessary to note at least its salient features, albeit briefly, remembering Nicholson's remark on Islamic mysticism: 'The forms may be fantastic and ideas difficult to grasp; nevertheless we shall do well to follow them'.<sup>56</sup>

The *Sūfis* in the Punjab of our period were the bearers of a rich and long tradition of mysticism in Islam. As early as the eighth century, emphasis on asceticism, as a prelude to mysticism, could be witnessed in Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Khorasan. The assimilation of this phase into the well developed tradition of later centuries is evident from the popularity of the legend of Ibrahim bin Adham (d. 777) and frequent references to the sayings of Hasan al-Basri (d. 728) and of the woman-saint Rabia (d. 801). This early phase was important in another way also. Its dominant tendencies found expression in the works of the mystics of the following century which remained influential afterwards. For instance, the works of Haris bin Asad al-Muhasibi (A.D. 781-837), particularly his *al-Ri'āya li-Huqūq Allah*, exercised a considerable influence on al-Ghazali whose *Ihyā' Ulūm-al-Din*, in turn, became a standard text in the later centuries. In the ninth century itself appeared also a bolder and immoderate expression of the mystical experience in the *Shathiyāt* (ecstatic utterances) of Abu Yazid of Bistam (d. 875). Though al-Junaid (d. 919), a pupil of al-Muhasibi, toned down Abu-Yazid's immoderation through a commentary on the *Shathiyāt*, some of the fundamental ideas of both Abu Yazid and al-Junaid became an essential part of the later *sūfī* theory. The legacy of Abu Yazid was carried further by al-Hallaj, who was executed in A.D. 922 apparently for his 'scandalous' utterances about

56. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, iv.

the nature of his reunion with God. Nevertheless his *Kitāb-al-Tawāsin*, in turn, left its mark on the theosophy of the *Futūhāt-i-Makkiya* and the *Fusūs-al-Hikam* by Ibn al-Arabi (A.D. 1165-1240). This particular trend of rather 'unorthodox' theosophy found its culmination in *al-Insān-al-Kāmil* of Abdul Karim al-Jili (d. 1428).

More or less orthodox works on *Sūfi* theosophy, belief and practice had begun to appear in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d. 988) in his *Kitāb-al-Lumā'* was concerned more with the exposition of the theosophy than the discipline of *Sūfism*. Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996) in his *Qūt-al-Qulūb* was anxious to prove the orthodoxy of *Sūfi* doctrines and practices; *al-Ta'arruf li-Mazhab ahl-al-Tassuwuf* of Abu Bakr al-Kalabazi (d. 1000) was even more apologetic on behalf of *Sūfism*. In A.D. 1046, the *Risāla* of Abu Qasim al-Qushairi (d. 1072) provided a comprehensive account of the theoretical structure of *Sūfism*. 'The classical formulation of Sufi doctrine on the mystical side has always been held by the Sufis to have been finally accomplished by al-Qushairi; its reconciliation and assimilation with orthodox Sunni theology and religious law was the work of the great Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111), carried out by stages in a considerable number of relatively short books, and consolidated and consummated in the *Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn*, which was written between 492/1099 and 495/1102'.<sup>57</sup> Henceforth, mysticism of a sober type was 'domesticated' in the Islamic world. Ali al-Hujwiri in the eleventh century mentions ten schools of *Sūfism* in the *Kashf-al-Mahjūb* which were considered to be orthodox. This trend was reinforced by the works of some of the founders of new *Sūfi* orders. The *Ghunya* of

57. Arberry, A. J. *Sufism*, London 1950. Much of the factual information for these paragraphs comes from this work.

Muhyiuddin Abdul Qadir (1078-1127) was firmly based on the *Qur'an* and the *hadis*. The '*Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, which was the most influential of the works of Shihabuddin Umar Suhrawardi (1144-1234), was equally orthodox.

This is not to suggest, however, that relatively unorthodox works did not appear now. Ain al-Quzzat Hamdani, who was put to death by the *wazir* of Sultan Sanjar in A.D. 1138-39, had left his *Tamhidāt* to posterity. The *Mirsād-al-'Ibad*, written about A.D. 1223 by Najmuddin of Qaisarya, contains ideas and expressions which reflect 'unorthodox' influences. The poet Iraqi (d. 1289) had composed his *Lama'at* after hearing Sadrudin Qonawi's lecture on the *Fusūs-al-Hikam*; the poet Jami wrote a commentary on the *Lama'at* and composed his own *Lawāih* in emulation. The Persian poets, at any rate, played a most considerable role in popularizing *Sūfi* ideas through their poetical works: Sanai through his *Hadiqat-al-Haqīqa*, Attar through his *Asrār-nāma* and *Mantiq-al-Tair*, Nizami through his *Makhzan-al-Asrār* and Jalaluddin Rumi through his celebrated *Masnavi*. Mysticism was wedded to romance in Jami's *Yusuf Zulaikha* and *Majnun Laila*. Altogether, by the fifteenth century an extremely rich and varied tradition of mysticism had developed in Islam.

The relevance of this rich background to the religious scene in India is evident from the familiarity of the Indo-Muslim *shāikh*s with a considerable number of works on *Sūfism* produced outside India: the *Qūt-al-Qulūb* of Abu Talib al-Makki, the *Risāla* of al-Qushairi, the *Ihyā-al-'Ulūm* of al-Ghazali and his *Kimiya-i-Sa'ādat*, the *Kashf-al-Mahjūb* of Hujwiri, the *Tamhidāt* of Ain al-Quzzat Hamdani, the '*Awārif-al-Ma'ārif* of Shihabuddin Umar Suhrawardi, the *Mirsād-al-'Ibad* of Najmuddin, for example.<sup>58</sup> In the

58. All these works are referred to in the *Sūfi* literature of the times.

*Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, which embodies the informal 'talks' of Shaikh Nizamuddin in the early fourteenth century at Delhi, there are references to Ibrahim bin Adham, Hasan al-Basri, Rabia, Bayazid (Abu Yazid), al-Junaid, al-Hallaj, al-Ghazali, Ali al-Hujwiri, Abdul Qadir, Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, Sanai, Attar and Nizami, among others. Shaikh Nizamuddin's sympathy with the 'orthodox' exponents of *Sūfism* was shared by many a fourteenth-century *shaikhs* in India.<sup>59</sup> In the fifteenth century, however, the ideas of Ibn al-Arabi were finding acceptance.<sup>60</sup> And in the early sixteenth century, he found respectable exponents of his theosophy, while the Shattaris were proud to trace their *silsilah* to Abu Yazid of Bistam and to advocate *sukr* (drunkenness) in preference to *sahw* (sobriety).<sup>61</sup>

The *Sūfi* literature in India was by no means confined to 'imported' works, or even to commentaries upon them.<sup>62</sup> Ziauddin Barani brackets the *Lawā'ih* of Hamiduddin Nagauri with the classics of *Sūfism* mentioned in the foregoing para-

59. This is evident from the extant writings of some of them.

60. See, for instance the *Muktūbāt* of Ashraf Jahangir, the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni* of Jafar-i-Makki, *Mirat-al-'Arifin* of Masud Bak and the *Māktūbāt* of Sharfuddin Yayiha Maneri, Cf. Rizvi, S.A.A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, 45-53. For opposition to Ibn al-Arabi, see *ibid.*, 54-55.

61. See n. 53, above; Nizami, K. A., "The Shattari Saints and their Attitude Towards the State", *Medieval India Quarterly* (Oct. 1956), I, No. 2, 56-70, Rizvi, S.A.A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, 62-66.

62. Shaikh Jalal, for instance, wrote a commentary on the *Gulshan-i-Rāz* in the reign of Sikandar Lodi: Nizami, K. A., *Life of Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis of Delhi* (in Urdu), 31; Shaikh Samauddin wrote a commentary on Iraqī's *Lama'at: ibid.*, 29. See also K. A. Nizami's "Supplement" to *Elliot and Dowson's History of India* (Vol. II).

graph.<sup>63</sup> Afif quotes some of the verses of Shaikh Jamaluddin Hansavi to whom, in fact, a *diwān* is attributed, as one is attributed to Bu Ali Qalandar.<sup>64</sup> Amir Khusrau's mystical leanings often found expression in his poetry. But the most important and the most popular of *Sūfī* literature in India assumed a form which is referred to as the *malfūzāt* (utterances). Barani observed that the *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād* had become extremely popular among 'the true disciples'.<sup>65</sup> Shaikh Nizamuddin himself recommends the '*fuwāid*' of the *shaikhs* to their disciples.<sup>66</sup> Shaikh Nasiruddin's '*fuwāid*' were collected by a disciple and given the title *Khair-al-Majālis*. Other well known examples of the genre are the *Sārūr-us-Sadūr* and the *Jawāmi'-al-Kilām*.<sup>67</sup> The collection of *maktūbāt* (letters) was another important form of preserving and propagating the ideas of the *shaikhs*: the *maktūbāt* of Shaikh Yahya Maneri, Ashraf Jahangir and Abdūl Quddus Gangohi, for instance.<sup>68</sup>

The importance given to these works of the *shaikhs* of India was only a reflection of their own importance and popularity as *pirs*. In fact, such works were 'fabricated' in their names: the *Annis-al-Arwāh*, *Dalīl-al-'Ārifīn*, *Fuwāid-al-Sālikīn*, *Asrār-al-Auliya*, *Afzal-al-Fuwāid*, *Miftah-al-'Āshiqīn*, *Diwān-i-Muinuddin*, *Diwān-i-Bakhtyar*, for example.<sup>69</sup> It has

63. Extracts from Hamiduddin's *Tawāli'-al-Shumūs* are quoted in the *Akhhār-al-Akhyār*.

64. *Tārikh-i-Firūz Shāhi*, 84.

65. *Tārikh-i-Firūz Shāhi*, 360.

66. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 18, 27.

67. Nizami, K. A., "Saroor-us-Sadur", *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, 1950; Askari, S. H., "Tazkira-i-Murshidi, A Rare Malfuz of the Fifteenth Century Sufi Saint of Gulbarga". *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, 1952.

68. These *maktūbāt* remained in currency during the medieval period

69. Muhammad Habib, "Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate period", *Medieval India Quarterly* (Oct., 1950), I, No. 2, 1-42.

been said of these works that their 'unknown authors were not conscious of any purpose or mission. They have no ideal or objective, good or bad. Their mysticism is secondary, low grade. Also they are not earnest about inculcating it, and they give only a homeopathic dose of it to the reader'.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the reader took them seriously and that makes the 'fabricated' works as important as the genuine ones. At any rate, fabrication never ceased and an average compiler incorporated the ideas and information obtained from both the genuine and fabricated works rather indiscriminately into his own work.<sup>71</sup> Nur Ahmad Chishti at Lahore in the nineteenth century, for instance, could make use of over thirty works of *Sūfism* for his *Tahqiqāt-i-Chishti*.<sup>72</sup>

In the Punjab of our period, a wide range of ideas in *Sūfism*, coming from several sources, may be expected. In the first place there were quotations from the *Qur'ān* which had served as the basis of mysticism and become a common heritage of the *Sūfis*: 'We verily created man and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are nearer to him than his jugular vein'; 'Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth'; 'Everything will perish save His countenance'; 'He loveth them and they love Him'; 'Am I not your Lord?', 'Yea, we witness it'; 'Adore, and draw thou nigh'; 'Remember God often', for example. This is not to suggest, however, that all the basic ideas of *Sūfism* were derived from the *Qur'ān*. Some of the attributes of God which are found in *Sūfī* theosophy

70. *Ibid.*, 39.

71. Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis, for instance, is particularly praised for his sense of discrimination but his *Akbār-al-Akhyār* does reveal his use of 'fabricated' works.

72. This work was composed in A. D. 1864; for the books consulted by him, see page 22.

do not appear in the *Qur'ān*: *al-wājib* (necessary), *wājib-al-wujūd* (necessarily existing), *al-kāmil* (the perfect) for instance.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps more important than the *Qur'ānic* verses, which the *Sūfis* interpreted in the light of their mystical experience and in its support and justification, was the mystical experience itself. For the typical ascetic it was his fear of Allah's wrath that evoked an intense religious feeling, for the typical mystic it was his love of God. Thus for Rabi'a: 'Love of God hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of any other thing remains in my heart'. From this to an ecstatic union with God was only a step. Thus Abu Yazid, who was the first to express his mystical experience in terms of the *mi'rāj* (Muhammad's ascension), could proclaim: 'Glory to Me! How great is My Majesty!' And al-Hallaj:

I am He whom I love and He whom I love is I,  
 We are two spirits dwelling in one body.  
 If thou seest me, thou seest Him,  
 And If thou seest Him thou seest us both.<sup>74</sup>

Such attempts at communicating the mystical experience scandalized the orthodox Muslims and the wise among the mystics rightly recognized that this supreme experience could not be communicated in words. But the idea of union with God as the mystic's goal, with the associated ideas of *fanā* (annihilation to self) and *baqā* (subsistence in God), was never discarded by any *Sūfi* worth the name.

The idea of *balā-i-dost* (divine affliction), the reverse of the ecstatic union, arose directly from the mystical experience. For

73. Redhouse, "The Most Comely Names", *Shorter Encyclopaedia*.

74. Grunebaume, G. E. von, *Medieval Islam*, 136. For an utterance of Abu Yazid, see Smith, Margaret, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and the Middle East*. London 1931, 231-38.

al-Junaid: 'With God is the consolation, far from Him is the affliction'; and, this affliction 'from God for God is an anguish even more intense than the mourning for a near relative'.<sup>75</sup> The anguish of separation from God in the mystical experience was as intense as the ecstasy of union with Him: 'By Thy Truth, if Thou wouldst sell me Paradise in exchange for a single moment of my ecstasy or for one passing gleam of the least of my spiritual states, I would not buy it! And if Thou wert to set Hell-fire before me, with all the diverse kinds of torment that are contained therein, I would deem it of no account in comparison with my suffering when Thou hidest Thyself from me'.<sup>76</sup> This aspect of the mystical experience was sanctified in the idea that affliction 'from God for God' was a sign almost of His grace.

The *Sūfī* theories of *ma'rifat* (knowledge of God), from the simplest to the subtlest, were expounded on the assumption of the mystical experience of union with God. According to al-Ghazali, man loves God because of the affinity between the human soul and its source, because it shares in the Divine Nature and Attributes, because through knowledge and love it can attain to eternal life itself and itself become God-like.<sup>77</sup> *Tauhid*, or unification, is defined by Abu Nasr al-Sarraj as the realization of the absoluteness of the Divine Nature in the passing away of the human nature so that 'the man's last state reverts to his first state and he becomes even as he were before he existed'.<sup>78</sup> The trinity of Love, Lover and Beloved is most obviously linked with the mystical experience of 'unification'. This link is only a little less apparent in the

75. "Al-Junaid", *JRAS* (1935), 503, 34.

76. Nicholson, R. A., *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, Cambridge 1923, 36.

77. "Al-Ghazali The Mystic", *JRAS* (1901), 176.

78. *Kitāb-al-Lumā*, quoted, *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, 13.

theosophical structures based on the Divine Attribute of Light. Al-Ghazali, whose preoccupation with the Light Verse (xxxv, 35) is evident from his *Mishkāt-al-Anwār*, compares the human heart or soul with the mirror.<sup>79</sup> The Divine Light could be seen reflected in this mirror. Assuming the experience of 'unification' as the ultimate basis of this subtler presentation of gnosis, its essential similarity to the direct and bold utterance of al-Hallaj becomes apparent:<sup>80</sup>

I saw my Lord with the Eye of the Heart.

I said, 'Who art Thou ?' He answered 'Thou'.

The idea in fact was older than al-Hallaj. It was said by al-Junaid: 'You are your own veil which conceals yourself from you'.<sup>81</sup>

However, al-Hallaj's inapt utterances savoured of *hulūl* (incarnationism) and he was naturally condemned by the orthodox. The fact of the mystical experience of 'unification' had nevertheless to be recognized and reconciled to orthodox beliefs, particularly to the crucial importance of the Prophet. The 'idea' of Muhammad controlling the universe as God's vicegerent, called *al-haqīqat-al-Muhammadiya*, was propounded and union with this 'idea' could lead the human soul back to God. The idea of passing away from self to God was replaced by the idea of *fāna fī al-Muhammad* as a prelude to 'unification'. The concept of *nūr-i-Muhammadiya* was only a variation on the theme. In the thirteenth century it came to be believed by the sober *Sūfis* that faith in Muhammad was the measure of one's faith in God and that the only way to God was through Muhammad.<sup>82</sup> Thus, *Sūfism* 'not only

79. "Al-Ghazali The Mystic", *JRAS* (1901), 144.

80. *The Book of Certainty*, 30. n. 1.

81. "Al-Junaid", *JRAS* (1935), 76.

82. *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, 63; see also 64, 65.

transformed the whole nature of the prophet's message, it transformed the prophet himself'.<sup>83</sup>

All these and other early or contemporary ideas of Islamic mysticism are echoed in the *Sūfi* literature popular in India. The religion of the lovers of God is nothing but Love, says Ain al-Quzzat Hamdani; he adds that this 'infidelity' is better than 'faith'; when the lover reaches the utmost limits of love, then the *shāhid* (witness) and the *mashhūd* (witnessed) become one; and this is not *hulūl* but unification.<sup>84</sup> This is reiterated in the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni*, after an emphatic assertion that Love, and Lover and the Beloved are essentially one.<sup>85</sup> Shaikh Abdul Quddus writes to Shaikh Farid of Hansi that the Lover's frame contained the 'essence' of the Beloved.<sup>86</sup> In the *Siyar-al-Auliya*, the idea of the unity of Love, the Lover and the Beloved is attributed to Shaikh Muinuddin probably on the basis of a 'fabricated' *malfūz*.<sup>87</sup> But even in the *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād* it is affirmed that 'a single particle of Love' is better than all the devotion of men and angels put together.<sup>88</sup> At the same time it is added that Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar's benediction upon his disciples often used to be 'May God give you *dard* (affliction)'. The two ideas were indeed inseparable. It is explicitly stated in the *Siyar-al-Auliya* that 'affliction' is the beginning of love.<sup>89</sup> It is said in the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni* that even Paradise was a veritable imprisonment for the lovers of God.<sup>90</sup> Shaikh Abdul Quddus

83. Zaehner, R. C., *At Sundry Times*, 163.

84. *Tamhidāt*, ff. 135b, 59a.

85. Pp. 37, 38.

86. *Maktūbāt*, f. 8b.

87. Pp. 480, 466.

88. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 74.

89. P. 457.

90. P. 47.

Gangohi cites a *ba'it* with the import that Paradise was useless without the Beloved.<sup>91</sup>

The 'unification' symbolized in the ecstatic utterances of Abu Yazid and al-Hallaj was generally appreciated, even though their attempt at communicating the mystical experience was disapproved. In the *Siyar-al-Auliya* there is a quatrain, often recited by Shaikh Fariduddin, expressing his wonder at the depths of human heart from which arises the utterance *anā'l-haqq* (I am the Truth).<sup>92</sup> Hamiduddin of Nagaur in fact justified al-Hallaj's utterance, though there is also the warning that one should seal one's lips, for none could know the *sirr* (mysteries) of God.<sup>93</sup> In the *Diwāns* of Shaikh Jamaluddin of Hansi and Bu Ali Qalandar of Panipat there are appreciative references to al-Hallaj's *dār* (gibbet). Shaikh Nizamuddin disapproved of al-Hallaj's ecstatic utterances significantly on the grounds that he should have shown greater capacity for love of God and not betrayed the secret of 'unification'.<sup>94</sup> Abu Yazid's utterance is quoted with approval in the *Siyar-al-Auliya*: 'You can see nothing under my cloak except God'.<sup>95</sup> Approval of Abu Yazid and al-Hallaj is quite emphatic in the *Tamhidāt*.<sup>96</sup> Shaikh Abdul Quddus refers to a stage at which it becomes legitimate to utter *anā'l-haqq*.<sup>97</sup>

Some of the other ideas of gnosticism were equally popular. Ali al-Hujwiri quotes the tradition, 'He who knows himself

91. *Maktūbāt*, f. 111b.

92. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 476.

93. *Akhbār-al-Akhyār*, ff. 38 a & b.

94. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, 8.

95. P. 489.

96. Ff., 34a, 102b, 106a, 111b, 130a, 134b.

97. *Maktūbāt*, f. 125 a; see also, *Mirat-al-'Arifin*, ff. 35, 64.

already knows his Lord.<sup>98</sup> This idea is presented by Ain al-Quzzaṭ Hamdani in almost the same words.<sup>99</sup> In the '*Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*' there is the statement, 'In my heart, my God, I saw'.<sup>100</sup> Masud Bak plays upon the same idea in a *ba'it*: 'Come to me, you said, that I may reveal the mystery ; when I reached your door I saw that I was not'.<sup>101</sup> Abdul Quddus Gangohi asserts that at a certain stage though man does not become God he is not separate from God.<sup>102</sup> He cites a quatrain to the effect that God's presence in the human frame made God and man indistinct.<sup>103</sup> He quotes Attar who refers to 'unification' in the metaphor of the ocean and the drop; Abdul Quddus himself, in a Hindi verse, uses the metaphor of the bubble in the water.<sup>104</sup> It may be added here that the 'philosophy' of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* was acceptable to nearly all the *Sūfis* of the period. Though it would be an oversimplification to equate this 'philosophy' with pantheism it may be legitimately asserted that if in orthodox theology it was the transcendence of God that was emphasized, in *Sūfi* theosophy it was His immanence.<sup>105</sup>

God's omnipresence was underlined in various ways. The conception of God as 'the One in All', 'the All in All' or 'All is He' was familiar to almost every *Sūfi*. So was the tradition about God as 'the hidden treasure'. Shaikh Nizamuddin possessed it in the hand of Shaikh Fariduddin: 'I was

98. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 197.

99. *Tamhidāt*, f. 8 a.

100. P. 118.

101. *Mirat-al-'Arifin*, f. 16.

102. *Maktūbāt*, f. 24 a; Mahmood Chishti quotes Attar's line, 'I am God, I am God, I am God': *Ma'rifat-al-Sulūk*, 108.

103. *Rushd-nāma-i-Mahshi*, 5.

104. *Ibid.*, 8, 29. Cf. *Lawā'ih-i-Jāmi*, 11.

105. For the increasing popularity of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, see Rizvi, S. A., A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, 58-62.

a hidden treasure and revealed myself in my creation to be recognized'.<sup>106</sup> It occurs in the *Rushd-nāma-i-Mahshi* with only a slight variation, and there also occurs the Hindi version of 'wheresoever you turn, there is the face of God'.<sup>107</sup> In the microcosm too it was only the veil of self that separated man from God.<sup>108</sup> Shaikh Nizamuddin uses the metaphor of the musk.<sup>109</sup> In the *Bahr-al-Ma'ani*, the tradition about 'the hidden treasure' is paraphrased and it is suggested that, since a direct sight of God was unbearable, He could be seen reflected in the mirror of the human soul.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, the heart of the *mūmin* is the throne of Allah.<sup>111</sup> And who was there in the universe except His Light?<sup>112</sup> The reality of man, according to the *Mirsād-al-'Ibad*, is that of a mirror to the essence and attributes of God.<sup>114</sup> Bu Ali Qalander, in his *Masnavi*, exhorts man to polish the mirror of the heart. The popularity of the Light Verse may be expected. It is there, for instance, in the *Muktūbāt* of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi.<sup>115</sup> The association of this verse with 'the idea of Muhammad' may again be expected. According to the *Mirsād-al-'Ibad* only the followers of Muhammad can reach the stage of pronouncing 'I am the Truth' or 'Glory be to me'.<sup>116</sup> In the *Tamhūdāt*, the soul of Muhammad appears in the mirror of man's soul before he can see the reflection of God.<sup>117</sup>

106. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 75.

107. Pp. 2, 3.

108. *Maktūbāt-i-Abdul Quddus*, f. 107 b.

109. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 460.

110. Pp. 33, 62.

111. *Mirat-al-'Arifin*, f. 94.

112. Amir Hussaini, *Nazhat-al-Arwāh*.

113. Ff. 122 a, 128 a, 129 a & b.

114. Ff. 164 b, 171 b.

115. *Maktūbāt-i-Abdul Quddus*, f. 79 a.

116. F. 77 a.

117. Ff. 32 a, 41 a, 87 b, 127 a.

In the *Maktūbāt* of Ashraf Jahangir, 'the Light Verse, 'the reality of Muhammad' and 'the light of Muhammad' are juxtaposed.<sup>118</sup> In the *Mirsād-al-'Ibad* is given an exposition of the *nūr-i-Muhammadi*.<sup>119</sup> Sayyid Muhammad, the author of the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni* takes the idea for granted: 'He who does not know himself can never know Muhammad'.<sup>120</sup> In the '*Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, the purpose of creation is Muhammad's existence; created beings are all his offspring; and honouring Muhammad is the essence of honouring God.<sup>121</sup> In the *Tamhīdāt*, 'whatever you are hearing from me you are hearing from the soul of Muhammad and what you hear from the soul of Muhammad you hear in fact from God'.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, 'what is Muhammad for the people is God for us and what is God for the people is Muhammad for us'.<sup>123</sup> This is repeated in the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni*. Shaikh Abdul Quddus conveyed an exposition of the idea to Ali Sher at Lahore.<sup>124</sup> There is much substance in Zaehner's remark that *Sūfism* transformed the Prophet as much as his message.

Nevertheless, the honour accorded to the *wali* in *Sūfi* theosophy was only a little less. Ali al-Hujwiri mentions two 'heretical' schools of *Sūfism* which held the belief that the saints surpassed the prophets in excellence.<sup>125</sup> Ibn al-Arabi expounded a special doctrine of *wilāya*. In his view all the prophets were also *walīs* (saints) and the saintly as-

118. Pp. 12, 13.

119. N. 117, above & ff. 16 a, 40 a, Cf. *Ma'rifat-al-Sulūk*, 56; *Bahr-al-Ma'āni*, 15, 56.

120. P. 14; also, 4.

121. Pp. 127, 143, 145.

122. F. 11a.

123. *Ibid.*, f. 156 a. Cf. *Bahr-al-Ma'āni*, 64.

124. *Maktūbāt*, f. 17 a.

125. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 129.

pect of each prophet was higher than the prophetic aspect. The historical Muhammad was superior to all other prophets, being the *khātim-al-anbiyā* (the seal of the prophets). But there was also a seal of the saints (*khātim-al-auliya*) who was the perfect manifestation of the spirit of Muhammad. This seal of the saints was Ibn al-Arabi himself.<sup>126</sup> The *Sūfi shaiḫs* and *pirs* never claimed this office for themselves; they were seldom placed above the prophets in the theoretical structures of *Sūfi* theosophy. For Ali al-Hujwiri, the end of saintship was only the beginning of prophecy.<sup>127</sup> This is repeated in the *Mirat-al-‘Ārifin*.<sup>128</sup> It is asserted in the *Maktūbāt-i-Sadī* that the prophets are superior to the *walīs*.<sup>129</sup> In the *Tuhfat-un-Nasā’ih* this assertion is even more emphatic: ‘Never can the *auliyā* equal the prophets in status’.<sup>130</sup> For Abdul Haqq Muhaddis, to believe that a *walī* can acquire the status of a *nabī* is to become infidel.<sup>131</sup> However, the status given to the *walī* was very considerable even in theory. If the *nabīs* were sinless; the *walīs* were protected from sin.<sup>132</sup> This is repeated by Shaikh Nizamuddin; and it is also said elsewhere in the *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād* that according to the *fuqarā* the *walīs* were also sinless. Shaikh Nizamuddin’s own view is that whereas the *anbiyā* are necessarily sinless, the *auliyā* are capable of becoming sinless.<sup>133</sup> If the *nabīs* received revelation through *wahī*, the *walīs* possessed intuition through *alhām*.<sup>134</sup> Amir Khurd believed that Shaikh Nizamuddin

126. Arberry, A. J., *Sūfism*, 101.

127. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 223.

128. F. 170 a.

129. Letter No. 20.

130. F. 4.

131. *Takmil-al-Imān*, 157.

132. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 225.

133. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 53, 81.

134. *‘Awārif-al-Ma‘ārif*, 121.

possessed the gift of *alhām-i-rabbānī*.<sup>135</sup> Shaikh Nizamuddin believed that some *walīs* could receive the grace of *mushāhida* (witnessing the divinity) in their earthly life.<sup>136</sup> In the *mīrsād-al-ʿIbad*, the *maʿrifat-i-shuhūdī* is open to the *auliya* as well as to the *anbiyā*.<sup>137</sup> The miracle of the prophet (*muʿjizā*) was paralleled by the miracle of the saint (*karāmat*). The *walīs* were commonly believed to possess the power of performing miracles. For Ali al-Hujwiri, the miracles of the saints were a proof of the truth of the Prophet's mission; indeed, it was a miracle of the prophet that Muslim saints could perform miracles.<sup>138</sup> In the *Ādāb-al-Harb* it is stated: 'You should recognize it as a fact that the saints have power to perform miracles'.<sup>139</sup>

The *Sūfī shaikhs*, who were generally regarded as *walīs*, were given even greater importance in practice than what was conceded to the *walīs* in theory. According to Shaikh Nizamuddin, the command of the Shaikh is like the command of the Prophet.<sup>140</sup> In the *Tamhīdāt*, the *pir's* command is like God's; in fact, the *pir* is like God.<sup>141</sup> In the *Muktūbāt* of Shaikh Abdul Quddus, since the *walīs* are always 'with God', to reach them is to reach God.<sup>142</sup> The indispensability of the *pir* was generally taken for granted. 'He who has no *pir* has no faith'.<sup>143</sup> One was bound to fall into the depths of

135. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 130.

136. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, 28.

137. F. 57a.

138. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 222.

139. Shaffi, Iqbal M. (tr.), "Fresh Light on the Ghaznavids", *Islamic Culture* (April, 1938), 229.

140. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, 128.

141. Ff. 20 b, 14a.

142. F. 163 b.

143. *Tamhīdāt*, f. 7 b.

darkness without the light provided by the *pir*.<sup>144</sup> The most frequently quoted saying of the *shaikhs* is to the effect that those who had no *shaikh* had Satan (*Iblis*) as their guide.<sup>145</sup> The author of the *Siyar-al-Auliya* talks of the 'love of the *pir*'; his aid could be invoked even in his absence in all emergencies.<sup>146</sup> Shaikh Abdul Quddus talks of *fanā-fi'al-shaikh* as a prelude to *fanā fi' Allah*.<sup>147</sup> As a result, even the apparently heterodox statement could be made that 'a *murid* who worships the *pir* is better than the one who worships God'.<sup>148</sup> Without any ambiguity, however, 'in the worship of the *pir* lies the worship of God'.<sup>149</sup>

The importance given to the *shaikh* had very interesting implications. Shaikh Abdul Quddus concedes the necessity of pilgrimage (*hajj*), but not before the service of the *murshid*.<sup>150</sup> In the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni*, real pilgrimage is not the sight of stones seen by the *hājis* but the light in the eyes of the *auliyā* which, indeed, turns into 'intercession' on the Last Day.<sup>151</sup> It is stated in the *Siyar-al-Auliya* that Shaikh Fariduddin never went on pilgrimage to Mecca, following the example of his *murshid*, Qutbuddin Bakhtyar.<sup>152</sup> In the *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*: 'only those go on pilgrimage who have no *pir*'.<sup>153</sup> The real *Ka'ba* was in the heart, in which could be seen God.<sup>154</sup> How-

144. Ashraf Jahangir, *Maktūbāt*, 38.

145. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*; *Rushd-nāma-i-Māhshī*, 5; *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 326.

146. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 100.

147. *Maktūbāt*, f. 216 b.

148. *Ibid.*, ff. 73 a & b, 74 a, 176 a.

149. *Ibid.*, f. 73 a.

150. *Maktūbāt*, f. 74b.

151. P. 12.

152. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 407.

153. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 87.

154. *Tamhidāt*, f. 50 a.

ever, the *ziyārat* of the tombs of saints was a different matter. It is approved by Ali al-Hujwiri.<sup>155</sup> It was sanctified by the examples of venerable *shaikhs* having gone to the *ziyārat* of the tombs of their *murshids*. The *auliyā* occupied a prominent position in the hierarchy of spiritual beings who, it was generally believed, were responsible for the good governance of the universe.<sup>156</sup> According to Ashraf Jahangir, the various *auliyā* in India had been appointed by God for the safety of their respective domains (*walāyats*).<sup>157</sup> In due course it came to be believed that the sincere association of a person with the *ptr* even for a few days could enable him to become a *wali* himself and to be possessor of the power to work miracles.<sup>158</sup> The *shaikh* was the living vicegerent of the Prophet.<sup>159</sup> 'The Shaikh in the midst of the *murids* is like Muhammad in the midst of his companions (*ashāb*)'.<sup>160</sup>

Indeed, for his formal disciples the *shaikh* was almost everything. The attainment of their goal depended on him at every step, from their initiation to the state of subsistence in God. It is true that the *Sūfis* occasionally use expressions suggestive of their belief in predestination or at least in the omnipotence of God.<sup>161</sup> It is said in fact that a person was 'fortunate' or 'wretched' already in the mother's womb.<sup>162</sup>

155. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 345, *Jawāmi'-al-Kilām*, f. 281 a.

156. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 213 : Rain fell through their blessings; plants sprang through the purity of their lives and believers gained victories over the non-believers through their influence; cf. *Makṭūbāt-i-Abdul Quddus*, f. 71 b.

157. *Makṭūbāt*, 127.

158. Jahan Ara, *Mūnis-al-Arwāh*.

159. *Mīrsād-al-ʿIbad*, f. 109 b.

160. *Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, 19.

161. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwā'id*, 54.

162. *Tamhidāt*, f, 88 b; *Lataif-i-Quddūsi*, 3.

However, the idea of predestination did not restrain the *Sūfi* in acting 'as though he believed in free will'.<sup>163</sup> It was generally believed in fact that it was for man 'to strive' and for God 'to give'.<sup>164</sup> The first step on the path was repentance (*taubah*) which placed the repentant at par with the abstinent.<sup>165</sup> Then from stage to stage (*maqāmāt*) the initiate traversed the road to 'unification' by following the ascetic discipline and comtemplative practices. But these stages were to be accompanied by appropriate states (*ahwāl*) which were God's gifts.<sup>166</sup> The supreme state (*hāl*) was that of *baqā* (subsistence in God), following upon passing away from self (*fanā*). In actual practice it was difficult to distinguish a *maqām* from a *hāl*, though this distinction justified the belief in God's grace. At any rate, the importance of the guide (*murshid*) was obvious to the traveller (*salik*) at every stage of his spiritual voyage.

Descriptions of the stages of the mystic path reveal variations, both of number and sequence. But their variations are slight and the stages most commonly mentioned are : repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, trust in God and satisfaction.<sup>167</sup> Though all of these might have been regarded as equally important, greater emphasis is laid in Indo-Muslim *Sūfi* literature on *taubah* (repentance), *tark* (renunciation) and *razā* (satisfaction). The first involved a realization of heedlessness and sin ; the second meant the abandonment of all desire as much as of pleasure ; and the third, an eager acceptance of God's decree. This last idea was closely associated with trust in God (*tawakkul*) and al-Ghazali's

163. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 17, 74.

164. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwā'id*, 4.

165. *Ibid.*, 34.

166. *'Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, 60.

167. Hardy, P., *Islam in Mediæval India*, 412; cf. *Bahr-al-Ma'ānī*, 174-77.

similes were often repeated : the trust of the client in his *wakil*, of the baby in its mother and, above all, of the dead body in the hand of the *ghassāl* (washer).<sup>168</sup> The practice of renunciation, to be in the world but not of it, is stressed by Shaikh Nizamuddin about fifteen times in the *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*.<sup>169</sup> For Shaikh Abdul Quddus, the three most commendable practices were renunciation, solitude and *zīkr* (remembrance of God).<sup>170</sup>

A repeated remembrance of God (*zīkr*), one of the most important of *Sūfī* practices had its basis in the *Qur'ānic* verse, 'Remember God often'. According to the '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*' the best choice for *zīkr* was the first part of the *kalima* : 'There is no god but Allah'.<sup>171</sup> The author of the *Ma'rifat-al-Sulūk*, however, favours the *zīkr* of 'Allah' alone, for in it is complete 'affirmation' and no 'negation'.<sup>172</sup> He recommends also a formula of seven letters, each symbolizing a prayer relating to gnosticism.<sup>173</sup> It may be inferred that the practice of *zīkr*, with some of the *Sūfīs*, had become a mere ritual,

Perhaps the most important practice of the *Sūfīs* was audition (*samā'*), or listening to the singing of moving verses often accompanied by dance and instrumental music. In spite of opposition from the '*ulamā*' and a grudging admission of its lawfulness by some of the *shaikhs* themselves,

168. *Kimiyā-i-Sa'ādat* (Urdu tr.), 572.

169. The other themes brought up for talk are:

*namūz*, *rozah*, *hajj*, *zakāt*, *wilāiya*, *zīkr*, *sukr* and *sahw*, *tawakkul*, *tā'at*, *sabr*, *tahammal*, *samā'*, *karāmat*, *taubah*, renunciation and *sulūk* in general, besides some points of theology and law.

170. *Maktūbāt*, ff. 24 a, 4 a.

171. P. 47

172. P. 25.

173. *Ibid.*, 45-46, 29.

the tradition of *samā'* had come to stay and prosper in the Muslim world. 'I have travelled', says Shaikh Jamali, 'to Mecca and Medina and in Egypt and Syria; everywhere the great *mashāikh* participate in *samā'*, in spite of the learned '*uilmā*; none forbids them'.<sup>174</sup> Though the Suhrawardi *shāikhs* in India did not encourage *samā'*, in their text of *Sūfism* the efficacy of *samā'* in aiding perfection of the true lovers is recognized: 'the *murīd* travels in a single moment as, without it, he cannot travel in years'.<sup>175</sup> The spiritual effect of *samā'* was attributed to the compact (*mīṣāq*) in pre-eternity between God and man in accordance with the *Sūfī* interpretation of the *Qur'ānic* verse containing, 'Am I not your Lord?'.<sup>176</sup> In justification of *samā'* was often quoted the saying: 'We have sung to you and ye have not been moved with emotion; and we have piped to you and ye have not danced'.<sup>177</sup> To *samā'* had been lent also the authority of al-Ghazali who had believed that only the foolish, the frozen and the hard of heart were shut off from the pleasure of music and poetry. The aid of audition to spiritual states was undeniable: 'The cause of these states befalling the heart through listening to music is the secret of God most High'.<sup>178</sup> In India, *samā'* was popularized mostly by the Chishti *shāikhs* who had practised it in spite of occasional opposition from the '*ulamā*'.<sup>179</sup> Shaikh

174. *Siyar-al-'Arifin*, f. 156.

175. '*Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, 30, 32.

176. *Ibid.*, 30-31; *Mirsād-al-'Ibad*, f. 189 b; *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 500.

177. "Al-Ghazali The Mystic", *JRAS* (1901), 234; *Bahr-al-Ma'āni*, 194.

178. "Al-Ghazali The Mystic", *JRAS* (1901), 230.

179. A quatrain in the *Tamhidāt*, for instance, was often quoted on the point and the irony is evidently at the cost of those who opposed *samā'*: 'You say that *samā'* is unlawful to you. May it remain unlawful for you!'; *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 521; also, 492. In fact, there are several references to conflicting opinions on *samā'* in contemporary literature.

Qutbuddin Bakhtyar was so much affected by *samā'* that, at last, he died on the recitation of the verse :<sup>180</sup>

Those who are killed by the sword of submission

Receive every moment a new life from Him.

Shaikh Nizamuddin was believed to have expressed his regret for not having 'asked' for death during *samā'*.<sup>181</sup> The verses which affected Shaikh Nizamuddin used to be recited by people for a long time and at many places.<sup>182</sup> It may be interesting to note that some of his disciples were most affected by Hindi verses.<sup>183</sup>

It has been observed recently that in India, 'because of the challenge and the risk of disintegration into Hindu mysticism, Sufism took special care to resolve its differences with orthodoxy. In Islamic religious history the tension between the religious assertion of the transcendence of God and the mystical aspiration for His immanence was perhaps nowhere more thoroughly resolved to a middle of the road position than in India where Islam was propagated mainly by the Sufis with a firm emphasis on the observance of the tenets of the *Sharia'a*'.<sup>184</sup> It is true that the Suhrawardi and Chishti *shaikhs* laid a good deal of stress upon *namāz* and *rozah* and seldom went out of their way to offend the orthodox. But as already pointed out, among the Chishtis the *hajj* was never given much importance in actual practice and *samā'* was never discarded in spite of opposition

180. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, 81; *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 55; *Akbār-al-Akhyār*, f. 26 a.

181. *Siyar-al-Arifin*, f. 151: Death during *samā'* was witnessed by Ibn Battuta. See also, *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 500, 501.

182. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 510, 511.

183. *Jawāmi'-al-Kīlam*, f. 138 b.

184. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, 131.

from the 'ulamā. In fact the increasing popularity and influence of the *mashāikh* among the Indo-Muslims obliged the 'ulamā to tolerate their practices as well as their existence. The co-existence of the *Sūfis* and the 'ulamā must not be confused with conciliation between orthodox theology and *Sūfi* theosophy or between the orthodox ideal of piety and the mystic goal of 'unification'. When Ali al-Hujwiri says that rejection of the Law is heresy, he also adds that rejection of Truth is infidelity and polytheism.<sup>185</sup> The author of the *Bahr-al-Ma'āni* says that the ignorant expounders of the Law criticized all references to God in terms of Love.<sup>186</sup> One of the most frequently quoted verses among the Indo-Muslim *Sūfis* clearly asserts that Abu Hanifa and al-Shafi have nothing to teach of Love.<sup>187</sup> And *Sūfism* shorn of love would be 'Hamlet' without the prince of Denmark.

Furthermore, in a historical approach to *Sūfism*, to emphasize its 'conformity' is to ignore its great variety. It was noted by Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi that the 'crowd at this time called *qalandaria* have taken off from their necks the helter of Islam'.<sup>188</sup> References to the wandering *darvishes*, with blue-coloured cloaks, in Indo-Muslim *Sūfi* literature are not very complimentary.<sup>189</sup> Though individual *qalandars*, like Sharfuddin Bu Ali of Panipat, could command respect, the *madāris*, *haidaris* and *qalandars* as a class were not appreciated by the sober

185. *Kashf-al-Mahjūb*, 139.

186. P. 46.

187. *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, 103; cf. Rizvi, S. A. A., *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, 65-66.

188. *'Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, 140.

189. For instance, *Fuwā'id-al-Fuwād*, 4; *Jawāmi'-al-Kilām*, 229, 733.

*shaikhs*<sup>190</sup>. Shaikh Abdul Quddus specifically states that in his youth the *madārīs* were regarded as depraved unbelievers.<sup>191</sup> The idea of *malāmat* (a genuine possession of *hāl* concealed in a misleading appearance) was an old one.<sup>192</sup> But the practice was noticed by Shaikh Abdul Quddus in his own day also : a naked *diwāna*, Yunis, used to drink on the roadside all alone and to recite the *ba'it* :<sup>193</sup>

The *Sūfī* does not become 'pure' until he quaffs the goblet;

It is a long way indeed from rawness to ripeness.

The Chishti *shaikhs* showed indulgence to genuine or fake *malāmatis*. Even so, Shaikh Abdul Quddus regrets the degeneration of *piri* and *murīdī* of his own time; many a *shaikh* was ignorant or incompetent or even libertine : 'The one who could not himself swim, how could he teach others to swim ? When the blind lead the blind, they all fall into the ditch'.<sup>194</sup>

The attitude of the Indo-Muslim *shaikhs* towards the non-Muslims was generally marked by tolerance. Shaikh Nizamuddin disapproves of cruelty in extracting the *jiziya*.<sup>195</sup> The Chishti *shaikhs* were seldom reluctant to come into contact with Hindus or to enter into discussion with them

190. *Siyar-al-'Arifin*, ff. 150, 139; *Jawāmi'-al-Kilām*, f. 275 b; Barani, in the *Tarikh-i-Firūz Shāhi*, brackets the *qalandaris* and *haidaris*. For a good brief statement on the opposition of the *qalandars*, see Rizvi, S. A. A., *Muslims Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, 29, 31.

191. *Latāif-i-Quddūsi*, 6; cf. *Mukh-al-Ma'āni*, 129.

192. *'Awārif-al-Ma'ārif*, 134, 137; cf. Ashraf Jahangir, *Maktūbāt*, 75.

193. *Latāif-i-Quddūsi*, 8.

194. *Maktūbāt*, f. 73 d.

195. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 76.

on religious matters.<sup>196</sup> References to contact or contest with the Jogis in particular only confirm this impression. Shaikh Nizamuddin once made a frank admission that he had appreciated one particular observation made by a Jogi.<sup>197</sup> The Shattari *shaikh*, Muhammad Ghaus, recommends in his *Bahr-al-Hayāt* the use of some Hindawi 'incantations' and sees many parallels between *Sūfi* theosophy and *Yoga*.<sup>198</sup> He reveals his familiarity with the Siddhajogis and the Gorakhnāthis; and Gesudaraz appreciates their complete devotion to God and detachment from the world.<sup>199</sup> According to Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus, the Jogis related the truths of gnosis only in a different 'language' from that of the *Sūfis*.<sup>200</sup> Such an appreciation of the Jogis was probably not common even in the time of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus. For the average *Sūfi* the order of nearness to God was still: Muhammad, the prophets, the *auliyā*, the believers and the infidels.<sup>201</sup> His general attitude was perhaps expressed in *al-Insān al-Kāmil*: 'Even if the infidels had known the torments which they must suffer in consequence of their worship, they would have persisted in it by reason of the spiritual delight they experience therein'. Shaikh Nizamuddin regrets that some of the Hindus know that Islam is the true religion but they do not become Muslims.<sup>202</sup> The relative ineffectiveness of Islam as a religious force in India was attributed by the

196. See, for instance, *Jawāmi'-al-Kilam*, ff. 88 a & b; *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 29.

197. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 49.

198. See, for instance, *Siyar-al-Auliyā*, 444; *Jawāmi'-al-Kilam*, 266.

199. *Jawāmi'-al-Kilam*, ff. 108 b, 109 a & b, 112 a & b.

200. *Bahr-al-Hayāt*, ff. 21 a, 23 a & b, 33 a, 42 a, 45 a, 47 a.

201. *Mirat-al-'Arifin*, f. 88 b.

202. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 76.

*Sūfis*, to the lack of ethical superiority in Muslims themselves.<sup>203</sup>

The *Sūfis* believed that theirs were the true ethics of Islam. They inculcated a whole-hearted devotion to God alone. Devotion or piety in women was as much acceptable as in men.<sup>204</sup> Indeed, women were to be accepted as disciples; Shaikh Nizamuddin recommends the mention of pious women, before that of men, in prayers.<sup>205</sup> The Chishti *shaikhs* were not reluctant to accept disciples from amongst the lower strata of the Indo-Muslim society. Shaikh Nizamuddin, for instance, was particularly pleased at the spiritual progress made by some butchers of Delhi.<sup>206</sup> The *shaikhs* generally recommended manumission of slaves. *Sūfī* piety at its best was free from superstition.<sup>207</sup> The *Sūfis* preached personal humility and a deep concern for the brothers in faith.<sup>208</sup> They denounced oppression and injustice.<sup>209</sup> The essence of *Sūfī* ethics for Shaikh Nizamuddin is: 'Do not do unto others what you would not do unto yourself; wish for others only what you wish for yourself'.<sup>210</sup> Not to injure others, by word or deed, was recommended again and again.<sup>211</sup> 'Every particle of the universe shows the way to God, but no way to Him is shorter than the one through human heart'.<sup>212</sup>

203. *Ibid.*, 102, 107.

204. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 13.

205. *Loc. cit.*

206. *Ibid.*, 134.

207. Shaikh Nizamuddin, for instance, disapproved of the belief that any day could be inauspicious: *Ibid.*, 67.

208. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 42; *Siyar-al-Arifin*, f. 146.

209. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 174.

210. *Fuwāid-al-Fuwād*, 6.

211. *Siyar-al-Auliya*, 128.

212. Shaikh Nizamuddin attributing it to Abu Sa'id Abu'l Khair: *Ibid.*, 411.

## CHAPTER IV

# RELIGION : HINDUISM

Islam in its *Sūfi*, sectarian and 'orthodox' forms was not yet the religion of the majority of people in the Punjab. The indigenous forms of religious belief and practice were not only older but, on the whole, also richer in variety and more complex.

One of the oldest Indian religions represented in the Punjab of our period was Jainism which had maintained its distinct identity through its monks (*jatts*). In the early fifteenth century, a party of Jaina pilgrims is known to have visited Kangra.<sup>1</sup> It is very likely that the itinerant Jaina monks had some following among the trading communities of the Punjab.<sup>2</sup> But the total number of Jainas in the Punjab was probably quite negligible. Nevertheless the wandering *jatts* attracted attention because of their outward appearance and peculiar practices. In the seventeenth century Sujana Rai noticed their conspicuous presence as well as their unpopularity among the Hindus. The chief characteristics of the Jaina monks noted

1. Jain, Banarsi Das, "Jainism in the Punjab", *Sarāpa-Bhārati* (reprint), Hoshiarpur 1954, 6-7.
2. According to H. A. Rose, nearly 99% of the Jainas in the Punjab belonged to the trading classes: *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 105. See also, *Punjab Notes & Queries*, I, No. 9, 121. Some Jaina monks established themselves in Lahore during the time of Akbar: Jain, Banarsi Das, "Jainism in the Punjab". But there is no reason to suppose that the Jaina monks had no lay following in the Punjab before the sixteenth century.

by Sujan Rai were their ascetical practices, their atheistic system of beliefs and their meticulousness about not injuring any living being.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike Jainism, Buddhism had failed to maintain a distinct identity in the Punjab by the time of Guru Nanak. Hiuen Tsang had noticed several Buddhist monasteries in the Punjab. Buddhism, however, was very much on the decline and in actual practice had 'compromised with the brahmanical religion to such an extent that it could almost have been regarded as a sect of the latter'.<sup>4</sup> In the fifteenth century, pockets of *tāntric* Buddhism could be found in the Punjab hills, but in the plains it had suffered by then a dilution which was little short of disappearance.<sup>5</sup>

Like Buddhism, the worship of the Sun, which at one time had gained considerable importance in northern India, nearly disappeared from the Punjab during the medieval period. The *Aditya Purāna* is mentioned by Alberuni among the eighteen *Purānas*. He refers also to two famous temples dedicated to the deity: the Aditya temple at Multan and the temple of Chakraswamy at Thanesar.<sup>6</sup> Places associated with this

3. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 23.

4. Thapar, Romila, *A History of India*, 159.

5. Cf. Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 67, 88-89; Goswamy, Karuna, *Vaishnavism in the Punjab Hills and Pahari Painting*, Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh 1968, 11, n. 1. (seen through the author's courtesy).

6. *Alberuni's India*, 116. Also, Upadhyay, Vasudeva, *Socio-Religious Condition of North India (700-1200 A. D.)*, Varanasi 1964, 259. The author also notices that several of the rulers at Thanesar were worshippers of Surya (Aditya): *ibid.*, 258. See also, *Archaeological Survey of India (1863-64)*, II, 219; V, 115-19.

worship could be found even in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> It may be safely assumed that some temples dedicated to the Sun remained in existence in the Punjab of our period. But the number of sun-worshippers appears to have been rather negligible. It has been observed by Hopkins that a most striking feature of the Hindu religions is the identification of right with light and of wrong with darkness.<sup>8</sup> It is tempting to connect this idea ultimately to the worship of the Sun. Ablutions offered to the rising sun, a practice quite common in those days as now, may also be associated at least indirectly with the worship of the Sun.<sup>9</sup>

The dominant forms of religious belief and practice in the Punjab of our period were Hindu. The authority of the *Vedas* was recognized by the priests of nearly all the Hindu sects and it was invoked in support of many a socio-religious custom.<sup>10</sup> The position of the *Vedas* as 'revealed' knowledge

7. See, for instance, *Archaeological Survey of India* (1872-73), V. 126; XXIII, 21, 25; *Châr-Bâgh-i-Panjab*, 303-04. Cf. Upadhyay V., *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 255-69. For a brief treatment of the worship of the Sun, see Bhandarkar, R. G. *Vaisnavism, 'Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona 1929, 212-21.
8. Hopkins, E.W., *The Religions of India*, London 1896, 422.
9. Watters, Thomas, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, 629-645. A.D., Royal Asiatic Society, London 1904, I, 320-21. Cf. McLeod, W.H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1968, 90 and n. 2. In Bhandarkar's view the sun has been adored since the Vedic times for the removal of sins, and the bestowal of riches, food, fame, health, and other blessings. At the present day twelve prostrations are made to Surya by repeating twelve of his names, all of which have a Sanskrit etymology and there is no foreign look about them. 'There is also a more elaborate set of such prostrations': *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, 217.
10. Cf. Weber, Max, *The Religion of India*, Illinois 1960, 26-27.

was indeed unique in the Hindu scriptures. However, the *Purānas* appear to have enjoyed greater popularity throughout the medieval period. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Ramāyana* appear to have been quite popular, though it is difficult to treat them as 'religious' texts of any particular Hindu sect. The six schools of philosophy remained in currency<sup>11</sup> but the *Vedānta* was gradually coming to the fore.<sup>12</sup> Some of the basic ideas of those schools could be invoked occasionally in support of one or another theosophical theory or religious practice. The *Nyaya* school was based on logic which had been brought into play in debates with Buddhist teachers; in the *Vaisheshika*, a kind of atomistic philosophy, there was a great insistence on the separation of the universes of matter and soul; the *samkhya* recognized dualism between matter and soul and explained creation in atheistic terms; the *Yoga* concentrated on the human body and experience for knowledge of the ultimate reality; the *Mimamsa* and the *Vedānta* were based on expositions of the *Vedas*. The main support for the last two systems came from the orthodox *brahmins*.

The three major 'sects' of medieval Hinduism were Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism. Of these the most important in the Punjab of our period appears to have been Shaivism. About its predominance in the Punjab hills during our period, as in Kashmir, there is little possibility of entertaining any doubts in the face of abundant and concrete evidence.<sup>13</sup> It is suggested by some scholars that

11. This is evident from the testimony of Alberuni, Abul Fazl and Sujan Rai.
12. Thapar, Romila, *A History of India*, 162-63.
13. For consolidated information, see Goswamy, Karuna, *Vaishnavism in the Punjab Hills and Pahari Painting*, Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh 1968.

the religious developments in the plains of the Punjab were generally reflected in the hills, though at a later date.<sup>14</sup> On this argument, there is a good case for assuming that Shaivism was very important in the Punjab of our period. Archaeological evidence reveals that in northern India generally Shaivism had started coming to the fore after the seventh century, and the Punjab does not appear to have been an exception to this development. Some *deva* temples mentioned by Hiuen Tsang in the Punjab are specifically Shaiva.<sup>15</sup> The temple of Mahadeva at Thanesar added to its importance as a centre of pilgrimage. References to *shivālas* in the towns and the countryside of the Punjab in later literature are quite numerous. It has been said indeed that Shiva was the most popular of *brahmanical* deities in the Punjab, as in northern India, during the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> This later popularity of Shaivism, particularly in the face of increasing Vaishnava influence due to the impact of *bhakti* movement, leaves no doubt about the predominance of Shaivism in the Punjab during our period.

14. *Ibid.*, 76; Cf. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, No. 24, 199.
15. Watters, Thomas, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, 283, 286, 291, 296, 314. Cf. Chattopadhyaya, S., *Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, Calcutta 1962, 113, 115, 116; Upadhyay, V., *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 289-92. See also, *Archaeological Survey of India*, II, 206 (for the temple of Naleswara, near Sarhind); *ibid.*, V., 86, 88 (for a Mahadeva temple in the Salt Range); Bhandarkar, R. G., *Vaisnavism; Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, 167.
16. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, No. 10, 110; Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 260: the author observes that all castes in the Punjab worshipped Shiva, including the *brahmāns* and *khātris* who were followed in this practice by the *sunārs* and *thāthiārs* and by some *banias*. See also, Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 176-77, 180-205, 263, 273, 303, 305.

It may also be presumed that the Shaiva *brahmins* looked after the *shivālas* and cultivated Shaiva literature, the *Agamas*. In fact, the importance of Shaivism even in *Purānic* literature was next only to that of Vaishnavism. However, the strength of Shaivism in the Punjab of our period lay chiefly in its monastic orders. References to *sannyāsis* in contemporary and later literature point to their importance throughout the medieval period.<sup>17</sup> Sujan Rai observed that the categories of *sannyāsis* were quite numerous; all of them were extremely ascetical in their practices, underwent hard penances and shunned the pleasures of the senses.<sup>18</sup>

'Asceticism and monastic organization', according to G. S. Ghurye, 'are two unique contributions which Indian civilization has made to the common stock of culture'.<sup>19</sup> Whereas asceticism concerned only the individual's practices, monasticism had a bearing on social organization. Monastic orders are much in evidence among the Shaivas several centuries before the time of Guru Nanak. Contrary to the views held by some writers, there was only one school of *sannyāsis* with its ten orders known as *dasnāmīs*.<sup>20</sup> The *sannyāsis* generally wore ochre coloured garments and some of them went naked. They could be distinguished by the *tilak*-mark on their foreheads. Some of the *sannyāsis* carried a tiger's or panther's skin on their shoulders. Almost all of them used ash for the *tilak*-mark which generally consisted of three horizontal lines representing the trident

17. Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 164, 179, 220, 245, 247-48. Ganesh Das refers to famous *sannyāsis* in Shamsabad, Pasrur, Gujrat and in the villages Punnānke and Kharat in the Rechna *doāb*.

18. *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, 22.

19. Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Sadhus*, Bombay, 1953, 1.

20. *Ibid.*, 79.

of Shiva or his third eye. Some used only two horizontal lines with a dot, considered to be a representation of the phallic emblem of Shiva. The wearing of the *tilak*-mark was regarded as an important ritual. The *sannyāsīs* frequently established *maths* or *sthānas* and the head of the establishment was either appointed by the founder himself or elected by his *sannyāst* disciples. He looked after the usual amenities for inmates or even the visiting *sannyāsīs*. Some of the *maths* undertook teaching activities and extended hospitality to the lay visitors. Some of the *sannyāst* orders were not reluctant to admit females or *shūdras* as members.<sup>21</sup>

Distinct from the *sannyāsīs* but closely connected with Shaivism were the Jogis, with their principal orders: Aghorapanthis and Nāthapanthis. The latter were the followers of Gorakhnath and admitted members from all castes and also females. Only those of the Jogis who went through the last stage of initiation were called *kanphātās*. The others were known as *aughars*. The last stage of initiation consisted in having the ear-lobes pierced with the *bhatraṇi* knife and large rings worn by the Jogi. These rings were generally called *mudrī*. The *kanphātā* Jogis used the suffix *nātha* to their names, greeted one another with the epithet *ādesa* and used a kind of blowing horn, *singi*. The Nāthapanthis are believed to have established important monastic centres in which the chief deity was Bhairava. The *dhūni* or a continuous fire was an important feature of the Nāthapanthi centres. In due course the Nāthapanthi order came to have twelve sections with a central organization called the Bhekh-Bāra.<sup>22</sup>

21. *Ibid.*, 101, 102, 109, 160, 257.

22. *Ibid.*, 150-51, 152-53, 155-56, 157-58.

Shaivism in the Punjab enjoyed a certain amount of vigour through its representation by the Jogis. Their contact or conflict with the *Sūfis* has been noticed in the previous chapter. Ibn Battuta claims to have witnessed some of their 'supernatural' feats in the presence of Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq.<sup>23</sup> Notwithstanding their association with magical powers, Ibn Khaldun had heard of their literature too and, according to D. B. Macdonald, Ibn al-Arabi had revised a translation of some *Yoga* work, with the help of a Jogi. Sujan Rai mentions the efficacy of medicines administered by the Jogis as well as their own ability to fly in the air, to walk on water, to acquire clairvoyance, to prolong life through practising *habs-i-dam* (suspension of breath) and to transmute ash into gold.<sup>24</sup> Besides the famous *tillā* of Gorakhnath in the Jhelum district, several places in the Punjab are associated with the Jogis: Gorakh-hatri, Makhad, Katas, Jakhbar, Kirana, Kohat, Bawanna, Bohar, Achal, Kahnuwan, Bhera, for instance.<sup>25</sup> Some of these were in existence in the fifteenth century and there is a great probability that records of many minor establishments of the Jogis have not survived.<sup>26</sup>

The order of the Jogis was remarkable for its organizational aspect. The most important Jogi establishment was of course the *tillā* of Gorakhnath and regular succession

23. *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 225-26.

24. *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, 22.

25. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 102, 164, 165, 210, 211, 299. See also, *Gazetteer of the Gurdaspur District*, 1914, 26, 27, 30-31; *Tārikh-i-Gujrat*, 585; Rose H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 123-25, 289; *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Multan*, 58-59, 60-61.

26. This of course is a mere suggestion. But this is the impression I get from some study of the Jogi establishments in the Punjab which I have made in collaboration with Dr. B. N. Goswamy.

of *gurus* or *mahanis* had taken place there for several centuries.<sup>27</sup> It is believed by a present-day scholar that Gorakhnath was the first reformer to emphasize 'practical guidance from the Guru'.<sup>28</sup> Whether or not this is taken as literally true, it is quite certain that succession to Gorakhnāthi *gaddis* was perhaps more formal than in other religious orders of the times. Under the aegis of the parent establishment, individual Jogis of known sanctity were permitted to establish their own *gaddis*, while the parent establishment served also as a link between the new establishments. In all probability, each succession had to be formally recognized by the *mahanis* of the various establishments of the Gorakhnāthi order.<sup>29</sup> Just as the vigour of Shaivism lay mainly in the monastic orders like that of the Jogis, so the strength of the Jogi order itself lay in its tight organization.

The movement initiated by Gorakhnath in the Punjab had its origins in the concept of *yoga* as the means of attaining to liberation, or rebirth to a non-conditional mode of being, through effectual techniques. Mircea Eliade regards this concept of *yoga* as important as the concepts of *Karma*, *Māyā* and *Nirvāna* in the history of Hindu religions.<sup>30</sup> Unlike the *Samkhya*, to which otherwise it presents several similarities, *Yoga*, is theistic and accords importance to techniques and meditation and not to metaphysical knowledge. Also, for *Yoga*, the world is real, and not illusory

27. In an early sixteenth-century versified dialogue between Machhandar and Ratan, fifteen names are mentioned as of the successors of Gorakhnath: Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*, Amritsar, 1951, 38-39.

28. *Ibid.*, 31.

29. See. n. 260, above; also Goswamy, B. N. and Grewal, J. S., *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*.

30. *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, London 1958, 3.

as it is for the *Vedānta*. Yoga in its widest sense had old and 'respectable' antecedents. 'The gradual spread of Yoga practice, regarded as an admirable way of salvation, can be traced both in juridico-theological literature and the didactic and religious portions of the *Mahābhārata*'.<sup>31</sup> In the *Yoga-tattva Upanishad* four kinds of Yoga are distinguished: *mantra*, *lāya*, *hatha* and *rāja*. It was the *hatha-yoga* that was appropriated by the Gorakhnāthis and transformed into a movement of considerable importance by the twelfth century.<sup>32</sup> By the fifteenth century this movement had perhaps reached, or even passed, its climax in the Punjab.<sup>33</sup>

In Hathayoga, great importance was attached to preliminary purifications, which as the texts repeatedly emphasize, were of great value for the yogi's health: *dhauti*, *basti*, *neti*, *nauli*, *trataka* and *kapala bhāti*.<sup>34</sup> Nothing could be obtained without *abhyāsa* (practice), and *pranayāma* was absolutely essential for purifying the *nāḍīs*; the most important of these *nāḍīs* being *ida*, *pingala* and *susumna*. Around them was built an elaborate and a complex system of homologies. It was believed that *pranayāma* destroyed all sins and conferred *siddhis* on the adept. Immortality of a perfect body (*siddha-deha*) led to immortality in a divine body (*divyā-deha*) and the attainment of perfection (*siddhi*) meant *jīvan-muktī* (liberation in life). This supreme state was the state of Shivahood.<sup>35</sup> This was 'the inner truth'

31. *Ibid.*, 143.

32. Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Sadhus*, 144-48.

33. It must be pointed out, however, that several important establishments of the Jogis in the Punjab belong to later centuries.

34. Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 230.

35. Dasgupta, Shashibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Calcutta 1962 (2nd ed.) 218-19; Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 306.

of the cult of Nāthism. Thus, it was not simply the adoption of Hathayogic practices but also their assimilation to a particular theological system that distinguished the order of the Jogis from some other 'sects'.<sup>36</sup>

Though the attainment of occult powers was not the end, there was a widespread belief in the occult power of the *siddhas*. Even in literature on *Yoga* in general, such powers are regarded as within the range of certainty. Eight powers (*vibhūti*s) in particular were well-known: the power of becoming as small as an atom, of becoming enormously big, assuming extreme lightness or excessive weight, obtaining everything at will, obtaining supremacy over everything, and the power of subduing, fascinating and bewitching.<sup>37</sup> On the attainment of *siddhi*, to walk on a bridge made of a hair or to walk on the edge of a razor was believed to be as easy as to walk on water or to fly in the air.<sup>38</sup> All those who attained to perfection were honoured with the general epithet of Siddha and, through a confused amalgamation of the Jogi Siddhas and the Buddhist Siddhacharyas, arose the tradition of 'eighty-four *siddhas*', the number eighty-four having only a mystic significance. At the initiation ceremony of the Gorakhnāthis, the initiate was required to worship not only the 'eighty-four *siddhas*' but also the 'nine-nāthas' who were believed to be immortal demigods still living in the Himalayas as the guardian spirits of the Himalayan peaks.<sup>39</sup>

The association of the Jogis with medicine and herbs

36. Dasgupta, Shashibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 201.

37. *Ibid.*, 212.

38. *Ibid.*, 226.

39. *Ibid.*, 202, 204, 206, 207, 219.

suggests their connection with the Shiva school of *Rase-svara-darshana*.<sup>40</sup> Even in the days of Patanjali it was believed that *siddhi* could be attained by the use of herbs or medicines (*ausadhi*). Vyasa comments that the use of *ausadhi* for this purpose referred to *rasayana*, a physico-chemical process which is noted by Alberuni also.<sup>41</sup> In the cult of the Jogis, this *rasa* was replaced by the nectar oozing from the moon and the earlier idea was changed into a psycho-chemical process.<sup>42</sup> But some of the Jogis maintained their practical interest in herbs and medicines almost for its own sake. Closely associated with the *rasayana* as the vehicle for psychic and spiritual operations was the belief in alchemy. Though the most distinct and frequent references to alchemy are to be found in the literature of *tāntric Yoga*, the Jogis in general were believed to possess alchemical knowledge.<sup>43</sup> The association of the Jogis with alchemy, medicine and magic finds enough justification in their literature and practices. But to emphasize this aspect of the order of the Jogis would be to miss their significance as a religious force.

It has been remarked that *Yoga* represented a reaction against metaphysical speculation and the excesses of a fossilized ritualism.<sup>44</sup> The popular legends created around Gorakhnāth, and around the *nāthas* and *siddhas*, gave expression to 'the real spiritual longings of the superficially

40. *Ibid.*, 192-94.

41. Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga : Immortality and Freedom*, 280, 283.

42. *Ibid.*, 229.

43. This was the impression carried, for instance, by Bernier. Sujan Rai's remark on the point has been mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. See also, Goswamy, B. N. and Grewal, J. S., *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 16, 32-33, 121-22, 123, n. 5.

44. Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga : Immortality and Freedom*, 360.

Hinduized masses'.<sup>45</sup> Though in theory all the Gorakhnāthīs could, and some actually did, marry, woman is depicted in Nātha literature as 'the tigress of the night', to be regarded as the greatest danger in the Jogi's path.<sup>46</sup> Towards men, however, the Jogis were more considerate: they tended to minimize the differences of caste and creed in accepting disciples. They were not reluctant to serve as *pujāris* in the temples of Shiva, Shakti and Bhairon. It is not unlikely that the temples of Bhairon were thrown open to the 'masses'. The use which the followers of Gorakhnāth in the Punjab made of the regional vernacular may be taken as an indication of their desire to address themselves to the uneducated as well as to the educated. Another form of their reaction to 'orthodoxy' may be seen in their refusal to recognize merit in pilgrimage. 'Wander not to sacred places, O Siddha', says Gorakhnāth.<sup>47</sup>

Not to leave the Gorakhnāthīs at a negative note, a few of their basic ideas may be noted. The inner *bhāva* was more important than external acts, whether one was a hermit or a householder. The truth, according to Gorakhnāth, was to be 'realized' within oneself.<sup>48</sup> But only the true teacher (*sat-guru*) could enable men to attain to this 'realization' which, in the last analysis, was the state of *sahaja*.<sup>49</sup> In the *sahaja* state or *smādhi* there is 'perfect equilibrium, which transcends all our perceptual knowledge with positive and negative attributes'. In this state of perfect quietude, the Jogi becomes one with the whole universe: 'He himself is the goddess, himself the God, himself the disciple, himself the

45. *Ibid.*, 302-04.

46. Dasgupta, *Shashibhushan, Obscure Religious Cults*, 244.

47. Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*, 33.

48. *Loc. cit.*

49. *Ibid.*, 35.

preceptor; he is at once the meditation, the meditator and the divinity'.<sup>50</sup> In this state the Jogi hears the divine music (*nād, anhata*) of immortality and the divine word (*śabd*) of ultimate truth.<sup>51</sup> In this state is everlasting bliss (*ānanda, mahāsukha*).<sup>52</sup> The attributes of God, for Gorakhnāth, were closely connected with these ideas: *sat-guru* (the true guide), *jivan-mukta* (the liberated-in-life), *alakhkh* (unseeable), *agamī* (unknowable), *amurta* (formless), *nirakar* (unformed), *amī* (undying), *nāda* (harmony), *pāra* (transcendent), *sunya* (contentless), for instance.<sup>53</sup>

For the existence of Vaishnavism in the Punjab of our period, there is first a clear literary evidence. The *Bhāgavata Gītā* the *Bhāgavata Purāna* and the *Vishnu Purāna* which are regarded as the Vaishnava texts *par excellence*, were known even to Alberuni whose information may be presumed to have been collected chiefly from the Punjab.<sup>54</sup> To these may be added the other *Purānas* associated with the *avatars* of Vishnu. This literary evidence is supported by the existence of temples dedicated to Vaishnava deities. An early inscription from Kangra indicates the prevalence of Bhagavatism in that region.<sup>55</sup> In Multan, a place associated with the *Narsingh* (man-lion) *avatar* of Vishnu remained in existence throughout the medieval period.<sup>56</sup> Other instances

50. Dasgupta, Shashibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 196.
51. Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*, 35.
52. Dasgupta, Shashibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 92.
53. Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*, 30.
54. Bhandarkar, R. G., *Vaishnavism, Saivism, and Minor Religious Systems*. 114. Cf. Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*. 366.
55. Goswamy, Karuna, *Vaishnavism in the Punjab Hills and Pahari Painting*, 69. The author suggests a valid distinction between early and later Vaishnavism by using the term Bhagavatism for the former.
56. *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Multan*, 52.

are also known.<sup>57</sup> Even in the eighteenth century, Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu could strike coins with invocation to Lakshmi-Narain.<sup>58</sup> It may be safely suggested, therefore, that Vaishnavism in its older form was known in the Punjab of our period.

However, it was due to the impact of the *bhakti* cult that Vaishnavism became more and more popular in the Punjab, as elsewhere in India. According to H. A. Rose, a new *bairāgi* movement was initiated in Multan, Muzaffarabad and Montgomery in the middle of the sixteenth century by Shamji and Lalji.<sup>59</sup> Sujan Rai noticed several categories of *bairāgis* in the seventeenth century; he associates them all with 'singing and dance'.<sup>60</sup> The famous Vaishnava *gaddis* of Pindori and Dhiaspur in the Gurdaspur district were established in the seventeenth century when Vaishnavism had started penetrating even the Punjab hills. Later references to Vaishnava *bairāgis* establishing their centres are quite numerous. Ganesh Das alone refers to such centres at Wazirabad, Cheema Chattha, Jalalpur Bhattian, Gujrat and Narowal and also in some villages of the Bari, Rechna and Sindh Sagar *doābs*. At one place he specifically refers

57. The temple of Totala Mai in the city of Multan and the temple of Suraj Kund at a distance of four miles from Multan: *ibid.*, 53-56. In the Sindh Sagar Doab, Ganesh Das mentions a place of pilgrimage called *Narsingh Puhār* visited by ordinary Hindus as well as by Hindu *darvishes*: *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 166. The temple of Ram Tirath in the city of Multan and of Ram Chautra in the village Ram Chautra in Sarai Siddhu *tahsil*: *Tawārikh-i-Zila-i-Multan*, 57.

58. Ganesh Das, *Rāj Darshini*, British Museum Catalogue No. Or 1634, ff. 235 b-236 a (microfilm in the Panjab University Library, Chandigarh).

59. *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 388-92.

60. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 23.

to a disciple of Parmanand who belonged to the *silsilah* of Ramanand Bairagi.<sup>61</sup>

Now, if the case of Vaishnavism in the Punjab hills can serve as a safe guide, it may be visualized that the bearers of new Vaishnavism in the Punjab had to struggle hard against the prevalent forms of religious belief and practice.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the tangible evidence of Vaishnava establishment in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may suggest an earlier background of individual effort at propagating the new faith. Though there is no direct evidence on this point, it is highly probable that the *bhakti* cult was being represented in the Punjab in the late fifteenth century. It is true that no late fifteenth century *bhagat* of the Punjab has left any record for posterity and there is not a single significant example to cite. However, there was always the possibility of pilgrims coming back with new influences and of the wandering *bhagats* to carry those influences to the Punjab from some other parts of the country. The new Vaishnavism was in the air, though borne aloft only by unnoticeable breezes.

Not the existence but the nature of Vaishnavism as a religious faith and the extent of its influence are difficult to ascertain. In older Vaishnavism, the worship of Vishnu as the supreme deity (as Narain, Hari or Govind) and of his incarnations in temples dedicated to them may be taken for granted. Probably the most important aspect of this

61. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 258-59; see also 161, 168, 218, 252, 254, 261, 263, 264, 296. R. G. Bhandarkar has observed that Ramanand's disciples founded different schools in northern India and came to compete successfully with the worshippers of Krishna: *Vaishnavism, Satvism and Minor Religious Systems*, 95.

62. Goswamy, Karuna, *Vaishnavism in the Punjab Hills and Pahari Painting*, 113-14.

worship was the believer's ritualistic round of visits to a temple. The guardians of Vaishnava temples would uphold the superiority of the worship of their deities and disseminate ideas and beliefs embodied in Vaishnava texts. But this would be done similarly by the Shaiva priests for their own deities. It cannot be said with any certainty but it seems that sectarian differences were never actually felt by the laity, and to draw a clear distinction between a Shaiva and a Vaishnava Hindu was not always easily possible. The merit of ceremonial ritual and pilgrimage to sacred places was recognized by the majority of the Hindus. Veneration for the *brahman* and the cow was shared by many.<sup>63</sup> If there was one thing that was much more pronounced among the Vaishnavas than among any other 'sect' of Hinduism it was their total abstention from meat and liquor.<sup>64</sup> In all probability the bulk of the Vaishnavas consisted of the members of the trading communities in towns and cities, notably the *khatris*. In a certain sense they represented what may loosely be called the Hindu orthodoxy.

Though the *bhakti* cult cannot be regarded as a break from older Vaishnavism, the introduction of some new elements and certain differences of emphases distinguish the new cult from the older system of belief and practice. The idea of *bhakti* can be traced to very ancient times in Indian history. It finds mention in Upanishadic literature and, as a path of salvation, it finds recognition in the *Bhāgavata Gītā* and the *Bhakti Sūtras*. However, the *bhakti* movement cannot be said to have come into its own before we come upon a development in which the path of *bhakti* is emphasized to the exclusion of the path of *jnāna* (knowledge) or the path of *karma* (action).

63. Cf. Weber, Max, *The Religion of India*, 27-28.

64. Cf. Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 366; Goswamy, Karuna, *Vaishnavism in the Punjab Hills and Pahari Painting*, 121.

It is possible to see in retrospect that Ramanuja made a distinguished contribution to the *bhakti* movement. Nicol Macnicol has seen 'a genuine Theism' in the religious practice of Ramanuja; as a corollary of this faith in a personal deity, he has also seen a kind of 'religious exclusiveness' in Ramanuja's Vaishnavism; the moral and emotional warmth that appears to pervade all his doctrines is believed to have given his system 'much of its power and its distinction'; and the 'loving faith' of the worshipper as much as the grace of God is regarded as central to his doctrine.<sup>65</sup> According to G. S. Ghurye, Ramanuja's system of qualified monism added to the 'religious ferment' of his times: 'By putting the personal god Vishnu at the centre of his scheme of salvation, he provided a crystallizing centre for the scattered elements of Vaishnava devotion attached to various forms and incarnations of Vishnu.'<sup>66</sup> It may be added that, by putting the personal god Vishnu at the centre of his scheme of salvation, Ramanuja smoothened the path for *bhakti* as well.

Ramanuja subordinated the path of *jñāna* and *karma* to that of *bhakti*. Acquaintance with the *Vedānta* and the performance of rites and duties were meant to lead those who sought eternal bliss to *bhakti*.<sup>67</sup> This *bhakti* was open only to the upper 'castes'. Furthermore, he made a distinction between this *bhakti* and *prapatti* which was open to the *shūdras* as well. The distinction made by Ramanuja enabled him to adopt a middle position in his attitude towards the lower

65. Macnicol, Nicol, *Indian Theism*, Oxford 1915, 101-02, 109, 110. Cf. Bhandarkar. R. G., *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, 151; Raychaudhri, Hemchandra, *The Early History of Vaishnava Sects*, Calcutta 1936 (2nd ed.), 195.

66. Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Sadhus*, 61.

67. Raychaudri, Hemchandra, *The Early History of Vaishnava Sects*, 194.

'castes'. At the same time, the idea of *prapatti* gained a new importance. In it was implied a complete self-surrender to God. According to R. G. Bhandarkar, *prapatti* consisted in 'the resolution to yield, the avoidance of opposition, a faith that God will protect, acceptance of him as saviour or praying him to save and sense of helplessness resulting in throwing one's whole soul on him'.<sup>68</sup>

The influence of Ramanuja on the *bhakti* movement is decisive and unmistakable. But whereas his *bhakti* was directed towards Vishnu as Narayana, in the later *bhakti* cult it is the human incarnation of Vishnu as Krishna or Rama which becomes the object of *bhakti*. Madhya emphasized the personal aspect of God and the importance of *bhakti* even more than Ramanuja. Nimbarka underlined the importance of *prapatti* as a prelude to *bhakti*. At the same time, he gave an exclusive prominence to Krishna and Radha.<sup>69</sup> Though Vasudeva had been the fountain-head of Vaishnavism in general,<sup>70</sup> the cult of Radha-Krishna was a new element in Vaishnavism;<sup>71</sup> it was an essential trait of the *bhakti* movement in its later phase. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the cult of Krishna and Radha was popularized by Vallabha and Chaitanya. Their work in a certain sense was complementary.

Vallabha, for whom the sportive boy Krishna and his mistress Radha were the object of deepest adoration,

68. Bhandarkar, R. G., *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, 77.

69. *Ibid.*, 93.

70. Raychaudhuri, Hemchandra, *The Early History of Vaishnava Sects*, 31.

71. According to Vasudeva Upadhyay, Radha-Krishna cult was a new element in Vaishnavism : *Socio-Religious Condition of North India*, 210; cf. Chattopadhyaya, S., *Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, 151-52.

developed the ceremonial side of the *bhakti* of Krishna. R. G. Bhandarkar has given the order of ceremonies daily performed by the followers of Vallabha and this detail is extremely interesting and significant:<sup>72</sup> (i) the ringing of the bell (ii) the blowing of the conch-shell (iii) awakening of the Lord (Thakurji) and offering morning refreshments (iv) waving of lamps (v) bathing (vi) dressing (vii) Gopivallabha food (viii) leading the cows out for grazing (ix) the mid-day dinner (x) waving of lamps (xi) the drawing up of the screen (now the God cannot be seen) (xii) the finishing up (xiii) the evening meal and (xiv) going to bed.

Chaitanya on the other hand devoted himself primarily to the cultivation of the emotional side of the *bhakti* of Krishna. Chaitanya's nature was highly emotional and in his moments of absorption in *prem-bhakti* he used to get into ecstatic trances which made him totally unconscious of the external world.<sup>73</sup> In his *bhajan*s and *kirtan*s he sang fervently of the love of Radha and Krishna. For his followers, salvation consisted in the devotee's going to the 'Goloka' after death and serving Radha-and-Krishna for all time. They insisted on treating the relationship of Radha and Krishna as that of a mistress and a lover and this insistence is believed largely to explain 'the deteriorative fissiparation for which the Chaitanyaite sect is so noted'.<sup>74</sup> For Chaitanya and his followers Krishna was to be approached and attained through *bhakti* alone. Persons from all 'castes' and even non-Hindus are believed to have been admitted by Chaitanya as his followers.

72. Bhandarkar, R. G., *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, 116.

73. Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Sadhus*, 185.

74. *Loc. cit.*

The cult of Rama as the incarnation of Vishnu was popularized by Ramananda. According to Raychaudhari, there is no clear evidence of the existence of a 'Ramaite sect' before the age of Ramananda.<sup>75</sup> To him goes the credit of installing Rama as a personal god and the tutelary deity of a large number of ascetics in India.<sup>76</sup> He is believed to have made it a regular practice to accept disciples irrespective of their caste affiliations.<sup>77</sup> However, the Ramanandis did not throw aside idol-worship.<sup>78</sup> In fact, they associated Sita with Rama in their visual representation of the deity. Ramananda's disciples are believed to have established several *maths* in northern India and there is no doubt that much of the strength of the Ramanandi *bairāgis* consisted in the regular establishments founded and maintained by them. Invariably, *pāthshālas* and *goshālas* formed an integral part of these establishments and they provided food even for the lay visitors.<sup>79</sup> The discipline imposed upon the inmates of the establishment was rather strict. The daily routine of a Ramanandi *bairāgi* has been briefly described by Ghurye and it may very well apply to some of the earliest establishments. The *bairāgi* rose very early in the morning and after finishing his bath 'he begins the muttering of the sacred formula. While still engaged on it, he begins the usual worship of his tutelary deity. Having completed it he starts reading his favourite religious book. Then he attends to an appointed task of his at the centre. A large number of Sadhus take only one meal

75. *Ibid.*, 174. Cf. Macnicol, Nicol, *Indian Theism*, 115.

76. Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Sadhus*, 65-66.

77. *Ibid.*, 188, 212, 256; cf. Wilson, H. H., *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, Susil Gupta (India) Private Limited, Calcutta 1958, 115.

78. *Ibid.*, 114, 257.

79. *Ibid.*, 200. See also Goswamy, B. N. and Grewal, J. S., *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Simla 1969.

at mid-day. In the afternoon they visit temples and listen to religious discourses'.<sup>80</sup>

If we now try to characterize the *bhakti* cult, it must be emphasized that the direct objects of the devotion of the *bhagat* was not Vishnu but his human incarnation, Rama or Krishna in close association with their 'consorts'. Worship in temples dedicated to the deity was not an unimportant part of the cult. It also suggests that the path of *bhakti* was not necessarily made accessible to all 'castes'. However, the *kirtanas* were most probably open to all. The singing of *bhajans* and also perhaps dancing formed an important aspect of the cult in some of its forms. This is not to suggest, however, that in some other of its forms the ceremonial ritual was not important. In any case, the worship remained intensely emotional. The use of vernaculars would suggest a much broader base of the *bhakti* cult than that of older Vaishnavism. The anti-ascetical character of *bhakti* is obvious enough. But what is not so apparent is the possibility of a ritualistic devotion becoming an end in itself, particularly for those who believed in *prapatti* to the extent of seeing salvation in the mere utterance of the deity's name. Lastly, it may be added that the exponents of the *bhakti* cult were not slow to establish *maths* for the propagation of their beliefs and practices.

The existing literature on the *bhakti* movement in general, though certainly useful in its own way, is not always a safe guide, when the discussion relates to any particular part of the Indian subcontinent, or to a particular personality associated with the movement. Important differences are glossed over by using the general label of *bhakti* on the basis of superficial similarities. A more sophisticated, and also more valid,

80. Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Sadhus*, 199-200.

way of keeping the label has been to distinguish between the *saguna* and the *nirguna* 'schools' of *bhakti*. Dealing with the Vaishnava *bhakti* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one is invariably confronted by the first 'school'. But to identify the *nirguna* school of Vaishnava *bhakti* is not easy.

At any rate, all those who did not belong to the *saguna* school were not necessarily the exponents of Vaishnava *bhakti*. We may take the case of Kabir, the most relevant to the present study. Reappraisals of Kabir have resulted in making a clear distinction between his position and that of the prototype of *bhakti*. In fact, it has been asserted recently by a scholar, who has made a detailed study of Kabir in relation to the *bhakti* movement, that the ideas of Kabir stand in complete contrast to those generally associated with the '*bhakti* religion'.<sup>81</sup> Another serious scholar of Kabir has emphasized that *Bhakti* was only one element in his religion which, at any rate, was 'an original synthesis' of medieval *Yoga* and the *Sūfi* tradition as well as *bhakti*.<sup>82</sup> The multiplicity of antecedents becomes really important when the resultant religious attitude does not exactly correspond to any single antecedent. Even if one were to insist on fitting Kabir into the *nirguna* school of *bhakti*, to make him a Vaishnava would be an impossible task. Clearly then, a distinction has to be made between the cult of Rama or Krishna and the religion of the saints like Kabir in which the idea of *bhakti* is an integral part of a system, but only a part. This is not merely a problem of conceptualization, though that too is

81. Sharma, Krishna, "Kabir and the Current Definition of Bhakti: A Case for Re-examination", paper read at a seminar in Delhi (seen through the author's courtesy).
82. Vaudeville, Charlotte "Kabir and Interior Religion", *History of Religions*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Winter 1964, 196. This article was made available to me by Dr. W. H. Mcleod.

important enough to justify the distinction; talking of Ramānand and Kabir one is talking of two forms of religious belief and attitude, related but distinct.

Kabir's influence on Guru Nanak has been emphasized or assumed by many a writer. The inclusion of Kabir's verses in the *Ādi-Granth*, his chronological precedence and similarities perceived between some of the ideas of Kabir and Guru Nanak have appeared to justify that assumption. Recently this assumption has been seriously challenged.<sup>83</sup> It has been argued in fact that a personal meeting between Guru Nanak and Kabir must be regarded as 'highly improbable'. Furthermore, though 'verbal correspondence' may suggest that Guru Nanak was familiar with some of Kabir's compositions, 'they do no more than establish it as a remote possibility'. This verbal correspondence may best be explained in terms of the *sant-bhāshā*, a specialized terminology developed by the *sants* of northern India, which was accessible to both Kabir and Guru Nanak. The least that this line of argument does is to oblige the student of Guru Nanak to look at the question of 'influence' all afresh. For this reason alone, it is necessary to have some idea of Kabir's position. But there is also another. Kabir was definitely known in the Punjab within fifteen to thirty-five years after Guru Nanak's death and so were some of the other saints.<sup>84</sup> The verses of Kabir included in the *Ādi-Granth* represent a different oral tradition than the one embodied in the *Bijak*. It may, therefore, be suggested that the possibility of the *sants* carrying the popular verses of Kabir and others to the Punjab of our period is very much

83. Mcleod, W. H., "Gurū Nanak and Kabir", *Punjab History Conference, Patiala* 1966, 87-92.

84. The names of Namdev and Kabir are mentioned in a verse of Guru Amardas (A. D. 1552-74): *ibid.*, 88.

there. In fact it is a likelihood. A religious leader called *Mula Sant* is believed to have established his headquarters at Wazirabad in the early sixteenth century and his followers were to be found later in Jhang, Shahpur and Gujranwala.<sup>85</sup> It may not be too much to presume that the *sant-bāni*, like the *bhakti* cult, was in the air in the Punjab of our period.

The first notable aspect of Kabir's position is a denunciation of much of the religious belief and practice of his times. In his view, the exponents of Muslim and Hindu orthodoxies (the *mullā* and the *pandit*) had gone astray from a genuine quest: 'they are pots of the same clay'. The *Vedas* and the *Qur'an* as the traditional scriptural revelation are discarded along with their guardians. Kabir denounces even *bhakti* as a mere ritual; true *bhakti* (*bhāva*) was something nobler, different. He does not believe in the worship of Vishnu, nor of Rama, nor of Krishna; he describes the ten *avatars* of Vishnu as *Māya*; and he speaks of Rama and Ravana and of Krishna and Kansa in the same breath.<sup>86</sup> Worship in temples and of idols, all purificatory bathings, ritual fasts and pilgrimages are denounced in uncompromising terms :

What is the good of scrubbing the body on the outside  
if the inside is full of filth ?

Kabir advocates a form of *bhakti* which has a broad affinity with *Sūfism*. Man must turn his attention to the innermost recesses of his conscience, and away from the exterior world, to 'realize' truth. Hari or Allah does not reside in the

85. Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 388-92.

86. Sharma, Krishna, "Kabir and the Current Definition of Bhakti: A Case for Re-examination".

east or the west but in the heart of man:<sup>87</sup>

I believed Him outside of me and, near, He became  
to me far.

The way to Him was the path of love; the goal was the  
absorption of the human soul in Him :

When I was, Hari was not now Hari is, and I am no more;  
Every shadow is dispersed when the Lamp has been  
found within the soul.<sup>88</sup>

This absorption or union was possible only through the grace of  
the Lord. If He rejected man, none could save him; if He  
accepted man non could reject him. For Kabir, *bhakti* is  
not an easy path, for love is 'cutting as the edge of the sword'.<sup>89</sup>  
It is terrible as a fierce furnace, for separation (*viraha*) involves  
suffering and the lover bleeds silently in the depths of his  
soul 'as the insect devours wood'.<sup>90</sup> He suffers many deaths  
everyday.<sup>91</sup> This torment is, however, a mark of divine  
favour:<sup>92</sup>

Then I said, 'Go home, Happiness - I no longer know  
anything but Truth and Suffering'.

Thus, Kabir's devotion differs from Vaishnava *bhakti*  
'not only in its object but also in its character'. The senti-  
ments of tenderness, trust and abandon which characterize

87. Vaudeville, Charlotte, "Kabir and Interior Religion", *History of Religions*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Winter 1964, 196. Some other quotations are also taken from this article, unless otherwise indicated.

88. *Ibid.*, 197.

89. Bankey Bihari, *Sufis, Mystics and Yogis of India*, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1962, 372, no. 87.

90. *Ibid.*, 371, no. 83.

91. *Ibid.*, 373, no. 102.

92. Vaudeville, Charlotte, "Kabir and Interior Religion", *History of Religions*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Winter 1964, 199.

much of Vaishnava *bhakti* literature do not constitute the whole of Kabir's *bhakti* which is, above all, 'an ardent quest, a heroic adventure in which he is completely involved, at the peril of his life'.<sup>93</sup> To conquer death one had first to prepare for a sacrifice of one's life:<sup>94</sup>

Cut off your head and take it in your hand, if you wish  
to call upon Ram.

Straight is the gate and narrow is the path that leads to salvation and few there be who enter thereat :

*Terā jan ik-ādḥ hai kot.*<sup>95</sup>

Yet the path was open to everyone.

The ideas of Yoga no less than those of *bhakti* and *Sūfism* are integrated by Kabir in a system which, though never consciously formulated, possesses the originality of a new whole. The ideas of *jīvan-mukta*, *sahaja-samādhi* and *sabd* are given a good deal of prominence in his verses. He talks of 'the magic stone' too that transmutes copper into gold. He lays emphasis on the merit of association with *sants*. He refers to God occasionally as 'the true *gurū*' (*satgurū*). God for him is both immanent and transcendent. God is the *milieu* of the soul as water is of the water lily; but He is also the Unknowable and the Mysterious.<sup>96</sup>

You alone know the mystery of Your nature  
Kabir takes his refuge in You !

Kabir offered his devotion neither to Rama nor to Allah, but to the one, the True, the Pure the Ineffable. He was a disciple of the True Guru.

93. *Ibid.*, 198-99.

94. *Loc. cit.*

95. Tiwari, Parasnath, *Kabir*, New Delhi 1967, 72.

96. Vaudeville, Charlotte, "Kabir and Interior Religion". *History of Religions*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Winter 1964, 200.

The relative importance of the worship of the Goddess in the Punjab of our period is difficult to ascertain, but sufficient evidence exists to show that the Shaktas formed a considerable proportion of the Hindus at this time. Besides Shakta literature we have the evidence of important temples dedicated to the Goddess. The temples of Kangra and Jwalamukhi were the most famous; even in the seventeenth century pilgrims from very distant places came to visit them.<sup>97</sup> Sujan Rai noticed that the temple of Bhima Devi at Ghāt Bhavāni (Pinjore) had remained a place of pilgrimage for 'the people of Hind since olden times'. Later references to *devī mandīrs* in several parts of the Punjab point to the continuity of the tradition from older times.<sup>98</sup> It appears indeed that the Shaktas not only formed a separate religious group but also they were next in importance only to the Shaivas and Vaishnavas.<sup>99</sup>

The worship of the Goddess in her various forms and manifestation was, among other things, a token of the primacy given to *shakti*, the active principle or the cosmic force which sustains the universe and the various manifestations of gods. The Shaktism was divided into two main categories: the 'cultus of the right hand' and the 'cultus of the left hand'. In the former, except for insistence on animal sacrifice in honour of Durga, Kali and other terrible forms of the great

97. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh*, 71-72. References to these temples in contemporary chronicles are quite frequent, as for instance in (Afif's) *Tārikh-i-Firūz Shāhi*, the *Āin-i-Akbari*, the *Tuzk-i-Jahāngiri*.
98. See for instance, Ganesh Das, *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 180, 263, 273, 303, 305.
99. Cf. Shivapadasundaram, S., *The Shaiva School of Hinduism*, London 1934, Introduction, 13. Cf. Barth, A., *Religion of India*, S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1969, 206.

goddess, the general usages of Shaivism were observed.<sup>100</sup> It was among the left-handers that some 'disreputable' forms of worship appeared under the influence of *tāntrism*. Whatever the number of the left-hand Shaktas in the Punjab of our period, their existence is beyond any doubt. They are represented by the *vāmachāris*, for whom sexual intercourse was an instrument of salvation. To understand their position we may briefly refer to *tāntrism* in general.

*Tāntrism* was becoming popular already before the Turkish conquest and in the due course became a pan-Indian movement. 'In a comparatively short time, Indian philosophy, mysticism, ritual, ethics, iconography, and even literature are influenced by tantrism'.<sup>101</sup> The *Samkhya* doctrine of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* formed the basis of *tāntric* philosophy, its aim being the identification of the individual soul with the supreme soul. Since *puruṣa* was the inactive and *prakṛti* the active principle, the latter apparently became more important than the former.<sup>102</sup> The propounders of *tāntrism* regarded the *Vedas* and the *brahmanical* tradition in general as inadequate for 'modern times' (*kāliyuga*). 'The Tantra is for all men, of whatever caste, and for all women'.<sup>103</sup> The *tāntric* worship was characterized by 'initiation', irrespective of caste or sex, and by *mantras*, *yantras* and 'black rites'.<sup>104</sup> It was based on a code of esoteric practices in which sexual representations were much in evidence.<sup>105</sup> *Tāntrism*, on the whole, was

100. Barth, A., *Religions of India*, 203.

101. Eliade; Mircea, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 200.

102. Chattopadhyaya, S., *Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, 119.

103. Woodroffe, Sir John, *Introduction to Tantras*, Madras 1956, 31.

104. Chakravarti, Chintaharan, *Tantras* (Studies on their Religion and Literature), Calcutta 1963, 3-6, 38, 39.

105. Renou, Louis, *Religions of Ancient India*, University of London, 1953, 84.

both anti-speculative and anti-ascetical. Nevertheless, the human body was the most reliable and effective instrument of salvation on the assumption that the macrocosm was reflected in the microcosm.<sup>106</sup>

Viewed from inside, *Tāntrism* was not an 'easy road'. The *tāntric* worship presupposed a long and difficult *sādhana*. The *dharants* and *mantras* were raised to the dignity of a vehicle of salvation and one was supposed to mutter the prescribed *mantras* even while conducting the ordinary daily business. The *yantra*, drawn on a piece of cloth, was conceived as a miniature temple: 'the Sriyantra, the finest of the series, has four openings, flights of steps, and a sanctuary where the chosen divinity dwells'.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, the disposition of triangles in the *yantra* represented the male and female sexual organs, the instruments of the *unio mystica*.<sup>108</sup> The penances and austerities (*tapas*) and the recitation of *mantras* (*japas*) were to precede the use of the *mandala* as well as *yantra*. The *mandala* was meant to be an image of the universe and, drawn on a cloth, it was believed to support meditation and to serve as defence against distractions and temptations. This liturgy could be 'interiorized' by the discovery of the *mandala* in the human body.<sup>109</sup> The 'black rites', in theory, were meant only for the adept.

The male partner in the rite of *maithuna* (the *bhairō* of the *vāmachāris*) was to look upon the naked female partner (the *bhairavi*) as *prakṛti* incarnate and, therefore, with the same

106. Woodroffe, Sir John, *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*, 34-35.

107. Renou, Louis, *Religions of Ancient India*, 82.

108. *Loc. cit.* The *gayatri yantra* is shown on the title page of Woodroffe's *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and confirms Louis Renou's statement.

109. Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 219-20,

adoration and detachment as one exercised in pondering the secrets of nature and its limitless' capacity to create. One list of females qualified to be *bhairavis* mentions a dancing girl, a harlot, a washer-woman, a flower-girl, a milkmaid, the wife of a barber, a female devotee, a *brahman* or a *shūdr* female.<sup>110</sup> At a second stage, the *bhairavi* was transformed into an incarnation of *shakti* and, therefore, the goddess herself. The supreme goal of the rite was a complete identification with Shakti and Shiva through the realization of 'immobility' on all the three planes of thought, respiration and seminal emission. Thus, the ritual of the five M's (*madya*: wine; *matsya*: fish; *mansa*: flesh; *mudra*: parched grain; *maithuna*: coition) became extremely important to the *vāmachāris*. But to the outsiders, this ritual indulgence in meat, wine and sexual intercourse was little short of debauchery. Ganesh Dass, for instance, appreciates two persons of Gujrat for their thorough knowledge of the *Agamas* but adds that: about their religion the less said the better, for wine and meat and sexual intercourse were regarded as lawful in their religion.<sup>111</sup> Objectionable on moral grounds in the eyes of the majority, the practice of this rite probably remained limited and secretive.<sup>112</sup>

One particular idea which is believed to have encouraged the licentiousness of *tāntrism* may be mentioned here, as much for its relevance to a later part of this work as for its currency in many a popular cult of the times: the idea of

110. Wilson, H. H., *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, 144.

111. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 178. See also, *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, No. 19, 110.

112. Cf. Renou, Louis, *Religions of Ancient India*, 84; Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 295; Hopkins, E. W., *Ethics of India*, New Haven 1924, 201.

*sunya* (void). It occurs in the *Rig-Veda*, first:<sup>113</sup>

At the time there was neither the aught, nor the naught, neither the earth nor heaven above. What was there to cover all? Wherein was the abode of all? Was there water deep and fathomless? No death was then, nor immortality, no distinction between day and night. The One alone breathed without any air,—

In the beginning there was darkness shrouded in darkness, indistinct was all - and water was everywhere. The All-Pervading One was covered with all the non-existent, and through the *Tapas* or the divine effort arose the 'One'.

This idea is variously described in the Upanishadic literature. It is described also in the *Sunya Purāna*: 'in the beginning there was nothing,—neither any linear mark, nor any form, nor any colour, nor any trace of anything; there was neither the sun nor the moon, nor the day nor the night. There was neither water, nor earth, nor the sky nor the mountains. The universe was not, neither was anything mobile or immobile, nor were the temples, nor the gods in them,—there were only all-pervading darkness and haze (*dhundhukara*)—and in the infinite vacuum the Lord alone was moving in the great void having nothing but void for his support'.

It has been observed by L. S. S. O' Malley that in Hinduism 'differences between the beliefs and practices of the cultured classes and those of the masses' amount almost to 'differences of kind rather than of degree'.<sup>114</sup> The religion of the masses

113. Dasgupta, Shashibhushan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 311-12, 324. Cf. Eliade, Mircea, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 206.

114. O'Malley, L. S. S., *Popular Hinduism*, Cambridge 1935, Preface.

has few of the higher spiritual conceptions of Hinduism and represents its lower side. Not unoften, primitive forms of animism and fetishism are found in combination with the rites and observances of 'higher' Hinduism. In this popular religion godlings of nature, of disease, malevolent spirits, animal worship, heroic godlings, as well as totems and fetishes make their conspicuous appearance. The detail of the objects of this popular worship makes a long list: sun, moon, stars, rainbow, milky way, earth, earth-quakes, lightning, rivers, springs, waterfalls, lakes, weather, rain; godlings of small-pox, cholera, cattle-disease; heroic godlings like Hanuman, Bhimsen or local godlings; the popular shrines of Bhairon, Ganesh and the mother-goddesses; the sainted dead, like ancestors, worthies, *sādhus*, *satts*, caste-saints; trees and snakes and *bhūts* and *churails*—all these and many more find mention in the popular religion of northern India in recent centuries.<sup>115</sup>

It may be safely presumed that much of this popular religion was prevalent in the Punjab not only in recent centuries but also during the times of Guru Nanak. In the countryside in particular, the forms of religious belief and practice considered in this chapter on religion would find only a negligible representation. In the lives of the common people worship of godlings and local deities assumed an overwhelming importance. An average village fed his *brahman*, let his women worship the local godlings, accompanied them to the annual festival at the local shrine and he did not visit the temple of Vishnu or Shiva more than twice a year.<sup>116</sup> In the Punjab the worship of ancestors and observance of the *shrādhā* cere-

115. Crooke, W., *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, 2 Vols., Delhi 1968 (Reprint).

116. O'Malley, L. S. S., *Popular Hinduism*. 104.

mony have an old history.<sup>117</sup> Direct evidence on popular religion in the Punjab during our period is by no means abundant, but there is no reason to suppose that what was observed here in the 19th century was, by and large, not prevalent during the earlier centuries. Near the city of Lahore, for instance, there were important places associated with Bhairon and Sitala Mata.<sup>118</sup> As Kali's attendant, Bhairon was worshipped in several forms.<sup>119</sup> And Sitala Mata or Masani Devi was the goddess of small-pox.<sup>120</sup> Mari Mai the goddess of cholera to whom animals were offered in sacrifice.<sup>121</sup> Even more popular was the worship of Gugga who was invariably associated with one or another figure of Shaiva mythology or legendary lore.<sup>122</sup> The worship of *satis* was not uncommon.<sup>123</sup> This would be equally true of the worship of *siddhas*.<sup>124</sup> There were several other godlings worshipped by the common people.<sup>125</sup> In the nineteenth century legendary saints or *pirs* were worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims and perhaps the beginning of this situation may be traced at least to the fifteenth century. For instance, Mian Mitha in the Gurdaspur district was commonly worshipped by both Hindus

117. *Ibid.*, 153.

118. *Tārīkh-i-Lahore*, 189-91, 233-36.

119. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, I, No. 3, 25. See also, Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, Oxford University Press 1926, 97-98.

120. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, No. 19, 109. Also, Crooke, W., *ibid.*, 119.

121. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, I, No. 1, 1.

122. *Ibid.*, I, No. 3, 1; II, No. 18, 91.

123. Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 123-25.

124. Cf. Goswamy, Karuna, *Vaishnavism in the Punjab Hills and Pahari Painting; Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 166. See also Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, 401.

125. Crooke, W., *ibid.*, 122.

and Muslims.<sup>126</sup> Ganesh Das notices one Hindu *murid* of Sakhi Sarwar who was followed by all Muslim *bharda*'s.<sup>127</sup>

Diverse judgments have been passed on the character of the age of Kabir and Nanak.<sup>128</sup> In the eleventh century, even the catholic Alberuni betrays himself by his comment on 'the innate perversity of the Hindu nature'.<sup>129</sup> His remark on the innate pride of the Hindus themselves in their learning and culture is better known. Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century observed that the Hindus 'never make friends with Muslims'.<sup>130</sup> It may be readily conceded that even in the times of Kabir and Guru Nanak 'orthodoxy', both Hindu and Muslim remained committed to the traditional socio-religious orders which it had upheld for several centuries. To minimize its strength would be to misjudge the age.

However, the mutual contact of Hindus and Muslims had been gradually developing at several levels. In politics and administration, a closer contact was imposed by the historical circumstance and it was paralleled by a greater

126. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, No. 22, 163.

127. *Chār-Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 221. See also, Rose, H. A., *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, 572-73.

128. See, for instance, Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1962, 128; also, 53; Lal, K.S., "A Critical Analysis of the Work of the Socio-Religious Reformers of the Fifteenth Century", *Proceedings Indian History Congress*, Calcutta 1961, 182-185; Chatterji, S. K., "Islamic Mysticism, Iran and India", *Indo-Iranica* (Oct., 1946), I, No., 2, 31; Zubaid Ahmad, M. G., *Contribution of India to Arabic Literature*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London 1929, 13; Roy Chaudhary, M. L., "Background of Sufism in Indian Environment", *Journal Greater India Society* (Jan., 1944), XI, No. 1, 31-41; Ikram, S. M., *Muslim Civilization in India*, 127.

129. *Alberuni's India*, 185.

130. *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 96.

give-and-take in the economic sphere.<sup>131</sup> If some Hindu works were being translated into Persian for the advantage or edification of Persian-knowing Muslims, many Hindus were learning and teaching Persian or even using it as the medium of artistic expression.<sup>132</sup> Regional languages were being adopted by some of the *Sūfis* for a communication of their ideas to both Muslims and Hindus. Certain fairs and festivals were attended by both Hindus and Muslims and, among the common people, it was perhaps not uncommon to worship a legendary saint or a local deity.

Even among the serious professors of religion it was not uncommon to exchange ideas on matters of belief and practice. Mutual appreciation resulted sometimes in piecemeal adoption of ideas or practices from a faith other than one's own. In the fifteenth century Muslim *Sūfis*, it is said, mixed with Hindu Sadhus, Sannyāsīs and Jogis for inspiration and guidance, without acknowledging the source in public. Similarities between different forms of faith were occasionally recognized and appreciated.<sup>133</sup> Some new forms of belief and practice were adding to the richness and variety of the religious scene. And there was a good deal of rivalry between the various religious groups.<sup>134</sup> In the midst of this rivalry,

131. Not only commerical goods but also immovable property exchanged hands between Muslims and Hindus.

132. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, I, 233.

133. Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus of Gwalior is an obvious example, but by no means the only one. See Ahmad, Mian Akhtar, "Amrit kund", *Journal Pakistan History Society* (Jan. 1953), I, Pt. I.

134. It is in this context that the case of the Brahman in Sikandar's reign becomes significant (*Tārikh-i-Firāshā*, 182): 'One day he professed to Muslims that Islam was true and so was his own religion'. Ahmad Khan's real or alleged apostasy in A. D. 1509 is another significant example: *The First Afghan Empire*, 151.

many of the contestants had come to believe that salvation was the birthright of every human being irrespective of his caste, creed or sex. On the whole, it was a rich and lively religious atmosphere. And it was this atmosphere that Guru Nanak breathed.

**PART II**

**THE RESPONSE**



CHAPTER V  
CONTEMPORARY POLITICS  
AND  
GURU NANAK

Writers on Sikh history and religion have expressed diverse views on Guru Nanak's response to contemporary politics and on his political concerns. In J. D. Cunningham's view, Guru Nanak probably did not possess any clear idea of 'political advancement' and his reform 'in its immediate effects' was only religious and moral.<sup>1</sup> This view poses a dichotomy between the 'faith' of Guru Nanak and the 'politics' of some of his successors and followers. On this assumption, Frederic Pincott has gone to the extent of believing that the political activity of the Sikhs was a reversal of 'the best intentions' of the founder of Sikhism.<sup>2</sup> More recently this view has been presented in an impressive manner by Arnold Toynbee in his *Study of History*.<sup>3</sup> On this view, the political concerns of Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh as well as the later political activity of the Sikhs appear to be a deviation from the

1. *A History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1955, 41-42.
2. *The Sikh Religion* (A Symposium by M. Macauliffe, H. H. Wilson, F. Pincott, John Malcolm, Sardar Kahan Singh), Susil Gupta Private Ltd, Calcutta 1958, 70,
3. For a brief discussion, see Grewal, J. S. "Toynbee's Interpretation of Sikh History", *Punjab History Conference*, Patiala 1969, 304-10,

teachings of Guru Nanak.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the political concerns of Guru Nanak are altogether absent from this view which underlines exclusively the religious concerns of the founder of Sikhism.

Nevertheless, several writers have discerned a close connection between the 'reform' of Guru Nanak and the 'politics' of some of his successors and followers. Even G. C. Narang believes that the 'steel' for the 'sword' of Guru Gobind Singh was provided by Guru Nanak.<sup>5</sup> Dorothy Field sees in the teachings of Guru Nanak the way paved for 'a political development'.<sup>6</sup> In J. C. Archer's view, there was 'something positive and realistic' in the reform of Guru Nanak, something that made for 'a religion and a state'.<sup>7</sup> In a more popular form it is said of the political achievement of the Sikhs that 'the sole credit, for this miracle of history', goes to Guru Nanak.<sup>8</sup> For another writer, there is no question of 'transformation' of Sikhism from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh; the difference between them is only a 'difference

4. Indubhushan Banerjee does not say so ; in fact the title of his work significantly is the 'evolution of the *Khālsa*'; but at the same time, he believes that Guru Nanak's work did not possess any 'original distinctiveness' which alone could provide the basis of 'a nation': *Evolution of the Khalsa*; Calcutta 1963 (2nd ed.), I, 9. It is popularly believed in fact that 'Nanak was simply a teacher of religion. Regarding his followers merely as disciples, he did not contemplate a political future for them': *Ramanand to Ram Tirath*, G. A. Nalesan & Co., Madras, n. d. (2nd ed.) 56.
5. *Transformation of Sikhism*, New Delhi 1960 (5th ed.), 17. Banerjee also believes that the future Sikh 'nation' grew from the foundations provided by Guru Nanak: *Evolution of the Khalsa*, I, 9.
6. *The Religion of Sikhs*, London 1914, 60.
7. *The Sikhs*, Princeton University Press 1946, 60.
8. Sarab Dayal, *An Ideal Guru : Guru Nanak Dev*, Paul Publications, Ambala Cantt. & Jullundur City, n. d., Preface.

of accent'.<sup>9</sup> It is suggested by some other scholars that the apt phrase to use is 'transfiguration', for there was 'no break, no digression in the programme of Sikh life'.<sup>10</sup> The order of the Khalsa, far from being a contingent phenomenon dictated by the exigencies of the moment, appears to be 'a logical development and entelechy of the teachings of Guru Nanak'.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, Guru Nanak is credited with direct political concerns. It is asserted, for instance, that he thought of the 'political disabilities of his people'.<sup>12</sup> It is also said that he was the first medieval Indian saint to condemn war and to denounce exploitation.<sup>13</sup> 'Who knows that given the means which Guru Gobind Singh had at his disposal with the work of ten generations which had prepared the ground for him, Nanak would have met the situation in the same way in which the former did in his own time afterwards'.<sup>14</sup> According to another scholar, Guru Nanak was 'vocal on things political'; he was moved by the suffering of women at the hands of the Mughals; he upbraided the tyrannical rulers of the times; and

9. Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*, Amritsar 1951, 65-66.
10. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Orient Longmans Ltd., Bombay, Calcutta, Madras 1950, 1-2.
11. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasma, or the Balsakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, Jullundur 1959, 12.
12. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, 14.
13. Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*, 58-59.
14. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Lahore 1944, 24. According to the author, Guru Nanak had declared a war of ideas to awaken 'a depressed, demoralised, superstitious and priest ridden race': *ibid.* 28.

he fearlessly criticised the Lodis.<sup>15</sup> Guru Nanak's political concern is seen closely related to his idea of a society which 'must needs be organised on the healthy basis of justice, fellow-feeling, liberty and equality and must be free from oppression of any kind'.<sup>16</sup>

In a recent article, specifically on the political ideas of Guru Nanak, it is conceded that he was 'primarily a social and religious thinker', but it is also suggested that even if he did not systematically probe into the affairs of the state it is possible to form an idea of his reactions to political authority.<sup>17</sup> On the basis of this brief study of Guru Nanak's reaction to contemporary politics, his attitude to political authority, his conception of the ideal ruler and of the ideal person, it has been concluded that in his view ;

The state should create conditions which may help the individual to further his personality. The good of the human being is the first duty of any constituted authority. The state is there for the individual and not *vice-versa*. An ideal ruler must, therefore, be an embodiment of divine wisdom and he should always cater to the needs of the people. If he fails to fulfil his duties, he loses the mandate of God and his removal from power

15. These views have been expressed by Dr. Ganda Singh in a paper read at a seminar in Delhi and I have seen the paper through his courtesy.
16. Fauja Singh, "Political ideas of the Sikhs during the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries", paper read at a seminar in Delhi and seen through the author's courtesy.
17. Bains, J. S., "Political Ideas of Guru Nanak", *The Indian Journal of Political Science* (Oct.-Dec., 1962), XXIII, No. 4, 309.

may be considered as a religious and moral duty.<sup>18</sup>

The variety and diversity of views expressed on Guru Nanak's political concerns dictate a certain amount of circumspection in our approach to his response to the political milieu. It has been remarked recently that Guru Nanak had a 'first-hand knowledge' of the condition of the people under the Lodis and of the behaviour of the ruling class towards the subject people.<sup>19</sup> This remark, though made only to underline the importance of Guru Nanak's compositions as a form of evidence on the age, is relevant for a discussion of his responses to contemporary politics. The number of passages often quoted by writers in illustration of Guru Nanak's political concerns is not more than ten. But there are other verses which have a bearing on the subject and the number of such verses is by no means inconsiderable. Altogether, they suggest Guru Nanak's familiarity with contemporary politics, government and administration. This may be inferred from the occurrence in these verses of the phrases: *sultān*, *pāts'hāh*, *shāh-i-ālam*, *takht*, *tāj*, *hukm*, *amr*, *pathānī-āml*, *wazīr*, *dīwān*, *nāib*, *lashkar*, *umarā*, *khān*, *malik*, *shiqdār*, *qāzi*, *chaudhari*, *muqaddam*, *ra'iyat*, for instance. Also, there are references to the court and palaces, royal canopy, elephants, armour, cavalry, trumpets, treasury, coins, mint, salary (*wajh*), taxes and even to revenue-free land.<sup>20</sup>

18. *Ibid.*, 318.

19. Ganda Singh, "Presidential Address", *Punjab History Conference*, Patiala 1969, 77.

20. For this paragraph, detailed reference to all the relevant verses of Guru Nanak may not be necessary; it may be pointed out that these verses occur in *S'rī Rīg* (Astpadiān), *Rīg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), *Rīg Āsā*, *Japji*, *Rīg Vadhans* (Chhant and Alkhanīān), *Vār Mājh*,

It may be noted at the outset that in a considerable number of verses Guru Nanak makes only a metaphorical use of political phraseology. This use is nevertheless significant: to a certain extent it may be regarded as a reflection of Guru Nanak's preoccupation with politics; also, these verses have to be taken into account for a proper understanding of his attitude. Furthermore, a clear distinction between literal and metaphorical uses may clarify the import of some important verses.

The most consistent, and probably the most significant, use of such metaphors by Guru Nanak relates to God; the true king, the king of kings, 'my king'.<sup>21</sup> He has His court, His throne and His palace.<sup>22</sup> He is the sole sovereign and the sole *wazir*.<sup>23</sup> He has his 'eight metal' coin, the Word.<sup>24</sup> To Him belongs the real command; all power and praise

*Rāg Parbhāṭī* (Cnaupaday), *Vār Malār* (Slok), *Rāg Bilāval*, *Sūhī* and *Rāg Basant* (Hindol). The term used for what I take to be a reference to revenue-free land is *mahdūd*; that is a piece of land demarcated by a description of all the four boundaries. In the Mughal documents the term occurs frequently in this sense and the context in which it is being used by Guru Nanak strongly suggests that the reference is to revenue-free land: 'the two harvest of *hāṛī* and *sāwani*, for me, are the True Name; I have obtained this *mahdūd* from the court of the True King'.

21. The phrases *sachchā pātsah*, *pātsah-īpātsāh*, *merā pātsāh*, occur for instance, in *Sri Rāg* and *Rāg Āsā*.
22. The phrases *dargāh*, *takht*, *mahal*, *dwār*, *darbār*, occur for instance in *Sri Rāg*, *Rāg Gaurī* and *Rāg Āsā*.
23. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G. 413: *Eko Sāhib eko wajir*. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1368.
24. The phrase *ast-dhāt*, as an obvious reference to coinage, occurs in *Sri Rāg*, for instance.

belong to Him alone.<sup>25</sup> He alone listens to sincere supplication; His service alone is the true service.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, to find honour in His court is the aim of human life.<sup>27</sup> Guru Nanak occasionally talks of *man* also as the *sultān* and of knowledge (*gyān*) as the *rāo*.<sup>28</sup> But his references to God as the *pātshāh*, or the king of kings, are the most frequent. These references cannot be dismissed as mere metaphors, because to Guru Nanak they meant much. If he were to choose between the service of his 'true king' and the possession of

25. *Rāg Āsā, A.G., 432:*

*Banāhan jā kai sabh jagg bādhiā, awrī kā nahi hukam piyā.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1427. Also  
*Rāg Āsā, A.G., 463:*

*Sachchi terī sifāt sachchi sālāh.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1527.

26. *Rāg Āsā A. G., 355:*

*Sachchi arj sachchi ardās mahālī khasam sunai sāsās.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1184.  
*Abai tabai hi chākari kiu dargah pāvai.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1393; Gopal Singh (tr.),  
*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 418.

27. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 16:*

*Tā man khivā jāniyai jā mahālī pāi thāu.*  
Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 19.

28. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 359, 415, 419:*

*Gyān rāo jāb sehjāi āvai. . . .*  
*Eh man rājā sūr sangrām. . . .*  
*Eh man rājā lobhiya, . . .*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1197, 1378, 1390.

*Sri Rāg, A. G., 61 :*

*Man rājā sultān. . . .*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 207.

earthly kingship, he would choose the former:<sup>29</sup>

Were I to be a *sultān*, to raise armies and to set my foot on the throne; were I to possess the regal command;—this would be worthless, O Nanak! To possess all this and to forget Him (would be worse):

Furthermore, he who submits to the 'true king' need not bow to a mere mortal.<sup>30</sup>

In Guru Nanak's meta-historical vision, temporal power suffered diminution not only because it was insignificant before the power of God but also because it was no better than any other earthly pursuit or possession. Temporal power is transitory; the *pādshāhs*, the *sultāns*, the *khāns*, the *shiqdārs*, the *chaudharis* and the *muqaddams* are as much subject to annihilation as the *ra'iyat*.<sup>31</sup> They are all chained to the cosmic

29. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 14:

*Sultān howā mail laskar takhat rākhē pāu,  
Hukam hīsā kart baithā, Nānakā sabh wāu.  
Mat dekh bhālā vīsraī terā chit nā āvai nāu.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 45 ; Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 18.

30. *Sāhi*, A. G., 729:

*Jā kan mahal hajār, dūjai niryai kīss.  
Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 698.*

31. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 227.

*Sultān khān bādsāh nahī rehā,  
chaudhari, rājai nahī kīssī mākhā;  
Riyat, mehar, mukaddam, shiqdārai,  
Nīkhal koi nā āssī sanārai,  
Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 219.*

circuit.<sup>32</sup> Excellent elephants and caparisoned horses, spears and trumpets, armies and *nāibs*, the throne and the command—all these are absolutely irrelevant to salvation.<sup>33</sup> The real honour or the true status of every human being is determined ultimately in God's court.<sup>34</sup> In His presence, the *sultāns* and *khāns* are reduced to dust.<sup>35</sup> Beautiful mansions, strong fortresses and innumerable armies are left behind when their masters, after life's fitful fever, depart in 'ignorance' of the Lord.<sup>36</sup> The conceited *khāns* and *maliks* are singed by their

32. *Rāg Gaurī, A.G., 226:*

*Haumai kar rājai bahu dhāveh,  
Haumai khapeh janam mar āveh.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 749.

33. *Rāg Gaurī, A. G., 225-26:*

*Haivar gaivar nejai vājai,  
Laskar naib khwāstī pājai;  
Bin Jagdīs jhūthai diwājai,  
Khān, malūk, kahavau rājā,  
Abai tabaj kūrāi hai pājā,  
Nejai, vājai, takhat, salām;  
Aḥkī trisnā vipāi kām.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 217-18.

34. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 358:*

*Lakh laskar, lakh vājai nejai, lakh uth karal salām;  
Lakhā uppar phurmāis tēri, lakh uth rakkkeh mān;  
Jān patt lekhai nā pavai tān sabh nirāphal kām.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1192-93.

35. *Sri Rāg, A.G., 16:*

*Nāv jinnā sultān khān hodai dīthai kkeh.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 51.

36. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 63:*

*Dar ghar, mahalā sohanai, pakkai kot ḥajār,  
Hastī, ghorai pākharai, laskar lakh apār,  
Kisahī nāl nā chaliā khap khap muai asār.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 59.

own pride as the forest reed is burnt by a wild fire.<sup>37</sup> The thirst for acquisition of power and riches is unquenchable<sup>38</sup> and temporal power (like youth, beauty and 'caste') is a dupe.<sup>39</sup>

It must be emphasized, however, that Guru Nanak does not denounce kingship as such. In the first place, the *rājā* is as much a creation of God as everything else in the universe: rulership and riches come not as acquisitions of men but as God's gifts.<sup>40</sup> The *rājā* as well as the beggar exists because of divine dispensation.<sup>41</sup> 'Some He has raised to rulership; others wander about begging'.<sup>42</sup> In fact, even the pleasures and luxuries enjoyed by the *rājā* are in accordance with God's

37. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 63:*

*Mehar, mulūk kahāiyai rājā rāo ke khān,  
Chaudhart, rāo sadāiyai jal baikai abhimān,  
Manmukh nām visāria jio dhav dadhā kān.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 59.

38. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 148:*

*Rājā rāj nā triptiā . . .*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 59.

39. *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1288:*

*Rāj, māi, rūp, jāt, joban, panjai thagg.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1229.

*A. G., 1257:*

*Rāj, māi, joban, sabh chhānv.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1201.

40. *Japji, A. G., 7:*

*Jor nā rāj māi, man sor.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 10.

41. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 354:*

*Koi bhikkhak bhikkhiā khāi, kot rājā rihā samāi.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1180.

42. *Vadhans, A. G., 366:*

*Sarbat samāna āpi tāhai, n pāi dhandal lāiyā,*

*Ek tujh kī kīat rājā, eknā bhikkh dhavāiya,*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 553.

will.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, an essential trait of the *sultān* is to receive reverence and homage;<sup>44</sup> the natural relationship between the ruler and the subject is established only if the latter meets the demands put upon him by the former.<sup>45</sup> One of the reasons why woman should not be reviled is that she gives birth to *rājās*.<sup>46</sup> It is in God's power to degrade the *sultān*, just as it is in His power to exalt the mean.<sup>47</sup> The valiant warrior, like the *rājā*, was a token of God's glory.<sup>48</sup> Guru Nanak has no hesitation in using *shiqdāri* as a metaphor for the primacy given to righteousness in the way of God.<sup>49</sup>

The most important trait of the ruler of Guru Nanak's conception is justice, the *raison d'être* of rulership. The best way in which the ruler can justify his existence in the world order is by aligning himself with righteousness. Apart

43. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 145:*

*Jā tudh bhāvai tā howeh rājai ras kas bahut kamāveh.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 136.

44. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 354:*

*Kia sultān salām vihūnā.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1181.

45. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 143:*

*Rājā mangai, dittai gandh pāi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 134.

46. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 473.*

*So kio mandā ākhiyai jit jammeh, rājān.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1562.

47. *Parbhāt A. G., 1329:*

*Uchchā te phun nich karat hat, nich karat sultān.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1266.

48. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 347:*

*Gāvan tudh no jodh mahābal sūrā, gāvan tudh no vir karārai.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 337.

49. *Rāg Basant, A. G., 1190:*

*Ghar ghar laskar pāvak terā, dharam karai sikhāri.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1141.

from some explicit statements on the point, Guru Nanak expounds this idea with reference to some popular figures of legend and mythology: Raja Bal, Raja Hari Chand, Harnakhas, Ravana, Jarasandh, for instance.<sup>50</sup> There is a strong suggestion in these verses that the might of the righteous is bound to prevail upon the might of the unrighteous and also that the powerless righteous are saved by divine intervention against the brute force of the unrighteous. In fact, in these verses there is a direct statement which is generally associated with Guru Gobind Singh:<sup>51</sup>

God exalts the righteous and casts down the wicked.<sup>52</sup>

Before turning to those verses of Guru Nanak which are generally used in illustration of his response to contemporary politics, it may be remarked that the age of Guru Nanak is commonly assumed to have been exceptionally characterised by political chaos, oppression and corruption.<sup>53</sup> Some

50. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān). See also, *Parbhātī*.

51. See, for instance, Grewal, J. S. & Bal, S. S., *Guru Gobind Singh* (A Biographical Study), Panjab University, Chandigarh 1967. 108-09.

52. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 224:

*Da'it sanghār, sant nistārai.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Grānth Sahib*, 216.

53. The writers who have not taken this view of the age of Guru Nanak are so few that it seems superfluous to mention those who have. However, for illustration, we may refer to: Sewaram Singh, *The Divine Master*, Lahore 1930. 6-7; Greenlees, Duncan, *The Gospel of the Guru-Granth Sahib*, Madras 1952, xix-xx; Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Nanak*, Ludhiana 1958. 1-18; Ranbir Singh, *Glimpses of the Divine Master*, New Delhi 1965, 65; Gopal Singh, *Guru Nanak*, New Delhi 1967, 8; Darshan Singh, *Indian Bhakti Tradition and Sikh Gurus*, Chandigarh 1968, 208-13.

of the verses of Guru Nanak appear readily to confirm this assumption. It must be remembered, however, that Guru Nanak did not set out to 'describe' the age for the benefit of posterity. To confuse his response to the political condition of his times with the political condition itself is the surest way to misunderstand both. After all, the age 'produced' only one Nanak. To over-emphasize the political 'degeneracy' of his times in an explanation of his responses is to minimize the strength of his own moral fibre. It is equally relevant to remark that this assumption about the 'darkness' of Guru Nanak's age often results in unbalanced or inadequate interpretation of some of his verses.

One of the most inadequately interpreted passages of Guru Nanak is in *Rāg Āsā* in which occur the often quoted lines:

Greed and sin, together, are the *rājā* and *mehta*; falsehood is the *shiqdār*: lust is the *nāib*, to give counsel; they all conspire together.<sup>54</sup>

These lines obviously refer to prevalence of greed, sin, falsehood and lust; the judgment belongs to the moral order; and the *rājā*, the *mehta*, the *shiqdār* and the *nāib* appear in these lines only as metaphors. Even if the prevalence of greed, sin, falsehood and lust in Guru Nanak's time is taken for granted, it is difficult to attribute this immorality simply to contemporary

54. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 468-69:

*Labh pāp dōi rājā mehta, kūr hoā sīkdār,  
Kām naib sadd puchhīyai bahī bahī karai bīchār.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 462; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1546.

rule. The general nature of this moral judgment should not be confused with a specific condemnation of government and administration.

Only a little less obvious example of inadequate interpretation is a passage in *Vār Mājh* which contains the more frequently quoted lines:

The *kaliyuga* is a knife: the *rājās* are butchers; *dharma* on its wings is vanishing; in the dark night of falsehood, the moon of truth does not appear to rise anywhere.<sup>55</sup>

These lines refer to the *kaliyuga* in a general way; the degeneration of kings and their oppression is a common trait of the *yuga*. It has been pointed out earlier that the concept of *kaliyuga*, with all the associated ideas of degeneration, was familiar to most people in Guru Nanak's 'time.' Even so, it may be argued that the phrase 'kings are butchers' could refer to the contemporary rulers. The whole passage vividly depicts Guru Nanak's anguish in his spiritual quest and the occurrence of this phrase in close association with *kaliyuga* would hardly justify the common interpretation that the passage contains a specific condemnation of the rulers of Guru Nanak's time.<sup>56</sup>

That Guru Nanak often denounces political rule in general terms may be seen from another passage in which the reference apparently is to 'Muslim' rulers. 'The *rājā* does justice only when his palm is greased; none is moved in the

55. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 145:

*Kal kāti, rājai kāsai dharam pankh kar udriā;*

*Kūr amāvas sachh chandarmān disai nahin kai chariā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 137.

56. Cf. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1968, 135-38.

name of *Khudā*.<sup>57</sup> It is extremely doubtful that the first part of this description would apply to any of the Lodi *sultāns* or to Babur and Humayun. In fact, only the word *Khudā* suggests that this may be a reference to 'Muslim' rulers; but in Guru Nanak's verses *Khudā* is a general epithet for God. This becomes absolutely clear in a verse in which both *Khudā* and *Allah* occur together.

This is not to suggest, however, that there is no direct denunciation of contemporary rule in Guru Nanak's verses. There is the general comment, first, that the rulers (*rājās*) are avaricious and full of *ahankār*.<sup>58</sup> There are very uncomplimentary comparisons too. For instance, there is a general reference to 'blood-sucking' *rājās*.<sup>59</sup> Then there is also a most direct comment:

The *rājās* are lions and the *muqaddams*, dogs; they fall upon the *ra'iyat* day and night. Their agents inflict wounds with claws (of power) and the dogs lick blood and relish the liver.<sup>60</sup>

57. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 350:

*Rājā nīāo karai haṭh hoi ; kahai 'Khudāi' nā mānai kot.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1165.

58. *Parbhāṭi* (Astpādīān), A. G., 1342:

*Māya-saṅch rājai ahankāri, māya sāth nā challai pīari.*

59. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 142.

*Rat pinai rājai sarai uppar rukhiqi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 133

60. *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1288.

*Rājai siha, mukaddam kuttai,*

*Jāi jagāin baithai suttai,*

*Chākar nehḍā pāin ghāo,*

*Ratt pitt kutto chat jāo.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1229.

In *Vār Malār* (A. G., 1286), there is a passage in which the same idea is expressed. It refers to the power and pride of the subordinates of the *sultān* and to their profitable but unjust employment.

A condemnation of contemporary rule is unmistakable here. It may be pointed out, however, that Guru Nanak's attack is not directed against the rulers as 'Muslims'. In fact, the bracketing of the *muqaddam* (who invariably was a non-Muslim) with the *rājās* strongly suggests that Guru Nanak adopts the standpoint of the common people, the *ra'iyat*, as against the rulers and their subordinates or agents. And this is extremely important.

There are only a few direct references to 'Muslim' rule in Guru Nanak's verses. In *R&g Basant*, there are the following lines:

The *ād-purkh* is called *Allah*, now that the turn of the *shaikhs* has come; the gods and their temples are taxed, such is now the custom.<sup>61</sup>

In these lines, Guru Nanak appears to assume a close connection between the holders of political power and the respectable professors of their faith; he notices also a 'discrimination' against those who do not belong to their faith. This largely depicts the situation of his day. It is obvious that Guru Nanak has no sympathy for 'discrimination' on religious grounds. Another direct reference to 'Muslim' rule occurs in association with the *kaliyuga* when 'the *Veda* is the *Atharva*, the respectable dress is of blue colour, the rule is of

61. *Basant*, A. G., 1191 :

*Ād-purkh kau Allah kahtiyā sekhān āyt vārt,*

*Deval devatlān kar lāgā aist kīrat chāht.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1141.

Turks and Pathans, and the name of *Khudā* is *Allah*'.<sup>62</sup> If there is a condemnation of 'Muslim' rule in this passage, it is only through the association of that rule with the *kaliyuga*. There is no direct denunciation.

We may now turn to the *Bābar-vāni* verses<sup>63</sup> which contain Guru Nanak's response to some of the political events of his days. It is well known that Guru Nanak's observations are confined to events connected with Babur's invasions. It has been pointed out earlier that the most important events in the politics of the Punjab were connected with Babur's political activity. It is not surprising, therefore, that Guru Nanak's observations relate to some of these events and to no other. The character of these events and the probability that they were within the range of Guru Nanak's personal observation may largely account for his strong reaction. There is no doubt that the suffering caused by these events deeply pained Guru Nanak. It is equally clear that this suffering raised some moral issues as well.

For a proper appreciation of Guru Nanak's response to the events in question, the *Bābar-vāni* verses must be considered together. In these, Guru Nanak mentions the suffering caused

62. These verses consist of *Āsā* 39 (A. G., 360), *Āsā Astpadiān* 11 & 12 (A. G., 417-18) and *Tilang* 5 (A. G., 722-23).

For the relevance of Guru Nanak's personal experience to these verses, see Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 135-38. It has been observed by the author that in Guru Nanak's descriptions of agony and destruction there is 'a vividness and a depth of feeling which can be explained only as expressions of a direct, personal experience'.

63. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 470:

*Kal main baid atharban huā, nāo Khudāi Allah bhīā,  
Nīl bastarai kaprai pehrai, turk pathāni aml kiā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1551.

by war. In *Rāg Tilang*, for instance, occur the following lines, believed to have been addressed to Lalo:<sup>64</sup>

With the marriage-party of sin, he has come from Kabul and demands charity (*dān*) by force. Honour and morality, both, have hid themselves and falsehood struts in the van. Not the *qāzīs* and *brahmans* but Satan presides over the rites of marriage.<sup>65</sup>

In these lines, the primary emphasis is on rape, committed obviously by the Mughal troops. In *Rāg Āsā* also, Guru Nanak refers to this unfortunate aspect of war: 'The robes of some are torn from head to foot'.<sup>66</sup> 'Or, 'they have been carried away, having been dishonoured'<sup>67</sup> Guru Nanak also observes that rape was committed indiscriminately. In *Rāg Tilang*, the reference to this fate of the women is indirect: the Muslim women invoke God in despair and the Hindu women

64. The word 'Lalo' occurs at the end of every line in the first stanza of seven lines. For a brief comment on its use, see Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 87.
65. *Ādi Granth*, 722-23. For translations of this passage, see Manmohan Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2357-59; Gopal Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 692; Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1909, I, 109-10.
66. *Ādi Granth*, 417-18. For translations of the passage, see Manmohan Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1384-86; Gopal Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 415; Trumpp, Ernest, *The Adī Granth*, London 1877, 585-86; Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 115-16. This line is interpreted by Kahn Singh Nabha clearly as a reference to 'dishonour': *Gurshabad Ratnākār Mahān Kosh*, Patiala 1960, 286 (under 'khur').
67. *Ādi Granth*, 417. For translations of the passage, see Manmohan Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1382-84; Trumpp, Ernest, *The Adī Granth*, 585; Gopal Singh, *Sri Gurm Granth Sahib*, 414-15; Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 112-13.

of all castes find themselves in a similar plight.<sup>68</sup> In *Rāg Āsā* the women who suffered are specifically referred to as many a *hinduānti*, *turkānti*, *bhattiāni* and *thakurāni*.<sup>69</sup>

The suffering caused by war was obviously not confined to rape. It involved death and murder. In *Rāg Tilang*, the reference to 'blood' is general but forceful: 'the pacans of murder are sung and the saffron-mark is of blood'.<sup>70</sup> In *Rāg Āsā* there is a reference to those who died in the field of battle.<sup>71</sup> They left wailing widows behind.<sup>72</sup> Also many strong mansions as well as ordinary buildings were burnt and even 'princes' were cut to pieces and rolled in the dust.<sup>73</sup> Guru Nanak was particularly pained to see the suffering of the weak, presumably the ordinary people who had little to do with politics and war. 'If the mighty destroy only one another, one is not grieved. But if a mighty lion falls upon a herd of cattle, the master is answerable'.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Guru Nanak asks God directly:

At this suffering and lamentation, did not You feel  
compassion?<sup>75</sup>

68: See note 65, above.

69. See note 66, above.

70. See note 65, above.

71. *Ibid.*

72. See note 67, above.

73. See note 65, above.

74. *Ādi Granth*, 360. For translations of the passage, see Manmohan Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1200-01; Gopal Singh; *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 351; Trumpp, Ernest, *The Ādi Granth*, 509; Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 119.

75. *Ibid.* Cf. Mcleod, W. H., *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 136 & n. 2.

With a firm belief in God's omnipotence, Guru Nanak does see the will of God behind these events. This is evident from some of the verses in the *Bābar-vānt* itself. In *Rāg Āsā*, there is the line:

You alone 'join' and You alone 'separate'—such is Your greatness!<sup>76</sup>

And there is also the line:

This world is yours; You alone are the Master.

In a single moment He creates and He destroys.<sup>77</sup> If God Himself acts and causes others to act, to whom can one complain? If suffering and happiness are dispensed by Him, to whom can one go and weep? His is the command that prevails and men receive what is 'written' by Him.<sup>78</sup>

It is for Him to bestow greatness or to chastise.<sup>79</sup>

Obviously, Guru Nanak's question in the previous paragraph is addressed to God who is *omnipotent*. On this belief, Guru Nanak can expose the pretention of many a *pīr* to miraculous powers. 'No Mughal became blind and none performed a miracle'.<sup>80</sup>

What God desires comes to pass. What is man?<sup>81</sup>

Guru Nanak's God is not only omnipotent but also just. The pursuit of temporal power and riches at the cost of

76. See note 74, above.

77. See note 66, above.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. See note 67, above.

righteousness brings its nemesis.

Where are those sports, those stables and horses, those trumpets and clarions? Where are those sword-belts, those chariots and those scarlet tunics? Where are those mirrors and those handsome faces? They are nowhere to be seen.

Where are those houses, mansions and palaces? and those seraglios? Where are those soft beds and those beautiful women whose sight banished sleep? Where are those betels and those harems? They have vanished.<sup>82</sup>

Guru Nanak's explanation of this change is the blind pursuit of wealth and riches. Because of wealth, it went hard with many; wealth cannot be amassed without sins and it does not accompany the dead. Indeed,

He who is destroyed is first deprived of his virtue!<sup>83</sup>

It must by now be clear that Guru Nanak's response to war and to suffering caused by war is not simply an expression of his anguish. There is a moral dimension to the situation which restrains Guru Nanak from an outright condemnation either of the conqueror or the conquered.<sup>84</sup>

82. See note 66, above.

83. *Ibid.*

84. The only reference to Babur which may be taken as a condemnation of his activity is in *Rāg Tilang* where the phrase 'marriage-party of sin' is used for his army. But in the context of the passage, this is a judgment on the soldiers. There is a line in *Rāg Āsā* (A. G., 360) which is translated by Macauliffe as: 'The

In fact his moral judgment is not confined to the rulers.

Those who wore beautiful tresses and vermillion in the parting of their hair, their locks have been shorn and dust rises to their necks. They used to dwell in 'palaces' and now they cannot find even a seat.

When they were married, their spouses adorned their sides; they came in palanquins studded with ivory; they were ceremoniously received, amidst glittering fans, and immense money was bestowed upon them in the ceremonies of reception; they relished nuts and dates and enjoyed their conjugal beds. But now on their necks are chains and broken are their strings of pearls.<sup>85</sup>

Guru Nanak observes, first that wealth and beauty which served as the source of pleasures have now become their proven enemy, for they have been dishonoured. Guru Nanak then adds:

Had they paused to think in time, would they have received punishment?<sup>86</sup>

*dogs of Lodi* have spoiled the priceless inheritance; when they are dead no one will regard them' (*The Sikh Religion*, I, 119). This line is by no means easy to interpret, for in the original, there is no mention of the 'Lodis'. If the common assumption that this line refers to the Lodis is justified, it should not be interpreted in isolation from the general response of Guru Nanak to the events. In any case the loss of Lodi sovereignty will be related to the moral failure of the Lodis.

85. See note 67, above.

86. *Ibid.* Cf. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurā Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 135-36.

The import becomes absolutely clear in the lines that follow. The senseless pursuit of pleasure by the rulers is contrasted with the helplessness even of the 'princes' after Babur's ascendancy. Some could not attend to their *namāz* or *pūjā*; some others were unable to be meticulous about their routine observances:

They had never remembered *Rām*; now they cannot invoke *Khudā*.<sup>87</sup>

Their heedlessness of God has brought about this retribution. Thus, all the suffering involved in war was not wholly undeserved. For all his sympathy with the sufferers, Guru Nanak does not regard them all as completely 'innocent'.<sup>88</sup>

In the light of this analysis, a categorical statement on the response of Guru Nanak to his political *milieu* may seem inadequate or superficial. Yet the necessity of reducing that response to an orderly pattern remains. And an attempt must be made to sum up his position. The verses which reflect his response to contemporary politics form only a very small proportion of his compositions. But, in qualitative terms, these verses are by no means negligible. In fact they suggest a serious concern of the author with politics. This concern was intimately connected with his deeper concern for salvation. In contrast to quest for salvation, pursuit of earthly greatness was sordid and mean. Consequently, Guru Nanak does not show any regard for temporal power and he does not show any respect for political authority. This aspect of his attitude to politics, in which man's moral commitment is given a clear primacy over his political obligations,

87. See note 67, above.

88. Cf. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 3-4.

is extremely important for its implications if the distinction between moral allegiance to God and political allegiance to the state was to be carried to its logical conclusions. In the absence of such a choice being forced on one, politics could more or less be ignored as a contemptible affair. True 'sovereignty' belonged to a sphere other than that of politics. However, the actions of the valiant warrior in a right cause were praiseworthy.

Guru Nanak expects certain norms of behaviour, both from the ruler and the ruled. The foremost duty of the ruler was to be just, both legally and morally. The foremost duty of the ruled was to meet the valid demands of the ruler. Guru Nanak is totally unconcerned about any constitutional questions. If anything, he wholeheartedly accepts the monarchical framework. He might condemn the holders of various offices but not the offices themselves. From the functionaries of government he expects honesty and integrity in the performance of their duties and consideration for common people. What was to be done if the rulers and their representatives failed in their duties? Guru Nanak does not appear to have posed this question to himself, and naturally, there is no direct answer to it in his verses. But his condemnation of oppression and corruption, delivered in bold and clear terms, may be taken as a form of answer. Furthermore, carried to its logical end, this attitude was capable of resulting in 'revolt', depending upon the nature and extent of 'oppression'.

Guru Nanak's denunciation of contemporary politics was frank but general. He does not appear to condemn individuals or their specific acts; but there can be no mistake about the condemnation itself. With probably the *jiziya* and the pilgrimage tax in mind he disapproved of 'discrimination' but, significantly, on moral grounds. Though

he was keenly aware of the Muslim presence in the Punjab and of Muslim domination in politics, there is little evidence to suggest that he condemned the rulers as 'Muslims'. The closest he comes to identify himself with any group of people is with the ruled, as against the rulers. His 'sympathies' and 'antipathies' cut across religious or communal barriers. His observations on some of the contemporary events are more in the nature of a general judgment of the age, a sermon in morality, rather than a specific condemnation of Babur or the Lodis. This judgment springs directly from Guru Nanak's absolute faith in God's omnipotence and justice. His humanistic impulse is chastened and restrained by his metaphysical and moral convictions. Possibly the essential clues to Guru Nanak's response to politics lie in his religion.

## CHAPTER VI

# CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY AND GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak's response to his social *milieu* is a complicated question, more even than the problem of his political concerns. In the sphere of politics there was no immediate necessity of clothing ideas and attitudes in tangible forms; but some 'social' action was inevitably involved in the 'religious' role assumed by Guru Nanak for himself. The moment we visualize him amongst his disciples, we discern a socio-religious group coming into existence<sup>1</sup> and to draw a neat distinction between the religious and the social aspects of Guru Nanak's activity becomes extremely difficult. What we confront in the social sphere, therefore, is not simply the evidence of Guru Nanak's compositions but also that of his practice. And this complicates the issues regarding his social concerns.

Guru Nanak is generally depicted as a great social reformer. It is believed that he preached 'liberal' social doctrines;<sup>2</sup>

1. In the last two decades of his life Guru Nanak led a more or less settled life at Kartarpur on the left bank of the river Ravi. This particularly was the period in which 'he gave practical expression to his own ideals, the period in which he combined a life of disciplined devotion with worldly activities, set in the context of normal family life and a regular *satsang*': Mcleod, W. H., *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1968, 277-28.
2. Teja Singh, *The Religion of the Sikh Gurus*, Amritsar 1957, 1.

he upheld the ideal of equality and advocated a casteless society.<sup>3</sup> He was an apostle of 'universal brotherhood' and he condemned 'caste and class'.<sup>4</sup> A notable aspect of the 'social improvement' effected by him was 'the emancipation of women'.<sup>5</sup> It is said in fact that he was 'the greatest emancipator of woman in this country'.<sup>6</sup> For him, men and women were equal not only before God but also before one another.<sup>7</sup> Guru Nanak's advocacy of 'the brotherhood of man' and his protest against 'the principle of caste' are seen as a reflection of the influence of the Islamic principles of universal brotherhood and human equality.<sup>8</sup> At any rate, Guru Nanak is believed to have condemned many social evils before launching a positive programme of social reform : disparity, caste, *sati*, slavery of women, for instance.<sup>9</sup> To a twentieth-century writer Guru Nanak has appeared, indeed, as 'a true socialist'.<sup>10</sup>

3. Kahan Singh, *The Sikh Religion* (A Symposium), 147.
4. Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *The Sikh Studies*, London 1937, 9. According to H. H. Wilson, the abolition of caste distinguished the Sikhs from 'the other Hindus': *The Sikh Religion* (A Symposium) 68-69.
5. Field, D., *The Religion of the Sikhs*, London 1914, 59.
6. Sewaram Singh, *The Divine Master*, Lahore 1930, 295. See also, Teja Singh, *Guru Nanak and His Mission*, Amritsar, n. d., 7.
7. Teja Singh, *ibid.*, 5.
8. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, 1, 28.
9. Darshan Singh, *Indian Bhakti Tradition and Sikh Gurus*, 208-13. See also, Jodh Singh, Bhai, *Gurmati Nirnay*, Ludhiana. n. d., 273-80.
10. Gurmit Singh, "Guru Nanak, a True Socialist", *The Sikh Review* (June 1969), XVIII, No. 191, 5-8. See also, Trilochan Singh, *Guru Nanak's Religion: A Comparative Study of Religions*, Delhi, 1968, 27: 'The key-note of the social and political philosophy of Guru Nanak is intense belief in equality of all human beings, and the right of all human beings to be free from fear, oppression, social slavery and political tyranny'.

This image of Guru Nanak is generally but not universally invoked. It is modified in two important ways: one, his social concerns appear to have been much less important to him than his religion; two, his compositions in themselves do not appear to be a safe guide in so far as they suggest radical break with the existing social order. K. M. Ashraf, for instance, has observed that the criticism of life to be found in the works of the reformers of the age is 'somewhat unbalanced'; the reformers like Nanak and Kabir, 'though rebelling against priesthood in no uncertain terms', do not strive against the prevalent social evils 'in the same characteristic and militant manner'.<sup>11</sup> Indubhusan Banerjee, after a lengthy discussion of Guru Nanak's attitude towards the existing social order, comes to the conclusion that there is no satisfactory evidence to support the view that Guru Nanak's aim was to build 'an entirely novel structure on the ruins of the old'.<sup>12</sup> This conclusion rests on a distinction made by Banerjee between the 'utterances' of Guru Nanak and the actual practice of his followers.<sup>13</sup> In his view, conclusions based solely on the 'utterances' of Guru Nanak are likely to be misleading.<sup>14</sup> In any case, the compositions of Guru Nanak demand a careful interpretation regarding the problem of his social concerns.

From this bare mention of the diversity of views held on the subject, several relevant questions emerge for consideration; the seriousness of Guru Nanak's social concerns, and their relative importance to him; his attitudes towards the existing social order, towards caste and the position of woman in particular; his attitude towards the 'evils' of contemporary society; the relationship between his theory and practice; and the need

11. *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustān*, 119, 122.

12. *Evolution of the Khalsa* (2nd. ed.), I, 141.

13. *Ibid.*, 113.

14. *Ibid.*, 132.

for a proper interpretation of his compositions. It may be readily recognized that the practical shape given by Guru Nanak to his idea on society is of crucial importance. Our limited purpose here, however, is to examine only his compositions with some of the relevant questions in mind. It may be possible at a later stage of this work to relate his 'theory' to the practical expression of his ideals.

A careful perusal of Guru Nanak's compositions reveals his familiarity with many of the socio-economic aspects of life in the Punjab. His awareness of the royalty, the nobility, the officials of the government, its intermediaries and the *ra'tyat* has been pointed out in the previous chapter. Here it may be remarked, first, that his compositions reveal his awareness of the social entity of the Muslims. He talks of the *musalmān* in general, and also of the *mullā* and the *shaikh*. He comments on some of the Muslim social customs and, at one place, refers to husband and wife as *miān* and *bibi*. But Guru Nanak's greater preoccupation appears to have been with the Hindu society. He takes notice of the 'four-varnas' and refers specifically to the *brahman*, the *khatrī*, the *vais* and the *sūdar*. He takes notice also of the high and low *jāts* and refers to the *chūhqārās*, the *chandālas* and the *dhānaks*, all of whom were probably 'outcastes'. The *brahman* is given specific attention as a *pandit*, a *pāndā*, a *vyotishi* or the *prohit*. Guru Nanak refers not only to the learning of religious texts and Sanskrit but also to 'the six philosophical systems' and to grammar, medicine and astrology. Several professions and occupations find mention in Guru Nanak's compositions: the *sāhūkar*, the money-lender, the merchant, the trader, the *banjārā*, the *sarrāf*, the *bāniā*, the goldsmith, the ironsmith, the dyer, the fisherman, the seller of bangles, the broker, the horse-dealer, the singer, the poet, the dancing girl, the juggler, the domestic servant, the menial, the slave,

the beggar, for instance. Guru Nanak refers also to the cultivator, to harvests and crops, to the day labourer. He talks of daily wages as well as of profits. He refers to the renunciant and the house-holder. He takes notice of the family as a social unit and dwells on the relationship between the husband and the wife; he refers also to the widow and the *sati*. He comments on some of the ceremonies and observances connected with individuals' life. He mentions articles of luxury and toilet and comments on dress, food and diet. He refers to the games of chess and *chaupar*. He takes notice of some social 'characters': the thief, the gambler, the addict, for instance. Guru Nanak's 'social observation' thus appears to be strikingly wide and comprehensive.<sup>15</sup>

However, Guru Nank's 'social comment' is more often implicit than explicit and almost always it has a context which strictly speaking is not 'social'. Therefore the task of examining Guru Nanak's response to his social *milieu* is not easy. It is necessary, first, to bear in mind Guru Nanak's evaluation of earthly pursuits in relation to salvation which for him was the real aim of human life. What is ephemeral and transitory is not 'true' and what is 'false' is not worth pursuing at the cost of the 'true'. From this viewpoint:

False are the *rājā* and the subjects, false indeed is the world. False are palaces and mansions and those who dwell in them. False are gold and hoards of riches; false the body, the raiment and beauty. False

15. No specific references are perhaps needed for the statements made in this paragraph. It may be enough to point out that these references are to be found in *Rāg Gauṛī*, *Vār Mājh*, *Srī Rāg*, *Rāg Dhanāsari*, *Rāg Āsā*, *Japji*, *Rāg Tilang*, *Rāg Sorath*, *Rāg Vadhans*, *Rāg Gwjrī*, *Rāg Bhairo*, *Rāg Tukhāri*, *Rāg Rāmkalī*, *Rāg Bīlāval*, *Rāg Suhi*, *Vār Malār*, *Rāg Sārang* and *Rāg Basant*.

are the husband and the wife; false indeed is all earthly attachment.<sup>16</sup>

This idea is by no means uncommon in Guru Nanak's compositions and it has to be given the importance it demands by its frequent occurrence. Whosoever has come into this 'false' world has to depart.<sup>17</sup> Yet from birth to death everyone remains attached to this 'palace of smoke'.<sup>18</sup> The father, the mother, the son, the daughter and the wife are 'ties' that bind everyone to this 'false' world.<sup>19</sup> Few escape this mortal attachment.<sup>20</sup> The lure of gold, pearls and riches is a veritable 'net';<sup>21</sup> wealth and power and youth and beauty are illusory shadows of 'a few days'.<sup>22</sup> For the Great Juggler, the whole universe is a 'play';<sup>23</sup> but for His creatures it is a 'snare'.<sup>24</sup> All earthly pleasures and attachments are lost in one stake in a gamble that is essentially 'false'.<sup>25</sup> The pursuit of all earthly pleasure is a thirst

16. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 468.

17. *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 581.

18. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 137-38.

19. *Rāg Āsā* A. G., 416.

20. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 356.

21. *Rāg Sūhī*, A. G., 762; *Sri Rāg* A. G., 63.

22. *Rāg Bilāval*, A. G., 796; *Rāg Dhanāsari* A. G., 689; *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 470-71:

*Kappar rūp suhāvanā chhad duniā andar jāvanā.*

*Mandā changā āpanā āpai hi kitā pāvanā.*

For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1553.

23. *Rāg Āsā* A. G., 433-34; *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 422.

24. *Rāg Sorath* (Astōadiān), A. G., 635; *Rāg Parbhāti* (Astpadian), A. G., 1343.

25. *Rāg Gauri* (Astpadiān), A. G., 222; *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 142:

*Kiā khādoi kīā pāthai hoi, jā man nāhi sachchā hoi.*

that by its very nature is unquenchable;<sup>26</sup> it leads inevitably to misery.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, misery is the beginning as well as the end of human existence on earth.<sup>28</sup> It may be safely inferred that Guru Nanak has no sympathy or appreciation for an earthly pursuit treated as an end in itself. All riches, luxuries and pleasures are to be rejected if they make men oblivious of God.<sup>29</sup>

Guru Nanak's 'social comment' must be seen in relation to his general idea of human misery. The chariot of *kaliyuga* is made of 'passion' and it is driven by 'falsehood'.<sup>30</sup> There are millions of fools fallen in the depths of utter darkness; there are millions of thieves subsisting on the earning of others; there are millions of murderers, sinners and slanderers; and there are millions of the false and the wicked.<sup>31</sup> Lust is the wine, misery the cup-bearer and man the drinker; worldly love

26. *Rāg Sorath (Astpadiān), A. G., 634; Rāg Bilāval (Astpadiān), A. G., 832:*

*Māyā mad mattai tripat nā āvai, tripat mukat man sachchā bhāvai.*  
For translation, Gopal Singh (tr.) *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 788-89.

27. *Vār Malār, A. G., 1287:*

*Dukkhkhī duni saheriat, jāi te laggai dukkhkh.*

....

*Andhī kammi andhī man, man andhī tan andhī.*

For translation, Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1288.

28. *Rāg Rāmkalī, A. G., 877.*

29. *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1255; Sri Rāg, A. G., 14.* On the argument that life is a fleeting shadow, Guru Nanak exhorts men to be pious:

Wealth, youth and flowers are guests only of four days;  
They wither and fade like the leaves of the water lily.  
Enjoy God's love, dear one, in the freshness of youth.  
Few are thy days; thou art wearied and the vesture of  
thy body hath grown old.

Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 187.

30. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 235.

31. *Āsā dī Vār, A. G., 466; Japji, A. G., 4.*

and anger are the contents and pride serves this concoction; the false and the covetous are the boon-companions; and man drinks it to the lees, and to destruction.<sup>32</sup> In this connection, a statement of Guru Nanak in the first person singular is worth quoting:

I have with me a dog and two bitches which bark at the wind every morning; my hunting-knife is falsehood and its handle is made of carrion; I remain in the guise of huntsman (*dhānak*), O Creator. I do not follow the Master's advice and I do not work as I should; my appearance is dreadfully deformed; . . . I utter slanders day and night; like low outcastes (*nīch sanāt*) I look for breaking into another's house; lust and anger, these *chandālas* dwell in my body; I remain in the guise of a huntsman, O Creator. My appearance is gentle but I meditate deception and fraud; I am a cheat of cheats; I am clever but I am loaded with sins; I remain in the guise of a huntsman, O Creator. I did and knew nothing except of dishonesty; how can I, a wicked thief, show my face? Nanak, the low (*nīch*) makes this deliberate confession: I remain in the guise of a huntsman, O Creator.<sup>33</sup>

This passage suggests that in interpreting Guru Nanak's 'social comment' due regard has to be paid to his moral fervour and to his artistic use of metaphors. It may not be safe, as a rule, to take his statements literally.

Guru Nanak often makes only a neutral use of meta-

32. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 182.

33. *Sri Rāg*, A. G 24.

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 184.

phors, without any clear social import. Most of the metaphors relating to trade, for instance, fall into this category. God is, the true *Sāhu* and men are His agents.<sup>34</sup> God is the real 'lender' and men are ultimately accountable to Him.<sup>35</sup> Man is referred to as His *vanjārā*, for he has been given life to invest in a way most pleasing to God.<sup>36</sup> One can never purchase goods without paying the due price.<sup>37</sup> True trade consists in dealing in God's Name.<sup>38</sup> The profit which accrues to the dealer from such a trade is his ability to accept God's will (*razā*).<sup>39</sup> He is the perfect weigher who weighs with the balance of truth.<sup>40</sup> He is the real connoisseur of 'diamonds'.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, God is the balance, the weigher and the weighed.<sup>42</sup> Similarly patience is referred to as the goldsmith and wisdom as the anvil.<sup>43</sup> There are illustrative references also to dyeing.<sup>44</sup> Modesty is the base, devotion the dye and fear

34. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 140; *Basant Hindol*, A. G., 1171; *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 155; *Rāg Sūhī*, A. G., 729; *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 557.

Occasionally God is also referred to as the Cultivator who prepares the soil for sowing the seed of True Name in man; *Srī Rāg*, A. G., 19.

35. *Rāg Sūhī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 751; *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1288.  
 36. *Srī Rāg*, A. G., 74-75.  
 37. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 226.  
 38. *Rāg Gaurī* (Pūrabi), A. G., 243.  
 39. *Rāg Sūhī*, A. G., 752; *Srī Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 59; *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), A. G., 636.  
 40. *Srī Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 59.  
 41. *Rāg Tukhārt*, A. G., 1112.  
 42. *Rāg Sūhī*, A. G., 730-31 :

*Āpai kandā tol tarāḥī, āpai tolanhār.*

For translation Gopal Singh (tr.), *Srī Guru Granth Sahib*, 699.

43. *Japji*, A. G., 8.  
 44. *Rāg Sūhī*, (Astpadiān), A. G., 751.

the vat.<sup>45</sup> Similarly evil mentality is compared to a low woman, cruelty to a butcher's wife, backbiting to a sweeper woman and anger to a *chandāla* woman.<sup>46</sup> In this last set of metaphors there is, no doubt, an implied disparagement of the low castes mentioned. But that is almost incidental and may be explained in terms of the values of Guru Nanak's contemporaries rather than his own. In any case, here there is no direct or indirect criticism of socio-economic realities as they existed in Guru Nanak's day.

However, quite often Guru Nanak judges the activities of his contemporaries from a standpoint which is closely related to his own expectations or values. In every day life, he expects the cultivator to prepare the soil well for sowing; he expects the trader to be honest in his trade.<sup>47</sup> It must be repeated, however, that Guru Nanak's preference for the spiritual life is revealed in the very use of his metaphors. For instance, he exhorts men to trade in such goods that are lasting; only these will be credited to their account by the wise *Sahu*.<sup>48</sup> Occasionally a metaphor is used only to bring home the moral teaching in view.<sup>49</sup> In fact, it is clearly stated that wealth, honour and wisdom are obtained only by lodging God in one's heart.<sup>50</sup> Consequently,

One may profit by millions; one may hoard millions;

45. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 232; Teja Singh, *Asa di' Var*, 87.

46. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 52.

47. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 18.

48. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 22.

49. *Rāg Sorāth*, A. G., 595-96. See also *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 419.

50. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 15:

*Tin matt tin patt tin dhan pallai, jin hirdaj rihā samāi,*

For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 49.

one may spend millions; immense wealth may pass through one's hands; if one receives no honour (in God's court) one has no place of honour. One may listen to all the *Shāstras* and all the *Purānas*; if one receives no honour (in God's court), all one's learning is of no account.<sup>51</sup>

Thus a true *brahman*, through his worship and conduct, must attain to salvation and be released from the cosmic circuit; a true *khatri* must be a hero in action to be acceptable in God's court.<sup>52</sup> Conversely, only those who follow the true path are 'wise *pandits*'.<sup>53</sup> And only those who are brave in action are true *khatri*s. On this criterion, there appeared to be little in the *brahmans* or the *khatri*s of the times that was commendable. They fell far short of the duties of their own conception. Their failure was greater when they were judged on Guru Nanak's criterion.

For Guru Nanak, the actual conduct of men is of the utmost importance. One who spoke untruths and fed oneself upon 'carrion' (ill-gotten earning) had no right to lead others. Those who believed that a cloth soiled with blood became 'defiled', why could they not see that one who sucked human blood did not remain 'pure'?<sup>54</sup> An ill-gotten income should

51. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 358:*

*Lakh khattiai lakh sanjai khājai, lakh āvai lakh jāi,  
Jān pat lekhai nā pavai tān jā kitai phir pāi.*

For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1193

*Lakh sāsai samjhāuni lakh pandit parhai purān,  
Jān pat lekhai nā pavai sabhai kuparvān.*

52. *Vārān te Vadhik, A. G., 1411* See also, *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1256.*

53. *Vār Malār, A. G., 1288*

54. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 140:*

*Je ratt laggai kapparai, jā mā hot palit,  
Jo ratt pivai mānasā, tin kion nirmal chit.*

For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 4(4

indeed be like pork to the Muslim and like beef to the Hindu.<sup>55</sup> Learning unaccompanied by good conduct is a veritable ignorance.<sup>56</sup> Every 'vanjārā' was accountable to the *Sāhu*.<sup>57</sup> Consequently man's actions assume primary importance because he is accountable to God:

The words man speaks shall be taken into account; the food he eats shall be taken into account; his movements shall be taken into account and what he sees and hears shall be taken into account. In fact, every breath he draws shall be taken into account.<sup>58</sup>

There is no escape from this reckoning, for God watches over all and knows everything. Men break into shops and homes to steal, and they return cautiously, looking before and looking behind, but where can they hide from God?<sup>59</sup>

Mere knowledge, unaccompanied by 'right' conduct, was despicable. Guru Nanak shows no regard for books and learning. One may load carts with books; one may read them for all the twelve months of the year or, indeed, at each and every moment of one's entire life; all this will be of no

55. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 141:

*Hakk parāiā Nānakā us sū'ar us gāi;*

*Gur pār hāmā tā bharai jā murdār nā khāi.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 39.

56. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 140. See also, Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 235.

57. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 15.

58. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 186. See also, *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G. 579; *Rāg Tukhāri*, A. G., 1110.

59. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 30. The original lines may be seen in *Rāg Gauri* (Chaupadai, Dupadai):

*Hatt, pattan, bij-mandar bhannai, kar chori ghar āvai;*

*Aggon dekhai, pichhchhon dekhai, tujh te kahā chhapāvai.*

account. What one needed was 'one word', God's Name.<sup>60</sup> One may know Sanskrit and read the *Purānas*; one may count rosary beads or recite books; one may understand grammar; but without the Guru's *sabad* and God's name there will be no salvation.<sup>61</sup> There were many *pandits* pondering the *Vedas* and practising astrology; they only indulged in profitless strife and remained chained to the cosmic circuit.<sup>62</sup> The *pandit* reads books but without gaining any understanding; he 'advises' others but contents himself with only the material gains of his occupation.<sup>63</sup> This kind of learning has little in it to commend itself to Guru Nanak. He advises men to burn their earthly attachment and turn it into ink, to turn their intelligence into paper, to use love and devotion as a pen, to turn their mind into a writer inscribing under the Guru's instruction, to inscribe the praises of the One whose limits are beyond comprehension.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, medicine for bodily ailments may or may not be prized: but the *Vaid* who heals the pangs of a divinely afflicted heart is worthy of veneration.<sup>65</sup>

In Guru Nanak's view, the *qāzi*, the *brahman* and the *Jogi* betrayed a grave gulf between their conduct and profession: they failed to perform their functions in accordance with the

60. *Āsā di Vār A. G.*, 467. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 229.

61. *Rāg Rāmkañ, A. G.*, 876; *Rāg Bhairo, A. G.*, 1127:  
*Pustak, pāth, biakaran vikhānai, sandhiā karam tikāl karai;*  
*Bin Gur-sabad mukat kahā parāni Ram nām bin urjh marai.*  
 For translation, Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1077.

62. *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 56.

63. *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān); A. G.*, 56. See also Macauliffe, M. A. *The Sikh Religion*, I, 65.

64. *Sri Rāg, A. G.* 16.

65. *Vār Malār, A. G.*, 1279; *Rāg Malār, A. G.*, 1256.  
 Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 27.

positions assumed by them.<sup>66</sup> He who dies to self is a *qāzī*; he who purifies himself is a *musalmān*; he who 'cleanses' his heart is a wise man; and he who attains to salvation and leads others to salvation is a *brahman*.<sup>67</sup> He who discards evil and cultivates good qualities is a real 'trader'.<sup>68</sup> He who begs from God and not from mortals is a true 'beggar'.<sup>69</sup> All service, goodness and wisdom are contained in the Name.<sup>70</sup> To serve earthly masters is to board a boat of stone which is bound to sink.<sup>71</sup> Guru Nanak advises men to discard falsehood and deception and to serve none other than God.

The Jogis deem it their duty to acquire divine knowledge; the *brahmins* to read the *Vedas*; the *khatri*s to exercise bravery; and the *shūdras* to work for others. But the highest duty of all is to repeat the Name of the Lord.<sup>72</sup>

It is evident from these examples that Guru Nanak's 'social

66. *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G.*, 662.

67. *Loc. cit.*

68. *Rāg Āsā (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 418.

69. *Vār Malār, A. G.*, 1286.

70. *Rāg Sūhī, A. G.*, 729.

71. *Rāg Āsā (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 420.

72. *Slok Sahskriti, A. G.*, 1353. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 234. See also; *Rāg Rāmkali, A. G.*, 878; *Rāg Bilāval, A. G.*, 844; *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G.*, 663. In this last verse, Guru Nanak castigates the *khatri* for adopting the language of the *mlechha* and regrets that the world is reduced to one *varna*. It must be emphasized that this is not at all a characteristic expression of Guru Nanak. It may be attributed to some peculiar circumstance or situation. For a similar castigation of the *brahman*, see Macauliffe, M. A.: *The Sikh Religion*, I, 239. The primary emphasis in both these instances appears to be on the gulf between profession and practice. Cf. Teja Singh, *Asa di Vār*, 102-04.

comment' is inseparably connected with his ideas on religion and ethics.

It may now be possible to appreciate Guru Nanak's attitude towards some of the prevalent customs and observances. As it may be expected, the ceremonial ritual, purificatory bath, pilgrimage, charity in the name of dead ancestors, fasting, meticulousness about diet or outward appearance or *kiryā*—all become of little importance to Guru Nanak.<sup>73</sup> A few instances may suffice to illustrate his general attitude.

If the idea of impurity (*sūtak*) is admitted, there is impurity in everything. The cow-dung and the wood contain worms and there is no grain of corn without life. There is life in water which makes everything green; which is used in kitchens. How can one avoid impurity then? Impurity is washed away by divine knowledge alone.<sup>74</sup>

Guru Nanak goes on to add that real impurity consists in greed, falsehood and in lustful glances at another's wife. Birth and death are in accordance with God's *hukam*. He is the bestower of food. The idea of impurity is a mere superstition. Similarly, the ceremony of the sacred thread should inculcate mercy and contentment. But, in spite of the sacred thread, men committed theft, adultery, falsehood, robbery and villainy against others. There was no restraint put on sexual indulgence; indeed there was no sacred thread for the women. The true thread was obtained only by adoring

73. *Rāg Bhairo*, A. G., 1127; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 358; *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1169; *Basant Hindol*, A. G., 1191; *Rāg Parbhātī*, A. G., 1328; *Rāg Tukhāri*, A. G., 1108; *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān)*, A. G., 56.

74. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 472. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 242.

and praising the Lord.<sup>75</sup> Again, insistence on vegetarian diet was a meaningless restraint. Those who held their noses against the smell of meat during the day enjoyed human 'flesh' at night. Those who wrangled about diet were ignorant of divine knowledge and failed to distinguish real good from real evil.<sup>76</sup> Guru Nanak shows little sympathy either for meticulousness about apparel or for nakedness.<sup>77</sup> The wearing of white clean clothes did not cleanse the heart of its hardness or insincerity.<sup>78</sup> One might wear a spotless *dhott*, a *tilak* on one's forehead and a rosary on one's neck but the inside may remain the 'pit of anger'.<sup>79</sup> For Guru Nanak obviously, what mattered more than the outward appearance was intrinsic merit.<sup>80</sup>

Guru Nanak's comment on customs and ceremonies is more often concerned with *brahmanical* rituals. But Muslim customs are not entirely left out. There is, for instance, his comment on burial:<sup>81</sup>

The ash (*mīttī*) of the *musalmān* falls into the potter's clod and when, cast into vessels and bricks, it is burnt it cries: the poor ash burns and weeps and sparks fly

75. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 471. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion* I, 16-17; Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 100-01.

76. *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1290; also 1289.

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 48.

77. *Rāg Bhairo*, A. G., 1127.

78. *Rāg Sūhi* (Astpadiān), A. G., 751:

*Chittai jin kai kappari mailai chit kathor jio.*

*Tin mukh nām nā upjās, dujāi, viāpai chor jio.*

For translation, Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 718.

79. *Rāg Bilāval* (Astpadiān), A. G., 832. See also, *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 139.

80. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 355.

81. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 466. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 226; Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 39, 74.

from it. The Creator alone knows what is best.

Guru Nanak upholds neither the custom of burial nor that of cremation. Perhaps none of these deserved the importance that was attached to it. Guru Nanak sees a close connection between men's 'ignorance' and their attachment to the world and, therefore, to social customs. Why should one weep over an individual's death when the whole universe is a 'play'? God creates; He is pleased with His creation; He knows best and He commands.<sup>82</sup> Only that bewailing is justified which is not for worldly attachments but for the love of God; all other cries are useless and vain and arise from an ignorance of what is good and what is bad.<sup>83</sup> Death will not be an evil if one knew how to die.<sup>84</sup> But those who spend their lives in heedlessness are bound to be afraid of death.<sup>85</sup>

Naturally, Guru Nanak lays a good deal of stress upon the individual's actions. He exhorts men to adopt good speech.<sup>86</sup> It may be pointed out, however, that his 'good speech' does not necessarily refer to ordinary conversation. Similarly, he emphasizes the need of helping oneself. But it

82. *Rāg Vadhans, A. G., 580:*

*Nānak kis nā bābā roiyai,  
Bāji hai eh sansāru.*

For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1905.

Cf. Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 149.

83. *Ibid., A. G., 579:*

*Nānak runnā bābā jāntai,  
Je rovai lāi piāru.*

For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1903.

84. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 188.

85. *Rāg Tukhāri, A. G., 1110.* It may be of some interest to note that Guru Nanak extends the idea of misery and suffering to kings, *pandits*, *shahs*, and even to the gods of mythology. See, Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 168.

86. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 15.*

is not necessarily for one's mundane activity that this self-reliance is inculcated.<sup>87</sup> Guru Nanak is quite explicit on what men should not do. None shall intercede for a thief in God's court.<sup>88</sup> All low passions lead to evil and must be curbed.<sup>89</sup> Men must discard lust, anger and self-centredness;<sup>90</sup> they must discard slander, greed and the hardness of heart.<sup>91</sup> The thief, the gambler and the slanderer shall inevitably receive punishment; so shall be punished those who indulge in illicit sexual intercourse.<sup>92</sup>

If one reaped what one sowed and ate the fruit of one's 'profit', it was as necessary to do positive good as to avoid evil.<sup>93</sup> For instance, one must earn one's livelihood honestly.<sup>94</sup> One should cultivate true humility and be of service to others.

The *semal* tree is very tall and birds come to it with hopes, but return disappointed; its leaves are useless, its flowers of abominable taste, and its fruit insipid. Lowliness is sweet; it is the essence of goodness.<sup>95</sup>

87. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 473-74.

88. *Rāg Dhanāsari*, A. G., 662.

89. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 147.

90. *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān)*, A. G., 58. In *Rāg Malār*, there is the crisp statement:

*Par-dhan par-nāri rat nindā, bikh khāi dukhkh pāyā,*  
(A. G., 1255).

For translation, Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1199.

91. *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1170.

92. *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1288.

93. *Rāg Sūhi*, A. G., 730 :

*Jaisā bijai so lunai. Jo khattai sa khāi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 698.

94. *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 566.

95. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 470. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 236.

Guru Nanak inculcates concern for others.<sup>96</sup> God is the bestower of all gifts, and charity in His name is highly commendable.<sup>97</sup> Thus, though Guru Nanak concentrates on the individual and his acts, some of these acts have clearly a social direction. He recommends the company of good individuals.<sup>98</sup> Guru Nanak's concern with the individual's salvation does not remain confined to the individual in isolation from others around him.

It has been observed recently by a scholar that Sikhism 'unreservedly repudiates the religious sanction of birth distinctions, refuses to admit that there are any divinely ordained classes amongst mankind, denies that social gradation determines social ethics and civic obligations of individuals and unambiguously declares that, "class and caste distinctions are just so much nonsense, all men are born equal, for, men were not created from different parts of the Primæval Man, but all originate from the same source, the Light of God, and, therefore, there are no high or low by birth".<sup>99</sup>

96. *Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 730.*

97. *Vār Malār, A. G., 1286.* Also see, Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 231: 'Let man show mercy to living things and perform some works of charity' (*Vār Āsā*). See also, *Rāg Vadhans, A. G., 566; Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 766.*

98. *Basant Hindol, A. G., 1172.*

99. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, Jullundur-1959, 428. The author goes on to add that this doctrine repudiates the bases and the institutes of the Hindu caste system and lays down secure foundations 'on which the traditions of a liberal democracy may be reared and the superstructure of an equalitarian society may be raised, in which social justice is secured by secular laws, the justness of which is guaranteed by the refined and awakened conscience of the community': *ibid.*, 429. See also, *ibid.*, 392, 399, 402, 403-06, 411, 427.

The idea that all mankind is God's creation occurs several times in Guru Nanak's compositions. For instance, in *Rāg Āsā* :

*Saght jot terā sabh koi.*<sup>100</sup>

In *Rag Dhanāsari* :

*Sabh meh jot jot hai soi*

*Tis dai chānan sabh meh chānan hot.*<sup>101</sup>

In *Japji* :

*Sabhnān jān kā eko dātā.*<sup>102</sup>

There is no doubt that Guru Nanak firmly believes in God as the Creator of all; it is also clear that in his view all human beings should be equally entitled to salvation. But the social implications of these ideas are not very clear.

In some of Guru Nanak's verses, God's omnipotence explains the contrasting social positions of individuals. The king and the monk, for instance, are both His creation.<sup>103</sup> Those who read 'the book' and acquire the status of the *mullā* or the *shaikh* do not necessarily infringe God's will.<sup>104</sup>

100. *A. G.*, 414. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1373-74.

101. *A. G.*, 663. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 82; also, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 2174.

102. *A. G.*, 2. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 4.

103. *Rag Sūhi*, *A. G.*, 762:

*Bhānai takhat vadāiyā, bhānai bhakh udās jio.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 727.

104. *Vār Mājhi*, *A. G.*, 145:

*Jā tudh bhāvat tā parhai katebā mullā saikh kahāvai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 481.

Even misery and hunger are His 'gifts'.<sup>105</sup> Some are committed to beggary, while some others hold splendid *darbārs*.<sup>106</sup> All these manifestations are covered by God's *hukam*.<sup>107</sup> It may be said that these verses belong to a plane from which it cannot be argued that they are really meant to justify the varying fortunes of individuals, much less to perpetuate existing differences. On this argument the inference of 'social' equality should not necessarily flow from God being the Creator of all.

This is not to suggest, however, that Guru Nanak shows no concern for the iniquitous system of 'caste'. God has no 'caste'.<sup>108</sup> There is no 'caste' in the next world and 'caste' there is of no account.<sup>109</sup> Real honour and 'caste' are bestowed by God.<sup>110</sup> One does not become 'high' in God's

105. *Japji, A. G., 5:*

*Ketā dukhkh bhukhkh sadmār, eh bhī dāt teri dātār.*

Cf. Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, New Delhi 1966, 57; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 16-17.

106. *Srī Rāg, A. G., 16 :-*

*Ik upāl mangtal iknā vaddat darvār.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 51.

107. *Japji, A. G., 7.*

108. *Rāg Parbhāti, A. G., 1328.* See also, *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 413:*

109. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 349.* See also, *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1257.*

Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 427, n. 36; Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 233; Teja Singh, *Asā di Var*, 140.

110. *Rāg Parbhāti, A. G., 1331.* See also, *Āsā di Vār, A. G., 464.* Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 428, n. 37. Kapur Singh's statement quoted in the previous paragraph is based on the verse :

*Phakkār jāi phakkār nāu, sabhnā jīn eko thāu.*

This verse is not essentially different from some others quoted in this paragraph. Cf. Teja Singh, *Asā di Var*, 140.

Eyes by regarding oneself as 'high'.<sup>111</sup> In His court 'caste' and 'birth' are not taken into account; honour and 'caste' are determined by the acts of the individual.<sup>112</sup> He who forgets the Master is of 'low caste'; without His Name one remains an 'outcaste'.<sup>113</sup> It is for God to bestow greatness irrespective of one's 'caste'.<sup>114</sup> From these verses it may be safely inferred that in Guru Nanak's view the social fact of one's belonging to a high or low caste is totally irrelevant to one's salvation. This indeed is the dominant impression that the reader gets from his compositions. High and low castes were God's making.<sup>115</sup> But then, one's real 'caste' is determined by the 'honour' one earns from God.<sup>116</sup> Thus, there is none high or low except in accordance with the honour conferred by God.<sup>117</sup> Caste and power shall not count in God's reckoning

111. *Rāg Parbhāti, A. G.*, 1330. Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 427, n. 35.

112. *Rāg Parbhāti, A. G.*, 1330:

*Jāt janam nā puchhiyai, sach ghar laih batāi;*

*Sāi jāt sa patt hai jehai karam kamāi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1266.

113. *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 349:

*Khasam visārai te kamjāt, Nānak nāvai bājh sanāt.*

Cf. Manmohan Sidgh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1163.

114. *Rāg Basant (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 1188; *Sri Rag, A. G.*, 53:

*Varnā varan nā bhāvani je kisai vaddā karai,*

*Vaddai hath vadiāyā jai bhāvai tāi karai.*

There is a suggestion in this verse that the 'high-caste' were not easily prepared to concede spiritual merit to the low-caste. For translation, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Ibid.*, 181.

115. *Sri Rāg., A. G.*, 18.

116. *Rāg Gauri (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 221.

117. *Japji, A. G.*, 7:

*Jis hath jor kar vekhai soi, Nānak uttam nich nā koi.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 24.

who bestows status on a different criterion; only those who are good receive honour from Him.<sup>118</sup> Not low caste but low conduct brings misery.<sup>119</sup> Those who are 'false' possess neither caste nor honour.<sup>120</sup>

Guru Nanak makes a few personal statements which have a close bearing on the question of social differences. 'I am a purchased slave'; 'My mother was a slave, my father a slave, I was born a slave'.<sup>121</sup> These lines indicate Guru Nanak's familiarity with the institution of slavery but his metaphor is meant only to indicate his complete submission to God. Addressing God, he also says, 'You are high, I am low (*nīch*)'.<sup>122</sup> To be low in relation to God is indeed praiseworthy. And if one became the servant of God, one had no use for 'caste'.<sup>123</sup> At another place, Guru Nanak says, 'I am a singer (*dhādī*) of low caste (*nīch jāt*); others claim to be of high caste; they do not know themselves and think too much of self'.<sup>124</sup> God's grace (*nadr*) descends upon the lowly and Nanak is always with them, amongst the lowest of the

118. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 469:

*Aggai jāt nā jor hai aggai jiv navai,  
Jin ke lekhai patt pavai changai sāl kiyai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1547.

119. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 15.

120. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 23:

*Khotai jāt nā patt hai, khot nā sijhas kot.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 76.

121. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 111.

122. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 422.

123. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 358 :

*Ṭūn sāhib, hau sāngi terā, parnavai Nānak jāt kaisi.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1195.

124. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 468. Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 273, n.5.1; also, Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 230; Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 83.

low'.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, God made all the 'vessels' and His Light shines in all; 'call everyone high, there is none who is low (*nich*)'.<sup>126</sup> In this verse the idea of God's light being in all is closely connected with a 'social' comment. Altogether, there is a suggestion in these verses that Guru Nanak's rejection of 'caste' was probably not confined to theoretical statements.

Guru Nanak has a good deal of appreciation for those who are above the distinctions of caste. Only a few men have succeeded in transcending earthly attachment and the *jāt-varna*; they have passed as 'true' (coins).<sup>127</sup> One thing that the *sabad* under the Guru's instruction does is to free men from useless thoughts of the *jāt-varna*.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, only those who possess the intrinsic merit of devotion to God and yet regard themselves as *nich* attain to salvation.<sup>129</sup> Whatever one's caste, servanthood of God is praiseworthy.<sup>130</sup> In fact, 'if you desire a good end, do good deeds and think of yourself

125. *Sri Rāg, A. G. 15 :*

*Nichā andar nich jāt, nichī hau at nich,  
Nānak tīn kai sang sāth vadhiyā sio kia ris.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 48.

126. *Sri Rāg (Aspadiān), A. G., 62 :*

*Sabh ko uchchā ākhiyai, nich nā disai koī.*

127. *Rāg Par bhāti (Aspadiān), A. G., 1345 :*

*Aisai jan virilai jagg andar, parkh khajānai pāyā,  
Jāt varn te bhayai atitā, mamtā lobh chukāyā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1281.

128. *Rāg Sārang, A. G., 1198.* Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 427, n. 32 ; Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1148.

129. *Āsā di Vār, A. G., 470 :*

*Bhāo bhagat kar nich sadāi, tau Nānak mokhantar pāi.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1551.

130. *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1256.*

as low'.<sup>131</sup> Guru Nanak's sympathy with the lowly good is clear enough.

On the basis of a frequently quoted verse in Guru Nanak's *Āsā di Vār*, it has been asserted that Sikhism not only repudiates the nexus between *karma* and the social status of Hindu woman, 'but declares her "as the very essence of social coherence and progress" and condemns any suggestion of "relegating her to an inferior status in any manner", whatever'.<sup>132</sup> The verse, taken in itself, hardly justifies this inference. It refers to the indispensability of woman as mother and wife; it refers in fact to her indispensability for procreation; and it poses the question 'why denounce her who gives birth to *rājās*'.<sup>133</sup> It is evident that Guru Nanak is prepared to defend woman against those who insist on relegating her to an inferior position merely on the basis of her sex. There is no reason to believe that Guru Nanak's path of salvation was not open to women. In this sense, she was certainly placed at par with man, just as the *shūdra* was placed at par with the *brahman*.

However, Guru Nanak's attitude towards woman is by no means simple to grasp. Several times he refers to the wife as a 'snare'.<sup>134</sup> But, on the other hand, he approves of the life of a householder who can cultivate detachment and devotion.<sup>135</sup>

131. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 465. Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 274, n. 5.1; Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 225.

132. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 379 & n. 71. Cf. Greenlees, Duncan, *The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib*, xxv.

133. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 473; cf. Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 51, 110-11.

134. *Sri Rāg* (Astapadiān), A. G., 63; *Rāg Bhairo* (Astapadiān), A. G., 1153; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 437.

135. *Rāg Parbhāti*, A. G., 1329:

*Man vichār dekh braham-gyāni, kaun griht kaun udāst.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1266.

Guru Nanak has no appreciation for the widow becoming *sati*,<sup>136</sup> but neither the divorced woman nor the widow appears in any commendable light in his verses. In one verse, the characteristic trait of a widowed woman is given as 'submitting her body to a stranger to gratify lust and to obtain money'.<sup>137</sup> Without any implication for the widow's position, the legitimate matrimonial relationship is mentioned as praiseworthy.<sup>138</sup>

By far the largest number of metaphors relating to woman in the compositions of Guru Nanak refer to conjugal relationship.<sup>139</sup> In these metaphors God is the true Husband and man, as his wife, seeks union with Him, or pines for Him. Possibly Guru Nanak's conception of a good or bad wife can be inferred from these verses. The image of the ideal wife that emerges from these metaphors is not unconventional. Even if she is beautiful, accomplished and well mannered, she is humble and modest before her lord.<sup>140</sup> She is completely devoted to him and obeys his commands with pleasure.<sup>141</sup>

136. It is generally believed that Guru Nanak 'denounced' the custom of becoming *sati* but there are no verses in his compositions to justify such an inference. At the most one may find an implicit disapproval.
137. *Rāg Gauri* (Astpadiān) A. G., 226.  
The word used in the original is *bidhvā* (widow); the reference may be to those widows who took to prostitution; but that is not certain.
138. *Loc. cit.* The statement is followed by the line :  
*Bin pir tripat nā kabhūn hoi.*
139. See, for instance, *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 17; *Rāg Gauri* (Pūrabi), A. G., 242; *Rāg Gauri*, A. G., 225; *Rāg Sūhi*, A. G., 764, 729, 762; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G. 355-56; *Rāg Tūkhāri*, A. G. 1109-10, 1107; *Rāg Sārang* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1232; *Basant Hindol*, A. G., 1171.
140. *Sri Rāg* A. G., 17-18; *Basant Hindol*, A. G., 1171;  
*Rāg Sūhi*, A. G., 750.
141. *Rāg Tilang*, A. G., 722. Cf. Mcleod, W.H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 214.

She pines for him in separation.<sup>142</sup> She adorns herself with ornaments only to please her lord.<sup>143</sup> She is faithful to him and expects him to be faithful to her.<sup>144</sup> The bad wife, on the other hand, has no physical or moral traits to commend her.<sup>145</sup> She does not know how to please her lord.<sup>146</sup> She does not know that all adornments are vain if they fail to please the lord.<sup>147</sup> She is generally heedless and slothful.<sup>148</sup> She can even be faithless.<sup>149</sup> She is of course a very unfortunate woman.<sup>150</sup> Only the good wife is commendable in Guru Nanak's eyes, as perhaps in the eyes of the majority of his contemporaries. It cannot be said with any certainty but it appears that Guru Nanak's conception of conjugal relationship is monogamous. There is no doubt that an essential trait of this relationship is fidelity. It is equally clear that the woman's place is in the home.

From this brief analysis of Guru Nanak's response to his social *milieu* it may be suggested that, though the range of his experience of contemporary society is quite comprehensive, only a part of his experience is reflected as 'reaction' to the social *milieu*. He does not appear to think in terms of 'Hindu'

142. *Rāg Tukhāri, A. G., 1107-08.*

143. *Rāg Malār (Astpadiān), A. G., 1274.*

144. *Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 766.*

145. *Rāg Sārang, A. G., 1197.*

146. *Basant Hindol, A. G., 1171.*

147. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 18 :*

*Mundhai, pir bin kiā sigār*

*Dar ghar dhoi nā lahai, dargāh jhūth khuār.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 60.

148. *Rāg Tukhāri, A.G., 1111 ; Rāg Sūhi, A.G., 763 ; Sri Rāg, A. G., 23.*

149. *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1256 :*

*Khasam visār karai ras bhog,*

*Tān tan uthth khuloi rog.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1201.

150. *Rāg Basant, A. G., 1170.*

and 'Muslim' communities; but he shows greater interest in the Hindu society than in the Muslim, which may be explained largely in terms of his personal experiences and contacts. He does not appear to identify himself with any community or 'caste'.

Guru Nanak's denunciation of contemporary society is closely related to his idea of salvation and partly reflects his moral fervour. He condemns every earthly pursuit treated as an end in itself and he does not entertain any regard or respect for the possession of riches and social position or power. This attitude is qualified, however, by the idea that there is no necessary opposition between the pursuit of salvation and an earthly pursuit. As a result, he gives primacy to honesty and integrity in the pursuit of a profession. This does have some significant implications but Guru Nanak nowhere underlines them. For instance, it is impossible to imagine him approving of prostitution but he does not explicitly condemn it.

It appears in fact that Guru Nanak has very little directly to say about what today are called 'social evils'. He disapproves of the custom of becoming *sati*, but almost incidentally. He appears to be familiar with the institution of slavery but he has little to say about it. He has little to say about 'child-marriage' or about the disabilities of the widow. He denounces sexual indulgence, particularly when it is illicit; but this denunciation is intimately connected with his general conception of piety. There is no doubt that his conception of piety has many social implications, but it is nonetheless significant that the range of his explicit 'social criticism' is very much limited.

Guru Nanak is most articulate in his social criticism when customs and institutions appear to touch upon religion. Consequently his criticism is directed most clearly against

the religious leaders and their ceremonies and customs.<sup>151</sup> Here, Guru Nanak appears to make no distinction between the *brahman* and the *mullā* or the *jogi* and the *shaikh*. He sees no moral justification for ritualistic observances which at best are seen as useless. It is difficult to doubt or minimize the earnestness of this criticism.

Guru Nanak's criticism of the contemporary society is, in a certain sense, fundamental; at any rate, it is serious. In theory, he appears to discard the *varna-āshrama* order; he sees no use in 'caste'; but he does not appear to conceive of 'equality' in any social or economic terms. Especially on this point, his theoretical position must be related to his practice, bearing in mind that it is hardly possible to doubt his grave dissatisfaction with the existing social order. Guru Nanak's compositions may not 'prove' a radical departure from the existing order, but a radical departure would be justified by his compositions.

151. 'Political, social and economic issues find expression in his works only in so far as they relate to the pattern of religious salvation which he upheld, or to contemporary patterns which he rejected. This is not to deny that details relating to such issues can be gleaned from his works, and it is obvious that his teachings have had effects which extend far beyond a recognizably religious context'; Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 162-63.

CHAPTER VII  
CONTEMPORARY RELIGION  
AND  
GURU NANAK

By many a scholar Guru Nanak has been regarded simply as an exponent of the cult of *bhakti*. In J. N. Farquhar's view, for instance, Guru Nanak's system was 'practically identical' with that of many other Vaishnava sects.<sup>1</sup> However, it was noticed even by Farquhar that, unlike the Vaishnava *bhagats*, Guru Nanak condemned 'incarnation' and protested against idolatry. This difference is often explained in terms of Kabir's influence, sometimes on the assumption that Guru Nanak was 'a disciple' of Kabir. In any case, Kabir's influence on Guru Nanak has been taken for granted by many writers.<sup>2</sup> Guru Nanak and Kabir are usually treated together as 'reforming' *bhagats*. On this view, Guru Nanak's religion appears to be an integral part of the *bhakti* movement.

Several scholars have treated Guru Nanak as a mere 'reformer'. It was observed by an early British writer, for instance, that Guru Nanak 'may be considered more in the light of a reformer, than a subverter of the Hindu religion'.<sup>3</sup> It has been argued in fact that Guru Nanak's conception of God is 'essentially Aryan', and that he looked upon the *Vedas*

1. *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London 1929, 336.
2. Keay, *Kabir and His Followers*, 162-63.
3. Malcolm John, *The Sikh Religion* (^ Symposium), Calcutta 1958, 29-30.

as 'revealed'.<sup>4</sup> By implication, Guru Nanak was restoring the pristine purity of Hinduism on the basis of his understanding of the *Vedas*. Occasionally, quotations from the *Bhagavata Gītā* also are given to suggest a close connection between the teachings of Guru Nanak and those of the *Gītā*.<sup>5</sup> However, the 'reform' of Guru Nanak is believed to have been applicable to Islam as well. Indubhushan Banerjee, for instance, regards Guru Nanak primarily as a critic of formalism and ritualism in Islam and Hinduism. Guru Nanak's enunciation that 'there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman' is interpreted by Banerjee as a comment on the deviation of Hindus and Muslims from 'true' Hinduism and Islam.<sup>6</sup> On this view, Guru Nanak is believed to have taught both Hindus and Muslims to be true to their own faith.<sup>7</sup>

Guru Nanak's own religion has been regarded by some writers as a mixture of Islamic and Hindu ideas and his 'mission' is represented as an attempt at conciliating Hinduism and Islam. It has been observed recently, for instance, that Guru Nanak made an 'explicit attempt to unify the Hindus and Muslims, and certainly succeeded in synthesising within his own teachings, the essential concepts of Hinduism and Islam'.<sup>8</sup> A more frequently used term for the religion of Guru Nanak is 'syncretic', often, with the implication that there is little

4. Chhajju Singh, Bawa, *The Ten Gurus and Their Teachings*, Lahore 1903, 191.
5. For instance, Bedi, Gursharan Singh, *The Psalm of Life*, Amritsar & New Delhi 1950.
6. *Evolution of the Khalsa* (2nd, ed.), I, 94-95.
7. For instance, Raja Sir Daljeet Singh, in his introduction to Sir Jogendra Singh's *Sikh Ceremonies*, Bombay 1941.
8. Nurul Hasan, "Presidential Address", *Punjab History Conference*, Patiala 1966, 79.

'original' in his system of beliefs.<sup>9</sup> On this view, the influence of other systems upon the thought of Guru Nanak becomes particularly important. For example, Tara Chand regards the influence of Islam upon the religious thought of Guru Nanak as of fundamental importance.<sup>10</sup> Some other writers, on different assumptions, have seen many a parallel between the verses of Guru Nanak and the *ayats* of the *Qur'an*.<sup>11</sup> The influence of the *Sūfīs*, as of the Jogis, is particularly emphasized.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, the 'originality' of Guru Nanak has been felt or underlined by many a writer. In J. C. Archer's view Sikhism was a product of the times in general and Kabir's reformation in particular; but Archer goes on to add that Guru Nanak and Kabir were 'after all, distinct phenomena'.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Guru Nanak preached *bhakti* in a way that made his *bhakti-marga* 'a fourth way of salvation, more instrumental and effective than any or all the other three'.<sup>14</sup> According to another scholar, there may be nothing original in Sikhism if it is analysed 'into bits and pieces' but to do this

9. For instance, Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, 152-55. The author also uses the term 'eclecticism' for the religion of Guru Nanak and believes that he failed to fuse Hindu and Muslim beliefs, he believes in fact that 'psychological resistance to Islam was inherent in Sikhism'.
10. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad 1946, 168, 169, 171, 176.
11. For instance, Gurmit Singh, *Islam and Sikhism*, Sirsa (Hissar) 1966; Trilochan Singh, *Guru Nanak's Religion, A Comparative Study of Religions*, Delhi 1968, 6 & n. 24.
12. For instance, Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Lahore 1944, 103. Cf. Loehlin, C. H., *The Sikhs and Their Scriptures*, Lucknow 1958, 63; see also, 4.
13. *The Sikhs*, Princeton University Press 1946, 56.
14. *Ibid.*, 133.

would be to leave out the 'mighty personality' of Guru Nanak.<sup>15</sup> In Cunningham's view, though Guru Nanak did not treat the Prophet of Islam and the Hindu 'incarnations' as 'impostors' he might have thought that he too had been 'sent to reclaim fallen mortals of all creeds and countries within the limits of his knowledge'.<sup>16</sup> His religion was thus meant to transcend previous dispensations. At any rate, he 'rendered his mission applicable to all times and places'.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, several writers have regarded Guru Nanak's 'mission' as the promulgation of a new religion. According to Dorothy Field, for example, the influence of Islam and of the monotheistic reformers of Hinduism on Guru Nanak is much in evidence, but it is also clear that in his view 'the religious world had gone astray and that therefore a new and direct revelation was again necessary'.<sup>18</sup> However much he may have borrowed from Islam or Hinduism in the matter of doctrine, 'his religion remains distinct and complete in itself'.<sup>19</sup> In short, Sikhism may be regarded as 'a new and separate world-religion'.<sup>20</sup> Dorothy Field is by no means alone in holding this view.<sup>21</sup> The latest serious work on Guru Nanak

15. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, 71. The author suggests that we may expect no 'absolute' rejection or acceptance of ideas from the prevalent systems : *ibid.*, 63.
16. *A History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1955, 40.
17. *Loc. cit.*
18. *The Religion of the Sikhs*, London 1914, 10, 52-53.
19. *Ibid.*, 42.
20. *Ibid.*, 10.
21. For instance, Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Balsakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 24-25, 26, 28, 30 ; Sewaram Singh, *The Divine Master*, Lahore 1930, 314-15 ; Jodh Singh, Bhai, *Some Studies in Sikhism*, Ludhiana 1953, 65 ; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton & London 1963, I, 17 ; Greenlees, Duncan, *The Gospel of the Guru-Granth Sahib*, Madras 1960, x.

is prefaced with the remark that he 'did indeed receive an inheritance and its influence is abundantly evident in all his works, but it would be altogether mistaken to regard him as a mere mediator of other men's ideas. In his hands the inheritance was transformed. Moreover, the pattern which was produced by this transformation has endured'.<sup>22</sup>

In the light of the views expressed by scholars on the religion of Guru Nanak it may be best to study first his attitude towards the contemporary systems of religious belief and practice and then his aims and achievement. This approach is unlikely to answer all relevant questions regarding the religion of Guru Nanak but it is likely to clarify some of the most important problems connected with the study of his religion. It has been assumed that a study of his mission in terms of his response to his historical situation is likely to clarify the subject better than a direct discussion of influences upon his thought. At any rate, it is useful to make a distinction between Guru Nanak's attitude towards contemporary forms of religious belief and practice and the real or apparent similarities of his ideas with the ideas of some other religions, antecedent or contemporary. The question of Guru Nanak's response to his religious *milieu* is inseparably connected with the nature of his mission.

As it may be expected, Guru Nanak's compositions reveal his thorough familiarity with contemporary Hinduism and Islam. He refers quite frequently to the *Vedas*, the *Smritis*, the *Shāstras*, the *Purānas* and the six schools of philosophy; he refers specifically to the *Vedānta* and alludes occasionally to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*. He talks of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and he refers to Pārbatī,

22. McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1968, 1.

to Shiva and Shiva-Shakti, to gods of mythology and to incarnations of Vishnu; he refers also to Gorakh and Machhandar, and to the Siddhas and the Nāthas. He mentions the four-fold 'blessings' of life : *dharmā*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*; he refers to the three paths of salvation; *jnāna*, *karma* and *bhakti*. Not always explicit, but there are references to the Vaishnavas, the Shaivas and the Shaktas; also to *sanniyās* and *bairāg*; to the *pandit* and the Jogi, to Krishnaites and Ramaites, and to the Jaina monks. Many a detail of contemporary belief and practice is mentioned. Several times Hindu and Muslim practices are mentioned together. But quite often references to Islam stand apart. Guru Nanak talks of Allah and the Prophet, of the *Qur'ān*, the *sharī'at* and the prophets; he talks also of the *ulamā* and the *mashāikh*, of *pirs*, *walīs*, *qalandars* and *dervishes* and of the *sālik* and the *faqīr*. He refers to some of the most important practices of Islam. Altogether, he shows a comprehensive understanding of the beliefs and practices of his contemporaries.

In our approach to Guru Nanak's response to his religious milieu, we may first consider his attitude towards the Hindu scriptures. In the early years of the present century it was observed by Bawa Chhajju Singh that the utterances of Guru Nanak are 'interspersed with contradictory passages'.<sup>23</sup> In his view, many of these contradictions were only apparent but some of them were real and could not be reconciled to any one interpretation. Furthermore, these contradictions could be explained in terms of Guru Nanak's gradual ascent towards a full realization of the truth.<sup>24</sup> This observation poses the problem of interpreting Guru Nanak's utterances, not only on the Hindu scriptures but also

23. *The Ten Gurus and Their Teachings*, 146.

24. *Ibid.*, 147.

on contemporary religious beliefs and practices in general. In the absence of an established chronology of his works, it is extremely difficult to talk of his progress or to see a pattern of development in his thought. The only alternative is to take his compositions as a whole and to interpret them in a manner that does best justice to them all. Bawa Chhajju Singh's procedure may indicate what one should not do on his own premises. He asserts that the *Japji* may surely be taken as embodying Guru Nanak's mature expression and 'his final teaching';<sup>25</sup> in these expressions he clearly sees that Guru Nanak treated the *Vedas* as 'revealed'; and assumes that this interpretation may be taken as firmly established. He shows it to his entire satisfaction that Guru Nanak had much greater veneration for the *Vedas* than for either the *Qur'ān* or the *Purānas*.<sup>26</sup>

There are not many passages, or even single verses, in Guru Nanak's compositions which refer exclusively to the *Vedas*. If this can be taken as a measure of his preoccupations, the *Vedas* do not appear to receive any special treatment. However, references of the *Vedas* occur in several contexts and, though it is difficult to say that Guru Nanak shows great veneration for them, they are not always mentioned with irreverence. For instance, as a token of God's power, the *Vedas* are mentioned along with the nine *khands*, seven *dāps*, fourteen *bhāyans*, three *loks* and the four *yugas*.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the *Vedas* are mentioned along with the four *yugas* and *khānis* as manifestations of God's creation.<sup>28</sup> At one place, the *Vedas* are mentioned as pointing to the One God, the only Creator of the earth and the sky above, without

25. *Ibid.*, 148.

26. *Ibid.*, 193-97.

27. *Basant Hindol, A. G.*, 1190.

28. *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 432-33.

any visible support.<sup>29</sup> At another place, the *Vedas* are mentioned as pointing to the path of *bhakti*; just as the *Shāstras* and *Smritis* point to the Name.<sup>30</sup> Elsewhere, the *Vedas* find mention along with the *Purānas* and the *Qur'ān* as the signs of God's *qudrat* (creation, power or providence).<sup>31</sup> Along with several other things, the *Vedas* are mentioned in connection with *visamād* (awe or wonder at God's power and creation).<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps the most characteristic attitude of Guru Nanak towards the *Vedas* is expressed in the *Japji* : at one plane of thought, the *Vedas* adore God as His creation: at another, they fall short of a full adoration of God's real Greatness; at yet another, they are only an insignificant part of God's creation.<sup>33</sup> The limitation of the *Vedas*, the *Smritis* and the *Shāstras* to comprehend the Word of God is underlined elsewhere also.<sup>34</sup> It need not come to us as a surprise, therefore, that at a certain level Guru Nanak speaks of the *Vedas* as an obstacle to the pursuit of the Name.<sup>35</sup> What has been observed of Guru Nanak's attitude towards the *Vedas* is more or less true of his attitude towards the Hindu scriptures in general. There is no direct denunciation, no categorical rejection; there is no irreverence; but there is no acceptance either. This attitude may amount to a virtual

29. *Rāg Basant* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 1188.

30. *Rāg Bilāval* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 831.

31. *Āsā di Vār*, *A. G.*, 464.

32. *Ibid.*, 463. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 222.

33. *Japji*, *A. G.*, 2, 3-4, 5-6; *Rāg Āsā*, *A. G.*, 8-9. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 221, 228.

34. *Japji*, *A. G.*, 2-3. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 133.

35. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 416 :

*Bandhan baid bād ahankār ; bandhan binsai moh vikār.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1382.

rejection of the traditional authority of the Hindu scriptures. It is absolutely certain that from Guru Nanak's point of view these scriptures were totally irrelevant to salvation. To hear or to read, to write (expositions) or to understand them was to amass mere 'burden'.<sup>36</sup>

Guru Nanak's attitude towards the Hindu deities is not much different from his attitude towards the Hindu scriptures. Like the rest of the universe, God created Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.<sup>37</sup> In fact, He created numerous *brahmas*, *kānhs*, and *maheshes*.<sup>38</sup> Obviously they meant something quite different to Guru Nanak from what they meant to his contemporary Hindus. Similarly, *shiv-shakti* is God's creation.<sup>39</sup> He sustains the universe, and the *gopīs* and Krishna is He himself.<sup>40</sup> Krishna in the house of Yashoda was as

36. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 20. In *Rāg Parbhāti* (A. G., 1328) occurs the following line :

*Jai kāran baid Brahmai ucharai, Sunkar chhodī māyā.*

Now, Brahma is the author of the *Vedas* here ; and Brahma is not God but God's creature in Guru Nanak's System of thought. See n. 166, below.

37. *Rāg Gujari*, A. G., 503-04 :

'They are all beggars and God alone is the bestower of gifts'.

38. *Japji*, A. G., 7. Among God's creation are mentioned Indar, Siddhas, Nāthas, Buddhas, *devis* and *devas*.

39. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 21 :

*Jeñ dekhā teh rav rahai, siv-sakti kā mail,*

*Trehi gun bāndhi dehuri, jo āyā jagg so khail.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 69.

40. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 73 :

*Gopī nai gavāliā, tudh āpai gai uthāliā.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 247.

much a part of the cosmic 'play' as anything else in the universe.<sup>41</sup> Brahma suffered for his pride, like some other figures of legend and mythology.<sup>42</sup> The incarnation of Vishnu as Krishna added little to God's greatness.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Brahma and his sons, and Indar and the like of him had performed God's *bhakti*.<sup>44</sup> Brahma and Indar, like numerous *munīs*, attained to salvation only through the Guru's *sabad*.<sup>45</sup> Without the Guru's *sabad*, Brahma and Vishnu and Mahesh were as much 'miserable' as the *sansāra* in general.<sup>46</sup> When Guru Nanak addresses God as Gobind, Har or Ram, we may be sure that Gobind, Har or Ram does not connote for him the deity of Hindu conception.

Guru Nanak's rejection of Hindu scriptures and deities is intimately connected with his repudiation of traditional practices and modes of worship. He sees no merit in pilgrimage to sacred places (*īrath*). In the *Japji*, for instance, the merit of 'sixty-eight bathings' is obtained by listening to the Word.<sup>47</sup> At one place, Guru Nanak refers to *īrath* as

41. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 75 :

*Haththo hathth nachāyai vanjāriā mitrā jio Jasodā ghar kānh.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 66.

42. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 224-25.

43. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 350-51 :

*Jiā upāi jugut hathth kini, Kālī nathth kiā vaddā bhiā.*

*Āgai ant nā pāyo tā kā, Kans chhed kiā vaddā bhiā,*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1168.

44. *Rāg Sārang* (Astpadiān) A. G., 1232 :

*Sank Sanād Brahmād Indarādak bhagat ratai ban āyi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1177.

45. *Rāg Bhairo*, A. G., 1125.

46. *Rāg Bhairo* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1153 :

*Rogi Brahma Bishan Suradarā, rogi sagal sansār.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1102.

47. A. G., 3.

dependent on God's will.<sup>48</sup> It is not clear, however, if this particular reference can be taken literally. Invariably he attaches no importance to pilgrimage.<sup>49</sup> He often says in fact that there is no use of pilgrimage when the heart is not cleansed of pride, its dust.<sup>50</sup> Even 'sixty-eight bathings' are of no avail.<sup>51</sup> Guru Nanak can be sarcastic on the point: many a white heron lives at *tiraths* (sacred places) to swallow the prey.<sup>52</sup> Not all the wanderings to the sacred most places can wash off the dirt of 'misery'.<sup>53</sup> For the truly pious, the company of *sants* is a veritable *tirath*.<sup>54</sup> The true *tirath* is in the Name and the *sabad*.<sup>55</sup> There is no *tirath* like the Guru.<sup>56</sup> The 'sixty-eight bathings' are at the Guru's

48. A. G., 2.

49. For instance, *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 17:

*Athsath tirath kā mukhkh Tikkā, tit ghat matt vigās,*

*Aut matti sālāhanā sachch nām gun tās ;*

*Bābā hor matt, hor hor.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 53-54.

50. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 61 :

*Tirath nāhtai kiā karai, man meh ma il gumān.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 229 ; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 206-207.

51. *Āsā di Vār, A. G.*, 473.

52. *Rāg Sūhī, A. G.*, 729.

53. *Rāg Bhairo (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 1153 :

*Tirath bharmai rog nā chhūtas,*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 102.

54. *Rāg Sorath, A. G.*, 597 :

*Sant janān mil sangti, Gurmukh tirath hoai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1963.

55. *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G.*, 687 :

*Tirath nāyan jāo, tirath nām hai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 2250.

56. *Rāg Parbhāti, A. G.*, 1328-29 :

*Gur samān tirath nahin koai.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 148.

feet.<sup>57</sup> The object of pilgrimage is within oneself.<sup>58</sup> For Guru Nanak:<sup>59</sup>

My *man* is my temple, and on my body is the robe of a *qalandar*; my being is filled by the *sabad*; I may not find another life.

With the idea of the temple being within oneself comes the repudiation of idol-worship. The references to *pūjā*, which are very frequent in Guru Nanak's compositions, invariably include the worship of idols. And there are some specific references also in his verses. In *Rāg Dhanāsari*, for instance, there is an explicit reference to the worship of stone (idols).<sup>60</sup> In *Rāg Sorath* the reference is even more explicit:<sup>61</sup>

The goddesses and gods whom you worship and to whom you pray, what can they give? You wash them yourselves and (were you to leave them in water) they sink.

Guru Nanak exhorts men to worship the true Lord, instead of

57. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 147 :

*Nānak karam hovai mukhkh mastak, likhiā hovai lekh.  
Aḥsath t'rth gur ki charni, pūjai sadā visaikh.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 491.

58. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 152 :

*Jai kāran tatt tirath jāht,  
Ratan padārath ghat hi māht.*

59. *Rāg Bilāval*, A. G. 795 :

*Man mandar tan ves kalandar, ghat hi tirath nāvā;  
Ek sabad merai parān basat hai, bahur janam nā āvā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 756.

60. *Astpadiān*, A. G., 68.

61. *Astpadiān*, A. G., 637. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2090.

the *sālagrāma* (associated with the worship of Vishnu); he asks them to treat honest living as the rosary of *tulsi*.<sup>62</sup> His rhetorical questions are worth adding: why water an unculturable waste and waste your lives? Why waste mortar on a falling wall of mud?

Guru Nanak has no sympathy for the traditional Hindu piety and the rites and observances associated with it. Even a tiny fraction of real honour with God is more valuable than all the traditional observances put together.<sup>63</sup> All charities as well as bathings at a *sangham* like Paryag consist in praising the True Guru.<sup>64</sup> Neither *jap* nor *tap*, nor living at *tiraths*, was of any use without the True One.<sup>65</sup> To believe in the One Lord is to have a real *tilak* on one's forehead; only the True Guru reveals this and not the four *Vedas* or the eighteen *Purānas*.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, ritualistic reading or recitation has as little effect on a man as perfume has on a dog.<sup>67</sup> The performance of *hom* falls into

62. *Basant Hindol, A.G.*, 1171. Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 61; Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1121.

63. *Japji, A.G.*, 4:  
*Tirath, tap dāya det dān,*  
*Jai ko pāvai til kā mān.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.) *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 13.

64. *Rāg Dhanasārī, A.G.*, 688:  
*Sālāh sāchai, mann satguru punn dān dayā mattai;*  
*Pir sang bhāvai sahaj navai, bainite sangam sat sattai.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 143; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2251.

65. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 56.

66. *Rāg Āsā, A.G.*, 355.

67. *Vār Mājh, A.G.*, 143:  
*Kuttai chandan lāyai bhī so kutti dhāt;*  
*Bolā jai samjhāyai, parhtiyai simrat path.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 475.

the category of observances which in Guru Nanak's eyes are fruitless.<sup>68</sup> The real *hom* as well as the *pāth* of the *Purānas* consists in burning away low passions and sensual appetite.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, even if one were to cut one's body into bits and pieces and offer it as fuel for *hom*, and if this ritual were performed a million times, it shall not equal God's Name.<sup>70</sup> For Guru Nanak, the realization of the only one God contains in it all ritual worship and charity.<sup>71</sup> Guru Nanak has 'lodged God in my heart; I have no *mantar* or *tantar* or any other pretence (to adopt)'.<sup>72</sup>

Guru Nanak's denunciation of the *pandit* may now be easily understandable. He is often referred to as 'the clever *pāndā*'.<sup>73</sup> In contrast to the one who really knows and understands, the generality of men are called '*pandit*'.<sup>74</sup> The *pandit's* igno-

68. *Rāg Bhairo, A.G., 1127 :*

*Jagan hom, punn, tap, pājā, dehi dukhi nit dukh sahai ;  
Rām nām bin mukat nā pāvas, mukat-nām gurmukhkh lahai,  
Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), Sri Guru Granth Sahib, 1076.*

69. *Rāg Malār, A.G., 1257.*

70. *Sri Rāg, A.G., 62:*

*Tan bāisantar homyai ik ratti tol katāi,  
Ton man samdhā jai kari andin agan jalāi,  
Har-nāmai tull nā pujjyai jai lakh kott karam kamāi.  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), Sri Guru Granth Sahib, 211.*

71. *Rāg Tukhāri, A.G., 1109 :*

*Pānn dān pājā pāmesar jug jug eko jātā.  
Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), Sri Guru Granth Sahib, 1062.*

72. *Rāg Sūhi, A.G. 766 :*

*Tant mant pākhand nā jānā, Rām ridai man māniā.  
Cf. Kapur Singh, Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of  
Guru Gobind Singh, 246 & n. 19 ; Gopal Singh (tr.), ibid., 731.*

73. For instance, *Vār Malār, A. G., 1290.*

74. *Rāg Āsā (Astpadiān), A.G., 413 :*

*Jagg pandit, viriā vichāri.*

rance does not deter him from preaching.<sup>75</sup> The real *pandit* is one who truly understands and sees the One in everyone.<sup>76</sup> The wise *pandit* is one who really knows the true object of worship.<sup>77</sup>

Can you advise me, O learned *pandit*, how to find the Master ?<sup>78</sup>

But the *pandit* understands nothing of real value; he only 'reads' books; he advises others and runs his shop on falsehood; his world revolves around falsehood.<sup>79</sup> He invokes the *Vedas* and practises astrology and he praises tales of strife (the *Mahābhārata* ?); he does not know the 'truth within himself'.<sup>80</sup> A million recitations of the *Purānas* and a million expositions of the *Shāstras* are fruitless if one fails to receive true honour from God.<sup>81</sup> The *pandit* does not know the acts that lead to salvation; he reads books and mutters his prayers and he disputes; he closes his eyes like the heron (that falls on its prey); he tells lies and by mere talk presents iron as gold.<sup>82</sup> The *pandit* is a broker in false practices; his hands will be cut off in the next world.<sup>83</sup> There is a yawning gulf between his acts and

75. *Vār Malār, A.G., 1290 :*

*Āp nā būjhat, lok bujhat ; pāndat kharā siānā.*

76. *Rāg Āsā, A.G., 432.*

77. *Rāg Malār, A.G., 1256.*

78. *Basant Hindol, A.G., 1171:*

*Suāmi panditā tum deh matti, kin bīdh pāun prān-patī.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1121.

79. *Sri Rāg, A.G., 56.*

80. *Rāg Āsā, A.G., 355.*

81. *Ibid., 358*

82. *Āsā dī Vār, A.G., 470. Also, Rāg Bhairo, A.G., 1127.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, 1, 237.

83. *Āsā dī Vār, A. G., 472.*

professions.<sup>84</sup> God be praised,

I am not a clever *pandit*, misleading others and myself;  
I tell no false tales; I recognize His *hukam*.<sup>85</sup>

The true *pandit* adopts God's Name.<sup>86</sup> Guru Nanak advises the *pandits* to know the acts that result in happiness; for they cite the *Vedas* and the *Shāstras* and yet their real interest is in worldly occupations; this pretence does not cleanse the inner dirt; this is precisely the way of the spider that weaves its web all the time, living and dying, upside down.<sup>87</sup> It hardly needs adding that Guru Nanak judges the *pandit* and his practices on the basis of his own understanding of the means of salvation.<sup>88</sup>

84. *Ibid.*, A. G., 471-72. In this passage, Guru Nanak charges the *brahman* with taxing the cow and the *brahman*, eating the bread provided by the *mlechchas*, reading their books, adopting their dress and yet practising ritual purity. For a translation of this passage, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1556-58.

85. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 221 :

*Nā pandit, nā chatur sianā,*

*Nā bhūlo, nā bharam bhulanā,*

*kathio nā kathant, hukam pachhānā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1229.

86. *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1288 :

*So parhīā so pandit binā jinnī kamānā nāon.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1229.

87. *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), A. G., 635 :

*Sun pandit karmāchōri !*

*Jit karam sukh upjai bhāi so uttam tatt bēchār.*

*Sāsāt baid bakai kharo bhāi, karam karo sansārī.*

*Pākhānd ma'il nā chukyi bhāi, antar ma'il vikārī.*

*In bidh dūbi mākari bhāi; undi sir kai bhāri.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2084.

88. See, for instance, *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 355 ; *ibid.*, 358. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 65 ; Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 149.

It is generally underlined that Guru Nanak condemned the meaninglessly meticulous ritualistic practices of contemporary Hinduism, but it is not generally realized that he does so on criteria which are consistently applied to all forms of contemporary belief and practice within the range of his observation or experience. Therefore we may consider a few more of his verses for his attitude towards orthodoxy in Hinduism. In a passage in *Āsā di Vār*, he mentions the astounding variety of God's limitless creation which only He sustains, and then occurs the following line :<sup>89</sup>

*Nānak sachchai nām bin kiā tikkā kiā tagg.*

Without the True Name, the *tilak*-mark and the sacred thread of the twice-born remain meaningless. Similarly, some of the most valued aspects of religious life are mentioned, including the recitation of the *Purānas*, and then God's omnipotence is underlined, followed by the phrase: *karam sachchā nīsān*.<sup>90</sup> Obviously salvation cannot be 'achieved'; it is to be 'bestowed' upon man by God. Guru Nanak mentions the *Vedas* and the *Vedānta*, along with *munis* and *sādhs*, as pointing to the efficacy of the True Name and of *bhakti-bhāva* during all the four *yugas*.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, one could consult Narada and Vyas to affirm that 'without the *Gurū*, there is no *giān*'.<sup>92</sup> In spite of the 'six schools', few can comprehend the secret without the *sabad* and the Name of the True One.<sup>93</sup> The *Vedas* talk of three states (*avasthā*) and the *Shāstras* of four blessings (*padārth*); all

89. *Āsā di Vār*, A.G., 467. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1540-41.

90. *Loc. cit.*

91. *Sri Rāg*, A.G., 57.

92. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 59 ; *Rāg Gujarī*, A.G., 489; *Rāg Āsā*, A.G., 357.

93. *Vār Mājh*, A. G. 148.

these fall short of the state or blessing of God's *bhakti*.<sup>94</sup> As already noticed, faith in the Boundless One and His *sabad* is more valuable than *japa*, *tapa*, *sanjam*, and the *pāth* of the *Purānas*.<sup>95</sup> To be oblivious of His Name is to remain in ever recurring misery; the recitation of books and the *Vedas* is of no avail.<sup>96</sup> To subdue the human *man* is to know the 'six schools'; all *bhekhs* and *varnas* are but ash; only the Name of the True One is eternal.<sup>97</sup> Only a few understand that though the *Vedas* talk of three paths there is only one: the service of the True *Guru*.<sup>98</sup> The Name transcends all the *Vedas* and the *Shāstras* and the 'sixty-eight bathings'.<sup>99</sup> All pilgrimages, fasts, and *tapas* are contained in the *bānt* of the *Gurū*.<sup>100</sup> The 'six schools' do not eradicate the disease of misery; the *Vedas* (and the *Qur'ān*) are of no avail, if one does not know the Only One.<sup>101</sup> Neither the four *Vedas*, nor the eighteen *Purānas*, nor

94. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 154; *ibid.* (Astpadiān), A. G., 226. Also, *Rāg Gujari*, A. G., 503, 504 :

*Ai ji bahutai bhekh karai bhikhiā kav kitai udar bharan kai tāi,  
Bin Har-bhagat nahi sukh parani, bin gur garab nā jāi.*

Cf. Mānmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1661.

95. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 223.

96. *Ibid.*, 226.

97. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 352.

98. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 352. Cf. Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 146.

99. *Ibid.*, 353. Also, *Basant Hindol*, A. G., 1191 :

*Tirāth simrat punn dān kichh lāhā milal dihāri,  
Nānak nām milal vadiāi, mekā gharī smāi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1141.

100. *Ramkali*, A. G., 879 :

*Sabh nād baid gur-bāni,  
Mān ratā sārāg pāni.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 837.

101. *Rāg Bhatro* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1153 :

*Rogī khat-darsan bhekhdāri nānā hatī anekā ;  
Baid kateb karai keh uparai nā bājhat ik ekā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1102.

bathings, nor ritual charities, nor fasting will decide the honour one shall receive; it depends upon true conduct.<sup>102</sup> All the four *yugas* are characterized by different traits, but the *bhāva-bhakti* is for all.<sup>103</sup> 'Some read Sanskrit, some read the *Purānas*; some count the rosary beads; I have known nothing but Your Name'.<sup>104</sup>

Guru Nanak's attitude towards the Jogis is not essentially different from his attitude towards the *pandits*. Several times they are mentioned together. In *Rāg Āsā*, for instance:<sup>105</sup>

A learned *pandit* is not necessarily wise, and an illiterate person, not necessarily bad; he who adores the Lord by submission to Him is His real servant (*bandā*). The Jogi who wears the *mundrā* of the *sabad* in his heart, puts on the cloak (*khinthā*) of forgiveness and gladly submits to God's decree, can find the path of salvation (*sahaj-jog*).

Guru Nanak gives as much attention to the Jogis as to the *pandits*. That he knew the beliefs and practices of the Jogis very well is evident from his references to many of them : their

102. *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1169.

103. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 470.

104. *Rāmkalī*, A.G., 876 :

*Koi parhtā sahsakirtā koi paṛhai purānā,*  
*Koi nām japai jap -māli, lāgāi tisai dhiānā,*  
*Abhi kabhi kichhu nā jīnā, terā eko nām pachhānā,*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 834.

105. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 359 :

*Nā ko paṛia pandit bīnā, nā ko mūrakh mandā;*  
*Bandī andar sifat karāi, tā kau kahyai bandā;*  
*Gur kā sabad manī meh mundrā, khinthā khimā hadhāvo ;*  
*Jo kichh karai bhalā kar māno, sahaj jog nidh pāvo.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1198.

ear-rings (*mundā*) and their cloak (*khinthā*), their staff (*dandā*) and their begging bowl (*patjholī*), their blowing horn (*singī*) and their object of concentration (*samyā*), their loin-cloth (*jangotā*) and the ash they used (*bhasam, bhabhūt*). Guru Nanak comments on their objective of attaining to supernatural powers (*riddhi* and *siddhi*) and to their interest in herbs. There are references to *rasāyana* too. Guru Nanak refers to their mode of salutation, with *Ādesh*; he refers also to their terminology: *Ād, Anūl, Anāhat, Niranjan, sunyasmādh, nād, anhad-sabad, mahāras, sahaj, Shiv-nagari*, for instance. There are references also to *bhekh-bārah*, to the common kitchen (*bhandār*) of the Jogis and to their meal (*bhugar*).

Guru Nanak occasionally uses the epithet 'my *Jogi*' for God.<sup>106</sup> But this is meant to be in God's praise and not in appreciation of the Jogis or even of *Jog*. Like all other manifestations in the universe, *Jog* too was there as a token of God's glory; Guru Nanak does not show any special appreciation for it. Neither the goodness nor the power associated with the Siddhas could be gained without God's will.<sup>107</sup> By listening to the Word one could understand the position of the *siddhas, pīrs and nāthas*.<sup>108</sup> One cannot get rid of *haumai* by smearing the body with ashes; this is not *Jog*.<sup>109</sup> Those who sit in desolated

106. For instance, *Rāg Dhanāsort (Astpadiān), A.G., 685 :*

*Sunn-mandal ik jogi baisai, nār nā purkh kaho kou kaisai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2244.

See also, *Sri Rāg, A.G., 71.*

107. *Rāg Āsā, A.G., 349.* Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 84.

108. *Japji, A.G., 2.*

109. *Rāg Basant, A.G., 1189, 90 :*

*Mat bhasam andūlai garab jāi, in bidh nāgai jog nāi,*

*Gur-sabad bichārai, āp jāi, sachch jog man vassai āi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1139-40.

places or in cremation grounds are 'blind fools'.<sup>110</sup> Those who resort to begging for food and clothing are hereafter bound to suffer.<sup>111</sup> The *siddhas* in their *smādhī* vainly pursue the object of seeing God; they should look to the inner light, the *sabad*, through which the True Guru settles all disputation and wrangling.<sup>112</sup> Guru Nanak has no appreciation for the objective of gaining supernatural powers.<sup>113</sup>

Were I to don fire, build a house of snow and eat iron;  
were I to drink all miseries like water; were I to drive  
the earth as a steed; were I to lightly weigh the skies in  
a balance; were I to become so large as to be contained  
nowhere; to lead everyone by the nose; were I to have  
the power to do all this and get it done by others—all  
this would be useless. The Great Master bestows great

110. *Āsā dī Vār*, A. G., 467-68 :

*Mūrahk andhai patt gavāi,  
Vin nāvai kichh thāi nā pāi,  
Rahai baibāni maḥi musāni,  
Andhu nā junai phir puchhtāni.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1542-43.

In *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), Guru Nanak says, 'I have never believed in any other deity than God Himself; I have worshipped Him alone; I never go to cremation grounds' (A.G., 634).

111. *Rāg Rāmkali*, A. G., 879 :

*Chhādan bhojan māgat bhāgai, khudiā dust jalai, dukkh āgai.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 837.

112. *Rāg Gujari*, A. G., 489 :

*Siddh smādh karai nit jhagrā, doho lochan kiā hai rai:  
Antar jot sabad dhun jāgai, satgur jhagar naberai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1616.

113. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 147. Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion* I, 158. See also, *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A.G., 411-12.

gifts, and to whom He is gracious He gives the greatness of the True Name.

To be oblivious of God's Name was much worse than not possessing the powers of *siddh*.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, to be a *siddha* and to be worshipped was of no use if one did not earn real honour from God.<sup>115</sup>

*Jog* does not lie in the cloak, nor in the staff, nor in smearing the body with ash; it does not consist in the *mundrā*, nor in shaving of the hair, nor in blowing the *singr*; it is obtained by living pure amidst the impurities of attachment.

*Jog* was not mere talk; it was not there in cremation grounds; it was not there in wandering to far off sacred places; the real *Jogi* looks at everything with the same eye; he becomes 'dead' while still living; but he can do so only by meeting the True Guru.<sup>116</sup> The real *Jogi* has to subdue his passions and to lodge truth in his heart; he should beg for the *sabad*.<sup>117</sup> Not *mukti* (release) or *baikunth* (paradise) but God's door is the goal and

114. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 14 :

*Siddh hovā siddh lāi, riddh ākhā āo,  
Gupat pargat hol baises, lok rākhai bhāo,  
Mat dekh bhūlā visarai, terā chit nā āvai nāo.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 45.

115. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 17 :

*Pūj lāgai pīr ākhyai, sabh milai sansār;  
Nāo Saddāi āpanā, hovai siddh sumār;  
Jā patt lekhai nā pavai, sabhā pūj khuār.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 54.

116. *Rāg Sūhī, A. G.*, 730. Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 60; Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 81; Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 698.

117. *Rāg Gaurī (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 223; *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 356; *Rāmkalī, A. G.*, 877-78. Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 53-54.

it is reached through the *bāni* of the *Gurū*.<sup>118</sup> Let the Jogi pursue his *Jog*; 'all I wish is to sit with someone who can sing of His message'.<sup>119</sup> Guru Nanak gives the same advice to the Jogi as to the *pandit*: Guru's *sabad* and God's *bhakti*, and the True Name.<sup>120</sup>

Guru Nanak's compositions contain a larger number of passages relating exclusively to *Jog* or the Jogis than to any other religious group of his times. This may be taken as a measure of his preoccupation with the Jogis as the most important single group on the religious scene in the Punjab. Ineed, the frequency of these references does not indicate any appreciation on the part of Guru Nanak for *Jog* or the Jogis. He advises the Jogis to cultivate contentment instead of wearing the ear-rings; to do honest work instead of carrying the begging bowl; to meditate on God instead of smearing the body with ash; to remember death instead of flaunting the cloak; to keep their bodies unsullied; to think of the true path as their staff; to 'conquer' themselves—this is the way to adore the Primeval Being; they should make knowledge their 'meal' and kindness the server of food in the common kitchen—only then can they

118. Rag *Āsā*, A. G., 360 :

*Gur ki sākhi amrit bāni.*

Cf. Kohli, S.S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 76 ;

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1200.

119. Rag *Suht*, A. G., 730 :

*Jogi hovai jog vai, bhogi hovai khāi :*

*Tapīā hovai tap karai, tirath mal mal nāi;*

*Terā saddrā sunījai bhāi je ko bahai alāi.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 698.

120. Rag *Rāmkali*, A. G., 878-79 ; also, 877 :

*Surat sabad sākhi meri, singi bājai lok sunai;*

*Pat jholi māngan kai tāt, bhikhiā nām parai.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 173 ; Gopal Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 834.

hear the *nād* inside themselves; they should know that salvation depends ultimately on the grace of the Primeval Being.<sup>121</sup> In another passage, Guru Nanak underlines the importance of the True Guru's *sabad* and *nām*, and of service and honest work in accordance with God's *razā*, for the Jogi's benefit.<sup>122</sup> The *anāhad sabad* is the *Gurū-sabad*.<sup>123</sup> Going naked was not real renunciation; so long as the Jogi did not realize what was *haumai*, he was bound to regret in the end.<sup>124</sup> Only a few could receive the grace of real detachment (*udās*) and, by implication, the Jogis were not among them.<sup>125</sup> They should blow the *singī* of the *sabad*; this is the way of those who are truly devoted to God.<sup>126</sup> Salvation did not lie in herbs and medicines but in the *mantra* of the One.<sup>127</sup> God's Name alone was the true *rasāyana*.<sup>128</sup> If we consider all the relevant passages together,

121. *Japī*, A. G., 6-7. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 21-22.
122. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 411.
123. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 351:  
*Binā sabad vajāvai Jogī, darsan rūp apārā;*  
*Sabad anāhad so surātā, Nānak kahai vichārā.*  
 Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1169.  
 Also, *Rāg Parbhāī*, A. G., 1332:  
*Bārah main rāval khap jāyāi, chau chhiā main sanniyāsi;*  
*Jogī kāpariā sir khūbai, bin sabdai gal phāsī.*  
 Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1268.
124. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 155-56. The passage opens with the lines:  
*Mundrā te ghat bhitar mundrā, kānyā kījai khinhātā.*  
*Panj chelai vass kījai rāval eh man kījai dandātā.*  
 For a translation of the passage, Manmohan Singh (tr.) *ibid.*, 520.
125. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 223-24.
126. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 360. Also *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), A. G., 634:  
*Ās nirās rahai bairāgi nij ghar tāri lāi.*  
 Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2081.
127. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 156.
128. *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1170; *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 415.

there remains no doubt that Guru Nanak's use of metaphors from *Jog* implies no appreciation for the Jogis. Thus, *sahaj-smādh* is constant devotion to God; *tān* (deep meditation) is absorption in the *Gurū-sabad*; *mahāras* (nectar) is the Name—such is the wisdom given by the *Gurū*.<sup>129</sup> It is in this context that the verses like the following should be read:<sup>130</sup>

*Andin rātā man bairāgi, sunn-mandal ghar pāyā;*  
*Ād-purkh apranpar piārā, satgur alakh lakhāyā.*  
*Āsan haisan thir Nārān tit man rātā vichārai;*  
*Nānak nām ratai bairāgi anhad runjhunkārai.*

Notwithstanding the use of *Jogi* terminology, these lines contain essentially a statement of Guru Nanak's experience of absorption in God through the *sabad* and the True Guru.

Guru Nanak does not show any appreciation for *bairāg*, if it meant mere external renunciation, asceticism or *sannyās*, in any form.<sup>131</sup> The ascetic who does not cast away 'self' cannot be a real renunciant (*udāsā*); his *tapas* in forests and his stay in the sacred places are fruitless.<sup>132</sup> Nothing is gained by adopting

129. *Rag Sārang* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1232.

130. *Rāg Āsā*, A.G., 436. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1439. For Guru Nanak's use of *Jogi* terminology, see also Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 78.

131. *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), A. G., 634 :

*Asankh bairāgi kahai bairāgi, so bairāgi jai khasamai bhāvai;*  
*Hirdūi sabad sadā bhai rachiā gur ki kār kamāvai;*  
*Eko chetai manvā nā dolai dhāvat varj rahāvai;*  
*Sahjai mātā sadā ranḡ rātā sāchhai kai gun gāvai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2080-81.

Also, *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 418-19.

132. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 418-19 :

*Ik tarast ban main tap karai nit tirath vāsā,*  
*Āp nā chinai tāms kahai bhayai udāsā.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1389.

a *bhekh* and wandering all over the world, for the 'inner dirt' is not cleansed without the True Guru's instruction.<sup>133</sup> The misery resulting inevitably from attachment cannot be avoided by having a hermit's cave (*guphā*) in a mountain of gold or by descending into deep waters or by hanging upside down between the earth and the sky. These practices are no better than ritual washings or deliberate uncleanliness.<sup>134</sup> It may be of some significance to note that Guru Nanak does not denounce certain practices because they are followed by a particular 'sect' or a religious group; rather 'sects' or groups come under his critical judgment because of certain practices they follow.

Guru Nanak's harsh judgment on the Jaina monks becomes understandable if his own religious values are kept in mind. They drink dirty water and eat what is left over by others; they spread out their ordure, not minding the foul smell; they are shy of water; their hair are plucked by pluckers whose hands are smeared with ash; they have discarded the occupation of their parents and their families weep for them; they do not observe the *brahmanical* rites, and the *brahmans* do not eat their food; they cannot find refuge in any of the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage; they have no *tilak*-mark on their foreheads and

133. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 22 :*

*Bharmāi bhavai nā vujhvai jai bhavai desantar des ;  
Antar ma'il nā uttarai dhrig jivan dhrig ves ;  
Hor kitai bhagat nā hoyai bin satgur kai updes.*

Also; *Vār Malār, A. G., 1290 :*

*Ik bhagvā ves kar bharamdai, vin satgur kinai nā pāyā ;  
Des desantar bhav thakhai, tudh andar āp lukāyā.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1231.

134. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 139.* Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 461.

they always remain filthy; they sit together, each covered with a cloth, as if in condolence, and they do not go to any open assembly; they tie cups to their waists, thread on their hands, and they walk in a single file.

*God has ruined them and they go about despised, the whole lot of them.*

Guru Nanak then mentions the uses of water as a great gift from God. If the pluck-heads do not wash, let there be seven handfuls of dust on their heads.<sup>135</sup>

It may not be expected, but it should not come as a surprise, that Guru Nanak brackets the representatives of the *bhakti* cult with the Jogis.<sup>136</sup> It may be pointed out first that Guru Nanak has no appreciation for any of the religious guides (*āgū* or *gurū*) within the range of his experience.<sup>137</sup> Those who wish to attain to Gobind by mere talk are yet to be burnt like the potter's vessels in the oven.<sup>138</sup> The disciples feed themselves upon food provided by the *gurū*; their relationship consists in mere eating; but even a hundred years spent in mere eating

135. *Vār Mājh, A. G.*, 149-50; Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 151; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 498-501.

136. *Vār Mājh, A. G.*, 144-45 :

*Tudh bhāvai ta vāveh gāveh tudh bhāvai jal nāveh;*

*Jā tudh bhāvai tā karai babbhūtā singi nād vajāveh.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 481.

137. *Rāg Sāhi, A. G.*, 767 :

*Andhā āgū jai thyai kion pādhar jānai;*

*Āpai musai matt hochhyai kion rāh pachhānai.*

Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 731.

138. *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 432 :

*Gaggai goi gāi jin chhodī gait Gobind garab bhayā;*

*Ghar bhāndai jin āvi sāji chārhan vāhai tai kiā.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1427.

shall be of no avail.<sup>139</sup>

The disciples play and the *gurūs* dance; they shake their feet and they roll their heads; dust arises and falls on their heads; people are amused and they laugh and they return home; the performers beat time perfectly for bread and the dancers dash themselves to the ground. They sing of *gopis* and of *kānh*; they sing of *Sitā* and *Rām*.<sup>140</sup>

Guru Nanak does not see any devotion in this performance; it is mere amusement. The dancer reminds him of the oilpress, the spinning wheel, the potter's wheel, of tops and churning staves and of the round of transmigration.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, Guru Nanak cannot think of Rama and Krishna as true deities.<sup>142</sup> In the passage referring to greed as the *rājā*, to sin as the *mehta* and to lust as the *nāib*, there is a reference also to the blind and ignorant *ra'vat*; and then occurs the description :

The *giants* dance and play on musical instruments and they don the costumes (of actors); they loudly sing of battles and heroes.<sup>143</sup>

139. *Rīg Asā*, A. G., 349-50.

140. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 465. Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 57, 224; Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, 87-88; Gopal Singh, *Guru Nanak*, 20; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* 1533-34.

141. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 224.

142. *Ibid.*, I, 223. In *Āsā di Vār* (A. G., 470), the reference to Krishna is by no means complimentary; he seduces Chandraval and amuses himself in Bindraban. Cf. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 235-36.

143. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 468-69. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1546-47.

The ignorant patrons think of their charity as an act of merit and hope for salvation. They are mistaken; these charities shall earn for them no real honour. This particular extract may not be in reference to the representatives of the *bhakti* cult; but there is no doubt that Guru Nanak does associate singing and dancing with them and he does not approve of the practice.

Guru Nanak's metaphors from singing and dancing bring out the values he applies elsewhere to all forms of religious belief and practice. For him, wisdom and devotion are the musical instruments; keenness to follow the path is the true manner of taking dancing steps; the praise of the Lord is the beat; His awe in the heart is the circular movement of dance; to regard the body as mere dust is the dashing of the dancer to the ground; the audience consists of the truly God-loving individuals who listen to the True Name. *This is the way to dance.*<sup>144</sup> Under the impact of the *kaliyuga*, even saints like Narad begin to dance, and so do many others who think of themselves as continent and virtuous. As for Guru Nanak, 'the whole world is a beating drum; the inner truth is cymbals and ankle-bells'.<sup>145</sup>

In *Āsā di Vār*, Guru Nanak dwells on the metaphor of play. In the cosmic drama, all the *gharts* of the day are *gopis* and all its *pahars* are *kānhs* and *gopāls*; the sun and the moon impersonate *avatars*, with the winds, water and fire as ornaments; the properties consist of the entire earth and their use consists in the earthly attachment. Devoid of understanding, men are deceived and they suffer death and rebirth again and again in

144. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 350. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1166-67.

145. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 349. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 75; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1164-65.

this cosmic drama.<sup>146</sup>

Guru Nanak does not appear to refer anywhere to the Vāmachāris. This by no means implies his approval of their practices. His silence may mean that the cultus of the left-hand was a well guarded secret. In any case, it does not appear to have been a noticeable phenomenon. Guru Nanak's explicit references to the worshippers of the Goddess in general are not many; the *Shaktas* are generally equated with 'the false'.<sup>147</sup> References to *tāntric* practices are rather general and *tāntrism* is not associated with any particular group. However, Guru Nanak appears to have attached some importance to *sunya*; it occurs in his compositions more than once. We may briefly note his use of the concept in relation to contemporary religions.

Guru Nanak uses the concept of *sunya* in *Japji* to underline God's omnipotence and the ineffable character of His Being. Neither the *pandit* nor the *qāzī*, nor the Jogi, neither the *Purānas*, nor the *Qur'ān*, did or could know the time or the manner of creation; 'the Creator who created the universe, only He knows'.<sup>148</sup> In a long passage in *Rāg Mārū*, Guru Nanak subscribes to the idea that in the beginning, for millions of years there was only *dhundhūkārā* (indescribable darkness) and *sunm-smādh* (abstract meditation) and His *hukam*. Then He

146. A. G., 465. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 233; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1533.

147. *Vār Mājh* (Astpadiān), A. G., 109; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 354; *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 597. It must be pointed out, however, that in some of the references the term *sākat* is used for a worshipper of *māyā*. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 362, 1179, 1962.

148. *Japji*, A. G., 4. Cf. Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 38; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 14.

created the universe, as He desired (*lhānā*). The similarity of this concept to that in the hymn of creation in the *Rig-Veda* has been noted recently by a scholar.<sup>149</sup> A broad similarity cannot be denied. If any significant distinction is to be made, it must rest upon one's interpretation of Guru Nanak's conception of God's *hukam* and His *bhānā*; otherwise the passage in its opening verses is very close to the *Vedic* hymn. There was neither the earth nor the sky, neither day nor night, neither the sun nor the moon.

Nevertheless, Guru Nanak's detail of what was not there in the beginning is largely his own, and this may not be without significance. He concentrates precisely on that detail which interested him the most. In the beginning there was no Brahma, Vishnu or Mahesh; there was no Krishna and there were no *gopīs*; there was no Gorakh, no Machhandar; there was no *shakti*. There were no *Vedas*, no *Smritis*, no *Shāstras*, no *Purānas* and there was no *Qur'ān*. There was no heaven or hell of Muslim or Hindu conception; there was no *mullā*, or *qāzī*, or *shaikh* or *hāji*; there was no temple, or god, or *brahman*, or *gāyatrī*. There was no male, or female; there was no caste.<sup>150</sup> The implication is obvious, but important: God is the Creator of everything and His creation must not be confused with Him. Does it also imply that there is no other eternal verity? Probably, it does.

Guru Nanak's attitude towards contemporary Islam is very similar to his attitude towards Hinduism. It has been noted already that the Hindu and Muslim scriptures are often equated by him; quite often Muslim and Hindu beliefs or practices are mentioned together. In *Rāg Āsā*, for instance, Guru Nanak illustrates the variety of those who are in search of God

149. Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 36-37.

150. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 165.

by referring to the Jogis, the *sannyāsīs* and the *pandits*; in the middle of this passage, he refers also to the representatives of Islam: the *darvish*, the *sālik*, the *pīr* and the *paighambar*.<sup>151</sup> In *Japji* too, the *shaikh* and the *pīr* are mentioned along with many other categories.<sup>152</sup> Elsewhere, 'thousands of Muhammads' are bracketed with 'thousands of *brahmas*, *vishnus* and *shivas*'.<sup>153</sup> This curious equation of the Prophet of Islam with the Hindu deities, indicates the importance attached to Muhammad by the Muslim contemporaries of Guru Nanak. For him, however, 'there are millions of Muhammads but only one God'.<sup>154</sup> Seen in relation to the idea of Muhammad being the seal of the prophets, an idea which in the eyes of his followers imparted to their faith an exceptional and exclusive verity, the attitude of Guru Nanak towards the prophet of Islam becomes meaningful.

Guru Nanak underlines the grace as well as the transcendence of Allah, presumably to bring home the point that by mere allegiance to Islam one could not ensure salvation.

Bābā ! Allah is inscrutable, He is boundless; His abode is holy and His are the holy names; He is the true sustainer. His *hukam* cannot be comprehended; it cannot be described adequately; not even a hundred poets coming together can describe a smallest fraction of it. All hear

151. A. G., 358 :

*Dar ghar mahalā hasti ghorai chhod valāyat des gayai,  
Pīr paigambar sālik sādik chhodī duniā thāī payai.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 154;  
also, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1195.

152. A. G., 3 :

*Suniyai saikh pīr pātsāh*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 7.

153. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 40.

154. *Ibid.*, I, 121.

and talk about Him, but none really appreciates His worth. There are *pīrs*, *paighambars*, *sāliks*, *sādiqs*, *faqīrs*, and *shahīds*; there are *shaikhs*, *qāzīs*, *mullās* and *darvishes*—all adore Him through their prayers (*durūd*), in the hope of future blessings (*barakat*). But Allah does not consult anyone when He makes or unmakes or when He gives or takes away; He alone knows His *qudrat*; He alone is the doer. He watches everyone and bestows His grace on whomsoever He wills.<sup>155</sup>

This passage alone is enough to suggest Guru Nanak's familiarity with Islam.

Guru Nanak's familiarity with Islam does not necessarily imply an appreciation for the contemporary forms of Muslim belief and practice. His denunciation of the *qāzī's* malpractices has been noted already.<sup>156</sup> Guru Nanak advises the *qāzī* to adjust his conduct to his profession and, thereby, become a true *musalmān*.

155. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 53 :*

*Bābā ! Allāh agam apār,  
Pāki nāi pāk thāi sachcha parvardgār.  
Terā hūkam nā japi kitarā, liḅh nā jāṇai koi;  
Jai sau sāir malliyai til nā pujāvai roi;  
Kīmat kinai nā paīya, sabh sun sun ākheh soi.  
Pīr paikambar sālik sādak suhdai aur sahid.  
Saikh masāik kāfi mullā dar darves rasid.  
Barkat tin kuu aggli parhdai rahan darūd.  
Puchh nā sājai puchh nā dhāhai puchh nā devai lai.  
Apni Kudrat āpai jānai āpai karan karai;  
Sabhnā vekhai nadar kar jai bhāvai tai dai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 180-81.

156. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 140; see also, Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G., 662:  
Kādī kūr bol mal khāi.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2171.

Mere talk can never lead to Paradise; salvation lies in right conduct. If you add spices to unlawfully earned food, it does not become lawful. Falsehood begets only falsehood.<sup>157</sup>

Furthermore, the *qāzi* is advised to treat good conduct as his *kalima* and to replace his five daily prayers with five principles of conduct and worship : truth (*sachch*), lawful earning (*halāl*), wishing well of others (*khair*), right intention (*niyat*) and praise of the Lord (*sifat, sanā*). The five daily prayers, the recitation or study of the *Qur'ān*, and the pleasures of the table will be left behind; even the learned 'sink' like the vessel that has a hole at its bottom. Only he is a *qāzi* who effaces himself and who really knows God who ever was, is, and shall be for ever, the True Creator.<sup>158</sup> God cannot be known through contentious wrangling; He is the Creator of all, and the only Judge; He will punish the 'infidels'; and as for men, they should not presume to judge.<sup>159</sup> Degradation lies in forgetting His Name.

In advising the *musalmāns*, Guru Nanak appears to prefer the path of the *Sūfis* :<sup>160</sup>

157. *Vār Mājh, A. G.*, 141. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 466-67.

158. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 24. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 82.

159. *Vār Mājh, A. G.*, 142; Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 40 ; see also, *ibid.*, 14; Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 471.

160. *Āsā di Vār, A. G.*, 465-66 :

*Musalmānā sifāt sariat parh parh karai bichār;*

*Bandā sei jal pavat vich bandī vekhan kau didār.*

Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 225. See also, *ibid.*, 13.

The *musalmāns* praise the *shari'at*; they read and ponder; but only those are His true servants who, to see His Face, become His slaves (*bandā*).

Guru Nanak advises the *musalmāns* to make kindness their mosque and sincerity their prayer-mat; to make lawfully earned food their *Qur'an*, and modesty and civility their circumcision and fasting; to make conduct their *ka'ba*, and truth their *pir*; to think of God's grace as their *kalima* and *namāz*; and to make *razā* their rosary. Indeed :

To be a *musalmān* is difficult; only those who are really *musalmān* should be called so. They should first adopt the religion of the *auliyā* and regard renunciation as a file that removes the rust (of the mirror) Only then they become *musalmāns* when they live their faith and dismiss all thoughts of life and death. They should accept God's decree most willingly, believe in Him as the true Creator and efface themselves. Only then may they receive His grace (*rahmat*) and only then shall they be real *musalmāns*.<sup>161</sup>

There is no doubt that Guru Nanak argues with the 'orthodox' in the terminology of the *Sūfīs* and, in doing so, shows a preference for the latter.

However, this relative appreciation for the *Sūfī* path should not lead us to infer that Guru Nanak approves of the contemporary *Sūfīs*. He brackets the *qāzi* and the *shaiikh* in several ways. In *Rāg Gaurī*, for instance, they are bracketed as suffering from *haumai* : they think too much of themselves.<sup>162</sup>

161. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 140-41. Cf. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 38; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 466, 468.

162. *Astpadiān*, A. G., 227 :

*Kāji saikh bhekh phakīrā, vadai kahāvai haumai tan pirā.*

A true *darvish* is he who while he lives is dead and abandons everything to meet his Creator.<sup>163</sup> But many a *shaikh* subsisted on-revenue free land obtained from the court, and distributed 'caps' among shameless disciples. Presuming to be sure of his own place of honour with God, the *shaikh* gave assurance to others as well : he was like the mouse which itself was too big for the hole and yet tied a winnowing basket (*chhajj*) to its tail.<sup>164</sup> If the *qāzīs* had their offices, the *shaikhs* had their establishments. They tended to treat the means as ends, forgetting that God alone is everlasting. Guru Nanak advises them both to remember :

Allah is ineffable; He is inscrutable; He is the all-powerful Creator, the Merciful. The whole world is transitory and the Merciful alone is permanent. Only He is eternal, for He is not subject to any destiny. The earth and the heavens shall perish; only He, the only One, remains for ever.<sup>165</sup>

In his attitude towards contemporary religions, Guru Nanak shows little appreciation for any of the established orders of his times. He discards Hindu and Muslim scriptures as irrelevant to salvation. He regards Muhammad and his religion as one of the numerous manifestations of God'-creation. He refers to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva 'in ways which suggest that he accepted their existence as real, but they appear as the creatures of God, deprived of all functions and

163. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, I, 55. Also, *ibid.*, 104; in *Rāmkalī Vār* Guru Nanak advises the *shaikh* to be killed by the knife of Truth if he wished to meet God and be absorbed in Him.

164. *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1286. Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1227.

165. *Srī Rāg*, A. G., 64 Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 219.

subject to *māyā* and to death'.<sup>166</sup> Guru Nanak's attitude to contemporary religion is informed by ideas and values which induce him not to identify himself with any of the existing forms of established religion. In fact he applies those ideas consistently to evaluate all contemporary belief and practice. The closest he comes to an explicit appreciation for any kind of individuals, it is for the *sādhs* and *sants*. But he does not refer to any particular *sādh* or *sant*; he does not refer to Kabir. For him, 'the true believer does not adopt a *marga*; he does not belong to a *panth*; he is concerned with true religion alone'.<sup>167</sup>

166. McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 166.

167. *Japji, A. G.*, 3 :

*Mannai mag nā challai panth ;*

*Mannai dharam seti sanbandh.*

Cf. Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 37; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 21; Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 23; Sohau Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 37.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE GOAL AND THE PATH

'Guru Nanak was not a reformer'. This simple but refreshing enunciation is followed by the logical explanation that: 'We know he was not a Hindu who appealed to the Hindu scriptures in order to reform Hindu society. We know he was not a Muslim trying to eradicate evils in Muslim society by appealing to the *Qur'an*'. Furthermore, in the teachings of Guru Nanak there is no attempt at 'a reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam'; both are set aside in order 'to get to the source of religion itself'. Guru Nanak is thus 'an originator, a founder'.<sup>1</sup>

In the extant works of Guru Nanak the positive note is by far the most predominant note. For his own ideals, he speaks with the voice of authority which appears to spring directly from his moral and metaphysical convictions. He rejects contemporary forms of religious belief and practice only because he is convinced that he has something more valuable to offer. Invariably, 'rejection' is accompanied by a positive offer, the offer of one or another of his own ideals. This should be evident from most of the verses cited in the

1. Mujeeb, M., Inaugural Address to Guru Nanak Quincentenary Educational Seminar, 11th & 12th October, 1969, Guru Gobind Singh College, Chandigarh (to be published by the sponsors of the seminar). I have seen the manuscript through the author's courtesy.

previous chapter. We may cite a fresh example, but only to start with our examination of the goal which Guru Nanak has in view and the path which he recommends to reach that goal. In *Rāg Bilāval*, he says :

Not for me *giān* or *dhiān* or *pūjā*; I have the indwelling Name (*nām*). Not for me *bhekh* or *bhaunṯ* or *haṯh*; I hold fast to Truth (*sachch*).<sup>2</sup>

In these verses Guru Nanak uses two of his basic concepts : *Sachch* (the Truth) and *Nām* (the Name). Both refer to 'divine self-expression', for which other concepts are also used : *Sabad* (the Word), *Guru* (the Divine Preceptor) and *Hukam* (the Divine Order). The idea of divine self-expression, obviously, is connected with Guru Nanak's conception of the Divinity. God, the One, in His absolute aspect is without any attribute and He can be known only through His revelation. The attributes of God emphasized by Guru Nanak are His unity, omnipotence, omniscience and His omnipresence and immanence. Almost an attribute of God is His *nadar* (grace), a concept of crucial significance in the theological thought of Guru Nanak. Man's *bhakti* (loving devotion) is to be addressed exclusively to this God, and closely associated with the idea of *bhakti* is God's *bhai* (fear). The chief obstacles in the path are adverse *karma*, *māyā* and *haumai*, which acquire great significance in the religious thought of Guru Nanak. These obstacles are grave but not insurmountable and the path leads to union with God. This is the goal. Guru Nanak offers this goal, and the path, to all.

2. *Rāg Bilāval* (Chhant Dakhkhanī), A. G., 843-44 :

*Ma'in aṡar giān nā dhiān pūjā Har-nām antar vas rahai;*  
*Bhekh bhaunṯ haṯh nā jānā Nānak sachch geh rahai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Grānth Sahib*, 2750;  
Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 802.

This cryptic statement has to be amplified to understand Guru Nanak's position as 'an originator, a founder'. To start with divine self-expression, in the Basic Credal Statement (*mūlmantra*) of Guru Nanak's *Japji* the attribute of the One God to be mentioned first is *sat-nām*: 'True is His Name'. He was true in the beginning and throughout the cosmic ages, He is true now and He shall be true for ever. The true Formless One alone is eternal.<sup>3</sup> He is the only True One.<sup>4</sup> At this level of Guru Nanak's thought anything other than God is 'untrue'. But the only true Lord is also the Creator and His creation is 'true'.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, wheresoever you look there is the True One.<sup>6</sup> In other words God's creation can never be eternal but to attribute all creation to Him alone is to recognize the Truth. And this recognition on the part of man makes him 'true'. (*sachiār*). Thus, in a sense, the Truth is within oneself.<sup>7</sup> We may now cite a few expressions in which the term *sachch* is used by Guru Nanak: men are 'true' only when they lodge the Truth in their hearts; they should act in accordance with

3. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 14* :

*Sāchā nirankār nij thāi. . .*

4. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 412* :

*Aīsā sachā tūn eko jān,*

5. *Asā di Vār, A. G., 463* :

*Sachchai terai khand, sachchai brahmand;*

*Sachchai terai lau, sachchai ākār.*

Cf. Teja Singh, *Asā di Vār*, 59.

6. *Rāg Gauri (Astpadiān), A. G., 224* :

*Jeh jeh dekhā teh teh sāchā.*

7. This and the following statements are based on a large number of verses which need not be reproduced here, but reference may be made to the pages of the *Ādi Granth* : 18 & 20 (*Sri Rāg*); 347-48, 419, 420, 421, 422, 432 & 434 (*Rāg Āsā*); 463, & 468 (*Asā di Vār*); 567 & 580 (*Rāg Vadhans*) and 597 (*Rāg Sorath*).

Cf. Teja Singh, *Asā di Vār*, 60, 84, 85.

the Truth; they should meditate on the Truth; they should direct their devotion to the Truth; those who receive the Truth have no fear; the Truth removes all sins; the boat of Truth is boarded with the help of the Divine Guru; the Truth is recognized through God's grace; only the true are absorbed in the Truth; man may be absorbed in the Truth by accepting God's will; only they can die to 'self' who love the True Friend.

Closely connected with the Truth is the idea of the Name. It is given as much prominence elsewhere as in *Japji*.<sup>8</sup> In *Rāg Parbhātī*, for instance :

Through the Name man can swim (across the Ocean of Existence); through the Name man obtains honour and (the secret of true) worship. The Name is man's best ornament, his intellect and his objective. Through the Name one gets recognition from others, (but) without the Name there can be no honour. All other wisdom is merely pretence; there is no fulfilment without the gift (of the Name). In the Name is real power, (the authority of) the *dīwān*, (the might of) the *lashkar* and (the sovereignty of) the *sultān*. Through the Name comes honour and greatness which are approved (by God); the mark of His gracious mercy (is received through the Name). The state of immortal bliss is found in the Name, for the Name is (the proper way of) adoration. The Name is the nectar that purges the poison (of *māyā*). Through the Name descends all happiness upon the human heart.

8. The following expressions occur in the *Japji* :

*sat-nām, sachī nāī, sachch nāo, nām-niranjan, asankh nāo, nao, nām dhiaunā.*

(But) without the Name man is bound for the realm of Death.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of the Name is emphasized again and again, and nearly all the ideas mentioned in this extract are repeated, with the significant comment at a few places that the Name was created by God.<sup>10</sup> The Name indeed is God's revelation through which He can be known,

Almost interchangeable with the Name is the Word (*Sabad*). What is affirmed of the Name is often affirmed of the Word also.

The *Sabad* is coined in the mint of the Truth.<sup>11</sup>

The treasure of excellence is obtained by meditating on the *Sabad*.<sup>12</sup>

The disease of *haumai* (self-centredness) is eradicated by the *Sabad*.<sup>13</sup>

9. A. G., 1327. Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1264.
10. This statement again is based on a large number of verses, and reference may be made only to the pages of the *Ādi Granth*: 16, 17, 19, 21, 25, 55 & 75 (*Sri Rāg* & *Astpadiān*); 109 (*Mājh*, *Astpadiān*); 226 & 228 (*Rāg Gauri*, *Astpadiān*); 349, 352, 358, 412 & 422 (*Rāg Āsā*); 463 (*Āsā dī Vār*); 504 (*Rāg Gujari*); 557 (*Rāg Vadhans*); 687 (*Rāg Dhanāsari*); 721 (*Rāg Tilang*); 728, 729, 730 & 752 (*Rāg Sūht & Kāfi*); 1187 (*Basant Hindol*); 1287 (*Vār Malār*); 1331 & 1342 (*Rāg Parbhāti & Astpadiān*).
11. *Japji*, A. G., 8 :  
*Ghaṭiyai sabad sachchī takṣāl.*  
 Cf. Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 78-79; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 36; Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 57; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 103.
12. *Sri Rāg* (*Astpadiān*), A. G. 59 :  
*Nānak sabad vichārtiyai pāiyai gunī nidhān.*
13. *Rāg Basant*. A. G., 1188 :  
*Nānak haumai sabad jalāū.*  
 See also, *Rāg Gauri*, A. G., 225; *Rāg Parbhāti* (*Astpadiān*), A. G., 1342.

By meditating on the *Sabad* of the *Gurū* is removed attachment to *māyā*.<sup>14</sup>

These ideas occur frequently in the compositions of Guru Nanak.<sup>15</sup> Again and again he underlines the importance of the *Sabad* as the vehicle of salvation which enables man to get rid of *haumai* and to be detached from *māyā*. The *Sabad* enables man to recognize the Truth and the falsehood of the world. It reveals God as the only true object of adoration.

More clearly than the Name, the Word is the vehicle of God's revelation.

He has no form, colour or material sign;

He is revealed through the true *Sabad*.<sup>16</sup>

This is equally clear in another verse in which are mentioned the sun, the moon, the earth, and the sky without any support as the revelation of the *Sabad*.<sup>17</sup> The Word and the Name, both, are the Divine Guru's revelation.<sup>18</sup> Meditation on the

14. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 412 :

*Māyā moh gur-sabad jalāi . . .*

See also, *Rāg Gauri* (Astpadiān), A. G., 225.

15. For this and the following statement, see *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 22, (Astpadiān) 58, 59; *Rāg Gauri*, A. G., 153, (Astpadiān) 221, 222, 223, 229, 242, 243; *Rāg Āsā* A. G., 416, 438, 449; *Rāg Gujari*, A. G., 504; *Rāg Bilāval* (Astpadiān), A. G., 831; *Rāg Tukhāri*, A. G., 1113; *Rāg Bhairo*, A. G., 115, 1153; *Rāg Parbhāti* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1331, 1332, 1342, 1343.

16. *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 597 :

*Nātis rūp varan nahin rekhiā,*

*Sachai sabad nisān.*

17. *Var Malar*, A. G., 1279 :

*Āpai nai āp sāj āp pachhāniā,*

*Anbar dharat vichhor tanduā tāniā,*

*Vin thammān gagan rahāi sabad nisania.*

18. *Rāg Mājh* (Astpadiān), A. G., 109 :

*Gur kai sabad nām nisānai.*

*Sabad* leads to the Truth.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the *Sabad* is the *Gurū*<sup>20</sup>

In the compositions of Guru Nanak there is a good deal of emphasis upon the absolute necessity of the *Gurū*. For example :

Without the *Gurū* there can be no *bhakti*, no love;

Without the *Gurū* there is no access to the company of *sants*;

Without the *Gurū* one blindly engages in futile endeavour;

But with the *Gurū* one's *man* is purified, for its filth is purged by the Word.<sup>21</sup>

Without the *Gurū* the filth of *haumai* cannot be washed.<sup>22</sup> There is no *giān* without the *Gurū*.<sup>23</sup> It is through the *Gurū* that God's light in the universe, and within man, is recognized.<sup>24</sup> Without the *Gurū* one wanders through the cycle of death and rebirth.<sup>25</sup> Without the *Gurū* one wanders in

19. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 144 :

*Sachhā sabad vichār sachch samāniā.*

20. *Rāg Sprāth* (Astpadiān), A. G., 635 :

*Sabad gur pīrā gehar gambhīrā . . .*

21. *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1170. This translation is by W. H. McLeod (*Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 197).

22. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 60 :

*Bin gur parit na upjai haumai ma'il na jāi.*

23. *Āsā dī Vār*, A. G., 469 :

*Giān kā badhdhā man rahai, gur bin gian nā hoi.*

24. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 20 :

*Ghat ghat jot niranteri bājhal gur-mat sār.*

25. *Rāg Bilāyal*, A. G., 832 :

*Gur te mūnh pherai tin jon bhavāiyai,*

*Bāndhan bhāndiā āiyai jāiyai.*

See also, *Rāg Parbhāti* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1344.

the darkness of ignorance.<sup>26</sup> The *Gurū* imparts the understanding that the bestower of all gifts is the One God and that He should never be forgotten.<sup>27</sup> The true *Gurū* unites man with God.<sup>28</sup>

That Guru Nanak does not refer to any human *gurū* may already be obvious. It becomes even more obvious when his use of the concept of the *Gurū* is seen in relation to the Truth, the Name and the Word. The Truth is recognized through the *Gurū's* instruction.<sup>29</sup> The *Gurū* is the 'ladder', he is the 'boat'; the *Gurū* is the river, he is the *tīrath*; and through God's grace may men bathe in this pool of the Truth.<sup>30</sup> The true *Gurū* reveals the Truth.<sup>31</sup> None can know God without the *Gurū* who gives the gift of the Name and also the honour of

26. *Rāg Vadhans, A. G., 580 :*

*Gur bin ghor andhāru.*

27. *Japji, A. G., 2 :*

*Gurū ik deh bujhāi.*

*Sabnā jiā kā eko dātā, so ma'in visar na jāi.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, *Bhai, The Japji*, 16; Meher Singh: *The Japji*, 27; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 18; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 20-21.

28. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 20 :*

*Satgur mail milāyā, Nānak so Prabh nāl.*

29. *Rāg Āsā (Astpadiān), A. G., 60 :*

*Gur-mat hoi te pāiyai sachch milai sukh hoi.*

30. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 17 :*

*Gur paūrī beṛī gurū gur tulhā Har-nāo,*

*Gur sar-sāgar bauhatho Gur tīrath dārlāo.*

*Jai tis bhāvai ujjali sat sar nāvan jāo.*

See also, *Vār Mājh, A. G., 150; Rāg Sorath (Astpadiān), A. G., 636.*

31. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 144 :*

*Satgur ākhai kār su kār kamāiyai,*

*Vār Mājh, A. G., 149 :*

*Ujhjhar bhāllai rāh gur vikhāliā,*

*Satgur sachchai vahu sachch samāliā.*

being absorbed in the Truth.<sup>32</sup> The *Gurū* alone reveals that there is no salvation without the Name.<sup>33</sup> The human *gurūs* are blind; only the true *Gurū* bestows the Name without which there is no purpose in human life: 'one comes and goes like a crow in an abandoned house'.<sup>34</sup> The treasure of the Name is obtained through the *Gurū's sabad*.<sup>35</sup> By recognizing the *Gurū's sabad*, one may get rid of the fear (of Death).<sup>36</sup> It is through the true *Gurū* that the *Sabad* is understood.<sup>37</sup>

The concepts of the Truth, the Name, the Word and the Divine Preceptor in the compositions of Guru Nanak 'bear a basic identity'.<sup>38</sup> The first of these is perhaps the most comprehensive. In its primary connotation, the Truth under-

32. *Sri Rāg* (Aṣṭpadiān), A. G., 61 :  
*Ākhan ākheh ketaṛai gur bin būjh na hoi,*  
*Nām vadāi jai milai sachch rapai patt hoi.*
33. *Rāg Parbhāti* (Aṣṭpadiān), A. G., 1345 :  
*Kahu Nānak gur būjh bujhāi,*  
*Nām binān gat kinai nā pāi.*
34. *Sri Rāg* (Aṣṭpadiān), A. G., 58 :  
*Gurū jīnān kā andhulā chelai nāhi thāo,*  
*Bin satgur nāo nā pāiyai, bin nāyai kiā suāo;*  
*Āi giā pachhutaunā jion sunjhāi ghār kāo.*
35. *Rāg Āsā* (Aṣṭpadiān), A. G., 61 :  
*Gur kā sabad man vassiā haumai vichu khoi,*  
*Nām padārath pāya lābh sadā man hoi.*
35. *Rāg Gauri*, A. G., 154 :  
*Kiā dariyat dar dareh samānā,*  
*Pūrai gur kai sabad pachhānā.*
37. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 414 :  
*Gur-mukh giān dhiān man mān,*  
*Gur-mukh mahali mahal pachhān,*  
*Gur-mukh surat sabad nīsān.*  
 See also, *Rāg Bhairo*, A. G., 1126-27; *Rāg Rāmkali*, A. G., 879.
38. McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 190, See also, Jodh Singh, Bhai, *Gurmati Nirnay*, 249.

lines the eternity that belongs to God alone and comes into sharp relief in contrast with His creation. The Word and the Name provide the means of knowing God and as God's revelation, they are the proper objects of man's contemplation. To make a categorical distinction between the Word and the Name is not easy but the Name appears to refer to the object of communication and the Word appears to refer to the medium of communication. The Word, therefore, embraces all that expresses God's nature, the laws governing the universe as well as the inner mystical experience. 'God Himself is, in His fullness, a mystery far exceeding the comprehension of man, but in His Word He expresses Himself in terms which may be understood and followed.'<sup>39</sup> As the expression of God's Truth, the Word is the instruction imparted to man by the *Gurū*, who, in the last analysis is the voice of God. Thus, the Word, the Name and the Divine Preceptor are the Truth of God made manifest by Him for man's salvation. His Truth can be perceived by looking around and within oneself. Nevertheless, Guru Nanak's answer to the question 'how to appropriate truth and pierce the veil of falsehood' is: 'to act in accordance with God's *hukam* and His *razā*.'<sup>40</sup>

The *Hukam*, as it is conceived by Guru Nanak is an 'all-embracing principle'.<sup>41</sup>

Praise Him alone, for He is worthy of praise; there

39. *Ibid.*, 194.

40. *Japji*, A. G., 1 :

*Kiv sachīārā hoīyā kiv kūrī tuttāl pāl ?*

*Hukam rajāī challanā Nānak likhiā nāl.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 6; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 21;

Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 7; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 15.

41. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 203.

is no other. Those who praise the Lord are good and they are 'dyed' in the *Sabad*; in their company the essence of loving devotion is found. Honour is bestowed by the Truth; and the Name is the true revelation. Recognize the *hukam* of the Lord who sends you (into the world) and takes you back. Without the *Gurū* the *Hukam* cannot be recognized; the True One alone has the real power. Under his *hukam* you were conceived and you remained in the womb; under His *hukam* you were born upside down, with your head first. The court of God is known through the *Gurū*; (through the *Gurū*) one knows the good acts. Man comes (into the world) in accordance with the *Hukam* and leaves in accordance with it; all are bound by the *Hukam*, and the self-willed are punished. In accordance with the *Hukam*, one recognizes the *Sabad* and receive honour in God's court. One thinks of meritorious deeds in accordance with the *Hukam* and in accordance with the *Hukam* one is caught in *haumai*. In accordance with the *Hukam* one suffers everlasting transmigration; and those who are devoid of merit weep and cry. Only if one recognizes the *hukam* of God one receives honour through the Truth.<sup>42</sup>

God alone is 'true'; He institutes the *Hukam* and keeps everything in accordance with it.<sup>43</sup> Happiness or misery is in accordance with His *hukam*.<sup>44</sup> The *Hukam* cannot be

42. A. G., 636. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2087-88; Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 58-59.

43. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 144 :

*Hukam sāj hukamai vichh rakkhai Nānak sachchā āp.*

44. *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1188 :

*Sabh hukamo vartai hukam samāi,*

*Dūkh sūkh sab tis rajāi.*

grasped with mere intelligence.<sup>45</sup>

The concept of *Hukam* is basic to the thought of Guru Nanak.

All forms are created by the *Hukam*; it cannot be described. It is through the *Hukam* that living beings are created and greatness is bestowed. Through the *Hukam* some are exalted and others lie low; misery or happiness is in accordance with the *Hukam*. Through the *Hukam* some attain to bliss and others are condemned to the transmigratory chain. All are subject to the *Hukam*; none is beyond its sway. If one could comprehend the *Hukam*, one would be rid of *haumai*.<sup>46</sup>

Everything in the universe points to the intelligent working of the *Hukam*.<sup>47</sup> It points to God as the only doer.<sup>48</sup> It must be recognised that there is no other to bestow greatness.<sup>49</sup> God's *hukam* cannot be evaded.<sup>50</sup> It is for Him to command

45. *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G., 661 :*

*Hikma hukam nā pāyā jāi.*

46. *Japji, A. G., 1; Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, The Japji, 8-9; Mehar Singh, The Japji, 21; Sohan Singh, The Seeker's Path, 10; Teja Singh, The Japji, 15-16. See also, A. G., 2; Jodh Singh, Bhai, ibid., 11; Mehar Singh, ibid., 23; Sohan Singh, ibid., 13; Teja Singh, ibid., 16.*

47. *Āsā di Vār, A. G., 464 :*

*Nānak hukamai andar vekhai vartai tāko tāk.*

*Cf. Teja Singh, Āsā di Vār, 64.*

48. *Rōg Gauri, A. G., 157 :*

*Nānak karanā jin kā soi sār karai.*

49. *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G., 688.*

50. *Loc. cit. See also, Rāg Āsā, A. G., 359; Sorath, A. G., 598-99:*

*Sarab jiān sir lekh dhurāhu, bin lekhai nahin koi jio,  
Āp alekh kudrat kar dekhai. hukam chalāi soi jio.*

and for men to obey.<sup>51</sup> To accept what is done by God as good is to appropriate the means to union with Him.<sup>52</sup> Those who appreciate the *Hukam* may receive the indwelling *Sabad*, and this too is a manifestation of His *hukam*.<sup>53</sup> Recognition of the *Hukam* comes through the *Gurū's* grace and it results in freedom from *haumai* and transmigration.<sup>54</sup> Through God's own mercy one submits to His *hukam* and becomes acceptable to Him.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, those who act in accordance with the *Hukam* are put into the Divine Treasury, while others are rejected as false coins.<sup>56</sup>

Almost synonymous with the *Hukam* are God's *bhānā* and His *razā*. The true Creator is beyond comprehension; He is boundless, without any limits; He creates and He destroys and He fills the three worlds; He makes perfect whomsoever he likes; and the world is only 'a pretext' for the exercise of His *bhānā*.<sup>57</sup> God alone has the power to bestow, and nothing said or done can oblige Him to bestow; to give or

51. *Japji, A. G., 6 :*

*Jo tis bhāvai soi karasi hukam nā karanā jāi,  
So pātsāh sāhā pātsāhib Nānak rahan rajāi.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 44; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 63; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 71; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 30-31.

52. *Rāg Tilang, A. G., 722.*

53. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 72 :*

*Hukam jinān nu manāiā,  
Tin antar sabad vasāiā.*

See also, *ibid.*, 55; *Rāg Mājh (Astpadiān), A. G., 109.*

54. *Vār Malār, A. G., 1289.*

55. *Āsā di Vār, A. G., 471.*

56. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 421.*

57. *Rāg Vadhans, A. G., 579.*

to withhold is His *bhānā*.<sup>58</sup> Greatness is received only through His *bhānā*.<sup>59</sup> Whatever is not in accordance with His *bhānā* is 'false'.<sup>60</sup> In all these verses *bhānā* can safely be replaced with *hukam*. The connection of *razā* with *hukam* in the verses of Guru Nanak is equally close. Happiness and salvation lie in God's *razā*.<sup>61</sup> Here *razā* is only another word for *hukam*. In fact both the terms often occur together. For instance, poison and nectar are equally acceptable to those who submit to God's *hukam* and *razā*.<sup>62</sup> One can meet God through the true *Gurū* if one recognizes the *Hukam* and conforms to His *razā*.<sup>63</sup> Guru Nanak's conception of God's *bhānā* is as comprehensive as his conception of God's *hukam*. For instance, attachment to *māyā* and devotion to God are both His *bhānā*; but those who forget Him are caught in the noose of Death.<sup>64</sup> God's *bhānā*, like His *hukam*, demands submission and willing acceptance. None can comprehend His *qudrat*; He alone is the everlasting Formless One; whatever pleases Him is good.<sup>65</sup>

58. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 25; Japji, A. G., 5 :*

*Band khalāsi bhānai hoi,*

*Horu ākh na sakai koi.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 38-39; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 55; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 62; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 28. See also, *Rāg Vadhans, A. G., 566.*

59. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 418; Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 729.*

60. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 144-45.*

61. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 412; Rāg Parbhāti, A. G., 1330; Rāg Dhanāsari (Astpadiān), A. G., 685.*

62. *Rāg Parbhāti, A. G., 1328 :*

*Tākā keha dar parvān,*

*Bikh amrit duai sam, sabh teri rajāi.*

63. *Rāg Bilāval, A. G., 832.*

64. *Vār Malār, A. G., 1286-87.*

65. *Japji, A. G., 4; Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, The Japji, 27; Mehar Singh, The Japji, 41; Sohan Singh, The Seeker's Path, 41; Teja Singh, The Japji, 23.*

You are the Creator, O Lord, and You are the Doer !  
Keep me as it may please You.<sup>66</sup>

It may now be added that God's *hukam* or *bhānā* is, for Guru Nanak, the Divine Order revealed in the physical and the moral world, and man is called upon to recognize this Divine Order and to submit to it. The close connection of the *Hukam* with God's omnipotence is quite obvious.

Indeed, Guru Nanak's conception of the Divinity is very intimately connected with the idea of divine self-expression. God in His primal aspect is devoid of all attributes; He is absolute, unconditional. As such, He is beyond comprehension; He is unknowable. God in His primal aspect is the eternally unchanging Formless One (*nirankār*).<sup>67</sup> He is without form (*rūp*) and He has no material sign (*rekhiā*).<sup>68</sup> He is inscrutable (*agam*); He is beyond the reach of human intellect (*agochar*); and He is boundless (*apār*).<sup>69</sup> He is self-existent and He is beyond time (*akāl*)<sup>70</sup> Some of the other epithets used by Guru Nanak for God in His absolute and unconditional aspect are *agāh* (unfathomable), *adrist* (beyond seeing), *anant* (infinite), *alabh* (unsearchable), *abol* or *akah* or *akath* or *alekh* (beyond utterance or describing). An epithet commonly used in this connection is *alakh* (ineffable). A logical corollary of God's absolute nature is that He is eternal. He is eternally constant (*achal*); He is wholly apart from creation (*aiti*, *nirmal*, *nirlep*); He is unborn (*ajūnt*); and He is wholly perfect. It is particularly in contrast with God's eternal

66. *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 54.

67. *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 596.

68. *Rāg Sūhī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 750.

69. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 437; *Rāg Dhanāsari*, A. G., 688.

70. *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 597.

aspect that the changing creation suffers; it is 'false', while God alone is 'true'.

'The intellect of man is strictly limited and any effort it may make to define the wholeness of God must be an effort to circumscribe the infinite, to bring within narrow bounds the One who is boundless.'<sup>71</sup> But God has revealed Himself in His creation and this aspect of God can be known by man. God created the universe as and when he wished and His endowing of Himself with attributes becomes the means of understanding Him; and knowing Him, man may enter into a unitive relationship with Him.<sup>72</sup>

However, Guru Nanak does not subscribe to the idea of incarnation. His emphasis upon the unity of God is quite remarkable.

My Master is the One; He is the One; my brother,  
He is the only One.<sup>73</sup>

He has no partner (*sharik*).<sup>74</sup> There is no 'second'.<sup>75</sup>

You are the One! You are the One!<sup>76</sup> There is none  
except you, my friend; there is none except you,  
O Lord!<sup>77</sup>

71. McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 173.

72. *Ibid.*, 167.

73. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 350 :

*Sāhib merā eko hai, eko hai bhāi, eko hai.*

74. *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 597 :

*Awar na dīsai kis sālāhi, tisai sarik na koī.*

75. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 355 :

*Tis bin dūjā awar na koī.*

76. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 143-44. The refrain 'ek tuhi, ek tuhi' is used seven times in the passage.

77. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 355 :

*Tujh bin awar na koī merai piārai,*

*Tujh bin aur na koī Harai.*

'There is no other' is a characteristic expression in Guru Nanak's compositions.<sup>78</sup> An obvious but important corollary of this emphasis upon the unity of God is that He alone is the proper object of worship. 'There is no other place.'<sup>79</sup> Since there is no 'second', devotion to the One alone leads to salvation.<sup>80</sup>

I worship only the One; I know no other.<sup>81</sup>

He is the 'One Husband' of all.<sup>82</sup> To whom else can worship be directed?<sup>83</sup> Only those receive honour who recognize the One as their Lord.<sup>84</sup>

I believe only in the One Lord.<sup>85</sup>

To appropriate this belief is to possess the right and proper kind of understanding.<sup>86</sup>

78. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 223; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 357, 433, 420; *Rāg Dhanāsari*, A. G., 660; *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 57.

79. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 60 :  
*Nānak dar ghar ek hai, awar na dūji jāi.*

80. *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 557 :  
*Nānak eki bāharā dūjā nāht kol,*  
*Ta'in sai laggi jai rahai bhi sau rāvai soi.*

81. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 225 :  
*Sevā ek nā jānis awarai.*

82. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 351.

83. *Rāg Parbhāti* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1345 :  
*Eko rav rihā sabh thāi,*  
*Awar na disai kis pūj charhāi.*  
Also, *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 221, 224; *Rāg Bilāval*, A. G., 795.

84. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 438.

85. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 156 :  
*Man eko sām̄b bhāi rai.*

86. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 357.

Guru Nanak emphasizes the greatness of God as the sole creator, the sole sustainer and the sole destroyer of His own creation.

With a single command He unfurled creation.<sup>87</sup> He who created the universe is the Lord of all.<sup>88</sup> He Himself creates; He Himself bestows devotion and He Himself becomes compassionate.<sup>89</sup> That Lord alone is the object of praise who created the universe.<sup>90</sup> The phrases 'makes and unmakes', 'creates and destroys', and 'builds and demolishes' occur frequently in Guru Nanak's compositions and there is no doubt that for him his only True Lord is the destroyer as well as the creator.<sup>91</sup>

Guru Nanak's emphasis on God as the sole sustainer is as remarkable as his stress upon God as the sole creator. He who created also watches over the universe.<sup>92</sup> He is the gardener who looks after the trees and embellishes the garden.<sup>93</sup> He gives without asking and His gifts are

87. *Ibid.*, 169. *Japji, A. G.*, 3 :

*Kitā pasāo eko kavāo.*

88. *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 432.

89. *Rāg Tilang, A. G.*, 722.

90. *Rāg Sūhi, A. G.*, 756 :

*Sāhib so sālāhiyai jin jagat upāiā.*

91. *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 413 :

*Āp marai mārāi bhi āp,*

*Āp upāi thāp uthāp.*

Also *ibid.*, 433.

92. *Rāg Sūhi (Chhant), A. G.*, 765 :

*Jin kiyā tin dekhīā jagg dhandarai lāyā.*

93. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 25 :

*Jā kai rukhkh birakh ārāo.*

innumerable.<sup>94</sup> He alone is the Giver; all others are beggars.<sup>95</sup> He is the nourisher of every living being; each breath and every morsel is bestowed by Him; and man may entrust to Him his life, without fear of death.<sup>96</sup>

As the sole creator, the sole sustainer and the sole destroyer, God is the One Sovereign Lord. He possesses unqualified power and absolute authority. He sees and He knows all; and what He does that alone comes to pass. There is nothing that is beyond His power and His rule is eternal. In both the physical and the moral world it is His *qudrat* that operates. He is the judge between the true and the false. Understanding and ignorance are His dispensation and He can wash away millions of sins in a moment. He alone is the proper object of prayer and supplication. Nothing is impossible for Him. He can oblige the carnivorous beasts and birds to eat grass and He can feed the grass-eating animals on meat; He can turn flowing rivers into sand-dunes and He can create fathomless waters in place of deserts; He can confer rule upon an ant, and He can reduce armies to dust.<sup>97</sup>

If one were to live throughout the four cosmic ages,

94. *Rāg Sūhi* (Chhant), A. G., 766; *Rāg Parbhāt*, A. G., 1328.

95. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 18 :

*Ketā ākhan ākhtiyāi ākhan tot nā hoi,*  
*Mangan wālai ketarai dātā eko soi.*

96. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 20 :

*Maranai ki chintā nahi jīvan ki nahi ās,*  
*Tū sarab jā prit pālāhi lekhai sās garās.*

97. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 144 :

*Nadiā vich tībbaī dekhālai thālī karai asgāh,*  
*Kirā thāp dayai pātsāhi laskar karui suāh.*

This statement on God's sovereignty is based on a large number of

or even ten times more; if one's writ were to run in all the nine regions of the earth; if one were to win greatness and fame in the world—all this would be nothing in the life hereafter if one fails to please God. (In fact) he may be treated as a worm among worms and even sinners may revile him. God alone bestows merit upon those who do not possess any and He alone increases the merit of those who have some already. There is none at all who can confer merit upon God.<sup>98</sup>

'If it pleases you', is a characteristic expression.<sup>99</sup> It may now be obvious that God's *hukam* is an expression of God's omnipotence.

The attributes of God considered so far tend to underline His transcendence. However, God is not only omnipotent verses. Reference may be made to only a few :

*Rāg Āsā, A. G., 360 :*

*Ja ko nāo dharāi vaddā, sād karai man mānai,  
Khasamai nadari kirā āvai jetai chuggai dānai.*

*Rāg Āsā, A. G., 414 :*

*Āpai jor vichherai soi,  
Āpai karatā karai so hoī.*

*Rāg Bhairo, A. G., 1125 :*

*Tujh te bāhar kichh nā hoī.*

*Rāg Parbhāti (Astpadiān), A. G., 1344 :*

*So bhūlai jis āp bhūlai būjhai jisai bujhāi.*

*Rāg Sūkhī, A. G., 728 :*

*Bāndhan bāndhā sabh jagg bhūlai.*

*Rāg Āsā, A. G., 438 :*

*Kor kotantar pāpā kerai ek gharī main khovai.*

See also, *Āsā di Vār, A. G., 464, 469; Cf. Teja Singh, Āsā di Vār, 63-64, 91.*

98. *Japji, A. G., 2; Cf. Mehar Singh, The Japji, 28-29; Jodh Singh, Bhai, The Japji, 17-18; Sohan Singh, The Seeker's Path, 26; Teja Singh, The Japji, 18.*
99. For instance, *Rāg Sorath, A. G., 599; Rāg Bilāval, A. G., 795.*

and omniscient but also omnipresent.

God has no mother, no father, no son and no relative; He has no wife, no sexual desire; He has no 'family' (*ku*); He is completely detached and He is infinite; but it is His Light that shines in His creation; and His Light is in everyone and in every thing.<sup>100</sup>

Wherever you look there is He; He is everywhere; He is everywhere and there is no other — these expressions occur frequently in Guru Nanak's verses.<sup>101</sup> He is not far; He is near; He is near, He is not far — these are some other characteristic expressions.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, God's omnipresence is inseparable from His immanence. His 'play' is wonderful; He fills the earth and the heavens and the space in between; He fills the three worlds; and in all the variegated forms it is His Light everywhere.<sup>103</sup>

He is the tablet and the pen and the writing.<sup>104</sup>  
The ocean is in the drop and the drop is in the

100. *Rāg Sorath, A. G., 597 .*

*Nā tin māt-pitā sut bandhap nā tis kām na nāri;  
Akui niranjan apar-parampar jagal jot tumāri;  
Ghat ghat antar brahm lukāyā ghat ghat jot sabā.*

101. *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān), A. G., 55, 61-62; Rāg Gauri, A. G., 153 (Astpadiān), 228; Rāg Āsā, A. G., 433, 437, 438; Rāg, Dhanāsūri, A. G., 661 (Astpadiān), 686; Rāg Rāmkali, A. G., 876; Vār Malār, A. G., 1291; Rāg Parbhātī (Astpadiān), A. G., 1343.*

102. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 354; Rāg Gujari, A. G., 489; Rāg Sūhi (Kĕfī), A. G., 752; Rāg Bilāval, A. G., 831.*

103. *Rāg Sorath, A. G., 596; Rāg Āsā, A. G., 433; Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 728.*

104. *Vār Malār, A. G., 1291 :*

*Āpat patī kalam āp, uppar lekh bhī tā;  
Eko kahiyai Nānakā dūjā kāhat kā.*

ocean.<sup>105</sup>

He is the speech and the speaker; He is the listener.<sup>106</sup> He is the plant and the flower and the loving *bhaurā*.<sup>107</sup> All is He.<sup>108</sup> He is in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm. He is 'within' and He is 'without'.<sup>109</sup>

The *ātmā* is in *Rām* and *Rām* is in the *ātmā*.<sup>110</sup>

We may now turn to Guru Nanak's concept of God's *nadar* (grace). He often refers to God's *kirpā*, *karam*, *prasād*, *mihar*, *dayā* or *bakhsis*; He also refers to his *taras*. All these terms refer to God's mercy, compassion or kindness. The most characteristic term, however, is *nadar*. It is through the *Guru's prasād* that ignorance (*agiān*) is obliterated and the light (of the Truth) is perceived.<sup>111</sup> One receives the Truth through God's *karam*.<sup>112</sup> The gift of the name is received

105. *Rāg Rāmkalī*, A. G., 878 :

*Sāgar main bñnd, bñnd main sāgar, kaun bñjhai bidh jānai.*

106. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 151 :

*Kathanā bakatā sunatā soi.*

107. *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1190 :

*Āpai bhaurā phūl bail,*

*Āpai sangat mit mail.*

108. For some interesting verses on the point see, *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 23, 25 (Astpadiān), 54, 62, 71.

109. *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 599 :

*Jo antar so bāhar dekhio awar na dūja koi jio.*

*Rāg Bhairo*, A. G., 1127 :

*Antar bāhar eko jāniā Nānak awar na dūā.*

See also, *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 434.

110. *Rāg Bhairo* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1153 :

*Ātam main Rām, Rām main Atam . . .*

111. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 349, 353; *Rāg Parbhātī*, A. G., 1329; *Rāg Sārang* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1233, *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 223.

112. *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 62; *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 465; Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā di Vār*, 67; *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 19; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 349, 412. See also, *Rāg Bilāval* (Chhant Dakhkhani), A. G., 844.

through God's *nadar*.<sup>113</sup> In such context, God's grace appears to be His revelation, His creativity made manifest in the created world and within man's inner being. In a certain sense, therefore, God's grace is a part of divine self-expression.

However, the *nadar* of Guru Nanak's conception is not entirely covered by God's grace in His revelation. The *nadar* is closely connected with God's inscrutable omnipotence; it is the attribute of a God who, above all, is a personal God. Through His *nadar* comes the recognition of His *hukam*.<sup>114</sup> Those who receive His gracious *nadar* are on the right path.<sup>115</sup> Through His *dayā* a mere heron is transformed into a swan.<sup>116</sup> God's *nadar* is one's solace; one 'sees' what He 'shows'.<sup>117</sup>

113. *Rāg Sūht, A. G., 729 :*

*Nāo Nānak bakhśis nadari karam hot.*

*Rāg Āsā, A. G., 354 :*

*Nadar karai ta satgur milai,*

Also *Āsā dī Vār, A. G., 465 :*

*Nadar karai jai āpani ta nadari satgur pāiyai.*

Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā dī Vār*, 67. Also, *Sri Rāg, A. G., 15, 16 (Ast-padiān)*, 59.

114. *Japji, A. G., 7 :*

*Nadari hukam pavai nisān.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 52; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 73; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 94; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 34.

115. *Japji, A. G., 7 :*

*Jin ko nadar karam tin kār.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 57-58; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 79; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 103; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 36. Also, *Rāg Parbhāṭī, A. G., 1330; Jis nu nadar karai soī bidh jānui.*

116. *Basant Hindol, A. G., 1171 :*

*Bagalai tai phun hansalā hovai jai tū karai dayālā.*

117. *Rāg Malār, A. G., 1257 :*

*Nadar karai ta bandhān dhīr.*

*Jion dekhālai tion dekhān bir.*

One is good or bad in accordance with His *nadar*.<sup>118</sup> Through His *nadar* one may meet God, and be absorbed in Him.<sup>119</sup> But, only those understand whom He gives to understand.<sup>120</sup> He 'enjoys' whomsoever He likes.<sup>121</sup> He alone is the bestower of union with Himself.<sup>122</sup> In these, and some other similar verses, God's *nadar* is not simply His revelation; no amount of human effort can necessarily enable one to receive His *nadar*. There is a point beyond which human understanding cannot proceed and there, it is the bestowing or withholding of God's grace that decides the issue of salvation.<sup>123</sup> Thus Guru Nanak's idea of God's grace repudiates all presumption to salvation by mere human effort.

It has been observed in the previous chapter that in his attitude towards contemporary religions Guru Nanak advocates inward devotion in preference to mere external and formal observances. 'True religion is to be found not

118. *Basant Hindol, A. G.*, 1191 :  
*Bhāvai changā bhāvai māndā jaisi nadar tumāri.*  
 Also, *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G.*, 661 :  
*Jaisi nadar karai taisā hoi.*
119. *Rāg Gauri, A. G.*, 222, 228-29, 242 ; *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 54, 72 ; *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 412.
120. *Vār Mājh, A. G.*, 150 :  
*Āp bujhāi, soi bājhai,*  
*Jin āp sujhāi tis sab kichh sūjhai.*  
*Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 15 :  
*Jo tis bhāvai sai bhalai hor ki kahan vikhān.*  
*Rāg Basant, A. G.*, 1189 :  
*Apno kar rākhai gur bhāvai.*
121. *Rāg Sūhi (Astpadiṣṇ), A. G.*, 750 :  
*Jai bhāvai piārā tai rāvesti.*
122. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 20 :  
*Āpai mail milāvahi sāchai mahal hadūr.*  
*Rāg Basant, A. G.*, 1170 ; *Rāg Sūhi, A. G.*, 728.
123. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 205.

in external practices, but in the inward disciplines of love, faith, mercy, and humility, expressed in righteous and compassionate deeds and in the upholding of all that is true.<sup>124</sup> Remembrance of God and love of God are often emphasized by Guru Nanak. Man should love God as the *chakvi* loves the sun or the '*chatarik*' loves the rain.<sup>125</sup> More easily understandable, but a stronger, simile is that of the love of the fish for water.<sup>126</sup> The lotus is whipped by the waves but it 'smiles'; it dies without water: such should be the love of man for God.<sup>127</sup> Guru Nanak lays great emphasis upon complete dedication.

My body and my soul are dedicated to You.<sup>128</sup>

Guru Nanak's emphasis upon *bhāva-bhakti* is indeed very strong. There is no salvation without *bhakti*, the loving devotion and dedication to God.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore, the idea of *bhakti* is closely connected with the idea of *bhai* or *bhau* (fear). Life is fruitless without *bhai-bhakti*.<sup>130</sup> They meet the 'husband' who put on the ornament

124. *Ibid.*, 212.

125. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 60.

126. *Rāg Parbhāti*, A. G., 1331; *Rāg Dhanāsari* (Astpadiān), 685.

127. *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 59-60.

128. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 354 :

*Jiū pind sabh terai pās.*

See also, *Rāg Dhanāsari*, A. G., 660; *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), 53, 61; *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 557; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 438; *Rāg Gauri* (Astpadiān), A. G., 222.

129. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 413, 418, 420; *Rāg Gauri* (Astpadiān), A. G., 228; *Basant Hindol*, A. G., 1172; *Rāg Parbhāti* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1342.

130. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 413 :

*Bin bhai bhagati janam biranth.*

of *bhai-bhāva*.<sup>131</sup> Those who have *bhau* they alone have *bhāva*.<sup>132</sup> Without *bhai-bhakti* man remains chained to the cosmic circuit.<sup>133</sup> This juxtaposition of devotion and fear suggests an equal emphasis upon both. The emotion of 'fear' appears to be a corollary of belief in God's absolute authority.

Fear (of God) is of great weight and hard to bear; the wayward mind, with all its effusions, is slight. (And yet) he who carries on his head (fear of God) can bear (its) weight. By grace he meditates on the *Gurū's* (teaching). Without such fear no one crosses (the Ocean of Existence), but if one dwells in fear to it is added love.<sup>134</sup>

To continue with the passage, if the fire of fear (due to Death) is fanned by the fear (of God) and to it is added love, (the true coin) is minted in the *sabad*. (But) if it is 'coined' without fear (of God) it remains false; (for without the fear of God) false is the mould and false the stroke. From the play of mere intelligence arises the desire (only of worthless things) and a thousand ingenuity does not provide the heat (that is there in the fear of God). The talk of the self-willed is meaningless chatter; his words are misleading nonsense. The only remedy for the fear of Death is God's fear lodged in the heart, for there

131. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 357 :*

*Kahat Nānak bhai bhāo kā karai sigār.*

132. *Āsā di Vār, A. G., 465 :*

*Nānak jin man bhau tinā man bhāo.*

Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā di Vār*, 71.

133. *Rāg Basant, A. G., 1188 :*

*Eka bhagat eko hai bhāo,*

*Bin bhai bhagati āvo jāo.*

134. *Rāg Gaurī, A. G., 151.* This translation is by W. H. Mcleod (*Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 213). Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Gurm Granth Sahib*, 504-05.

is none other than He and nothing happens without His will.<sup>135</sup> Whatever happens is according to His *razā*, and he who lodges God's fear in his heart becomes fearless.<sup>136</sup> Conversely, fear catches hold of those who are not afraid of God.<sup>137</sup> Meditation on the *Gurū's* instruction enables one to understand that the Ocean of Fear is crossed by lodging God's fear in the heart.<sup>138</sup> It appears that Guru Nanak's stress upon fear is not simply a conventional element of traditional *bhakti*.<sup>139</sup>

However, what distinguishes Guru Nanak's *bhakti* from the religion of the Vaishnava *bhagats* is not so much his emphasis on *bhai* as the fact that his *bhāva* is addressed directly to God Himself and not to any *avatar*. This may be an obvious difference but it is a crucial difference because of its implications for the expression of his *bhakti*. For example, the emphasis upon *nām japānā* or *nām simarānā* (to repeat or to remember the Name) assumes an altogether different complexion when the true import of the Name and the Word has been grasped. It is not a repetition of the

135. In the rest of this passage it is emphasized that to entertain any other fear than the fear of God is absolutely baseless; the soul does not die and by itself does not 'sink or swim'; whatever happens is always in accordance with His *hukam*. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 505-06.
136. *Rāg Basant* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1187 :  
*Jo kichh kinas Prabh rajāi,*  
*Bhai mānai nirbhau meri māi.*
137. *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 54 :  
*Nidariā dār jāniyai, bājh gurū gubār.*
138. *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1288 :  
*Bhai tai bhaijal langhiyai gurmatt yichār.*  
 Cf. Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1229. See also, *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 464; Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā di Vār*, 65-66.
139. Cf. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 214.

name Gobind or Hari which is being recommended; what is being recommended is meditation on the nature of God and His attributes. Consequently, the remembrance of God comes to embrace thought, word and deed. Through such a meditation, the devotee renders submission to God, for the *Sabad* reveals His absoluteness; he abandons attachment to the fleeting world, for the *Sabad* reveals the eternity of God; he separates himself from the snares of life, for the *Sabad* reveals God's complete detachment from *māvā*; and he approaches God in all humility, for the *Sabad* reveals His ineffable greatness. Indeed this meditation on the nature and attributes of God is 'the core of Gurū Nānak's religious discipline'.<sup>140</sup>

In the context of Guru Nanak's religious discipline the significance of *karma* undergoes a radical change. It may be mentioned first that Guru Nanak often speaks in terms of the 'law' of *karma*. On the basis of one's actions in a previous life, one receives what is 'written' for him.<sup>141</sup> This *karma* is not obliterated.<sup>142</sup> It must be pointed out here that this notion of *karma* is often used by Guru Nanak to emphasize the necessity of good acts. For instance,

Do not blame others, for you receive the reward or

140. *Ibid.*, 217.

141. *Rāg Vadhans, A. G.*, 579. For Guru Nanak's explicit acceptance of the concept of transmigration, see *Rāg Parbhāti (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 1342.

142. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 74 :

*Jaisi kalam vūṛi hai mastak taisi jiyarai pās.*

*Rāg Gauṛi, A. G.*, 154 :

*Kirat piā nā meṭai koi.*

See also. *Rāg Vadhans, A. G.*, 582; *Āsā di Vār, A. G.*, 468; Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā di vār*, 86.

*Rāg Gauṛi (Astpadiān), A. G.*, 222 :

*So kamāvai dhur likhiā hoyai.*

See also, *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G.*, 689.

retribution for what you yourselves do.<sup>143</sup>

Indeed, one reaps what one sows.<sup>144</sup> The law of *karma* is invoked also to explain the differences of birth.<sup>145</sup>

Nevertheless, the law of *karma* is not independent of God's *hukam*. For instance,

The difference between the virtuous and the sinner is not merely verbal; what one does is credited (or discredited) to one's account and one reaps what one sows; and one comes and goes in accordance with the *Hukam*.<sup>146</sup>

143. *Rāg Āśī, A. G., 433 :*

*Jo ma'in kiā so ma'in pāyā, dos na dijai awar janān.*

See also. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 75.*

144. *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G., 662 :*

*Jaisā karai so taisā pāvai,*

*Āp bij āpai hī khāvai.*

*Rāg Parbhātī, A. G., 1331 :*

*Jiv ayā tiv jāisā, kiā likh lai jāi.*

145. *Japji, A. G., 2 :*

*Karami āvai kappāḍ . . .*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 13; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 25; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 17; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 17; Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 60. At another place, the idea of *karma* is invoked to emphasize that comfort and misery should be treated with equal indifference : *Sri Rāg, (Astpadiān), A. G., 57.*

*Japji, A. G., 6-7*

*Sanjog vajog doi kār chālāveh, lekhai āvai bhāg.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji* 46; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 67; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 79; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 31.

146. *Japji, A. G., 4 :*

*Punni pāpi ākhan nāhi,*

*Kar kar karanā likh lai jāhu,*

Again,

Everyone receives what He gives and His *hukam* is according to one's actions.<sup>147</sup>

It appears that the subordination of *karma* to the *Hukam* is not without significance. Occasionally, the *karma* and the *Hukam* are invoked together to inculcate the efficacy of the *Sabad*.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, the acceptance of the Name through the true *Gurū*, and conformity to His pleasure, appear to obliterate the adverse effect of *karma*.<sup>149</sup> Paradoxically, submission to the *Hukam* becomes a means of release from the chain of *karma*. More clearly, the chain of *karma* may be broken by God's *nadar*. In any case, the idea of God's grace is opposed to any causal law of *karma* and, in the theological thought of Guru Nanak, the idea of grace is the more important idea.

In the context of Guru Nanak's theological thought, *kār* and 'karm' (human acts) acquire a fresh importance. Good acts

*Āpāi bijai āpai hī khāhu,*

*Nānak hukamī āvo jāhu.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 32; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 47; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 51; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 25.

147. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 433 :

*Tis dā diyā sabhni liyā,*

*Karamī karamī hukam piā.*

See also, *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1171; *Tukhāri Chhant*, A. G., 1109; *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 472; *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1289.

148. For instance, *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1288 :

*Likhiā pallat pāi so sach jāniyai,*

*Hukamī hoī nadar gayā jāniyi,*

*Bhaujal tārānhār sabad pachhāniyai.*

149. *Rāg Sūhi*, A. G., 729 :

*Tinān miliā gur āyi jin kau likhiā,*

*Amrit Har kā nāo deyiā dikhiā,*

*Chalai satgur bhāī bhavai nā bhikhiā.*

have their merit even in the context of the law of *karma*, but this is not the primary criterion for Guru Nanak. For instance, loving devotion to God becomes good *kār* and a meritorious act.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, to appropriate the Name through the grace of the *Gurū* is to acquire good *karma*.<sup>151</sup> The Truth is received through true *kār*.<sup>152</sup> When Guru Nanak says that you cannot find God without the true *Gurū* in spite of your acts, it becomes clear that traditional notion of *karma* has been set aside.<sup>153</sup> There is no doubt that Guru Nanak emphasizes the importance of 'karm', quite often in the context of his own theology.<sup>154</sup> In all probability it is in this context that Guru Nanak refers to virtue and vice in his *Japji* :<sup>155</sup>

God's justice takes virtue and vice into account and in

150. *Rāg Sūhi, A. G.*, 729.

151. *Rāg Āsa, A. G.*, 414-15 :

*Jahān nām milai teh jāo,*

*Gur-parsādi karam kamāo.*

See also, Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 253 & nn. 29-30.

152. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 19 :

*Suchchi kārāi sachch milai.*

153. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 72 :

*Satgur bājh nā pāyo sabh thakki karam kamāi.*

See also, *ibid.*, 59; *Rāg Gauri, A. G.*, 154 (*Astpadīān*), 222.

154. For instance, *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 20 :

*Bin gun kām na āva't dhāi dheri tan khehu.*

*Ibid.*, 75 :

*Dharam seti vāpār na kīto karam na kīto mitt.*

*Rāg Gauri, A. G.*, 157 :

*Karmā uppar nibbarai, jāi lochai sabh koi.*

See also, *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 23-24, 25; *Rāg Sorath, A. G.*, 599.

155. *Japji, A. G.*, 7 :

*Changiāyān burlāyān vāchai dharam hadūr.*

*Karāni āpo āpant kai nātrai kai dār.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 58; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 79;

accordance with one's merit is one's nearness to God.

Guru Nanak's conception of *māyā* shows even more clearly than his use of the current concept of *karma* that the older concept is transformed into something new in the context of his religious thought. The entire creation is God's *māyā*.<sup>156</sup> It is God's 'play' through which he reveals Himself.<sup>157</sup> But in contrast to the Truth of God, His creation is false. *Māyā*, therefore, is deceit; it is a snare.<sup>158</sup> To be attached to *māyā*, is to be intoxicated with the 'dose' of falsehood.<sup>159</sup> He who worships *māyā*, in opposition to the Truth, remains in *dubidhā* (misery arising from affiliation to anything other than God).<sup>160</sup>

If you worship the attendant you will never see the

Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 36. See also, Kapur Singh, *Parashar-prasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 377.

156. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 351 :

*Sarab jot rūp terā dekhīā sagal bhaun teri māyā.*

See also, *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 229; *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 72.

157. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 72-73 :

*Tudh āpai āp upāyā,*

*Dūjā khail kar dikhlāyā.*

See also, *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 580.

158. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 15 :

*Bābā māyā rachnā dhohu,*

*Andhai nām visāriā, nā tis eh nā ohu.*

159. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 229.

160. *Rāg Mājh* (Astpadiān), A. G., 109 :

*Sākat kūrāi sachch nā bhāvai,*

*Dubidhā bādha āvai jāvai.*

See also, *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 19 (Astpadiān), 61; *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 144; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 420; *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), A. G., 634-35; *Rāg Basant*, A. G., 1190.

Master.<sup>161</sup>

But the multicoloured *māyā* allures man to itself and, in ignorance, he 'comes and goes'; he does not realize that all other than God is subject to annihilation.<sup>162</sup> Thus *māyā* is 'filth'; it is 'poison'.<sup>163</sup>

You have come into the world and you will leave it; this world is false. The true abode is found only by adoring the True One; only the Truth makes one true. Falsehood and avarice bring no honour here and you will find no 'place' in the hereafter. There you will receive no welcome, like the crow in a deserted house.<sup>164</sup>

If you cater to the bodily appetites, there will be no room in your heart for the Name.<sup>165</sup>

O my soul, you are a stranger in this country

161. *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 229 :

*Cheri kī sevā karai thākur nāhi dīsai.*

See also, *Sri Rāg*, *A. G.*, 75 :

*Har kā nām nā chetai parāni bikul bhayā sang māyā.*

162. *Rāg Sūhi* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 751.

See also, *Sorath* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 635, 637.

163. *Rāg Sūhi*, *A. G.*, 728 :

*Antar vasai na bāhar jāi,*

*Amrit chhod kāhai bikh khāi.*

See also, *Rāg Gaurī*, *A. G.*, 156; *Rāg Sorath*, *A. G.*, 596.

164. *Rāg Vadhans*, *A. G.*, 581. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1911-12.

165. *Sri Rāg*, *A. G.*, 15 :

*Aitai ras sarir ke, kai ghat nām nivās.*

See also, *ibid.*, 24 (Astpadiān), 61; *Rāg Gaurī* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 222; *Rāg Asā*, *A. G.*, 354, 412, 439; *Rāg Sorath*, *A. G.*, 595; *Rāg Rāmkālī*, *A. G.*, 876; *Rāg Tūkhāri*, *A. G.*, 1112; *Rāg Malār* (Astpadiān), *A. G.*, 1255.

(the world), why should you be entangled in it ?<sup>166</sup>  
 The thirst for pleasures is not quenched by *māyā*; happiness is to be sought in detachment from *māyā*, within oneself.<sup>167</sup>

For Guru Nanak, *māyā* is not the cosmic illusion of the *Vedānta*. The universe as God's creation is real and, as His revelation, it helps man to understand His nature. But God alone is eternal and He is distinct from His creation. The world in contrast with God's truth is false and impermanent. There can be no conciliation between man's allegiance to God and his affiliation to *māyā*. Therefore to be attached to *māyā* in any of its forms is to be in *dubidhā* (misery arising from dual or wrong affiliation); it is to remain chained to the transmigratory circuit. But *māyā* is sweet, it attracts and it allures. The low passions and sensual appetites keep man in bondage to *māyā* and he remains a stranger to the Creator. It is in this context that Guru Nanak inculcates detachment and inner cleansing by curbing low passions and sensual appetites; for all deeds of violence and falsehood spring from *kām* (lust), *krodh* (anger), *lobh* (covetousness), *moh* (attachment to the things of this world) and *hankār* (pride). These 'five adversaries' are frequently denounced by Guru Nanak. The cleansing of the human 'vessel' is necessary to make it a fit receptacle for the Word. And the best antidotes to the poison of *māyā* are loving devotion, appropriation of the Name, acceptance of the *Hukam* and, of course, God's *nadar*.<sup>168</sup>

166. *Rāg Asā, A. G., 439 :*

*Merai jiyariā pardesiā kit pavai janjālai Rām.*

On the other hand, the realization that the real Home of the soul is not in this world leads to detachment. See for instance, *Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 767*, the passage with the refrain :

*Man pardesi jāi thiyai sabh des parāyā.*

167. *Rāg Sūhi (Astpadiān), A. G., 751.*

168. *Rāg Gaurī (Astpadiān), A. G., 220-21; Rāg Parbhāṭi (Astpadiān), A. G., 1342, 1344; Rāg Āsā, A. G., 355.*

*Māyā* is not the only obstacle to salvation. There is another, and a more formidable adversary: *haumai*. From *haumai* results pride (*hankār* or *garab*). But *haumai* is much more than pride. It is that self-centredness which is opposed to God as the only omnipotent reality. *Haumai* is a subtle psychological barrier between man and God. The recognition of the way to salvation does not come unless the true nature of this self-centredness is realized. And without this realization man remains entangled in the net of *māyā*; he remains chained to the cosmic circuit.

In *haumai* he comes and in *haumai* he goes;  
 In *haumai* he is born and in *haumai* he dies;  
 In *haumai* he gives and in *haumai* he takes;  
 In *haumai* he acquires and in *haumai* he casts away;  
 In *haumai* he is truthful and in *haumai* he lies;  
 In *haumai* he pays regard to evil or to virtue.<sup>169</sup>

This passage closes with the assertion that unless *haumai* is recognized the true object of worship is not found, and without this awareness man indulges in vain talk; the way out of this impasse is to recognize the nature of God's *hukam*.<sup>170</sup> Also, *haumai* can be eradicated through *anhad*

169. *Āsā dī Vār*, A. G., 466. This translation is by W. H. McLeod (*Gurū Nānak and The Sikh Religion*, 183). Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā dī Vār*, 75-76.

170. *Āsā dī Vār*, A. G., 466 :  
*Haumai būjhai tū dar sūjhai,*  
*Giān vihūnā kath kath lūjhai,*  
*Nānak hukamī likhyai lekhi,*  
*Jehā vekhai tehā vekhi.*

Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā dī Vār*, 76; Kohli, S. S., *Outlines of Sikh Thought*, 68-69; McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 184. See also, *Rāg Sāhi* (Kāfi), A. G., 752; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 353.

*bāni*, the Name.<sup>171</sup> To cross the Ocean of Existence one has to die to self, while alive.<sup>172</sup> In Guru Nanak's verses there is a good deal of insistence on discarding the self-centredness of *haumai*.<sup>173</sup> There is also a good deal of emphasis upon the efficacy of the *Sabad*, the *Gurū* and *bhakti* for treating the disease of *haumai*.<sup>174</sup>

Just as affiliation to anything other than God means affiliation to delusion (*māyā*), so to attribute anything to oneself is to disregard the omnipotence of God and His true nature.

Great is God and His glory is great; whatever comes to pass is His doing. He who regards himself (of any consequence before God) shall find no honour (in His court).<sup>175</sup>

Having subdued the *man* and recognized the real self, one discovers that there is none like unto Him.<sup>176</sup> When the True Master is lodged in the heart, the poison of *haumai* is properly

171. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 21; *Rāg Rāmkalī*, A. G., 879.

172. *Rāg Rāmkalī*, A. G., 877 :

*In bidh sāgar taryai,*

*Jivatiān ayun maryai.*

173. *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 153 :

*Āp marai tā pāi nāo.*

Also, *ibid.*, 221, 222; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 413 :

*Jivat maranā tārai taranā.*

See also, *Rāg Vadhans*, A. G., 580; *Rāg Rāmkalī*, A. G., 879.

174. *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 58, 62, 64, 72; *Rāg Gaurī*, A. G., 153 (Astpadiān), 227; *Rāg Sārang* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1197.

175. *Japji*, A. G., 5 :

*Vadā sāhib vadhi nāi kitā jā kā hovai;*

*Nānak jai ko āpo jānai aggai giā nā sohai.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 35; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 51; Soban Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 54; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 26.

176. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 356.

treated.<sup>177</sup> But so long as the mind is engrossed in *māyā*, the inner 'duality' caused by *haumai* persists.<sup>178</sup>

For the man who is caught in *haumai* and in *māyā*, Guru Nanak uses the term *manmukh* (the self-willed). Since he has not purged *haumai* from his *man*, and he is involved in *māyā* and, hence, in *āvidyā*, he remains separated from God. *Haumai* is his bane.<sup>179</sup> He fails to recognize the Omnipresent and suffers transmigration.<sup>180</sup> He is ungrateful to the Master.<sup>181</sup> He vainly attributes things to himself.<sup>182</sup> He is lost in affiliation to other than God.<sup>183</sup> He fails to receive understanding.<sup>184</sup> He loves ignorance.<sup>185</sup> He merely talks; he does not act in accordance with the Truth.<sup>186</sup> All his capital consists of falsehood and he is doomed to everlasting separation.<sup>187</sup> The *manmukh's* blind forgetfulness of the Name binds him to Death, the cycle of death and rebirth.<sup>188</sup> His *haumai* stands in the way to *bhakti*, and there is nothing in store for him but misery.<sup>189</sup> His false knowledge is an obstacle to

177. *Ibid.*, 419.

178. *Srī Rāg*, (Astpadiān), A. G., 63.

179. *Rāg-Gaurī* (Astpadiān), A. G., 228.

180. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 143.

181. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 60.

182. *Rāg Sorath* (Astpadiān), A. G., 635; *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 141.

183. *Rāg Āsā* (Astpadiān), A. G., 60.

184. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 138 :

*Nānak manmukh andh piār.*

185. *Rāg Bilāval* (Astpadiān), A. G., 831 :

*Manmukh kathani hai par rehat nā hol.*

See also, *Rāg Sorath*, A. G., 596 :

The *manmukh* does not adopt *nām*, *dān* and *asnān*.

186. *Rāg Bilāval*, A. G., 796 :

*Manmukh vichharai khoti rās.*

187. *Srī Rāg*, A. G., 19.

188. *Rāg Parbhātī*, A. G., 1345.

189. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 356.

submission.<sup>190</sup> He is a blind fool who openly eats 'poison'.<sup>191</sup> He lives and dies a stranger to himself and to God. He is like a piece of stone amidst water ; his inside remains 'dry'.<sup>192</sup> He is wise in his own evaluation and does not think of the *Gurū*; 'like spurious sesame he shall be left desolate in the field'.<sup>193</sup> The *manmukh's* fate is sealed by his submission to his own *man*, rather than to God.

Nevertheless, it is the human *man* (heart, mind, soul) itself that opens the way to salvation. 'To conquer the *man* is to conquer the world.'<sup>194</sup> This terse expression occurs in *Japji* but the idea is expressed at several other places. In *Srī Rāg*, for instance :<sup>195</sup>

If the wandering *man* were withdrawn (from *māyā*), and if it were inclined toward Truth and fear, it would enjoy the sweet nectar of *giān*, and its thirst would be quenched for ever. If it were subdued in this manner, there would be no misery any longer. (But)

190. *Rāg Parbhāti*, A. G., 1330-31.

191. *Rāg Sūhi* (Kāfi), A. G., 752.

192. *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 419 :

*Manmukh paththar sa'il hai . . .*

193. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 463 :

*Nānak gurū nā chetani man apnai suchait,*

*Chhuttai til bhuār jio sunjhai andar khait.*

Cf. Teja Singh, *Āsā di Vār*, 58.

194. *Japji*, A. G., 6 :

*Man jītai jag jīt.*

Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 45; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 65; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 76; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 31. The translation is by W. H. McLeod (*Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 178).

195. *Srī Rāg*, A. G., 21. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Srī Guru Granth Sahib*, 69-70.

this *man* is foolishly attached (to *māyā*) and it is easily allured (by *māyā*); it refuses to be drenched in the *Sabad*; and Death is the fate of misguided intelligence. Through the True *Gurū* the treasure of virtue is obtained. Leave *haumai*, O my *man*, and cast away pride; adore the purifying *Gurū* that you may receive some honour in God's court.

The *man* is capable of being attuned to diverse activity. It may aid renunciation; it may help indulgence; it may advance ignorance; it may enable one to bestow charities; it may induce one to beg; it may enable one to think of God; but happiness lies in subduing 'the five adversaries', the low passions and evil impulses.<sup>196</sup> Once the desire to cater to these adversaries is curbed and the *man's* attachment to sensual pleasures is completely broken, it is transformed into a valuable instrument. Then 'the *man* is a priceless pearl'; but not if its worth is not realized.<sup>197</sup> Attuned rightly, it may lead you to God; attuned wrongly, it keeps you entangled in the net of *māyā*. Therefore, know yourself; for he who does not know himself is a mere beast.<sup>198</sup>

He who knows himself has found the Palace within.<sup>199</sup>

196. *Rāg Parbhāṭī*, A. G., 1330 :

*Man jogi man bhogī, man mārakh gāvār,  
Man dātā man mangatā man sir gur katār,  
Panch mār sukh pāyā alsā brahm vichār.*

197. *Srī Rāg*, A. G., 22 :

*Man mānak nirmol hai . . .*

*Eh mānak jiu nirmol hai ayn kaudī badalai jāi.*

198. *Rāg Sūhī* (Astpadiṅ), A. G., 751 :

*Mūl nā bājhai āpanā sai pasuān sat dhor jio.*

See also, *Rāg Gauṛī*, A. G., 153.

199. *Srī Rāg* (Astpadiṅ), A. G., 56 :

*Jinī āp pachhāntā ghar vich mahal sushāl . .*

God in His immanent aspect is in every heart and the rightly attuned *man* can as well perceive Him in the microcosm as the human understanding can find Him in the macrocosm.

The goal, however, is not in this world, not even in paradise; it is nothing short of union with God. The terms frequently used by Guru Nanak for this union are *jott jot samaunā* (mingling of light with the Light) and *sahaj*; the goal is also referred to as *sunm-smādh* or *turiā avasthā*; other terms are also used; the idea of the union is also conveyed through the metaphor of mingling streams or the unitive experience of 'the wife' with 'the Husband'.<sup>200</sup> The experience of union can never be adequately described; but the experience is all-important.<sup>201</sup> The experiential nature of the goal has implications for the path too. For instance, merely to say that God is great is meaningless; the effect of this belief must be reflected in one's attitude towards God, if his belief has to have a meaning.<sup>202</sup> In fact one may then realize that God's greatness is beyond expression.<sup>203</sup> The

200. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 21; *Vār Malār*, A. G., 1287; *Tukhāri Chhant*, A. G., 1109; *Sri Rāg* (Astpadiān), A. G., 54; *Rāg Parbhāti* (Astpadiān), A. G., 1342, 1345; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 356; *Rāg Gujari*, A. G., 503-04; *Rāg Āsā*, A. G., 439.

201. *Rāg Malār*, A. G., 1256 :

*Undithā kichh kahan nā jāi.*

*Rāg Gauri* (Astpadiān), A. G., 222 :

*Adist disai tā kihā jāi,*

*Bin dekhai kahnā bīrthā jāi.*

202. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 15 :

*Kimat kinai na pāiyā kahan nā vadā hoi.*

203. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 14-15 :

*Bhi teri kimat nā pavaī kevad ākhā nāo.*

This refrain occurs four times in the passage in which it is emphasized that God's worth and the worth of His name cannot be fully appreciated.

experiential nature of the path and the goal makes search and striving indispensable.<sup>204</sup> Also, one has to cultivate proper disposition and the right attitude.<sup>205</sup> In a sense, one has to bear one's own cross.<sup>206</sup>

Nonetheless, the path is there and it is sufficiently well-marked. A prerequisite obviously is the awareness that it is there. One has to discard heedlessness to be aware of it. Guru Nanak's emphasis on the fact of death, for instance, becomes meaningful in this context.

When the soul departs, the deserted body is dreadful; the burning fire is dead, there is not even a trace of smoke.<sup>207</sup>

The soul departs and what is left behind is ash.<sup>208</sup> All sense of possessions is gone in a trice.<sup>209</sup> Naked you come into the world and naked you leave it.<sup>210</sup>

The night is spent in sleep and the day in eating;

204. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 145 :*

*Hau bhāl vikunnī hot.*

See also: *Rāg Dhanāsari, A. G.; 661,*

205. *Rāg Gujari, A. G., 504 :*

*Ūdhai bhāndai kichh nā samōvai sidhai amrit pōrai nihār.*

206. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 351 :*

*Āpona kāraj āp swārai . . .*

207. *Srī Rāg, A. G., 19 :*

*Sunjhī dehi darāunt jā jiu vichu jāi,*

*Bhāhal balandī vujhavi dhuā nā niksio kāl.*

208. *Rāg Thukārī, A. G., 1111.*

209. *Srī Rāg, A. G., 76.*

210. *Srī Rāg, A. G., 74 :*

*Nā-marjād āyā kal bhitar bāhur jāsi nāgd.*

the jewel of life is cast away for nothing.<sup>211</sup>

The noose of Death hangs over your head all the time.<sup>212</sup>  
The person who is heedless of God is like the woman who sleeps in her father's house (the world), while thieves break into the house in broad day light; his virtues are stolen and all he carries with him is a load of demerits.<sup>213</sup>

How can I be the beloved wife of my Husband, for I sleep all day long and He is awake all the time.<sup>214</sup>

If one knew the Home, one would not sleep.<sup>215</sup>

From the awareness of the goal springs the anguish of 'separation'. 'I cannot live for a moment without the beloved; I cannot have a wink of sleep without meeting Him.'<sup>216</sup> The smallest forgetfulness of God inflicts misery on the heart.<sup>217</sup> 'I cannot live without you even for a moment; nothing consoles me; I cry, "my Love, my Love" and my heart is drenched in love.'<sup>218</sup> The Husband is not with me, how can I be happy? The anguish of separation has pierced my body.<sup>219</sup> My

211. *Rāg Gauri, A. G., 156 :*

*Ra'in gavāi soi kai, divas gavāyā khāi,*

*Hirai jaisā janam hai, kaudī badalai jāi.*

Cf. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasna, or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, 382, n. 77.

212. *Rāg Bhairo, A. G., 1126.*

213. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 22. See also, Rāg Āsā, A. G., 357.*

214. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 356 :*

*Ayun klon kant plārt hovā,*

*Sahu jāgat hau nis bhar sovā.*

215. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 418.*

216. *Rāg Makār (Astpadiān), A. G., 1274.*

217. *Sri Rāg, A. G., 21.*

218. *Rāg Āsā, A. G., 436.*

219. *Tukhāri Chkant, A. G., 1108.*

heart longs for God and if it forgets Him, I die in misery.<sup>220</sup>  
But,

He who is immersed in His love day and night knows (Him who is immanent) in the three worlds and throughout all times. He becomes like Him whom he knows. He becomes wholly pure, his body is sanctified, and God dwells in his heart as his only love. Within him is the Word; he is blended in the True One.<sup>221</sup>

However, at no stage on the path to salvation can one be presumptuous. God is to be approached in devout humility and gratitude. By oneself one cannot do anything, for God is the Doer.<sup>222</sup> 'You alone are perfect, we are imperfect and mean; You are full of wisdom and we are witless.'<sup>223</sup> Why should man forget Him in whose hands is life?<sup>224</sup> 'I have no virtues; I have every demerit; how can I meet the Lord?'<sup>225</sup>

My sins are as innumerable as the drops of water in the ocean. Through your mercy, O Lord ! even

220. *Rāg Bilāval*, A. G., 796; *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān)*, A. G., 59.
221. Quoted, Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 221. *Sri Rāg (Astpadiān)*, A. G., 60 :  
*Āpai mail vichhuniā, sach vadiā dai.*
222. *Āsā di Vār*, A. G., 469 :  
*Tūm karatā karanā ma'in nāhi, jā hau kari nā hoī.*
223. *Rāg Sorūth*, A. G., 597 :  
*Tū pūrā ham ūrai hochhai tū gaurā ham haurai.*
224. *Sri Rāg*, A. G., 15 :  
*So kion manon visāriyai, jā kai jiā parānā.*
225. *Rāg Sūhi (Astpadiān)*, A. G., 750 :  
*Sabh augun ma'in gun nahin koi,*  
*Kionkar kant milāvā hoī.*

stones can cross the waters.<sup>226</sup>

None knows the limits of your bounty, O Gracious Lord ! while my sins cannot be counted.<sup>227</sup> I am a fallen sinner and a cheat : you are the Formless, Pure One.<sup>228</sup> You are the Pure One and I am a sinner; praise be to the True One, you are my only refuge.<sup>229</sup> Whom else can I adore ? there is no second.<sup>230</sup>

My Beloved, You are the Creator and the Sustainer; I am a sinner and a cheat; grant me the boon of the Name.<sup>231</sup>

God dispenses life and death; He grants union through His grace; He bestows the gift of the Name on whomsoever He likes, He is the Wise One, the True One; He is the only Master; and man should depend entirely upon Him for the right instruction.<sup>232</sup> God is the Perfect One, the Giver of wisdom and salvation; men should beg from Him.<sup>233</sup> 'I implore Him with folded hands that the *Gurū* may lead me on the right path.'<sup>234</sup>

226. *Rāg Gaurī, A. G., 156 :*

*Jetā samund sagar nīr bhariā taitai augun hamārai;*

*Dayā karuh kichh mihar upāvuh, dubdai paththar tārai.*

See also, *Rāg Sorath, A. G., 596.*

227. *Rāg Gaurī, A. G., 156 :*

*Merai sāhibā, kaun jānai gun terai,*

*Kahai nā jāni augun merai.*

228. *Rāg Sorath, A. G., 596-97.*

229. *Rāg Gaurī, A. G., 153.*

230. *Rāg Dhanāsari (Astpadiān), A. G., 686.*

231. *Rāg Sorath (Astpadiān), A. G., 637.*

232. *Rāg Gaurī, A. G., 154.*

233. *Rāg Sorath, A. G., 597 :*

*Tū Prabh dātā dān mat pūrā, ham thārai bhikhāri jio.*

234. *Rāg Sūhi, A. G., 767 :*

*Kar jor gur pai kar bēnāī, rāh pādhar gur dassai.*

natural or temporal power.<sup>238</sup> This is understandable because 'only those receive Life who lodge God in their hearts (to the exclusion of everything else); no one else can receive Life.'<sup>239</sup> To find the true Home and to recognize it through the *Gurū*, one has to give up one's self and one's head.<sup>240</sup> Obviously, the path is not easy to follow; it requires constant exertion in the way of God.<sup>241</sup>

Devotion and dedication to God in terms of Guru Nanak's religious ideals lead to the experience of *visamād*, an experience that serves as 'a stimulus to more exalted meditation.'<sup>242</sup> The awe-inspiring vision of God's greatness, and the feeling of ecstasy resulting from it, is *visamād*.

Infinite are the praises (of the Creator), infinite the ways of uttering them. Infinite are His works and infinite His gifts. Infinite His sight, infinite His hearing, infinite the workings of the divine mind. His creation is boundless, its limits infinite. Many have striven to encompass its infinity; none have succeeded. None there be who knows its extent; whatsoever one

238. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 14. The refrain of the passage is :

*Matt dekh bhūlā visarai terā'chit nā āvai nāo.*

239. *Vār Mājh, A. G.*, 142 :

*So jivīā jis man vasiā soī,  
Nānak awar nā jivai koi.*

240. *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 420 :

*Āpanarā man vechiyai sir dījai nālai,  
Gurmukh vasat pachānyai apanā ghar bhālut.*

241. *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 25-26 :

*Vich dunia sev kamāyai,  
Tū dargāh baisan pāyai,  
Kahu Nānak bānh ladānyai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 87-88.

242. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 219.

may say much more yet remains to be said. Great is God and high His station; higher than high His Name. Only he who is of equal height can comprehend its loftiness; therefore God alone comprehends His own greatness.<sup>243</sup>

Some of this greatness is depicted also in the 'so-dar' passage.<sup>244</sup> And the longest passage on *visamād* occurs in *Āsā di Vār*, followed significantly by passage on God's *qudrat* (creation as well as creative power) and *bhai* (fear).<sup>245</sup> The emotion of wonder engendered by the overwhelming greatness of God leads to refined and intense meditation which purges *haumai*. Guru Nanak does not say so, but the connection between the 'experience' of God's greatness and the eradication of *haumai* appears to be quite logical. The experience of God's greatness leads to an intense adoration too. The best praises of God appear to be inadequate.<sup>246</sup> This refined adoration is

243. *Loc. cit.* Cf. Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 52-55; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 27; Jodh Singh, *Bhai, The Japji*, 36-37; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 59-60.

See also, *A. G.*, 5.

244. *Japji, A. G.*, 6. For translation, Jodh Singh, *Bhai, The Japji*, 42-44; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 59-63; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 69-71; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 29-31.

245. *A. G.*, 463-64. For translation, Teja Singh, *Āsā di Vār*, 62-63.

Also, *Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 416 :

*Dekh acharj rahai bismād.*

246. *Rāg Sūhī, A. G.*, 728 :

*Kahdai kahai kī jāvai tum sar awar nā koī.*

*Rāg Āsā, A. G.*, 349 :

*Giāni dhiāni gur gurbhāi,*

*Kahan nā jāi tert til vadiāi.*

See also, *Sri Rāg, A. G.*, 15.

a gift of God Himself.<sup>247</sup>

- Praise be to Him who shows the way.
- Praise be to Him who heralds the Word.
- Praise be to Him who leads to union.<sup>248</sup>

With the aid of meditation on the revelation of God all around oneself and of dedicated devotion exclusively to the One True Lord man may progress on the path of realizing higher and higher truth. 'With the ever-widening *visamād* and the progressive subjugation of the *man* go a developing sense of joy and peace. It is a path leading onward and upward. The accent is strongly upon ascent to higher and yet higher levels of understanding and experience, an account which is particularly evident in Guru Nanak's famous figure of the five *khands*' towards the end of his *Japji*.<sup>249</sup> Recognizing the law of cause and effect in the moral as well as the physical world, man realizes the justice of God; in His court stand revealed the true and the false. Man's widening understanding of the nature of God becomes a source of joy. Consequently, he puts in greater exertion and his acts conform to his increasing understanding. He then receives the reward of his devotion and ascends to the Realm of Truth, the dwelling-place of the Formless One, in which there is

247. *Japji*, A. G., 5:

*Jis nu bakhśai śifat śālāh,*

*Nānak pātsāhi pātsāh.*

Cf. Joḍh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 39; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 57; Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 62; Teja Singh, *The Japji*, 28.

248. *Rāg Gaurī* (Aṣṭpadiān), A. G., 226:

*Tis kau wahu wahu jai vāt dikhāvai,*

*Tis kau wahu wahu jai sabad sunāvai,*

*Tis kau wahu wahu jai mail milāvai.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 748.

249. McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 221.

perfect harmony with His *hukam*. The transmigratory process now ends in the state of union with God, a state of consummate joy and perfect peace. 'To describe it, Nanak, is as hard as steel.'<sup>250</sup>

It may be obvious but it may nevertheless be stated that 'the goal and the path' conceived by Guru Nanak was based on his deep understanding and personal experience — his primary credentials. But, true to his convictions, he attributes all that he understood and experienced to God. In *Vār Mājh* there is perhaps a suggestion that Guru Nanak thought of himself as God's herald.<sup>251</sup> At another place in the same *Vār* he clearly states that he is a singer (*dhādhi*) whom God has commanded to sing constantly the *vār* (of His praises);

the Lord called the *dhādhi* to His abode of Truth and robed him with "true praise and adoration"; the true nectar of the Name has been sent as food; those are happy who taste it to the full in accordance with the *Gurū's* instruction; the *dhādhi* openly proclaims the glory of the *Sabad*; and Nanak, by adoring the

250. *Japji*, A. G., 8 :

*Nānak kathnā kararā sār.*

The translation of this line is taken from Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 224. Cf. Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, 101; Jodh Singh, Bhai, *The Japji*, 57; Teja Singh, *The Japji* 36; Mehar Singh, *The Japji*, 77.

251. *Vār Mājh*, A. G., 142 :

*Phurmāni hai kār khasam pathāiā,  
Tabalbāj bichār sabad sunāyā.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 473. Here the reference may be to God or to the Guru in the word *tabalbāj*; but it is not certain.

Truth, has found the Perfect One.<sup>252</sup>

Such references to the role which Guru Nanak assumed for himself may suggest that, in a certain sense, he regarded his task as ordained by God.

It is absolutely certain that Guru Nanak's task did not end with his own experience of union with his God. He was equally concerned for the salvation of others. This concern is reflected in his works.<sup>253</sup> But more than that it is reflected in his life. By the early 1520s 'we find Gurū Nānak settled on the banks of the Ravi in the village of Kartarpur. The Guru is now more than 'fifty years old. Behind him lie many years of religious endeavour and the time has come for the application of the ideals which have matured during those preceding years. His fame has spread and in accordance with immemorial tradition prospective disciples have gathered to learn from one whom they can acknowledge as a preceptor

252. *Vār Mājh, A. G., 150 :*

*Hau dhādhi vekār kārāi lāyā,  
Rāt dihai kahu vār dhuru phurmāyā;  
Dhādhi sachchai mahal khasam bulāyā,  
Sachchī sifāt sālāh kappārā pāyā.  
Guru-mattī khādā rajj tin sukh pāyā;  
Dhādhi karai pasāo sabad vajāyā,  
Nānak sachch sālāh pūrā pāyā.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 502-03. In *Rāg Bilāval (A. G., 795)*, Guru Nanak attributes to God what he 'says'. Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 2589-90. See also, *Rāg Vadhans, A. G., 566*; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1839.

253. It may be added that the air of controversy strongly suggested by several of Guru Nanak's compositions becomes understandable only if we assume that he was anxious to convey his message to others. Similarly, his strong expressions about the 'foolish' and the 'ignorant' suggest opposition or indifference to his message on the part of some. See, for instance, *Vār Mājh, A. G., 143.*

and master.<sup>254</sup> Obviously, Guru Nanak now became a *gurū* (preceptor) for many others; but he had come to feel the call much earlier.

However, the two decades of Guru Nanak's settled life at Kartarpur are by far the most important period of his life 'in terms of his posthumous influence.'<sup>255</sup> Here he imparted regular instruction to his disciples in the new faith. It may be safely assumed that he exhorted the visitors as well as his regular disciples to discard trust in external forms and in status conferred by caste or wealth, to discard pretence and hypocrisy and to cultivate inner devotion and a truly religious attitude by recognizing the greatness of God, reflecting upon His revelation and by meditating on the Name. Furthermore, it was at Kartarpur that a regular discipline was evolved for the adoration of God. The 'ambrosial hour' of the early morning was devoted to meditation; *kīrtan* was adopted for congregational worship by singing the praises of God in the morning and in the evening. There is a good deal of emphasis upon *satsang* in the compositions of Guru Nanak and this ideal found its practical expression in the corporate worship of Guru Nanak and his disciples at Kartarpur.

Probably the most important aspect of the mode of worship adopted by Guru Nanak for himself and for his followers was the use of his own compositions. This was a logical corollary of a rejection of the scriptural authority and the scriptures of contemporary religions. This was a period of many of his definitive utterances and some of these utterances might have been meant specifically for liturgical purposes. The later importance given for instance to his *Japji*, or even the

254. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 230.

255. *Ibid.*, 227.

*So-dar* passage, appears to be a continuation of the importance attached to his composition by Guru Nanak. Indeed, it is likely that these compositions, and many others, were recorded in writing by Guru Nanak himself. Given the 'clarity and coherence' of the pattern of Guru Nanak's religious thought, the adoption of his compositions virtually as a scripture was of crucial significance not only for his own work at Kartarpur but also for the later development of the faith promulgated by him.

Another important aspect of the community life at Kartarpur was the daily labour of its members. Guru Nanak himself may or may not have participated in the manual work but he lived at Kartarpur as a householder, for his wife and his two sons lived with him. The combination of 'piety and practical activity', exemplified in the life of Guru Nanak and his regular disciples, was a corollary of his ideal of living pure amidst the impurities of attachment through 'a disciplined worldliness'. His ideal of equality found practical expression in the common meals as well as the corporate worship of the community at Kartarpur. On the whole, the community aimed at practising the three-fold ideal mentioned by Guru Nanak in some of his verses : *nām*, *dān* and *asnān* (devotion, charity and purity). We may be sure that this path was open to all men and women, irrespective of their caste or creed.

The last important aspect of Guru Nanak's work at Kartarpur was the nomination of a successor. It has been aptly called a 'key event' in the history of Sikhism.<sup>256</sup> The formal appointment of a successor indicates that Guru Nanak attached great importance to spiritual guidance provided by a competent individual. In Guru Nanak's eyes, one of his

256. *Ibid.*, 1. See also, Archer, J. C., *The Sikhs*, 109.

most devoted disciples, Lehna, was the individual who could shoulder this responsibility. The chosen Lehna became Angad, literally a part of Guru Nanak's body and metaphorically an extension of his 'mission'.

Gurū Nānak's decision to appoint a formal successor was one of critical importance, for there can be no doubt that it was the establishment of an effective succession of Gurūs which, above all other factors, ensured the transmission of the first Gurū's teachings and the cohesion of the religious community which he had gathered around him. The choosing and formal installation of Angad was the first step in the process which issued in the founding of the Khālsā, and ultimately in the emergence of a Sikh nation.<sup>257</sup>

Thus, before his death Guru Nanak had entered history.

257. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 143.

## CHAPTER IX

# EPILOGUE

J. C. Archer has observed that there are two Nanaks: 'the factual' and 'the formless'; they are two in one, 'both in practice and in theory.'<sup>1</sup> He goes on to add that the faith in him made him 'a compelling figure.'<sup>2</sup> Archer rightly suggests that we are to judge 'this first Sikh in a fuller measure than himself, by other Sikhs and by what came after him.'<sup>3</sup> As an appropriate epilogue to this study of Guru Nanak in history we may turn to the attitude of his successors and followers towards the founder of their faith. Our primary aim here is not to discover the Nanak of history behind the Nanak of faith, not even to distinguish the one from the other or to discuss all that came after him. Our limited aim is to consider, rather briefly, what Guru Nanak meant to the first few generations of the believers in his mission.

Guru Angad, the immediate successor of Guru Nanak, directly refers to the founder of Sikhism in these words :

They need no other instruction whom Guru Nanak has given the understanding through his guidance and who, through (God's) adoration, are blended with the Truth.<sup>4</sup>

1. *The Sikhs*, 57.

2. *Ibid.*, 58.

3. *Ibid.*, 106.

4. *Mājh di Vār* (Slok), A. G., 150 :

*Dikhtā ākh bujhāiā sifī sachh samayo,*

*Tin kau kiā updesiyai jin Gur.Nānak dayo.*

Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 502;

Two aspects of this statement deserve attention. Nanak is being called 'Guru Nanak' and his 'guidance' is being regarded as superior to any other. Direct references to Guru Nanak in the works of Guru Arjan, the fourth successor of Guru Nanak, provide further insight into the image of the founder of Sikhism crystallizing among his successors.<sup>5</sup> The path shown by Guru Nanak is 'the treasure' of God's *bhakti*.<sup>6</sup> The idea that Guru Nanak has clearly shown the way to salvation occurs more than once.<sup>7</sup> In the 'modern' age (*kaliyuga*), Nanak is the true *Gurū* and he is 'the greatest of all.'<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the greatness of Guru Nanak has been made manifest for the entire *yuga*.<sup>9</sup> Guru Nanak is also the '*jagat-gurū*'.<sup>10</sup> It is evident that in the eyes of his successors Guru Nanak occupies a unique position and his message possesses universal validity.

The last successor of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh

Harbhajan Singh, "Guru Nanak", *Preet Lari* (November, 1969), 11-12.

5. In Guru Arjan's works some verses are believed to refer to Guru Nanak indirectly. See for instance, *A. G.*, 167, 110; 172, 114; 452, 18; 964, 19; 1387, 11.
6. *Rāg Sūhī*, *A. G.*, 763 :  
*Har-bhagat khajānā bakhṣā Gur Nānak kiyā pasāo jio.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 2484-85.
7. For instance, *Rāg Sorath*, *A. G.*, 612, 110; also. *A. G.*, 1386, 117, 10, 13.  
See also, Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 1211; Gopal Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 1316-17.
8. *Rāg Sūhī*, *A. G.*, 750 :  
*Sabh te vadhā satgurū Nānak jin kāl rākhī meri.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 2444.
9. *Rāg Sorath*, *A. G.*, 611 :  
*Pragat bhat saglai jug antar Gurū Nānak ki vadiās.*  
Cf. Manmohan Singh (tr.), *ibid.*, 2009.
10. *A. G.*, 1305, 11.

too gives the same primacy to the founder of Sikhism. Guru Nanak 'established the true religion in the *kal* (*yuga*) and showed the way to all *sādhs*; whosoever follows his path becomes free from sins once for all; God removes all sin and suffering from those who join his *panth*; they never suffer misery and hunger, for they are released from the net of death'.<sup>11</sup> In the *Bachittar Nātak*, from which this extract is taken, the idea that Guru Nanak's religion was meant to transcend all previous dispensations is unfolded in clear terms in the context of what for Guru Gobind Singh was the universal history of religion.<sup>12</sup>

The homage paid to the founder of Sikhism by his successors is not confined to upholding the uniqueness or the universality of his message. Behind the religion of Guru Nanak they see not only the direct sanction of God but also a personality standing in a special relationship with God, without being His incarnation or His prophet. The concept of the Divine Preceptor in the works of Guru Nanak prepared the ground for this homage, for the same epithets could be easily applied to Nanak as the *Gurū*. 'For Nanak the Guru was the voice of God, within the human heart, but with his own coming the function passed to the man himself. The function was vested in a particular man, Nanak, who, by means of his own exalted perception was qualified to

11. W. H. McLeod has appropriately quoted these significant lines from the *Bachittar Nātak* on the very first page of his *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1968. See also, Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion*, V, 294-95; Grewal, J. S. & Bal, S. S., *Gurū Gobind Singh*, Chandigarh 1967, 109-10.
12. For a brief analysis of the *Bachittar Nātak*, in which Guru Gobind Singh unfolds this argument, see Grewal, J. S., "The Bachittar Natak," *Ek Mūrit Anek Darsan*, Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jullundur 1967, 104-06.

instruct others. It was in this light that his followers understood his life and teachings and appended the title Guru to his name'.<sup>13</sup> This title was appended to the names of his successors too.

The uniqueness ascribed to Guru Nanak's position thus reconciled to the continuity of his work through his successors adds a new dimension to the concept of the *Gurū*. The immediate successor of Guru Nanak calls himself '*Nānak*', a practice which is followed by his own successor also.<sup>14</sup> The import is significant. There is no difference between Angad and Nanak as *Gurūs*, for the office is derived from the founder. Guru Amardas, who was chosen by Guru Angad as his successor, is explicit on this point. The mingling of 'the light' of Guru Nanak with 'the light' of Guru Angad is in accordance with God's *razā*.<sup>15</sup> Guru Nanak is 'the primeval source of *gurūship* but he is not different from the successor. Guru Gobind Singh too invokes the idea of 'the light' of Guru Nanak to underline the unity of *gurūship* from its inception to the time of his last successor.<sup>16</sup> Guru Gobind Singh is quite emphatic about this unity; in his presentation Guru Nanak 'becomes' Guru Angad and Guru Angad 'becomes' Guru Amardas and Guru Amardas 'becomes', Guru Ramdas.

13. Mcleod, W. H., *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Auckland 1968, 15. Cf. Jodh Singh, Bhai, *Gurmatī Nirnay*, 113-14.
14. The use of the epithet Nanak by the successors of Guru Nanak in their compositions is no mere imitation of the founder. The continuity of the mission as well as the supreme position of Guru Nanak is implied in a most effective way in the use of this epithet.
15. Quoted, Harbhajan Singh, "Guru Nanak", *Preet Lari* (November 1969), 14. See also, *A. G.*, 396 : a successor of Guru Nanak refers to his position as a gift from Guru Nanak.
16. Cf. Grewal, J. S., "The Bachittar Natak", *Ek-Mūrit Anek Darsan*, 105.

Indeed, only 'the foolish' failed to understand that the *Gurū*s were all 'one form' and not distinct from one another.<sup>17</sup>

It may be argued that the idea of the unity of *gurūshīp* in Sikhism came into prominence in justification of the transition from nomination to 'hereditary succession'. But it is more valid to argue that this transition was made possible by the idea.<sup>18</sup> Much before the time of Guru Gobind Singh the sanctity which was attached to the distinctive role of Guru Nanak had come to be associated also with his successors 'in all of whom thus appeared to shine the light of Nanak'.<sup>19</sup> It must be emphasized that this conception of *gurūship* safeguarded the distinctive position of Guru Nanak and, at the same time, bestowed upon the office of the *Gurū* a legitimate authority for initiative. The successors of Guru Nanak were entitled to take vital decisions by virtue of their office

17. Grewal, J. S., "*The Bachittar Nātak*", *ibid.*, 104, see also, Harbhajan Singh, "*Guru Nanak*", *ibid.*, 14. The text of the *Bachittar Nātak* on this point is quite clear and direct :

*Sri Nānak Angad kar mānā,*  
*Amardās Angad pehchānā,*  
*Amardās Ramdās kahāyo,*  
*Sādhan lakhā mūr neh pāyo,*  
*Bhin bhin sabhu kar jānā,*  
*Ek rūp kinhun pehchānā,*  
*Jin jānā tin hi sidh pāi,*  
*Bin samjhai sidh hāth nā āi.*

18. The contest of rival claimants to the *gaddi* may have some bearing on the point but this factor has to be regarded as of minor importance for two reasons : hereditary claims had remained largely unrecognized during the phase of nomination from the time of Guru Nanak to that of Guru Amardās and, after Guru Ramdas, contest was confined to members of one family.
19. Grewal, J. S. and Bal, S. S., *Guru Gobind Singh*, Chandigarh 1967, 18-19.

and their decisions become 'the extension' of Guru Nanak's mission, both logically and historically.

Guru Arjan's decision, for instance, to compile a canonical scripture must be seen in the light of Guru Nanak's use of his own compositions for liturgical purposes. Guru Angad had followed the example of his master not only by compiling the works of Guru Nanak but also by adding some of his own in a script significantly called the *gurmukhī*. Guru Angad's own example was followed by his three successors until in A. D. 1603-04 Guru Arjan compiled the *Granth* to enshrine 'in permanent form the teachings of the first five Gurus soon after the original delivery of those teachings'.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, Guru Nanak's concept of the *Sabad* was imperceptibly transferred to his *bānī* and to the *bānī* of his successors whose compositions 'read more or less like variations on the themes chosen by him for the edification of his disciples'.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, the *bānī* of the *Gurūs* came to be regarded as the medium of communication with God.<sup>22</sup> It may also be pointed out that the *Sabad* and the

20. Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 1-2. The author rightly regards the compilation of the *Granth* by Guru Arjan as one of the three key-events of Sikh history from the time of Guru Nanak to that of Guru Gobind Singh. One of the other two has already been mentioned: the appointment of a successor by Guru Nanak. The third key-event, according to W. H. Mcleod, is the founding of the *Khālsā* by Guru Gobind Singh in A. D. 1699.

21. Grewal, J. S. and Bal., *Guru Gobind Singh*, 19.

22. It is well known that Guru Arjan included the compositions of several *bhagats* in the *Granth* that he compiled. This fact has sometimes been interpreted in terms of Kabir's influence on Sikhism, or even on Guru Nanak. It may be pointed out, therefore, that though Kabir's verses are the largest in number he is one among many. The proportion of the compositions

*Gurū* were often equated so that the scripture compiled by Guru Arjan became an alternative to the personal *gurūship* of Guru Nanak's successors. When Guru Gobind Singh decided not to nominate any successor to himself, he referred his followers to the 'eternal *bāni*' for guidance and inspiration.<sup>23</sup>

From the successors of Guru Nanak we may now turn to some of their followers for confirmation of what has been observed already and for further insight into their attitude towards the founder of Sikhism. Satta and Balwand refer to Nanak as the *Gurū*. In the same sense, they refer to Guru Angad as '*satgur*'.<sup>24</sup> Baba Sundar in his *sadd* in *Rāg Rāmkaṛī* refers to Guru Amardas as '*satgur purakh*'.<sup>25</sup> Satta

of all the *bhagats* together remains rather small and they are nowhere included in those parts of the *Granth* which were used for liturgical purposes. Also, the compositions of some of the *bhāts* who served the Gurus are included in the *Granth*. It may be suggested therefore that Guru Arjan's decision to include the *bāni* of the *bhagats* in his compilation is meant to assimilate them to Sikhism. This decision, seen in the light of Guru Nanak's approval of the *sādhs* and *sants* in general, becomes easily understandable.

For an analysis of the *Granth*, see Pincott, Frederic, "The Arrangement of the Hymns of the *Adi Granth*", *JRAS*, (New Series) XVIII, 437-61.

23. Grewal, J. S. and Bal, S. S., *Guru Gobind Singh*, 156. 'Sikh belief has continued to evolve', says W. H. Mcleod, 'during subsequent centuries, but it possesses in its attitude towards its scripture an anchor which has restrained it from radical digression': *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Auckland 1968, 16.
24. Sahib Singh (ed.), *Stik Sattā Balwand di Vār*, Amritsar 1949, 78, 84. It may be pointed out here that the editor, contrary to the general opinion, places the composition of this *Vār* in the early 1580s in the pontificate of Guru Arjan.
25. Sahib Singh (ed.), *Sadd Stik*, Amritsar 1953, 46. This *Sadd* is attributed by the editor to Baba Sundar Ji Bhalla, the great grand son of Guru Amardas.

and Balwand are explicit on the point that the glory and greatness of Guru Nanak was transferred to Guru Angad who thus came to possess 'the same light'.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, they are most emphatic about the unity of *gurūship*; Guru Ramdas is 'the same' as Amardas, Angad and Nanak.<sup>27</sup> Like Guru Nanak, Guru Angad is the medium of union with God.<sup>28</sup> There are other ideas too in the *vār* of Satta and Balwand which are associated with the *Gurū*. The *Gurūs* are 'true kings', and this *rāj* was instituted by Guru Nanak on the firm foundation of the Truth.<sup>29</sup> Also, the *Gurūs* present resemblance with the *avatars* or the prophets of God or even God Himself.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the office of the *Gurū* is by no means

26. Sahib Singh (ed.), *Sitk Sattā Balwand di Vār*, 78 :

*Lehnaī di phatrāyāi,*  
*Nānak dohi khattayāi.*  
*Jot uhā jugat sāi,*  
*Sāh kāyā palattayāi.*

It may also be added that in this *Vār* Guru Nanak is presented as placing 'the umbrella' on Lehna's head and then bowing to him in reverence: *ibid.*, 77-78. Obviously, the disciple becomes the master even for Nanak after Lehna has been formally installed as the *Gurū*. This idea is not confined to Satta and Balwand, and the importance of this idea is unmistakable for the concept of *gurūship* in Sikhism.

See also, *A. G.*, 967; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 3170-71, 3173.

27. *Ibid.*, 97 :

*Nānak tū Lehnā tūhai Gur Amar tū vichāriā.*

Cf. Harbhajan Singh, "Guru Nanak", *Preet Lari* (November, 1969), 13.

28. Sahib Singh (ed.), *ibid.*, 83.

29. *Ibid.*, 80, 95; 76 :

*Nānak rāj chālāiā, sach kot satāni nīdai.*

30. *Ibid.*, 84, 94, & 96. The followers of Guru Angad are referred to as his *ummat* (a term generally used for the followers of the Prophet of Islam); Guru Amardas is referred to as *avatar*; and the Sikhs and the *sangat* bow to him as 'Pār-brahm.' See also,

an easy office.<sup>31</sup>

For a more elaborate conception of Guru Nanak's place in the history of religion we may turn to Bhai Gurdas, 'the St. Paul of Sikhism'<sup>32</sup> whose *vārs* are regarded as 'the key' to the Sikh scripture<sup>33</sup> and appear to present 'an orthodox analysis of Sikh beliefs'.<sup>34</sup> There is no doubt that Bhai Gurdas's *vārs* reveal his thorough familiarity with the works of Guru Nanak.

Our present concern, however, is only with the image of Guru Nanak as it was conceived and presented by Bhai Gurdas. This image is of obvious importance, for he was closely connected with Guru Amardas and associated himself with Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind.<sup>35</sup> In a certain sense, therefore, he is 'an orthodox' spokesman.<sup>36</sup>

Harbhajan Singh, "Guru Nanak", *Preet Lari* (Nov., 1969), 13-14; A. G., 967, 11. 1-2; Manmohan Singh (tr.), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, 3170.

31. *Ibid.*, 79 (with reference to Guru Angad after his appointment):  
*Karai jo Gurū phurmāiyā,*  
*Sil jog alūni chattiyai.*
32. Macauliffe, M. A., *The Sikh Religion* (A Symposium), Calcutta 1958, 18-21.
33. See, for instance, Harinder Singh Rup, *Bhāi Gurdās*, Amritsar 1952, 76.
34. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Lahore 1944, 3.
35. For some biographical information, see Harinder Singh Rup, *Bhāi Gurdās*, Amritsar 1952. Also, Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 14.
36. It has been remarked recently that the *vārs* of Bhai Gurdas are more important than perhaps any other work in the founder of Sikhism: Fauja Singh, "Guru Nanak Dev Ji dā Sarūp . . .", *Preet Lari* (Nov., 1969), 29. In this article the author looks at the image of Guru Nanak through the eyes of Bhai Gurdas.

Bhai Gurdas emphasizes the overwhelming greatness of Guru Nanak in the spiritual realm. He compares Guru Nanak to the sun, before which the stars fade away; to the lion, from whom the deer run away in panic; to the *garuṭ*, from whom the cobras seek shelter in holes; and to the *shahbāz*, from whom the birds flee for refuge.<sup>37</sup> Guru Nanak is the herald of light which dispels the universal darkness of the *kaliyuga*. This darkness is vividly depicted by Bhai Gurdas in terms which often remind the reader of Guru Nanak's verses.<sup>38</sup> The mission of Guru Nanak is placed in this context, and it is in this context that the well known verse of Bhai Gurdas has to be placed :

*Satgur Nānak pragtia mitī dhundh jag chānan hoā.*<sup>39</sup>

With the appearance of Nanak, the true *Gurū*, the haze (of ignorance and falsehood) has vanished and the world is illumined with the effulgence (of knowledge and truth).

The uniqueness and the universality of Guru Nanak's message are taken for granted by Bhai Gurdas. In fact he is explicit on the point that the message of Guru Nanak transcends all previous dispensations, particularly Hinduism and Islam. In the eyes of Bhai Gurdas affiliation to any of the four Hindu *varnas*, or to any of the 'religions' of Islam, is fruitless.<sup>40</sup> Not the pilgrimage to Mecca, or to Benaras, but the adoration of God amidst the *sādh-sangat* leads to salvation; in the *sādh-sangat* are transcended all distinctions of caste and creed.<sup>41</sup> As for the ordinary *gurūs* and *pt̄rs* and their following,

37. *Vārān Bhāi Gurdās* (ed. Hazara Singh & Vir Singh), Amritsar 1962, *vār* 5, *paurī* 12. See also *vār* 1, *paurīs* 27 and 34.

38. For instance, *ibid.*, *vār* 1, *paurī* 7, 20 & 21.

39. *Vār* 1, *paurī*, 27.

40. *Vār* 8, *paurī* 6.

41. *Vār* 24, *paurī* 4.

'the blind lead the blind to the ditch'.<sup>42</sup> Both Hindus and Muslims are bound to suffer without good acts; their mutual wrangling has misled the world to the devil's path.<sup>43</sup> The true *Gurū*, on the other hand, has shown the highway to salvation.<sup>44</sup> The 'light' of Guru Nanak shines in the entire universe; it cannot be concealed.<sup>45</sup>

*Jāhar pīr jagat-gur Bābā!*<sup>46</sup>

Nanak, the *Gūrū*, has been made manifest for the whole of mankind.

In the *vārs* of Bhai Gurdas, Guru Nanak's concern is with the salvation of the whole of mankind. Bhai Gurdas relates the *udāsīs* (travels) of Guru Nanak to his concern for the suffering humanity.<sup>47</sup> Also, this concern becomes a spectacle of his unqualified triumph over the representatives of all other forms of religious belief and practice.<sup>48</sup> On the assumption of the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's message, the entire world is alien to salvation 'without the *Gurū*'.<sup>49</sup>

42. *Vār 1, paṛī 26.*

43. *Vār 1, paṛī 33.*

44. *Vār 7, paṛī 12.*

45. *Vār 1, paṛī 34.*

46. *Vār 24, paṛī 3.*

47. *Vār 1, paṛī 24.*

48. *Vār 1, paṛī 37 :*

*Gay Bagdād nivāīkai Makkā Mānā sabhai nivāīā*

...

*Hindū Musalmān nivāīā.*

49. *Vār 1, paṛī 29 :*

*Phir puchhan sīdh Nānakā ! māṭ lok vich kiā vartārā ?*

...

*Bājh gurūd ubbā jag sārā.*

Without the *Gurū*, there is nothing but darkness!<sup>50</sup> This verse is virtually a quotation from Guru Nanak's verses, but the import is very much different: Bhai Gurdas's reference appears to be to Guru Nanak himself and not to the voice of God within man.

It is highly probable, indeed, that the function of the true *Gurū* of Guru Nanak's conception is often transferred by Bhai Gurdas to Guru Nanak himself. There is no understanding without (Nanak) the true *Gurū*.<sup>51</sup> Without the true *Gurū*, the fear (of Death) is not eradicated.<sup>52</sup> The true *Gurū* has provided the remedy for the disease of *haumai*.<sup>53</sup> The true *Gurū* alone is perfect and there is no salvation without the perfect *Gurū*.<sup>54</sup> For Bhai Gurdas, Nanak the *Gurū* is in fact beyond time (*akāl rūp*); he is like God.<sup>55</sup> Quite frequently, Bhai Gurdas poses an equation between the *Gurū* and God.<sup>56</sup> The idea of Nanak as the last and the eternal

50. *Vār 1, paūrī 22 :*

*Bājh gurū andher hai . . .*

Also, *paūrī 24 :*

*Bājhu gurū gubār hai . . .*

51. *Vār 1, paūrī 9 :*

*Satgurū binān nā sojhī pāi.*

52. *Vār 1, paūrī 10 :*

*Satgur binān nā sehsā jāvai.*

53. *Vār 4, paūrī 3 :*

*Haumai rog matāida satgur pūrā karai tabībī.*

54. *Vār 26, paūrīs 1 and 16; Vār 8, paūrī 18.*

55. *Vār 1, paūrī 35 :*

*Ek Bābā akāl rūp . . .*

. . .

*Nānak kal vich āpā āyā rabb fakir eko pehchānā.*

56. *Vār 1, paūrī 17 :*

*Gur pamesar ek hai . . . (et passim).*

For instance, *Vār 26, paūrī 2 :*

*Gurū Parmesar jāntiyai sachchā nāo dharāiā.*

spokesman of God assumes great importance in the *vārs* of Bhai Gurdas.

Bhai Gurdas often conceives of the position of the *Gurū* in terms of sovereignty. The true *Gurū* is the 'true king'.<sup>57</sup> The *Gurū's panth* is his coin.<sup>58</sup> And the *panth* is compared by Bhai Gurdas to 'the eight-metal coin'.<sup>59</sup> Temporal authority fades into insignificance before the sovereignty of the *Gurū*. It is in this context that Babur is vanquished by Guru Nanak in Bhai Gurdas's reference to a meeting between them.<sup>60</sup> Also, the *Gurū* as the true sovereign commands exclusive allegiance : those who do not submit to the *Gurū* are 'rebels'.<sup>61</sup> Bhai Gurdas does not make any distinction between Guru Nanak and his successors, for they too are the *pātsāh* of both *dīn* and *duniā*.<sup>62</sup>

The idea of the unity of *gurūship* is clear and consistent in the *vārs* of Bhai Gurdas and the conception of the Guru appears to crystallize in a form that would endure.

Nanak struck his coin in the world and instituted the pure *panth*. In his lifetime he installed Lehna,

Cf. Fauja Singh, "Guru Nanak Dev Ji dā Sarūp . . .",  
*Preet Lari* (Nov., 1969), 29-30.

57. The phrase '*satgurū sachchā pātsāh*' occurs quite frequently in the *vārs* of Bhai Gurdas.

58. For instance, *vār* 1, *paurī* 45.

59. *Vār* 7, *paurī* 8.

60. *Vār* 26, *paurī* 21.

Cf. Harbhajan Singh, "Guru Nanak", *Preet Lari* (Nov., 1969), 14-15.

61. *Vār* 26, *paurīs* 31 & 32.

62. *Vār* 39, *paurī* 3. This reference is to Guru Hargobind. That the term '*din duni dā pātsāh*' has little to do with Guru Hargobind's martial activity is evident from its application to Guru Nanak (*vār* 26, *paurī* 21) and to Guru Angad (*vār* 24, *paurī* 7).

with the umbrella of *gurūship* over his head. Blending light with light, the true *Gurū* Nanak changed form, and performed a wonder of wonders which is beyond the comprehension of everyone. In Lehna's body was infused the form of Nanak.<sup>63</sup>

The characteristic phrase expressing the unity of *gurūship* in the *vārs* of Bhai Gurdas is 'blending of the light' (of Guru Nanak) with the light (of Angad) and, by inference, the transference of the light from the predecessor to the successor. Another variation is that of a lamp being lightened by another. Also the mingling of water with water or even 'apparentation' suggests the relations between the predecessor and the successor. All these metaphors are used to underline the unity of *gurūship*.

Bhai Gurdas appears to attach a good deal of importance to the fact that the appointment of Lehna was made by Guru Nanak himself.<sup>64</sup> Guru Angad in turn could appoint a successor to himself. Angad 'received' the *gurūship* from Nanak and 'transferred' it to Amardas as a divine gift.<sup>65</sup> Bhai Gurdas explicitly traces the *gurūship* of Hargobind from Guru Nanak, successively through Angad, Amardas, Ramdas

63. *Vār* 1, *paurī* 45 :

*Māriā sikkā jagat vich Nānak nirmal panth chalāiā;*  
*Thāpiā Lehnā jivdāi gurīāi sir chhatar phirāiā;*  
*Joti jot milāikai satgur Nānak rūp vasāiā;*  
*Lakh na koi sakai ācharjai āchrj dikhāiā;*  
*Kāyā palat sarūp bahāiā.*

64. In the note given above, there is a specific reference to the appointment in the lifetime of Guru Nanak. In the same *Vār* (*paurī* 46) the glory of *Gurū* Angad is attributed to this decision of *Gurū* Nanak :

*Gur Nānak handi mohar hath Gurū Angad di dōhi phirāi.*

65. *Vār* 1, *paurī* 46 :

*Lehnaī pāi Nānako deni Amardās ghar āyi.*

and Guru Arjan.<sup>66</sup> The right to nominate a successor goes with the office of the *Gurū* and, to Bhai Gurdas, it is immaterial whether the nominated successor is from amongst the disciples of the *Gurū* or from amongst the members of his own family. The nomination by Guru Ramdas of his youngest son, Arjan, is as meaningful and legitimate in the eyes of Bhai Gurdas as the nomination of Lehna by Guru Nanak.<sup>67</sup> Bhai Gurdas's ardent support to the 'new measures' of Guru Hargobind springs logically from the assumption that Guru Hargobind as the legitimate successor of Guru Nanak was vested with the authority of action by virtue of the office he had come to hold.<sup>68</sup>

For Bhai Gurdas, the office of the *Gurū* is more important than the person. Guru Nanak performed 'a wonder of wonders' not simply by nominating a successor in the ordinary sense but by transforming a disciple into the *Gurū*. Bhai Gurdas appropriately uses the simile of the water running upstream.<sup>69</sup> In his *vārs* there are frequent references to the *gurū* being the *chelā* and the *chelā* being the *gurū*.<sup>70</sup> The position of the master and the disciple

66. *Vār 3, paūrī 12.* It opens significantly with the line :

*Satgurū Nānak daio gurū gur hoiyā.*

(Guru Nanak was the *gurū* of *gurūs*.)

67. *Vār 1, paūrīs 47 and 48.* Bhai Gurdas appears to have in mind the mythology which Guru Gobind Singh uses in his *Bachittar Nātak* to explain the continuity of *gurūship* in the family of Guru Ramdas, the Sodhi. However, it cannot be argued that Bhai Gurdas is justifying 'hereditary' succession. The fact of that succession and its acceptance as a legitimate nomination appears to have preceded the explanation in terms of mythology.

68. Grewal, J. S. & Bal, S. S., *Guru Gobind Singh*, Chandigarh 1967, 26-27.

69. *Vār 1, paūrī 38 :*

*Ulti gang vahāiyun Gurū Angad sir uppar dhārā.*

70. *Vār 3, paūrī 11; Vār 6, paūrī 5; Vār 9, paūrīs 8, 9 and 16.*

are interchangeable precisely because in Bhai Gurdas's conception of the *Gurū* the office is distinct from the person. Much before the author the *Rāmkali Vār Pātsāhī Dasven kī* praised Guru Gobind Singh for becoming the *chelā* as well as the *gurū* (of the *Khālsā*), the idea had been popularized by Bhai Gurdas.<sup>71</sup>

It has been remarked recently that with the death of 'the tenth and last Guru we come to a third stage in the development of the doctrine of the Guru' in Sikhism.<sup>72</sup> The function which was exercised for about two hundred years by a succession of men had now come to be vested, according to Sikh belief, jointly in the scripture and in the corporate community, the *Khālsā*. That this development was made possible by ideas coming into currency during the second stage itself may be evident from Bhai Gurdas's conception of the *Gurū-sabad* and the *Gurmukh-panth*. Bhai Gurdas uses the term *nirmal panth* also for the followers of the *Gurūs*.<sup>73</sup> More frequently he uses the term *sādh-sangat*.<sup>74</sup> There is no doubt that Bhai Gurdas is keenly conscious of the distinct identity of the Sikhs.<sup>75</sup> Also, the *sādh-sangat* has a certain

71. *Vār* 41 :

*Gurū sangat kīnī khālsā manmuk hī duhelā,  
Wāhu wāhu Gobind Singh āpatī gur chelā.*

72. McLeod, W. H., *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 15.

73. Cf. Mrigindra Singh, Kanwar, "Nirmal Panth", *Proceedings Punjab History Conference, Patiala 1969*, 110.

74. *Vār* 3, *paurīs* 6, 10 and 16; *vār* 4, *paurī* 19; *vār* 5, *paurīs* 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, and 18; *vār* 6, *paurīs* 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 17; *vār* 7, *paurīs* 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 18; *vār* 9, *paurīs* 10 and 12; *vār* 24, *paurī* 1.

75. For instance, *vār* 5, *paurī* 1 :

*Gurmukh hovai sād̄h sang horat sang kusang nā rach̄chai.*

Also; *paurī* 3 :

*Apnat apnat varan vich chār varan kul dharām dhārandat.*

*Sād̄h sangat gur-sikh pājandat.*

amount of sanctity for Bhai Gurdas. In fact, the *Gurū* is in the *sādh-sangat*.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, the *Gurū's sabad* is the *Gurū*.<sup>77</sup> And, for Bhai Gurdas, the *sabad* primarily connotes the *bānt* of Guru Nanak and his successors.<sup>78</sup>

According to a Sikh scholar, the possibility of miracles is admitted in Sikhism but the True Name is enormously more valuable than the power to perform miracles.<sup>79</sup> This is certainly true not only of the successors of Guru Nanak but also of the best minds among the followers of the Sikh *Gurūs*. Bhai Gurdas was easily among those best minds. He appears to have grasped nearly all the fundamental teachings of Guru Nanak.<sup>80</sup> In his *vārs*, the insistence on the True Name is quite remarkable.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, he attributes to Guru

*Vār 3, paūrī 16 :*

*Gurmukh panth nipang bārāh kheliā.*

76. For instance, *vār 39, paūrī 12 :*

*Pārbrahm pūran Brahm satgur sādḥ sangat vich vassai.*

*Vār 6, paūrī 4 :*

*Sādḥ sangat sach-khand vich satgur purakh vasai nirankārā.*

77. *Vār 7, paūrī 20 :*

*Sabad gurū gur jāniyai . . .*

78. For instance, *vār 6, paūrī 17 :*

*Gurduārāi āikai churan kanval ras amrit pāgai ;*

*Sabad surat liv sādḥ sang ang ang ik rang samāgai.*

See also, *paūrī 19* and *vār 6, paūrī 10*.

79. Jodh Singh, *The Life of Guru Amar Dass Ji*, Ludhiana 1953, 23.

80. This is evident, for instance, from Bhai Gurdas's conception of God in His absolute aspect and in His revelation; the unity, the greatness, the transcendence and the immanence of God are emphasized by Bhai Gurdas in almost the terms of Guru Nanak; there is the same insistence on *bhāu-bhagat* and *bhai*; the same emphasis on good acts, as opposed to merely formal worship; and there is the same insistence on living pure amidst the impurities of attachment (*māyā vich udās*).

81. The opening line of the first *paūrī* of the first *vār*, for instance is :

*Namaskār gurdev ko sat-nām jis mantar sunāiā.*

Nanak the actual performance of miracles in certain situations.<sup>82</sup> It may be safely inferred that the lesser minds would look upon the supranatural powers of Guru Nanak as an impressive, or even an essential, trait of his personality.

Within fifty years of Guru Nanak's death traditions regarding his life and teachings began to grow in the Punjab, and in the first half of the seventeenth century attempts were made to compile them as '*janam-sākhis*' of Guru Nanak.<sup>83</sup> This tradition of preserving or compiling the *janam-sākhis* of Guru Nanak has survived into the present century and even today some of these compilations are popular among the followers of Guru Nanak. The earliest of these are the *Purātan Janam-sākhis* which are fairly well represented in the *Purātan Janam-sākhī* compiled and first published by Bhai Vir Singh in 1926. The other compilation of the first half of the seventeenth century is known as the *Miharbān Janam-sākhī*, though only its first volume, the *Pothi Sach-khand*, is the work of Sodhi Miharban, the nephew of Guru Arjan.<sup>84</sup>

The connotation of the True Name has changed here but the import is clear : belief in the One True God to whom alone exclusive worship is to be addressed.

82. *Vār 1, paṁrīs 32 and 36.* These miracles appear to be the token of Guru Nanak's greatness.
83. For an elaborate analysis of the *janam-sākhis*, see Mcleod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 15-33, 36-147.  
Cf. Piar Singh, *A Critical Study of Punjabi Prose in the 17th Century*, Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh 1968; also, Jagjit Singh, *A Critical and Comparative Study of the Janam Sakhis of Guru Nanak up to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century*, Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh 1967.
84. The *Pothi Sach-Khand* has been edited by Kirpal Singh and Shamsher Singh Ashok and published as the *Janam-Sākhī of Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* (Amrītsar 1962). Sodhi Miharban (A. D. 1581-1640) was closely associated with the sect of the

These two works may therefore be regarded as the most relevant to our present purpose.<sup>85</sup>

It has been observed recently that in the *janam-sākhis* of Guru Nanak we find 'the image of the Guru seen through the eyes of popular piety seventy-five or a hundred years after his death'.<sup>86</sup> *Sākhis* appear to have been used by the followers of the Gurus for propagating the faith of Guru Nanak among Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike even before attempts were made to compile them.<sup>87</sup> At any rate, they appear to have been a most popular medium of propagation and, hence, they have an importance of their own. The *janam-sākhis* are, first, a testimony to the impact made by Guru Nanak's personality; also, they reflect the ideals and values of those among whom they were popular.<sup>88</sup> In a certain sense,

*Mintz*, formed by the followers of Prithi Chand (A. D. 1558-1619), the eldest son of Guru Ramdas, who had been passed over in favour of Guru Arjan.

85. W. H. Mcleod has provided a very useful chart of the various *Janam-sākhī* traditions (*Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 73-76). This chart does not include every known *sākhī* but it is fairly comprehensive. Nearly thirty *sākhīs* are common to both the Miharban and the Purātan tradition; the former has about thirty *sākhīs* which are not there in the latter; and the latter has about thirty-five *sākhīs* which are not there in the former. The two traditions to a certain extent appear to support and complement each other. It may also be added that the number of new *sākhīs* incorporated in the later traditions is not very large, though the qualitative difference may be significant.
86. Mcleod, W. H., "The Nanak of Faith and the Nanak of History" paper presented at the seminar on *History and India Today*, held at Biring Union Christian College, Batala, in March, 1967 (see through the author's courtesy).
87. Piar Singh, *A Critical Study of Panjabi Prose in the 17th Century*, 121.
88. Mcleod, W. H. (note 86, above).

therefore, the *Janam-sākhi* image of Guru Nanak is the more important, for it is the more popular, image.

In this popular image the power to perform miracles is an important aspect of the personality of Guru Nanak. The supranatural powers of Guru Nanak are not unobtrusive in the *Purātan Janam-sākhis* or the *Pothi Sach-khand*.<sup>89</sup> These powers are revealed by effecting change in the chemical state of an object and in the physical state of matter or even changing it into life, reviving life in a dead animal or a human being, surmounting the insuperable barriers of the physical world or exercising control over the objects of nature, for instance. In certain situations, the performance of a miracle is the clinching argument in a contest; it is a token of Guru Nanak's overwhelming greatness. In some other situations, the miracle is performed to help an individual, to provide food or to heal, for instance. Occasionally, the supranatural element is brought in apparently for no meaningful purpose: understanding the language of birds, for instance, or meeting the personified *Kaliyuga*. In the latter case, it is true, there is a meaningful import. In his encounter with *Kaliyuga*, Guru Nanak not only reveals his greater control over the physical world but he also rejects the offers of wealth, women and temporal power made by *Kaliyuga*.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, this moral superiority of Guru Nanak could easily be conveyed in some other way, as indeed it is done elsewhere in the *Janam-sākhis*. It appears, therefore, that a strong belief

89. See, for instance, *Purātan Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* (ed. Vir Singh), Amritsar 1959, 6, 7, 24, 33, 37, 56 & 58; see also *sākhis*, 18, 20, 25, 36, 47, 48, 50, 51, & 53; *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* (ed. Kirpal Singh and Shamsher Singh Ashok), Amritsar 1962, 22, 24, 27, 109, 231 & 449; see also *goshitis*, 31, 37, 64, 68, 69, 72, 136 & 152.

90. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 37 (*sākhi* 24).

in the supranatural world was as much a part of the psychological makeup of the followers of Guru Nanak as of their contemporaries in general.

It must be added, however, that the supranatural powers as such are subordinate to the power of the True Name; they are even seen as meaningless; and, in the possession of Guru Nanak, supranatural powers are a token of his special relationship with God. For instance, a boat can sail against heavy odds when '*Satgurū Nānak*' is written on it.<sup>91</sup> Or, a pitcher miraculously stuck to the head can come off when '*Wāhgurū*' is uttered.<sup>92</sup> Occasionally, the performance of a miracle is presented as the infringement of God's *hukam*.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, Guru Nanak is presented at times as discouraging the performance of miracles, or even implying that miracles could not be performed.<sup>94</sup> There is no doubt that in the eyes of the believers the True Name was to be preferred to the possession of supranatural powers; but when it came to revealing those powers, there was none to match Guru Nanak, the *zāhir pīr*. His miracles were surely a sign of God's grace. That is why the shade of the tree under which Nanak sleeps does not move with the sun advancing on its natural course. It is in this light that Rai Bhoa is made to look upon the incident in the *Pohtī Sach-khand* <sup>95</sup>

The believer's faith in the *Gurū* as an extraordinary man of God, combined with the belief in the existence of a supranatural world, enables him to visualize a meeting between Guru Nanak and God himself. God (*Pār-Brahm*)

91. *Ibid.*, *sākhī* 45.

92. *Ibid.*, 33.

93. *Jaham-sākhī Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, *goshtī* 83 : Guru Nanak repents having resurrected dead birds.

94. *Ibid.*, *goshtī* 140.

95. *Ibid.*, 27.

calls Guru Nanak to the Realm of Truth, praises him and asks him to sing His praises. Guru Nanak first expresses his inability to praise God's ineffable greatness and then recites the *So-dar* passage.<sup>96</sup> At another occasion God (*Parmes̄har*) calls Guru Nanak and asks him to have whatever he likes; Guru Nanak asks for the Name, in preference to riches and honour.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Guru Nanak rejects rulership in favour of the Name.<sup>98</sup> Eventually, God chooses Nanak from amongst all His *bhagats* as the best: 'Nanak' ! now you go to the world and save mankind'.<sup>99</sup> With this Divine sanction, Guru Nanak does not remain different from God.<sup>100</sup> His mere glance even at the funeral pyre of a sinner saves him from hell (*narak*).<sup>101</sup> At any rate, there is no salvation without the *Gurū*.<sup>102</sup>

Nanak the *Gurū* is the preceptor of all, irrespective of one's caste, creed, country or sex. It may be pointed out, first, that the *janam-sākhīs* are not, strictly speaking, the biographies of Guru Nanak. In them there is no attempt to see the spiritual growth of the man leading to a discovery of the truth for himself. At his birth, the thirty-three crores of gods and goddesses, the eighty-four *joginis*, the fifty-two *btis*, the six *jatts*, the eighty-four *siddhs* and the nine *nāths*

96. *Ibid.*, 198.

97. *Ibid.*, 238. At another time, Guru Nanak begs for a meeting with God and his supplication is granted. On meeting God, Guru Nanak asks for God's *jāp*, *sanjam*, *sach*, and *nām* *ibid.*, 271.

98. *Ibid.*, 443-44. This happens at another occasion also : *ibid.*, 459.

99. *Ibid.*, 484, 487.

100. *Ibid.*, 15 :

*Gurū Bābā Nānak karanhār sachchā parvardgār;*

*Kar kar kudrat vekhdā ant nā pārāvār.*

101. *Ibid.*, 32.

102. *Ibid.*, *goshit* 79.

bow to him in reverence : the child is 'a god' for the Hindus and 'a *sādiq* of *khudā*' for the Muslims.<sup>103</sup> At the age of seven he teaches the *pandit* true gnosticism.<sup>104</sup> He teaches the *mullā* too; and everyone says 'he is no ordinary child; he has on him the seal of God'.<sup>105</sup> At Sultanpur, on Guru Nanak's enunciation that there is no Hindu and there is no Musalmān, people say : 'God is speaking through Nānak'.<sup>106</sup> Guru Nanak refuses to identify himself with any creed or sect;<sup>107</sup> he wears a dress which is neither Hindu nor Muslim, but both.<sup>108</sup> The dispute between Hindus and Muslims over the disposal of the dead body of Guru Nanak appears to symbolize the acceptance of his position as the *jagat-gurū* by both Hindus and Muslims.<sup>109</sup>

The *udāsīs* (travels) of Guru Nanak become a spiritual conquest of the four quarters of the world. He meets the Jaina monks and triumphs over them; he meets the *shāikhs* and the '*ulamā* of Islam; he meets the orthodox *pandits*, the Jogis, the Vaishnava *bairāgis* and the *sanniyāsīs* and he meets the *sant-bhagats*.<sup>110</sup> They all acknowledge his superiority. For instance, the Vaishnavas in Bikaner are completely convinced of Guru Nanak's greatness and they fall at his feet, uttering *dhan* Guru Bābā Nānak ! *Sārgurū* Bābā Nānak !

103. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 1; *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 9.

104. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 1 (*sākhi* 2); *Pothi Sach-khand*, *goshti* 5.

105. *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 15 (*goshti* 4).

See also *goshti* 6.

106. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 16; *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 93 (*goshtis* 28 & 29).

107. *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 461; *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, *sākhi* 17.

108. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 25.

109. *Ibid.*, *sākhi* 56.

110. *Ibid.*, 40, 52, 66, (also, *sākhis* 43 & 147-49); *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 190, 291, 331 (also *goshtis* 41, 58, 76, 100-106, 123-24, 126, 128-32, 134 & 138).

*Wāhagurū* Bābā Nānak.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, the great Kabir himself acknowledges that Nanak is the *Gurū* of the World.<sup>112</sup> Those who become the followers of Guru Nanak do not belong to one particular creed or class or country: they include Hindus and Muslims, holy men and *thags*, *rājās*, and *nawābs*; and they belong to near and distant lands.<sup>113</sup>

The *janam-sākhts* do not always present the ideals of Guru Nanak in the light of their original significance. It has been observed recently that in the *janam-sākhts* there is a marked deference to the ascetic ideal and this in some measure is a departure from the teachings of Guru Nanak.<sup>114</sup> Occasionally, the 'law' of *karma* appears to overshadow the merit of *satsang*.<sup>115</sup> Guru Nanak is presented at one place as cursing the pious and blessing the wicked.<sup>116</sup> In spite of the clever explanation that the pious once uprooted would infuse piety among others wheresoever they go and the wicked would remain stuck to their village, the anecdote does no justice to the Nanak of history. Similarly, Guru Nanak is presented sometimes as causing the death of an

111. *Janam-sākhtī Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 345, 353.

112. *Pothi Sach-khand, goshtī* 52. The inclusion of the compositions of the *bhagāts* in the *Granth*, seen in relation to this idea, would confirm what we have observed in note 22, above.

113. *Purātan Janam-sākht*, 21, 57, (also, *sākhts* 12-14, 22, 33 & 34; *Janam-sākhtī Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 150, 245, 251 & 339 (also, *goshtīs* 31, 78, 90, 96 & 98).

114. Mcleod, W. H., "The *Janam-sākhts* as Sources of Panjāb History" (*ms.* seen through the author's courtesy). See also, for instance, *Pothi Sach-khand, goshtīs* 35 & 36; *Purātan Janam-sākhtī*, 5 & 20. W. H. Mcleod notes that at places the ascetic ideal is discarded, but more often it is commended, and both Hindu and Muslim renunciants are treated with considerable respect.

115. *Purātan Janam-sākhtī*, 30 (*sākht* 21).

116. *Ibid.*, 40 (*sākhts* 26 & 27).

opponent with a curse.<sup>117</sup> Though there is a repeated insistence upon the absolute efficacy of the Name in the *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, the Name means the mechanical repetition of the single word 'Rām'.<sup>118</sup> In the *Pothi Sach-khand*, the mere utterance of 'Har' enables Guru Nanak to be transported instantly from an unknown land of darkness to the banks of the Ganges.<sup>119</sup>

This is not to suggest, however, that in the *janam-sākhis* deviations from the teachings of Guru Nanak are more marked than the positive acceptance of his ideals. In fact, departures are rather insignificant compared with the insistence upon the essential teachings of Guru Nanak. In the *janam-sākhis* there is, first, a strong opposition to notions of caste and ritual purity.<sup>120</sup> There is also a strong opposition to ritualistic practices and customs, and to attachment to *māyā*.<sup>121</sup> But for the element of miracle, the import of the *Bābar-vāni* verses, and of those having a bearing on the moral and political condition of the time of Guru Nanak, is quite close to the original.<sup>122</sup> In the *Pothi Sach-khand*, the primary duty of the ruler is explicitly mentioned: to be just.<sup>123</sup> There is a similar emphasis upon the unity of God, His ineffable

117. For instance, *Pothi Sach-khand*, *goshti* 135.

118. Mcleod, W. H. (note 114, above).

119. *Goshti* 67.

120. This has been noted by W. H. Mcleod in "The *Janam-sākhis* as Sources of Panjāb History". See also, *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 72; *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 120 (also, *goshtis* 7 & 34-50).

121. *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 116, 117, 123, 128, 130, 186, 358 & 371 (also *goshtis* 40 & 112); *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 20, 70 (also, *sākhis* 49-50).

122. *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 114, 384, 399, 463, & 466.

123. *Goshti* 74.

greatness and His *hukam* and His omnipotence, His omnipresence and His immanence in the macrocosm and the microcosm.<sup>124</sup> To adore God, to love him and to offer exclusive devotion to Him, to make one's worship really meaningful, to discard heedlessness and to search for salvation, — all this is commendable.<sup>125</sup> So too is the 'true trade', the 'true farming' or to be a *gurmukh* and not a *manmukh*.<sup>126</sup> The only thing that God does not possess is 'falsehood' (*nā-haqq*); He is all Truth; and Guru Nanak is His disciple.<sup>127</sup>

In the *janam-sākhts*, Guru Nanak bequeathes his office to Lehna and, through him, to the other successors of Guru Nanak. Lehna becomes Angad, a part of Guru Nanak, and also his *Gurū*.<sup>128</sup> Guru Nanak grants to Angad the boon of the *Sabad*, which is the *bānt* as well of Angad and his successors as of Guru Nanak.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, the *panth* of Guru Nanak has behind it the Divine sanction: 'Go Nanak! your *panth* will flourish', says God.<sup>130</sup> The followers of Guru Nanak are to be called the *Nānak-panthīs*, with their distinct form of salutation and with their distinct places of worship; their watchwords are to be *nām*, *dān* and *asnān*; their aim is to

124. *Ibid.*, 30-31, 132, 229, 360, 374, 377, 383 & 488.

125. *Ibid.*, 38, 80, 98, 99, 178, 180, 184, 409, 416, 419 & 434 (also, *goshīs* 15 & 30); *Purātan Janam-sākhi* 11, 44, 49 & 72.

126. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, 8; *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 52, 66, 71 & 287.

127. *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 401 & 451.

128. *Purātan Janam-sākhi*, *sākhi* 54.

129. *Janam-sākhi Sri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*, 39. It must be pointed out that this idea is being used by the author probably to justify his claim to be the seventh *Gurū*.

130. *MS.B-40*, f. 120 b (quoted by W. H. McLeod in "The *Janam-sākhts* as Sources of Panjāb History"). This manuscript represents one of the earliest traditions of *sākhts*. See, McLeod, W. H., *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 17-18.

spread true religion; and they are to live pure amidst the impurities of attachment.<sup>131</sup> Thus is reflected in the *janam-sākhis* 'a developing self-consciousness; a growing awareness of the community's nature and function as a distinctive *panth*'.<sup>132</sup>

In retrospect, it is possible to see that Sikh institutions during the first two centuries of their history developed in close relationship to some ideological developments. Nearly all of these were seen as interpretations or extension of Guru Nanak's mission. If we were to choose one key-idea which lends unity to all these developments, it is surely the concept of the *Gurū*, which at once reconciled the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's position to the authority vested in his successors through that office and which, at a different level, brought the *bāni* and the *panth* into parallel prominence with the personal *gurū*. The unity as well as the end of personal *gurūship*, which today is the fundamental belief of the majority of the followers of Guru Nanak, is a legacy from the times of his successors. This may be regarded as perhaps their most creative response to the greatness of the founder of Sikhism.

131. *MS. B-40*, f. 120-b.

132. Meind, W. H., "The *Janam-sākhis* as Sources of Panjāb History".



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