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SELECTED WORKS OF SIRDAR KAPUR SINGH

# Guru Nanak's Life And Thought

*Editors*

Madanjit Kaur & Piar Singh



**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY  
AMRITSAR**

***GURU NANAK'S  
LIFE AND THOUGHT***

My Light is the Name of One and only God.  
And its oil is the pain and suffering:  
The former is consumed and the latter is then done away with.  
And, lo ! there is no-doing between I and Death.

[page 181]

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Series : Selected Works of Sirdar Kapur Singh (I)

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*Edited by*

Madanjit Kaur  
Professor & Head  
(Retd.)

&

Piar Singh  
Professor & Head  
(Retd.)

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**TO  
SEEKERS OF TRUTH**

## FOREWORD

Late Sirdar Kapur Singh left behind him a corpus of writings touching upon various aspects of Sikh religion, history, culture, ethos and institutions. These apart, he has been an erudite scholar having deep understanding of comparative theology. The material he draws upon for his writings at times simply staggers imagination in its sweep and profundity. No current and cross-current of yore seemed to escape his incisive pen.

Sirdar Kapur Singh, as was his wont, wrote whenever an issue provoked him. As a result, his non-conformist writings do not necessarily form compact and compatible treatises as a whole. With this apprehension in view that his par excellent writings, with the passage of time, might not be lost to the posterity, the University has drawn up a plan to collect, classify, compile and publish these in an edifying form. The first one in the series, *Guru Nanak's Life and Thought*, which we have the pleasure to place in the hands of the readers, encompasses practically all that was written by Sirdar Kapur Singh pointedly explicating Guru Nanak's teachings and actions. More such collections follow.

I hope, this book with its poignant explications will inspire many young scholars to go in for a deeper and scientific analysis of Sikhism and carry forward the great Guru's message.

**Guru Nanak Dev University  
Amritsar**

**S.P. Singh**  
*Vice-Chancellor*

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## PREFACE

Late Sirdar Kapur Singh (1909-1984), formerly I.C.S., was a prolific writer and had left behind him a vast literature touching all aspects of Sikh life, thought, history and culture in English and Punjabi, both. He is regarded as one of the most controversial figures and yet the greatest scholar of Sikhism. For his versatile personality and scholarship he has become a legend and an institution in Sikh Studies.

Born on March 2, 1909 in a middle class Sikh peasant family of Lyallpur district (now in Pakistan), Sirdar Kapur Singh was educated at Government College, Lahore, and Cambridge University, London. He topped the list of successful candidates in the Master of Arts (Philosophy) Examination of the Punjab University in 1931. He received his Tripos in Moral Sciences in 1934 from the Cambridge University in England and also passed the Indian Civil Services Examination.

Sirdar Kapur Singh was an administrator with a quick grasp and a tight grip. While serving with the Indian Civil Service, he had the courage to develop close relations with freedom-fighters and wrote political treatises against the British. In 1941 all copies of his book *The Hour of the Sword*, based on *Prachin Panth Prakash* of Rattan Singh Bhangu, were confiscated under orders of the British Government of India. After Independence, his *Sachi Sakhi* (political memoirs and analysis of contemporary Sikh problem) earned for him wrath of the Indian Government.

Sirdar Kapur Singh was a member of Parliament and also a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. As a parliamentarian and a legislator, he was known for his intelligent parry and sharp thrust on the current Indian history and Sikh demands. His parliamentary speeches are evidence of the fact

that he was the staunchest protagonist of the Sikh's case for an honourable political status within the Indian Union. Disappointed with the biased attitude of the Indian Government towards the Sikhs, he later on propounded the idea of the demand for Sikh Homeland. It was he who drafted the controversial Anandpur Sahib Resolution in 1973 and also enunciated the doctrines of the Double Sovereignty of the Sikhs and the Theo-political Status of the Golden Temple.

In October 1973, he was conferred the status of National Professor of Sikhism by the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, the supreme political seat of the Sikh community. Sirdar Kapur Singh, no doubt, was an exciting and multi-dimensional personality. He was an individual both feared and respected by friends and foes alike.

Sirdar Kapur Singh's writings in English, it so happens, exist in the form of articles on subjects that have been posing the Sikh community a challenge from time to time regarding its issues, ethos and thrust on contemporary problems. They just take the form of stray articles, and not planned treatises. He had, in fact at no stage proceeded to write a book in a compact form, *Paraśarapraśna* and *Sikhism for the Modern Man* (in press at present) excepted. Even in this case the first i.e. *Paraśrapraśna* (The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh) was prompted by questions raised by one of his friends, Sardari Lal Parasara, in the course of their long walks at Simla and then what followed gave rise to the book in question, which soon came to be considered as the hallmark of Sikh scholarship. The second work is product of an actual assignment given to him by the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

This much about his writings in English. His few books which are available in Punjabi (*Sachi Sakhi* excepted) were produced to cater to the needs of Punjabi students reading for their different courses. They too do not go beyond accumulation of stray articles considered useful for students.



Realizing the need to preserve Sirdar Kapur Singh's writings, the authorities of the Guru Nanak Dev University had ordained collection, scrutiny, compilation, editing and publishing of his works in a plausible form. The present work, *Guru Nanak's Life and Thought*, is the first in the series with a few more to follow suit.

This book, as will be noted, relates exclusively to Guru Nanak. It contains sixteen articles, each put in a separate chapter. They flowed from the pen of the great scholar on different occasions. Sorted out of about two dozen articles, this collection represents Sirdar Kapur Singh's formulations on many basic issues and are replete with an astonishing wealth of ancillary information. To a serious student of Comparative Religion they provide not only a model to pursue but enough food for further investigations too.

It was a habit with Sirdar Kapur Singh to revise, recast and supplement an article written and published earlier. Sometimes he would incorporate a whole article in a new one and float it under somewhat a different title. To avoid repetition we have discarded all such articles, but have not interfered in those we have selected. For that reason their introductory parts containing facts about the life of the Great Guru stand repeated at more than one place. Considering them to be necessary preambles to what follows, we have refrained from excising them from their texts. A discerning eye may thus feel inclined to dub them as unnecessary repetition in the book, yet he will not feel them jarring and, instead, may find them refreshing.

In our anxiety to encompass all that Sirdar Kapur Singh has written touching the life of the great Guru we have included in this book an article, "Guru Nanak and Martin Luther" in translation. This appeared long long ago in the Punjabi press and was at no stage done in English by the author himself. Considering that it cleared a very wrong notion about Guru Nanak prevalent amongst educated people fond of finding parallels in history, we have ourselves rendered it into English and included it in the book.

To satisfy the curiosity of the inquisitive reader we have at the end of each article given details of its earlier publications too.

Articles written at different times and great intervals and published very often by different agencies, are prone to differ considerably in their format. We have, therefore, taken care to recast them in a homogenous documented pattern. Accordingly authorities quoted by the author have all been put in footnotes, their quotes rechecked and authenticated with reference to their original sources. This appeared to be necessary for the author, very often, relied for his quotes on memory and did not take care to check them up. To make the quotes more intelligible we have equipped them with proper diacritical signs and added the texts in original too along with the transcripts.

The Key to Transliteration appears elsewhere in these prelims. To facilitate reference a bibliography too has been added at the end of the book to the extent it could be prepared from S. Kapur Singh's notes and information that could be collected from local libraries.

Conscious of the fact that this work may be used as a hand book for knowing exact connotation of various concepts elucidated by Sirdar Kapur Singh, we have alongwith a General and Bibliographical Index added a Doctrinal Index which we hope will be of immense use to scholars and readers both.

Our acknowledgements are due to S. Gurtej Singh I.A.S. of Chandigarh who prompted us to take up this project and provided us with copies in large cases of Sirdar Kapur Singh's published works. We are also grateful to S. Kuljit Singh of New York, U.S.A., Dr. Rajwant Singh of Washington, U.S.A., S. Baldev Singh of Goindwal (Amritsar) and Professor Pritam Singh of Patiala all of whom have placed their valuable collections of Sirdar Kapur Singh's papers ungrudgingly for our use. Likewise, we owe much to the editors of *The Spokesman*, *The Sikh Review*, and other journals, who were generous enough to answer our queries and help us with the material sought.

We owe sincere thanks to the very kind cooperation extended to us by Dr. K.L. Sharma and Dr. Shukdev Sharma of the Sanskrit Department in checking up for us Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali quotations with which this book abounds.

The help rendered by S. Jagjit Singh Walia and his staff, particularly by Shri S.S. Narula, Senior Proof Reader, in seeing this volume through the press, is praiseworthy and deserves our utmost thanks.

**Madanjit Kaur & Piar Singh**

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It gives me immense pleasure to place the second edition of *Guru Nanak's Life And Thought* in the hands of the readers. Some errors left in the first edition have been corrected. This book is the first volume in the series of 'Selected Works of Sirdar Kapur Singh' published by Guru Nanak Dev University in the year 1991. Since then three more books; *Sikhism For the Modern Man*, *Guru Arjan And His Sukhmani* and *Some Insights Into Sikhism* have been printed by Guru Nanak Dev University. These scholarly works by late Sirdar Kapur Singh, the National Professor of Sikhism are in great demand by the scholars, researchers and readers. The editor would like to place on record her deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Piar Singh, the versatile linguist and a well known scholar on Sikh Scripture and Sikh Theology; who is no more with us. It would not have been possible to undertake the difficult task of editing the 'Selected Works of Sirdar Kapur Singh' without the excellent guidance of Dr. Piar Singh. The editor takes this opportunity of thanking Dr. Gopal Singh Dhillon, for his help in proof reading of the text and preparation of the index of this volume. I am grateful to S. Jagjit Singh Walia, Director Press and Publications, Guru Nanak Dev University, and his staff for putting in their best efforts in the production of this book.

**Madanjit Kaur**

*Editor*

10 April, 2001

## KEY TO TRANSLITERATION

Gurmukhi/ Devanagari Sound 1	Gra- pHEME 2	Gurmukhi/ Devanagari Sound 3	Gra- pHEME 4	Arabic Sound (a few) 5	Gra- pHEME 6
ਅ ਅ	a	ਘ ਥ	gh	ث	s / th
ਆ ਆ	ā	ਙ ਙ	ñ	س/ص	s
ਇ ਙ	i	ਚ ਚ	ć / ch	ش	ś / sh
ਈ ਙ	ī	ਛ ਛ	ch/chh	ح	ḥ
ਉ ਤ	u	ਜ ਙ	j	ق	q / k
ਊ ਙ	ū	ਝ ਙ	jh	خ	kh / kh
ਏ ਏ	e	ਞ ਙ	ñ	ع	, with the vowel
ਐ ਐ	ai	ਟ ਟ	ṭ		
ਓ ਓ	o	ਠ ਠ	ṭh	غ	gh
ਔ ਔ	au	ਡ ਙ	ḍ	ذ/ذ	z
ੲ/ੲ ਅੰ	m̐ / ṅ̐	ਢ ਙ	ḍh	ض/ظ	z/ḍh
ਰਿ ਙ	ri / ṛ	ਣ ਙ	ṇ	ر	w/v
ਸ ਸ	s	ਤ ਤ	t	ف	f
ਹ ਹ	h	ਥ ਥ	th		
ਕ ਕ	k	ਦ ਦ	d		
ਖ ਙ	kh	ਧ ਧ	dh		
ਗ ਗ	g	ਨ ਨ	n		

1	2	3	4	5	6
प प	p	ल ल	l		
ढ फ	ph	व व	v / w		
घ ब	b	झ ड	r / d		
ड भ	bh	झ श	ś / sh		
म म	m	न ज	z		
य य	y	गज ज	jñ		
र र	r	ष	ṣ		
		क्ष	kṣ		

### ABBREVIATIONS

- AG *The Adi Granth*
- BG *Bhai Gurdas (Vārān)*
- DG *The Dasam Granth*
- S. Karika *Samkhya Kārika*
- [ ] Crochets show sound added to make the pronunciation conform to the modern practice.
- ( ) Parentheses indicate the sound which is not pronounced although it appears in the script.



## BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH AND TEACHINGS

Nanak, who came to be universally known as the *Gurū*, the Light of Mankind, was born in A.D. 1469 in a small village, called Talwandi Rāe Bhoē[ñ] situated in the alluvial barren tract, called Bar, the area now comprised mostly by the Sheikhpura district of West Punjab and the south-western portion of the Lahore district. The village, Talwāndi Rāi Bhoē[ñ], is situated at a distance of about 50-kilometres to the south west of the town of Lahore and it was renamed Nankana Sahib by Maharaja Kaurā Mal who constructed holy tanks and memorial *gurdwārās* in this deserted village in 1750.<sup>1</sup> The extensive lands bequeathed to the monuments and the memorial *gurdwārās*, sacred to the memory of Guru Nanak, by Maharaja Kaurā Mal continued to be a part of the estate of the *gurdwārās* at Nankana Sahib upto the creation of Pakistan. The father of Nanak was a *patwāri*, revenue overseer and accountant, appointed by the feudal chief of the village, Rāe Bulār, who was originally a high caste Hindu of Bhatti Rājput clan, it seems, recently converted to Islam under the pressure and duress of the times. The life of Nanak is contained in the *janam-sākhis*, two of which are now extant. The earlier account, known as *Walāit-wāli Janam-sākhī* on account of a partial recension of it having been recovered from a manuscript in British Museum in London half a century ago, initially retrieved by a British military officer from the personal kit of a Sikh soldier slain on the battlefield of Gujarāt (1848), contains a less imaginative and more realistic account of Nanak's life than the other and popular *janam-sākhī*, called *Janam-sākhī Bhāi Bālā*, which latter is manifestly inspired by the Buddhist Jātak Tales, usually described as

histories of the previous lives of the Buddha, though this description is inadequate. Many of these Jātak Tales are folklore tales, far older than Buddhism. They represent the deposit of esoteric story of the evolution of human religious dimension down from animal instinctual structure to human awareness.

These recorded accounts of Nanak's life, more often than not, strike as bad history and confused legend to modern mind familiarised only with rational and objective semantic tradition as the only respectable verbal mode of expression and, as a consequence, even many Sikh scholars describe these basic records and testaments of the Guru's life as excessively imaginative, puerile and unworthy of acceptance by 'scientific' and 'objective' minds.<sup>2</sup> It is not so, because, it is not the *janamsākhis* that falsify the Guru's profile but a failure of comprehension of their idiom that confuses the modern European and the Sikh scholar as to the delineation and portrayal of a human being, Guru Nanak, who is eviscerated of his true personality the moment he is squeezed, distorted into the mould of a 'historical Nanak' as distinct and wholly separated from what these 'scholars' designate as the 'legendary Nanak'.<sup>3</sup> This failure of comprehension has twin roots; (1) European literary tradition delights in generalising and in the abstract and the impersonal, while the genius of almost all the oriental languages i.e. their pre-nineteenth century morphal organisms, is personal, particular and concrete, where the folklore narrative attempts to communicate the universal concepts as informing a concrete historical person and occurrence; (2) the so called 'historical Nanak' that is sought to be churned out by modern scholars, the European as well as the Sikh, on deeper thought, is seen to be a person who demonstrably is not the Nanak born in A.D. 1469 at the village Talwandī Rāe Bhoē[ñ], and who gave birth to the historical upsurge and movement known to history as Sikhism. This distilled 'historical Nanak' is clearly seen as a mere emotionalised intellectual who said this and did that such

as many others of his contemporaries, predecessors and those who followed him had said or done but who crossed the desert of life and history to vanish beyond the skyline, without leaving tell-tale footsteps and beckoning footpaths involving future generations of mankind into new modes of impulse and behaviour, such as the Guru Nanak did. The 'historical Nanak' of our 'scholars', therefore, is not the Guru Nanak whose portrayal is attempted by our profound literary genre the *janam-sākhis*, but a mere type, a denominator of what the individual Nanak might have been, had he not been the Guru Nanak. These 'scholars', thus, by piecing together carefully and laboriously selected passages from these existing documents and by checking them with tradition and historical monuments that sprang up soon after the conclusion of earthly career of the Guru Nanak, give a connected and 'objective' story of his life. As the years rolled by and as the formative impulses which Nanak had fashioned and released amongst the people, assumed concrete social and political shape in the form of the Sikh nation, incidents of Nanak's life acquired an evergrowing vivid halo and aura of reverence surcharged with primal significance so that miracle and heavenly assistance, were seen and recognised as an integral part of Guru Nanak's life story. Such a process is always an evidence of the magnitude and the extent of spiritual forces released by the personality of an individual and actualised in the destiny of a people, Besides it is a higher and poetic form of history designed to lift the prosaic, personal, imperennial but, nevertheless, the true story of that individual to plane above the accident of time and space. this aspect of the *janam-sākhis*, though requires a fuller treatment in its own right but for it the present is hardly the proper occasion. Suffice it to say that it is certain that Nanak was, from the very beginning, a precocious and moody child, and as he grew up, he became the despair of his matter-of-fact male parent, Mehta Kalu Ram.<sup>4</sup> He was sent to the village *pāthśālā* under a Brahman teacher,

from whom he learnt Arithmetic, Book-keeping and Mnemonic Tables of Accountancy and reading and writing of the current *devanāgrī* script known as the *Sastri* script in the north western India. By all accounts, he was a very intelligent and clever pupil and soon learnt all that was to be learnt from this *pāthśālā*. He then went to the local *maktab*, the seminary run by a Muslim teacher, Saiyid Hassan, as the author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutākhirin* tells us. In this *maktab* Nanak studied rudiments of Persian and Arabic and Indian Islamic literature which became the foundation of his later acquaintance with the highest religious thought then current in the Islamic world. Nanak's was a knowledge-hungry mind and a restless soul, and through self-study and dialogue he soon became at home with the ancient Hindu scriptures and the pious writings of the exponents of the Bhakti School of Medieval India. He finished his education by personal discussion with the recognised teachers of various religions and itinerant *sādhūs* and *faqīrs*; of whose company he was exceedingly fond. These educational attainments and the grounding in learning which Nanak thus acquired is amply evidenced in his revelations such as the *Japu*, the *Siddhagosti* and the *Oamkār*.

At the age of nine, it is recorded, he was asked to participate in the Hindu ceremony of *Yajnopavitam* and he took exception to the mere formality, empty of its spirit, remarking that he would rather put on a thread which would "neither break, nor get soiled, nor burnt, nor destroyed".<sup>5</sup>

All attempts of Nanak's father to put him to some useful profession or trade failed and he became increasingly more moody and contemplative. The story goes on that he was sent to the neighbouring market of Chūhaṛkānā with a good sum of money to conduct some sound business deal, but Nanak spent this money in feeding a group of hungry medics taking too literal a stand on the instructions of his father that he was to invest this money in some *sachchā saudā*, 'profitable business'.

The magnificent temple known as Sachcha Sauda, now left in Pakistan, marks the spot where Nanak demonstrated how the impulse for material gain may be transformed into a spiritual purpose.

Thoroughly disappointed in the conduct of his son, Mehta Kalu Ram sent him to his brother-in-law, Mehta Jai Ram Das, to whom the elder sister of Nanak was married at Sultanpur, now a decaying town in the former Kapurthala State on the banks of a tributary called the Bein, to the river Beas, Jai Ram Das was an official in the court of Daulat Khan Lodhi, the local Pathan potentate and through his influence Nanak was appointed the Custodian-General of the State stores. He performed his duties diligently and efficiently, and the previous impression that Nanak was unfit to engage himself in any profession or trade, was completely removed. Here, Nanak married and two sons were born to him. But his restlessness soon had the better of the sense of security and creature-comforts which a happy home and a good job guaranteed. It was in the year A.D. 1496, when Nanak was twentyseven years old, that, one morning, when he went to bathe in the rivulet Bein as usual, he had the unique experience of complete atunement with God, the Universal Spirit, and received the Mandate for his Ministry. The chroniclers inform us that Nanak remained submerged in the waters of the river for three days and three nights, and he was commissioned by God Almighty to go forth into the world to praise and preach the religion of the Name, which later came to be known as Sikhism. The God Almighty said to Nanak : "I am God, the Almighty, you are the Guru-in-God",<sup>6</sup> recounts the *Janam-sākhī*. On emergence from the river-waters the first words that Nanak uttered are recorded as : "Neither there is Muslim, nor Hindu";<sup>7</sup> and, this utterance is at once the starting point of Nanak's teachings, as a notification of the assumption of his Ministry as the Guru, the Light and the Teacher of Mankind.<sup>8</sup>

What is the significance of this event and this occurrence as comprehended by the Sikhs and epitomised in the Sikh movement?

First of all, it is a claim that the movement which Guru Nanak initiated is the complete and legitimate heir to the spiritual truth of the Hindu race and the Semitic races. Simultaneously, it is a proclamation that the truths that had hitherto been the property, in exclusivity, of the exclusively organised peoples, the Hindus and the Muslims, were henceforth to be the property of the whole mankind, guarded by a World Religion.

Secondly, it was a judgement that the current exclusive and corrupted forms of the Truth, believed and hugged by the races calling themselves the Hindus and the Muslims, were not enough and that needed purification, further elucidation and newer interpretation before they could be accepted. The Sikh Movement, as a consequence, took and inherited the activism, *jehād*, of Islām along with the spirit of deep quest and profound introversion of the Hindus.

Thirdly, it proclaimed the advent of a unique event, the singular manifestation of a particular Attribute of God, 'God as the Guide', with the avowed object of leading mankind from Darkness to Light in answer to the eternal cry of human heart, paraphrased in the Upanisadic text as, *tamsomājyotīrgamya*, the emergence of the Guru-Principle of God, capable of being placed as a number in the series of other incarnations of God, and prophets of mankind, but in quality and historicity unique, to be repeated in Ten Manifestations, 'ten' being the ultimate Number, not merely a peak in human evolution, but a discontinuous once-for-all initiative of God,<sup>9</sup> within the spatio-temporal Order, known as the World.

Fourthly, it affirmed that human life on earth is not without real significance, a mere dream, or a *līlā qua* the human beings but has abiding consequences for them.<sup>10</sup>



In this context it was that Guru Nanak started on his extensive journeys of the then known civilised world, India and Muslim Asia, to preach his new religion, which at once combined the creative institutions of the Hindus and the critical intelligence of the Semitic mind and thus it is that we find the integrated co-presence of the spirit of combat and organisation and the spirit of quietist contemplation amongst the Sikhs. At this point, Guru Nanak left the Government employment and the town of Sultanpur accompanied by a Muslim musician, Mardana. For a while, he tramped over the northern Punjab. He went to Saidpur, now Eminabad, in the Gujranwala District of the West Punjab, and halted at the house of a low caste carpenter, revered in Sikh history as Bhāi Lālo. This in itself was a dramatically starting event, a high caste Kṣatriya, accompanied by a lowcasteless Muslim, living with a low caste *śudra*, so that the local Hindu Prefect or *faujdar*, Malik Bhāgo, called upon him to explain his conduct. Guru Nanak here publicly denounced the *Varṇāśramadharmā* and the Hindu caste system, and declared human race as one social brotherhood. It was here that Guru Nanak openly preached his one of the three basic tenets of Sikhism, namely, that all possession of material goods and wealth, unless acquired legitimately through honest non-exploitive creative labour, was sinful. The three basic tenets of Sikhism, as declared by Guru Nanak, are : (1) *nām japo*, practice the yogic discipline of Name, (2) *kirt karo*, engage in honest non-exploitive labour, and (3) *wand chhako*, share your earnings, out of love and compassion with others.

The first tenet inculcates the necessity for spiritual *sādhanā* for the purpose of purifying and uplifting the individual soul to the full realisation of its true potentiality and essence, and the *sādhanā* recommended is *yoga* of the Name, in supersession of the difficult and involved spiritual disciplines that had been current amongst the Hindus and certain sects of Islam and other religions, entailing complete retirement from the social and

wordly activity and maceration of the body and mortification of mind. This *sādhanā* centres around the verbal repetition of the True Name or the Sikh formula, Wāhegurū.<sup>11</sup>

In its deeper import and significance, this *sādhanā* is a psychological discipline having remarkable points of resemblance with the system now propounded by Rishi Arvindo Ghosh of Pondicherry, to empty the mind of its contents of evanescent impressions and the awakening and awareness of the *numina* as contrasted with the phenomena of perceptions through physical senses by the displacement of this phenomenon of *rūpa* and *rāga*. Thus the individual psyche becomes aware of its true essence, *swarūpa*. This is the highest goal, envisaged by the highest forms of yoga. Consciousness of culture, which is the social aspect of the spiritual awakening of people, intellectually creates its primary *numina* to sustain it. It imposes significant words, names, on forms of the culture and conjures them, seizes or bounds them. By virtue of the Name these "numina" are subject to the intellectual powers of man who possesses the Name; and the whole of Philosophy and the whole of Science and everything that is related in any way to knowing, is, so at the very bottom, nothing but an infinitely refined mode of applying the Name of that which before such application is alien and unknown and unknowable. The pronouncement of the right Name, which in physical sciences we call, "the concept", is, in essence, an incantation, a *mantram*. Deities and basic notions of Science alike, come into being first as vocable names, with which is linked the idea that is to become more and more definite in the consciousness. Thus and thus alone, through the magic of the Name do men become capable of knowing God, and Guru Nanak discovered this essential truth and advocated it as a true, proper and royal path to the completest fulfilment of the religious quest in man, in supersession of the ancient arduous and tortuous disciplines and *sādhanās*, so far prevalent and practised. This is religion

in its purest sense, separated from its social and ethical content. It is the *adhyātam vidyā* of the Upaniṣadic sages. It is religion as implicated in its loftiest conception by the western mind as A.N. Whitehead defines it : "What man does with solitariness."

The second tenet, namely *kirat karo*, was preached by Guru Nanak to the Governor of Saidpur, Malik Bhago, by refusing to partake the luscious and luxury food offered by him to Guru Nanak, on the ground that this food had not been earned and acquired through honest, non-exploitive labour, and his possession of the food, therefore, was sinful. It is interesting to speculate on some points of apparent similarity between this ethical doctrine of Guru Nanak and the theory of 'Economic Value' propounded by Karl Marx, four centuries later. If all wealth and material possessions not acquired through honest non-exploitive labour are sinful, such possession is, by and large, morally illegitimate and unjustified also. All such possession is, essentially, usurpation and exploitation, and a just and equitable social order, therefore, should be such as to make this usurpation and exploitation impossible, and the communist basis of the social order logically follows. It is necessary to point out here, though, that an ethical justification of an economic order of the pattern of Communism, does not, in any manner, directly justify the methods adopted in contemporary times to establish and sustain such an economic order, such as centralisation of power, annulment of the human individuality and dictatorship. The first is a question of ethics and 'economic justice', while the second is a question of organisation and 'instrument of power', i.e. political power, whether direct or indirect, and there is no logical nexus between the two. It is necessary to make this distinction here, because Guru Nanak has not altogether neglected the second question, and it is clear that all achievement of power and its sustenance that is devoid of a human face or has a non-human face masqueraded, is anathema to the religion of Guru Nanak, Sikhism.

The third and the last tenet of Sikhism, *wand chhako*, carries the process further. Even the wealth which an individual legitimately and through his own honest creative labour acquires, must not be reserved by him for his selfish, self-centred and exclusive enjoyment. The whole community is morally entitled to the fruits of such labour, not, indeed, on the grounds of equity or 'economic justice' which are amorphous and relative concepts, but on the ground that no individual is spiritually complete unless he considers himself a part of the society as a whole. The Sikh way of life, as preached by Guru Nanak, therefore, is by no means of vague religiosity but a way of believing and living revealed in the concrete stuff of History and mediated from generation to generation and through the centuries, in well-defined thoughts and practices. It is indefeasibly social, for, according to Guru Nanak's teachings, no individual can, for ever or for long, experience God without the divine Society, the *sangat*, as known to the Sikhs up to the Ninth Nanak, and the *panth*, into which this *sangat* was reorganised by the Tenth Nanak, is its necessary vehicle and abiding guarantee.

And in his conception of *sangat*, Guru Nanak reveals his teachings about the vexed question of the organisation and distribution of power which has become such a vital issue for the modern man. The source of 'power' is the spiritually awakened individual, the *gurmukh*, and the basic unit of organisation is the *sangat*, rooted in its geographical locale. It is through the voluntary and revocable delegation of 'power' by such *sangat* that any centralisation of power may come into being, if it has to win approval by the Sikh doctrine. This centralisation takes the form of the Guru Sangat, the Guru Panth, always subject to the Sikh doctrine : "*Gurū bis biswe sangat ikīs biswe*" i.e. "The Guru is twenty parts and plenary but the *sangat* may override and veto."

The centralised Authority is all-powerful but is always

subject to the scrutiny and control of the primary and basic units, called the local *sangats*. Thus, neither the tyranny of the majority nor a form of dictatorship is countenanced in this scheme of organisation of power. And, since each individual is an end-in-himself and each local *sangat* completely and fully sovereign, even when it has delegated its sovereignty to a centralised Authority, no question of sacrificing the individual for the State or of one generation for the next generation, as is being tacitly accepted in the present day world in totalitarian regimes of 'Socialist Planning', ever arises. This scheme of organisation of 'power' is not merely implicit in Guru Nanak's teachings, it is explicit and was demonstrated in practice, as the Sikh movement unfolded itself under the guidance of the successive Gurus.<sup>12</sup>

After appointing Bhai Lalo as his first missionary, instructions for him, were to go forth into the world with the tools of his trade and to make no other request to people except for a carpenter's job. While doing his job of a carpenter Bhai Lalo was to keep himself engaged in the repetition of the Name and, if and when, any soul was attracted to him on account of his honest work as a carpenter and his conduct as an honest labourer, it was then and then alone that he was to preach the Sikh way of life to that Soul and to impart to him the three basic tenets of Sikhism and explain how these tenets were to be lived in practice.

Next, the Guru went towards Multan where he preached the good religion and the way of life that is Sikhism and then he turned back home. After staying at his home-village for a short time, he commenced his four famous 'grand tours', known as four *udāsīs*. The first *udāsī* was towards the East in which he covered the important centres of Hindu religion. He visited Kurukṣetra from where he passed through Panipat to Delhi and arrived at Haridwar. He preached on the way from place to place, to the individual and to the multitude, in his peculiar

characteristic way. Kuruksetra, he visited at the time of the sun-eclipse fair and to the horrification of Brahmans and pilgrims he started cooking meat on the bank of the holy tank at the sacred hour of the sun-eclipse, when all cooking fires must be extinguished. In the discussions that followed he explained that the doctrine of non-meat-eating on the ground of meat-diet involving taking of life was untenable, since the Principle of Life pervaded, in equal measure, throughout the animal-kingdom and the vegetable-kingdom, both. It was equally untenable on grounds of well-established ancient tradition, for the ancestors of the Hindus used to kill animals for sacrifices, and thirdly, that in any case, avoidance of flesh as food was impracticable and impossible so long as they used water, since water was the source of all life and 'the First Life-Principle.'<sup>13</sup>

At Haridwar, he stood in the holy waters of Ganga and instead of throwing handfuls of it towards the rising sun, as other pilgrims were doing, as oblations to their ancestors residing in the *suryāloka*, Guru Nanak began to throw water towards the west and when questioned, replied that, he was throwing water to have his newly sown grain-fields, about two hundred miles away in the Punjab, irrigated. The people laughed at him pointing out that his endeavour was useless. How could his handfuls of water irrigate his fields over two hundred miles away in the West? the Guru rejoined : "In the same way in which you expect your water to reach your ancestors millions of miles away in the *sūryaloka* !" The Guru, thus, had his point made, From Haridwār, Guru Nanak went to Kashi or Banaras, modern Varanasi, where he held discussions with and preached to learned *pundits*, collectively symbolised by the name of *Chaturvedī* or *Chaturadās* in the *Janam-Sākhis*, that is, those learned in the sciences of the four *Vedās*. the purport of these discussions has been compressed by Guru Nanak himself in his revelation called *Oamkār*; and the doctrine preached is that



God resides in the human heart, and the human mind could become aware of it through the discipline of the Name.

Those who accepted the way of life preached by the Guru, were organised into a *sangat* and the leader of that *sangat* was appointed as the Sikh missionary at Banaras. The headquarters of this congregation, is now marked as *Gurū kā bāgh* where a *gurdwārā* stands to commemorate the Guru's visit. From there the Guru journeyed further east and went to Gaya, and from there he detoured towards Patna where a rich jeweller, Sālis Rāi accepted his teachings and was appointed a Sikh missionary at the head of a Sikh congregation. He went onwards to Assam and Dacca. At Dhubri, in Assam, Guru Nanak's visit is commemorated by an artificial hillock surmounted by an altar. The hillock was raised through the voluntary labours of Rajput General of Emperor Aurangzeb when, at the head of an expedition to Assam, the Guru returned by way of 24 Parganas. He went along the coast and came to Cuttack where a *gurdwārā*, named *Dātan Sahib*, commemorates his visit. At Jagannath Puri he visited the world famous temple and did not participate in the formal *arti* to Jagannath but performed it otherwise and in his own way. The purport of what he explained to the angry priests is paraphrased in a revelation, most magnificent hymn favourably comparable in grandeur of diction and depth of thought to the famous hymn, "Uṣas", in the *Rig Veda*. It runs as follows :

The sky is the salver and the sun and the moon are the golden lamps, and the stars scattered pearls. The winds waft incense. The flowers shed luminance. So is Thy *ārti* performed. Thou, the Dispeller of fear and Dispenser of mercy."<sup>14</sup>

The Guru then returned to his home in the Punjab passing through Central India, where *janam-sākhīs* are unanimous that he preached his gospel to aboriginal tribes making them give up the crude life of cannibalism and unnecessary violence.

Before he started on his second *udāsi*, he crossed the river Ravi and went to Pakpattan, the headquarters of the sufis of persuasion of Sheikh Farid, the Shakarganj. A very large proportion of the mass conversions of Hindus of the West Punjab to Islam are ascribable to the activities of Sheikh Farid, the Shakarganj, and his descendants during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. His discussions with the reigning pontiff at Pakpattan and the Guru's comments on his verses are included in the Guru Granth. The Guru then roamed about in the central and western Punjab and is reported to have made a large number of converts from amongst the Pathans, then the Muslim ruling-caste. During this *udāsi* he met a millionaire, Duni Chand Khatri, at Lahore on the occasion of the latter's feast-ceremonies of his late father. Guru Nanak's preaching to Duni Chand Khatri consisted of a remark pointing out that the variety of foods being distributed for the benefit of the soul of his deceased father might do his father's soul no good in case his father's soul was now in the body of a wolf, for the human tastes and the animal tastes differ.

It was during this period that he founded a new town called Kartarpur on the right bank of the Ravi, which is now left in Pakistan and he settled his family there before proceeding upon his next *Udāsi*. An *Appendix* to a manuscript copy of the Guru Granth retrieved by Major Henry Erskin in the battle field of Gujarat at the time of the second Sikh War in 1849 and now preserved as original manuscript No. 1125 in the British Museum gives a detailed itinerary of Guru Nanak's second *udasi*, to the south of India, as far as Ceylon, and the whole of this tour is commemorated by a line of *gurdwārās*, some of which still exist inspite of their neglect by the Sikhs owing to political vicissitudes. Some of these prominent historical monouments exist at Rameswarm, Salur, Bhaker and Shivkanji in Tamil Nadu, and at Colombo in Ceylon, while many of such Sikh centres of worship in the interior of Sri Lanka were

destroyed by the Portuguese inquisition and fanaticism in the century following their foundation by the Guru and his Sikhs. In addition, there exist similar monuments and *gurdwaras* at Burhanpur, Surat, Mahalaxmi (Bombay), Amraoti and Nirmal containing manuscript copies of the Guru Granth taken to these places by Sikh preachers sent by Guru Har Gobind and Guru Hari Rai, the sixth and seventh Nanaks.

The Guru returned by the western coast of India to Punjab, preaching his gospel throughout on the way and making converts and establishing *sangats* or congregations.

The third *udāsi* was commenced soon after, and in this the Guru turned his attention to the yogis who were then active in the sub-montane tracts of the Himalayas. Some of the Guru's most profound philosophical revelations refer to his discussions with these yogis, and recluses, out of which the *Siddha-gostī* is the most significant. He visited Gorakh Matta, now in the sub-montane portion of Uttar Pradesh, which was then the headquarters of the yogis in northern India, and this place, henceforth became Nanak-Matta and centre for preaching the Sikh religion. In this itinerary he passed through Kashmir<sup>15</sup> and Nepal into Western Tibet and visited the Mansarover Lake and also the famous Himalayan peak, the Kailash. The *janamsākhis* record that the denizens of Kailash were amazed to see him at the summit of the inaccessible mountain. Bhai Gurdas gives a short account of the main preachings of Guru Nanak to these recluses, which declare that an attitude of world-negation and renunciation of society is self-stultifying and leads to corruption of the psyche of the recluse, implying that salvation of man was in and through society, ultimately. When asked to display some of his extra-psyche powers the Guru declared such powers as irrelevant to true religion,<sup>16</sup> and added that ethical conduct, communion with God translated into authentic living in human society, was the only true means of salvation.

His fourth and last *udāsī* was to the western countries outside India. He travelled by sea to Mecca and rested in the holy enclosure with his feet towards the *Ka'aba*, the sacred cube-structure, for which he was severely rebuked by an Indian Muslim priest Rukun-ud-Din, for "turning his feet towards the House of God". The Guru humbly replied that he was too tired to move and that the priest may turn his feet towards the direction in which there is no *Ka'aba*, House of God. Rukun-ud-Din turned Guru's feet away from the sacred structure and Rukun-ud-Din beheld the platform of *Ka'aba* moving towards whichever direction Rukun-ud-Din moved the feet of the Guru. The Guru then solemnly repeated the verse of the *Quran* which says that:

Allah is in the East and in the West, so whither-so-ever ye turnest, there is the face of Allah.

Questioned whether he was a Hindu or Muslim, he replied : "I am a human being and Nanak is my name"<sup>17</sup>

When asked as to whether he considered the Hindu or the Muslim way of life superior, he replied, "The deed is important and not the creed"<sup>18</sup>.

On his return journey he came by the land route and halted at Baghdad which was at that time a great centre of Islamic religion and learning. A memorial monument, extensively repaired by a Turkish Governor subsequently and bearing the date of its original erection as the year 927 Hijra (A.D. 1550) marks now the spot where Guru Nanak stayed, and preached at Baghdad, and where he founded a Sikh *sangat*. This memorial is still reverently tended and worshipped by the successors of Shah Bahlol Dānā whom Guru Nanak had appointed as the Head of the *sangat* at Baghdad. A Turkish Arabic inscription on this monument describes Guru Nanak as : "*gurū murād eldī hadrat*

*rabb-al-majid bābā Nānak faqir.*" Many attempts have been made by scholars, non-sikhs and not-objective or impartial, to throw doubts on the authenticity and meaning, both, of this stone-inscription; but class-prejudice and pious envy rather than any impartial spirit of academic enquiry are seen as real motivation here. It is not a little surprising that this Turkish inscription contains exactly the title by which Nanak and his successors have been known and designated by contemporaries in India. The contemporary titles and designations of Guru Nanak and his successors invariably speak of them as, "*Gurū bābā akāl purukh*" which last appellation has been correctly and aptly translated into Turkish as *hadrat-rabb-al-majid*, and this is certainly amazing when viewed in the background of the fierce, uncompromising and monotheistic tenets of Islam, particularly as embodied in its formulated creed, the *kalimā* which speaks of 'no deity but Allah and Mohammad as His (last) prophet'.

The Guru returned via Afghanistan and the ancient Gandhar valley and on his way converted a Muslim saint of high repute and exalted spiritual station called Hassan, the *abdāl*, *abdāl* in Arabic meaning, an anchorite who has attained exceedingly high spiritual excellence. This *abdāl* was residing near a sweet spring of water which, in all probability, was a Buddhist monastery during the first centuries of the Christian era.

This Hassan, the *abdāl*, was converted and appointed as the head of the Sikh *sangat* which Guru Nanak founded there. The spring which Guru Nanak hallowed by his feet is now marked by the magnificent *gurdwārā* of Punja Sahib, now left in the Attock district of western Punjab in Pakistan. This is precisely the period when Babur invaded India for the third time at the end of A.D. 1521. At the time of this invasion, Guru Nanak was an eye-witness of the sack of Saidpur and the wholesale massacre of its inhabitants. Guru Nanak has made

poignant references to this invasion and to this massacre, calling upon God and man, both to witness the uncontained violence, and pointedly upon God, who is the creator of both, the invader and the invaded.

On 22nd December, 1539 he gave up his ghost at Kartarpur (Ravi) after appointing Guru Angad as his successor to carry out the task of reconstruction of society in accordance with his teachings. One of his very last revelations is Tukhāri Chant. In it, the Guru recalls with a rare, chaste passion, in a diction at once sophisticated and simple, the seasonally changing face of the land where he was born, a land which, before it is seen through the eyes of the poet and the prophet Nanak, is a barren dry alluvial plain, studded with stunted monotonous shrubbery. Guru Nanak reveals the hidden beauties of this land changing face in response to the changing seasons of nature, month by month, in the literary tradition and genre of the *bārāmāha*, 'the Twelve Months!'<sup>19</sup> In the background of these changing moods of nature in the land of his birth and childhood, Guru Nanak speaks of his passionate love of God, the restlessness of the soul, in search of its true nature and its yearning for unison with its original source and ultimate base, the abiding significance of human life and actions on this earth and now this life and human actions may be co-ordinated to the totality of these forces, as sustain the universe. He speaks of the totality of these forces, as a Person (*Purukh*), and how the varying moods of nature provide an aid to the endeavours of the individual soul for unison with this Person. Before passing a way, he walked with his disciples out of the town of Kartarpur into the sown fields, full of dark green plants of wheat, and lay down on the ground, in the open sky under a naked bony *Jand* tree, and had the following revelation sung to the accompaniment of instrumental music in the musical mode

*Mājh*, which recalled the commencement and significance of his Ministry on earth :

An insignificant bard at the gate of the Lord was I. My assignment was to sing His praises day and night. He, the True Lord, has now called me to his Mansions and there I go robed in honour.<sup>20</sup>

This briefly is the life-story of Guru Nanak, a most dynamic personality the world has ever seen.

(ii)

The limited space of this article precludes the possibility of giving any detailed exposition of Guru Nanak's outlook on life or his teachings. Guru Nanak was born at a time when the north-western India had already succumbed to the dominative impact and influence of Islam during the previous three centuries. The age of Muslim invasions in India from A.D. 664 had passed and the stable establishment of Muslim domination had been accomplished. In northeren India particularly, the Hindu mind was in a state of much fermentation and disintegration owing to Muslim impact; and in the revelations of Guru Nanak there are numerous and poignant references to the resultant social and religious conditions. In "Rag Dhanasari" of the Guru Granth, we are categorically told that the old Hindu world has crumbled irretreivably : *sriṣṭi sabh ik varan hoi dharma kī gati rahi*.<sup>21</sup> In more than one ways it was a period of fundamental transition politically, culturally and spiritually. It was a period of political disintegration.

The Sultanate of Delhi came to an end with the invasion of Babur and the Mughal period began, signifying, as the intriguing *Bhavishya-purana's* text tells us "destruction of Hindu identity and the *Vedic Dharma*".<sup>22</sup> It was also the exact point of transition from medieval India to modern India which was heralded by the arrival

of a Portuguese, Vasco-da-Gama, at Calicut in A.D. 1498 and the victory of Babur at Panipat in A.D. 1526. Modern India, from political standpoint, is resultant of the two forces released by these two historical events. The five preceding centuries had seen the invasion and gradual infiltration of Islam in India; and before the Moghul power was clearly established leading to firm political unity of the Indian sub-continent once again after a lapse of about seventeen centuries, two facts strike as outstanding to a student of History. One was the political separation between the South and North India leading to containment and stagnation. Ever since the Muslims had firmly established themselves in the form of Sultanate of Delhi (A.D. 1206), they had attempted to extend their dominion upto the farthest end of the Indian sub-continent within the first century of their arrival. This had necessitated, in view of the condition of the communications then prevalent, a shift of the centre of Muslim power from Delhi to Daulatabad (A.D. 1327). But the Tughlaqs soon found out that it was futile to attempt to dominate over the south of India, and within ten years of this venture of the shifting of the capital, the great Hindu empire of Vijaynagar emerged. In quick succession of emergence of this Hindu empire, almost within ten years, the Brahmani Sultanate was founded in the Deccan which demonstrated that the forces responsible for the political separation of the South from the North were by no means religious. The second outstanding fact of the pre-Mughul epoch, is the decline of the authority and influence of the Delhi Sultanate even in North India, in Bengal in East India, and Sind in the West. The authority of Delhi Sultanate was openly repudiated by rebellious governors, and the Rajputs were threatening to overwhelm the surrounding Muslim kingdoms of Delhi, Malwa and Gujarat. In the wake of the invasion of Timur-i-lang (A.D. 1398-99) Malwa and



Gujarat finally broke away from Delhi. Such was the political disintegration prevailing in India at the time when Guru Nanak was born.

Culturally also, it was a turning point in the history of India. New Highways on the seas had been opened up establishing contacts with the Western World, and fresh invasions from Central Asia had extended communications and contacts with races professing ways of life fundamentally different from those of the Hindu race. The great Indologist, Albirūnī, in his *Kitābul-Hind* tells us that we (the Muslims) believe in nothing in which they (the Hindus) believe and they believe in nothing in which we do.<sup>23</sup> This period, therefore, witnessed a cultural spectacle about which Sir John Marshall says that 'seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Mohemmedan and the Hindu, meeting and clashing and mingling together'.<sup>24</sup>

What was this Hindu culture which was being so violently shaken and reshaped by these cultural and political upheavals? A critical study of the development of the cultural history of the Hindu race reveals the existence in it of two distinct and separable culture-forms and impulses since the earliest times, when the Vedic Aryans are said to have conquered and subdued the pre-historic Mohenjo-Daro civilization and peoples of India in the second millennium B.C. This is hardly a place for discussing the genesis and contents of these two culture-forms but they may conveniently be described as Brahmanic and Sramanic culture-forms, broadly represented by the ceremonial activities and social way of life reflected in the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, and the individualist, contemplative, repulsive way of life represented in the reflections of the *Upaniṣadas*. The first is grounded in the recognition of a social heirarchy, a caste system,

the second recognises human equality in the spiritual sphere. The one is aristocratic by temperament and insists upon Sanskrit as the only fit vehicle for expressing and communicating spiritual truths and cultural activities of the race, the other is democratic and freely employs *prakrits* and vernaculars for the purposes of religion and culture. The former is racial and national in spirit insisting that Aryan truths are the monopoly and prerogative of the Hindus bounded by the geographical limits of India; the latter is universal and missionary in spirit, declaring that the whole humanity, irrespective of race and creed, are legitimate heirs to these truths. The first lays exclusive stress on ceremony and formal conformity of conduct, the second essentially insists on the necessity of inner culture and *sāadhanā*. These two culture-forms co-exist and overlap, commingle, influence and modify each other throughout the last 2500 years of the cultural history of the Hindus. The Vedic period lasting from about 1500 to 800 B.C., as the European scholars compute it, mainly represented the Brahmanic way of life; and the Upaniṣadic period lasting from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100 represented mainly the *Sramanic* way of life, marking the development of *Upaniṣadas* and accompanied by the growth and expansion of Jainism and Buddhism. This is followed by a revival of the Brahmanic way of life during the hey day of the great Hindu empire of the Guptas and flowering into the incarnation-doctrine, *avatārvād*, codified in the *Addendum* to the *Mahābhārata*, called 'Harivamśa'.

The latest archaeological excavations in India and their recent interpretation by experts throw a most revealing light on the roots of the above mentioned culture-forms and the subsequent shapes which these culture-forms have assumed throughout the history of Hindu race up to the conclusion of the eighteenth century. It has now become clear that the potent

forces behind the organisation of the Harrappa culture, which symbolised and supported the pre-Aryan culture and civilisation in India, were, by no means, wholly secular, and the archaeological finds more than hint that the priest-hood of some religious order played a considerably important part in the regulation of the Harrappa, economy, as appears from certain walled structures of the two capital cities so far dug out, of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh and Harrappa in Montgomery District of West Pakistan. Such rule by priests, by probably priest-kings, would be altogether in accordance with what is known of other contemporary ancient civilisations in Western Asia, where the written records in the forms of cuneiforms and heiroglyphs has provided us with knowledge and with insights which are beyond the limits of Archaeology; and it is not unlikely that the pre-Aryan culture and civilisation, individual and peculiar though it probably was, did not differ radically in respect of its basic organisation from its sister cultures and civilisations. Some of the relics found during the excavations of these two ancient cities throw light on the organisation of its basis and also furnish links between the Hindu culture-forms and religion, as we know them from the times of *Rig Veda*, and the religion of our pre-Aryan ancestors. The numerous clay figurines of women in all these excavations, whether in Baluchistan or Sindh, Western Punjab or Gujarat, suggest that there was some form of worship of Mother-goddess in which these figurines played their part in household shrines and there is a clay seal impression which bears a representation of a female from whose womb issue branches of a plant, which suggests the idea of an Earth-goddess connected with vegetation. Such gods are by no means rare in the Hinduism of the country-side even today, the *grām devatās* and the *kul devīs* of many a shrine in the countryside, particularly in the Himalayan region where iconoclastic Muslim impact has

not been so fierce. Secondly, the priests of such shrines are rarely Brahmans whose authority would date back to the Aryan invasion or supremacy by the middle of the second millennium B.C. but these priests are the outcastes who still know the ways of customs of the gods who were the sovereign rulers before *Rig Vedic* gods. The development of the concept of śakti, as a counterpart of all the Vedic gods, at quite an early period of the development of Hindu religious thought, is definitely traceable to the cult of these pre-Aryan clay-figurines.<sup>25</sup>

In later centuries whether it is the cult of Viṣṇu or Siva, Hari of Hara, or whether it is the development of Sāktism in its pure form, it is these clay-figurines who animate and mould the subsequent development of Hindu religious thought. This is more than one representation on the seals from Mohenjo-Daro and Harrappa of a male-god, horned and three-faced (*Trimūrti*) Siva so strikingly sculptured in the Elephanta Caves, Bombay off-shore, sitting in the posture of a yogi, *padamāsan*; and on one seal this three-faced yogi is surrounded by beasts, unmistakably suggesting the *paśupati* Siva, who is also the prince of the yogins, *yogeśwar*. The four beasts represented on this particular seal are the tiger, the elephant, the rhino and the buffalo, with a couple of deer at his feet. this yogi on the seal may very well have been conceived as four-faced, the *chatra-mukhi* (the fourth face being incapable of representation on a two-dimensional plane) with his four traditional links to the four quarters of the earth. This would readily recall the symbolical elephant, the lion, the horse and the bull of the column of Aśoka of third century B.C. at Sārnāth from which the *dharmacakra*, Aśokan Wheel, now imposed on the Tricolour Flag of the Republic of India, has been borrowed. The word śri which in Indian official parlance and in official correspondence has, almost instinctively and unofficially been adopted in

supersession of all other courtesy-titles after 1947, is unmistakably and directly traceable to the concept of the female counterparts of major gods of Hindu pantheon, which concept has its roots in the clay-figurines found in the pre-Aryan cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harrappa, and which, in the hands of the philosophical Hindus, has grown into the theological doctrine of dichotomy and bifurcation of the Ultimate Basis of the Universe, into the dual unity of śiva-śakti. The presence of deer by the feet of the horned yogi on the above-mentioned seal furnishes another significant link with the later religion of Gautama, the Buddha, Where the *Jātakas* represent Gautam as a king of the deer in one of his previous lives, Sarnath (*sārangnāth*) itself signifying the place where this king of the deer had his earthly career.

There is also evidence of phallic (*linga*) worship in the Mohenjo-Daro and Harrappa culture. Representations of *lingam* and *yoni* have been found, and also tree-worship, as a female deity is shown concealed in the branches of a *pipal* tree, which is still the holy tree of the Hindus, *ficus religiosa*. On the pieces of pottery discovered in the lowest layers at Harrappa and Kulli (Baluchistan), *pipal* leaves provide the dominant motif for pottery painters. The well-known Mohenjo-Daro seal—representation of the bull again shows that the humped bull was a sacred animal, true proto-type of the sacred śiva's bull, Nandi, found in most śaivite temples of which the gigantic black Nandi of Chammundi hill, Mysore, is most famous and the privileged position which this holy animal occupies today as he slowly and royally noses his way unmolested through our streets and bazars, helping himself to whatever takes his sacred fancy, must date back to at least the third millennium B.C., if not the fifth millennium B.C. on the banks of the Indus and the Ravi rivers. These links are of profound and immediate interests, providing as they do some

explanation of those many features that cannot be traced from the Aryan tradition brought into India after, or concurrently with, the fall of the Mohenjo-Daro and Harrappa civilization. The old faiths die hard. It is even possible that early historic Hindu society and its organisation, owed more to Harrappa and Mohenjo-Daro than it did to the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans.

The Hinduism which was shaken to its very foundations by the Muslim impact was, in the five centuries preceding the birth of Guru Nanak, a body of customs and a body of ideas, the two together having such pervasive power and defensive force as to absorb or resist, in a passive or stubborn manner, for centuries past, any system that came in contact with it, though it found itself as not altogether strong enough to absorb the shock which the Muslim impact gave it. It is sometimes assumed, and even claimed by Muslims themselves, that the majority of them in India represent the influx of foreigners during the past centuries, though such hardly is the case. A great majority of Muslims in India are Hindu converts, though in their composition and their relation with the Hindu converts, they exhibit a complexity which is not easy to analyse. The first group of Muslims, no doubt, came in the shape of invading armies from north-west. They were armies in contrast to all the earlier invasions, which were folk-migrations of the Aryans, the Scythians and the Hunas. As such they did not make any large scale settlements on the soil of India. From the very start, these men formed a military ruling caste, and though their numbers were considerable enough to form communities they were scattered groups rather than compact bodies. These men and their descendants scattered, formed, first a military aristocracy, then a ruling caste and eventually a social elite. They are still to be seen in the Indian Muslim families of the upper strata, the Quraishis, the Saiyids, the Chughtāis and the Bukharis, not

all of them genetically genuine. The remaining Muslim population, almost ninetyfive per cent of it, are Hindu converts, mostly lowcastes. These conversions were of two kinds, individual among the upper classes of the Hindus, and mass among the lower classes. Upper class Hindu individuals embraced Islam either from conviction or from policy. A long list could be made of persons during Muslim rule, holding high rank and official positions who were Hindu converts. But the bulk of Muslim population comes from mass converts, some as a result of forcible conversions, terror or economic duress, but others, and there is considerable number of such mass conversions, who embraced Islam voluntarily. Wherever the Muslims were established in power, Islam could not have failed to attract the Hindu outcastes. Its promise of brotherhood, its simple and complete demands, its comparatively few taboos opened up a new world to any outcaste who could see beyond the sunbaked mud walls and the surrounding shrub-land of his village. There is another, but very little known, factor which accounts for these mass conversions, the decadent Mahayana Buddhism. Not long before the Muslim impact in the eleventh century, the Buddhist population in India, by and large, came under the political domination of the militant Hindu dynasties who were active protagonists of the Brahmanic form of culture, which is the traditional antithesis of the *sramanic* form of culture. The resultant cultural conflict considerably aided the alliance of Buddhist masses with political Islam, both in north-western India and Gandhara valley, as well as in east India and Bengal. The subtle metaphysical doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism, called the doctrine of the *trikāya* as understood by the generality of the Buddhist masses, helped and hastened the absorption of these populations into Islam.

The Buddhist Trinity or *trikāya* is a complex doctrine

and, as understood by the Buddhist masses of Mahayana persuasion, it represents grades of Buddhahood, *dharmkāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *nirmanakāya*. These are a complex group of conceptions and are typical of the subtlety of Mahayana thought. Buddhahood, according to the esoteric tradition, has seven Buddha *kṣētras* which the *trikāya* represents the three, just as the 'body', 'soul, and 'spirit' of St. Paul is a condensed version of the seven-fold human nature of early Greek philosophers. From another angle, these grades of Buddhahood include *saṃpuraṇ*, Buddha, *pratyeka* Buddha etc. and *dharmakaya*, that is the body of the Dharma, which is the religious vesture of a Buddha, and is supposed to be present in varying degrees in all ages and climes. It was the doctrine of *trikāya*, which made it easy for the Buddhist masses of north-western India and eastern India to accept the status and authority of Prophet Mohammad, as the foundation-head of revealed truth. Now, in Buddhism, as Dr. Suzuki has pointed out,<sup>26</sup> "Mahayana Buddhism is a religion which developed around the life and personality of Buddha rather than a religion based upon the words of his mouth. the person is greater and more real than his words. In fact, words gain validity because of the person behind them." To be absorbed into Islam, and to renounce their ancestral faith, the Buddhist masses, when they came in contact with Islam did not experience any great spiritual qualms such as the Hindu masses of the *savarna* Brahmanic classes did.

On the political plane, their conversions to Islam did not represent a crude coercion, as it did in the case of the militant and priestly classes of the Hindus whose political power had been extinguished. On the contrary, it was a release for them from the political tensions and cultural pressures in which they were living. On the religious and spiritual plane, the conversion



to Islam represented to them an easy and an almost imperceptible glide. Once it was accepted that *dharmakāya* was, in the historical past, the vesture of the prophet of Arabia, Mohammad, the rest became easy. The *Quran*, as the revealed truth through Mohammad, then logically became the code of conduct and repository of religious truth to be meticulously followed. The catholicism, the universality, and the metaphysical subtlety of Mahayana Buddhism, which had made it into a great world religion for a thousand years in the greater part of Asia, directly facilitated the accession of its populations to Islam, while those who followed brahmanic Hinduism showed far greater tenacity and resistance to the impact and on slaught of Islam. Our Al-Biruni (970-1039), the author of the *Kitāb-ul-Hind*, who came to India in the wake of the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni, notes in chaste Arabic but with unconcealed acerbity, that "Hindus believe that there is no country like theirs, no nation like theirs, no religion like theirs, and no science like theirs." Al-Birūni adds that "the ancestors of the Hindus were not so narrow-minded as the present generation was."<sup>27</sup>

Something has already been said as to what the essential teachings of Guru Nanak are. Considerable ignorance and misunderstanding prevails about these teachings for a variety of reasons. He has been called an exponent of the Bhakti movement in medieval India, and it has even been asserted that he was a disciple of Kabir. Intelligent scholars no longer assert that there was any personal contact or even intellectual commerce between Kabir and Guru Nanak, but it is not properly realised that Guru Nanak was neither a *bhakta* in the historical or accepted sense of the word, nor an exponent of the Bhakti School of medieval India.

What is Bhakti School and what is a *bhakta* ? Literally, *bhakti* is understood as devotion to God, a fervent devotion to

God. In that sense it is an essential part of all theistic religions, past and present. It is to be found wherever men turn, in eagerness of desire or in extremity of despair, away from themselves to a supreme power, *Du* of Martin Buber, "You perceive it and accept it for your Truth,"<sup>28</sup> capable of controlling their environments and their destinies. This *bhakti* is unmistakably present in our earliest records, *Vedas*; and in *Rig Veda*, the grace of god Varuna<sup>29</sup>, already provides the ground for and expression of *bhakti*. In the Egyptian pyramid texts and in the writings of the baked tablets of Mesopotamia, in the texts of the Old and New Testaments of the Jews, this element of *bhakti* is unmistakably present in the Hindu sacred literature. However, the idea of *bhakti* had a genesis and development of its own. It is not with general and abstract idea of *bhakti* with which we are here concerned when assessing the teachings of Guru Nanak with reference to the claim that he belongs to the Bhakti School of Hinduism, but with historical development of this idea of *bhakti* in the religious history of Hinduism. In the later-than *Vedas* literature of the *Brahmans* (800-500 B.C.) Viṣṇu, though only one of the gods, already has assumed an attraction which distinguishes him from the others. Whether it is to rectify an error in a ritual of *yajna*, or it is in marriage, Viṣṇu's aid is invariably invoked, but by far most important reference to Viṣṇu in the *Brahmans* is the legend which is subsequently incorporated in the *Addendum*, the *Khilla*, to *Mahabharta*, called "Harivaṁśa" the legend in which Viṣṇu as Vamanavatar, redeemed the Earth from oppression of the king of demons, the *asura* Bali. Viṣṇu as Vāman, was contemptuously offered by Bali as much of earth as he could measure by his three strides. Straightaway Vāman swelled into the huge form of Trivikrama, the Giant of the Three Strides. and with his first step bestrode the whole earth, with the second, the whole heavens and his third stride he placed on the head of Bali thus

killing him : *ati dānen bali badho . . . ati sarvatra varjavetī*, 'Bali lost his life, because he gifted excessively . . . all excess is dangerous.' It is this thread of the legend which is taken over in the *Bhagvadgītā* (200 B.C.) and transformed into magnificent doctrine of the god Viṣṇu assuming terrestrial form, "whenever there is decline in Dharma on earth", *yeda yadahī dharmasya gilanir bhavati*. This doctrine in the *Bhagvadgītā*, the cornerstone of the Hindu Bhakti movement. Whatever the philosophical inconsistencies of this doctrine, it has struck firm roots in the Hindu mind during the last two thousand years. this doctrine, in the first place, takes the shape of the identity of the Brahman and the Atman of the *Upaniṣads*, and then identifies it with god Viṣṇu, who is one of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity, the other two being Brahmā and Siva. Viṣṇu and Brahman are, from now onwards, convertible terms, Secondly, it identifies Viṣṇu with certain proto-historical personalities, such as Rama and Krishan, and lastly, it lays down the technics of salvation and release from recurred births, the method of Devotion, the *Bhaktimārga*, in addition to the two methods already approved, the *Jnānmārga* and the *Karmamārga*. How the incarnated god can be reconciled with the impersonal, actionless, absolute Brahman of *Upaniṣadas* and of *advaitvād* of the later *Sankracharya* the *Bhagvadgītā* does not satisfactorily answer. It was not until many centuries had passed that the bhakti movement found a competent philosopher in the person of Rāmānuj (1017-1137) and in his *viśishtadvait* he tried to reconcile the conception of the impersonal Brahman with the incarnated Viṣṇu. But Rāmānuj was not the morning star of the Bhakti movement as is sometimes assumed. Between the period of *Bhagvadgītā* and Rāmānuj, a mighty movement of Bhakti took birth and flourished in South India represented by a succession of over fifty saints, known as *Alvars*.

In their hymns and songs, these Alvar saints assume the position taken up in the *Bhagvadgītā* with regard to the identity of Viṣṇu and Krishna, and in the type of devotion which They represent and approve. they maintain *Bhaktimārga* as the sure way to salvation. This happend in the period between seventh and ninth centuries of the Christain era<sup>30</sup> and a parallel movement of *bhakti* also arose which identified the Brahman with śiva but without positing that Śiva had assumed a historical incarnation. The thesis held by some recent scholars that the Bhakti movement in India owed its origin or main stimulus to the influence or impact of Islam, is thus found to be rather far-fetched.<sup>31</sup> The hymns of these Alvār saints, which are all in the Tamil language, were gathered together by Nathmuni in A.D. 920 and were called, *Nalayirappabandham*, and these hymns are regarded by Alvārs as embodying the essence and validity of the *Vedas* and they are used in replacement of sacred Sanskrit texts in the ritual worship by the Alvārs. These facts are interesting as they throw light on certain facts of the Sikh movement as it developed out of the teachings of Guru Nanak. Guru Arjan, the fifth Nanak, collected his own revelations and of his predecessors into one volume, called the *Adi Granth* (A.D. 1604) and this *Adi Granth*, is popularly referred to as the "fifth Veda" in northern India. This "Fifth Veda", in succession of time to the four previous *Vedas*, is believed to supercede and replace them all. The suggestion which is sometimes made that the *Adi Granth* was compiled with a view to give the Sikh people the status of 'the people of the book', *ahl-i-kitab*, "those to whom Allah spoke"<sup>32</sup>, to obtain for them a political status higher than that of the Hindus and to save them from the exactions of *Jiziya*, is thus shown to be merely fanciful, if not spiteful.

Bhakti was imported to northern India by a follower of

Ramanujacarya, Ramanand. Ramanand came to reside at Benaras, modern Varanasi, in about A.D.1430 and the movement which he founded there produced two mighty figures Kabir and Tulsidas. Kabir sought to bridge the gulf between creeds of the Hindus and the Muslim by preaching *bhakti* of an impersonal God, while Tulsidas followed the conservative tradition of preaching the *bhakti* of a personal god, Viṣṇu incarnated as Rama. At the end of the thirteenth century, *bhakti* appeared in Maharastra and western India through the works of Jnaneśvar, who wrote a commentary on the *Bhagvadgītā* in verse. In the sixteenth seventeenth centuries the *bhakti* movement flowered into its full bloom with Tukaram in Maharashtra and Chaitanyā in the north-east India . Chaitanyā worshipped Viṣṇu in the form of Krishna and Tukaram in the form of his village god, Vithobha. Mention has already been made of *bhakti* towards Siva as a god of Hindu Trinity and by the great Tamil poet Manika-vichar(circa A.D.900) in his *Saiva Siddhānt*, wherein god śiva is transformed into śiva the Saviour. Bhakti is also preached by the Saktas in their scripture, *Devi Bhagvadi*.

From these synopsis of the development of Bhakti- thought in India, it becomes clear that *bhakti* as a devotional attitude in religion must be distinguished from Bhakti proper which is equivalent to *Bhāgvata pūjā*, that is, devotion towards god Viṣṇu or, at other times, -towards some other diety of the Hindu Trinity or outside it, When it is asserted that Guru Nanak was not a bhakta, what is meant is, firstly (1) that he did not teach that *Bhaktimārga*, that is, mere emotional devotion, constituted the whole of the main essence of religious activity or that it was in itself exclusively sufficient for salvation whatever the contents of that term 'salvation' may be and secondly (2) that he is not, in any sense, a follower of the doctrine that takes its inception from the doctrine in *Bhāgvadgītā* asserting the identity of the

absolute Brahma with Viṣṇu and the identity of Viṣṇu with the incarnated human form of Krishna or some other proto-historical figure.

The essence of this Bhakti movement may thus be summed up in the following two propositions:

- (1) That god Viṣṇu is a compassionate Person, who out of his compassion for human beings incarnates himself from time to time, sambhavami-yuge yuge, and has so incarnated himself as Rama and Krishna, the proto-historical individuals;
- (2) That the finite selves may be saved through the loving worship of this incarnated god.

By implication, this doctrine of Bhakti transcends the distinctions of caste in so far as the spiritual salvation of finite selves through *bhakti* is concerned. There is a splinter group of this Bhakti movement, the greatest exponent of which is Kabir, called the *nirguna* school as contrasted with the *saguna* school, followers of which worship God in His human incarnations. The *nirguna* school lays stress on worship of God in His infinite and formless aspect. The *nirguna* School neither denies the possibility or historical truth of 'incarnations', nor crusades against the institutes of caste as embodied in the *varṇāshramādharma*. It does not protest against the social discrimination inherent in the doctrine and the political consequences of such discrimination, nor does it challenge the sources of authority in which these distinctions are rooted, the corpus of Sanskrit Brahmanic literature, from *Rigveda*<sup>33</sup> down through the *Bhāgavadgītā*<sup>34</sup> to *Mānavadharmasāstra*.<sup>35</sup> In ultimate analysis, the *nirguna* school is essentially a methodology and not a fundamentally distinct doctrine. It is a method of salvation for the finite selves and no more.

It has been necessary to go through this cultural back-

ground of Hinduism and to provide this historical perspective of its political and social conditions so as to furnish a backdrop to the content and significance of the religion revealed by Guru Nanak. The birth of Guru Nanak is, thus, seen to coincide with one of the most critical periods of the history of Hindu race, if not, indeed, the entire mankind. A whole political and cultural epoch had come to an end, and medieval India concluded with the second battle of Panipat in A.D. 1526. A unified modern India took birth from the ruins of a disintegrated and medieval India. The organism the Hindu society and Hindu culture had, for the first time in its history, failed to absorb the shock of a foreign impact, that of Islam and to assimilate it. Hinduism, sometimes, likened to a ship in which one can compare its hierarchical castes and the essential ideas that bind them, with the steel framework and special fixtures, such as the engines and the steering gear, which fixtures are located in some parts but not in all sections of the Hinduship. So, it is claimed as a mixture of all these component parts, a loss of any one of which would involve the sinking of the ship. This view of Hinduism still-persists alongwith a faith in its almost limitless power of assimilation and its capacity to endure. The analysis of the consequences of the impact of Islam on the Hindu race given above, should provide a necessary corrective to this faith and optimism on which some contemporary politician might wish to base his state policies today, Some modern ships are so carefully constructed and sub-divided with such technical perfection that they are deemed unsinkable, a claim similar to that made on behalf of Hinduism. Seamen, however, know that these claims of unsinkability are only based on a calculation of known and predictable dangers. This, at any rate, is the warning note implicit in the teachings of Guru Nanak.

In this cultural and historical background, and in the locale

of the north-western India and the Punjab where always decisive political and cultural struggles and upheavals have taken place crucial to the destiny of the Hindu race, Guru Nanak set upon his appointed task of laying down the foundations of a new society which must retain all that is true in the past and yet accept supplementation and re-arrangement to guard against the already known dangers and to provide strength and elasticity necessary for future risks and perils. Guru Nanak is neither a *bhakta* as our Ākāśvāni delights in referring to him nor an adherent of the *nirguna* school of Bhakti as aspirants to academic doctorates in our present day universities love to dub him. His only connection with the Bhakti movement is of an accidental character, of chronological nature. Historically, he lived in the fifteenth century which was a flowering century of Bhakti movement in the northern India and this alone relates him to this phase of Hinduism. Secondly, Guru Nanak, in his revelations, makes use of metaphors and phrases, verbal expressions and idioms which are the stock-in-trade of the religious pious literature of his times, which was more or less, inevitable. With regard to the meanings and nuances of these metaphors and phrases, he leaves no doubt whatever that he is transvaluating and not mechanically copying. That which sharply distinguishes him from the Bhakti movement as well as the *nirguna* school is demonstrably fundamental. Guru Nanak absolutely repudiates the concept of Incarnation of God, who is *ajūni saibhang*, unborn and self existent.<sup>36</sup> Guru Nanak denies the adequacy and efficacy of any mere emotional approach or loving adoration of formal God for Salvation though he concedes its high value.<sup>37</sup> Guru Nanak insists that a life lived in a social context and on an ethical plane is necessary for salvation. His concept and content of 'salvation' is also distinct from that conceived by the followers of the Bhakti School in



more than one fundamental respect. Above all, Guru Nanak repudiates, not only the Hindu caste structure but the whole basis of the divine authority for *varṇāśramdharāma* and asserts that a full and authentic religious life is impossible without such repudiation. These are fundamental and significant points and an appreciation of these distinctions alone can explain why Guru Nanak's teachings resulted in the birth of a political nation and a special society while no such fruits ripened out of the variegated chromatism of the Bhakti movement.

As a philosophical foundation of the religion he brought to men. Guru Nanak rejected *māyāvād-vedānta*, the interpretation by Sankara of the *Upaniṣadas*, which doctrine involves a denial of the reality of the world, and which doctrine has glaciated and pervaded the whole thought of the Hindu race. It is epitomised in the cliché: *Tattwamasmi*. All moral and individual distinctions are, in this way, obliterated, the criminal and the saint are equally manifestations of Brahman, and to believe that one has a separate individuality A.B. or C, is to dwell into a state of gross error and cross illusion, or at least, a state in which the facts are fundamentally misperceived and misconceived. Thus a social life on a rigorous ethical plane, with an abiding sense of duties and rights, becomes inconceivable, and the absence of social cohesion, and consequent political weakness, logically and inevitably, proceed from this position. Guru Nanak has placed his new Society on a sound philosophic base. His *Japu* is believed by many as an epitome of Nanak's philosophy and teachings and the whole of the remaining Guru Granth is viewed as essentially exegetic. This thesis about the *Japu* is arguable and in the *Japu* Guru Nanak has clearly laid down that the moral categories and imperatives are absolutely real and abiding, and not mere verbal quibblings or relativistic.<sup>38</sup> Having thus repudiated *māyāvād-*

*vedānta* and having firmly established the validity and absolute ontological status of ethical categories, Guru Nanak preached that the content of salvation was not merely individual but collective and social.<sup>39</sup> Thus is the validity of social progress and political activity, within the framework of a religious life of the highest order, retrieved.

The organisation of the Sikhs into the Khalsa Panth, as a political organisation was founded with the explicit and declared object of gaining political fulcrum so as to establish a free, dynamic and progressive society, in which it becomes possible for each individual to develop his personality as a limb of the society. That religion is to be practised not in utter and unrelated seclusion and retirement, not by a denial and negation of the world and sense-experience, but on the social, ethical and co-operative plane, is the point which Guru Nanak is clearly making in the sixteenth stanza of *Japu*. These teachings and these doctrines can have nothing but a remote and superficial resemblance with the teachings of the Bhakti school, and the historical contiguity of Guru Nanak to a certain phase of the Bhakti movement in northern India is no more than a coincidence. These teachings of Guru Nanak entail fundamental and far-reaching social and political consequences, and the history of the Punjab, henceforth, inevitably, becomes the Sikh history. During the last days of his sojourn on earth, he settled, as already said, in a township which he himself founded on the right bank of the river Ravi, called Kartarpur. He settled as a farmer on the lands surrounding this township and worked there with his own hands, so as, by precept and by deed, to teach and demonstrate as to what one of the three pillars of Sikhism, *kirat karo*, signifies. This means, engaging in honest, non-exploitive, creative labour. All the fruits of the labour, whether of his own or of his Sikhs, were pooled into a common fund out of which the needs of the local

community were met and out of which a common and free kitchen was run and which was open to all those who needed food, and which fund was open to all those who stood in some need or succour. Thus Guru Nanak exhorted mankind to adopt a life of religion, a life of nearness to and awareness of God, a life of ethical conduct and a life of social service, of mutual cooperation and of self-sacrifice, in short, a way of life alone capable of redeeming man.

What Guru Nanak's teachings and life's work amount to is not merely the inception of a religious movement, much less a phase of Bhakti movement of medieval India. Happily, Nietzsche has given us a phrase through which we may comprehend the true significance of the achievement of Guru Nanak. The phrase is "Transvaluation of Values". The process of this kind is neither a phase nor a link in any preceding historical movement strictly speaking. It is the most fundamental character of a civilisation of every civilisation. It is the beginning of a civilisation in that it reminds all the basic forms of a culture that went before. It understands them differently and practises them in another way. Apparently, as it strikes all but the most keen observers, it begets no more, but only reinterprets. But it is neither a repetition nor a continuation but a new fundamental phenomenon. Indeed, such a process alone, as is the case with the teachings of Guru Nanak, assumes that the genuine act of creation has already occurred enabling it to enter upon an inheritance of big actualities. It is in this sense that Guru Nanak may be said to have founded no novel religion but merely unfolded the potentialities that lay dormant in the human psyche.

Nevertheless, Guru Nanak has ushered in a new spiritual era as well as a social and political era for mankind.

This was not a matter of mere political or even religious transformation. It was the condition of the soul of a people

which underwent transformation. It was the kind of process which took place in the Greeko-Roman world in the interval from Socrates to Marcus Aurelius: and in case of India, at the time when Vedic *Aranyakas* and Upaniṣadic literature had come into existence, i.e. round about the time of Emperor Ashoka. No external life and conduct, no institutions and customs, but the deepest and the last things are in question when such a process is initiated: and viewed thus alone it is possible to understand Guru Nanak and Sikhism properly.

As a divine, inspired, thinker and a religious teacher, Guru Nanak thus occupies a uniquely significant place in History. He has neatly separated pure religion from ethics and ritual. He has determined the place of religion in social context and has clearly shown their interdependence. He has, with remarkable penetration, analysed and formulated the basic problems of social organisation, namely the creation of wealth the distribution of wealth and the organisation of power, the problems which only in recent years have assumed a clear and definite shape in the human mind, but problems to which clear and acceptable answers are still awaited. Guru Nanak gives definite and clear answers to these problems and correlates them to the problems of religion. Such clear formulation of the basic problems, their elucidation, their solution and their correlation to each other is not to be found easily in the past human History. His teachings arose out of the political and social problems of the Hindu race at a great critical transitional period and the answers that he gave to these problems are calculated, not only to preserve that what is best in the Hindu genius, but also to furnish a firm foundation for the reconstruction of the Hindu as well as the universal human society, to meet the requirements of modern age, of which he is indubitably the morning star. Further, the teachings of Guru Nanak shed and project light into the future and seek to solve

its social and religious questions, a prognostication of which problem is assuming a dim shape only today. Let us salute Guru Nanak.

[This paper is the culmination of a series of papers on Guru Nanak prepared and presented to the literati by the author himself on various occasions. In its present form it was presented to an audience of the Punjabi University, Patiala, on 29th April, 1976 as one of a series of commemorative lectures. Later on it appeared in Punjabi University's six-monthly *Nanak Prakash Patrika* (Vol. IX, No. 1, June 1977) also. We have reproduced it here from a copy revised by the author himself before his death--editors]

### Notes & References

- <sup>1</sup> This Maharaja Kaura Mal was a *Sahajdhari* (probationer) Sikh and was appointed the Governor of the Multan Province by Mir Mu'in-ul-Malik, known as Mir Mannu to the Sikh chronicles. Mir Mannu became the *subedar* of the Lahore satarapy in 1748. He is notorious in Sikh chronicles as the most vicious enemy of the Sikhs, who pursued, as his main state policy, the complete genocide of the Sikh people by organised, wholesale and ruthless massacres.
- <sup>2</sup> The reference is obviously to Macauliffe's observation in *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, p. XV—editors.
- <sup>3</sup> For one such rigorous study see W.H. Mcleod's *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*—editors.
- <sup>4</sup> According to some writers "Mehta Kalu Chand"—editors.
- <sup>5</sup> *nā eh(u) tuṭai nā mal(u) lāgai, nā eh(u) jalāi nā jāi.*  
(ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ, ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ)  
—*Āsā* (Vār), M. I, *AG*, p. 471.
- <sup>6</sup> *merā nāu[n̄]pārbrahm(u) paramesar(u), terā nau(n̄) guru paramesar(u).*  
(ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ)  
—*Purātan Janam-sākhī*, p. 15.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

- \* "Guru' etymologically, in Sanskrit, means 'Dispeller of Darkness', Hence the claim : When Guru Nanak came into the world, darkness was dispelled and there was light all around" :

satiguru nānak paragaṭiā miṭi dī-undh(u) jag(i) chānan(u) hoā.

(ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਿਟੀ ਧੁੰਦੁ ਜਗਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਆ) ...BG. (27/1)

- <sup>9</sup> The ten Gurus are, in mystic sense, one guru in one continuous manifestation. Guru Gobind Singh in his incomplete autobiography, *the Bachitra Natak*, says that 'those who regard ten Gurus as ten events, are in gross illusion.'

- <sup>10</sup> The major impediment in understanding the true nature of Sikhism, so far, has been the desire to explain it as a historical phase of the Hindu religious thought of medieval India. The possibility that it may be something discontinuous and unique, was deemed as basically misconceived and was brushed aside as simply impossible or unscientific by those nurtured in the crude notions of the nineteenth century dogma of evolution and Hegelian dialectics of History. The concept of Emergent Evolution, of discontinuous and unpredictable events in the physical structure of matter and biological process, came to be recognised only recently while the critical thought on History and Religion still remains contaminated by the old nineteenth century mechanical concepts. The following passage, as reproduced in *the Listener* (London, 30th Oct. 1947) occurred in a broadcast of B.B.C by Dr. I.A. Richards in October, 1947 :

"Here is a very odd thing. In literature, the best in each land comes first, comes suddenly and never comes again. This is a disturbing, uncomfortable, unacceptable idea to people who take their Doctrine of Evolution oversimply. But I think, it must be admitted to be true. Of the very greatest things in each sort of literature, the masterpiece is unprecedented, unique, never challenged or approached henceforth."

Something analogous to this, is true of Sikh religion also.

- "(ੳ) ikdū[n]jibho[n] lakh hohi[n] lakh(u) hove[n]h lakh bis.

lakh(u) lakh(u) gerā ākhiai ek(u) nām(u) jagdis.

(ਇਕਦੂ ਜੀਭੇ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਲਖ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਲਖ ਵੀਸ॥

ਲਖੁ ਲਖੁ ਗੋਤਾ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ॥)

—Japu (32) AG, p. 7.

- (b) dharmasāl kartārpur(u) sād̄h sangat̄(i) sach(ch) khand vasāyā

vāhigurū gursabdu sunāyā.

(ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਚਖੰਡ ਵਸਾਇਆ॥

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ॥)

—BG, 24 (1/6).

- <sup>12</sup> *Nanak Prakash* of Bhai Santokh Singh records an interesting incident of the later days of the Guru's life, when Guru Nanak had permanently settled at Kartarpur (Ravi). Two rich and elderly gentlemen, Pritha and Khera from central Punjab, came to reside at the Kartarpur Farm. After some stay there they were so impressed by the spiritual grandeur of Guru Nanak and his teachings that they humbly petitioned that they may be permitted to stay in Guru's personal service. "Go back, to your homes, spend your wealth in the service of the poor and your lives in the service of the people, and thereby you will have rendered ample service to my person", advised the Guru :  
 bole sri prabh(u), ham taihñvā, base sada satisingat jaihvā.  
 krit kari wand so khāo, charaṇ saraṇ nit eon je kamāo.  
 (ਬੋਲੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਹਮ ਪਗ ਤਹਿਵਾ। ਬਸਹਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਤਿਸੰਗਤ ਜਹਿਵਾ॥  
 ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਿ ਵੰਡ ਸੁ ਖਾਓ। ਚਰਣ ਸਰਣ ਨਿਤ ਇਉਂਜਿ ਕਮਾਓ॥)

—*Nānak Prakāsh* (ed. Vir Singh), p. 1122.

- <sup>13</sup> pahilā pāñi jiu hai  
 (ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ)

—Āsā (Var), M 1, AG, p. 472.

- <sup>14</sup> gagan mai thāl(u) ravi chand(u) deepak bane  
 tārikā mandal janak moti  
 dhūp(u) mālanlo pawāñ(u) chavaro kare  
 sagal banrāi phoolant joti  
 kaisi arti hoi bhav khandanā  
 teri ārti anhatā sabda wājant bheri  
 (ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਬਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ  
 ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ  
 ਧੂਪ ਮਲਾਨਲੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰੋ ਕਰੇ  
 ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੁਲੰਤ ਜੋਤੀ  
 ਕੈਸੀ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਭਵ ਖੰਡਨਾ  
 ਤੇਰੀ ਆਰਤੀ ਅਨਹਤਾ ਸਬਦ ਵਾਜੰਤ ਭੇਰੀ॥)

—Dhanāsari, M 1, AG, p. 13, also p. 663.

- <sup>15</sup> Colonel Mian Singh, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, constructed in 1829 an artificial lake at Mattan, fed by the Martand spring and, in the midst of this lake, constructed a *gurdwara* to commemorate the visit of Guru Nanak to that place. In about 1854, this *gurdwara* was demolished and the spot converted into a Hindu temple by the Brahman priests under encouragement of the new

Dogra rulers of Kashmir, and remains so till today. In the times of the successor of Maharaja Gulab Singh, the Sikhs built a *gurdwara* on the right bank of this lake, which now commemorates Guru's visit to Mattan.

- <sup>16</sup> ridh(i) sidh(i) avrā sād  
(ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਅਵਰਾ ਸਾਦ)

—Japu, 29, *AG*, p. 6.

- <sup>17</sup> panj tat(u) kā putlā nānak merā nāo[n̄]  
(ਪੰਜ ਤਤੁ ਕਾ ਪੁਤਲਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ)

—*Janam-sākhī Bhai Bālā*

- <sup>18</sup> subh(i) amlā[n̄] bajho [n̄] dono[n] roi  
(ਸੁਭਿ ਅਮਲਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਦੋਨੋ ਰੋਈ)

—*BG*, I (33/4).

- <sup>19</sup> See *AG*, pp. 1107—1110.

- <sup>20</sup> hau[n̄] dhādhi vekār(u) kārai lāiā  
rāt(i) dihai[n̄]h kai vār dhurahu[n̄] phurmāiā  
dhādi sach[ch] ai mahal(i) Khasm(i) bulāiā  
sach[ch]ji sift(i) sālāh kapṛā pāiā  
(ਹਉ ਢਾਈ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ  
ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ  
ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਲਿ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ  
ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ)

-Majh (Vār), M.I. *AG*, p. 150.

- <sup>21</sup> srist(i) sabh ik varan hoi  
dharam ki gat(1) rahi  
(ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ,  
ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ।)

—Dhanāsri M.I, *AG*, p. 663.

- <sup>22</sup> Nanaś vedmārgasthan dehli deṣmāsthithah  
Pancvarṣa kritam̄ rājyam̄ nāmāsya bābaroabhavat.  
(ननाराश वेदमार्गस्थान देहलीदेशमास्तिः ।  
पंचवर्षं कृतं राज्यं नामास्य बाबरोऽभवत् ।।)

- <sup>23</sup> S.K. Chatterjee, *Albiruni's Commemorative, Volume*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 19.

- <sup>24</sup> So far available only in the from of the *Proceedings of the British*



*Academy*, Vol. 33, 1947, in the form of *Rhys Memorial Lecture*. Also in R.E.M. Wheeler, *Ancient India* No. 3, London, 1947.

<sup>25</sup> Mesopotamia worshipped a beneficial *Great Mother* whose fertility was seen in the produce of the Earth and who gained additional religious importance by a variety of associations. The Earth was viewed as counterpart and, hence, spouse of Heaven, *Anu*, or of the Waters, *Enki*, or even of the kingly storm-God, *Enlil*. In Egypt, on the other hand, the Earth was a male god. CEEPTAH or OSIRIS : the ubiquitous Mother Goddess was not connected with the soil. Her image was cast in the primitive and guise of the cow"—Henri Frankfort *et al.* *Before Philosophy*, p. 239.

<sup>26</sup> "The Shin Sects of Buddhism", *Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. VII, p. 229.

<sup>27</sup> *Albiruni's India* (tr. E. C. Sachau), p. I, 321.

<sup>28</sup> *Du nimmst sie Wahr- Ich und Du*, 1924.

<sup>29</sup> "In whom all wisdom centres, as the nave is set within wheel. Haste ye to honour Varuna (*Trita*) as Kine hasten together in the field, even as they muster steeds to yoke." VIII, 41.

<sup>30</sup> The traditional dates, asserted by Alvares themselves are 4203-2706 B.C. though modern scholarship is now in general agreement that they were predecessors of Ramanuja and preceded him by a couple of centuries.

<sup>31</sup> Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>32</sup> *Quran*, II, 254.

<sup>33</sup> X. 90. <sup>34</sup> *Catuvarnayamyā srishti*. IV. 13. <sup>35</sup> 1.87.99.

<sup>36</sup> *Japu* (*Mulmantra*), *AG*, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *terā nām(u) kari[n] channāthiā je man(u) ursā hoi.*

*karaṇi kungū je ralai ghaṭ antar(i) pūjā hoi.*

(ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਕਰੀ ਚਨਣਾਠੀਆ ਜੇ ਮਨੁ ਉਰਸਾ ਹੋਇ।

ਕਰਣੀ ਕੁੰਗੂ ਜੇ ਰਲੈ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਹੋਇ।)

--Gujari, M.I, *AG*, p. 489.

<sup>38</sup> *punni pāpi ākhaṇ(u) nāhi[n].*

(ਪੁੰਨੀ ਪਾਪੀ ਆਖਣ ਨਾਹਿ)

--Japu (20), *AG*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> *jini nām(u) dhiāi ā gae masakat(i) ghāl(i)*

*nānak te mukh ujale keti chhuṭṭi nāl(i).*

(ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ)

--Japu (last sloka), *Ibid*, p. 8.

## MARTIN LUTHER AND GURU NANAK

A few days ago, a weekly in India reproduced an article published in a daily in Canada. It gave details of a discussion held by the daily's correspondent with a Sikh student regarding the Sikh faith. In the course of the discussion, the Sikh student observed that Sikh religion could be construed to have with the Hindu faith the same equation as the Roman Catholicism and Protestantism had with Christianity. For a proper apprehension of the problem, it needs be recalled that Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was a contemporary of Martin Luther.

Such erroneous ideas as above, prevail not only among Sikh students but also among a majority of other English-knowing people in India.

These ideas were floated first by J.D. Cunningham about a hundred years ago, and were later on adopted by scholars claiming conversance with western lore--all this without proper verification and independent enquiry. Guru Nanak's and his successor's *bānī* (word) contradicts such false notions and other similar erroneous conceptions. The religion propounded by Guru Nanak has no such affinity with the classical Hindu faith as the Roman Catholic and the Protestant faiths have had with Christianity. A minimum of substance underlying these ideas resolves only to this: (1) That Martin Luther and Guru Nanak, both, flourished during the sixteenth century of the Christian era: (2) That Martin had objected to the interpretation of certain Christian doctrines and practices as propagated by Rome's sovereign Bishop, the Pope, and his priests.

On the other hand, Guru Nanak too condemned and denounced many a belief and practices prevalent in the Hindu faith. From this analogy, supercilious theorists are easily led to the belief that the role of Guru Nanak was confined only to condemnation and denouncement of what was facile in Hinduism.

Two other similar but wrong ideas based on gross ignorance and prevailing equally amongst the Sikhs and the non-Sikhs, may also be recalled in this context. They are: (a) The Sikh faith is only a reformed and purified version of the Hindu faith; and (b) the religion propagated by Guru Nanak was but an offshoot of the Bhakti movement of medieval times. It is proposed to defer examination of the above stated last two points to some later occasion<sup>1</sup> and for the being take up only one question: Is Guru Nanak's status and relation with the classical Hindu faith analogous to the status and relation of Martin Luther's with Christianity? Let us enquire who Luther was, what ideas he preached, and in what respect Guru Nanak's ideas differ from him?

Martin Luther (A.D. 1483-1546) came of an ordinary peasant family of a small Saxon Town of Eisleben in Germany. He was hardly four, when his family migrated to a nearby town, Mansfield. He passed his early days there receiving what little schooling he could at the local Latin School, and it was here that he could muster an adequate knowledge of the articles of beliefs and practices of European followers of Christianity. Two ideas took firm hold of his mind: The first, the ruling emperor of Germany had an important role to play for safe-guarding their fatherland from the onslaughts and rampages of the Turks and thereby to give them the much needed protection; the second, the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, was the Father and Master of the Christian people. For that reason he could exercise

the same rights over his people, as a father could over his family. These two ideas formed Luther's mainstay for reinterpreting Christian doctrines in a way that later shook the very basis of the Christendom and split it in twain, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic. In contrast to this, Guru Nanak's teachings were so very enlightened, original, unique and doctrine-based that they, in no way, depended for their sanction on the status of kings, monarchs, the clergy or the bishops. This very fact, indeed, is sufficient to distinguish and demarcate the status of the two. Guru Nanak and Martin Luther.

Having finished his schooling in the Latin school at Mansfield. Martin Luther shifted to a high educational institute at Magdeburg and, thence, to the famous academy at Eisenach. Here, he completed the study of grammar and, then, shifted to the University at Erfurt, which was considered to be the foremost seat of higher learning at that time throughout Germany and Europe. There, Luther delved deep into Biblical Theology and picked up the rigorous methodology of scholastic nominalists. The bent of his mind, however, was not towards the unearthing of deeper doctrinaire or philosophical subtleties but towards the effects their interpretations exercised on the day to day life and working of the believers. The subject-matter of the 95 Theses, which formed the basis and the starting point of the Protestant order was, largely, these very effects exercising the minds of the believers. This vital divergence in the concerns and the occupations of the two great minds we are discussing, that of Guru Nanak and Martin Luther, further demarcates their position and status.

Martin Luther, no doubt, was a great religious leader of intuitive faculties of the sixteenth century Europe so far as Christendom is concerned. But, he had neither brought forth a new religion, nor was instrumental in giving birth to an ideology that did not exist

earlier. He thus, became a revivalist and a symbol of only those ideas which were in vogue among the people in Europe and had been cherished for long by the people, Guru Nanak has no such tag tied on to him.

Now, what are the ideas for which Martin stood ? If one were to look into the pages of the history of the Dark Ages a little more closely, it becomes quite clear that then and even centuries earlier, the common people professing the Christian faith loved to impart to their children the basic knowledge about their faith, for example, regarding "The Lord's Prayer", "The Ten Commandments", etc., in their mother tongue. This is the basic principle of the Protestant people who own Martin Luther as their leader. In the fifteenth century of the Christian era, Religious Revival was in full swing in the whole of Europe. This was due to certain causes. Epidemics were raging ferociously throughout Europe. People feared death any moment. The whole of Europe travelled under fear of the Turkish conquest. Stricken with stark fears, the people of Europe were inclining more and more towards religion. Thus, the dynamism of Martin Luther has had its roots in incitement of the religious feeling and in socio-political factors operating at that time. Guru Nanak's religion, on the other hand, stood in need of no such props.

A peep into the Social History of Central Europe, particularly of Germany of a couple of centuries before the arrival of Martin Luther on the scene, reveals a powerful surge among common people claiming control over certain fields of religious action. They regarded undue interference by Pope and his clergy as unwarranted. This revolt against the priestly class was very much there before Martin Luther was born. "*The Jus episcopale*" propagated by Luther in his 95. Theses had been recognized and authenticated in Saxony and Brandenburg long before Luther was born. In fact, this was the main stock

in Luther's 93 Theses which, more than anything else, helped promote and propagate the Protestant ideals, for it ensured the concentration of power in the hands of the rulers rather than in the hands of Pope's emissaries. Consequently, the rulers of about half of Europe became supporters of Martin Luther and extended patronage to his ideology with the result that Protestantism in no time became the state and people's religion of a greater part of Europe. In contrast with this, the faith propagated by Guru Nanak and his successors has had to wade through a sea of state havoc and suffer numberless tyrannies perpetuated on the Sikhs by their rulers and hostile elements for over a century and a half. They could earn a respite only after a very long and arduous struggle.

At the time Luther received his education in the University, the priestly class was the sole repository of all sorts of knowledge in Europe, just as, in our own country, the Brahmans have had the monopoly of learning and teaching for several thousand years. Ideas inimical to this monopolistic control over learning were rearing their heads mooted by the priests themselves. Tracts were written and freely distributed denouncing this monopoly. Socialist ideas were also propagated here and there. Martin Luther got so swayed by these movements, that he turned a monk. His aim was to seek an escape from the disgusting goings on around him, and to get absorbed in Christian practices to seek solace for his soul. Luther spent sometime in a monastery and thereafter turned a friar (a priest). As a priest Luther interpreted indulgences sanctioned by Pope in such a way as earned him the latter's extreme wrath. In this conflict with the Pope the rulers of Germany sided with Luther and saved him from the wrath of the Pope. Thus arose the Protestant order of the Christians, which grew powerful day by day. That Guru

Nanak's ideas were from the very outset free from any controversy, is another point of difference.

Now, what were the practices which were interpreted differently by Martin Luther and thereby gave rise to the Protestant order?

The institution of granting indulgences had long been in vogue in the Christian world. It had been there for quite a number of centuries even before Luther appeared on the scene: nay ever since Christianity had its sway. In earlier times, whenever a follower of the Christian faith committed a sin or some act tabooed by the faith, he would make a confession of it in an open congregation of the faithful and, by way of penance, would undertake a fast or some other purging ritual. As time lapsed, the practice to make a confession in the open congregation of the Church got weakened, the sinners began to make their confessions before an ordinary priest, who would then prescribe a punishment that the sinner would have to undergo. This institution, no doubt, was borrowed by Christians from the code of conduct of the Buddhists of Syria, where Christianity took its first lessons. The traditions of confession of sin and of undergoing punishment (*tankhā*) among Sikhs too is a continuation of the practice of Buddhist *Vinay* and has no direct connection with the Christian practice.

With the passage of time this institution of confession and undergoing penance for redress, necessitated the working out of some sort of guidelines for regulating it. In the seventh century A.D. a system of commutation was evolved. Under it the form of punishment could be altered. For instance, if a sinner was required to undergo fast for six months, he could instead, be asked to recite the Christian prayer six times, or else to contribute six standard coins for charitable purposes. The penance then was considered to have been duly undergone.

This, then was the idea underlying the granting of indulgence, and Martin Luther never objected to it. On the contrary, he thought it to be a healthy institution. Church which laid down punishment could, he argued, commute it as well. By the thirteenth century A.D. This institution of indulgence had, however, come to be questioned in some respects. The older practice envisaged a genuine feeling of regret and penance on the part of the sinner. He was expected to confess it openly and undergo punishment with a feeling of resignation. Now, a feeling grew that a sinner by invoking indulgence could obtain divine forgiveness but not state pardon. He, therefore, notwithstanding his having undergone penance was still answerable to the state and its people.

Earlier for a long while, it had been held that Pope had full jurisdiction over his believers, both in matters spiritual and mundane. It was in pursuance of this right that he and his emissaries issued indulgences. Later on, a new doctrine called *Thesaurus Meritorium* or the "Treasury of Merits" was added to it to provide the indulgences a convincing base. It was given out that just as Lord Jesus Christ has left for the redemption of his followers infinite merits, likewise, the past and current Christian saints too have left their merits for the benefit of the faithful. They stand engraved in an "Incomplete Thesaurus Meritorium", out of which the Pope could, any time, give the benefit of some merit to the sinner seeking indulgence.

The doctrine of *Thesaurus Meritorium* is not the creation of the Christian world. This, on the other hand, was the Smaritan idea of the Vedic Age and had, through the aegis of Mahayana Buddha, infiltrated the Christian faith enroute Turkistan and the Middle east countries. The *Pūrva-mimānsā* of Jaimini lays down that the reward of Vedic rituals, when not instant, gets accumulated in an Incomplete Thesaurus which accrues to the



person concerned in this or any of his later lives. This is the basis of the Incomplete *Thesaurus Meritorium*, the authority of which the then Pope arrogated to himself in the thirteenth century A.D. and gave the institution of indulgences a new turn. It was given out that if a faithful Christian sinner were to offer a set sum of money to the Pope or to the Church by way of penance, his sin could be condoned. This led to the issuance of a plethora of indulgences over Pope's signatures in Christendom. This may be compared to the present day system of buying travelling cheques for transaction at any point or stage of one's journey.

Pope had never claimed in so many words that indulgences issued by him were destroyers of the possessor's sins and misdeeds and could guarantee God's pardon. Intelligent thinkers among the priests also held similar views. They regarded them as waivers of worldly punishments only. The laity, however, could not understand these subtle distinctions. They thought that the greater the price paid for indulgence, the bigger would be the pardon granted by the Lord. Martin Luther jettisoned this belief of the common people as the official version of the Church, although Pope and his emissaries had never endorsed it in so many words. He issued condemnation and announcement of this very belief in his 95 Theses which *inter alia* laid down that--

- (i) An indulgence can commute ecclesiastical penalty only, for priests are competent to undo their own actions, but a sin against God can only be pardoned by God himself.
- (ii) An indulgence can never claim to be a destroyer of sin. Pope has no such right to exercise. This is a prerogative of God alone.
- (iii) An indulgence cannot checkmate Divine wrath. Only God has control over it.

- (iv) Indulgence cannot be of any help in the purgatory too. Only living beings can suffer ecclesiastical penalties. When death comes, they too end with it. Pope can only pray for the redemption of soul caught in a purgatory; he cannot exercise any control over its fate there.
- (v) The believer who repents and shows genuine contrition for sins, is pardoned by the Lord. He does not stand in need of any indulgence. Lord Jesus Christ expects a heartfelt repentance only from his believers for their sins.
- vi) It is not possible to explain in detail the Doctrine of *Thesaurus Meritorium*. It cannot be said with any amount of certainty as to what it is. This is a concept beyond the understanding of the ordinary folk, yet this cannot be taken to be the Treasury of Merit of Jesus Christ and his saints, for their merits already stand dedicated to the redemption of the believers and bear no interference by the Pope. The concept of Treasury of Merits can then only mean that Pope is empowered to excuse those sins only which a believer commits against the Church and in contravention of the ecclesiastical rules. To be sure, the real *Thesaurus Meritorium* is the Lord Himself, who excuses sins in His Grace even without the sinner's knowledge.

On November 1, 1517, the All Saints' Day, Martin Luther put up his 95 Theses comprising the above stated six and many more, on the gate of the Castle Church at the Wittenburgh University along with a notice of his intention to defend them in academic disputations if called upon to do so. This caused a great excitement and there was upheaval amongst the people overnight. The laity and the ruling class gradually came round to Luther's view-point with the result that Pope's sway over matters spiritual as well as temporal of at least half of Europe

was lost for good. The Christendom was divided into two opposing camps, the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. This war of attrition then went on unabated for the next to centuries leaving behind it much tribulation and misery. The controversy settled down only after reason had had its sway towards the close of the eighteenth century :

This is what Martin Luther did and what he stands for.

Needless to say that Martin Luther's status and his field of action are totally different from those of Guru Nanak, so that no comparison is warranted. The main points of divergence of the two great men of their times may, however, be summed up as under :-

(1) Guru Nanak's claim that whatever he spoke, preached and advocated, was revealed to him directly by the ever True Lord, and that they were not the ravings of any human intellect, or cullings from any philosophical treatise, places him very high in the category of *rishīs*, prophets and *avatārs*. Following utterances of Guru Nanak and his successors bear testimony to his claim :

a) Whatever my Master puts in my mind.

I unfold to you, the people.

(Tilang, AG, 722)

b) I myself know not what to say;

I only utter what He doth ordain.

(Suhi, AG, 734)

c) I uttered the words My God, only

when you wished me to utter !

(Vadhans, AG, 566)

d) God Himself put the message into the Guru's heart,  
who then transmitted it to the people through his word.

(Malar, AG, 1271)

All these utterances lead but to one inescapable conclusion that his utterances were of the nature of God's own words, *Vahaj*<sup>2</sup> or *Vahī*, come down from Him. Such utterances, it is often held are couched in the idiom, phrases and words used by God Himself. The author of *Mimāṅsā* holds this view about the contents of *Vedas*, as do Muslim scholars about the *Quran*-The scholars of the Mu'tazilla order of the Muslims, on the contrary, say that the verses of the *Quran* are not verbatim utterances of God. They are rather translation or paraphrase of the message conveyed by Him to the Prophet and, therefore, may appropriately be termed as *ilhām* or revelation. What they mean is that Arabic (or even Sanskrit) has no *locus standi* to be named the 'Tongue of God'. Yet, whatever is coded in Arabic in *the Quran*, may be said to represent, straight way, God's ideas, God's message. As for Guru Nanak, it is difficult to tell whether he regarded his utterances as *vahaj* or *ilhām*. It would rather be nearer the truth if we say that he did not recognize the difference between *vahaj* and *ilhām*; he considered it as idle polemics. Indeed, he considered confining of Divine knowledge to a particular language as sheer folly. The same was his opinion about the people who regarded Sanskrit as God's language and also about those who held hymns of *Vedas* to have emanated from the mouth of God, or about those who considered writings of the *Quran* as *Vahaj*. We have, on this point, a very authentic and unequivocal utterance of the Tenth Master recognizing all forms of letters and speech forms as perfectly appropriate vehicles for imparting Divine knowledge.<sup>3</sup> This, indeed, is the proposition acceptable to intellectuals and to those who have risen above any bias. Considered thus, Guru Nanak seems to be in line with the great Arab prophet, Hāzrat Mohammad. Gautam Buddha too belonged to this category. Yet Guru Nanak, on his own testimony, has had a vital difference too. Hazrat

Mohammad claimed that the message he was giving the people, was God-sent or God-inspired, yet he took all the pains to declare that it was essentially the same as was given to Hazrat Ibrahim in the past, vide-

They say : 'Accept the Jewish or the Christian faith and you shall be rightly guided'.

Say : 'By no means ! We believe in the faith of Abraham, the upright one, He was no idolater'.<sup>4</sup>

Like-wise, is the assertion of Gautam that the message he was giving, was the same old message as had been given and propagated by sages, who had attained Buddhahood in the past (*eso dhammam sanātanam*). "I realized, the ancient path (the path adopted by saints before Buddha's time), the same I have chosen to tread upon."<sup>5</sup> Guru Nanak's Word (*bāni*) and utterances, infact hymns and sayings of the rest of the Sikh Gurus too, at no place show that Guru Nanak or his successors considered the truth of their utterances as resting on the revelations of anybody else. They claimed their Word (*bāni*) as directly inspired and regarded their religion as God-commissioned. They did not invoke for its truth any other authority. This, however, should not be taken to mean that the Divine message Guru Nanak propagated did not, in its general or even particular aspect, exist before fifteenth century A.D. There is a possibility and, indeed, it is very much there, that the truths which emanated from Guru Nanak's mouth for the welfare of the world in the fifteenth century A.D. had been, in their entirety or parts, known to the people for long past. This was so, for, as St. Ambrose has put it, "Whatever is self-evident and true, no matter from whose mouth it has emanated, is due to the Holy Ghost's motivations".<sup>6</sup> The point being laboured at here, is that the Divine message that emanated from Guru Nanak's mouth is not based on the Divine knowledge of any

other religion, but on direct revelation from God. For that reason, Guru Nanak's Word (*bāni*) and message does not stand for its testimony on any other revealed book or God-sent treatise, not it rests on any ancient tradition in vogue in the past. These utterances are directly God-sent, self-evident and, in themselves, their own testimony. Reckoning thus, Guru Nanak's status rises very high among Vedic sages, Indian Buddhas and Tirthankaras, Semitic apostles and prophets. Such considerations must have had their sway over the great poet Bhai Sanokh Singh when he described Guru Nanak as "the greatest of the greatest men and master of those who are reckoned the *pravār* or most high".<sup>7</sup> In *pravār* he includes Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Shiva, Buddha and the Tirthankars.

The status which the great poet has assigned to Guru Nanak is, indeed, what is due to him and is no exaggeration or a hyperbole. This, in fact, is the status which is confirmed by Guru Nanak's own utterances. Comparing this status of Guru with that of Martin Luther is highly reprehensible and one that needs be condemned. Martin Luther had, at no time, claimed to be a seer, prophet or messenger come down with a new revelation. On the contrary, he remained fully attached to the teachings of the Bible all his life and regarded himself as a humble servant of Christianity. He only interpreted a few Christian doctrines which did not meet approbation of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. His status is, thus analogous to that of Shankaracharya, Madhvacharya and Ramanujacharya who interpreted the *Brahma Sutras* of Bādrāyan differently, which in its turn led to the development of *advait*, *dvait* and *vasishtadvait* philosophies. These *achāryās* relied, for their authority, on *Brahma sutrās* only. They did not profess to have given rise to any new heirarchy of Divine knowledge. On this count Martin Luther too is an *achāryā*. It is, therefore, entirely wrong to equate him with Guru Nanak.

(2) The field of Guru Nanak is quite different from that of Martin Luther, for Martin Luther was a spokesman of beliefs and ideas that were prevalent in his time. He was not the originator of any new ideology. That is why he could immediately win the support of the rulers of his time, which helped the Protestant order take shape in no time. As against this, the religion advocated by Guru Nanak was not something already in vogue and one accepted by the people. It was rather a new religion, a quite distinct faith, for which the Sikhs had to make sacrifices with their lives for over a hundred and fifty years to win their right to live according to it.

(3) The Divine knowledge which Guru Nanak propagated, is quite distinct in its conceptual content from that of the people for whom Martin Luther stood. Martin Luther's ideology gave the Christian faith, then current, a new life and many a new bylane to tread, which helped the Christians of Europe to assume the leadership of the present age based on socialist ideas. On the other hand the knowledge and the message which Guru Nanak gave the world has the terrific potential to generate a new age and a new world culture, which due to certain Geophysical factors has not yet been able to take off, but about the ultimate coming of which no thoughtful person can have any doubt.

These three distinctions separating Guru Nanak's status and ideology from that of Martin Luther are so very original and fundamental that a comparison must sound utterly frivolous. Avoiding all hyperbole, it can be said with a good deal of certainty that Guru Nanak's status and the universal sweep of his ideas and their potency to come to grips with world problems bear no comparison.

The prognostication embedded in the *Bhavishyā-purāna-*

*tadvai lokarakṣārtham mlecchānām naśahetave  
pścime tu śubhe deśe, vedi vamiṣe cha nānakāh<sup>8</sup>*

is entirely correct assessment of Guru Nanak's status and the field of his action. Indeed, Guru Nanak's status is that of universal leader who spread his Divine Message to protect mankind from all sorts of injustice and sins, and to destroy the evil powers that be.

[Written in Punjabi, this article appeared in *Gurmat Prakash* of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, in November, 1958. The author does not seem to have cast in into English, for it appears nowhere in the English press. We have, therefore, thought it proper to render it into English and to include it into the present volume for the benefit of the readers-editors.]

### Notes & References

<sup>1</sup> This point now stands covered in article No. 1, *supra*, pp. 30-40. —editors.

<sup>2</sup> The Arabic lexicons have no such word with the semiotics, import intended to be conveyed here. It appears to be the author's own coinage to connote 'born of *vahi* (vahi+ja)-editors.

<sup>3</sup> The relative verse quoted by the author reads-

sabhe des bidyā, sabhe lok bāni  
sabhe kāl bhākhā, samasto pardhāni

It appear, the author did not take pains to check up the correct text which figures in the 'Gyan Prabodh' section of the *Dasam Granth* and reads as below :

sabhe achhar bidyā, sabhe des bāni  
sabha des pūjā, samasto pardhāni

(Verses 282-284-editors)

<sup>4</sup> *Qurān*, 2, 135.



<sup>5</sup> *Samyut-nikaya*, 2, 106.

<sup>6</sup> St Ambrose in I Corinth, 12.3, endorsed by St. Thomas Aquinas in Sum Theology 1.11.109.1.

<sup>7</sup> *Nanak Prakash*, 1.1-4.

**8** तद्वै लोकरक्षार्थं, स्तेच्छानां नाशहेतवे ।  
पश्चिमे तु शुभे देशे, वेदीवंशे च नानकः ॥

## THE MIRACLE THAT GURU NANAK WROUGHT

The Janam-sākhī, that is, the Stories of the life of Guru Nanak tell us, and we have the authority of Bhai Gurdas for its authenticity, that, when Guru Nanak, in his wanderings, met in the deep recesses of the farther Himalayas, the yogis and adepts who had acquired powers over the laws of nature and over death itself, he was asked to show a miracle as a credential of his fitness to converse with Siddhas. A miracle, as the hall-mark and test of a prophet and a man of God, is an idea constantly recurring in the literatures of the old Semitic religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and the critical students of Sikh history know that the crucial point on which Emperor Aurangzeb came to his fateful decision to behead Guru Tegh Bahadur at Delhi, was because the latter refused to perform a miracle and thus establish his credentials as a Prophet entitled to speak of the eternal validity of Hinduism as Aurangzeb, with all true believers, considered to be evident in the case of Islam. The Aryan attitude towards miracle is not the same as that of the Semitic mind, in so far as the more scientific Aryan mind treats what is seemingly miraculous as merely a manifestation of unknown or obscure laws, while the Semitic mind, incapable of comprehending the scientific principle of causality, regards miracle as par excellence a direct act of the will of God. Guru Nanak, to this requirement of Siddhas, as did his ninth incarnation, Guru Tegh Bahadur, to the requirement of the mighty Aurangzeb, simply replied, as Bhai Gurdas puts it, "I have no other miracle which I can perform except the repetition

of the True Name." Guru Tegh Bahadur similarly replied to the fanatically Semitic Aruangezbe that "as a servant of God, he would be ashamed to perform tricks called miracles". But the chronicler adds that Guru Tegh Bahadur did promise Aurangzeb a miracle when the head of the former would be severed from his body. Whether Aurangzeb had the imagination to see the miracle that happened after Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded, or whether the controversialist Siddhas fully realized the miracle which Guru Nanak was then working in India by "the repetition of the true Name", is not explicitly reported either by chroniclers or by historians. Guru Nanak did, in fact, perform a miracle, a miracle as mightily as the cosmic phenomena of confluence and conflict of cultures and more spectacular than the emergence of new forms of life in the process of Evolution. By trying to understand the nature and significance of this miracle alone it is possible to understand the true import of Sikhism as a cultural phenomenon in the history of the world, and as a turning point in the history of the Hindu race.

### (ii)

A critical study of the cultural history of the Hindu race would reveal the existence, from the times as far back as our historical data can take us, of two streams, two processes, two cultural movements, existing sometimes side by side, sometimes overlapping and intermingling, and sometimes struggling for supremacy, but to identify these two cultural streams with the Aryan and Dravidian in Indian culture would be much too naive and superficial. For want of a better nomenclature, these two culture-forms may be called Vedic and Upaniṣadic or Brahmanic and Shramanic. This is not the place for giving an analysis of exposition of these two mighty culture-forms, but their presence is discernible throughout the known history of the Hindu race. The Vedic culture-form is distinguishable from the Upaniṣadic culture-

form in as much as the former lays almost exclusive stress on rituals and external ceremonies as the highest conduct, while the latter on inner culture and *sādhana*. The Vedic culture-form is aristocratic and exclusive and supports the hierarchy of castes and believes in fixing frontiers beyond which its privileges must not extend, while the Upaniṣadic culture-form is missionary and egalitarian. The Vedic culture-form always insist on exclusive fitness of Sanskrit as a vehicle of true cultural knowledge, while Upaniṣadic culture-form prefers the spoken and living vernaculars as its vehicles for cultural knowledge. These are only a few and mechanical characteristics of these two culture-forms and I like to think that the cultural history of the Hindu race is far better illumined, if studied from this point of view.

### ( iii )

In our ancient literature there is enough illustrative material regarding these two culture-forms, and to go back no farther than the age of Buddha we find that Gautama Buddha was essentially a protagonist of the Upaniṣadic form of culture. Buddhism thus prominently represented one of the two basic feelings of the Indian civilisation, and the quintessence of this movement is to be found in the famous sermon at Sarnath where the prince-philosopher, Gautama, won his first five adherents. The movement which Gautama initiated rejected all speculation about God and the cosmic problems. Only self and the conduct of actual life are important in it. It did not definitely recognise the soul. The stand-point of the Indian psychologist of the early Buddhism was that of the modern western psychologist who reduces the inward mind to a bundle of sensations. Nagsena, in his famous *Milindapanah*, tells King Milinda that the parts of the car in which he is journeying are not the car itself and that the "car" is only a word and that so also is the soul. This culture-form, a movement of self-culture

and *sādhanā* slowly but progressively melted into and coalesced with the antagonistic Brahmanism, which is the modern Hinduism. It had been supposed on the authority of the old texts of Brahmanism, where boasts of persecution are put forth, that the decline of Buddhism in India had been hastened by Brahmnic persecution. The now accessible older authorities make no mention of persecution. On the other hand, the comparison we can make between the canonical books of the older Buddhism and the later texts of Mahayana Buddhism of the following centuries, shows a continual decline from the old stand-point a continual approximation of the Buddhist views to those of the rival culture-form of Brahmanism. We can now see that the very event which seemed, in the eyes of the world, to be the most striking proof of the success of Buddhism, the conversion and strenuous support in the third century B.C. of Ashoka, the most powerful Chakravartin ruler that India has had, only hastened the decline of the Sramanic culture-form of Buddhism. The adhesion of the large number of nominal converts, more especially from the newly incorporated and less advanced North Western provinces, of which the modern Punjab, the Frontier Province, and the valley of Kabul were the most prominent, produced weakness rather than strength in the original movement. The date of final collapse had come. Every relaxation of the old thorough-going position was welcomed and supported by converts, only half converted, and so the margin of differences between the original position expounded at Sarnāth and the attitudes of the Brahmanic culture-form faded, in the end, almost entirely away. Thus, the ancient Buddhism was overwhelmed, and modern Hinduism once again arose on its ruins.

( iv )

The Brahmanism had a glorious sway on the Indian, soil, as a

cultural movement, for over a thousand years till its own seeds brought it to the verge of collapse, practised at the time of its impact with the movement of Islam. So far, throughout their long and varied history, the two culture-forms in India, acted and interacted on each other and whenever by exhaustion or natural fulfilment, one culture-form was on the point of decay, the other came to the surface to assimilate and replace it. But the impact of Islam was a phenomenon fundamentally different from the past experiences of these two culture-forms, and two factors had combined together fortuitously in the Middle Ages, when Guru Nanak arose to perform his supreme miracle. One factor was the feebleness of the will to power, a *non-Vedic and Sramanic trait*, and an unwillingness to master technics, that made the Hindus ill-armed and ready for a possible collapse. As it happened in the past ages, the aged feebleness and collapse of the Brahmanic culture-form might have given place to a new Upaniṣadic culture-form as, indeed the Bhakti movement of the middle ages was emerging to maturity, and repeating the ancient sea-saw of the cultural history of the Hindu race. But an utterly new phenomenon in the shape of Islamic Semitism came to India for which the Hindu race had no adequate reply, such as it had given in the past to the hordes of invaders from the north-west-Greeks, Sakas and Hunas. This was the *Jehad* urage of Islam, a myth purified and conceptually fortified, combined with rigorous ethical precepts bound with the conviction that the true believers of Islam would attain salvation before all other men. The idea was neither the invention of Mohammad nor new. The gold tables found at Thurii graves which were put in the hands of the initiate of this ancient forgotten civilization carried the assurance of God : "Happy and blessed one, thou shalt not be any more a mortal but a god." It is the same certainty that the Quran gives to all

believers who fight in the holy war against the infidels. "The monasticism of Islam is the religious war," says a hadith of the prophet. Before such an onslaught and impact, both the culture-forms of the Hindu race were ready for the fate which overtook the Mexican culture. For, as it happens, this is the one example of a culture ended by violence. It was not starved, suppressed, or thwarted, but murdered in the full glory of its unfolding, destroyed like a sunflower whose head is struck off by one stroke. All these Mexican states, including a Chakravartin sovereign and more than one federation of kings with an extent and resources far superior to those of the Greek and Roman States of Hannibal's day, with a comprehensive policy, a carefully ordered financial system, and a highly developed legislation, with economic traditions, such as the Ministers of Charles V could never have imagined, with a wealth of literature in several languages, intellectually brilliant and cultured society in great cities to which the West could not show one single parallel—all this was not broken down in some desperate war but washed out by a handful of bandits in a few years, and the relics of the population retained not even a memory of it all. The cluster of their great cities in the virgin forests of the Mexican jungles succumbed swiftly to the attacks of vegetation, and we do not now know the old name of any one of them. Of the literature, three books survive, but no one can read them. The extent of this vandalism was so cruelly banal, was so supremely absurd, that it would not be tolerated in the wildest literary farce. A few cannons and hand guns began and ended the whole drama, a drama which might have had its exact historical parallel through the raids of the Mahmud of Ghazna and of Bakhtiar Khilji. The ruins of Texila and Nalanda are significant pieces of evidence for those who are inclined to doubt this possibility.

## ( v )

That this fate has been averted, and a new and in all probability, glorious lease of life has been given to both indigenous culture-forms of the Hindu race, is the miracle which Guru Nanak wrought, and the significance of which is only dimly being understood by the critical students of Indian history today. How unobtrusively and humbly Guru Nanak started a movement which was to all appearance a mild reformist movement, but which in its potentialities and its quintessence, was a mighty reorientation and organic regrouping of both the culture-forms of the Hindu race, which flowered into the Khalsa in the hands of the Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, is a perennial source of wonderment to those who have the capacity and the training to read its full meaning. To what extent this movement was successful in its early history, is also clear to trained students of history. How, the mighty onslaught of the Islamic Jihad, both in its military and spiritual aspects was checked and hurled back, through the instrumentality of impulses formed and released by Guru Nanak, is a subject matter the full import of which will be unfolded only to those who have the third eye to see the future, with a sure diagnosis of the problems which faced the Hindu culture of his day, and a perfect discernment of the problems which the future was to unfold before the humanity, Guru Nanak broadbased his teachings and the movement which he initiated through them on the triple proposition of economic, sociological and spiritual character. Fortunately for us, he himself summed up his teachings in a clear and succinct form, which has reached us without apocryphal adulteration. To the Hindu race and to the humanity his message was, as is repeatedly recorded in the *Janam-sakhi*, *Kirt karo*, *Wand chhako*, *Nām japo* (Earn your livelihood by the sweat of your brow and by honest means, share your wealth with others and repeat the True Name). The first two precepts



offer the germs of solutions of the sociological and economic problems of the humanity towards which the modern theories of states including those of communism and Anarchism are laboriously grouping, while the third and the last precept stresses the ultimate necessity of the inner spiritual culture, the basic teaching of our śramanic culture-form, without which no abiding solution of human problems is conceivable. This is the miracle which Guru Nanak wrought, a miracle the full meaning and significance of which still lies concealed behind the curtain of the future, almost though not quite, as concealed and hidden as it was to the Siddhas, and subsequently to Emperor Aurangzeb.

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## HOMAGE TO GURU NANAK

From amongst the prophets and founders of great religions of the world in general, and from amongst the seers and sages of India in particular, the name of Guru Nanak stands out as one whose historicity and life-history are well and firmly grounded in objective and scientific evidence.

Guru Nanak was born on the 15th of April, A.D. 1469 at the place now famous as Nankana Sahib, included in West Pakistan after the partition of India. He was born in a high caste Khatri family employed in white-collar occupation. His father Rai Kalu, was a man both of affluence and influence, being the traditional village revenue accountant of the manor, the landlord of which lived in the village called Talwandi, before it become Nanakana Sahib, the holy birth place of Nanak, after the birth of Guru Nanak. At an early age, he was sent to the village school where the traditional Hindu system of primary education was the rule. Stories of his precocious progress in the lessons taught are unanimous that he did not stay in the *paṭhsālā* to complete his educational course. Likewise when sent to a *madrasah* where the primary curriculum of Islamic system of education was imparted, he exhibited such signs of mental perspicuity that the Muslim teacher agreed, it was unnecessary for him to continue his attendance of the school. As is natural, his father had worldly ambitions for his only son and he decided that he should learn the ancestral occupation of trading in case young Nanak's mind was not inclined towards the post of the village revenue accountant to which he would have normally succeeded after the retirement of his father, according to the public service rules of those days.

The town of *Sachchā Saudā*, also left in West Pakistan, commemorates the spot where young Nanak tried to demonstrate what he understood as the high principles of trading. Instead of earning a good percentage of profits on the capital entrusted to him for investment, he gave it away as alms to feed a group of religious mendicants who had been without food for a number of days already. The town of Sultanpur, which is still in Indian Punjab, was, during the sixteenth century, a flourishing trading centre on the high-way road from Central Asia to the south of Hindustan and it was also the headquarters of a principality presided over by a powerful Pathan of the Lodhi clan, Nawab Daulat Khan. This Lodhi prince was no ordinary satrap of the Lodhi Sultanate but was a powerful figure in the north of India, being a close relation of the Delhi sovereign. The history shows him as a powerful potentate of his times who had ambitions to wear the crown of sovereignty of the whole of north India at Delhi and for this purpose he participated in a high conspiracy that resulted in the invasion of Babur and the first Battle of Panipat (1521) that led to the establishment of the Mughal empire in India. This Daulat Khan Lodhi had rebuilt and patronised this flourishing town of Sultanpur which marked an ancient site of a Buddhist *Vihār*, dating back to the 2nd century A.D. There seems to be some mysterious law of History that once a sacred place, always a sacred place; and which law also determines the resurgence of congregate traditions of culture of other human activities. In accordance with some such mysterious law, this Sultanpur became not only a flourishing town embellished with palaces, gardens, pavilions and other magnificent feudal buildings, but also became a centre of Islamic education and scholarship. At one time, Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb, the two remarkable princes of Emperor Shah Jehan, representing two polarities of temperament, came to reside in

Sultanpur to acquire traditional Muslim education and learning. It was this Sultanpur which was later on to become Sultanpur *Sahib*, the Holy Sultanpur, by the coming of young Nanak to take employment under the Lodhi prince, and then for receiving his first revelation from God on this ancient holy spot of Buddhist spiritual practices. The husband of the elder sister of Nanak, Nanaki, was also under the employment of the Lodhi prince at Sultanpur and it was this Jai Ram of Uppal Khatri caste, who, to allay the anxieties of the father of Nanak about the future career of Nanak, offered to get him fixed up in government employment. It was under these circumstances that Nanak moved from Talwandi to Sultanpur, "after five days' journey" as the *janam-sākhis* tell us, and when he reached the house of his sister after a travel of almost a hundred miles, the sister bowed down to touch the feet of her younger brother, which is against the customary practice. On Nanak's protesting that it was his prerogative and duty to touch her feet, she being the elder of the two, Nanaki replied, as the *Bhāi Bālā Janam-sākhī*<sup>1</sup> tells us, "This would be so if thou wert and an earthly being."

Nanak was appointed by the Lodhi prince as his chief Storekeeper, a position of great trust and also of profit if the incumbent were inclined that way. By all accounts Nanak performed his duties diligently and to the utmost satisfaction of his prince employer. Here, when he was nineteen years old, he was married to the daughter of high caste Khatri, Mool Chand by name, who hailed from Pakhoke Randhawa. On the spot where the wedding ceremony took place now stands a magnificent Sikh shrine. It was here at Sultanpur that his two sons were born, the elder, Sri Chand, in 1494 and the younger, Lakhmi Chand, in 1496. The elder, Sri Chand, was, from the beginning, of an austere and religious turn of mind and later on he founded the sect of Sikh *Udasins* which sect has played a most remarkable and dynamic part in the missionary

history of Sikhism during the last five hundred years. The younger son, Lakhmi Chand, was a man of the world and continued the line of Nanak with his descendants now holding high and respectable positions in Punjab and outside. The turning point in the life of Nanak is the year 1496, when he was twenty-seven years old. During these days, he would, while performing his official duties, pass out into subjective reveries, almost amounting to trances, On one such occasion, while weighing the official stores, he stopped dead at measure 13, which in Punjabi is *terā*, meaning also, 'I am Thine', and went on repeating, *terā; terā* while still passing out measure after measure of stores without keeping proper account. As would be the case anywhere, complaints were made to the Lodhi prince about the way in which this parvenu Hindu high official under a Muslim Government, was recklessly squandering the government stores.

Not many days after that, while the matter of investigating into his alleged misconduct was still engaging the attention of the Lodhi prince, Nanak went, as usual, to take his morning dip in the small river that, during those days, flowed perennially by the side of the town of Sultanpur, The river called *Bein*, is still there but comes to life only during the rainy season or when the high mountain snows melt. It is recorded that, after entering the waters of *Bein* for a dip, he stayed in the waters for full three days and was assumed as drowned and lost. On the morning of the fourth day he came out of the waters of the river to the spot where his servant, who was to be his life-long companion, Mardana, was faithfully waiting with Nanak's clothes. The first words that he uttered on emerging from the waters are recorded. He said, "There is no Hindu, no Mussalman." It was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission of reconciling the two antagonistic and warring cultures, the Aryan and the Semitic,

by showing them that deeper down the two there lay a common sub-stratum of identity. Those acquainted with the doctrines and practices of Yoga know that *Jalstambha samādhi* for long periods extending over days and months, under deep waters, is a Yogic skill that can be acquired either by appropriate discipline or as a God-given skill from birth, *janam-siddhi*. There is no need to search for other explanations for the disappearance of Nanak in the mid stream of *Bein* for full three days, in view of this established Yogic fact. All the *janam-sākhis* agree that it was during this *Jalstambha samādhi* that Guru Nanak received his first revelation and his first commission to found and preach a new religion and a new way of life. Revelation is not a psychological process in the individual's mind; it is an encounter with Reality and the individual does not make a spiritual discovery through his own mental cogitation but he encounters God, and this distinction is fundamental. Henceforth Nanak becomes Guru Nanak, Nanak, the World Teacher. This encounter is described in the *janam-sākhis* in the following words: "As God willed, Nanak His devotee was escorted to His presence. Then a cup filled with Liquid of Immortality was given Him accompanied by the command, "Nanak, pay attention, this is the cup of Holy Adoration of My Name. Drink it . . . I am with thee, and thee do I bless and exalt . . . Go, rejoice in My Name, the Name of God, and preach to others to do the same . . . Let this be thy calling."<sup>2</sup> Guru Nanak himself refers to this divine assignment with deep gratitude : "I, an unemployed minstrel, was assigned a rewarding task."<sup>3</sup>

Guru Nanak resigned his post and started on long journeys into all directions of the then civilized world, to preach the religion of the Name of God. Here the parallel between the missionary tours of Guru Nanak and almost 2000 years earlier, of Gautam, the Buddha, readily comes to mind, After staying for three months at

Sarnath, when sixty disciples had gathered around him, Gautam, the Buddha, said to them one day : "Go now and wander for the gain of many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of gods and men."<sup>4</sup> Gautam, the Buddha, himself spent the rest of his life preaching his mission within a narrow area of the Indian sub-continent, But here the parallelism ends. Guru Nanak not only travelled throughout India and the known accessible Islamic world of his days, but also aimed at not merely preaching a religion and a way of life in a congenial cultural milieu, as Gautam, the Buddha, and his disciples did, but he primarily aimed at creating a sense of commitment between the men of religion and their socio-political problems to which point I propose to refer presently, in greater detail. Bhai Gurdas (1551-1639), called, 'the St. Paul of Sikhism', describes the missionary travels of Guru Nanak as aimed at "removal of social and political imbalances of the world."<sup>5</sup>

The first journey of Guru Nanak was towards the east, aimed at covering the important centres of Hindu religion. Kurukshetra, Panipat, Delhi, Hardwar, Varanasi, Gaya, Patna, Dacca and Assam are the places and areas where the foot-marks of Guru Nanak are still revered through commemorative Gurdwaras. On his return journey he crossed the 24 Parganas and going along the coast he visited Cuttack and then Jagannath Puri where he met the great Chaitanya. One of the most powerful poetic revelations of Guru Nanak called, the *Ārtī*, which opens with the famous lines, '*gagan-mai thāl*', was uttered here. It is on record that the father of Rabindranath Tagore, Maharishi Debendranath Tagore, was first powerfully attracted towards Sikhism on hearing this *sabda* of Guru Nanak from an *Udasin* mendicant, thus arousing the interest of his illustrious son also in Sikhism by bringing him to Amritsar as a young boy.

After returning to the Punjab, the Guru went on another long journey towards the south and this itinerary is marked by a long line of Gurdwaras marking the whole length of the Deccan Peninsula, down to Ceylon. New epigraphical and archaeological evidence discovered in the island of Ceylon itself now confirms that Guru Nanak's visit to Ceylon was a momentous religious event thought worthy to be recorded in stone under royal orders and also devoutly remembered by generations of local folk up to this day.

His third long journey was towards the north, the home of yogis and Hindu gods. He travelled deep into the inner Himalayas, crossing Nepal and some portions of the western Tibet, reaching the legendary Kailsash Mountain and the celestial Mansrover lake. It is here that he made a most explicit statement of his doctrine that, 'Truth must be the basis of all religions and further, the religion must be socially committed.' Our Bhai Gurdas tells us that when the yogis residing at these inaccessible regions asked Guru Nanak as to 'how did the news go in the world of the mortals', the reply of Guru was sharp and to the point: 'The society has become rotten to its core', and here he raised an accusing finger at these yogis, adding, 'you are the guilty ones, for the society cannot be guided and sustained without men of high sensitivity and culture but you, who possess it, have become escapees.'<sup>6</sup>

The fourth sojourn of Guru Nanak was to the west when he travelled by sea and visited Mecca. Inside the holy sanctuary of Mecca when doubts arose on account of his behaviour as to whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu, he was accosted with the question : "Who are you and what is the book that you carry under your arms, for it is not the Holy Quran? Tell us, please, according to this book that you carry, whether the Muslim religion is true or the Hindu religion?"<sup>7</sup> The reply of the Guru is not only clear but fearless. The Guru said, "O pilgrims, neither



those who profess Islam nor those who profess Hinduism are superior, one to the other. It is the practice and its quality that makes one individual superior to the other in the eyes of God and not mere lip profession."<sup>8</sup> On his return journey he passed through Tehran, Bukhara, Kurgan, Samarqand, Balakh, Kabul and Jalalabad over to Peshawar via the Khaibar Pass, and traversed through the place which is now marked as Gurdwara *Panja Sahib* in West Pakistan. It was during this journey that he learnt of the invasion of Babur and he saw with his own eyes its terrible devastation on the population of Hindustan. Some of his most powerful and pregnant revelatory poems record his reactions to these political upheavals.

In the beginning of the year 1521, the Guru founded a new settlement at Kartarpur on the western bank of the river Ravi. This holy place has now been left in Pakistan. At Kartarpur he ran an agricultural farm, a community kitchen and a community hall, to which place flocked his admirers and disciples, including those merely curious, from all corners of the country. Here, after handing over the mantle of successorship to Guru Angad, Nanak II, he passed away on September 22, 1539.

### **An Assessment of Guru's Achievements**

Prophets of religions, like other people, are in no small measure rooted in time and place. The forms in which they cast their ideas, no less than the methods that they adopt, are largely fashioned by the habits of thought and action which prevail around them. Great minds and prophets make unique contributions of enduring value to the thought of their age but they do not and they cannot altogether transcend the age in which they live. True, they sometimes raise new questions but this they do also to answer those their contemporaries are asking and the solutions which they give are pertinent to the traditional statements handed down from the past. The prophets like Guru

Nanak, by being inspired by extraterrestrial sources, do not cease to belong to their age even when they are rising most above it. Thoughts and insights into the Reality do not make incongruous leaps, they rather advance to new concepts and higher planes and wider dimensions through re-interpretation of old ones. An estimate and appraisal of Guru Nanak's teachings, therefore, is not possible without first delineating their context and background. The Muslim power had already been firmly established in India by the sixteenth century and the imperial hegemony of Tughlaqs and Khiljis had impressed its stamp on the whole of the sub-continent. The Hindus no longer dreamt of throwing out the foreigners from their sacred soil, though a struggle for survival, the case of survival was still much in evidence. A Muslim minority, an alien culture, and an indigestible society, from the Hindu point of view, was the central fact of the Indian scene when Guru Nanak was born:

What enabled a comparatively small foreign garrison to maintain its supremacy over Hindustan, the Punjab and Bengal, was its religious homogeneity and the impossibility of any unanimity among the Hindus. From them the spirit of caste has, for ages, ousted the sentiments of nationality. Caste despises the caste or resents in caste the assumption of superiority. The Brahman condemns the cultivator; the cultivator resents the attitude of the Brahman; both despise the menial. Each Rajput clan deems itself the superior of any other and there never has been an Indian nation.<sup>9</sup>

When Shihab-uddin Ghuri finally defeated Prithvi Raj at Taraori, his royal neighbour, Jai Chandra, is recorded and having ordered a public holiday and state festivities in his kingdom. A contemporary account tells us that the defeat of Prithvi Raj which resulted in a secure occupation of Indian soil by the Muslim invaders was deemed

as an occasion of national rejoicing by those whose turn was to come next:

In every house, thresholds were washed with butter-fat, to mark the auspicious occasion and trumpets were publicly sounded to celebrate it.<sup>10</sup>

This state of affairs had reduced the political condition of Hindus, the original natives of the soil, by the fifteenth century to such a state that:

Non-Muslims (are) the furniture and properties for the stage on which the drama of the Muslim destiny . . . in Hindustan is played. The Hindus are . . . as the passive material on which the Muslims impose their will. It is the function of the Hindus to provide opportunities for the practice of Muslim virtue, they are never interesting in themselves, but only as converts, as capitation tax-payers or as corpses.<sup>11</sup>

Arnold Toynbee, who is one of the modern prophet-historians, portrays the development and fate of every civilization and culture in terms of his Challenge and Response Theory. The life and durability of a civilization or culture depends upon the type of challenges which it encounters during its life-span and on as to whether it can produce an adequate response to the challenge. If it does, it survives and grows; and if it cannot, it is defeated and it dies. First and foremost, the religion which Guru Nanak revealed and preached must be tested on this touchstone. To meet the challenge of Muslim political and cultural onslaught from the eleventh century onwards, into the north of India and then enveloping the whole of India, evoked three responses. One was physical resistance, which though brave and stout, eventually collapsed. The second response was of a negative character through which the Hindus evolved a form of conservative seclusion of Hinduism by a rigid imposition of

rules of caste and the rituals and ceremonials of religion. Throughout the middle ages the Hindus shut themselves off in their castles of caste-regulations, expecting that these restrictive limitations might stop the floodgates of whole-sale conversion of Islam. This they indeed did but not without heavy losses, for, once a Hindu was found guilty of the slightest violation of the most rigid caste laws of exclusion, he would be lost to the Hindu community for ever : "For, the immovable castles, behind which the Hindus sheltered, had only exit but no entrance".<sup>12</sup> The third type of response evolved was by the emergence of saints throughout India who attempted to construct, on the basis of identities rather than differences in the Muslim and Hindu cultures, a bridge of understanding between the contending parties. Ramanand, Kabir, Chaitanya, point out the basic identity of *Allah* and *Ram*, stressing on piety of heart and sincere devotion as the only valid means of salvation for Hindus and Muslims alike. But as the keen students of Indian History know, the impact of this attempt has never been very significant except in the domain of abstract religious thought and its practical influence was confined to small fraternities so widely scattered over the country as completely unable to play any dynamic role in the history of India. The tragic fate that overtook the cultured prince Dara Shikoh at the hands of bigot Aurangzeb is truly illustrative of the eventual destiny of such a resistance to the type of challenge which the Hindus had to face. It was, therefore, that a new and truly effective response had to be fashioned and this test one must judge the contribution of Guru Nanak. This is no occasion for going into the matter in detail and only a very brief and curt statement of the subject is, therefore, permissible. Guru Nanak evoked a response which was perfected and implemented by the successor Nanaks and the Sikh community, consisting of basic and fundamental ideas

all of which originate from the teachings of Guru Nanak. The first and the natural response to aggression, that of resistance, stout resistance, which had collapsed in the case of Hindus, was revived and taken up, fortified by a regeneration of its spiritual foundations. In his hymns, called *Babar Bani*, Guru Nanak succinctly adumbrates two new concepts that must form the basis of human response to a given situation. The first is that the evil, unless resisted, grows and endures and does not wither away or die by itself. That is true, at least, for all practical purposes. The evil, therefore, must be resisted by human effort and destroyed, 'with the help of God'. But the evil must not be left alone till God on High chooses to intervene to destroy it. The temper of the doctrine of *avatārvād*, which forms the bedrock foundation of Hindu outlook, is essentially this that evil either is destroyed by its own suicidal nature or else it must be destroyed by the direct intervention of extra-terrestrial powers : "*yadā yadāhi dharmasya gilanir bhavati, . . . sambhavāni yuge yuge . . .*", as the *Bhagvadgītā* puts it. It is this temper of messianic expectation which was replaced by a temper of positive human concern and responsibility that ultimately shaped the type of response which Sikhism furnished to the onslaught of Islam. The heart-rending cry and the audacious question of Guru Nanak put to God on witnessing the misery caused by Babur to undefended and unarmed civilians of India carries clearly the seeds of this new concept of individual, personal and human responsibility of a man to be directly concerned with evil on this earth and to resist it instead of either remaining unconcerned and high and dry about it, or hoping for extra-terrestrial intervention to destroy it : "So much misery and so much anguish caused to the people and their lamentations, You saw and heard, all of them, and yet You, O God, were neither moved nor did you intervene!" is the

central cry and question of the *Babar Bani*. It was this conceptual seed which changed the entire attitude of Sikh community to the onslaught of Islam in India :

. . . after centuries of subjection, Nanak was the first among the Hindus to raise his voice against tyranny and oppression.<sup>13</sup>

Sikhism concedes the doctrine of Thrasymachus<sup>14</sup> that successful violence, if it is violent enough and successful enough, does pay and may win for its practitioners all the powers and glories of the world; and Sikhism enjoins, therefore, active and armed resistance to such a violence at all stages, Sikhism also shows awareness of the further teachings of Thrasymachus that successful violence can always clothe itself in the trappings of morality, and it, therefore, does not agree in allowing it an unhindered course. In this manner, Guru Nanak comingled the first response, that of physical resistance, and the third response, that of discovering common ground of identity between the conflicting cultures of Hinduism and Islam, and fashioned the fourth response which proved historically effective. Arnold Toynbee observes about this clash of Hindu and Muslim cultures that :

There principal meeting ground has been India where Islam has impinged on Hinduism violently. On the whole the story of the relations between these two great religions on Indian ground has been an unhappy tale of mutual misunderstanding and hostility . . . The Sikh religion might be described, not inaccurately, as a vision of the Hindu Muslim common ground. To have discovered and embraced the deep harmony underlying the historic Hindu-Muslim discord has been a noble spiritual triumph; and Sikhs may well be proud of their new religious ethos and origin.<sup>15</sup>

This estimate of the contribution of Guru Nanak to the solution of the fundamental problem of his times, is supported by modern Hindu judgement also as :

He (Guru Nanak) cut himself adrift from all associations with the prevailing sectarian religions and although his approach to God was through love and devotion, he did not adopt the imagery or symbolism of Vaishnavism or any other creed. His was the first and also the last successful attempt to bring together the Hindus and Muslims in a common fold of spiritual and social brotherhood . . . The political achievements of Sikhism . . . have largely overshadowed its spiritual character, but it is this later aspect alone with which the name of Nanak must be associated.<sup>16</sup>

The other element in the basic attitude which Guru Nanak fashioned, was a re-interpretation of the age-old Hindu doctrine of non-involvement with the world as the only proper attitude for a cultured man, *niškāmkarma*. The doctrine of *niškāmkarma* is pivotal in the *Bhagvadgītā*<sup>17</sup> and the term, *niškāmkarma* is not only retained but upheld in the revelatory poems of Guru Nanak and the successor Nanaks.<sup>18</sup> But the term has been re-interpreted to mean a passionate and full-blooded response to a given challenge and situation but not surrendering before it one's inner poise. The question of Guru Nanak in the *Babar Bani* addressed to God Almighty, *tai [ñ] ki dard nō āiā*, means just what Chekov makes his hero, Gromov, say in *Ward No. 6* :

I react to pain with tears and cries, to baseness with indignation, to vileness with disgust and that is my opinion in life ! . . . to despise the suffering would be tantamount to despising life itself, for man's whole existence consists of sensations of hunger, cold, mortification, loss and a Hamlet like fear of death.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the entire Hindu character of those who accepted Guru Nanak was transformed into a new type, through re-interpretation of certain fundamental insights of the Hindu race into things and reality, but without altogether destroying or replacing those insights. Incidentally, thus was also answered the most formidable criticism against Hinduism recently made by Albert Schweitzer that Hinduism was a religion of cerebration, which thinks but never does or feel anything. Secondly, Guru Nanak, through his teachings, laid firm foundations for a democratic society by repudiating caste and social privileges by birth. Many seers and saints of India before Guru Nanak had preached irrelevance of caste to spiritual attainment but none before Guru Nanak had repudiated the caste on its social and political plane. Guru Nanak did it and laid firm foundations for a modern democratic society. His third contribution was with regard to social and spiritual status of women. Claim is frequently made by the advocates of Islam that it accords a most enviable status to women in society. While it is true that the precepts of Mohammad vastly improved the status of woman as it obtained in pre-Islamic Arabia, it cannot be claimed that *Quran* grants women equality before law or equality of opportunity which is the essence of equality of status in the modern world. "Men have mastery over women" is the basic refrain of *Quran* of the subject of women as determined by God.<sup>20</sup> In our own culture, Hinduism, woman has been treated with a great deal of respect and romantic sentimentality, but it will not be claimed by any serious student of Hinduism that equality between man and woman, in the modern sense, is a postulate of Hinduism. In *Rig Veda* itself, we have a dialogue hymn in which mortal Pururvas tries but fails to persuade nymph Urvashi to continue to live with him, but the lure of paradise is too much for the fickle minded female. This Vedic hymn contains the following parting words of Urvashi to her lover :



Pururvas, don't die, don't perish, let not the cruel wolves devour you. The friendship of women is never firm. For they are hyenas in heart.<sup>21</sup>

That women are congenitally inferior to men is a Vedic postulate. In *Mānavadharmasāstra*, women are referred to with much tenderness and reverence; *yatra bhārya pujante ramnatra tatra devatah*, but in the operative context of this ancient code, a woman's status has been laid down as that of a triple and eternal subordination to man just as in Chinese Confucian culture the identical concept, *Tam Tong*, indicates, which means, 'Three Woman's subordinations.' According to it, in a patrilineal society woman must remain subordinate to her father before her marriage, to her husband after her marriage, and to her sons when widow. In the Buddhist estimation, the status of woman undergoes no improvement:

How, Lord, are we to conduct ourselves with regard to womankind? 'Don't see them Ananda', But if we see them, what are we to do? 'Abstain from speech', 'But if they should speak to us, what are we to do?' Keep wide awake'. When Ananda won from the Master the right of women to enter *Sangha*, the Buddha remarked: 'If, Ananda, the women had not received the permission to enter the Order, the good religion would have lasted long, the pure law would have stood for a thousand years. But . . . now it will stand fast only for 500 years.'<sup>22</sup>

It was Guru Nanak who, for the first time, in the history of India, and for the first time in the history of the world, perceived that there can be no enduring democratic culture unless grounded in unreserved recognition of full equality of woman with man. Just as in Greek society and Roman civilization, similarly in Islamic culture, it was the inferior status of woman which remained the basic weakness of these cultures. Likewise, in Hindu society the weakest link in its social structure was the unequal status of

woman and this weakness Guru Nanak removed by putting a simple question implicating the fundamental postulate of equality of man and woman: "Why call her in any way, whatsoever, inferior to man, when all form of greatness of man have their matrix in woman?"<sup>23</sup> Such were the contributions of Guru Nanak whose Quincentenary we are formally celebrating today. This was the man whose teachings gave birth to a religion which:

is of special interest since it has created not only a political society but also customs so distinctive that those who profess it rank . . . as a separate race. <sup>24</sup>

By his teachings he not only created a political nation, but as a byproduct, for the first time in the History of India, the word 'Punjab' emerges as the name of a separate political region. Before Guru Nanak the word 'Punjab' is mentioned nowhere in any written record of the word. This 'Punjab', within a little more than a century after him. Had its political frontiers extended, from Peshawar to Panipat and from Gilgit to Spiti. Alongwith it, a new full-fledged language, called Punjabi, assumed a literary status which in the matter of artistic excellence and lexicographic resources is second to no other Indo-Aryan language. For the first time in the recorded history of India the natural direction of invasions and immigrations was reversed from south-east to north-west instead of from north-west to south-east, and in the nineteenth-century, in the streets of Kabul and Ghazni, the war cries of 'Sat Sri Akal' were heard as a token of proclamation of this reversal; and the sandal-wood gates of the holy Somnath, plundered by Mahmud of Ghazna in the eleventh century, were retrieved from Ghazni in 1846<sup>25</sup> and restored to the temple of Somnath. Lastly, a new human type has been evolved about which Arnold Toynbee, in his *East and West* (1962) says to the effect that if the human race survives its follies at all . . . Sikhs shall surely be there on this planet as a vigorous, hardy and gogetting homosapiens.

Let us Salute Guru Nanak.

[This formed an address given to the luminaries of the Punjab University Chandigarh, in connection with the Quincentenary Celebrations of Guru Nanak, held in 1969. - editors]

### Notes & References

- <sup>1</sup> *Janam-sākhī Bhāi Bālā*, Pub. Gulab Singh & Sons, Lahore, 1918, p. 42.
- <sup>2</sup> *Purātana Janam-sākhī* (Pub. Punjab Government, Lahore), 1912, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>3</sup> hau[m] dhādhi vekār kārāi lāiā. (ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ)  
—Majh (Var), M 1, AG, p. 150.
- <sup>4</sup> bahunahitāya bahunasukhāya lokānukampāyai tathā vai  
hitāya sukhāya dévamānuṣānām  
बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय लोकानुकम्पायै तथा वै  
हिताय सुखाय देवमानुषानुणाम्—इतिवृत्तकम्  
—*Itivuttakam*
- <sup>5</sup> chaṛyā sodhan(i) dhart(i) lokāi.  
(ਚੜਿਆ ਸੋਧਣਿ ਧਰਤਿ ਲੋਕਾਈ)  
—BG, 1 (24/8)
- <sup>6</sup> phir(i) puchhan(i) siddh Nānakā mātlok vichch(i) kiyā vartārā  
(ਫਿਰਿ ਪੁਛਣਿ ਸਿਧ ਨਾਨਕਾ, ਮਾਤਲੋਕ ਵਿਚਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ)  
...  
bābe ākhiā nāth jī sach chandramā kuṛ(u) andhārā  
(ਬਾਬੇ ਆਖਿਆ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ, ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਕੁੜੁ ਅੰਧਾਰਾ)  
...  
siddh chhap(i) baiṭhe parbatī[n] kauṅ jagatr(i) kau pār(i) utārā  
(ਸਿਧ ਛਪਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਪਰਬਤੀ ਕਉਣੁ ਜਗਤਿ ਕਉ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਾਰਾ)  
—BG, 1 (29/1, 3, 6)
- <sup>7</sup> vaddā sāng vartāiā lakh(i) na sakke kudrat(i) koī  
puchhan(i) phohl kitāb no[n] hindū vaddā ki mussalmānoī

(ਵਡਾ ਸਾਂਗ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ਲਖਿ ਨ ਸਕੇ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੋਈ  
ਪੁਛਿਨ ਫੋਲਿ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਨੋ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਵਡਾ ਕਿ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੋਈ)

—*Ibid*, 1 (33/2-3)

<sup>8</sup> bābā ākhe hājīā subh amlān bājhon dono[n] roi  
(ਬਾਬਾ ਆਖੇ ਹਾਜੀਆ, ਸੁਭਿ ਅਮਲਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਦੋਨੋ ਰੋਈ)

—*Ibid*, 1 (33/4)

<sup>9</sup> *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 249.

<sup>10</sup> gṛhe gṛhe ghr̥tēna dwārkaśālānamārabdhān tūryapravṛtṭē—  
"Jaichandraprabandha" in *Puratānprabandhasamgrah*.

<sup>10</sup> ਗ੍ਰਹੇ ਗ੍ਰਹੇ ਘ੍ਰੁਟੇਨ ਫ਼ਾਰਕਸ਼ਾਲਨਮਾਰਬਧੰ ਤੂਰ੍ਯਪ੍ਰਵ੍ਰੁਟੇ —ਜਯਚੰਦ੍ਰਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਪਦ ਪੁਰਾਤਨਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਸੰਗ੍ਰਹ ।

<sup>11</sup> P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India*, p. 114.

<sup>12</sup> R.C. Majumdar, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XVIII, 195, p. 170.

<sup>13</sup> Gokul Chand Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 40 fn.

<sup>14</sup> See Plato's *Republic*, Ch. III.

<sup>15</sup> Trilochan Singh *et al* (eds.) *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>16</sup> *History & Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. VI, p. 569.

<sup>17</sup> tyāktva karamphalasangam nityatripto nirashrayah.-IV. 20

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निरोश्रयः

(गी. 4. 20)

<sup>18</sup> (i) jaise jal mahi[n] kamal[u] nirālam[u] murgāi nāisaṇe  
(ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੈਸਾਣੇ)

Rāmkali (Siddha Gosti), M 1, *AG*, p. 938.

(ii) karma karat hovai mihkarma (ਕਰਮ ਕਰਤ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਿਹਕਰਮ)

—Gauri Sukhmani, M 5, *AG*, p. 274

<sup>19</sup> A.P. Chekov, *Short Novels and Stories*, pp. 187-88.

<sup>20</sup> Ar-rijal qaummuna alay-un-nisāin-IV. 35

<sup>21</sup> X-95, 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, V. 23.

<sup>23</sup> so ki[u]n] manda akhiai jit[u] jammah(i) rājān

(ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ)

—Āsā (Vār), M 1, AG, p. 473

<sup>24</sup> Charles Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. II, p. 217.

<sup>25</sup> It has not been possible to verify this date from any known source.

—editors.

## GURU NANAK'S STATUS AND SALIENCE

The Sikhs like to think and assert that the birth of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) anticipated and synchronised with a major shift and a grave crisis in human minds and that Life-Force that creates, sustains and controls the Universe, flashed on to our earth, to restore spiritual imbalances, to underline priorities in newly arisen human problems, to afford guidance to man in his onward spiritual fulfilment. "The inky darkness of falsehood has completely eclipsed the moon of Truth"<sup>1</sup>, "No milestone is visible to man in this altogether unilluminated situation"<sup>2</sup>, and to redeem him from this utter helplessness "God Himself manifested His Effulgence"<sup>3</sup>, are the phrases employed in the Sikh scripture to indicate and communicate the context of Guru Nanak's advent. The ages-old isolation, virtually separating Asia from Europe, was diffused through newly developed maritime contacts. The Renaissance and Reformation in the West had cracked the shell encasing the European mind, and the intellectual movement of human understanding, broadbased on rationalism and materialism, had taken birth. The tool of scientific research was on the point of conferring superior military power and organisational skills in the hands of Europeans that would subdue the Oriental mind and Asia, paralysing the latter's autonomy and spontaneity. The critical Moment in the history of mankind had arrived, about which Teilhard de Chardin has said:

In every domain, when anything exceeds a certain measure-ments, it suddenly changes its aspect, condition or nature. The curve doubles back, the surface contracts

to a point, the solid disintegrates, the liquid boils, the germ-cell divides, intuition suddenly bursts on piled-up facts . . . Critical points have been reached, . . . jumps of all sorts in the course of development.<sup>4</sup>

In his poem, *Nullus*, D.H. Lawrence refers to such a moment in his own words:

There are said to be creative pauses,  
 Pauses that are as good as death itself,  
 And in these awful pauses,  
 The evolutionary change takes place.

Hindu mind is familiar with this idea out of which the grand doctrine of *avatārvād* and the profound religion of *Brahmanism* has emerged. *Bhagvadgītā* refers to it as, *yadā yadāhi dharmasya gilānir bhavati*: 'whenever a cosmic moral imbalance occurs'<sup>5</sup> The status of Guru Nanak has to be appreciated in this grand oecumenical context and not in relation to the back-drop of a marionettes show, as has been done so far by non-Sikh historians and scholars. European scholars, mostly rate Guru Nanak as the founder of a "sect".<sup>6</sup> It is presumed by them that the 'opinions' which Guru Nanak held and preached were mere re-interpretation of doctrines and dogmas of Hinduism while Guru Nanak did not question the Hindu dogmas and doctrines themselves, for a 'sect' is no more than a sub-division of a religion or the main divisions of a religion. It is tacitly, thus, asserted that Sikhism is not an independent, autonomous religion, a judgement or appraisal that Guru Nanak himself as well as the Sikhs have, throughout the past five centuries regarded as a term of pejoration and devaluation, unless it is born out of gross ignorance. Guru Nanak himself proclaims: "Whatever I say, is directly inspired by God."<sup>7</sup> Nanak the Third asserts: "The ever-true revelations

of the Guru Nanak are direct manifestations of the Divine Impulse, and the Guru is merely the mouth-piece."<sup>8</sup> Nanak the Fourth, unambiguously says that "Guru Nanak, the lowest of the lowly, as a human being speaks exactly as God directly prompts him to."<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Nanak the Fifth declares: "Guru Nanak's speech is made for him by God himself."<sup>10</sup> Again, that "Guru Nanak recognises no authority, no doctrine, except that directly revealed to him by God."<sup>11</sup> It is clear, beyond doubt that all the ten Manifestations of Guru Nanak and his followers, the Sikhs, have, from earliest times and throughout their history, claimed and asserted that Guru Nanak is an independent prophet in his own right and Sikhism is an autonomous world-religion, and not a sect or syncretism, no derivation or plagiarism.

Guru Nanak was also not a link in the chain of the medieval Bhakti Movement, because the fundamental propositions of this movement he did not accept. They are : (1) That Viṣṇu, the Sustainer and the Lord of the Universe, is the only true God to whom worship is due. (2) That God Viṣṇu, out of compassion for mankind, takes periodical births in human or sub-human forms, called *avatārs*. (3) That the only way in which a man may achieve freedom from birth and death is by worshipping one of these incarnations with single-minded devotion, i.e. *bhakti*.

Guru Nanak did not accept any of these propositions of the Bhakti cult, though he did emphasize that the way to the nearness of God was sincere devotion to Him. It is, therefore, a mistake to call him a prominent figure of the medieval Bhakti Movement.

## (ii)

The true status of Guru Nanak is *the Guru*, and he is demonstrably not a 'reformer', as Davy Cunningham in his *History*



calls him. A 'reformer' is one who restores an already established religion to its supposed original purity or amends it to remove its supposed defects. A 'reformer' accepts the validity of the already established religion and does not, directly or indirectly, repudiate or foreswear his unswerving allegiance to it. Guru Nanak, however, is emphatic and explicit that he "follows that what is directly revealed to him by God", *khudā rāhnumāi man ast.*<sup>12</sup> Bhai Gurdas (1558-1637), an unimpeachable authority on Sikhism and contemporary Sikh historical episodes, tell us (*Var* 1.33) that when on his visit to holy Mecca, the priests of Ka'aba found out that he was not a true believing Mussalman and that he carried a book under his arm containing his own credentials, they asked him point-blank to refer to his 'book' to answer the question of questions as to whether the Muslim insights into Reality and the Muslim way of life was valid or the Hindu religion and its practices. Guru Nanak's fearless reply was : "Neither one nor the other : not the credo but the deed counts."<sup>13</sup> If Guru Nanak, then, neither is the founder of a 'sect' nor a 'reformer', is he to be deemed an *avatār* of the Hindu tradition or a prophet, *an-nabi*, of the Semitic tradition? The reply to both the questions is in the negative. An *Avatar* is the descent of god Viṣṇu on earth in non-human or human form, while the very first line in the Sikh-scripture refers to God as, *ajūni*, beyond genesis. A curse is imprecated in the Guru Granth on the head of those who dare conceive of or describe God as having taken birth : *so mukhu jalau jitu kahe thākuru jonī (Bhairo, M.5)*. Guru Nanak is not a 'prophet' of the Semitic tradition, since the line of such prophets is fiercely believed as having ended finally by Christians with the crucifixion of Christ till the Day of Judgement, when Jesus, the Christ, will return to earth, and by the Muslims, with Mohammad, who sternly claimed : "I am the last of the Prophets", *annā ākhir-ul-anbiā*.

Besides, the functional appearance of an *avatār* as well as a *nabī* or *rasūl* is fixed and well defined, altogether out of focus with the essence of Sikh religion, the Religion of the Name, preached by Guru Nanak : *Nānak ke ghar (i) keval nām (u)* as the Sikh scripture puts it (AG, 1136). An *avatār* descends down periodically to earth to restore the social chaos and ethical imbalance to its predetermined, original harmony : *dharmasthāpanārthya sambhavami yuge yuge*. A Semitic prophet, *rasūl*, is commissioned by God to rejuvenate the religion, already preached by the premier Prophet Abraham, after salvaging its original purity.<sup>14</sup> An *avatār* functions, so to say, as a 'stabiliser' to an electric machine, to regulate an even flow of the current necessary for its smooth and efficient performance, it is external to the machine and it does not amend or interfere with the machine but intervenes only when the even flow of electric voltage transgresses normalcy. An *avatār* is not a revolutionary and does not insert himself into History to change its trends or functional destiny. He activates himself only, when the primordial and prefixed cosmic order is threatened with corruption. He re-establishes the settled tradition by destroying anti-conservative forces, by lancelating the abscess of *adharma*, the locus of infection, so to say, but he reveals no newer goals or destiny to society and creates no new or higher system of values. His penultimate function is, *maryādā purshotam*, the hero who puts the tradition and establishment back on its rails. A prophet renews and regenerates that which is already there, but has been obfuscated and corrupted, and he functions by inserting himself in the historical process by initiating human ferment and movement that makes its presence felt in the course of History, unlike an *avatār* who descends from High-above to remove some cog in the machine of History; he, the *avatār*, creates no new ferment

in human affairs and gives no new orientation to the historical process. The Guru, on the other hand, is different from both of them, the *avatār* and the prophet, in as much as he (1) reveals a new value-system for mankind, (2) inserts himself in History to give birth to new trends and fresh movement aiming at prevalence of the newly revealed value-system, and he thus (3) initiates a genuine revolution in the affairs of mankind by flashing out a new destiny for man. The Sikh scripture is clear about this connotation of the concept of the Guru : "the Guru is the perennial spring of pure Life-Force which is competent to remove impurities and parablepsis of the human soul, and the Guru, therefore, is the only fulfilment and refuge for man for him to transcend himself from humanity to divinity.<sup>15</sup> But the Sanskrit word *Gurū*, is a rather vague as well a very comprehensive and multivocal word in Indian sacred and secular literature and this fact is responsible for a great deal of confusion about the status of Guru Nanak in the minds and writings of Sikhs and non-Sikhs, Indians and foreigners. A Government of India *Report*, published in 1882, while dealing with "Indigenous Education in the Punjab", informs the reader that

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Among Sikhs there are three kinds of *gurūs*, educational, religious and spiritual.

The reference is to a School teacher, a Divinity teacher and the initiator of the Sikh baptismal ceremony. All these are referred to, in common speech, as gurus. Besides, the instructor of any art or craft is called a "guru" by the learner, There is a fifth sense of the concept, "guru", in relation to spiritual care and guidance by the adept of his disciple, which relationship is strictly personal and mutual to the two individuals concerned. Such a guru is called a *murshid* amongst Sufi Orders. *Rudrāyamal*, a tantric text, defines such a guru as "one who practises himself what he preaches."<sup>16</sup>

Besides, such a guru should be "a disciplined introvert", *antarlakshya*, and free from "outward orientation and poverty of mind", *bahir drishtih mano daridrya varjitam*. The heretic and schismatic persons in the Sikh community, the *neo-nirankāris* and *Rādhāswamis*, who insist and argue that a personal human guru is a 'must' for Sikh spiritual discipline, have this concept of guru in mind, and it is on account of their gross ignorance or cursedness that they equate this connotation of the concept *guru*, with the status-significator of the Sikh Gurus and Guru Nanak. The true Sikh doctrine of the Guru-status has been clearly defined in the *Guru Granth* as God operating in human sphere and guiding and enlightening the human mind. "The Guru is there in every human heart, such is the scheme of things as created by God."<sup>17</sup> "The Guru is the eternal God Himself, omnipresent and ever-lasting, implicit in every human heart, adamant and indestructible."<sup>18</sup> "When this Voice of God becomes explicit and specific, it assumes the form of the Word of the Guru, for him to proclaim it to the World."<sup>19</sup> "The mortal frame of him who thus proclaims the Word of the Guru is not the Guru."<sup>20</sup> "It is this Word that is the Guide and Light for mankind and those blessed by the Grace of God alone receive and accept it."<sup>21</sup> "The speech of a pretender or a mimicker is no substitute for this Word of the Guru."<sup>22</sup> "In the absence of this Guide and Light, the Word of the true Guru, man labours and laments in confusion and darkness."<sup>23</sup> Such is the status of Guru Nanak.

### (iii)

Earlier, a reference has been made to Moment of Crisis and the advent of Guru Nanak. It has been hinted that a major shift in human attitudes, that was to affect the entire mankind, had occurred resulting in, gradually, through the seventeenth

century, and maturing by the end of the eighteenth century, the exact span of history corresponding to the epiphany of Sikhism and its finalisation by Nanak the Tenth, Guru Gobind Singh. A.N. Whitehead has given us a phrase, 'mental climate', to express this phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> The mental climate characteristic of the modern world (seventeenth-mid-twentieth century) was well settled in the general mind. The mental climate of a period, this period in particular, consists of those fundamental assumptions which are current in the period, which are accepted as self-evident and which form the common ground of different world-outlooks constructed during that period. Such assumptions are not expressed and explained as explicit philosophies but none-the-less they form the basis of philosophies constructed and attitudes adopted during that period. One such assumption, more or less unquestioned during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has been that there exists an Order of Nature that can be investigated and comprehended by scientific enquiry and experimentation, illustrated in modern Science, particularly in Physics. This had led to the general outlook on all departments of human thought and activity, including religion, philosophy, aesthetics and art, called 'Scientific Materialism'. It is based on the supposition that reality of the world may be exhaustively described in terms of the abstractions found so successful in modern Science. These abstractions are 'mass', 'force', 'location in space and time', in the main. The human mind, therefore, must be understood by reduction into these abstractions, and since it is the human mind which is exclusively concerned with the 'religious experience', the artistic and aesthetic values form no part of the reality; they are merely expressive of its own constitution and not indicative of any aspect of the real world. They throw no light on the constitution of the world and they are expressive of nothing

more tangible than our own subjective needs, in the last resort, our biological needs. They point to no universal purpose in things and are, therefore, trivial for a mature mind, not fit for engaging a serious minded person's interest or attention. They are trivial because here nothing but accidental and non-essential subjective needs and appetites are involved. That which does not fit in with the materialistic universe of Science, forms no part of reality and is liable to be wholly dismissed. This doctrine that the whole of reality may be exhaustively described in terms of the fundamental scientific concepts elaborated in Europe during the seventeenth century, the precise period during which Sikhism was unfolding itself into its fulness and maturity, has only recently been abandoned during the last three or four decades of new developments in thought. The basis is found in the fact that the elements ignored by Science, *ex-hypothesis*, cannot come into question or disturb it. If religious experience, the artistic, and aesthetic cognitions form part of reality, how is it that the scientific description is to be deemed as complete ? It is now becoming increasingly clear to well-informed minds that the materialist outlook and objective scientific attitude and approach towards reality is, *abinito*, vitiated and this recent shift in the mental climate of intellectuals has now acquired greater force, due to the fact that materialist conceptions have been found to be inadequate in the very fields in which they achieved their greatest triumphs, and the Quantum Physics and the General Theory of Relativity have done the job. Physics, on which Science, the materialistic outlook is based, deals with but one aspect of reality, namely, its structure, and remains, perpetually, within its own domain by the device of cyclic definition.<sup>25</sup> Thus the mental climate brought about by Scientific Materialism is cracking up, bringing the relevance of Guru Nanak's teachings nearer and nearer to acceptance by the generality of mankind, fulfilling the prophecy made in the

Epilogue of the *Guru Nanak* to the effect that the "mankind shall not be able to turn its back, forever and permanently, on teachings of Guru Nanak."<sup>26</sup> But in the meantime, much harm has already been done. Collapse of modern societies is mainly traceable to one single fact, the so called scientific materialistic outlook as the determinant of the mental climate prevalent during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is the firm preference of the modern man for the secondary reality, which we call, *vyavahārik satya* to the primary reality, the Absolute Reality, *paramārtha satya*. Marxism, permissiveness in sex, hippyism, women's lib, streaking youth revolt, secularism, leftism, communism, socialism and atheism are directly traceable to this one major shift in human attitude to which Guru Nanak's teachings furnish an effective antidote and cure. Bhai Gurdas was literally right in saying that, "the advent of Guru Nanak clears the spiritual smog of mankind."<sup>27</sup>

(iv)

What are salient teachings of Guru Nanak that are directly relevant to the modern human situation ? Religion is a form of experience in which a man seeks to come into rapport with the Absolute Reality, thereby attaining security amidst the hazards of self-hood. Religion is what man does with his solitariness. It arises when we are frustrated with all earthly values and fail to achieve security and fulfilment through them, money, sex, hunger, power, reputation, good name, physical health and adulation. It is the consequent realisation born in the human heart that contact with something enduring, peaceful, leading to integration with wholeness that annuls man's basic alienation with the world, which environs and confronts him. To this basic human situation there are numerous references in the Sikh scripture. There is no enduring fulfilment for man in wealth, enjoyment and culture of senses, or seeing what the world has

to show."<sup>28</sup> Passions and desires cannot be calmed through indulgence "just as fire cannot be extinguished by adding more and more fuel to it," *Jio pāvak indhan nahi dhrāpe*. "There is no abiding security for man, except through refuge in God."<sup>29</sup> That this, indeed, is the basic human situation and its cure is through rapport with God, now finds powerful support even from modern atheist understanding of the problem :

I have treated many hundreds of cases in the second half of my life . . . There has not been one whose problem, in the last resort, was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook.<sup>30</sup>

How pithily and succinctly Guru Nanak has revealed this truth of basic relevance to mankind today, that "man is afflicted with illness, and rapport with God is the cure, for infections result from a false outlook."<sup>31</sup> Thus has Guru Nanak called upon man to turn God-wards by declaring that "all outlooks, social planning and political endeavours are futile and vain unless they are fundamentally grounded in fear of God."<sup>32</sup> Since "love of and rapport with God is not possible except through fear of God"<sup>33</sup>, "without fear of God, there is no redemption for man."<sup>34</sup> This is the first and fundamental salience of Guru Nanak's teachings in relation to the modern human situation. The second such salience is that a man of religious enlightenment must remain socially committed and must not insulate and separate himself from the society and its problems. On his visit to Kailash mountain and his dialogue with anchorites, he raised an accusing finger against them by saying that they were responsible for the current deplorable state of society with no one to guide



and instruct them. "The men of refinement and culture have escaped into inaccessible mountains and none is left there to guide and succour the society", as Bhai Gurdas tells us.<sup>35</sup> The Sikh scripture describes those who do not serve the society with all their talents and resources, as guilty of a most heinous sin.<sup>36</sup> It is the hallmark of Guru Nanak's teachings that social commitment and self purification are complementary to each other.<sup>37</sup> Guru Nanak assures mankind, on the authority of the divine revelation vouchsafed to him, that 'compassion of God is so great and His mercy so vast that if mankind earnestly and sincerely accepts and follows the Guru's teachings, the human society shall be so exalted that men will be transmuted into gods on earth.'<sup>38</sup> And where else shall we find teachings so simple and so noble that they not only meet all requirements of the modern human situation but also hold out vistas of spiritual heights so far unattained and undreamt of by the social homosapiens :

Do you want all your aspirations fulfilled and your basic situation redeemed? Then, accept and act Truth.

Live in nearness to God, through the Discipline of the Name.  
Through utmost humility, seek propinquity to God.

Harm and hurt no one and rest in peace at the centre of your own heart.

Nanak declares for all to hear : God is omniscient to purify and exalt the fallen and debased.<sup>39</sup>

[This paper was presented to the audience at Khalsa College, Amritsar, on November 30, 1970. It is a very much enlarged and elaborated version of an earlier article that appeared in the *Sikh Review* in 1969 (October-November issue, pages 92-93) under the head "The Status of Guru Nanak". That earlier article closed with the following powerful observation of the writer, which does not figure in the version reproduced above, but which amply bears repetition :

In a sense Guru Nanak was all these (a saint, a reformer, a rishi, a prophet) but he was primarily and essentially the Guru. The Guru is that attribute and power of God through which he dispels darkness of human mind and illumines it to see the Reality, when the veil is lifted from its face.

In the *Bhāgavadgītā* the term "Guru" is described as follows:

Guru is Brahma, Guru" is Vishnu and

Guru is also Meheshwar."

—Editors]

### Notes & References

- <sup>1</sup> Kūr[u] amāvas sach(u) chandramā,  
dīsaī nāhi kah chariā  
(ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ, ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚਤਿਆ)  
—Mājh, M 1, AG, p. 145
- <sup>2</sup> hau[n] bhāl(i) vikunni hoī  
āndherai rāh (u) na koī  
(ਹਉ ਭਾਲ ਵਿਕੁੰਨੀ ਹੋਈ ਆਧੇਰੈ ਰਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ)  
—*Ibid*
- <sup>3</sup> āp(i) nārāyaṇ(u) kalā dhār(i) jag maih[n] parvariyo  
(ਆਪਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਕਲਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਵਰਿਯਉ)  
—Swayye Bhaṭṭān Ke, AG, p. 1395
- <sup>4</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *Phenomenon of Man*.
- <sup>5</sup> IV. 8
- <sup>6</sup> *Cāmbriidge History of India*, IV, p. 244.
- <sup>7</sup> ta[n] mai[n] kahiā kahaṇ(u) jā tujhai kahāiā  
(ਤਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਹਣੁ ਜਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਕਹਾਇਆ)  
—Vadhans, M 1, AG, p. 566.
- <sup>8</sup> sabde upajai amrit bāṇī gur mukh(i) ākh suṇavṇiā  
(ਸਬਦੇ ਉਪਜੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਵਣਿਆ)  
—Mājh, M 3, AG, 125
- <sup>9</sup> dāsan(i) dās(u) kaha jan(u) nānak(u)

- jehā tūn karāihī(n) tehā hau(n) kari(n) vakhīān(u)  
 (ਦਾਸਨਿ ਦਾਸੁ ਕਰੈ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ  
 ਜਹਾ ਤੂੰ ਕਰਾਇਹਿ ਤੇਹਾ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਵਖਿਆਨੁ)
- Sūhī, M 4, AG, p. 734
- <sup>10</sup> nānak(u) bole tiskā bolāiā  
 (ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਬੋਲਾਇਆ)
- Malār, M 5, AG, 1271
- <sup>11</sup> aparampār pārbrahm(u) paramesar(u)  
 nānak gur(u) miliā soi jīo  
 (ਅਪਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਉ)
- Sorath, M 1, AG, p. 599
- <sup>12</sup> *Janam-sākhī Bhāi Bālā.*
- <sup>13</sup> puchhan(i) phol(i) kitāb no hindū vaḍā ki musalmānoi  
 bābā ākhe, 'hājīā, subh(i) amlā[n] bājho[n] dono[n] roi  
 hindu musulman doi, dargah andar lahan(i) dhoi  
 (ਪੁਛਨਿ ਫੋਲਿ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਨੋ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਵਡਾ ਕਿ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੋਈ  
 ਬਾਬਾ ਆਖੇ ਹਾਜੀਆ ਸੁਭਿ ਅਮਲਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਦੋਨੋ ਰੋਈ  
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਦੁਇ ਦਰਗਹ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਲਹਨਿ ਨ ਢੋਈ)
- BG, 1 (33/3-5)
- <sup>14</sup> *Qurān, 25. 14.*
- <sup>15</sup> Gur(u) dariāo sadā jal(u) nirmal(u)  
 miliā durmat(i) mail(u) harai  
 sat(i) gur(i) pāiai pūrā nāvaṇ(u)  
 pasū paretahu dev Karai  
 (ਗੁਰੁ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਸਦਾ ਜਲੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ  
 ਮਿਲਿਆ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਹਰੈ  
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਾਵਣੁ  
 ਪਸੁ ਪਰੇਤਹੁ ਦੇਵ ਕਰੈ)
- Prabhāti, M 1, AG, p. 1329

<sup>16</sup> svayam ācarate śiṣyam ācāre sthāpyāpi.

स्वयम् आचरते शिष्यम् आचारे स्थापयति

<sup>17</sup> satigur te khāli ko nahī

mere prabh(i) mel milāe

(ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਖਾਲੀ ਕੋ ਨਹੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ)

—Slok, M 4, AG, p. 850.

<sup>18</sup> satigur(u) merā sadā sadā nā āvai nā jāi

oh abināśi purakh(u) hai sabh mahi[ṅ] rahiā samāi

(ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਨਾ ਆਵੈ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ

ਓਹੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ)

—Sūhi, M 4, AG, p. 759.

<sup>19</sup> sabde upajai amrit bāni gurmukh(i) ākh(i) suṇavanaia

(ਸਬਦੇ ਉਪਜੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਵਣਿਆ)

—Mājh, M 3, AG, p. 725.

<sup>20</sup> bāni gurū gurū hai bāni

(ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ)

—Nat, M 4, AG, p. 982.

<sup>21</sup> gurbāni is(u) jag mahi(n) chanaṅ(u)

karam(i) vasai man(i) āe

(ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ

ਕਰਮਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਏ)

—Sri Rāg, M 3, AG, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> satigur ki risai hor(i) kach(u) pich(u) bolde

(ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਰੀਸੈ ਹੋਰਿ ਕਚੁ ਪਿਚੁ ਬੋਲਦੇ)

—Gauri, M 3, AG, p. 304.

<sup>23</sup> bin(u) satigur sabh(u) jag(u) baurānā

(ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਬਉਰਾਨਾ)

—Sorath, M 3, AG, p. 604.

<sup>24</sup> Vide *Science and the Modern World*.

<sup>25</sup> Eddington, *Mathematical Theory of Relativity*.

Also, *Science, Religion and Reality*.

- 26 eh vast(u) taji nah jāi  
(ਏਹ ਵਸਤੁ ਤਜੀ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ)  
— Mundāvāṇī, M 5, AG, p. 1429
- 27 satigur nanak pragatiā  
mitī dhundh(u) jag(i) chānaṅ(u) hoā  
(ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਿਟੀ ਯੁੰਧ ਜਗਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਆ)  
—BG, 1 (27/1).
- 28 sukh(u) nāhi bahutai dhan(i) khāṭe  
sukh(u) nāhi pekḥ nirt(i) nāṭe  
sukh(u) nāhi bahu des kamāe  
(ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਹੁਤੈ ਧਨਿ ਖਾਟੇ  
ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਪੇਖੇ ਨਿਰਤਿ ਨਾਟੇ  
ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਹੁ ਦੇਸ ਕਮਾਏ)  
—Bhairo, M 5, AG, p. 1147.
- 29 har(i) bājh(u) rākhā koi nāhi  
(ਹਰਿ ਬਾਝੁ ਰਾਖਾ ਕੋਇ ਨਾਹੀ)  
—Āsā, M 1, AG, p. 439.
- 30 Carl C. Jung, *Man in Search of Soul*, p. 294
- 31 sansār(u) rogi nām(u) dārū  
maī(u) lāgai sa[ch]ch binā  
ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਰੋਗੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਰੁ  
ਮੈਲੁ ਲਾਗੈ ਸਚ ਬਿਨਾ  
—Dhanāsari, M 1, AG, p. 687.
- 32 bhai bin(u) ghārāt kach(u) nikach(u)  
andhā sa(ch)ā andhi saṭ  
(ਭੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਘਾਤਤ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚ  
ਅੰਧਾ ਸਚਾ ਅੰਧੀ ਸਟਾ)  
—Gaurī M 1, AG, p. 151.

<sup>33</sup> bhai bin bhagt(i) na hoi  
(ਭੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ)

—Rāmkalī, M 3, *AG*, p. 911.

<sup>34</sup> bhai bin koi na langhs(i) pār  
(ਭੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਲੰਘਸਿ ਪਾਰ)

—Gaurī, M 3, *AG*, p. 151.

<sup>35</sup> si[d]dh chhap(i) baiṭhe parbati[n]  
kaun jagatr(i) ko pār(i) utārā  
(ਸਿਧ ਛਪਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਪਰਬਤੀ ਕਉਣੁ ਜਗਤ੍ਰਿ ਕਉ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਾਰਾ)

—*BG*, I (29/6).

<sup>36</sup> (a) mānas janam kar bhalā nā kino  
ta te adhik darao  
(ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮ ਕਰ ਭਲਾ ਨ ਕੀਨੋ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਕ ਡਰਾਉ)  
(b) gāhe nā neki kār kardam mam in chini[n] ahwāl.  
badbakht hamch(u) bakhil gāfil benajar bebak  
(ਗਾਹੇ ਨ ਨੇਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਮ ਮਮ ਈ ਚਿਨੀ ਅਹਵਾਲ  
ਬਦਬਖਤ ਹਮਚੁ ਬਖੀਲ ਗਾਫਿਲ ਬੇਨਜਰ ਬੇਬਾਕ)

—Tilang, M 1, *AG*, p. 721.

<sup>37</sup> satigur ki aisi vadiai  
putra kalatra vi[ch]che gati pāi  
(ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਐਸੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ, ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰੁ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ)

—Dhanasari M 1, *AG*, p. 661.

<sup>38</sup> balihāri guru āpṇe diohāri sad vār  
jin(i) māṇas te devate kie karat na lāgi vār  
(ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦ ਵਾਰ  
ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ)

—Asa (Vār), M 1, *AG*, p. 462.

<sup>39</sup> jis(u) sarab sukhā phal loṛiah, so sach[ch] kamāvo  
nerai dekho pārbrahm(u), ik(u) nām(u) dhiāvo  
hoi sagal ki renukā, har(i) sang(i) samāvo

dūkh(u) na deī kisai jā, pat(i) siu[ṅ] ghar(i) jāvo  
 patit punit kartā purukh(u), nānak sunāvo  
 (ਜਿਸੁ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖਾ ਫਲ ਲੋਤੀਅਹਿ ਸੋ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਵਉ  
 ਨੇਤੈ ਦੇਖੋ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਇਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵਉ  
 ਹੋਇ ਸਗਲ ਕੀ ਰੇਣੁਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਵਉ  
 ਦੂਖੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਿਸੈ ਜੀਅ ਪਤਿ ਸਿਉ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਵਉ  
 ਪਤਿਤ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣਾਵਉ)

—Gauri (Vār), M 5, AG, p. 322.

## THE CONTEMPORARY CHAOS AND GURU NANAK

Contemporary<sup>1</sup> Europe and, indeed, the whole world, presents a very disquieting spectacle. The chaos, known as the World Wars, is a symptom of the chaos prevalent in the moral outlook of the civilised man. As a consequence, the world today presents a remarkable variety of social and political doctrines. Indeed, it seems improbable that the mankind has ever before shown such variety of invention in this field.

Asia lost the spiritual leadership of the civilised world many centuries ago and it is now some centuries since Europe has subscribed to and lived under any single and universal conception of society and government. But we are living in an age of self-conscious communities. Even the crudest of the regimes of the contemporary Europe, claim a systematic and well-thought out doctrine of its own and, thus, opportunism, whether in the affairs of individuals or the organised societies, has been converted into a principle. We have lost even the candour of a Kautilya and a Machiavelli.

The most outstanding of these social and political doctrines may be taken as, Representative Democracy, Communism, Fascism and National Socialism. All these doctrines have been put forward as solutions of all the ills, bodily and mental, that mankind is heir to. Instead of ushering in an era of universal peace and goodwill, these doctrines, however, have, directly or indirectly, led to the present state of affairs, the stupendous stupidity of which appalls every thinking man.



## (ii)

The need for examining the roots of this chaos, therefore, is apparent. It is further apparent that unless a way of life and conception of society, is evolved which leads to more harmonious relationship between individuals and societies, the future of civilisation is none too bright.

As far as I can see, the fundamental difference between the contemporary European creeds of social and political philosophy lies not between those which offer a spiritual ideal and those which offer a material ideal, as is sometime assumed.

Even the most Marxian materialistic interpretation of social behaviour has a spiritual aspect about it. The basic cleavage between these doctrines is represented by those, on the one hand, which hand over to the arbitrary will of a society's self appointed leaders the planning of its entire life, and those which not only refuse to hand over the destiny of a society to any such leaders but also consider the whole notion of such planning of the destiny of a society to be senseless and immoral. On the one side are the authoritative doctrines of Communism, Fascism and National Socialism; and on the other Democracy and Liberalism. The present war<sup>2</sup> in Europe is represented, and, as matter of fact, it is a conflict between the two fundamentally divergent conceptions of human society and ways of life. To the Liberal mind the notion that men can authoritatively plan and impose a way of life upon a society appears to be a piece of pretentious ignorance. Such a notion can be entertained only by such men who have no respect for human lives and who are willing to make them the means to the realization of their own ambitions. To the other type of mind that is authoritarian, it appears both, stupid and criminal, that there should be misery and suffering and want of full opportunity for growth simply because really

intelligent people are not at the helm of affairs to guide the destinies of a society.

(iii)

The solution which Guru Nanak suggested to these complicated problems assumes a new importance on account of its relevance to these most vital questions of the day and also because of its inherent merits.

(iv)

The basic assumption of Guru Nanak's solution of these problems is that, in their last analysis, the social and political questions are personal and individual questions. Thus, finally the individual is measure of all things. Unless the individual is regenerated and elevated and adopts an attitude which harmonizes with the attitude of his similarly elevated fellow human beings, it is not possible to eradicate the roots of disharmony and conflict. There is no novelty in this doctrine as it is nothing but the doctrine of the ancient Upaniṣads that *Dharma* is the prop of the University. It is the content which Guru Nanak gave to this notion of *Dharma* which is of pragmatic interest to a thoughtful student of political and social philosophy. As you read the *Janamsākhis* as revealing the basic ideas and doctrines of Guru Nanak's Sikhism, and as you study the Guru Granth an exposition of the spiritual atmosphere in which the regeneration of mankind may take place, and as you study carefully the final shape which Guru Gobind Singh gave to Sikhism, and the meticulous rules of conduct, embodied in the *Rahatnāmās*, the simple and clearcut message of Guru Nanak, given on every third page of the *Janamsākhis* stands endorsed.

The message is repeated again and again, and the rules of conduct laid down in the message are mechanically reiterated from page to page. Whenever Guru Nanak meets a stranger, regenerates him through his personal magnetism and when he is about to

depart, the separation seems painful as the pangs of death. "Stay with me, O Master, and do not leave me alone" entreats the stranger turned a devotee. Then speaks Guru Nanak, invariably, "Engage thyself in honest labour only, make the practice of *Nām* thy avocation in life, and do not hoard thy wealth but enjoy it sharing it with others".

## ( v )

These three precepts seem to offer a solution of the outstanding problems which confront the human society today. Exploitation and Imperialism will become impossible in a society composed of individuals who may subsist on no other means of livelihood but those which have been acquired through honest sweat of the brow.

Accumulation of wealth, the attendant evils of capitalism, and the social ills which it leads to, would be unthinkable in a society whose members inculcate in themselves an attitude which considers it evil to enjoy exclusively the fruit of one's labour.

The practice of *Nām* will raise the whole conscious and sub-conscious make-up of men to a new and higher plane where such attitudes are no longer opposed to human nature but, on the contrary, are in harmony with human nature.

## ( vi )

Unless the individual is raised from the ditch of his narrow self and where a collection of such individuals arises to a new and higher plane, regenerated through the discipline and practice of *Nām* and unless such individuals accept the doctrine of non-exploitation and collective right of all the members of the society to the wealth of the society, there shall not be peace or harmony amongst men on the earth. When or how these precepts of Guru Nanak will be applied to the ills of the contemporary world is a question not for me to answer.

[*The Tribune*, Lahore, dated November 3, 1941.—editors]

### **Notes & References**

- <sup>1</sup> "Contemporary" here refers to the period preceding 3 November 1941, when the article was written and when World War II was going on in its full fury—*Editors*.
- <sup>2</sup> World War II which began on September 30, 1939.

## FOUNDER OF A WORLD RELIGION

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

Herein, what follows, the term "founder" means not a follower, exegesist, syncretist, a metaphysician or a philosopher, but one who, while in direct contact with what Otto Rudolph in his *Idea of the Holy* calls "Numenon", and compulsively impelled by it proclaims, formulates and preaches a way to such a contact by others. A 'religion' is neither ethics, not metaphysics, neither mystical awareness nor magic, neither theism nor worship of a deity or even the Deity; it is that which moves man to the depth of his being and yet has not its origin in the depths of human soul but moves it from outside. Just as the central concept in art is 'beauty', in ethics 'goodness', so in religion it is 'holiness an intimate contact or union with which is felt as utterly necessary for complete satisfaction and wholeness of man.' A world religion' is that way of life on which all mankind may walk without the apartheid of race, colour, sex, age, caste, class, country and clan.

It is intended here to give, first, a briefest possible life-sketch of the historical man Nanak, who became Guru Nanak, the World Teacher, a short account of the nature of his prophetic

claim and a bare outline of his teachings and their relevance to the modern human situation.

Nanak was born on 15th April, A.D. 1469 in the north-west of India in a village, now called Nanakana Sahib-the Holy Birthplace of Nanak-situated in Pakistan from where the Sikhs, his followers, were expelled, almost to a man, in 1947, when the outgoing Britishers divided India into the two separate countries by drawing a pencil line on the map of an indivisible India. As might be expected, Nanak, the son of petty high caste revenue official, was, from the beginning, of an unworldly turn of mind, and many attempts of his parents to engage him in some gainful occupation, each time, ended in disaster, till he was persuaded to accept the gainful and important post of the chief supplies master of a nearby Muslim Principality. The turning point in his life came when he was twentyseven years old. During these days, he would, while performing his duties, pass out into reveries, frequently becoming trances. On one such occasion, while supervising weighing of grain stores, he stopped dead at the count of measure thirteen, which in Punjabi language is the word *tera*, also meaning, 'I am thine', and he went on counting *terā, terā*, while measure after measure of stores was being passed out. As was to be expected the government took a serious notice of it and an enquiry into his gross negligence was ordered against him. While the enquiry was still in progress, Nanak, as was his routine, went one early morning for his dip in the neighbouring stream and disappeared into the bed of the river for full three days, when he was presumed drowned and a search for his body proved fruitless. All these days, he had sat, what in ancient texts on Yoga is called *jalastambhasamādhi* 'trance-in-water', a skill acquirable through prescribed techniques and practices and also available to gifted individuals from birth. There are many who possess

this skill in India even today. On the fourth day he emerged from the depths of the waters and uttered the following words: "There is no Hindu, no Mussalman".<sup>1</sup> Whether he meant that deep down in the substratum of Aryan and Semitic religions there is an identity of base or whether he intended to convey that the truth of both had been obscured and lost to practitioners of both these faiths on account of verbal formulae and empty rituals, it was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission that demands acceptance of genuine dialogue rather than conversion as the goal of transcending particularisms or contending cultures and feuding religions, with a view to discover a universal concept, not synthesis or synthetic amalgam, but deeper penetration of one's own religion in thought, devotion and action, and thus to arrive at the realisation that in every living religion there is a point at which the religion itself loses its importance and that to which it points, breaks through its particularity elevating it to spiritual freedom and with it to a vision of spiritual presence in other expressions of the ultimate meanings of human existence. This is not the doctrine of the so-called 'fundamental unity of all religions', for such a claim has its limitations. Given fundamental differences in conceptions of Reality and attitudes towards the world, no real synthesis can be expected, there being incompatible elements in the cores of various religions. None of these religions can draw closer to the others, for each must claim itself to be the way and the truth for its own believers, even if not for all men. No world religion can seriously consider abandoning its own absolutistic claim, for if it did, it would scarcely have the right to call itself a religion, much less a world religion. But a sort of reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect is possible, generating civilised tolerance and growing co-operation. It seems more likely that this is the true intent and meaning of what Nanak uttered on this occasion.

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

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

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

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

to purify and divinise the entire mankind on all parts of the globe.<sup>4</sup>

Guru Nanak had nine successor World Teachers who, through precept and practice, fulfilled and applied the teachings of Nanak, the First Guru, to the changing and growing politico-social situations of the day, and in their own independent revelations and testaments explained and exegetised the contents' implications of Guru Nanak's revelations which they themselves compiled and recorded as the Sikh scripture, the *Guru Granth*.



The Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh (1661-1708) was the last manifestation of Nanak who passed on the preaching and practice of Sikhism as world religion to the Collective Corpus of all the believers inspired and guided by the Word, as revealed and recorded in the Sikh scripture. Ever since, the central focus of all Sikh congregations and the body of the non-institutional Sikh Church is comprised of the collectivity of all the believers in Sikhism, and is called the *Panth*, 'the Way of Life'. Nanak the Tenth further ordained (1699) the Order of the Khālsā to establish, to perpetuate and to legitimatise the social pattern amongst government, societies and states of the world, wherein the Sikh values of life-truthfulness, honesty, mutual trust and loyalty, productive labour and communal sharing, gratitude and integrity of conduct, authentic living, and above, all, spiritual transformations that raise man to what St. Teresa of Avila, the Christian mystic refers to as "spiritual marriage"-prevail and wherein a God filled man returns to society for its service and edification.<sup>5</sup> These are the Sikhs whom one might meet in all parts of the world, bearded, unshorn and turbaned, symbolising natural, spontaneous, unmanufactured or fashioned pristine integrity of man. It is to this Order of the Khalsa that Arnold Toynbee, in his History points as the true prototype of the elan of the Communist Party of Lenin, while rejecting the latter's claim that his Communist Party was a unique phenomenon in the history of the societies of mankind.<sup>6</sup>

Nanak is the first born in India who claims that the religion he preaches is a revealed religion. "I am completely dumb as I am and I speak as I am made to, by God." "I utter and preach the Word just as it comes to me."<sup>7</sup> Our knowledge of the psychological character of the religious experience and its matrix is so minimal that it is not possible for us to make positive statements about divine revelation. Quranic revelation is not a living experience between

God and man, a happening into which God Himself enters, but it is a book. The first word of Mohammad's revelation is, "read" and the page of a book is shown to him, the book that the angel has brought down from heaven. Islam was a book-religion from the first moment on. Jesus left no written word to his followers and is merely reported as having claimed full authority of his Father, God, for what he was preaching. Moses, like a much earlier Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, received a material, an inscribed tablet of laws, through the agency of a burning bush and from the sun-god on high, *shams*, respectively. The seers, *rishis of Vedās*, grasped, without necessarily comprehending, eternal sounds, *śruti*, and then passed them on to future generations in mnemonic formulae and, therefore, the texts of *Vedās* and *apauruṣeya* and eternal, co-existent with the beginning of existence, *anādī*. The "voices" heard by extraordinary men, throughout the ages, such as Socrates and Joan of Arc in the West, have been known to be of obscure origin, proven unreliability and dubious authenticity. Mysticism is a variety of human experience that might be interpreted, but in itself is non-sensory, non-intellectual and altogether non-verbal and ineffable. Guru Nanak claims direct contact with supra-sensuous Truth and the Divine Person which is sensory, intellectual and verbal, experienced with an immediacy and simultaneity that carries with it its own authenticity and which is *sui generis*, fashioned into a mould of poetry and song. Bergson has well pointed out that "before intellection, properly so-called, there is the perception of structure and rhythm." The nature of Guru Nanak's revelation is, thus, shown as unique and mysterious in character and origin.

Prophets of religion, like other men, are also rooted in time and place. The teachings of a prophet may amount to unique contributions of enduring value to the thought of their age and

they may say that it is a class by itself, without a precursor, without a successor, logically untraceable to antecedents, yet thereby a prophet does not cease to belong to his age; just as he is arising most above it, he is truly rooted in it. This is true of Guru Nanak also.

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

1. He teaches that it is not the intellectual formula or verbal assent to it that liberates man, but the deed and his quality of living. "Truth is higher than everything but higher still is truthful living."<sup>8</sup>

2. Self-alienation is the most profound affliction, not only of the modern man but it has been so ever since man began to look within. In the most ancient recorded thought of man—the *Veda*—this self-alienation, *kilvis*, the primal fission where the One became many, is pinpointed as the basic problem of the human psyche, and the ritual technique of *yajna* is recommended for regaining this lost unity, and this is the beginning of the prestigious Hindu contribution of the techniques and systems of Yoga to the insights into the psychologies and religious practices of mankind. Religion always proceeds from an existential dichotomy between man and the world, between man and God, and man longs to overcome this dichotomy to achieve a wholeness which appears to him as necessary for a satisfying and authentic living. Pascal describes the point well by observing that "all man's troubles stem from the fact that he cannot bear to stay in a room alone with himself". Each one of us, more or less, encounters a sense of despair, when he is forced to compromise his inner vision with the realities of a world he must share with others. It is one of the terms of a social being as it is the predicament of a lonely person and, therefore, part of adult life, particularly of the intellectual, whom

Albert Camus describes as "someone whose mind watches itself", and in whom this disease of self-alienation is apt to run rampant. In the whole of the Sikh scripture, as in the revelations of Guru Nanak himself, there are repeated references to this great wrench in human psyche and the cure is declared as a spiritual system and discipline based on the fundamental psychological insights of the Yoga and its adaptation to a secular, social life, thus discarding the necessity of turning one's back on the world, and full social participation in it in search for annulment of man's self-alienation. This system and way of life is the *Nam-Yoga* of Sikhism that constitutes the greatest contribution of Guru Nanak to the Religion wherein the secular and the spiritual are indissolubly married. This Yoga of the Name is the core of the 'Religion of the Name' which Sikhism is and which God commanded Guru Nanak to practise and preach to the world.

3. The third Central teaching of Guru Nanak is that the fully integrated person, the liberated individual, the defied man, must revert to the world and society to participate in its activities to guide and assist it in striving for achieving a situation in which human mind is free, human psyche is made whole, authentic living is facilitated and individuals may evolve into "defied men." When Guru Nanak travelled deep into the Inner Himalayas crossing Nepal and some portions of Western Tibet, reaching the legendary Kailash Mountain and the celestial Mansarovar lake, the snowy and inaccessible abode of the perfected yogis who were amazed to see a mere mortal reach there, "How does the news go with the world of the mortals?" they asked Guru Nanak, "The society is rotten to its core", replied Guru Nanak, and then raised an accusing finger at these yogis adding, "And sires, you are guilty ones, for, it is men of high culture and sensitivity who alone can guide and sustain society, but you have chosen to be self-indulgent escapees?"

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

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

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### Notes & References

1 *Purātan Janamsākhī* (ed. Bhai Vir Singh), 4th ed. p. 15.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

3 Hau[n] dhādhi vekār(u) kārai lāiā.

(ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ)

—Mājh (Vār), M 1, AG, p. 150

4 Chariā sodhaṅ (i) dhart (i) lukāi.

(ਚੜਿਆ ਸੋਧਣਿ ਧਰਤਿ ਲੁਕਾਈ)

—BG, 1 (24/8)

5 *The Interior Castle*.

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

7 Hau[n] apahu[n] bol(i) nā jāṇdā, mai[n] kahia sabh(u) hukmao jiu.

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

—Sūhi, M 1, *AG*, p. 763.

8 Sach[ch]o[n] orai sabh(u) ko upar(i) sach[ch]u āchār(u)

(ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ)

—Sri Rāg, M. 1. *AG*, 62.

9 *BG*, 1 (29/6).

## THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF GURU NANAK

When in 1610, some Sikhs asked for the permission of the Sixth Nanak (Guru Har Gobind) to have a portrait of the Guru prepared, it was politely refused, and to the puzzled Sikhs, Bhai Gurdas, the evangelist, explained that the only authentic portrait of the Guru is the Word of the Guru.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is a basic Sikh doctrine that 'the Guru and the Word are identical in all respects.'<sup>2</sup> Bhai Kesar Singh Chhibbar (died in about 1730), in his *Bansāvalināmāh* tells us that the last injunction of Guru Gobind Singh to the Sikhs was 'to analyse and think over the implications of the Word of the Guru and to endeavour constantly for the collective good of the Panth.'<sup>3</sup>

This, then, is the central injunction of the Gurus to a Sikh, as well as to mankind, that (1) the basic factor in human society is the individual, (2) valuable creative efforts are possible only if his core is kept free, and (3) his freedom consists in the extinction of selfishness rather than in the pretensions inflation of his ego.

This is precisely the message which Guru Nanak gave in the opening stanza of his basic Revelation, the *Japu* :

Through thinking the Reality cannot be grasped, no matter how hard the thinking be.

Through complete stoppage of mentation also the equipoise of inner silence cannot be reached.

Not through maceration and atrophe of the human senses is man ultimately nourished, even though he may completely place in check the entire proliferation of his personality that is its universe.

No techniques or know-hows will finally avail, no matter how subtle and various.

Then how may man establish harmony with Truth, so that the divisive veil may fall off ?

Nanak answers the question thus " 'Man must completely submerge his little ego in the Will of God which He revealeth to human beings through the human heart itself.'<sup>4</sup>

It clearly means that philosophies, systems of metaphysics credos and ideologies are no answer to the basic human predicament and, therefore, neither individual nor social problems of mankind can be satisfactorily solved through either neat system of thought or political ideologies, or through institutionalised religions or dogmas. It also means that all attempts at world-negation, all disciplines aiming at sheer mental culture, or esoteric introversion and mind-control, are bound to fail as ultimate solvents of human problems. Further, self aggression, resulting in rigorous strophe of the human personality, another form of suicide, is no solution of man's fundamental problems. And, lastly, it means that all attempts at utopia-making, through regimentation of society and planning grounded in compulsion and social engineering are bound to fail in the long run.

If neither pseudo-rationalism nor yet materialism can furnish the final answer to the fundamental human problem, then how may man establish 'harmony with truth ?' Guru Nanak in answering this question, makes it clear that such harmony can never be reached by imposition of compulsion-imposition that comes from neatly compiled 'revealed' or 'remembered' ethico-social codes, decalogues, messages of God revealed through hand-picked individuals, mnemonic premonitions, the *smṛitis* of men-in-trance; and the compulsion of ideologies and of utopia-making busy-bodies, wherein and with whom lies the temptation to depreciate the individual and to suppress free inquiry and criticism. In one age it is the power of the Church, in another it is the power of the State, in still another it is the



power of Money. All these masquerade as the Will of God, and all these aim at eventual liquidation and enslavement of the individual so as to perpetuate their own earthly power over him.

'Harmony', therefore, can come only through education and culture of the individual made conscious of his moral and social responsibility. Only such an inner directed man can be fully human, truly free and in harmony with his total environment. Only the inner-directed man in communion with God had dignity which respects that of others. Only such an individual can form the fundamental building stone of a genuinely free and civilised society. By contrast, the outer-directed man, the man imposed upon and guided by compulsion, the robot and the organised man, pressed and atomised into some kind of monolithic collective, is the man who, first, is robbed of his personal identity, and next becomes the man in a herd, 'integrated fully' to the community, nation, state or party; in fact a man of the mob, a potential mobster who is ultimately destined to be the dust on the boots of *chappals* of the mighty in a sub-human robot or ant-hill society.

However, even that is not such a man's final tragedy. His final tragedy is that he is cut off from God, the All-Ground, and thus is incurably alone, estranged and powerless. In his heart the divine ordinances, eternally imprinted these, become indecipherable, and obfuscated and God no longer 'revealeth Himself' to such a human being, as Guru Nanak says.

In *Āsā dī vār*, Guru Nanak reverts to this topic to explain the final tragedy of such a man :

O, NANAK, such men who turn their backs on the divine Guidance within their hearts, misled by their superficial cleverness, in the final reckoning they are like unto a parasite plant which remains disgracefully standing in the empty field,

ungathered, unharvested. But this loneliness and worthlessness is not yet their final tragedy, Nanak asserts. Their true tragedy is that seemingly they prosper and make good, but from inside they turn into ashes.<sup>5</sup>

Such is the central message which Guru Nanak has given to mankind, a message which, in the present social and political situation of the world, acquires a significant poignancy and meaningfulness. The world stands poised on the brink of disaster yet with the choice of taking the road to a glory, perhaps, unprecedented in its long history.

[This article first, appeared in the *Sikh Review* (November 1961), pages 35-37, in connection with the Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, in that year-editions]

### Notes & References

- 1 gurmūrat(i) gursabad(u) hai.  
(ਗੁਰਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰਸਬਦੁ ਹੈ)  
--BG, 24 (11/3).
- 2 bāṇi gurū gurū hai bāṇi  
(ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ)  
--Nat, M 4, AG, 982
- 3 khoj sabad di karani, bhalā panth dā lochanā.  
(ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਦੀ ਕਰਨੀ, ਭਲਾ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਲੋਚਨਾ)  
-Baṅsāvalināmā.
- 4 sochai soch(i) nā hovai, je sochi[n] lakh vār  
... ..  
hukm(i) rajāi chalanā, nānak likhiā nāl(i)  
... ..  
(ਸੋਚੈ ਸੋਚਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ, ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀ ਲਖ ਵਾਰ)  
... ..  
(ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ)  
-Japu(i), AG, p.1.

- 5 nānak gurū nā chetani man(i) āṇṇai suchet,  
 chhuṭṭe til būār jio[n] suñjhe aṅdar(i) khet,  
 khetai aṅdar(i) chhuṭṭia[n] kahu nānak sau nāh,  
 phaliai phuliai bapure bhi tan vi[ch]ch(i) suāh.  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨ ਚੇਤਨੀ ਮਨਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੁਚੇਤ  
 ਛੁਟੇ ਤਿਲ ਬੂਆਤ ਜਿਉ ਸੁੰਵੇ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਖੇਤ  
 ਖੇਤੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਛੁਟਿਆ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਉ ਨਾਹ  
 ਫਲੀਅਹਿ ਫੁਲੀਅਹਿ ਬਪੁਰੇ ਭੀ ਤਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੁਆਹ

-Āsā, M 1, AG, 463.

## THE *JAPU*

The *Japu*, pronounced as Jap, is the first text included in the Guru Granth. The average modern man, not well-versed in the ancient idiom and genre of verbal traditions of India, experiences much difficulty in following the meanings, nuances and significance of texts, such as the *Japu* of Guru Nanak, for the *Japu* assumes such a knowledge on the part of those to whom it is addressed. Therefore, the following lines.

It is not disputed that the *Japu* is one of the latest revelations or compositions of Guru Nanak and is estimated as enshrining mature theosophy of the Sikh religion. The Hindi poet-laureate, Mahakavi Bhai Santokh Singh (A.D. 1785-1843), in his *Garba-Ganjani Teekā*, an exegesis of the *Japu*, has summed up the consensus of generations of Sikh opinion, on the status of this text in Sikhism, by saying that 'he who calls himself a Sikh and yet has not committed the text of the *Japu* to memory (for daily recitation), is like the husk containing no grain of rice, worthless and of no value'.<sup>1</sup> The *Japu* is a pithy, *sūtra* form of Sanskrit literary tradition that requires an expression comprised of all essentials of a thesis in the fewest possible words without sacrificing clarity. A careful study of the *Japu* is, therefore, necessary for understanding Sikhism and the Sikh movement.

The *Japu* is also of the genre of the Poetics, which, however alien it may appear to religious preoccupations, undoubtedly draws inspiration from the meanings applicable to the context of *mantra* or acoustic potency of the spoken words, such as *upamā*, *slesha* and *dhvani*, suggestive comparison and equivalence, implied peripheral meanings and penumbral undertone aesthetic significance evoked by it. In the *Kavyamīmāṃsā* one senses the desire to imitate Vedic imagery

where one finds the verse of the *Rigveda* on the "Two Birds",<sup>2</sup> the symbol of the "double meaning", the double *entendre*, or *vakrokti*, about which latter the *Upaniṣadas* tell us that it is the only language, acceptable to the gods : *vakroktikama hi devah*, serving here to illustrate the thesis it is Poetics which enables one to understand the transcendental truths and profundities of religious realisation.

As for the *sutra*, it means a clue intended as memory-aid to long discussion on a topic, wherein much thought is compressed into the fewest possible words. Mādhavāchāryā quotes from *Padmapurāna*, a definition of *sūtra* in his *Brahmasūtrabhāshya*:

People learned in *sūtra*-literature say that a *sutra* should be concise and unambiguous, give the essence of the arguments on a topic, with all aspects of the question, free from repetition and otherwise faultless.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to being of (i) Poetics category and (ii) *sūtra* genre, the *Japu* is also (iii) revelation in contrast to argument, exegesis and contemplative insight.<sup>4</sup> Even where its content and expression reflects or resembles ideas and expressions pre-existing, it is not to be deemed as a borrowing, as it has a wholly different and original matrix. And even when it is manifestly traceable to earlier known ideas, manipulated, moulded, and re-expressed, it is not to be regarded or styled as syncretism, for, here, similarity to or identity with the earlier integral component ideas is accidental and not casual. Or, where it simple or directly re-echoes an existing idea or thesis, it is more truly a chance parallelism and similarly and not a deliberately supportive argument, or mere assent.

Terence (195-159 B.C.), a Roman playwright, when accused of plagiarising the Greek dramatist, Menander wrote : "Nothing is ever said which has not been said before."

The Vedas contain the most ancient philosophical and

religious lore of mankind and it has been the corner-stone of all religious and metaphysical thought in India, during the last three or four millennia. Gautama, the Buddha, while preaching his precepts, said, "what I preach is the ancient truth."<sup>5</sup> The ancient religious lore of India is collectively called the Veda. The ontological status of the Veda, according to the *Mimāṃsā* is that it is unman-made, *apauruṣeya*, and eternal, *anādī*. What does this claim mean? The *Nyāyasūtras* of Gautama, the *ṛṣi*, another *vedāṅg*, recognises four means of valid knowledge : *Pratyakṣya*, sense-perception, *anumān*, inference, *upman*, analogy and *śabda*, testimony. *Pratyakṣya* furnishes the material with which the Physical Sciences deal, while *anumān* and *upmān* do not independently furnish facts. They can only ruminate and analyse the facts furnished by the *pratyakṣa* mode of proof. The material of the *śabda* is the regions which are inaccessible to the normal human sense-perception, it being taken for granted that such regions exist. A person who denies the existence of such regions is a *nāstika*, who denies', and with him there is no further argument. He is the *mānmukh*, a stone and lifeless stuff, a sorry and blank span of life'.<sup>7</sup> The Veda technically, is the corpus of the *śabda* containing, in verbal sounds, the facts pertaining to regions beyond the range of human sense-perception, aided or unaided 'Mysticism', 'noumenon', vaguely signify, in the west, the kind of knowledge which is the subject of *śabda*.

In India the Veda, the repository of the *śabda*, has been identified textual records known as the *Rigveda*, *Sāmveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharavaveda*. Certain *Upaniṣadas* also commonly deemed, a part of this Veda, and this Veda has six limbs, the *vedāṅgs*, the knowledge of which is necessary for understanding this Veda. These limbs are : Prosody, Pronunciation, Grammar, Etymology, Astronomy-Astrology and the Kalpa the Ceremonial. The ancient Sanskrit treatises on these six sciences are the *vedāṅgs*. The facts given in the Veda were not perceived, deduced, or formulated through reason,

but were revealed to men possessing high extra-sensitivity, the *ṛiṣīs*, and the Veda is, therefore, *śruti*, *revelation*, in contradistinction to *smṛiti*—that which is remembered', the knowledge derived through sense-perception and ratiocination. this is the foundation of the processes of the religious and metaphysical thought in India.

Gautama, the Buddha, repudiated the claim and validity of the Veda in this particular sense, and he also denied, by implication, the validity of the *śabda*, non-human verbal sound, as a true source of knowledge. *Buddhi*, the enlightened, steadfast, dispassionate reason, was the source of the truths that Gautama, the Buddha, preached. When Subhadra, a Brahmin philosopher met the Buddha at the banks of the river Hrinayvati, as the Buddha was about to pass away, in answer to the question as to whether there were any other truths beyond the lore contained in the vedic texts and the *śhāstras*, the philosophical systems supposedly derived from the texts of this Veda, the Buddha replied : "This is not the time for such discussions. to true wisdom, there is only one way, the path laid down by me . . . O, Subhadra, I do not speak to you of things I have not experienced. Since I was twentynine years old, till now, I have striven after pure and perfect wisdom. . . ?"<sup>8</sup> It is for this reason that Gautama, the Buddha, is described as a *nāstika* in the Hindu tradition, the one not only misguided but 'a deliberately false guide for confounding men and gods, both'.<sup>9</sup>

The disappearance of Buddhism from the land of its birth, about fifteen hundred years ago, is coeval with the reassertion of the doctrine of *śabda* and the identification of the *śabda* with the corpus of the texts of the ancient Sanskrit literature, known as the *Rigveda*, *Sāmveda*, *Upaniṣadas*, etc. In this Veda are also included aphorisms called, the *brahma-sūtras* of Bādrāyana, the *ṛiṣī*. All the mighty currents of Hindus religious developments that have taken place during the last fifteen

hundred years or so, originate from interpretations or commentaries on these *brahmasūtras* by tall figures such as Sankra, Ramānuja, and Mādhva, the three great ācāryās, the founders of the philosophical systems, known as *advaita*, monism, *vaśiṣṭa-advaita*, qualified monism and *dvaita*, dualism, the philosophic systems, from which the Vedantist, Vaiṣṇava and Bhakti movements have flowed, throwing up such mightly figures as Chaitanya, Tukārām, Jnyāneśwar, Tulsi, Kabir, Vivekānand and Rāmatīrtha. It may truly be asserted that all these movements and the whole of this religious thought-pyramid and activity proceeds from and is based on logic and grammar, *bhāśyas*, expounded on the *brahmasūtras*.

After the Buddha, Guru Nanak is a milestone in the spiritual life of India, comparable in principle, to the phenomena of revelations of the Vedic text and the system of psychological discipline and intellectual ratiocination of Gautama, the Buddha. Guru Nanak proclaims the validity of the doctrine of the *śabda* in a special sense, and claims that the *śabda*-testimony which he prefers, is independent, in its genesis and validity, of the ancient scriptural texts called the Veda, but beyond that he does not explicitly go. He does not repudiate the truths enshrined in these scriptural texts. This point must always be borne in mind when understanding Guru Nanak, for a non-appreciation of this point has already resulted in endless confusion and misunderstanding. Unlike Gautama, the Buddha, Guru Nanak does not repudiate the validity of the *śabda* testimony. Like Gautama, the Buddha, he denies that springs of truth have dried up for ever to mankind and that the mortals may do no more than interpret, reinterpret, exegetise with the aid of Logic and Grammar, the truths concealed and congealed, stratified and implicit in the ancient scriptural texts. With regard to the genesis of the *śabda*-testimony, the Guru asserts that the human beings are capable, each one of them, to experience the truths of which he speaks, provided he submits himself to a rigorous psychosomatic and spiritual discipline and provided certain



transcendental conditions called, the powers of Grace, are favourable to him. The last hymn of the *Japu* which is numbered as hymn 38, is a clear enunciation of this modified doctrine of *śabda*. This modified doctrine of *śabda* is of tremendous significance and power for the religious thought of India and indeed; for the full unfoldment of the religious dimension of man. It preserves the transcendental character of Truth, but adds to it the concept of a growing knowledge of this truth, within the ken of human minds. Its primary interest is centred around the problem of the quality of living and the transformation and evolution of the human mind and experience, as distinct from the standard of living, which the modern politics-oriented man assumes is the whole of Truth. This doctrine of Guru Nanak is of such a large philosophic nature that it would be difficult to conceive of any historical or scientific discovery which would greatly affect it. The essential teaching of Guru Nanak, the essence of Sikhism, therefore, has nothing to fear from the two basic and relentless activities of the modern Western mind, the 'higher criticism', and the 'scientific investigation.' The higher criticism consists of examination of the previous ideas and their alleged authorities, and the scientific investigation examines all things dispassionately, objectively, assuming nothing and testing everything. Guru Nanak bases his testament on no previous authority and concedes the possibility of the truths that he reveals, being tested by human mind, provided certain experimental conditions are present and provided.

Modern mind assumes that what is referred to as 'higher truth' of religious experience is either hallucination or result of 'wishful thinking', whatever the terms 'wish' and 'thinking' might connote here. Carl Jung, for instance, informs us that if the mind asserts the existence of a 'Universal mind', the mind that encompasses and informs all individuated minds,<sup>10</sup> it is because 'there is no evidence whatever for the ability of the human mind to pull itself up by its own boot-strings, i.e. to establish anythings transcendental'.<sup>11</sup> Bluntly put, the idea is

that the so called, 'higher truth' is mere speculation because no one can have direct experience of it. The reply of the *Japu* is that here the point is missed. The issue is not one of proving propositions, as Kant has clearly shown that they cannot be proved, but of understanding them, which is a much wider faculty because it breaks down the separation of subject and object, to which faculty the *Japu* refers, as the last rung of the process of knowing.<sup>12</sup> The position of the *Japu* is not that 'higher truth' is apprehensible by every-body's mental horizon, but that it is apprehensible through requisite discipline and training, for the only fully convincing proof is to have such experience for oneself. "without experience nothing may sufficiently be known."<sup>13</sup> It is to this that *Kenopaniṣad* (III. 3) points out, through the paradox : 'It is understood by those who do not understand it,' meaning that experience and not argumentative demonstration establishes the 'higher truth', the *śabda* of the *Japu*.

First, that the 'higher truth' is not mere fantasy or hallucination or philosophical speculation, but a fact of experience, and second, that the 'higher truth' is experienceable by every human-being provided he successfully undergoes and practises the requisite psychosomatic discipline, described in the stair 38 of the *Japu*<sup>14</sup>, are the quintessential propositions of the *Japu*. That not mere 'authority' of 'dogma', but 'reason' and 'experience' are the proper 'stairs' by which man may ascend to the 'higher truth', is a fundamental of Buddhism, as is recorded in the Mahāyān text<sup>15</sup> : 'just as a sensible man first rubs against touchstone, heats and cuts through a piece of gold before accepting it as genuine, even so, an aspirant must experience the 'higher truth' for himself and not accept it merely on the authority of Gautama, the Buddha." The *Japu*, while deprecating mere dogma, in the requisite psychosomatic discipline it recommends and retains the role of 'reason' under the control, and guidance of the revealed guidelines available to mankind.<sup>16</sup> With this the modern enlightened man can have

no quarrel, since he now is aware that, thanks to Sigmund Freud, rationalisation, the counterfeit of reason, is a child of the emotional complex of the individual's character and not a clear and sovereign light of guidance in its own right. While Buddhism affords no indications of its awareness of this truth about human faculties, the *Japu* takes explicit note of it by teaching that the 'higher truth' can be hammered out for the purpose of grasping by the human mind on 'the anvil of reason' with the tool of the revealed light only. It is this insight of the *Japu* which is integrated into the Sikh congregational prayer : 'May our reason flow clear of emotional obfuscations under the constant guidance of God'.<sup>17</sup> Individual unguided reason, uninformed with the light, that is, the Guru's teachings, is self-stultifying. Did not Spinoza say long before our prophets of the modern Depth-psychology, that 'What Paul says about Peter tells us more about Paul than Peter'?

That the 'higher truth' may be experienced and reached not through the normal experience of an average man but only through an intense psychosomatic discipline, has been accepted and proclaimed as the 'ancient truth', *sanātan satyā*, in our country, a precept that has now universally become known as Yoga, in the west. Such a claim has neither been discussed nor raised in western science and Philosophy. It was not contemplated by Greece since classical times, though we can say neither one way or other about Orphism, Pythagorean teachings or the Eleusynian mysteries. It is rather unlikely, though, that there existed anything like the psychosomatic practices, elaborated in India, to experience the 'higher truth'. There are no references or indications justifying such an assumption in the art and literature produced within the ambit of Greek civilization. In the West, fantasy, such as is sometimes said to have inspired cosmogonical mysteries of our *Purānas* in part, have not dwelt on such a human endeavour that seeks to grasp the higher apex of reality through a regulated *sādhanā*. From Plato onwards, only the negative reflection is there that it is not

possible to accomplish a real transformation of human nature; and the Judaic-Christian-Orthodox Islamic tradition that God and man are separated by an unbridgeable gulf is a logical corollary thereof. Freud who frankly admits his impotence to influence the demoniac powers in modern civilisation, is only restating this basic attitude.<sup>18</sup> The idea that man can be fundamentally transformed and uplifted, can become liberated from the conditioned existence and then by reverting to the world, can bring this weight to bear against the demons, is utterly foreign to the basic assumptions and conceptions of the Western mind and the modern man, and for him, therefore, the assertions in the stair 38 of the *Japu* are either mumbo-jumbo or downright puzzling. For the modern man, which has the twentieth century European intellectual as its prototype, the *Japu* opens up new and enchanting vistas of knowledge and states of consciousness such as are not only relevant to the human situation today but spell out the nature of the ultimate concern of man, as well as indicate outlines of likely solutions to tensions and frustrations that currently afflict the human society.

The *Japu* has 38 hymns or *pauris* or stairs containing a systematic and thorough exposition of the teachings of Guru Nanak, though, it bears repetition, a good knowledge of cultural history and metaphysical developments of the Hindu and Sufi Muslim thought are presumed in those to whom it is addressed.

All the hymns of the *Japu* are metrical, on the pattern of the *Rigveda*, with a severity of expression and economy of words, making the stanzas, kin-brothers of ancient Sanskrit literary genre, *sūtras*, a reason which has made the *Japu* the most difficult part of the Sikh scripture to understand. The line which forms the metrical unit, consists of varying number of syllables is constant, though the metrical unit is not identical in all 'stairs'. The concluding lines of a hymn are often of a different syllabic length. The metres like those of the classical

Sanskrit have a quantitative rhythm in which long and short syllables alternate. The rhythm of the last four or five syllables is rigidly determined. In their structure, they come half-way between the metres of the Zend Avesta, where the principle is the number of syllables only, and the classical Sanskrit, in which the quantity of every single syllable in the line is fixed, except in the case of the *śloka*, the epilogic conclusion.

The opening lines of the *Japu* constitute the *mūlmantra*, the basic tenets of Sikhism, embodying the Guru's ideas about the nature of the ultimate Reality. The *śloka* at the end is the revelation of Nanak, the Second, Guru Angad, and forms a fitting epilogue to the *Japu*, in the Guru Granth.

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### Notes & References

- <sup>1</sup> nam dhrāyo sikh nij, japuji kanth nā keen,  
jio tunggal bin tukh hai, taisai nihphal cheen,

-Sloka 33 (Invocation)

- <sup>2</sup> "dvipakṣi" (द्विपक्षी)

- <sup>3</sup> alpākṣramasandigdha sārvaadvīsvatomukham  
astobhamanavadyam cā sutram sūtracidoviduh

अल्पाक्षरमसंदिग्ध सारवद्विस्वतोमुखम्

अस्तोभमनवद्यं च सूत्रं सूत्रविदोविदुः

- <sup>4</sup> (a) tā[n] mai[n] kahiā kahaṅ(u) jā[n] tujhai kahāiā

(ਤਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਹਣੁ ਜਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਕਹਾਇਆ)

-Vadhans, M 1, AG, p. 566.

(b) sat(i)gur ki bāṇi sat(i) sat(i) kar(i) jāṅhu gursikhu  
 har(i) kartā āp muhu[n] kaḍhāe.  
 (ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ  
 ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ)

-Gaurī(Vār), M 4, AG, p. 308.

(c) hau[n] āphu[n] bol[i] nā jāṅdā  
 mai[n] kahiā sabh(u) hukmāo jio  
 (ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ  
 ਮੈਂ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ)

-Sūhi, M 5, AG, p. 763

<sup>5</sup> "aisso dhammam sanātanam"

(ਏਸੋ ਧਮਮੰ ਸਨਾਤਨਮੰ)

-Dhammapada

<sup>6</sup> A *vedāṅga* or a limb of the Veda

<sup>7</sup> manmukh pathar sail hai dhrig jīwan phikā

(ਮਨਮੁਖ ਪਥਰ ਸੈਲ ਹੈ ਧ੍ਰਿਗ ਜੀਵਨ ਫੀਕਾ)

—Āsā, M 1, AG, 419.

<sup>8</sup> Mahāparinibbāna-suttam of the Pali *Deegha-nikāyā*

<sup>9</sup> namo buddhāya suddhāya dāitya dānava mohini.

(ਨਮੋ ਬੁਢਾਯ ਸੁਢਾਯ ਦੈਤ੍ਯ ਦਾਨਵ ਸੋਹਿਨੀ)

—Bālmiki, *Rāmāyanā*, 11, 109, 34.

<sup>10</sup> tis dai chānan(i) sabh mah(i) chanaṅ(u) hoi

(ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ)

—Dhanāṣari, M 1, AG, 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Introduction to the Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, (ed. Dr. Evantz Wentz), Oxford, 1954, pp. 29-32.

<sup>12</sup> suṇiā manniā man(i) kitā bhāu

(ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ)

—Japu, (21), AG, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Sine experientia nihil sufficienter scri potest.*

<sup>14</sup> jat(u) pahāra dhīraj(u) suniār(u)

(ਜਤੁ ਪਹਾਰਾ ਧੀਰਜ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ)

—Japu, (38), AG, p. 8

<sup>15</sup> tāpāccā chedāccā, nikasacca svaṇamiva panditah,

parīkṣā bhikṣā grāhyam madvaco na tu gauravāt.

तापाच्च छेदाच्च निकषाच्च सर्णमिव पण्डिता :

परीक्षा भिक्षा ग्राह्यम् मद्रवो न तु गौरवात्

<sup>16</sup> ahraṇ(I) mat(i) ved(u) hathiār(u)

(ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥਿਆਰੁ)

—*Loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Sikhān dā man nīvān mat(i) unchchi, mat(i) dā rākhā āp wāhigurū.

(ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਮਤਿ ਉਚੀ, ਮਤਿ ਦਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਆਪ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ)

<sup>18</sup> *Essays on Contemporary Events, 1946.*

## THE REGION OF GRACE

It is proposed here to make a few observations on and suggest some clues' for a truer understanding of the thirty-seventh stanza (*karam-khand*) of the *Japu* of Guru Nanak.

It is necessary to bear in mind the basic characteristics, *mūl-lakṣnam* of the *Japu* described in the preceding chapter (No. 9) to appreciate the reflections on its thirtyseventh stanza.

Besides, ideas about the insights into Reality, no matter what their origin, cogitation, intuition, inspiration, theomancy, theopneusty or direct revelation, *sruti*, *ilhām*, are always bound by and are within the context of contemporary spiritual milieu and cultural topography and environment, and can be properly understood only when seen thus, though this tinge and coloration of particularity and contingency does neither devalue the universal import of a revelation nor detract from its pristine status.

The *Japu* as a scriptural text, a revelation embodied in verbal theses, has to be approached and understood in this background if it is to be truly understood.

The stanza in question, is as follows :

karam khand kī bāni jor(u).  
 tithai hor(u) na koi hor(u).  
 tithai jodh mahābal sūr.  
 tin mahi rām(u) rahiā bharpūr.  
 tithai sitositā mahimā māhi.  
 tā ke rūp na kathne jāhi.  
 na ohi marahi na thāge jāhi.



jin ke rām vasahi man māhi.

tithai bhagat vasahi ke loi,

karahi anand(u) sacha man(i) soi.<sup>1</sup>

And it may be translated as follows :

The speech of *karam-khand* is *jor (u)*.

There is neither the other nor aught else.

There the valiant, the mighty, the brave ones.

In themselves they are God-filled.

There *sītositā* in glory and praise.

Their beauty of form indescribable.

They die not and are not victims of nescience and deception,

Those whose minds are occupied by God.

There *bhaktas* or devotees of many worlds reside,

And they are in the state of bliss having the True One enshrined in their hearts.

The words of the texts, *karam-khand*, *jor(u)* and *sītositā* remain in their original Panjabi form, having been deliberately left untranslated.

The *Japu*, as was to be expected, has been commented upon and exegetised ever since the epiphany of Sikhism, and over one hundred commentaries on it are now available in printed form. In all these commentaries, without an exception, no attempt is made to find out the locus classicus of the five *khands* or 'regions' of Reality which are expounded in the *Japu* and of which 'regions' of Reality, the *karam-khand* is described as the highest but one, the highest being the *sach-khand*, the 'region' of Truth. In earlier commentaries when theological interpretation of Sikhism was the exclusive domain of Udasis, the ascetic Sikh yogi preachers, and *nirmalas*, the scholastic non-house-holder class amongst the regular, baptised Khalsa,

*karam-khand* was almost invariably translated as 'the stage (in spiritual development) where the action (Skt., *karma*) is of foremost importance.' The word *jor(u)* occurring in the first hemistich of this stanza lent this interpretation plausibility for two reasons; first the word *jor(u)* is employed in the meanings of 'strength', 'power', in the earlier, thirty-third stanza of the *Japu*; and secondly, these classes of commentators were educated exclusively in Sanskrit, and they naturally accepted the word *karam* as meaning the same as it does in classical works on Yoga, where *karma-yoga* is one of the techniques for the practice of Yoga.

Although in the last, the thirty-eight stanza of the *Japu*, the word "*Karam*" is unmistakably used as the Arabic word *karm*, which means 'compassionate mercy' 'grace' and although in the voluminous Sufi Islamic literature, the term is frequently employed in precisely this sense, it did not occur to these earlier commentators that here the term, *karam-khand* is a new philosophical concept coined by Guru Nanak's contemporaries, in order to express a system of cosmology different from those already known to the Aryan and the Semitic thought.

The present-day commentators, however, concede that in the term *karam-khand*, in the thirtyseventh stanza of the *Japu*, the expression *karam* is a word of Arabic origin, but these commentators invariably ignore the fundamental rule of interpretation requiring that, in a text, the meaning of a part has to be reconciled with the meaning of the whole. They translate the word, *Jor(u)* in the first line of this stanza, to mean 'power', 'strength', taking it to be the Persian word *zor*, for which the Sanskrit equivalent is *bala*. They fail to notice that if *jor(u)* here is the same as *bala*, then the first line of the stanza remains at loggerheads with the second line *tithai hor(u) na koi hor(u)*: 'in that (region) there is no other and naught else.' Surely, where 'power', 'strength' is the master-element through which the

*joru* as its *bāni*, 'speech', there, ex-hypothesis, as well as by implication have to be the 'other', something 'else', for the manifestation to occur and the communication to take place. It is obvious that here Guru Nanak is indicating a mode of knowing that is referred to as *advandva*, 'unitive experience', in the *Bhāgavadgītā* and other ancient Sanskrit texts. Such an 'experience' or spiritual state is wholly devoid of subject-object tension, such as is implicit in the word, *joru*, if it is to be understood as the Persian word, in the meaning of the Sanskrit *bala*.

The *bāni*, the mode of communication of the *karam-khand*, therefore, cannot be *jor(u)*, in the meaning of 'power', strength'; the word *jor(u)* must stand for something that means, 'unison', 'elimination of the subject-object tension, *advand*, 'without the other', *tithai hor(u) na koi hor(u)*; and Punjabi word 'jor' (ਜੋੜ), ending in a hard 'r' (ੜ) readily suggests itself. The word, '*jor(u)*' here is the Panjabi word *jor* (ਜੋੜ), which precisely means united together 'unison'. Guru Nanak has replaced the hard 'r' of the Panjabi word with the soft 'r' to meet the prosodial requirements of rhyme, a well-recognised technic of poetic-licence.

The first line of the thirtyseventh stanza of the *japu*, therefore should be rightly translated as : 'The speech of the region of grace is unison'.

The commentators, old and new, both, do not seem to think that the word *Khand*, here poses a problem requiring understanding and explanation. they either retain the word as it is in their commentaries, presuming that its meanings are simple and self-evident<sup>2</sup> or they quite arbitrarily mix it up and equate it with its denotation, ignoring its connotation altogether,<sup>3</sup> thus mistaking the 'class' for the 'characteristics'.

Now, let us take the word *Khand*, which one of our commentators presumes as simple and the other as meaning *kand* and then quite wrongly takes *kānd* to mean a 'class'.

Any lexicon of Sanskrit will tell us that *khand* means, 'part', 'fragment', 'a piece', 'portion'. when applied to geography, it means, 'a continent'. In precisely this last geographical sense the word has been employed by Guru Arjun, in the *Sukhmani*.<sup>4</sup> It, therefore, cannot legitimately be interpreted to mean either a stage in individual's spiritual evolution or ascent or a class or category of individuals reaching that stage. Cosmology is the study of universe as whole, which includes both cosmogony, the theory of the origin of the universe, and cosmography, a description of the universe.

It is obvious that the description of the five *khands* in the *Japu*, of which the *karam-khand* is one, is Sikh cosmography and not Sikh cosmogony which exists elsewhere in the Guru Granth.

The Hindu cosmography is various and complicated and is not unoften influenced by sectarian tendencies, but all such theories belong to two categories those that conceive of the universe as spatial and those that interpret it as essentially psychological. In both cases the universe is described or conceived as consisting of *lokas*, from the Sanskrit, *loka*, 'to see' 'to behold' or 'to perceive'. The most commonly accepted cosmography which conceives of the Universe as spatial, propounds seven words or *lokas* : (1) *bhūr-loka*, the earth (2) *Bhuvan*, space between earth and the sun (3) *Svar*, Indra's heaven, between the sun and the polar star, (4) *Mahar* above the polar star inhabited by the rishis who survive the destruction of the three lower worlds, (5) *janar*, the abode of Brahma's son, Sanatkumar, (6) *Tapar*, inhabited by deified *vairāgins*, (7) *Satya* or *brahmaloka*, Brahma's abode, translation to which precludes re-birth. Other Hindu cosmographies mention fourteen *lokas*, seven above and seven below our earth.

This cosmography was one of the things that aroused the scorn of Lord Macaulay, who for this reason among others, dismissed Hindu claims to scientific competence in the field of

geography, quite forgetting that Brahmagupta, as far back as third century B.C., was aware that the earth was spherical and had compiled fairly accurate longitudes of important places in India, and blissfully ignorant of the fact that although the *lokas* of Hindu cosmography were material in nature, yet they were not to be deemed as of gross matter, of the gravitational property of the earth observable by physical human eye, aided or unaided. These *Lokas*, though spatial, are conceived of as made up of subtler and subtler forms of matter, observable through extra-physical 'eyes' of various grades, *şaksu* inherited by exceptional individuals or developed through Yogic discipline.

Like the Hindus, the Sufi Islam also propounds a cosmography, partly based on clues from the *Quran* and mostly based on the extra-perceptual, direct knowledge, *Kashf*, gained by spiritually developed Sufis and Muslim saints. They speak of seven worlds : (1) Evidential world, *alam-ash-shahadat*, (2) Purgatorial world, *alam-al-barzakh* (3) World of Spirits, *alam-al-arwah*, (4) World of reality, *alam-al-haqaiq* (5) World of principles, *alam-al-arakan*, (6) World of unseen, *alam-al-ghaib*, (7) World of plurality and oneness, *alam-al-kathrat-va-vahdatahu*. Apparently, these worlds of Islamic cosmography are spiritual and/or logical and conceptual in nature; they are not material or spatial.

The psychological Hindu cosmography of *triloka*, is rooted in depth-psychology; in what the post-Freudian generations of the Western intellectuals are familiar with as conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious. The conscious is deemed as of the lowest quality of awareness of reality, where the soul is caught in the maze of sensory perceptions, each one snare due to the constitution of senses which are incapable of giving a true account of the objects setting them into activity. It is a world of artificial and deceptive images that a prisoner of waking consciousness is subjected to.

The break in the normal and natural order of things in

human life is directly traceable to man's mentation, the way in which he knows himself and distinguishes himself from others.<sup>6</sup>

The dream-consciousness is intermediary between the limitations of our waking consciousness and higher contemplation. Although the materials of our dream-consciousness come from the outside illusory world, yet their organisation and sequence is not imposed from outside and is essentially the result of our own creative activity. Thus, dream-consciousness is freer and is in touch with a higher layer of reality.

Deep sleep is the highest form of our individual consciousness when no dreams interfere or intervene. It is free both from constraining outer influences and from the selective arbitrary restrictions of mental activity. Here the individual consciousness is liberated from the desecrating and misconstruing impositions of the two localising elements, the self-centredness, the subjective opposition to the objective universe and the sentiment of our objectivated personal being of our manifold organised person, located between this self-conscious centre and the surface of its contact with and its resistance to the outer world.

These are the three psychological worlds of which the Hindu psychological cosmography speaks of as *triloka*, the Three worlds. There is the fourth world beyond the individual unconscious, which is nameless and is, therefore, simply called *chaturya*, the fourth world. This is identical with the All-Ground of the Absolute Reality, the characteristics whereof are unsayable and to which the *neti*-doctrine of the *Upaniṣadas* refers. It is to these psychological worlds that a reference exists in the apocryphal Sikh sacred writing *Pransangali*<sup>6</sup>, to fetch a manuscript of which, Guru Arjun, the Fifth Nanak, sent a special messenger to Ceylon in A.D. 1600 and after examining it, rejected it as apocryphal and not in accordance with the true Sikh cosmography, which is contained in the *Japu*.

These three psychological worlds are not spatial or encased in the time-space continuum and they are clearly distinguishable from the seven *lokas* of Hindu cosmography as well as the seven words of the Muslim cosmography.

From all these cosmographies are to be distinguished the Buddhist visionary worlds, such as *śukhavati*, mentioned in the Buddhist text. *Amitādhyanasutra*, the personal paradise of the individual contemplative mind. These worlds are wholly subjective and are distinguishable from the other categories of the Hindu and Muslim cosmographies which are trans-subjective, being objects common to all normal experiences under certain appropriate conditions. the visionary, the purely mental cosmographic worlds, lack spatial relations and are of utterly transient nature directly apprehended by one subject only.

The Sikh cosmography as explained in the *Japu*, is clearly distinguishable from all the other cosmographies in certain respects. Firstly, the Sikh cosmography is not spatial and material as the Hindu terrestrial *lokas*, or as the psychological *triloka*. The Sikh cosmology also is not visionary or subjective like the Buddhist *śukhavati* paradises. The Sikh cosmography also is not an admixture of logical and discursive comprehension as, in the main, the Sufi Muslim cosmography is. The positive characteristics of the Sikh cosmography are, that it is trans-subjective and corresponds to development and growth of human personality, till the individual becomes one with Truth, a denizen of *sach-khand*. Negatively, it is not spatial, material, idealistic or logic-based. Its most distinctive characteristic is that it conceives of the creation, not as uncoordinated phenomenon, *sarvam*, but as an organic whole, *viśvam*. Its outstanding peculiarity is that its correspondents to *lokas*, *alams* and *vatis* are spoken of as *khands*, fragments and parts of a whole that never loses its continuity or uniformity from one 'part' to the other, while the Hindu *lokas* and Islamic *alams*

are, each one of them, an organic whole in itself, not integrally related to the other, they are unrelated, discrete, self-sufficient and whole in their own rights.

The category of *khand* in the Sikh cosmography, has far-reaching and basic consequences *que* the religious quest and goal of man, which after all is the only true motivation for understanding and comprehending a theory and schemata of cosmology. If the various *lokas* and *ālams* of cosmography are variant, discrete, organically unrelated and distinctly layeral, then translation of man from one to the other is inconceivable.

The teaching of Buddha relates to two truths, the relative and the conditional and the transcendent.

But the two truths are not unrelated, for, were they so, we would be involved in absolute skepticism.

Without resorting to relative truth, resorting to absolute Truth is unattainable.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of the entire cosmos as made up of *khands*, parts, as is described in the Sikh cosmology, opens up a religious vista and furnishes a theological insight that lends it a pragmatic significance and logical coherence missing in the earlier cosmologies.

The procession of human personality and perception from one *khand* of the Sikh cosmography to the other and higher superior *khand*, is through a rigorous and systematic integrated, intellectual, emotional, ethical course and spiritual discipline consummated by 'grace', as is made clear in the thirteenth stanza of *Japu* and the final consummation and summit-achievement is the gift of God, just as is the engagement and occupation of the human individual in the appropriate pursuit of the *summum bonum* : *jin kau nadar karma tin kar, Nānak nadri nadar nihāl*.

What is this 'grace' of God, *karam*, to which the man solely



owes the initiative sustenance, and achievement regarding the path to and arrival at the highest apex of Reality ?

Defined in psychological terms, grace is something other than our self-conscious personal self by which we are helped.<sup>8</sup>

Spiritual grace originates from the divine Ground of all being and it is given for the purpose of helping man to achieve his final end which is to return out of time and selfhood to that Ground.<sup>9</sup>

The entire text of the *Japu* requires a thorough reappraisal and fresher understanding so as to make it acquire significance and relevance for the modern well-informed mind.

Now an analysis of the third word *sito sitā*, that we left untranslated above, may be attempted.

The word *sito sitā* occurs just once in the entire voluminous corpus of the Sikh scripture and it is not found in the contemporaneous current language, such as Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Brajabhāshā, when the *Japu* was created in the north of India. In no Punjabi writing, prior to or since Guru Nanak, this word has been made use of in any composition of the Punjabi language, and it is, therefore, natural that it should have mystified and stultified genuine and pseudo commentators of the *Japu*. It is also understandable that this obscure mystery-word should have attracted fanciful and naive meanings.

In most of the extant commentaries of the *Japu*, two different meanings are given to this word : (1) 'well-sewn', 'firmly stitched', from the Punjabi word *sina*, to sew<sup>10</sup>; (2) husband of *Sītā* of the *Ramayana* and *Sītā* herself.<sup>11</sup>

Any person well-acquainted with the syntax and structure of Punjabi language and aware of the academic levels and literary style of Guru Nanak will at once reject these suggested meanings as crude, naive, inappropriate and inadmissible, 'Sewn into the praise', *sito sitā mahimā mahi*, is no expression or idiom in Punjabi. To say that Guru Nanak, called Sri Ram Chandra

by the diminutive and contemptuous name *sito*, in the meaning of 'the husband of Sitā', is to betray gross ignorance of Punjabi morphology and to lampoon Guru Nanak, who held the hero and heroine of the *Ramayana* in the highest respect and whose knowledge of contemporary theological thought and religious literature of Hinduism and Islam is profound and whose literary skill in manipulation of Punjabi language is superb by all standards.

*Sitositā*, therefore, must properly be identified, through a search of the Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian classical literatures.

In a late hymn of the *Rigveda* it is said that--

Those who dip at the place where the white, *sita*, and black, *asita*, rivers meet, *sangam* (Punjabi, *Jor*, ਜੋੜ ) they prosper in the celestial region and those who end their lives by drowning themselves here get a release from the corporeal existence.<sup>12</sup>

The two rivers mentioned here are evidently to be identified with Ganga and Jamuna, still known in popular tradition as, *sita-asita*, 'white and black', and this is the earliest reference to the holy *sangam* at Prayag, desecrated and degraded by the Mughal rulers of India into Allahabad.

*Sito-sitā* in our text is undoubtedly *apabhramsha* form of this vedic expression, *sita-asita*, and the popular name of this holy confluence, *sit-asita*.

Prayag, *pra*, meritorious, excellent; *yag*, sacrificial place, where a dip at the confluence of Ganga and Jamuna translates man into the region of the 'shinning ones', *divamut patanti*, and where self-immolation leads to 'conditions beyond death', *amarattvam*.

According to the schemata and postulations of Sikh cosmology the status of shinning gods and 'existence beyond death', is obtainable only through the grace of God and not through rituals and suicide at a particular holy place.

*Mahabharat* (Vanaparva, 87.19) tells us that in the days

of prehistory, 'the soul of beings', *pitamaha*, himself had performed ritual sacrifices here at Prayāg, and that is why it is called, *prayāg*:

*yatrāyajata bhūtātāmā purvameva pitamaha,  
prayāgamiti vikhyatam tasmād bharatasattam.*<sup>13</sup>

Further on it is said here that this sacrificial spot is worshipped by the gods themselves : even a little given here in alms increases a thousand fold. By a dip in the confluence man not only obtains merits of ten thousand horse-sacrifices but benefits his ancestors also :

*tatah punyātīmām nām triṣu lokeṣu bhārata,  
prayagam sarvattirthebhyo pravādanti adhikam,  
vibho eṣa yajanbhūmirahi devānāmabhisanskṛta,  
tatta dattam sval pamāpi mahad bhavati bhārata.*<sup>14</sup>

Again, *Mahabharat* asserts further on that 'by going to this holy place, by singing its praises, or by taking a little water from it, one is cleansed from every sin. One who bathes in that confluence, celebrated over the Three Worlds, acquires all the merits of the *rajasuya* and *aśvamedha* sacrifices'.

Self-immolation by burning oneself or by jumping down the top of a banyan tree, rooted out by Emperor Akbar, but replaced by a new tree subsequently, called *akshayavat*, 'the indestructible banyan tree' or by drowning in the riverine confluence, *sangam*, has been an ancient practice at Prayāg. The sacred text in *Kūrma-purāṇa*, (xxxvi) tells us that-

By drowning oneself at the confluence of the two rivers, a man is freed from sin as the moon is rescued from the shadowy planet, *Rāhū*, (after moon-eclipse).<sup>15</sup>

Such is the *mahima*, 'the greatness and glory' ascribed to ritual bath of sacrificial ceremonies or self-immolation at the confluence, *sangam*, of the rivers Ganga and Jamuna at Prayag and our text in the *Japu*, says that the 'great glory' ascribed to

certain acts performed at Prayag is, in fact, to be had by man only by entry into the region of grace, where the true *sangam*, *joṛ(u)*, is located, and that this true confluence of *sīta-asīta* is also there and there alone : *karam-khand kī banī jour. . . tithai sīto-sītā mahimā māhī*.

Our text says that 'the form and beauty of those arrived in the region of Grace, is indescribable. This statement clearly arises out of the onomatopoesis of the preceding line, containing the expression, *sīto sītā*. Sītā, the heroine of the *Ramayana*, the paragon of womanly virtues, was also the Helen of Hindu womanhood. An ancient Sanskrit quotable quote ascribes the entire tragedy and tribulations of Sītā to her matchless beauty of form and psyche : *ati rūpena vai sītā. . . ati sarvatra varjayet*,<sup>16</sup> 'Sītā suffered because she was excessively beautiful and, therefore, excess in everything is undesirable'. As Valmiki *Ramayana* tells us, while imprisoned in the forestgrove, *ashoka-vātika*, in order to stiffen her courage Sītā recollects what she learned in the lore of *anga-vidyā*, the science of essences of bodily forms', had told her *ucchurlakṣaṇīno ye māṇ putriṇyavidhaveti ca*,<sup>17</sup> she 'would be blessed with sons and would not be widowed', *keśah sukṣma samā nilā*, 'my hair are of dark blue colour, glossy and smooth', *bhruvau caṅgate mama*,<sup>18</sup> 'my hair on two eye-brows do not meet', *sankhe netre karau*<sup>19</sup> *padau gulphavāru çamme citau*, corners of my eyes, hands, feet, calf-muscles and thighs are strong and fleshy', *anuvrit nakhah snigdaha samaścāṅgulayo mam*,<sup>20</sup> 'my fingers are round and the nails shine with red hue', *stanau caviralau pīnau mamemau magnācūehukau*,<sup>21</sup> 'my breasts and nipples are fleshy, crushing each other', a characteristic of padamini, the highest species of woman. (Valmiki, *Ramayana*, yudhakānda, xxxviii-2,9,10,11).

It is in this literary background of our classical literature that the expression in our text, *tā ke rūp na kathne jāhi* is to be understood and appreciated.

Likewise, the following line of the text, *na ohi marahi na thāge jāhi* should be understood and appreciated, for Sitā did become a victim of deception and Rama, as *Uttararamacharittam* of Bhavabhuti tells us, ended his sojourn on earth by plunging into the waters of Saryu river that flows by the town of Ayodhya. Our text says that those who are God-filled as denizens of the 'region of grace', *jin ke rāmu vasai mān mahi*, they do not fall into the lap of death as Rama did, nor are they deceived as Sitā was.

The line *tithai jodh mahābal sūr, tin mahin rāmu rahiā bharpūr* as descriptive of the citizens of the 'region of grace', asserts that mental processes of unusually high type, the intuitions of genius, the outbursts of inspired poesy, the emotional fervour or the ecstasy that carries the martyr triumphantly through the severest trials, the enthusiasm that enables the human organism to carry through incredible labour, the courage and fortitude that stands up incredibly and unflinchingly against uncommonly heavy odds, all this has as its psychological ground the God-filled substratum that lies at the roots of the human psyche, to which, writings of F.W.H. Myers in particular and others have given the name of 'subliminal self'.<sup>22</sup>

This concludes our comments and reflections on the *karamkhand* portion of the thirtyseventh stanza of the *Japu*.

[This article first appeared in the *Journal of Sikh Studies* in February 1974 and then in the *Nanak Prakash Patrika* of June 1977. It attracted attention of another authority on Gurbani, S. Sohan Singh, M.A., Ph.D. who disagreed with Sirdar Kapur Singh, and gave his own version of the Region in a subsequent article that appeared in the *Journal of Sikh Studies* in February 1976. The interested may refer to it too.-editors]

### Notes & References

<sup>1</sup> ਕਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਰੁ  
 ਤਿਥੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰੁ  
 ਤਿਥੈ ਜੋਧ ਮਹਾਬਲ ਸੂਰ  
 ਤਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰ  
 ਤਿਥੈ ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਮਾਹਿ  
 ਤਾ ਕੇ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਕਥਨੇ ਜਾਹਿ  
 ਨ ਓਹਿ ਮਰਹਿ ਨ ਠਾਗੇ ਜਾਹਿ  
 ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ  
 ਤਿਥੈ ਭਗਤ ਵਸਹਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਅ  
 ਕਰਹਿ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਸਚਾ ਮਨਿ ਸੋਇ

—Japu (37), M 1, AG, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Karam khand di bāni jor wāli hundi hai",  
 (ਕਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਰੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ)

—Narayan Singh Gyani, Pandit, *Sri Japu ji Steek*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> "Bakhshish de khand walian di bani jor wali hundi hai".  
 (ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਖੰਡ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ)

—Teja Singh Sodhi, *Kathasagar*, p. 280.

<sup>4</sup> naukhaṇḍ prithamī phirai chir jivai.  
 (ਨਉਖੰਡ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੀ ਫਿਰੈ ਚਿਰ ਜੀਵੈ)

—Ashtpadi 3(2), AG, p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> jāgat swapan susopati turiā ātam bhupati ki ih puriā.  
 (ਜਾਗਤ ਸੁਪਨ ਸੁਖੋਪਤਿ ਤੁਰੀਆ ਆਤਮ ਭੂਪਤਿ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਪੁਰੀਆ)

<sup>7</sup> vyavahāramanāṣṛitya paramartha na deṣyate.

व्यवहारमनाश्रित्य परमारथो न देश्यते

—Nagarjuna, *Prajnaparmitta*, XXIV.नागाजुं प्रज्ञापरमिता

<sup>8</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Perennial Philosophy*, p. 191.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>10</sup> "Sito sitā=puran taur te sita hoia".

(ਸੀਤੋਂ ਸੀਤਾ=ਪੁਰਾਣ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ)

-Kartar Singh, Prof., *Japu Steek*, p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> "uthon de (vasian di) mahima vi[ch]ch sito (Sita da pati)

Sri Ram Chanderji ate Sita (ji bhi jagai hoi han)"

ਓਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਵਿਚ ਸੀਤੋਂ (ਸੀਤਾ ਦਾ ਪਤੀ)

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੀਤਾ (ਜੀ ਭੀ ਲਗੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ)

-Narayan Singh Gyani, Pandit, *Sri Japu ji Steek*, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Rikpariśiṣṭa (*Rigveda*), X, 75.5

ऋक्परिशिष्ट (ऋग्वेद)

<sup>13</sup> यत्रयजत मृतात्मा पूर्वमेव पितामहः ।

प्रयागमिति विख्यातम् तस्माद् मारत्तम् ॥

<sup>14</sup> ततः पुण्यात्नं नाम त्रिषु लोकेषु मारत

प्रयागं सर्वदीर्घैर्यो प्रवदन्ति अधिकम्

विमो एषा यजनमूमिरहि देवानामसिसेंस्कृत

तत्र दत्तं स्वल्पमपि महद् भवति भादत ॥

<sup>15</sup> जल प्रवेशं यः कुर्यात्संगमे लोकविश्रुते

राहुग्रस्तो यथा सोमो विमुक्तः सर्वपातकैः ॥

<sup>16</sup> अतिरूपेण वै सीता...अति सर्वत्र बर्जयेत् ।

<sup>17</sup> ऊचुर्लक्ष्मिणो ये पुत्रिण्याविघवेति च ।

<sup>18</sup> केशाः सूक्ष्मा समा नीला घ्रुवौ चासंगते मम ।

<sup>19</sup> शङ्गे नेत्रे करौ पादौ गल्फावूरु चमे चितौ ।

<sup>20</sup> अनुवृत्त नखाः सिर्नैघ्नाः समश्चांगुलयो मम् ॥

<sup>21</sup> स्तनौ चाविरलौ ਫੀਨੀ ਮਮੇਮੀ ਮਘਨਚੂਚੁਕੀ ।

<sup>22</sup> *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, London, 1903; Prince, Morton, *Dissociation of a Personality*, London, 1906.

## GURU NANAK'S CONCEPT OF NATURE

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) in his Sacred Writings, *Gurbani*, 'the Voice of the Light' according to the Sikh creed, while formulating the philosophic basis of the Sikh religion, has employed an Arabic word *qudrat*,<sup>1</sup> as a philosophical term as correlated to the time-honoured Sanskrit term *puruṣa*. In the traditional philosophic systems of India, *puruṣa* is correlated to the term *prakṛiti*. All religious systems of India, by tradition, must have one of the philosophical schools—six in number—as its base, or it must be supported by an authoritative interpretation of the cryptic text *Brahmasutra* by Bāḍrayāna. Guru Nanak, on the other hand, has either taken ancient philosophical terms of India and then reinterpreted them or, as in the case of the term *qudrat*, has picked up a non-Indo-Sanskrit word and then imparted a precise philosophic status to it. It is, here proposed to examine what does the dualism of *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* originally mean in Indian philosophy and what extended and changed meanings the Guru has given to the first term of this dualism, *puruṣa*. Finally, it is proposed to scrutinise the semantic changes the word *qudrat* has undergone till its exaltation as a fundamental philosophical concept of Sikhism; possible reasons for Guru Nanak's choice of the term *qudrat*, are also briefly sought to be explained.

Guru Nanak was prophet of religion, and philosophy was not central to his teachings:

Numerous dogmas that there are, and as many more are intellectual disciplines. As many are systems of



philosophy. All these, so many of them, are the chains that curb the spontaneity of the psyche. For a man of religion, the central concern is the way to liberation.<sup>2</sup>

But that is not to say that Guru Nanak was unconcerned with study of humanities and sciences or placed little value on the culture of mind:

There are those who are cultured neither in philosophy nor in scripture and nor they have developed proper taste for music.

And likewise, those who are unacquainted with aesthetics and art—they have neither a trained character, nor disciplined intellect and, as such, they are devoid of true learning, so much so that the true significance of accumulated human wisdom is outside their sphere of interest.

Such people, says Nanak, are true animals, for they strut about as human beings without the qualifications of a human being.<sup>3</sup>

Guru Nanak also asserts that-

Intellectual curiosity and scientific knowledge are necessary for removing doubts that beset human understanding.<sup>4</sup>

From this position of Guru Nanak, three propositions follow:

- (1) That, intellectual activity is not identical with or directly relevant to the religious activity;
- (2) That, for a properly developed and integrated person, intellectual and scientific studies are imperative; and
- (3) That, although religion is philosophically indeterminate, philosophical enquiries are necessary for preparing the mind suitably towards acceptance of religious discipline.

It is in this background that it is proposed to study and examine a philosophical problem which is fundamental to philosophies of East and West and which Guru Nanak has explicitly stated and attempted to answer in his Sacred Writings.

There are two fundamental concepts that run through almost all systems of Indian philosophy throughout the ages, the concepts of *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*. Very broadly speaking, these concepts correspond to the concepts of 'subject' and 'object.' The dualism between 'mind' and 'matter', 'life' and 'nature', has been recognised by thinkers in all philosophies of East and West, but the *Samkhya* system provides the most ancient and systematic speculation on this topic.

This system was founded by Kapila (sixth century B.C.) but the original text *Samkhya Sutra* has been irretrievably lost. The basic text we have today is, the *Samkhya-Karika* of Íśvarakṛiṣṇa of the fifth century. Commentaries on this text were written by Gaudpad in the ninth century. Another text, the *Samkhya-pravachan*, that has come down to us was considered as Kapila's original text, but now it has been shown to be a work of the fifteenth century. Commentaries on this text were written by Aniruddha and Vijnanabhikṣu, who belong to the sixteenth century, approximately.

The *Samkhya* doctrines of *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* have undergone developments through the past centuries. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, these concepts of *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* have been given extended and more sophisticated meanings whereas Vijnanabhikṣu and Aniruddha have developed the classical *Samkhya* still further.

While Guru Nanak, in his Sacred Writings, has retained the term *puruṣa* as fundamental to his system of religion, he has abandoned altogether the term *prakṛiti* for this purpose though

he was quite familiar not only with the dualism of these terms, but also with their philosophical imports as is vouchsafed in the Sikh scripture.<sup>5</sup>

The term *puruṣa*, though retained as fundamental to, what might be called, the philosophic infrastructure of the religion he revealed, he has interpreted it altogether otherwise than that in the classical *Samkhya* of the *Karika* or the *Samkhya* of the *Bhagvadgītā* or the Neo-*Samkhya* of Aniruddha and Vijñānabhikṣu. For the other term of this dualism, Guru Nanak has employed the Arabic word *qudrat*, and has relegated the term *prakṛiti* altogether to other contexts.

Let us examine briefly the original connotation of the term *puruṣa* and to distinguish it from the vernacular or *apbhramaṣa* form of it, *purakh*, as employed by Guru Nanak with altogether extended and new connotation given to it. Let us also examine, briefly the philosophical meanings of the term *prakṛiti*, as understood in the ancient thought-system of *Samkhya* and to discriminate it from the Arabic word "qudrat" which Guru Nanak has substituted as the second term of this dualism, and speculate also on the reasons for the same. Lastly, we may speculate as to what might be the motivation of Guru Nanak for substituting an Arabic word instead of one from Sanskrit-based vocabulary, which latter was well integrated with Indian modes of philosophic thought.

Since it is not our purpose to write a dissertation on the system of *Samkhya* itself, it is most convenient to confine ourselves to the text of *Samkhya-karika*, for purpose of examining the terms, *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*.

The word, manifest or un-manifest, according to *Samkhya* is not derived from the *puruṣa*, that is Nature does not have its matrix in the Mind. The world is comprehended in the term of *puruṣā*, but does not originate from it and is not grounded in it. This *puruṣa*, is not personal, though it is discrete and

individual.<sup>6</sup> It is the propinquity of this *puruṣa* to *prakṛiti*, which gives rise to the world of appearances.<sup>7</sup> In the absence of this nearness, the world is there but it simply remains *avyakta*, un-manifest. The world is that which is perceived or 'witnessed,' *lokyanti iti lokah*, and thus the world of appearances serves the purpose of the individual; *puruṣa* is in itself translucent and transparent; it is a witness; it is a fact of consciousness and that is its primary mode of functioning, witnessing of seeing the world.<sup>8</sup> It is inherent in this primary function of the *puruṣa* that by so functioning, it appears different from what it is : it appears as if it were, panorama of appearances, and appearances likewise appear as if they were possessed of consciousness. That is how a double obfuscation afflicts the basic human situation, namely concerning its awareness of the World and of himself.<sup>9</sup> The *puruṣa* appears as what it is not and the *prakṛiti* appears other than itself. This double negation occurs because of the very nature of the *puruṣa* which has its function as witness and to reflect or to appear as what it is not. In order to be what it is, it must appear as what it is not. It is to the implications of this doctrine that Bhai Nand Lal Goya, a contemporary and beloved disciple of the Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, refers to in his Persian poem.

We understand not that from the beginning of Time, the human consciousness constitutes the instrumentality through which the Maker of appearances builds a mansion for himself.<sup>10</sup>

It follows that in this arrangement between *puruṣa* and the process of *purusartha*, 'for the sake of the *puruṣa*', no consciousness, deity or mind functions in the genesis of manifest world. In its own nature, and by itself the world is simply *avyakta* (un-manifest) as long as it is not in the vicinity of the *puruṣa*. The ultimate *avyakta*, *mūlprakṛiti*, is a confection of

three *gunas*, but these *gunas* do not become creative unless in the presence of the *puruṣa*. In its primal state, although the *avyakta* potentially contains everything that is in the manifest world, but in, and of itself, it is just an unconditioned, unmanifest, plentitude of being which is completely and utterly unconsciousness.<sup>11</sup> The manifest world begins to emerge or unfold when *puruṣa* comes into proximity of this *avyakta*, the plentitude of un-manifest being. These *gunas*, three in number, *triguna*, in admixture with the *mūlprakṛiti*, give rise to a series of evolutes or emergents from which is created the world of appearances. These *gunas* extend throughout the *avyakta* and *vyakta* and they are continually modified and transformed in proximity of the *puruṣa*. They constitute the psycho-physical make-up of human nature and they likewise constitute the nature of everything, non-human and inorganic and, thus, they represent the fundamental structure of both the worlds, the seen and the unseen. In themselves, however, they are wholly and utterly unconscious and like the *mūlprakṛiti*, they are absolutely separate from the *puruṣa*.<sup>12</sup>

Thus in this *Samkhya* Philosophy, the fundamental categories recognize no consciousness of Absolute or a creator God. It does not deny the existence of gods, or even a God, the only and lonely God. The God or the gods, indeed, may exist but they can be no more than products of the interaction of unconscious *mūlprakṛiti*, and the conscious *puruṣa*, and the unconscious *gunas*.

It follows that this dualism of the ancient Indian *Samkhya*, focuses on the distinction of the conscious and the unconscious, between individual consciousness as one term and the unconscious as the other term. It is not the dualism of 'mind' and 'body' or the dualism of 'thought' and 'extension'. 'Thought', 'extension', 'mind' and 'body' are regarded simply as different dimensions or attributes

of the world of appearances and this unity of 'thought' and 'extension' is supported by the doctrine of the *gunas*, which function without hinderance on the psychological and gross physical levels, both. The *puruṣa*, the essence of which is consciousness, is not a part of the manifest world which is unconsciousness. The *puruṣa* is simple the fact of impersonal consciousness, not to be confused with *buddhī*, the intellect, *aḥamkāra*, the I-consciousness, or *manas*, mind, which latter are the evolutes of the three fundamental categories. Since the *mūlaprakṛitī*, in admixture with the three *gunas*, makes up everything that constitutes the manifest world, including mental dimensions of nature and man, the *puruṣa* is simply the presence of emptiness; as pure consciousness, it simply witnesses or sees. It appears as what it is not, but its appearance is what it is. The content of this *puruṣa* can only be what it is not. Consciousness is always consciousness of something and pure consciousness is beyond the grasp of the mind and the intellect.

This insight is the *hrīḍya*, the heart, of the contribution of the *Samkhya* made to the Philosophy and those so interested might find it rewarding to search for basic similarities between the *Samkhya* and the phenomenology of Sartre.<sup>13</sup> The *Tantrayāna* or *Vajrayāna* school of Buddhism, founded in the fourth century by Arya Asanga adopted this insight as the base of the doctrine of *Sunyata*, the basic emptiness that sustains the human situation, the world and man's awareness of it :

*dridham sarmasausiryam achhedyā abhedyā*

*lakṣṇam adahi avinaṣī chā sunyata vajra muchayate*

(*Sunyata* is designated as *Vajra*, because it is firm, sound, cannot be pierced, cannot be penetrated, cannot be burnt and cannot be destroyed).

It is this insight on which are based the most charming pieces

of poetic imagery in the ancient text of *Samkhya Karika* which tell us that,

After showing her face to the *puruṣa* the *prakṛiti* disappears like a dancer after her enchanting performance on the stage.(59).

This is my considered view that there is nothing more sensitive and shy than *prakṛiti* who, once she knows that she has been seen by the *puruṣa*, never again unveils her bewitching face to the *puruṣa*.(61).<sup>14</sup>

It is on this insight that the Sikh doctrine of the utter irrelevance of science and objective knowledge to the penultimate goal of religion, namely, deliverance from the bondage of *saṁsār*, the trans-migration, is based :

Science purporting to be an end in itself  
is weariness of flesh and waste of soul.<sup>15</sup>

In the Sacred Writings of Guru Nanak the decisive argument against utter irrelevancy of objective science and, by implication, against the contemporary Western Scientism, is that by objectively becoming preoccupied with the phenomenal world, man inevitably becomes drawn into the morass of conjectures and illusions and, therefore, is drawn away from the possibility of release and deliverance. The wish for exactitude of scientism can be shown as being far from constituting a guarantee of intrinsic value and spiritual legitimacy for the simple reason that the exactitude in question is already jeopardised by the most serious begging of the question, that is, scientism by denying the intellect and the Absolute rejects *apriori* the certainty of all knowledge. This argument, in essence, occurs clearly and succinctly in the ancient Buddhist text, *Lankavatasutra* (Hui-Yuan, A.D. 333) which runs as follows :

They do not understand that the objective world derives from the mind itself, and do not grasp that the whole system of thought likewise derives from mind; but attributing reality to these manifestations of mind they examine them, senseless people that they are, and get attached to dualities such as "this" and "that" or "being" or "not being" without realising that there is but a single Essence.

The religious system and the way of life which Guru Nanak revealed and preached is based on the philosophical doctrines that the one Absolute *Puruṣa*, both as self-conscious and unconscious, is the matrix of the world and not simply a term in a confection or admixture. That the world has a Creator, that as created Nature it has no absolute basis or essence independently and apart from this *Puruṣa*, and lastly, that the relation between the Creator and the created, Nature, is not a separate and independent category of existence but is merely an extension, and emanation of this *Puruṣa*. This one Absolute *Puruṣa* is to be contradistinguished from the *puruṣa* of the Vedas repeatedly described in all the four Vedas:<sup>16</sup> in *puruṣasukta* as "a fourth of Him is all beings and the three fourths is in immortal heavens". This Vedic *puruṣa* is not the Creator or Controller of the world but just the neutral stuff of the manifest and the unmanifest worlds, not fundamentally and essentially different from the *puruṣa* of the *Saṁkhya*.

The first of these two doctrines stem out of the *Saṁkhya* dualism of *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*, and the third, out of a pivotal problem common to all systems of Indian thought, namely the problem of the nature of relation. In Western Philosophy Hume brought the problem of relation to the fore front particularly the problem of the causal relations. But his formulation of this problem is in a very different context from that of the Indian Philosophy, as Hume was attaching it in the context of British



Empiricism. His Problem is epistemological in nature, while that raised in Indian Philosophy is metaphysical in nature, where the question asked straight off is "whether the relations are real?"

Two basic features of our experience are identity and difference and we find them in our experience as subject as well as object. All pairs of categories, 'subject' and 'object', 'substance' and 'quality', 'permanence' and 'change', 'body' and 'mind', 'universal' and 'particular', can all be reduced to these two basic aspects of human experience, identity and difference. These two aspects are inevitably related to each other. They are not jumbled together. What is the nature of this relation between the two and, if this relation is real, how can both belong to one and the same thing, because both are opposed to each other fundamentally? Either the difference and the identity and the relation, all three, are equally real; or the relata between the two is false while the two are real; or lastly, it might be that the relation as well as one of the relata is false. Of course there is a fourth logical possibility that the identity, the difference as well as the relation, might be equally false, implicating the ultimate *śunyata*, just as the *Vajryāna* Buddhism depicts it. The *Nyāya-vaiśeṣika* and the *Mimāṃsā*, Jainism and the realist interpretations of Vedānta such as *dvaita*, *viśiṣṭadvaita*, *suddha-dvaita* hold that all the three, the relata as well as the relation, are real. Without holding this, it is not possible to uphold a pluralist view of reality, because how can there be an unreal relation between the two reals? The doctrine of *samvaya* (inherence) of *Nyāya-vaiśeṣika* and its doctrine of a *satkaryavada* (the theory that the effect does not pre-exist in its cause) is based on the reality of the relation and the relata. The Buddhist and the Vedāntin, accepting the centrality of this problem of relation in the philosophical context of India, attacked the doctrine of the reality of relation with much vigour.

The Vedantin attacked it by posing the question that, if relation is real like the *relata*, then it would need another relation to relate it to the *relata*, thus giving rise to *regressus ad infinitum*. and the Buddhist put the question: "If the relation is as real as the *relata*, why is it not seen as a thing as the *relata* are?" This weakness of the realist view of relation has given rise to the concept of the release, *mokṣa*, which are central to all systems of Indian thought. Since *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*, the one representing the identity and other representing difference, are both real, but the relation between the two is not ultimately real, then it follows that the relation can be eliminated or removed by some technique of know-how, by some discipline or *sādhana*; and, thus, *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* can be released from the bondage of each other and the *puruṣa* freed from the drudgery of *samsāra*.

The possibility of this release is logically implicated by the Buddhist dictum, *ya-viruddhā dharmadh yasavan ne esau akah* (that which has opposite attributes cannot be one). There is, however a flaw in this argument, for, it presupposes that relation merely implies a connection but it fails to see that it also implies separation. Through rejection of the relation, therefore, they will not fall apart. Anyhow, if the relation between the *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* is false, what is there to separate the two? In other words, they cannot see that the conception of the two absolutes is self-contradictory, a gross nescience which is sought to be removed in Sikhism in the *mūlmantra*<sup>17</sup> which has the arithmetical numeral '1' as its first term. But if the relation is not real, then the two terms, that of "identity" and "difference" cannot both be real. The Vedantin holds the "difference" as false. That is why the Buddhist rejects the unifying categories such as 'substance' or 'universal' (*samānya*) and the Vedantin is in favour of the unifying category of 'Atma':

*brahma satyam jaganmitthya jivabrahmaiva nāparah.*

The Vedantins and Buddhists both accept the falsity of the relation and also its implication that one of the relata must be false, but yet one goes to accept the relata of "difference" and the other relata of "identity" and the Vedantins argue that logically the identity, is more fundamental than "difference",

*abheda' purvako bhedah,*

while the Buddhist argues that reality must be *arthakriyakarin*, that is efficient, whereas the "identity" or "permanence" cannot be efficient. The *coup d' grace*, in this controversy, has been administered by the Madhyamika who rightly detects strains of dogmatism in both the schools which reject one relata and accept the other, and thus he argues that the "identity" and "difference" being correlated must disappear altogether and since *ātamavāda* and *anatmavāda*, are incompatible with each other, both cannot be accepted, but both can be rejected all right. If the falsity of relation leads to the falsity of one relata, the falsity of one relata, likewise, implicates the falsity of both the relates. This inexorable logic of the Madhyamika exalts the reality to a pedestal which is outside the reach of human experience. This would mean that the reality, the *tattva*, is completely beyond the reach of human experience and thus is logically unrealizable. If that is so, then all quests for the ultimate religious goal, the *summum bonum*, become futile and pointles. In order to remove the stigma of contradiction the reality must be transcended, but in order to be realizable it must also be immanent in experience.

It is in this background that Guru Nanak has favoured the three philosophical doctrines stated in the opening pages of this paper.

Guru Nanak, as we have said, has employed the word

"*qudrat*" as the second term of the dualism, with *Purakh* as the first term. *Qudrat* is an Arabic word meaning "that under the power and authority of" its Master. *Al-Qādir* as one of the attributes of God mentioned in the *Quran* and this attribute is distinguishable from another attribute of God, *Al-khāliq* i.e. the Creator. In *Quran*, with the contents of which Guru Nanak was well familiar, it being the part of the high-culture of Islamic Asia during Guru Nanak's days of which Islamic Asia, Punjab was an integral part in the fifteenth century, God is spoken of as "the First and the Last"<sup>18</sup> and He is also spoken of as "the Originator of Heavens and Earth"<sup>19</sup> Guru Nanak, in his term "qudrat", includes both these Quranic attributes of God, "*Al-khāliq*" and "*Al-Qādir*".

He Himself creates and arranges the Nature,

He Himself controls its progression and evolution.<sup>20</sup>

He is the transcendent as well as immanent and He is also the appearances. He is the Pure Consciousness, and He is also the Creator of the Nature.<sup>21</sup>

The Universal Self has created the individual self and He Himself hath created the differentiating names. Thus Nature hath He created as 'the other and depositing Himself therein, He is in a relation of aesthetic contemplation to Nature.<sup>22</sup>

Nature is all that appears and Nature is the World as seen, felt and appreciated. Nature is all the spaces and Nature is the totality of forms.<sup>23</sup>

Glory to thee who dwelleth in the Nature. Infinite and eternal. Thy limits and frontiers are unknowable.<sup>24</sup>

He who has created the World in which He abides as Immanent, that Lord may be recognised through Nature. He is not to be regarded as wholly transcendent as His voice can be heard in every heart.<sup>25</sup>

O, true Lord, Thy created Nature is real.<sup>26</sup>

All that is Your *qudrat* and You are its Qadir and Karta, i.e. Absolute Controller and Creator.<sup>27</sup>

God creates Nature single and alone. Single and alone He contemplates over it.<sup>28</sup>

The question arises but no answer is forthcoming: The purpose, the significance and the value of Nature are beyond man's comprehension.<sup>29</sup>

The Lord contemplates His own creation, Nature. He contemplates it and he sustains it. Why? He who does, He alone knows.<sup>30</sup>

It thus becomes clear that Guru Nanak employs the term *qudrat* to designate Nature and Cosmos, in the sense of the general cosmic order ordained by God in contrast to human derivations from it. Nature here is the complex of created things, in contradistinction to the Creator, *Natura Naturans* of the Scholastic, whereas the created things are *Natura Naturata*. Guru Nanak adopted this word the common lingual pool of the medieval Indo-Islamic world in which he lived. In Arabic, *qudrat*, literally means, power, might. The same word *qudrat*, as a part of the Turkish language, means power, strength, omnipotence of God, Nature (*Turkish Language Dictionary* by H.C. Hony. Oxford, 1957). This word *qudrat*, as a verbal noun of *qadar*, in the Persian language, means power, potency, authority of God, the Creation, Universe, Nature (*Persian-English Dictionary* by Steingass).

It was this word *qudrat* which Guru Nanak picked up from the cultural parlance of his contemporary world to which he gave a precise meaning, and philosophical exactitude.

The foregoing discussion suggests also reasons for which Guru Nanak abandoned the term *prakriti*. The term *prakriti* has a permanent odour of absoluteness, existence-in-its-own-

right, about it and no amount of reinterpretation of the term through the process which Nietzsche called "transvaluation of values", could possibly have divested it of this inconveniently unpleasant smell. The 'Nature' in Guru Nanak is created by and it is also utterly dependent on the Creator, at every moment of its existence. The status of Nature in the philosophic scheme of Guru Nanak is also encompassed within the time-cycle, so that the Quranic status of God, "the First and the Last", remains intact.

This concept of Nature is totally different from the concept of *prakriti* which forms the warp of the entire fabric of Indian philosophy. It is strangely akin to the concept of "Nature" held by Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) in his *Opus Tripartitum*.

It remains now to conjecture over the reasons why Guru Nanak was at pains to borrow a fundamental term of Sikh philosophy from a source, non-Indo-Sanskrit.

It would appear that the main reasons were three: (1) Primarily, Guru Nanak wanted a term of philosophy to which he could impart such connotation and meanings as would fit in with the base of the religion that he revealed. It is a subject in itself as to what that religion is and how precisely the concept of *qudrat* is necessary for its intellectual base and proper practice. (2) Incidentally, Guru Nanak wanted to break the shell of prejudice enclosing Hindu mind and attitudes towards modes of human communication in languages other than Indo-Sanskrit. There is a severe injunction in the *Bhaviṣyapurana* :

Even if the consequence is death, a true Hindu should refuse to learn the vulgar speech of the Western regions.<sup>31</sup>

This Guru Nanak discountenanced resulting in the broad liberalism of the Tenth Nanak to the effect that,

All languages of whatever people and whatever region

of the earth and all the true sciences, they are proper and acceptable.<sup>32</sup>

Last, the Hindu mind was afflicted with a gross bias, for centuries past, symptomatic of dogmatism and mental stagnation. The famous Indologist, Al-Biruni (973-1048) in his *Kitabul-Hind* has recorded:

The Hindus think that there is no science, no knowledge which exists or has originated beyond the frontiers of the sacred land of India.<sup>33</sup>

As against, this Guru Nanak aimed at opening the windows of the human mind to all the four quarters of the space so that man's mind may grow freely and his soul may remain whole through healthy contacts with the insights gained by mankind in all countries and in all ages, through such education as trains him to employ his "critical faculty as the anvil and the accumulated wisdom of mankind as the fashioning tool."<sup>34</sup>

[This paper was first presented to a seminarian audience in Punjabi University, Patiala, on September 3-5, 1969, Next year it appeared in print in the *Sikh Review* in its Feb.-March, 1975 issue. Later on it saw publication in the proceedings of the said seminar under the title *Perspectives on Guru Nanak* edited by Professor Harbans Singh sometime in 1974-75. The present version is based on a copy obtained from his personal records, duly checked up and corrected.—editors]

### Notes & References

- 1 The *Japu* is the pivotal text in the Sacred Writings of Guru Nanak and the first chapter in the Guru Granth which every Sikh must commit to memory to recite it as the first ritual-prayer at dawn; it is the *hridayasutra* of the Sikh scripture and in this text the word *qudrat* is straight off introduced :

qudrat(i) kavan kahā[n] vichār(u),

vāriā nā jāvā[n] ek vār.

(ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਵਣ ਕਹਾ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ, ਵਾਰਿਆ ਨਾ ਜਾਵਾ ਏਕ ਵਾਰ)

-Japu (16), *AG*, pp. 3-4

- 2 man haṭh bu(d)dhi ketiā[n̄] kete bed bichār  
 kete bandhan jā ke gurmukh(i) mokh duār  
 (ਮਨ ਹਠ ਬੁਧੀ ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ)  
 ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰ)

-Sri Rāg, M 1, AG, p. 62.

- 3 iknā nād nā bed(u) na gia ras(u), ras(u) kas(u) na jāṅant(i)  
 Iknā si[d] dh(i) na bu[d]dh(i) na aqal sar(i), akhar kā bheo na lahant(i)  
 nānak te nar asal(i) khar, je bin(u) guṇ garb(u) karant(i)  
 (ਇਕਨਾ ਨਾਦੁ ਨ ਬੇਦੁ ਨ ਗੀਅ ਰਸੁ, ਰਸੁ ਕਸੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੰਤਿ  
 ਇਕਨਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਨ ਬੁਧਿ ਨ ਅਕਲ ਸਰਿ, ਅਖਰ ਕਾ ਭੇਉ ਨ ਲਹੰਤਿ  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਅਸਲਿ ਖਰ, ਜਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰੰਤਿ)

-Sloka, M1, AG, p. 1411.

- 4 man samjhāvan kārme kachchuak pariāi giān  
 (ਮਨ ਸਮਝਾਵਨ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਕਛੁਅਕ ਪਤੀਐ ਗਿਆਨ)

-Gaurī, Kabir, AG, p. 340

- 5 paramad bhutam pārkriti param jad(i) chint(i) sarab gatam  
 (ਪਰਮਦ ਭੁਤੰ ਪਰਕ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਪਰੰ ਜਦਿ ਚਿੰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਗਤੰ)

-Gujari, Jaideva, AG, p. 526

- 6 tanmātrāṇyā viśesā stebhyo bhūtāni panca pañcabhyah  
 ete smritā viśeṣāḥ śanta ghoraṣcha mūdḥāṣcha.  
 तन्मात्राण्य विशेषाः स्तेभ्यो भूतानि पञ्च पञ्चम्यः  
 एते स्मृता विशेषाः शान्ता घोरारच मूढारच ।

-S. Karika, 38

- 7 puruṣartham prati vimocatyekarupeṇa  
 ਪੁਰੁਥਾਰਥੰ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਵਿਮੋਚਤ੍ਯੇਕਰੂਪੇਣ ।

-S. Karikā, 63

- 8 kaivalyam mādhyaस्थ्यam dṛiṣṭrivamakartri bhavaṣcha  
 कैवल्यं माध्यस्थ्यं दृष्टृत्वमकर्तृ भावश्च ॥

-S. Karikā, 19



- 9 tasmāttatsanyogād chetānām chetānavadiva lingam  
 guṇākarttrive chda tathā karteva bhavatyudāsināh  
 तस्मात्तत्संयोगाद् चेतनं चेतनावदिव लिङ्गम् ।  
 युणकर्त्तृत्वे च तथा कर्तेव भवत्युदासीनः ॥

-S. Karikā, 20

- 10 na-dānistam az roz-i-azal in naqsh-i-adam rā  
 kih naqsh az barāy būdan-i-khu khānā mi-sāzad.  
 مژدانیستم از روز ازل این نقش آدم را  
 که نقش از برای بدن خود خانه میسازد

- 11 triṅṅamviveki viṣayāh sāmānyamachetnam prasavadharmi  
 vyaktam tathā pradhānam tadviparītustathā cha pumān  
 त्रिगुणमविवेकि विषयः सामान्यमचेतनं प्रसवधर्मि ।  
 व्यक्तं तथा प्रधानं तद्विपरीतुस्तथा च पुमान् ॥

-S. Karikā. 11

- 12 avivekyadeh siddhah traigunyāttadviparyayabhāvāt.  
 अविवेक्यादेः सिद्धिः त्रैगुण्यात्तद्विपययाभावात् ।

-S. Karikā, 14

- 13 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (tr. Hazet Barnes), N.Y. Phils : Lib  
 1956.

- 14 (a) raṅgasya darśayitvā nivartate nartaki yathā nriyat,  
 puruṣasya tathātmanam prakāśya vinivartate prakritih.

-S. Karikā, 59

(क) रङ्गस्य दर्शयित्वा निवर्तते नर्तकी यथा नृत्यात् ।  
 पुरुषस्य तथात्मानं प्रकाशय विनिवर्तते प्रकृतिः ॥

(b) prakriteh sukumārtaram na kinchidastimate me matirbhavati  
 ya dṛiṣṭaasmiti punarn darśanāmupaiti puruṣasya

-S. Karikā, 61.

(ख) प्रकृतेः सुकुमारतरं न किञ्चदस्तीम्ते मे मतिर्भवति ।  
 या दृष्टाऽस्मीति पुनर्न दर्शनमुपैति पुरुषस्य ॥

15 likh(i) likh(i) paṛiā tetā kāriā

(ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਪੜਿਆ ਤੇਤਾ ਕੜਿਆ)

—Āsā, Vār, M 1, AG, p. 467.

<sup>16</sup> It is found in the *Rig Veda* (X-20) and consists of 16 verses. It is ascribed to riṣi Nārāyana. In the *Shukla Yajur, Vajsaneyi samhita* (XXXI. 1.) It has 22 verses. In the *Taittiriya-ārnyak* of the Kriṣṇa Yajur (III. 2) it has eighteen verses. In the *Ārnyak samhita* of *Sām Veda* (IV.3) and in the *Atharva Veda* (XIX.3) also it is there.

<sup>17</sup> ek omkar sat(i) nām(u) kartā purkh(u) nirbhau nirvair(u)

akāl mūrāt(i) ajūni saibham gur prasād(i).

(ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ)

—Mūlmantra, AG, p. 1

<sup>18</sup> hu-wall-awwalu wal akhuru

—Quran, 57-3.

<sup>19</sup> badī as-samawāt(i) wal-arzi

—Ibid., 6-102.

<sup>20</sup> ape qudrat(i) kare sāj(i) sa[ch]ch(u) āp(i) nibere rāj(u) rāj(i)

(ਆਪੇ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਸਾਜਿ, ਸਚੁ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਬੇਰੇ ਰਾਜੁ ਰਾਜਿ)

—Basant, M 1, AG, p. 1170.

<sup>21</sup> āpe neṛai dūr(i) āpe, hi āpe manjh(i) miāno

āpe vekhai suṇai āpe hi qudrat(i) kare jahāno

(ਆਪੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਦੂਰਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਆਪੇ ਮੰਝਿ ਮਿਆਨੋ

ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੈ ਸੁਣੈ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਹਾਨੋ)

—Sri Rāg, M 1, AG, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> āpinai āp(u) sājio, āpinai rachio nāo

duyi qudrat(i) sājial, kar(i) āsan(u) di[t]tho chāo

(ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ

ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ)

—Āsā, M 1, AG, p. 463.

- <sup>23</sup> qudrat(i) disai qudrat(i) suṇīai, qudrat(i) bhau sukh sār(u)  
qudrat(i) pātālī akāsi, qudrat(i) sarab akār(u)  
(ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਦਿਸੈ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਭਉ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ  
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਾਤਾਲੀ ਆਕਾਸੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਆਕਾਰੁ)  
—Āsā, Vār, M 1, AG, p. 464
- <sup>24</sup> balihāri qudrat(i) va(s)siā, terā ant(u) nā jāi lakhīā  
(ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ, ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ)  
—*Ibid*, p. 469.
- <sup>25</sup> jini jag(u) siraj(i) samāiā, so sāhib(u) qudrat(i) jāṇovā  
sa[ch]chrā dūr(i) nā bhāliai ghat(i) ghat(i) sabad(u) pachchaṇovā  
(ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਸਿਰਜਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ, ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜਾਣੋਵਾ  
ਸਚੜਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਭਾਲੀਐ, ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣੋਵਾ)  
—Vadhāṅs, M 1, AG, p. 581.
- <sup>26</sup> sa[ch]chī teri qudrat(i), sa[ch]che pāt(i)sāh  
(ਸਚੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹ)  
—Āsā, Vār, M 1, AG, p. 463.
- <sup>27</sup> sabh teri qudrat(i), tūn qādir(u) kartā  
(ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਾਦਿਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ)  
—*Ibid*, p. 464.
- <sup>28</sup> āpe qudrat(i) sāj(i) kai, āpe kare bichār  
(ਆਪੇ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜਿ ਕੈ ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਬੀਚਾਰ)  
—Mājh, Vār, M 1, AG, p. 143.
- <sup>29</sup> kahṇā hai kach(u) kahaṇ(u) nā jāi,  
tau qudrat(i) qimat(i) nāhī pai  
(ਕਹਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਹਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ  
ਤਉ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਪਾਇ)  
—Garri, M 1, AG, p. 152.
- <sup>30</sup> kitā vekhai sāhib(u) āṇṇā qudrat(i) karai bichāro  
qudrat(i) bichāre dhāran dhāre, jin(i) kīyā so jānāi.

(ਕੀਤਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਆਪਣਾ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ।  
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ ਧਾਰਣ ਧਾਰੇ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੈ)

—Vadhans, M 1, AG, p. 580.

<sup>31</sup> na pret yavani bhāṣā prāṇ kanṭh gaterapī.

(ਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਯਵਨੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਕੰਠ ਗਤੇਰਪੀ)

<sup>32</sup> sabhai lok bhākhā sabhai des bāṇi

sabhi sāstra bidiā samasto pardhāni.

[For correct text of this Verse see fn. 3, page 50 above. —editors]

<sup>33</sup> Albiruni, *Kitabul Hind*, (tr. Sachau).

<sup>34</sup> ahraṇ(i) mat(i) ved(u) hathiār(u)

(ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ)

—Japu, M 1, AG, p. 8.

## SIKHISM AND ISLAM

[The cosmopolitan character of Guru Nanak's teachings had attracted people of different castes and creeds. In his own day he was hailed as "Hindu's Guru and Muslim's Pir." Even in the last decades of the Christian era, an over-enthusiast Muslim sect, the Ahmadiyya, got up to claim vehemently that Guru Nanak was a true believer of Islam and up-holder of the revelations of the *Quran*. To remove his doubts Qazi Ahmad Mohammad el Nuri of Mosul, Iraq, wrote to the editor of *The Missionary*, Delhi. The question and its answer as given by Sirdar Kapur Singh is reproduced below for the benefit of the readers. —editors]

*Q.* "I have heard it said that (Hazrat) Baba Nanak was a true Muslim believer, or, at least, he was a great admirer of the Holy Prophet of Islam and a staunch supporter of the Quranic Revelation. I request for authoritative comments from some eminent Sikh theologian and scholar on this matter."

*A.* Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in the fifteenth century in the north of India that had already been politically integrated into the organised world of Islam for almost 500 years. Arabic was already the official and cultural language at Lahore, a place only a few miles from the birth-place of the Sikh Prophet. Islam and its culture, was not only the dominant strain of the world civilization and culture of those days, but had also percolated into the common idioms and modes of thought of the north-western Punjab. It was in this milieu that the oecumenical religion of Sikhism took birth. Guru Nanak not only was in intimate contact

with the Muslim learned men and centres of religion of Islam of those days, but also had made a close study of the basic Islamic literature. His knowledge of the fundamental Hindu sacred texts now being revealed through a critical study of the Sikh Scripture, is not only pleasantly surprising but also impressive. Needless to say that Guru Nanak was thoroughly conversant with the texts and the teachings of the *Quran*. Since Guru Nanak was a Prophet in his own right and according to his own claim, he neither gives direct quotation nor makes precise references to Hindu and Muslim texts, as a mere scholar would be expected to make, and it is, therefore, only a trained scholar of Comparative Religion who can spot out and pinpoint the exact sacred texts which Guru Nanak had in mind when delivering a particular Revelation.

When such a critical study of the Revelations of Guru Nanak is made, there is left no doubt in the mind of a balanced scholar that even when apparently affirming or repudiating a particular doctrine or text, the Guru almost always amplifies his own statement by adding to it nuances of critical exposition. An appraisal of this character alone can make it clear that Guru Nanak had a definite and positive attitude towards the *Quran*.

The *Quran* has three distinct elements in its texts: (a) Dissertations on the nature of God and man's relation to Him. (b) pronouncements on social organisation and ethics, (c) statements on Judaic mythology. Guru Nanak ignores the last as irrelevant to the Message that he has to preach to the mankind. He also considers this as uninteresting, for he makes very sparse, if at all, even passing references to it. With regard to the second element in the *Quran*, namely, the laws and principles of social organisation and social ethics, Guru Nanak would seem to reject most of them as contingent and non-perennial. It is the first element in the *Quran* which the Guru takes seriously

and on which he has made a large number of pronouncements. The space and scope of this answer forbids any detailed discussion of this point and I would, therefore, just state that Guru Nanak seems to find most of it as worthy of consideration and even assent and he has explicitly incorporated its essentials in the sacred book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth, though only after a personal digestion and re-interpretation.

I must make this statement slightly clearer.

In sura 2 called Albaqr, the Cow, for instance, amid brief disquisitions on a multitude of subjects, including pilgrimages, divorce, menstruation, the rights of women, proposals of marriage, and the need for killing the adversaries of Islam, there appears, quite unexpectedly, one of the grandest verses of the *Quran*, the famous Throne-verse:

There is no God save Him, the living the eternal;  
 Slumber overtaketh Him not, nor doth sleep weary Him,  
 Unto Him belongeth all things in Heaven and on the Earth.  
 Who shall intercede with Him save by His will.  
 His throne is as vast as the Heavens and the earth.  
 And the keep of them wearith Him not.  
 He is exalted, the mighty One.

It is this beautiful and noble text which claims the attention and general assent of Guru Nanak and it is this text which he has matched by his own famous text, *The Sodar*, That Gate, or The Gate, as, there being no definite article in the Indo-Sanskrit languages, *the* can only be expressed as *that*,

Like what is that Gate?  
 With what compares that Abode?  
 By visiting where He sustains All?

Then, in this text Guru Nanak goes to imply that the formal nature of this 'Throne' is best comprehensible by human mind through reference to those areas of Reality that pertain to sound and feeling rather than those that pertain to visual and spatial aspects of Reality, as is implicated by the *Quranic* text. Herein Guru Nanak has the advantage of his acquaintance with the categories of the *Samkhya* school of Hindu philosophy that categorises sound as the subject element of sensibilia and perception. It is only by a careful and critical analysis of such parallel texts in the *Quran* and the Guru Granth, that the true interrelationship between Islam and Sikhism can be properly understood.

Another grand verse, sura 24, in the *Quran* goes under the name of *mishkatul-anwar*, The tabernacle. This is the text to which the Mohammadan mystics and Sufis have returned to again and again, never tiring of the mysterious Lamp whose rays bathe the whole universe:

God is the Light of the heavens and earth,  
 The similitude of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp,  
 And the lamp is within a glass,  
 And the glass, as it were a pearly star.  
 This lamp is lit from a blessed tree,  
 An olive neither of the east nor of the west;  
 Almost this oil would shine though no  
 fire touched it.  
 Light upon Light, God guideth whom  
 He willeth to His Light,  
 And He speaketh in parables to men,  
 for He knoweth all things.  
 Now, Guru Nanak has taken an unmistakable note of this text.



Guru Nanak was also familiar with certain Hindu sacred texts (*Vaikunth*, and *Dipaparijvalanam* in the *Gurudapuranam*) that speak of the lamp that guides men here and hereafter. Guru Nanak has revealed a text which not only takes note of all these Muslim and Hindu sacred texts but which constitutes the Guru's own disquisition on the Lamp that guides. Guru Nanak opens by declaring:

My Light is the Name of One and only God.

And its oil is the pain and suffering:

The former is consumed and the latter is then done away with.

And, Io ! there is no-doing between I and Death.

A large number of similar texts in the Guru Granth, are, in this manner, grounded in the Islamic and Hindu sacred texts but invariably the former have the content and identity of their own.

This is true and correct relationship between Islam and Sikhism. As for Guru Nanak's attitude towards the Muslim Prophet Mohammad, it has to be a matter of inference, for, nowhere in the voluminous Guru Granth, the name of the Muslim Prophet occurs, directly or indirectly, though *Quran* is mentioned by name more than once, the Sikh doctrine on the subject is sharp and clear; the born is perishable, and all praise is due to the Timeless. Insofar as the Guru perceived excellence in Mohammad, he attributes it exclusively to the grace of God, and whatever was contingent unenduring in the words and deeds of Mohammad, he deemed as merely human and impermanent trait.

There is no other way of answering the question put by the learned Qazi from Mosul.

[Courtesy, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 39 : 3 (March 1991).—  
editors]

## THE YOGIS WHOM GURU NANAK MET

The *Japu* and the *Siddhagoṣṭi* are some of most profound philosophic writings of Guru Nanak. In both of them, the main argument is frequently addressed to "the *Yogis*", at places, even by name, as is the case in the *Siddhagoṣṭi*.

There is no doubt that these *yogis* were the contemporaries of Guru Nanak. Indeed, the *Siddhagoṣṭi*, as is testified by Bhai Gurdas, is the substance of discussions held by Guru Nanak at Achal Vatala, and by tradition, as the *Janamsākhis* record, Guru met some of these master *yogis* in the inner Himalayas. It may further reasonably be presumed that the teachings of these *yogis* had considerable influence over the general mass of the public in Northern India in the fifteenth century which accounts for Guru Nanak's particular attention towards them.

Who were these *yogis* who claimed so much attention of the acute mind of Guru Nanak? These *yogis* were the heirs to a most imposing tradition of the Indian religious thought, the cradle of which was the great Nalanda University itself, which University for over a thousand years remained the greatest seat of learning in the whole of Asia, from the second to the tenth century A.D. Students to this University came from Turkistan, China, Japan, Mongolia, Korea, Tibet, East Indies, Java, Bali, Sumatra, Ceylon, and the whole of India, and chose, as they required from the one hundred lectures a day, delivered by some of the fifteen hundred teachers of the University, the finest brains of India of those days. It was at this University, in the sixth century, that a teacher, Asanga by name, taught the

doctrine of a new School of Mahayana Buddhism, called the Yogacharya School of Mahayana. He applied the principles of the Yoga system of psychological discipline of Patanjali to the Mahayana Buddhism of his day, which was already a mixture of Saivite mysticism, Tantricism, and a large measure of magical ritual, *mantric* and *mudra* practices. Vasubandhu, a brother of Asang, was another teacher of this Yogacharya School. They both came of a Brahman family of Gandhara, the modern Peshawar and Rawalpindi districts, now in Western Pakistan, and took orders in the *Sarvastivadi School* of the Hinayana Buddhism. They were called *Sarvastivadins*, because they held that perception gives a knowledge of that which is real. *Sarva*, "all" *asti*, "exist", *vada*, "saying", that is, those who hold that all that is perceived, in reality exists. Today, we would call them "Realists". Asanga was the first to transfer his allegiance to Mahayana from Hinayana, and later on, he converted his brother, and thereafter the two became the most distinguished representatives of the Mahayana at Nalanda. Both these brothers were closely associated with the Gupta Court of Ayodhya, the modern Oudh, where they were contemporaries of King Baladitya and his father, who assumed the ancient title of Vikramaditya. Vasubandhu was a prolific writer and is credited with some twenty odd works, the two most celebrated and influential of which are, the *Abhidharmakosa*, dating from his Hinayana period, and *Vijnaptimatra-Trimisika* from his later years. The most important of Asang's works are *Yogacharya-bhumi* and *Mahayana-samparigraha*. The great Padamsambhav was a disciple of Asang and it was this Padamsambhav, who in A.D. 747 went to Tibet from the Nalanda University, and firmly established Lamaism there. When in the eleventh century, the Nalanda University, with its ten thousand undergraduates and fifteen hundred teachers and

two hundred thousand manuscript copies, was sacked and destroyed by the hordes of Bakhtiyar Khilji, some students and teachers, though only some, escaped the holocaust and sought safety in the inner Himalayas. The famous siddhas mentioned in the *Siddhagoṣṭi*, Gorakhnath, Machhandranath, Gopichand, Charpatnath, and Bhartrihari are some of these refugees, whom Guru Nanak is believed to have met. This Bhartrihari is the great Sanskrit poet who has written the three versified Treatises on Love, Politics and Religion, called *Sringarsattak*, *Nitisattak*, and *Vairagsattak*. It is believed that their yogic skill had enabled these refugees to prolong their lives much beyond their allotted span, in the sanctuaries of the perpetual snow-filled inner Himalayas, till they met Guru Nanak, who convinced them of the futility of inordinate prolongation of human life. Those of us, however, whose "scientific" conscience refuses to accept this thesis of prolonged lives, may assume that the yogis of these names, whom Guru Nanak met in the sixteenth century, were in fact, in the direct line of discipleship of the illustrious refugees from Nalanda, bearing identical names,

[Courtesy : *The Spokesman*, Vol. 3 (32-33), Independence No., 1953.—editors]

## GURU NANAK AS A NATIONAL POET

Guru Nanak was an eye witness of the invasion of Babur, who founded the Mughal Empire in India in the sixteenth century. In the Guru Granth are found a number of most poignant hymns by Guru Nanak which make a direct reference to this historical event. As far as the writer of these lines is aware, Guru Nanak is the first writer, native or foreign, who uses the word 'Hindustan' to denote the whole country of India, the ancient concept of Bharatvarsha, the land bounded by the Himalayas and Kanyakumari. So is the idea that the civil population of a belligerent country, so long as it does not take up arms against the enemy, is entitled to immunity from military attack, for the first time expressed in the world, with such pathos and force. The Geneva International Conventions on the subject came centuries later. The following is one of those hymns.

Khorasan protected, but terror struck in the heart of  
Hindsustan.

God doth not take direct blame.

Babur, the Mughal, is the scourge of God  
So terrible the chastisement of the people,  
Such heart-rending their wails,

But Thou, O God, madest no response.

Thou art the Creator of all Thy Creatures.

When the strong punish those with equal strength, there  
is no grievance.

But when a ferocious tiger maraudes and spreads  
merciless death in a herd of defenceless cows :

The Herdsman must answer for it.

The cowardly curs, the Pathans,

Have lost the priceless jewel that is India.

Dead and Forgotten are they now.

Glory, glory be unto God : He the Joiner, He the Separator.

The mighty of the earth, their majesties and their excellencies.

But the earth is the Lord's.

And they, the puny insects crawling on the earth.

Man die unto thyself, so that thou mayest have life everlasting.

Hail, hail to God, says Nanak.<sup>1</sup>

[Courtesy : *The Spokesman*, Guru Nanak issue, No. 5(45), Nov., 1955.—Editors]

### Reference

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ॥  
ਆਪੇ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ॥  
ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ॥੧॥  
ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ॥  
ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥  
ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੇ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ॥  
ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾਤਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ॥  
ਆਪੇ ਜੋਤਿ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥  
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ਧਰਾਏ ਵਡਾ ਸਾਦ ਕਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਣੇ॥  
ਖਸਮੇ ਨਦਰੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਆਵੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਚੁਗੈ ਦਾਣੇ॥  
ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ॥

—Asa, M I, AG, p. 360.

## GURU NANAK AND THE CIVIL SERVANT

Guru Nanak (1469-1539), whose Quincentenary Birthday Celebrations were celebrated throughout the world about two years ago, was, by profession, a civil servant before he was called upon to don the mantle of a Prophet and was commissioned by God to preach a new religion of "Praise of God, and the Name of God." The only other profession, which he adopted in his later life, when he settled down at Kartarpur (Rāvi), was that of a farmer, but by that time, he had become some kind of 'a universal man', and it is, therefore, secular profession of a civil servant which he undertook as Nanak, as individual and private citizen. Thus, anything he has said directly or indirectly about the calling and duties of a Civil Servant assumes a particularly poignant relevance for 'the distinguished gathering of the Cadre of high class Civil Services whom I have the privilege to address today.

As the *Janamsākhis* tell us, when the father of Nanak failed in engaging the attention of his son in a worldly profession, the husband of the elder sister of Nanak, who was already in the employment of the Lodhi Prince, Daulat Khan, at the principality of Sultanpur in the Punjab, secured an appointment for Nanak as the Chief Government Storekeeper. Nanak worked as Civil Servant for a number of years when formal accusations were made against him of having misappropriated government stores and of falsification of public records relating to the accounts of the government stores. He was, what would now be called 'suspended' from the Service and an inquiry was ordered against him. As it happened, he was found missing from his post of

duty and residence and was believed to have drowned himself in the river, called 'Bein' that flows by Sultanpur. Vigorous searches were made for the recovery of his body when, after full three days of absence, Nanak emerged out of the waters of the river safe and sound, and made his first proclamation as Prophet by uttering "There is no Hindu, there is no Mussalman."

*Janamsākhis* inform us that Nanak refused to be present at the formal inquiry of checking up and verification of the government stores and the account books and, instead, took his abode in the graveyard of the town. He refused to appear before the Prince, even after the inquiry had revealed complete falsity of the charges levelled against him and he resigned from the service with immediate effect.

The chronicles of his life further say that, on this occasion, he entered into what the Yoga texts describe as a *Jalstambha-samādhi*, that is a trance under water, in which state he remained for three days before emerging out of the river. During this trance Nanak received his first revelation and his first commission to found a new Religion and preach a new Way of Life. Revelation is not a psychological process in the individual's mind; it is an encounter with reality and the individual does not make a spiritual discovery through his own mental cogitation, but he encounters God and this distinction is fundamental. Henceforth, Nanak becomes Guru Nanak, the World Teacher. This encounter is described in the *Janamsākhī* in the following words :

As God willed, Nanak, His devotee, was escorted to His Presence and then a cup filled with the Liquid of Immortality was given him with the command, "Nanak, pay attention, this is the cup of holy adoration of My Name. Drink it . . . I am with thee, and thee do I bless and exalt. . . Go, rejoice in My Name, the Name of God



and preach to others to do the same . . . let this be thy calling.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak himself refers to this Divine Assignment with deep gratitude :

I, an unemployed lowly minstrel, was assigned a truly rewarding task.<sup>2</sup>

It is proposed, in this paper, to examine briefly three questions : (1) The origin and growth of the institution of Civil Service in the organized societies of the world; (2) The origin and genealogy of the current superior Civil service in India and (3) Relevance of certain teachings of Guru Nanak to the Civil Servant in general.

Ancient Greece and Medieval Europe created many important traditions of representative Government as did Confucian China, many of which traditions have entered the common heritage of personnel administration in the modern state.

In ancient India the problem of recruitment and control of Civil Service received early and sustained attention, as is apparent from the pointed injunctions laid in the *Arthaśāstrā* of Kautilya. In Chapter IX, Section 27, Kautilya ordains merit as the best directs a constant supervision as the only guarantee of their continued efficiency. Kautilya seems to have been well aware of the hazards of in-group rivalry that is likely to generate in Civil Service cadres and he was thoroughly opposed to formation of Service Unions of Civil Servants. He says :

Those who are possessed of ministerial qualifications shall, in accordance with their individual capacity, be appointed as Superintendents of Government Departments. While engaged in work, they shall be kept under constant supervision and daily examination, for,

men are naturally fickle-minded, and, like horses at work, exhibit constant change in their temper. . . Without dissensions, personal rivalries and without any concord among themselves they shall carry on their work as ordered.<sup>3</sup>

It was in ancient China, however, that a close and sustained attention was first paid to the problem of Civil Services necessary for running a State efficiently and it was there that techniques for recruitment, promotion, and supervision of Government employees on the basis of merit, were diligently examined and developed. As far back as 165 B.C., it is on record that the system of competitive written examinations for appointment to higher Civil Services were adopted. Emperor Hsio Wen set questions for written answers by the men recommended for high offices.<sup>4</sup>

During the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) contributions to Civil Service techniques of outstanding value were made that have influenced the modern Civil Service throughout the World. Selection by merit, ensuring stability of career, freedom from interference by usurpers of power, whom some might be tempted to call public representatives and politicians of today, gave a measure of maturity and stability to Civil Services that rendered the Sung Dynasty uniquely long lived in Chinese history. The most peculiar feature of the Sung Civil Services System was what might be described as, the 'Sponsorship System, that has remained almost unique amongst the world political institutions. The principle of this Sponsorship System, *pao jen* in Chinese, consisted in making not only initial appointments but granting special promotions on the recommendations of a permanent superior officer, who, thereafter, was legally answerable for the quality and the acts of his protege, and this technique became the regular practice in Chinese personnel

administration. This technique, though not formally adopted as the regular principle of recruitment, filtered to modern times as is evident from the appointments which used to be made by the Secretary of State for India to the Indian Agricultural Service till almost the twenties of the twentieth century. The Secretary of State used to make initial appointments to the Indian Agricultural Service directly and without any reference to merit, formally and impersonally ascertained in any regular or competitive test. Fortunately for him, the Secretary of State for India did not accept the concomitant of this technique, namely, legal responsibility for the failures and misdeeds of officers thus appointed by him. This system of sponsorship for recruitment of higher Civil Services is illustrated by the first available Imperial Proclamation of the Chinese Emperor Chei Lung made in the third Regional Year (A.D. 962) second month, second day, which runs as follows :

Han Lin academicians and civil court officials who have formerly served as civil aides of (lesser) officials in the prefectures or sub-prefectures, shall each recommend one man suitable to be a civil aids, sub prefect or executive inspector. If the sponsor has near relatives (who are suitable), selection may also be made from among them. Then set forth (all pertinent facts) in a form of recommendation. On the day of appointment (a recommended man) should further set forth the name and surname of the sponsor. If in office (the recommended man) should prove greedy and sullied, unfair, apprehensive and soft, inert, neglectful of duties, (or) errant in his legal verdicts and evasive, then weighing the gravity of the case, implicate (the sponsor) in the offence.

This background acquires particular interest for us because

it was on the principle of sponsorship that Jairam, the brother-in-law of Nanak, already a responsible Civil Servant in the Government of the Lodhi Prince at Sultanpur, had secured the appointment of the Chief Storekeeper for Nanak and, when accusations were made against Nanak of gross-misconduct, Jairam was held accountable, till Nanak was absolved of the accusations.

In Europe, the development of considered, impersonal and standardized procedures for handling administrative personnel came relatively late. Even Imperial Rome with its vast territories and its preoccupation with administrative methods, seems to have recruited and promoted officials on the basis of custom and personal judgement of superiors.<sup>5</sup>

The bureaucracies of Royal administrations of medieval Europe were recruited largely through a hereditary prerogative, royal favour or court nepotism.<sup>6</sup>

The direct influence of Chinese example on the development of British Civil Service Examination in the nineteenth century through the practices and procedures of the Indian Civil Service is now well conceded.<sup>7</sup>

This brings us directly to the Indianisation of the Indian Civil Service, which latter is the direct matrix and the predecessor of the Indian Administrative Service, on whose shoulders now devolve the vast responsibilities of handling the complex administrative problems of a new free India.

The British East India Company, till the battle of Pallasey in 1757, was in the position of a mere trader in India and its officials were called, 'factors' and 'Writers' with its administrative authority confined to Company's factories in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The only Indians in its service were Interpreters and brokers. In 1752 when the British East India

Company secured administrative powers and thus became the Hon'ble John Company, it continued using the Civil Service personnel in the employment of the Nawab of Bengal, its predecessor. The Mughal policy was to employ Indians of all races and religions in senior positions to checkmate the possibility of emergence of powerful classes of hereditary officials till Aurangzeb initiated the policy of *mussalmanizing* the supervisory Revenue Field Services, including and above the post of the Kanungo. By and large, however, Rajputs and Muslims were both found in administrative and military posts of the Mughal Administration, though Muslims predominated in the Judicial and Hindus in the Revenue Departments. In 1793, Governor General Cornwallis replaced all senior officials by Europeans and henceforward under the Charter Act of 1793 all posts of over £ 500/- per annum were reserved for the Company's new "covenanted" services.

The exclusion of Indians from the senior positions of administrative responsibility was, however, strongly criticized by successive British Governors of provinces such as Elphinstone and Malcolm of Bombay and Munro of Madras. Munro wrote in 1817 :

It is from men who either hold or are eligible for public offices that nations take their character : where no such men exist, there can be no energy in any other class of the community. No elevation can be expected from men who in the military line cannot attain to any rank above that of Subedar where they are as much below the ensign as the ensign is below the Commander-in-Chief or who in the civil line can hope for nothing beyond some petty and revenue office, in which they may, by corrupt means, make up for their slender salary. Foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence, but none with such scorn as we.<sup>8</sup>

Malcolm was even more forthright and he asserted :

We must, or we cannot last, associate Indians with us.<sup>9</sup>

While conducting its twenty-year review for renewal of the Charter of the East India Company, British Parliament, through a Select Committee, considered the question of employment of Indians to the Higher civil posts and the Select Committee reported :

(Indians') admission under European control into higher offices would have a beneficial effect in correcting the moral obliquities of their general character; would strengthen their attachment to British dominion. . . would be a great saving in the expense of the Indian Government."<sup>10</sup>

Out of this background arose Clause 87 of the East Indian Charter of the year 1833 :

And be it enacted that no native of the said Territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty, resident therein, by reason only of his religion, Place of Birth, Descent, Colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any Place, Office or Employment under the said Company.

The effects of this Clause 87 of the Charter were felt to be so disconcerting after a number of years that Lord Curzon, while Viceroy of India, complained personally to the Secretary of State for India that—

an increasing number of 900 and odd higher posts that were meant for and ought to have been exclusively and specifically reserved for Europeans, are being filched away by the Superior wits of the native in the English examinations.<sup>11</sup>

It was not till 1924, when, on the proposal of the Lee Commission, it was agreed that fifty percent of the posts of the Indian Civil Service should be Indianised over the next fifteen years,

When in 1942 your speaker of this evening was on a private visit at Wardha, he informed Mahatma Gandhi in reply to his query that by 1960 the Indians might predominate over the Europeans in the Indian Civil Service, to which Mahatma Gandhi sententiously remarked, *1960 kis ne dekha hai.*"

When in 1947 the British left India, only a sprinkling of Europeans remained as part of the Indian Civil Service and the next year or two from today, will see the last the I.C.S. men vanish from the stage which is now occupied by the cadre represented by the distinguished audience this evening.

Now, India has squarely entered the age of political power in its own right and is struggling to carve out a legitimate place for herself in the comity of nations. Everywhere people are turning to Government to achieve purposes that formerly were left to private institutions or private enterprises; Great Britain has become a Welfare Society; U.S.A has its New Deal; and India is reaching out through 'mixed economy' to the apocalypse or the Utopia styled 'the Socialist Pattern of Society'. Russia is both totalitarian and dictatorial and thus bureaucracy has become an unavoidable consequence, or shall we say, necessary evil of modern governments. the things that the governments seek to accomplish these days cannot be achieved merely through enactments of statutes and framing of regulations, unless great number of men and women are employed to put the Government policy into practice. Men and women brought into work together in large organizations constitute bureaucracy such as you, ladies and gentlemen are.

The recruitment, the promotion, the control and incentivization of such a complicated organization as a modern bureaucracy, naturally raise complicated problems that require constant review and revision, but there is an ethos and a moral bed-rock on which such an organization must rest, if it has to prove efficient and enduring in relation to the purposes it is designed to achieve and to remain invulnerable to shocks implicit in the vagaries and vicissitudes of politics, particularly democratic politics, for, mere coercive disciplinary measures, experience shows, do not altogether succeed. The Egyptian officials were slaves of the Pharaoh and the Roman *latifundia*. The owners liked to commission slaves with management of their money-matters, because of the torture they could lawfully inflict on them in case of inefficiency or errancy. In China it has been sought, and perhaps in some form or other the principle is still operative, to place reliance on the prodigal use of the bamboo-stick as a disciplinary measure, from which our own political concept of *danda* seems to have been directly borrowed. Our ancient *Manavadharmaśāstra* (VII-18) informs us that it is "the bamboo stick that sustains human rectitude"; *dando dharmāha*.

The practical experience extending over centuries in various countries and climes, in relation to organization and control of administrative personnel, teaches us that the relative optimum for the success and maintenance of bureaucratic efficiency are provided by a secured money salary, fair chances of promotion in career that is broad-based, on the official's sense of honour, development of prestige sentiments and fear of God or development of a matured moral conscience.

As our experience extends over centuries in various and varied periods and forms of governmental organisations and social complexities, the words of the Deuteronomist acquire



more and more literal and inescapable force in relation to the calling and vocation of a civil servant, in particular, and an individual in general : "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deuteronomy, 30 : 15). This is precisely the point which Guru Nanak himself made out, during his sojourn to Mecca, as Bhai Gurdas (1561-1637) tells us :

Then the leaders of Religion and the Church-dignitaries engaged Nanak in discussion over the first principles. And they pointedly asked him to open the Book that he carried (knowing it was not a *Quran*) and answer : "Whether the Hindu Way of Life or the Mulism Way of Life is superior.' And Nanak replied, 'O pilgrims, neither one nor the other, but the good deeds alone without which nothing avails.'<sup>12</sup>

It is here, when we are considering and dealing with the very foundations of the operative health of higher Civil Services, that Guru Nanak's teachings acquire pertinence and poignant relevance, not only because he was a world teacher of Universal moral value but also because his professional background was essentially that of a Civil Servant. True, that after he settled down in his later life as a householder, he engaged in agricultural farming for his livelihood, but at that time he had already acquired the status of a Prophet who received his Light direct from "God beyond Whom there is no God."<sup>13</sup> But before the age of 27, when he was still a human individual and a secular man, he was a regular Civil Servant and it is only to be expected that in his utterances as a Prophet, there must be implicit his background personal experiences of a civil servant.

When we study his Revelations, and the utterances of his successor Guru Angad who, more often than not, almost literally echoes Guru Nanak from this point of view, we are enabled to gather a few principles of such universal import that clearly

apply to the moral foundations on which an efficient and enduring Civil Service must be based in all times and, particularly, under the complicated conditions such as prevail in India and World today, when the Civil Service has acquired increasingly large measures of power entailing an urgent call for developing a fully responsible conscience.

(i) In one of his utterances, the Guru says :

Those who enter (Public) service must remember that their paramount duty is to carry out orders in letter and spirit both. This alone will give them honour, recognition rewarding satisfaction as well as felicity of ample promotions<sup>14</sup>.

The principle is of fundamental importance to administrative personnel of a State in all times and under all circumstances. A Civil Servant who operates with mental reservations of absence of rectitude in the due performance of his duties and implementation of the orders duly conveyed, is something less than a Civil Servant and not a complete and whole Civil Servant.

(ii) At another place the Guru has said that "an employee who not only proposes and advises but also criticizes and opposes, vitiates his calling basically."<sup>15</sup>

This again is a principle of universal import and of inestimable value for the guidance of a civil servant, under all circumstances, throughout his active career. A Civil Servant in the highest position has the privilege of proposing and the prerogative of advising, but when a competent decision has been taken, he is debarred from criticizing or opposing it, or from retaining mental reservations while executing it. A decision competently taken after due consideration is not to be cavilled at for purposes of evasion or defection by a Civil Servant. A Civil Servant who bears this principle in mind in the performance

of his duties need normally never come to harm at the hands of a politician or a higher authority: Guru Nanak also lays stress on the whole-hearted performance of one's duty which, he asserts, is a stage towards spiritual progress that leads to the *summum bonum*.<sup>16</sup>

(iii) But Guru Nanak is careful to point out that blind and slavish execution of any order, when it is demonstrably immoral and clearly opposed to public interest, is not to be done just because it is an order. All spheres of the duty of a Public Servant are to be governed by ultimate moral requirements so that the German military axiom, *Befehl ist Befehl*, that is, "Orders are Orders," does not become a justification for crimes against man and God. It will be recalled that *Befehl is Befehl* was the basic defence adopted by the accused persons at the international trials held in Nuremberg.

(iv) Guru Nanak is fundamentally opposed to extraction of bribes or pecuniary advantages from the public by the Public Servant. He declares that—

What is not legitimately due is religiously forbidden, no matter to what religion one belongs. Because, it is not by formal assertion of faith that a man gains admittance to Paradise of God's Grace, but only through the moral excellence of his deeds.<sup>17</sup>

(v) Guru Nanak pointedly refers to decisions by persons in authority, *malafides* made, though formally correct, a device of tyranny practised by Public Servants in all ages. The Guru says :

Sitting in the seat of a Judge and adopting forms and procedure of a man engaged in the dispensation of true justice, in fear of God, the officer still might take decisions perverse and *malafides* and yet justify them with

reference to the letter of the law and the precedent cases.<sup>18</sup>

These are only some of the utterances and revelations of Guru Nanak that are of particular importance and pertinence to the Civil Servants of today in the modern world. Guru Nanak unambiguously persuades men not to go in pursuits of lucre and wealth, but to live a life of honesty and dedication, to ends higher than himself, and this advice is of utmost importance to those also who would go in for a Civil Service career. Guru Nanak further squarely condemns all forms of tyranny and injustice perpetrated by those in State authority in a hymn opening with :

The times are the knife and Government officials are the butchers.<sup>19</sup>

This is the strongest possible condemnation of State tyranny in all forms, whether ancient or modern.

Guru Nanak, therefore, is not only relevant to the modern man in his fundamental problems of existence; in relations to questions that arise out of the nature of man and the world and the ultimate goal of man, but is also relevant for those whose main preoccupation is skill in public affairs. Guru Angad, Nanak the Second truly said of Guru Nanak, that "He showed us the right path here in this World and he led us into the divine Spheres of truth. What further guidance do they require who have turned their faces towards Guru Nanak as their Guru and Teacher ?"<sup>20</sup>

[Talk given to the trainees of the Indian Administrative Service, at the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, on December 10, 1971. Later on published in the *Sikh Review* (Vol. 20, 219) of February, 1972. —editors]

### Notes & References

<sup>1</sup> *Purātan Janamsākhī*, Pub. Govt. Lahore, 1912, pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> hau[n] dhādhi vekāru kārāi lāiā

rāt(i) dihai[n] kai vār dthurhau[n] furmāiā

(ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ

ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਪੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ)

—Mājh, Vār, M 1, *AG*, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Vide—

(i) amātyasam apadopetāh sarvādhyakṣāh śaktih karmasu niyojyah

अमात्यसंपदोपेताः सर्वध्यक्षा शक्तितः कर्मसु नियोज्याः ॥११॥

(ii) karmasu chaiṣam nityam pariksam karayet.2.

कर्मसु चैषां नित्यं परीक्षां कारयेत् ॥२॥

(ii) chittānityanavān manuṣṣyaṇām.3.

चित्तानित्यवान् मनुष्याणाम् ॥३॥

(iv) aśvas dharmāṇo hi manuṣyā niyuktah karamsu vikurvate.4.

अश्वस धर्माणो हि मनुष्या नियुक्ताः कर्मसु विकुर्वते ॥४॥

(v) te yathā sandeśama samhātā avigrihit karmāṇi kuryuh.5.

तेयथा संदेशम संहता अविगृहीताः कर्माणि कुर्युः ॥५॥

*Arthasāstra* (Kautilya, 9, 27).

<sup>4</sup> Pan Ku, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty* (tr. Dubs H. Homer), Vol. I, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> Harold, Mattingly, *The Imperial Civil Services and Rome*, Cambridge, (1910).

<sup>6</sup> T.F., Tout, *The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century*, Manchester, 1916.

<sup>7</sup> Sau Du Teng : "Chinese Influence on the Western Examination System" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1943, VII, pp. 267-312.

<sup>8</sup> G.R., Gleig, *Life of Sir T. Munro*, Vol. II, p. 85.

<sup>9</sup> E.Edward, *History of India*, p. 259.

<sup>10</sup> Max Muller, *India, What can it Teach Us?* p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> C.H., Phillips, *Select Documents on History of India and Pakistan*, Vol. V, p. 564.

<sup>12</sup> puchchan(i) gal[1] imān di kāji mullā[n] ikatthe hoi

... ..

puchchan(i) phol(i) kitāb no hindū vadā ki mussalmānoī

bābā ākhe hājīā[n] subh(i) amlā[n] bājho[n] dono[n] roi.

(ਪੁਛਨਿ ਗਲ ਈਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਕਾਜੀ ਮੁਲਾ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਈ

... ..

ਪੁਛਨਿ ਫੋਲਿ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਨੋ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਵਡਾ ਕਿ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੋਈ

ਬਾਬਾ ਆਖੇ ਹਾਜੀਆ ਸੁਭਿ ਅਮਲਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਦੇਨੋ ਰੋਈ)

—BG, I (33/1-4).

<sup>13</sup> aparampār pārbrāhma paramesar(u).

nānak gur(u) miliā soi jio

(ਅਪਰੰਪਾਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਉ)

—Rāg Sorath, M 1, AG, p. 599.

<sup>14</sup> chākār(u) lagai chākari je challai khasmai bhāi

hurmat(i) tis no agali oh(ū) vajuhu bhi dūṇā khāi.

(ਚਾਕਰੁ ਲਗੈ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਜੇ ਚਲੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਭਾਈ

ਹੁਰਮਤਿ ਤਿਸ ਨੋ ਅਗਲੀ ਓਹੁ ਵਜਹੁ ਭਿ ਦੂਣਾ ਖਾਇ)

—Āsā, (Vār) M 1, AG, p. 474.

<sup>15</sup> salām(u) jabāb(u) dove[n] kare mundhauhu[n] ghutthā jāi.

(ਸਲਾਮੁ ਜਬਾਬੁ ਦੇਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਮੂੰਢਹੁ ਘੁਥਾ ਜਾਇ)

—*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> vichch(i) duniyā sev kamāiai tā[n] dargah baisan(u) pāiaih.

(ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ)

—Sirī, M 1, AG, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> haq(u) parāiā nānakā us(u) sūar us(u) gāi

... ..

gal[1]i[n] bhist(i) na jāiai chhutāi sach(u) kamāi

(ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ)

... ..

ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ)

—Mājh, Vār, M 1, AG, p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> qāji hoi kai bahe nīai

phere tasbi kare khudāi,

vaḍḍhi lai kai haq(u) gavāe

je ko puchchai ta parh(i) suṇāe

(ਕਾਜੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਬਹੈ ਨਿਆਇ)

ਫੇਰੇ ਤਸਬੀ ਕਰੇ ਖੁਦਾਇ

ਵਡੀ ਤਸਬੀ ਕਰੇ ਖੁਦਾਈ

ਵਡੀ ਲੈ ਕੈ ਹਕੁ ਗਵਾਇ

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਪੁਛੈ ਤਾ ਪਤਿ ਸੁਣਾਏ)

—Rāmkali, Vār, M 3, AG, p. 951.

<sup>19</sup> kal(i) kāti rāje kasai. dharm(u) paṅkh kar(i) udriā

(ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ)

—Mājh, Vār, M 1, AG, p. 145.

<sup>20</sup> dikhīā ākh(i) bujhāiā sifī sach(i) sameu

tin kau kiā upadesiai jin gur(u) Nānak deu.

(ਦੀਖਿਆ ਆਖਿ ਬੁਝਾਇਆ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਸਚਿ ਸਮੇਉ)

ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਕਿਆ ਉਪਦੇਸੀਐ ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਉ)

—*Ibid.*, p. 150.

## THE PROGENITOR OF PUNJABI POETRY

Guru Nanak has been claimed as a man of Hindi letters. The question as to whether Guru Nanak was a Hindi poet or not, is not free from difficulties<sup>1</sup>, for the word Hindi is often used ambiguously. For instance, it is often applied in a loose sense to the vernacular speech of the North of India between the Punjab and Sindh on the west and Bengal on the east. But the linguistic researches of scholars like Grierson have established that there are really numerous vernaculars in this area out of which the chief are Rajasthani, Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi and Bihari. Bihari belongs to a group of languages of which Bengali is another member. Western Hindi is closely connected in parentage with Punjabi. The term Hindi is also sometimes used to denote modern literary Hindi, particularly the Hindi of the All India Radio of post-1947 period, in contradistinction to Urdu, but scholars know that Urdu and this royal Hindi, both, have developed from Punjabi through Western Hindi. It is long after the period of Guru Nanak that the language called Hindi in its modern form, assumes a definite shape and prior to this Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu had already developed modern literatures which have proceeded in their own definite lines. The Western Hindi and Punjabi, both, have as their parent, *Prakrit Sauraseni*, while Eastern Hindi has developed from *Prakrit Ardhamāghdi*. Principal dialects of Western Hindi are Bangroo spoken in the West Ganges and in the high lands of the South East of the Punjab, *Braj Bhasha* of the Mathura tract, *Bundeli* of Bundel Khand and of Narbada Valley and the dialect current in the neighbourhood of Meerut



and Delhi, of which the last dialect forms the basis of *Khari Boli*. Delhi, having been, for a long time, the headquarters of the Muslim rulers of India, it was from this *Khari Boli* that a lingua franca of the Mughal Empire originated, and as was to be expected in course of time, a great many words of Persian, Arabic, Punjabi and Rajasthani, were introduced into this camp-language called Urdu. The extension of the area of its influence and its eventual literary form, we owe directly to the Mohammedan influence. The modern Hindi or royal Hindi was artificially extracted from this *Khari Boli* by Lallu Ji Lal, hardly a hundred years ago in the Fort William College at Calcutta. This Hindi was created just as nectar and wine were extracted from the churning of the Cosmic Ocean by the joint efforts of gods and demons, by a process of exclusion of all Persian and Arabic words and substitution by those of Sanskrit. In some such manner the Sanskrit language itself must have been distilled by Brahmans under the leadership of Panini out of Prakrits, the current vernaculars of the second millennium B.C.

The language of Guru Nanak is innocent of any such artificial selective and distilling process, and if a portion of his composition may be classified as Hindi, it can only be by expanding the identity of Eastern Punjabi with Western Hindi, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, though in one important respect this observation must be modified. When Guru Nanak is dealing with philosophical problems and metaphysical questions primarily, and not considering them in relation to human emotions, he employs a language which was then known as *Sadh Bhasha*, the language of the itinerant *sadhus*, which was definitely the lingua franca of India. This *Sadh Bhasha* is true and genuine Hindi, the fifteenth and the sixteenth century which cuts across the frontiers of local dialects and linguistic divisions. This language of Guru Nanak is at

once learned and mature, capable of expressing subtle shades of meanings and involved-cum-complex concepts. Apart from a not inconsiderable portion of his compositions grouped under various *ragas*, his special compositions such as *Patti*, *Oamkar* and *Siddhagosti* fall under this category.<sup>2</sup> Guru Nanak makes no attempt, whatsoever, to separate the *tatsum* forms of words from the *tadbhava* words, and uses them as they are spoken and understood by the people whom he is primarily addressing in his particular composition. In his word-formations, he follows the rules which have governed the creation of *tadbhava* words in Punjabi, and which have, ever since become the guiding principles of the growth of the Punjabi language. His attitude towards prosody is similar. Hindi, on the model of the Sanskrit Pingal patterns, has a more elaborately developed prosody than perhaps any other language. Hindi prosody does not like English prosody, depend on accent, but like the classic poetry of the Greeks and Romans, is based on the quantity of the syllables, the equivalent of which in Hindi prosody, is *matras*. The number of meters recognised in Hindi prosody is very large but the principal one are *doha*, *soratha*, *chaupai*, *kundalia*, the *chhapai*, *swayya* and *kabita*. These meters, with the exception of *chaupai* and *chhapai*, however, are not very extensively employed by Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak's poetry contains not only sprung rhythms but speech rhythms also and it contains meters, stanzaic formations, and variations in lengths so numerous that they can hardly be enumerated in an essay of this kind, and require a special and separate treatment. What, however, is most refreshing in compositions of Guru Nanak is that he is probably the first poet of Hindi or Punjabi who boldly broke away from the conventionality in the use of metaphors.

It is of the flora and fauna of the Central Punjab<sup>3</sup> and the seasons and trades of the place of his birth<sup>4</sup> that he mostly

speaks of and sparsely of *chakwa*<sup>5</sup> who is separated from *chakwi* at night or of *chatrik* who is supposed to drink in the rain drops<sup>6</sup>, or of *chakor* who is never happy except when gazing at the moon, or the swan that knows how to separate milk from water. He employs these unnatural metaphors only when he has to give philosophic exposition of a point of traditional philosophy but never when he employs nature as the background of his theme or of his emotions. This is something rare in whole range of Hindustani and Vernacular literature in India as far back as the fifteenth century. His compositions are wholly free alliteration or other such literary devices which are so greatly admired in all forms of Indian Vernacular utterature and his concept of poetry rests not so much on its technical skill but very largely on the message and appeal it contains. The sweep of his subject matter is so great as to be almost cosmic. Nothing in the whole range of Hindi and Vernacular literatures touches, in variety and magnitude, the subject matter of his poetry. From a flower in the field, or the cooing of the bird in a bush, he goes to the sun and the moon, the seas and the mountains and the starlit firmament above and the totality of the forces that sustain them. From the crow black tresses of a newly married maiden which are oiled with rare scents, before she is taken into captivity<sup>7</sup> by the invading hordes of Babur, he changes to fundamental causes which lie at the rise and decline of nations.<sup>8</sup> There is not much on the earth and under the sun which escapes the touch of his poetic impulse and the language itself becomes a pliant servant in his hands to suit his subject matter. Nothing comparable to this is to be found in the whole range of the Indian literature whether ancient, medieval or modern, except certain portions of the *Rig Veda*.

Before Guru Nanak there was hardly any Punjabi literature

in recorded form. Yogis of Northern India, particularly Charpat (A.D. 890-990) and Gorakh Nath (A.D. 940-1031) and Sheikh Farid Shakarganj (twelfth-thirteenth century) are sometimes mentioned as the fore-runners of Guru Nanak in Punjabi literature, but the material available in recorded form is so scanty and its authenticity so doubtful that hardly any scientific conclusions can be drawn from this data except this that the verses of Guru Nanak are in such mature diction such plasticity of language and such wealth of vocabulary coupled with variety of verse-forms, that a student of language cannot but come to the conclusion that despite the absence of recorded literature, Punjabi verse at that time had an ancestry of at least five hundred years, if indeed, not a millennium, before Guru Nanak employed it for the exposition of his thought and teachings. Besides, scholars have now found unmistakable evidence of the influence of Punjabi language on the compositions of such great writers in diverse parts of India as Kabir and Namdeva<sup>9</sup> who are fore-runners of Guru Nanak in the Indian Vernacular literature and from this also the surmise with regard to the ancient age of the Punjabi language in the modern form, after its emergence from the Prakrit form at the end of the fifth century A.D. is shown as well founded. The fact however remains that Guru Nanak is the first figure in the Punjabi literature who combines in himself the stature and genius of a great man of letters.

It is more or less agreed, though the point is still not free from controversy, that it was Guru Nanak to whom the Punjab is indebted for the Gurmukhi alphabet. The controversy on this point tends to search for the sources from which Gurmukhi alphabet originates. The written records and the firm tradition however, unmistakably support the theory that it was Guru Nanak who gave us the Gurmukhi alphabet in its present form.

The fact that Gurmukhi alphabet has a resemblance with the more ancient Landa characters and that its half a dozen letters show considerable resemblance with Sharda characters and one or two with the Devanagari, has already not much bearing on the proposition that Guru Nanak is the inventor of the Gurmukhi alphabet. Scholars trace the origin of all the alphabets of the world to certain ancient Phoenician scripts. Phoenicia is the ancient name for a part of the coast of modern Syria, and the now indecipherable Mohenjo-Daro script is also believed to be a derivative of the ancient Phoenician script. In the beginning of the Christian era, there is evidence of two scripts in use in India, both of which show unmistakable signs of having been derived from some ancient Phoenician script, Brahmi and Kharoshti. The former was written from left to right, the pattern now universally followed by all Sanskritic scripts. Both of them are more or less identical in respect of their individual alphabetical letters. Guru Nanak undoubtedly made full use of the alphabetical sources available, but his distinct contribution towards the final shape which he gave to the Gurmukhi alphabet, consists of two elements. He fashioned the Gurmukhi alphabet with the specific purpose of meeting the requirements of the Punjabi language and its peculiar and distinctive sounds, in and bestowed a form and shape to the Gurmukhi alphabet which brought it in line and made it resemble with the Devanagari and the other Indian scripts derived from Devanagari. The part which the second element has played in bringing Punjabi culture and Punjabi genius in harmony with the main currents of the Indian culture, yet awaits proper assessment. It is, however, patent to keen students of the history of Indian culture that in this manner, the Punjab and its people which had been violently severed from the main Indian cultural stream by the defeat and capture of Jaipal by Mahmud of Ghazna on

27th November, A.D. 1001 on the battlefield of Peshawar, were once again rejoined to its parent cultural body and entrusted with their ancient destiny of being, both the head and the sword-arm of the great Hindu race. The process of the cultural decay and death of the Punjab which started on 27th November, A.D. 1001 at the battlefield of Peshawar was definitely arrested by the teachings of Guru Nanak, which teachings were clothed in the Punjabi Language, the language of the people and were encased in the Gurmukhi alphabet. The decay was not only arrested but an element of life and vigour was introduced into the genius of the Punjab which promises it a destiny of enduring greatness which may far surpass its ancient and great past and which may, in the fullness of time, raise its stature and spiritual and cultural lead of India. This destiny which Guru Nanak thus assigns to the people of the Punjab is the destiny to reconstruct a society, spiritually enlightened, economically just, and politically stable which society may become the pattern for the future mankind to follow, and which society may furnish an answer to the problems which face the sick and troubled humanity of today.

In this wide and extensive perspective of Guru Nanak's teachings and achievements a consideration of his literary forms and compositions becomes almost banal. But even as a man of letters, pure and simple, Guru Nanak stands in comparison with any great figure of the world. Guru Nanak's poetry contains not only sprung rhythm but also meters, stanzaic formations variations in lengths so numerous that this aspect of his literary compositions alone would require a separate treatment. There is no recorded evidence on the basis of which Guru Nanak's compositions can be arranged chronologically in point of creation, but it is possible broadly to separate them into two categories by reference to their contents. The first category is

rich and more profuse in emotions portrayed on the canvas of the changing moods of nature, and the second category is marked by condensed thought and architectural perfection, and it is usual to suggest that the first category belongs to Guru Nanak's younger days and the second category to his older and maturer days. The *Japuji*, the *Oamkar* and the *Siddhagoṣṭi* are thus ascribed to the second category, but this classification, at best, is merely conjectural. *Japuji* is par excellence, Guru Nanak's philosophic composition falling under the second category. This is arranged in the traditional *sutra* form and the whole composition is arranged in *paunis*, i.e. the steps of a stair-case in which Guru Nanak builds his thesis on Religion and on Cosmology. This composition is packed by an epilogue in the form of a *sloka* which in its lofty sweep is reminiscent of certain portions of the *Faust* of Goethe. The architectural scheme of *Japuji*, in a most startling manner, foreshadows the governing principle of the mature Mughal architecture embodied in the Taj Mahal, which principle has been described as the Principle of Harmony and Balance, and which principle was known to the Persian Architectural Science as the Principle of *Swāl-Jawāb*. The same harmony and the same balance which is the distinctive note of the Mughal architecture and which is the high watermark of the fusion of the Hindu and Muslim cultures, is employed and unmistakably fore-shadowed in the architectural schemes of the *Japuji*. His other composition of other categories are also excellent examples of concise thought expressed with great economy with discriminate choice of word. The foundations which he thus laid of a living and growing Punjabi literature are still determining its future evolution.

The man of the stature of Guru Nanak was bound to have immitators and during his very life-time a corpus of apocryphal literature grew after his name. Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru,

after a very critical examination of this extant literature, rejected all that he found spurious and included in the *Adi Granth* only that which he found as the genuine creation of Guru Nanak. The following apocryphal works, attributed to Guru Nanak, still survive and many of them are in a language which can easily be identified as Eastern Punjabi or Western Hindi : (1) *Nasihāt Nāmā*, (2) *Hazar Nāmā*, (3) *Prānsanglī*, (4) *Bahar-i-Tawil Baba Nanak*, (5) *Munājāt Baba Nanak*, (6) *Meharban's śabdās* written under the name of Guru Nanak, an incomplete copy of which is available in the Library of the Khalsa College Amritsar. Similar *śabdās* composed by Harji who was a descendant of Meharban, are also available in manuscript form in the Library of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, (7) *Haqiqat Rah-Muqam-Raje Shivnabh Ki*, (8) *Paintis Akhari*, (9) Two *śabdās* found in the recension of the *Adi Granth* called *Bir Bhāi Banno*, the opening lines of which are;

- (a) Es Kalion panj bhition kion kar(i) rakhā[n] pat(i)<sup>10</sup>
- (b) Jit dar lakh mohammadā lakh bramā bisan mahes<sup>11</sup>

The *Nasihāt Nāmā* is, in fact, a Punjabi adaptation of an Arabic work made by some clerk in the Imperial Secretariat of Emperor Akbar at the close of the sixteenth century. It is a free translation of the Arabic composition ascribed to Alghazālī, called *At-tibrul masbūq* and contains simple pieces of advice to a king. The *Hazar Nāmā* is an *addendum* to the *Purātan Janamsākhi* which purports to be a sermon of Guru Nanak to a person called Mian Mitha, who lived near Pasrur in Sialkot District in the West Punjab. It consists of aphorisms usually employed by Muslim faqirs and is remarkable neither for its literary excellence nor profundity of thought. It is impossible to believe that Guru Nanak could have written in such crude language. *Pransangli* is a mediocre exposition of the famous Sanskrit work *Hathyoga Pradipkā* modified by some obsolete



Buddhist work of Mahāyāna. It was in existence in A.D. 1604 in the Sikh *Sangat* in Ceylon, when Guru Arjun compiled the Guru Granth. A copy of it was especially sent for, from Ceylon by Guru Arjun at a huge cost of money and time, and it was rejected as an apocrypha. *Bahar-i-tawil* and *Munājāt* are Persianised Hindi compositions in Persian meters containing praises of Guru Nanak and God. These compositions are not the work of any mature literary mind. The *śabdās* of Meharban and Harji breathe at places the spirit and are couched in a similar diction and style as the compositions of Guru Nanak, but they do not bear a careful scrutiny and are easily recognised as apocryphal. *Haqiqat-Rah-Muqam-Raje Shivnabh Ki* is a travel memorandum of some Sikh missionary towards Madras, and in its inner evidence it is unmistakably nears about A.D. 1673 and this, therefore, is demonstrably apocryphal. The *Paintis Akhari* is an exposition of *advaita vendanta*, written on the pattern of *Patti Likhi* composition of Guru Nanak and is therefore an apocrypha. The two *śabdās* in Bhai Banno's recension of Guru Granth and rejected by Guru Arjun as apocryphal, are a class apart. They do not occur in the earliest manuscript of collections of compositions of Guru Nanak called *Pothian* as is believed by some. Both these *śabdās* are remarkably faithful imitations of the diction and style of Guru Nanak and they contain sentiments which can easily pass as Guru Nanak's. The first *śabda* is a satire on the opinions of "Mrs. Grundy", the uncritical public, and though of much literary excellence, lacks the spiritual poise of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak, unlike Kabir, has nowhere spoken of the common man and of his opinions with ridicule and contempt and on this ground alone, we must agree with Guru Arjun in rejecting this *śabda* as apocryphal. The other *śabda* exalts God by saying, that in his presence are countless Mohammads and countless Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas. Guru Nanak might well have

expressed such sentiments and at numerous places he has said so much, but without being so blatant, as he is made to be in this *sabda*. A careful analysis, however, of the political circumstances attendant upon the inception of the Sikh movement, makes it appear more than probable that this *sabda* was coined at the instance of some very clever and subtle man to create estrangement between the Sikh Movement and the Mughal Emperors and their powerful Hindu officers. Students of Sikh History know that, from the very beginning till today, the Sikh Movement has excited fierce jealousies and has had enemies aglore and more than once, before Emperor Akbar, before Raja Birbal, Emperor Jehangir and Emperor Aurangzeb, this *sabda* was reported as an evidence of the undesirable character of the Sikh Movement, meriting suppression under Imperial command. Not that cardinal principles of Hindu creed and Muslim faith are not rejected in the compositions of Guru Nanak but this particular *sabda*, on count of its blatancy, even if we ignore the political evidence,<sup>12</sup> must be rejected as apocryphal, in agreement with Guru Arjun. It is fairly obvious that the prototype of this apocryphal *sabda* is the twenty-seventh stanza in the *Japuji*, which begins with:

Sodar keha soghar keha jit bah sarba samale

The language of this apocrypha has the same stamp of maturity of diction and the same deceptively, similar atmosphere as that of this stanza of the *Japuji*. The main sentiment in both of them is identical. It may, therefore, be presumed that the author of this apocrypha used this stanza of *Japuji* as his model and this stanza furnishes an another argument against this apocrypha. In the stanza of the *Japuji*, the Guru with a view to exalt God, speaks of gods of the Hindu pantheon with a tender reverence though leaving no doubt about their status in comparison to God.<sup>13</sup> This precisely is the central theme of this apocrypha, but the treatment is quite different. In

the apocrypha the method openly adopted is to belittle Prophet Mohammad and Hindu gods with a view to exalt God, and this treatment is alien to the spirit of 'Guru Nanak.'<sup>14</sup>

[The essay reproduced above formed the closing part of Sirdar Kapur Singh's commemorative lecture given to the literati of the Punjab University, Chandigarh, in connection with the quincentenary of Guru Nanak. It was later on published by the University Department of Punjabi in their Research Journal, *The Parkh*, in 1969 (Commemorative Volume, Quincentenary Birthday of Guru Nanak). Since this closing part of the said lecture was not repeated in any of the papers presented by the writer himself thereafter, we have retrieved it for the benefit of the readers and given it here under the caption "The Progenitor of Punjabi Poetry" in consonance with its contents. Our check up, however, shows that two earlier papers published in the *Spokesman* under the following titles and on dates mentioned below formed its nucleus:

(i) "Guru Nanak as a Man of Letters"—August, 1952, Vol. 2 (31-33)

(ii) "Apocrypha of Guru Nanak"—November 5, 1952, Vol. 2 (43-44)

-Editors

### Notes & References

प्रायः सब हिन्दी साहित्य के इतिहासकारों ने गुरु नानक देव जी को हिन्दी का प्रसिद्ध कवि माना है। परन्तु वास्तव में ऐसा नहीं हो सकता। मैं यही स्वीकार करूंगा कि गुरु नानक देव के कुछ पद अवश्य ही ऐसी भाषा में लिखे हैं जो पंद्रहवीं शताब्दी की हिन्दी से सादृश्य रखते हैं परन्तु उनकी संख्या बहुत ही थोड़ी है और उनमें पंजाबीपन का रंग कुछ न कुछ पाया जाता है। गुरु नानक की मातृ भाषा पंजाबी थी। इसके अतिरिक्त संयुक्त पंजाब प्रान्त की हिन्दू जनता की जागृति के लिये उनको धर्म-क्षेत्र में उतरना पड़ा था।

—Ayudhya Singh, Pundit, *Origin and Growth of Hindi Language and its Literature.*

<sup>2</sup> The following samples from these special compositions will illustrate this point.

- i) da[d]āi dos(u) nā deū kisāi, dos(u) kara[m̄]mā āpāṇia[n̄]  
jo māi [n̄] kiā so mai[n̄] pāiā, dos(u) nā dijai avar jan a[n̄]  
(ਦਦੈ ਦੇਸੁ ਨਾ ਦੇਊ ਕਿਸੈ ਦੇਸੁ ਕਰੰਮਾ ਆਪਣਿਆ  
ਜੇ ਮੈ ਕੀਆ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ, ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੀਜੈ ਅਵਰ ਜਨਾ)

Āsā, M 1, Patti, AG, p. 433.

- (ii) gagan garṁbhir (u) gaganāntar(i) vās(u),  
guṇ gāvai sukh sahaj(i) niwās(u)  
gaiā na āvai āi na jāi,  
gurparsād(i) rahai liviḁi,  
gagan(u) agam̄m(u) anāth(u) ajoni,  
asthir(u) chit(u) smādh(i) sagoni.  
(ਗਗਨ ਗੰਭੀਰੁ ਗਗਨੰਤਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ, ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵੈ ਸੁਖ ਸਹਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ  
ਗਇਆ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਆਇ ਨ ਜਾਇ, ਗੁਰਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਰਹੈ ਲਿਵਲਾਇ  
ਗਗਨੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਅਨਾਥੁ ਅਜੋਨੀ, ਅਸਥਿਰੁ ਚੀਤੁ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਸਗੋਨੀ)

Rāmkali, M 1, Oamkār, AG, p. 932.

- (iii) jaise jal mah(i)[n̄] kamal(u) nirālam(u)  
murgāi naisāne,  
surt(i) sabad(i) bhavsāgar(u) tāriai  
nānak nām(u) vakhāṇe.  
rahih ikānt (i) eko man(i) vasiā  
āsā māhi[n̄] nirāso,  
agam(u) agochar(u) dekh(i) dikhae  
nānak(u) tā kā dāso.  
(ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੈਸਾਣੇ  
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ, ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ  
ਰਹਹਿ ਇਕਾਂਤਿ ਏਕੋ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ, ਆਸਾ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰਾਸੋ  
ਅਗਮੁ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਏ, ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਾਕਾ ਦਾਸੋ)

Rāmkali, Siddhagoṣṭi, AG, p. 938.

<sup>3</sup> i) Tuñ suṇ(i) harṇā kālīā, kī vārīāi rātā rām,

... ..

bhavarāā phūl(i) bhavanīā, dukh(u) ati bhāri rām.

... ..

nadīā[n] vāh vichchunia, melā sanjogī rām.

(ਤੂੰ ਸੁਣਿ ਹਰਣਾ ਕਾਲਿਆ ਕੀ ਵਾਤੀਐ ਰਾਤਾ ਰਾਮ

... ..

ਭਵਰਾ ਫੂਲ ਭਵੰਤਿਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਅਤਿ ਭਾਰੀ ਰਾਮ

... ..

ਨਦੀਆ ਵਾਹ ਵਿਛੁਨਿਆ ਮੇਲਾ ਸੰਜੋਗੀ ਰਾਮ)

Āsā, M 1, Chhant, AG, pp. 438-39.

ii machhuli jāl(u) nā jāñiā, sar(u) khārā asgāh(u).

ati siāñī sohani, kio[n] kito vesāh(u).

(ਮਛਲੀ ਜਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਿਆ, ਸਰੁ ਖਾਰਾ ਅਸਗਾਹੁ

ਅਤਿ ਸਿਆਣੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ, ਕਿਉ ਕੀਤੋ ਵੇਸਾਹ)

Sri Rāg, M 1, AG, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> i) mori[n] runjhuṅ lāiā, bhaiṅe sāwaṅ(u) āia,

(ਮੋਰੀ ਰੁਣਝੁਣ ਲਾਇਆ ਭੈਣੇ ਸਾਵਣੁ ਆਇਆ)

Vadhañs, M 1, AG, p. 557.

ii) man(u) hāli kirsāñī karañī, saram(u) pāni tan(u) khet(u)

nām(u) bij(u) santokh(u) suhāgā rakh(u) garibi ves(u)

(ਮਨੁ ਹਾਲੀ ਕਿਰਸਾਨੀ ਕਰਣੀ, ਸਰਮੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਤੁ

ਨਾਮੁ ਬੀਜੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੁਹਾਗਾ, ਰਖੁ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਵੇਸੁ)

(Sorath, M 1, AG, p. 595.

<sup>5</sup> re man aisi har(i) siu[n] prit(i) kar(i), jaisi chakvī sūr,

khin(u) pal(u) ni[n]d nā sovai, jāñāi dūr(i) hajūr(i).

(ਰੇ ਮਨ ਐਸੀ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜੈਸੀ ਚਕਵੀ ਸੂਰ

ਖਿਨੁ ਪਲੁ ਨੀਦ ਨ ਸੋਵਈ ਜਾਣੈ ਦੂਰਿ ਹਜੂਰਿ)

Sri Rāg, M 1, AG, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> re man aisi har(i) siu[n] prit(i) kar(i), jaisi chātrik me[n]h

sar bhar(i) thal hariāvale, ik būnd nā pāvai keh.

(ਰੇ ਮਨ ਐਸੀ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜੈਸੀ ਚਾਤ੍ਰਿਕ ਮੇਹ  
ਸਰ ਭਰਿ ਬਲ ਹਰੀਆਵਲੇ, ਇਕ ਬੁੰਦ ਨਾ ਪਵਈ ਕੇਹ)

*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> jin sir(i) sohan(i) pat[ti]ā[n], mā[n]gi pāi sandhūr(u)

se sir kāti mu[n] nian(i), gal vich[ch](i) āvai dhur(i)

(ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ  
ਸੇ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁੰਨੀਅਨਿ ਗਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਵੈ ਧੂਤਿ)

*Āsā, M I, AG, p. 417.*

<sup>8</sup> jis no āp(i) khuāe kartā, khus(i) lae chaṅgiat.

(ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਆਪਿ ਖੁਆਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਖੁਸਿ ਲਏ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ)

*Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> i) कबीर के ग्रन्थों का संग्रह छपा है। उसकी प्रतिलिपि यद्यपि 1574 ईसवी की लिखी हस्त-लिखित प्रति के आधार पर तैयार की गई है, किन्तु उसमें पंजाबीपन इतना अधिक है कि उसको काशी में रहने वाले कबीरदास की मूल वाणी होने में बहुत संदेह है।

--Dhirendra Verma, *Hindi Bhasha Ka Itihas*, p.76.

ii) हमारा विश्वास है कि वर्तमान हिन्दी के रूपर पंजाबी का भरपूर प्रभाव पड़ा है।

--Badri Nath Bhatt, *Hindi*, p. 20.

iii) "It is strange that the Punjabi dialect exercised such a great influence on the language of Kabir who was born in Benares and lived there to the end of his day..."—Paper read by Babu Shyam Sunder at the Fourth Oriental Conference, Allahabad.

<sup>10</sup> ਏਸ ਕਲੀਓਂ ਪੰਜ ਭੀਤੀਓਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਰਖਾ ਪੱਤਿ।

<sup>11</sup> ਜਿਤ ਦਰ ਲਖ ਮੁਹੰਮਦਾ ਲਖ ਬੁਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਮਹੇਸ।

For full texts of these *Sabdās* as also of *Nasihāt Nama* and other compositions mentioned in the next paragraph, see G.B. Singh, *Prāchin Birān*, pages 341-404.—editors.

<sup>12</sup> This pattern of political forgery repeats itself in the Sikh History. In 1761, when Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was proclaimed the Supreme Generalissimo of the Military Government of Lahore, 'under the title *sultanul-Qaum*, new money was coined in the name of the Khalsa, as a mark of their assumption of sovereign status. The new coinage bore the traditional legend of the Khalsa:

dego tego fatah nusrat bedarang, yaft az Nanak guru gobind singh

(ਦੇਗੋ ਤੇਗੋ ਫਤਹ ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇਦਰੰਗ। ਯਾਫਤ ਅਜ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ)

But a group of Muslim conspirators forged pieces of gold and silver coinage, with a legend which was at once insulting to the Generalissimo, as well as calculated to incite and incense Ahmad Shah Abdali to whom these coins were duly sent with a view to persuade him to invade again the Punjab and dislodge the Sikhs. The forged legend was as follows.

sikkā zad dar jahān bā-fazali akāl

mulk-i-ahmad grift jassā kalāl

(ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜਦ ਦਰ ਜਹਾਂ ਬ-ਫਜਲੇ ਅਕਾਲ

ਮੁਲਕਿ ਅਹਮਦ ਗਰਿਫਤ ਜੱਸਾ ਕਲਾਲ

Ganesh Dass Vadehra, *Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> gāvḥ(i)[n]isar(u) barmā devī...devtiān dar(i) nāle

(ਗਾਵਹਿ ਈਸਰੁ ਬਰਮਾ ਦੇਵੀ...ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਦਰਿ ਨਾਲੇ)

-Japuji, *AG*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> (a) The Qadiani sect of Islam in the Punjab created a certain amount of apocryphal literature in the name of Guru Nanak in the beginning of this century to prove their pet theory that Guru Nanak was a devout convert of Islam. The following line is representative of this Qadiani apocryphal literature:

nānak kalmā je paṛhe[n] tañ dargāh pavai[n] qubūl

(ਨਾਨਕ ਕਲਮਾ ਜੇ ਪੜੇ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਵੈ ਕਬੂਲ)

(b) There are half a dozen prose and poetry mixed books styled by the generic name of *goshtis*, and mostly extant in manuscript from which contain accounts of Guru Nanak's supposed conversations with various mythological persons. The following are some of them.

1. *Ajite Randhave Ki Goshti* (ਅਜਿਤੇ ਰੰਧਾਵੇ ਕੀ ਗੋਸ਼ਟਿ)—Litho-Published as an addendum to the *Janamsākhī* of Bhai Bālā in 1878 at Lahore. Available in Manuscript as Folio No. 205 in the Punjab Public Library, Lahore.

2. *Goshti Rāje Janak Ki* (ਗੋਸ਼ਟਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਜਨਕ ਕੀ)—Manuscript Folio No. 191-192, Punjab University Library, Lahore.

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