

GURU NANAK'S
MESSAGE
IN JAPJ

Dewan Singh

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GURU NANAK'S MESSAGE IN JAPJI

by

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Foreward by

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Ph.D., D.Lit. (London)



SINGH BROS.

1991

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ISBN 81-7205-049-6

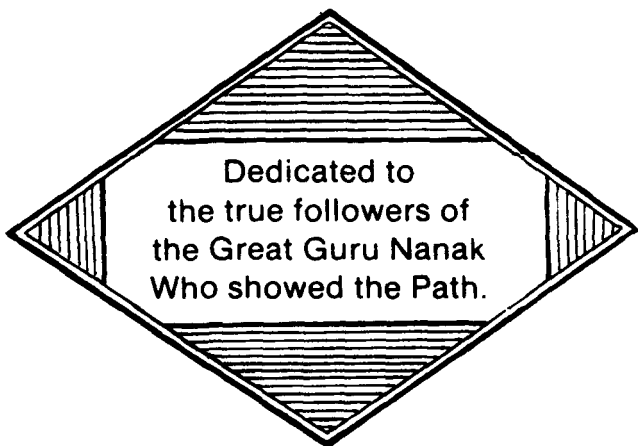
Third Revised Edition:
November 1991



Price Rs. 15-00 (Paper-back)
Rs. 35-00 (Deluxe)



Published by:
SINGH BROTHERS, MAI SEWAN, AMRITSAR.
Printed by:
Hamdard Printing Press, Mai Hiran Gate, Jalandhar.



Dedicated to
the true followers of
the Great Guru Nanak
Who showed the Path.

FOREWORD

Prof. Dewān Singh, Head of Gurū Nānak Studies Deptt., Gurū Nānak Dev University, Amritsar, has devoted much of his life to the study of literature and religion. Also he is a creative writer in his own right. Obviously he combines in himself much that goes into the writing of meaningful piece of work, particularly in a field which is after his own liking.

The *Japjī* is rightly regarded by Prof. Dewan Singh as the epitome of Gurū Nānak's spiritual thought and the corner-stone of his revelation. This quintessence of Sikh religious philosophy has been studied by many scholars before and translated into English by several students of Sikhism. Prof. Dewan Singh has derived benefit from the work of those translators; also he has imparted to his translation an originality of its own. Equally important is Prof. Dewan Singh's exposition of the message contained in the *Japjī*. He has devoted over sixty pages to this exposition which combines simplicity with insight.

This booklet should serve as a most useful introduction of the *Japjī* to the readers of English.

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Amritsar

May 28, 1982.

CONTENTS



Introduction	9
Japji and Its Theme	14
The Concept of God	20
The Human Situation	24
The Holy Path	30
The Unknowable	43
God-men	51
The Five Regions	58
Translation of Japji	69

Introduction

Gurū Nānak has a place among the great prophets of the world who conveyed to the suffering humanity their divine message of love and peace, unity and tolerance, pure-heartedness and faith.

His was a seminal personality, encompassing many facets of human perfection and glory. Of all religious leaders, in ancient or medieval India, probably it was Gurū Nānak who left the deepest mark on the social and cultural life of the modern times.

The enormous impact of his personality was felt far and wide, specially during the later part of his life. This powerful humanisitic influence, which was essentially of a spiritual and ethical nature, was brought about by his dramatic actions, his courageous confrontation with the regal and ecclesiastical powers of his time and his extensive travels which took him to almost all the then-known world.

Wherever the great Gurū went, after the declaration of his divine dispensation at Sultānpur in the Panjāb, his all-absorbing, all-embracing holy presence was felt by all and sundry. He was like a touchstone that served as an ennobling, enriching force for all those human beings who saw him or heard his immortal word.

In fact, his spiritual effect was so immediate and so far-reaching that to know him or to see him or even to hear or utter his name was enough to be eternally saved. Gurū Nānak was, undoubtedly, one of the great saviours of souls. His sole purpose in coming to this physical world, from the exalted spiritual domains, was to re-bind and re-align the

separated and lost souls to their original divine source.

An embodiment of truth, Gurū Nānak was so much intoxicated with the love of God that he lived and exemplified truth in each and every moment of his life. Thus he taught to others what he himself experienced and realized in actual life.

Gurū Nānak was a mystic, above all else that can be said about him. His spiritual realisation and mastery was his real character. There was nothing theoretical or speculative about him. He was all-truth, all-love. Goethe's dictum of all-round perfection was the keynote of Gurū Nānak's exalted self.

He was the humblest of the humble, simplest of the simple, truest of the true, and holiest of the holy. He was an elemental being, in whose person all the elements of life and nature had joined in perfection and harmony. Though mortal like all other mortals, he was, in fact, the most immortal among men, the most infallible, because he had become one with God and the Universe. Stories of his divine origin and birth and numerous miracles have gathered round his life and work because of this ineffable divineness of his being.

But when we study his life and work carefully and discriminately, we find Gurū Nānak quite normal and common in his worldly and social dealings. In ordinary life, he was like any other house-holder or man of the world. He lived among people, as a married man, as one of them, as their kith and kin. This was the real cause of his enormous popularity. He was never a recluse or a mendicant or a cynical Sādhū. He was, in turn, a peasant, a shopkeeper, a government employee, a wandering preacher and again a farmer. He was a poet, a singer, a scholar, a logician, a divine, a religious organiser, a worker, a reformer, all in one. He had, for many long years, a Muslim bard named Mardānā

as his constant companion and friend. He made numerous devotees and disciples during his life-time from among all the classes and creeds of society.

Thus the image of Gurū Nānak is the image of an ideal religious preceptor and saviour. In the words of his fifth successor, Gurū Arjan Dev, I should sum up the character of the great Gurū :

I do not possess any knowledge, contemplation or (virtuous) action and (thus) fail to understand what O God ! thou art.

The greatest among all the saviours is my truthful Lord, Gurū Nānak, who has, in his mercy, rescued and saved me.

-2-

According to Gurū Nānak, God is absolutely One (as we find so strictly emphasised in the Islamic belief also) and in His eyes all men are equal, whether they are Hindū, Muslim, Christian or Buddhist, whether they are rich or poor, high-placed or low-placed in society, having no regard for class, creed, country, colour whatsoever.

The true quality of a real man, a man of God, will be determined, according to Gurū Nānak, on the basis of what actually he is, what and how he thinks, speaks and acts. Nobody can deceive his Divine Creator by any wrong profession, or false dissimulation, in fact, by any deviation from Truth. Truth will always be known by its own true nature and falsehood will ever be discovered by its own falsity. Therefore in the eyes of the True Maker, the right and wrong actions of men will certainly be judged in their true perspective.

Gurū Nānak, in his mystical thought, cut at the very root of all sham and humbug. The professional Brāhman or the short-sighted Mullāh could not stand the test of his acute thinking and sharp reasoning, which were based on a true living and a direct contact with the Supreme Being.

Gurū Nānak's message of love and truth is of a universal nature ; it is for all men whoever they be ; it is for the whole world, for all human beings, wherever they be ; and it is for all time, past, present and future. His message is spiritual in its essence, humanistic in its approach, social in its application and moral in its judgement.

The greatest spiritual concept in Gurū Nānak's thought is the actual communion or contact with the Divine Being. Constant remembrance of God's name is the truest act that a man can perform. Gurū Nānak emphasised to all men the need for establishing a direct rapport with God which means : no professionalism in religion. All the so-called religious intermediaries are futile except the Gurū himself who has known truth and can make others know it. In other words, since the Gurū has achieved union with the Divine Being, therefore, all men must pass through his sanctuary in order to know and realise God. There is no other way possible.

Gurū Nānak's message proved a lasting bridge between the warring and wrangling religions in India—indeed, a unique meeting ground which has no analogy in the history of our country.

Probably the greatest contribution of Gurū Nānak's religious thought to the Indian society was his inculcation of social and moral responsibility on all Indians. It has made men, not only God-centred but society-oriented, and thus his Sikhs have never shirked national and patriotic duty in the hour of India's need. His disciples have in thousands and

lakhs courted death with courage and valour but have never flinched from their post or hour of duty.

This social responsibility has gradually forged and converted Sikh nation into a strong martial instrument of national importance. It has also made them into excellent citizens, workers, artists, artisans, engineers, merchants and farmers. Without doubt, Gurū Nānak's Sikhs are now a community, at once deeply religious, highly pragmatic and keenly progressive. Dynamism is the keynote of their attitude towards life, as infused in them by Gurū Nānak's powerful thought and message.

-3-

Japji has a great meaning and message to communicate. Gurū Nānak made it an epitome of his whole spiritual thought and a cornerstone of his great divine revelation. It is, in fact, the quintessence of the whole religious philosophy, as propounded in the voluminous corpus of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and the *Dasam Granth*.

In Japjī we find briefly expressed a theological argument involved in the eternal relationship between man and his Creator. No one who wants to know Gurū Nānak's thought can ignore or miss its study. Hence its unique popularity and appeal.

Keeping in view the special importance and popularity of Japjī and difficulty faced by many Sikhs and non-Sikhs in grasping its meaning and message, the author has undertaken an intensive thematic study of this sacred text and has also appended an English translation along with the text in Roman script.

Japjī and its Theme

To understand Japjī is to know the truth behind Sikhism. It is the central and most essential of the Sikh scriptures.

No one interested in Sikhism can afford to ignore the importance and spiritual efficacy of this great text. In fact, one cannot do better than to recite Japjī daily in the morning, keeping his mind fixed on the meaning, so that he may get attuned to the underlying message of the Gurū.

Japjī is so much packed with spiritual thought and insight as to make one believe that its creation completely involved a mystical process of the highest order.

A great literary genius, in his own right Gurū Nānak in Japjī intuitively gave expression to his innermost realisation of the Supreme Reality.

How a lover of truth, with the grace of the Gurū, can seek and find out the true relationship between the created and the Creator—this crucial question as posed in the beginning of the Japjī, is the crux of the whole message that has been expressed here in the briefest form along with the answer :

How to be truthful and how to break the wall of falsehood ?
Nānak says : By following the path of obedience and
resignation (to the will of the Supreme Being) as ordained and
determined. (in the very fact of our beings). (Japjī, 1)

Each word and each line of this holy text involves much exposition, and endless realisation. In fact the whole of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is a veritable exposition of the fundamental thought expressed herein.

Japjī was given the place of pride and pre-eminence by Gurū Arjan Dev, the fifth Gurū, who compiled *Gurū Granth*

Sāhib in 1604 A.D., as the first and the foremost complete text entered in the very beginning. Whereas all other poetic compositions included in *Gurū Granth Sāhib* were assigned to and included under various Ragas, Japjī was kept apart from the division of the Rāgas. This fact not only speaks of its uniqueness as a religious text but also indicates its special spiritual character.

Historically speaking, ever since its composition in the last years of Gurū Nānak's life at Kartārpur (on the right bank of the Rāvī), this poem was regarded by the great Gurū himself as an essential text for daily morning recitation and during his lifetime it had become imperative for the Sikhs to recite and repeatedly recite it as a religious prayer. Its very title 'Japu' (though also a verb meaning 'to recite') here implies a noun used as a title for the text, meaning 'recitation'.

The reading and study of Japjī has been so much emphasised ever since the time of the Gurūs and during the subsequent three hundred and fifty years of Sikh history, that it can be said that the Gurūs themselves and all their true Sikhs always lived up to the highest Sikh ideals as propounded in Japjī and when the hour of death came; they again resorted to the recitation of the Japjī which is the antidote of death and the nectar of life. Sikh history abounds in interesting examples of the miraculous powers attained by those who recited this text in right earnest.

Japji has been regarded as a difficult text not only for its depth of thought and the richness of meaning but also for its terseness of language and the preciseness of diction. Principal Tejā Singh has aptly referred to the epigrammatic quality of this poem, which is perhaps the most cogent literary fact of Japjī.*

*See his Introduction to *Japjī or Gurū Nānak's Meditations*.

But in spite of this general difficulty of the text (which has mostly been brought about by the compactness of its style the area of appeal and interest for those who know the Panjābī language and also possess some literary sense, is perhaps the widest, because most of the lines and stanzas found in the text are easy to grasp, specially those having lyrical modes of expression.

But Japjī has also universal appeal for all men having a religious bent of mind, because its meaning and message are of a universal nature.

Gurū Nānak has himself made it clear in Japjī that his religion is not confined to a sect of people only, but, instead, belongs to all classes of people irrespective of caste, creed or colour. In his own words :

(Our) great path is one which includes all classes of people
and by conquering the mind (we) conquer the whole world.

It is, therefore wrong to believe that Gurū Nānak's divine message is confined only to the Sikhs. Gurū Nānak belongs to all the yearning souls wherever and whoever they be. So Japjī, in original or in translation, should reach all men and women in the world around.

With a fount of love in his heart and the blood of universal sympathy running in his veins, Gurū Nānak travelled, in difficult conditions and without any conveyance to carry him, to distances covering thousands of miles and to the farthest lands known at that time, beyond surging oceans and across formidable mountains.

—2—

Gurū Nānak always said what he directly knew. He expressed what is expressible and communicable. He knew

the limits to which a language can go and beyond this limit he would not attempt to say anything. In Japī he has repeatedly forbidden the use of language where only silence is needed, because silence is the beginning and the end of all speech. For a theme which has to probe the spiritual reality and the spiritual fact, it is the wise dictum of the great Gurū that one should not make unnecessary attempt to utter the unutterable. All outspoken people and braggarts, according to Gurū Nānak, are vulgar and foolish and deserve punishment for their indiscretion. In his own words :

If one bespeaks something out of limit or propriety, he will certainly be dubbed as the most foolish and vulgar among men.

(Japī, 26)

The basic thought underlying Japī is the enunciation of the most fundamental problem of human life which can be stated in clear terms as follows :

God, who is the spiritual reality underlying the universe, has no second or rival because nothing whatsoever exists or can exist without Him ; He not only created Himself but also created the universe for His pleasure ; He only knows why and when He created the world and what is the mystery behind this created world ; of all creations he has given to human beings a certain freedom of action and initiative ; man has to discover the true purpose of his life on earth ; life is so short-lived that it cannot be wasted in idle and futile pursuits ; hence the need for a spiritual guide who has discovered the purpose of life himself and having reached the goal can guide others on the path to salvation.

Gurū Nānak who is a perfect spiritual guide, has shown the path in Japī. Verily, Sikhism is a path, a *Mārg*, a way of life, a definite spiritual attitude towards Reality in all its manifold aspects.

Sikhism, as taught by Gurū Nānak, has no rigid doctrine or dogma. It is a spiritual training and practice. It is a daily experience and actual realisation. Sikhism literally means 'training' and a Sikh 'trainee'. All men can learn from Gurū Nānak the path of Sikhism as enunciated in Japjī—a path which has a universal meaning and appeal.

Human life is a combination of physical and spiritual elements. Whereas the physical element is something concrete, the spiritual element remains intangible. One is the outer aspect and the other, inner aspect of human life. Since life begins and grows from some hidden and subtle sources, it can be said that the basic element of man is spiritual. But the outward perception caused by human senses, creates an illusion for men so as to make them believe that the physical reality is the only real thing in life. All things that are perceived by senses seem to be very real, while the soul that is not physically perceived makes little impression. This temporary reversal of the perception of truth is called *Māyā*. All men and their souls remain engrossed in this illusory effect throughout their lives* until and unless their souls are awakened by a spiritual guide.

Gurū Nānak called this human state of illusory perception, 'falsehood' and to further illustrate this state he used the metaphor of a wall or a barrier which divides truth from falsehood. All human misery is caused by this falsehood. Hence the imperative need for breaking this wall or barrier. This is the crucial question posed in Japjī. This is the central idea of Japjī. In the first stanza of Japjī, after rejecting the prevalent religious beliefs and practices which led people astray from the path of truth, Gurū Nānak went straight to the

*"The world is asleep under the effect of the illusion created by the three *Gunas* (i.e. Qualities, *Rajo*, *Tamo* and *Sato*), and in this sleep passes their night (of existence)."
Gurū Amar Dās, *Rāmkalī*.

heart of the problem and not only stated the problem in the briefest and most exact terms possible, but also offered his own solution which is probably the cornerstone of his whole religious edifice. In his own words :

How to be truthful, and how to break the wall of falsehood ?

Nānak says : By following the path of obedience and resignation (to the Will of the Supreme Lord), as ordained and determined (In the very fact of our being). (Japjī, 1)

In order to have a clear understanding of the theme of Japjī, it has been discussed under the following heads,:

1. The concept of God
2. The Human Situation
3. The Holy Path
4. The Unknowable
5. God-men
6. The Five Regions

All these aspects collectively make up the one whole theme of Japjī.

The Concept of God

All things have their beginning in God and the Word*. The holy Qurān has it : From God we come and to the same source we return. In the first verse of the Gospel of St. John in the Bible, we find the same truth : In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Similarly it is stated in the Vedās : In the beginning was the Lord of creatures and second to him was the Word..... The Word was truly the Supreme Brāhman.†

God is thus the primal reality in the universe. Japjī begins with this very recondite spiritual fact. Gurū Nānak makes a credal statement about what God is. In Sikh terminology, this statement is called the *Mool Mantra* or the Prologue, in which the holy Gurū gives his own positive concept of Godhead. He establishes the true nature of God, as we human beings should understand Him.

God is inscrutable, unknowable and beyond human comprehension. Still, Gurū Nānak, the true enlightner of the souls, who, according to Sikh belief, saw God face to face and thus had a positive, personal experience of the Divine Being, was able to make a final and original statement of his concept of God. Probably nowhere in religious history we find such a clear-cut, definite and complete statement about the nature and reality of God as we find, epigrammatically expressed, in the beginning of Japjī.

*(God) created all the worlds by uttering one Word. From this word flowed out millions of rivers (of life). Japjī, 16.

†C. Isharwood, *Rāmā Krishnā and His Disciples*, 1964, P.105.

In primitive religions we find the superstitious belief in plural gods, instead of the one indivisible Godhead. In some, there are two Gods, in others three and still in others many gods—pantheon of gods. The pantheistic view of the Divinity has almost whittled down the very concept of Godhead, because according to this belief all visible things not only represent but incarnate the Godhead. Thus the very entity of the one and unitive Godhead gets lost in the quagmire of plurality.

Similarly the Hindū concept of the independent existence of *Prākṛitī* (Nature) and its co-existence with God is also unacceptable to Gurū Nānak who regards the one Supreme Being as the sole Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the universe. No one can create, sustain or destroy except the one *Kartā Purkh* (The Absolute Creator Being).

The Gurū has also rejected the idea of *Avtārvād* or Incarnation theory which implies the Godhead assuming or taking human shape. Gurū Nānak says God is beyond death (*Akāl Mūrat*) and beyond birth (*Ajūnī*). He is self-existent, self-created, who neither takes birth nor dies, but EVER IS.

Gurū Nānak is strictly monotheistic in his concept of God.* In this he is akin to the Islāmic belief of the absolute oneness of God (*Wāhid-o-lā-sharīk, Tauhīd-i-Mutliq, Lā-ilā-il-lā*).

It is generally and correctly believed that the philosophy of Sikhism is the philosophy of the Name (i. e. God's Name). To know God is to know His name. By constant repetition, oral or mental, and meditation on the Holy Name (as revealed by the Gurū in Sikhism, it is *Wāhigurū*), a seeker after truth becomes one with the Name, or to be more exact, with the Being represented by the Name. Actually, the Name is a symbol of God and probably the highest symbol. For a

*Cf. C.H.Loehlin, *The Sikhs and their Scriptures*.

spiritualist, there remains no difference between the Name and the Divine Person behind it.

Gurū Nānak has, therefore, in the very beginning of Japji, attempted to define and state (by using attributes and assigning names to Godhead) the true nature and reality of the Supreme Being. This he has done by using epigrammatic language.

In fact, God cannot be expressed in any human or linguistic terms. He is only a fit subject for contemplation. He exists only in the soul or in the heart of a man, or to use a phrase from Gurbānī, on the lips of a man of God. Therefore, it may be said that Gurū Nānak has expressed the final word on the subject. In his other compositions he has further clarified his concept of Godhead, which, however, stands basically the same as stated in the beginning of the Japjī.

We may ask as to what is the final or true Name of God? According to Gurū Nānak, it is *Satnām*, or the Everlasting Name. After saying that He is one and the only one, he has stated that His real Name is *Sat* (Sanskrit: *Satya*), One who ever is or one who remains forever (Arabic: *Al Haī, Al Qayyūm, Al Bāqī*). This is his Primal Name (Arabic: *Zāti Ism*). His other names are just attributive or qualitative ones (Arabic: *Sifāti Ism*), such as Creator (*Kartā*), Fearless (*Nirbhau*), Without-enmity (*Nirvair*), Deathless (*Akāñ*) etc.

Furthermore, the statement called *Mool Mantra* also serves as a regular prayer for constant repetition and meditation. Since God can at best be known by his attributes only, this *Mool Mantra* serves the highest purpose for the development and spiritual progress of the disciple. Gurū Nānak has emphasised, time and again, that by praising the Lord or by considering and realising His greatness, we can be one with Him or be united with Him. Japjī begins with this credal statement.

(He is) One, Pervading in all things, Having Everlasting Name, the Creator Being, the Fearless, Without Enmity, the Deathless Being, Not physically Born, Self-created, By the Grace of the !Gurū (can be known and attained).*

After the Prologue or *Mool Mantra* comes the title *Japu* (for religious edification called Japjī or Japjī Sāhib) which is followed by a second Prologue in the form of a verse called *Salok*. This is again in praise of the Supreme Being. In this *Salok* Gurū has laid emphasis on the original truth about God, which, in *Mool Mantra*, he earlier expressed as *Satnām*, as explained above. His style in Japjī is throughout elliptical and succinct, but this remarkable quality of his style has found special play in the composition of the first Prologue and then the second Prologue. To translate the *Salok* into English :

(God was) True in the beginning, True in the various Ages,
True He is, says Nānak, True He will ever be.

*Japjī, Prologue.

The Human Situation

God is the First cause or the source of all existence. He creates, kindles or animates all beings, human and animal.

Just as the sun spreads countless rays all around and those rays always remain connected with the sun, without which they have no existence; in the same way, all individual souls always form a part of and have their eternal being in the Primal Soul, without which they cannot exist.

The great Primal Soul remains ever in its purest element, undefiled, unruffled, unabated, untarnished. But the individual soul, when it gets defiled and tarnished by its commingling with the material and the physical elements (created by the Supreme Being Himself to make the Soul tangible and concrete), it easily falls a prey to delusion and illusion. It becomes insular, individualised, separated and egotistic. It is thus lost in the meshes of falsehood, called *Māyā*. Enslaved and warped, it loses its essential or original character which is spiritual and thus becomes merely material and physical.

This reversal of the human state, from spiritual to material, is the cause of all human tragedy. The sorrow-ridden humanity does not find any peace in its futile worldly pursuits, which, bereft of spiritual harmony and detachment, always end in smoke and leave behind nothing but failure, destruction and repentance.

This enslavement of the soul in the clutches of deception or falsehood, slowly and gradually increases and flourishes, if its rising tide is not stemmed by a corresponding

spiritual effort towards enlightenment. When it gets confirmed in folly, its misery becomes so perpetual and lasting that the captive soul can find no way out or let up. The miserable state of a lost soul is one which, in religious terms, calls for hell-like punishment during the life on this earth and in the life hereafter. Physical, mental or spiritual torture is what we call a 'hell'.

But all this peace or lack of peace, pleasure or sorrow, is always at the mercy and will of a Benevolent God, whose dispensation of Law is always corrective and reformative and never merely punitive and vindictive. His justice is always tempered with mercy. We only need patience and fortitude in order to understand His Divine Law. This is what Gurū Nānak has taught in Japjī. No soul should lose itself in despair, because the Lord of the soul is supremely merciful and graceful. In the 15th stanza of Japji, the Gurū says :

The doings of the Creator are beyond our reckoning ;
The (mythical) ox denoting the Law (Dharma) is the son of
Charity ;
It has been made steadfast by having been tied down with the
rope of patience.
If one understands this, he will be truthful.

All souls craving redemption should have a recourse to and a refuge in the holy path shown in Japjī. Gurū Nānak is the saviour of all souls, who are losing or have lost grace and goodness. Submit to the will of God, as our inner self (called conscience) knows this truth—this is what Gurū enjoins upon all men to learn and do. By treading on this path and by following this injunction, we can shun falsehood and realise truth.

This panacea offered to the souls by Gurū Nānak is something fresh and original in-as-much as it has been discovered after right spiritual training and experience,

which implies rejection of many useless and unprofitable religious practices, adopted and pursued in utter ignorance of what is right and true. In the first stanza of Japjī, the Gurū rejects four common rituals and religious follies. They are as follows :

1. Bathing in sacred rivers as a penance and a religious practice: The underlying belief was that it cleanses the body, the mind and the spirit. But the Gurū says, no bathing, however constant and frequent, can purify or cleanse the mind and the soul. It is only an external act which cannot have any effect on the soul, which can only be cleansed by a perpetual repetition of God's Name. In the Gurū's words :

If hands and feet and the body get dirty and unclean,
Their impurity can be removed by washing with water.
If clothes become soiled by urine and refuse, they can be
washed with the help of soap.
If the reason gets polluted by indulging in sins,
It can be purified by constant meditation on the (holy) Name.
(Japjī, 20)

2. Keeping mute and speechless : Many sādhus, ancient and modern, are known to have regarded continuous silence as an effective means for controlling the mind. But it is a futile practice. How can silence still the mind, when we find that even sleep has no power over the mind ? Speech is just one of the many ways of expression of what is inside the mind. Therefore, only by an inner discipline or absorption of the mind, one can have any control over it.

It is not the speech of a man that matters, but the meaning implied therein or the intention involved.* Silence, at the most, can help in conserving energy or in aiding concentration. What a votary of God needs, is the all-

*Gurū Nānak says in Āsā dī Vār :

Whatever is in the mind, will be out.
The oral speech is nothing but air.

absorbing God-consciousness, which only His holy Name can bestow on the human soul. Muteness can be apathy, dullness, inertness, even death-like nothingness or void. Don't we find all hills, forests, plains, rivers, oceans, stars and heavens and even animals generally silent and mute ? It is only given to man to choose and decide when and what to utter and when and what not to utter. Man is the only sentient and articulate being, who has infinite knowledge, infinite experience and infinite speakability.

3. Fasting as a means to weaken the body and thereby to control the mind : It is again a futile effort. By weakening the body or the mind, there can be no spiritual gain. In fact by forgoing food, one loses physical and mental energy, which is so essential for spiritual advancement. The physical hunger and thirst are biological necessities and thus, normal urges. Who can live without eating ? One may do well to avoid excessive eating but to shun food or keep fasting for long and frequent intervals is an extreme step. The natural hunger can be appeased or satisfied by normal eating—by eating what is necessary and useful for physical health. Those who fast too much, end by ruining their health. It is thus a suicidal tendency and must be curbed.

Gurū Nānak, the Perfect-Gurū, shows the right path by inculcating moral and healthy process of life. Don't we find people eating voraciously after breaking a fast or thinking of food or lack of food during the fast ? Only a physically normal and satisfied person can pray well. Hungry and thirsty persons cannot pray well. In the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the Saints and Bhagats have asked of their beloved God to give them normal food and other necessities of life so that they may be able to worship Him.

The great Persian poet Sā'di says in one of his verses :

When I Make ready to pray to God at the dead of night,
It flashes to my mind as to what shall I give to my son to eat in
the morning ?

4. Experience and Wisdom of life as a means to gain spiritual salvation : Gurū Nānak says : if there be not one but a thousand wisdoms, these avail not a whit.

By wisdom, we generally mean worldly wisdom. Such wisdom is acquired by a long and useful experience of life. A man becomes well-versed and adept in any human activity, pursued with persistence and interest. This we might call skill or insight. But spiritual experience is of a different quality. It is gained not by an expertness or efficiency in doing something at a physical level, but by an inner experience, by a feeling in the soul, by introspection and meditation on the nature of truth and falsehood, on life and death, on the hidden sources of life and on the ultimate Reality that underlies the world of appearance.

Human experience is too limited and meagre, if it is confined to the area of physical activity. All knowledge, thinking, speculation and imagination, if these are on the material plane, are just ignorance compared to the knowledge and insight that is realised by the spiritual communion with the All-pervading, Omniscient, Unknowable Reality called God.

What is wisdom ? It is organised and channelised human experience. That is all. But wisdom gained through limited sources is very much limited. On the other hand, the realm of spirituality is beyond the limits of space, time and causation. Hence, this limited wisdom, as a means to spiritual uplift, is quite insufficient and futile.

After refuting and rejecting the common practices of other faiths prevalent in his time, the Gurū has logically posed the real problem as it is, in its true spiritual context, in the very first stanza of Japī. He has at once made the premises clear by clinching the issue and by removing all chances of confusion, and stating in question form, the basic spiritual need of mankind on the spiritual plane. People go

astray when they lose sight of the true goal and the means get lost in the meshes of extraneous thought, when the end is not visualised and stated in a clear-cut language. The Gurū, has therefore aptly and precisely stated what he means, in the question : "How to be truthful and how to break the wall of falsehood ?"

And his answer is equally terse and pithy. In his own profound words : "By following the path of obedience and resignation (to the will of the Supreme Lord) as ordained and determined (in the very fact of our beings)."

This statement made by way of answer, needs explanation at great length but suffice it to say here that a soul that submits or loses itself in the Oversoul, is, by this act of submission and losing, qualified to be redeemed, to be saved. Obedience to the Divine Law or Order (*Hukam*) is the greatest human quality. Very few mortals achieve this spiritual state and that also through the Grace of the Divine Being and not by their own effort. By shedding ego, as it were an erratic soul gains the higher selfhood, which we may call Godhead .

This submission to *Hukam*, the Gurū says, is the highest spiritual merit.*

*"By submitting to *Hukam*, a man gets accepted and thus he is able to enter the sanctuary of his Lord." Āsā-dī-Vār, 15.

The Holy Path

The concept of a Sikh's submission to the Will of God (*Hukam*) as a paramount act of faith, is an imperative necessity for determining his right attitude towards religion. Actually, a Sikh is one who submits, who obeys the Law at all costs and in all eventualities. This is the first step towards the holy path.

To express this thought in the apt phraseology used in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* by Gurū Nānak and his successors, a Sikh is one who offers his head to the Lord as a sacrifice or price for His love *—who relinquishes or consigns his whole self to the sacred Will of the Lord, thus consecrating his life and every thing for the higher spiritual cause so dear to his heart.†

In Sikh faith, the cardinal point is Love. A Sikh is a lover, first and last. A lover knows how to submit to the Will of the Beloved. Only a lover knows how to obey. Love and obedience always go together, as Gurū Nānak says in *Āsā dī Vār* :

* Gurū Nānak says :

If you desire to perform the act of love (to me) ;

Come to my street with your head placed on the palm of your hand.

† He who tells me about thee, O Lord,
what should I give to that man ;
I should cut my head to make him sit on it
and thus serve him without my head.

(Gurū Nānak, *Wadhans*.)

Those who have fear in their hearts,
have also love in their hearts.†

Unless one fulfils the basic condition of a Sikh by becoming a lover of God, how can he reach the Lord or ever go near Him ? Gurū Gobind Singh, the tenth Gurū, declared in his lucid words :

Those who loved God, they alone found Him.

But, at the same time, lovers need many more things. They have to develop this basic quality of love to its logical end. From lovers they have to become one with the Beloved. From a drop they have to become an ocean. From an atom they have to become a sun. These are well-known metaphors used by the Sikh Gurūs, like other mystic poets.

A drop becoming an ocean or an atom becoming a sun ! What a vast distance ? A Persian poet says :

Look at the distance in the path,
from what end it is to what end ?

It all depends on the spiritual ascent or evolution that a votary can go through in his lifetime.

This measureless ascent and this pathless progress* has its own meaning and its own reason. The effort is as much inside as it is outside. Spiritual evolution is the most difficult task. It requires the best and the toughest among men. The inner reality is too beyond and away from the apparent reality. But both have to be correlated and commingled in one spiritual blend.

†In Japji (Stanza 38) the great Gurū Says :

Make fear thy bellows and penance thy fire ;
Make love thy utensil and pour the holy nectar therein.

*The great Persian poet Faizi says :

I tread a path where physical stride is unknown.

For all this, the right means for the right end are needed. Bad means cannot lead to good results. Hence the need for a moralistic approach to religion.

Sikhism, as Gurū Nānak taught it, emphasises virtuous means for reaching the sublime spiritual altitudes.* Evil has to be totally rejected and shunned. A lover can do no wrong, just as in England they say : A king can do no wrong. The humble and selfless attitude of a lover makes him virtuous and morally sound. Love being the essence of all that is created and of the Creator Himself, it naturally and inevitably binds all men to one another and to the Divine Being. Love is the safest bridge between God and man. †

Having determined the right attitude of a Sikh, the great Gurū in his boundless compassion and love for the suffering humanity, shows the practical path, in Japjī, by treading on which the seeker-after-truth can certainly reach the true spiritual goal. He has laid down, in specific and clear terms, the efficacious means which a Sikh must adopt so that he may succeed in fulfilling his true destiny.

In Japjī, we can easily discover and point out the following means for the spiritual rebirth of a Sikh. All those who take refuge in the divine mercy and love of the Gurū, get a new life or a rebirth in the mystical sense. They all become the children of the all-embracing, all-powerful Gurū who raises them from the lowest physical levels to the highest spiritual states of existence.

*There can be no devotion without acquiring virtue.

Japjī, 21.

† The true Lord, having true Name, has a language made of measureless love.

Japjī, 4.

1. Recitation of the Holy Name

When the human mind is beset with impurity or polluted by sin, there is no remedy better than recitation of the Holy Name. The Name signifies the Divine person invoked by this symbol. In Sikhism, it is *Wāhigurū* which means 'Wonderful Lord'. It is infinite and everlasting praise of the Inscrutable God, rendered in terms of the human spoken word or language.

Whereas all other efforts fail, the method of recitation of God's Name, by word of mouth or by contemplation of its meaning, never fails in its divine purpose. Gurū Nānak himself made it clear in Japji (Stanza 20) when he said :

If hands and feet and the body get dirty, their impurity can be removed by washing with water.

If clothes get soiled by urine and refuse, they can be washed and cleansed with the help of soap.

If the reason gets polluted indulging in sins, it can be cleansed by constant recitation of the Name.

The pious and the sinner are not merely in name.

What you will earn by action, that goes with you.

You will reap what you will sow.

Nānak says, at the Lord's bidding you will come and go.

The sincere and pure-hearted recitation of the Name is the highest prayer and thus the highest spiritual state which a man can attain. It does not come to any seeker by effort or even by chance. It comes as a Divine gift given to the 'Chosen ones' i.e. those who are deserving of this state in the eyes of God or those who are the humblest and the purest among men. But no one can say what pleases the Lord. It is His sweet Will that rules the universe. His state is kingly, as Milton says.*

*In Japji (Stanza 4) His absoluteness has been most lucidly expressed in the following line :

Nanak says we know this much :
that He the Truthful is all by Himself.

A question arises here, that if so much is in the hands of all-dispensing God, then what should a man do to please Him or to deserve His favour? This very question Gurū Nānak himself has posed in the fourth Stanza of Japjī. His answer to this crucial question is contained in his following words :

In the ambrosial early morning hours (you should) concentrate or ponder on the true Name and the greatness (of the Lord).

By His grace one gets the robe of honour (of the divine praise) and by His favour the door of salvation is attained.*

A Sikh's duty is only to pray and pray in all sincerity. Beyond this, he cannot and should not go, otherwise he will be engrossed in his pride and vanity. If he relies upon his own effort or his wisdom, he will certainly become egotistic and thus lose his very bonafides.

This useful and recondite principle has been revealed in Japji by the great Gurū in the fifth stanza. He has even gone so far as to compose the required Prayer for the benefit of the Sikhs, in his own beautiful words :

O Lord, give me one understanding :
There is but one Giver of all beings,
Whom I should never forget.

At another place in Japjī (stanza 25) the Gurū has stated, in the most precise manner possible, as to what lofty spiritual heights a man can attain by the praise of God and by recitation of the Name. It is a supremely categorical

*While translating these lines I have followed the meaning given by S.Sāhib Singh in his *Japjī Satik* (Punjab).

statement which should be regarded as the highest theological principle of Sikhism. Thus says the Gurū :

One to whom the Lord in His mercy
gives His praise and devotion,
Nānak says, he is the king of the kings.

2. Singing and hearing of Gurbānī

In *Gurū Granth Sāhib* we find the following injunction :

O man, you came to the world
to read and hear Gurbānī.

'Gurbānī' means poetry at its highest and sublimest. In perfection of thought and expression, no poetry is capable of rivalling what we call 'Gurbānī'.*

A man can occupy himself with anything, from cooking his ordinary food, to driving a rocket to the moon or the mars. But what is his real purpose or job in this world ? Who can decide this matter ? Only a sage, who has known the truth or the reality of things, can decide for us. Thus we approach the sagacious Gurū to guide us. His verdict is clear. One cannot do better than to read or hear the word spoken by the Gurū. Better still, one should *sing* the poetic words uttered in the praise of God. This, Gurū Nānak has emphasised in Japjī, time and again.

* Gurū Amar Dās, the third Gurū, has, in his well-known poem Rāmkalī Anand, distinguished between ordinary poetry, called by him 'untrue poetry' (*Kachī Bānī*) and the great poetry composed by the Gurū, i.e. true poetry (*Sachī Bānī*) or *Gurbānī*

What is the Gurū's criterion for the verdict that only the devoted ones will be saved ? Men may deceive themselves by asserting that whatever they do is right. But the Gurū and God cannot be deceived. The truth gets known at the end. Judgement comes only after a man has left the earthly abode. Gurū Nānak says in Japjī (Stanza 34) :

True He is and true is His Court (of Justice).
There the 'chosen ones' adore His presence.
By Divine grace and favour
the sign of greatness comes.
It is there that default and perfection are determined.
Nānak says, this truth is known
only after one reaches (that court).

The transitory abode on this earth cannot be the real place for a man's sojourn. His permanent and eternal abode is certainly beyond this physical world. It is with God, in the spiritual regions, where Time, Space and Causation are no more. We may call it heaven or paradise (*Surg, Baikunth, etc.*)

But our life on this earth, though short-lived, is all-important and all-inclusive, because it is here and in this practical field, that a man's destiny is determined. This earthly region is the training ground, the place for action and reaction. It is as much real as any region above, because it is as much created by the Creator as any other creation. So, we can say, the immediate and the ultimate are combined here in this world, the finite and the infinite, the ephemeral and the transcendental, all in one.

Let us, therefore, follow the path shown by the Gurū and sing the praises of God or listen to such singing, as and when possible, in fact at all times, with love in our hearts and longing in our souls. The Gurū instructs thus in Japjī (Stanza 5) :

Those who remembered Him were honoured.
Nānak says, let us sing the praises
of that Treasure of virtues.
Let us sing His praises and hear them,
keeping love in our hearts.
In this way we shall banish all sorrow
and acquire all bliss.

In Japjī the idea and the importance of singing praises and hearing them are so elaborately expressed that space does not permit us to elucidate or expatiate on that in this brief study. Suffice it to say that the series of stanzas beginning with 'By hearing' i.e. from 8th to 11th and again the lengthy (in fact the longest in Japjī) 27th stanza pertain to this very subject. The whole universe is busy singing His praises; all great manifestations of God do nothing but sing His greatness—then why should man, the most sentient being, should be silent ?

The famous Persian poet Sā'di says in one of his verses in *Gulistān* :

I felt deeply ashamed that in the early morning
all the birds around were busy singing
the praise of God and I alone should be mute.

3. Obedience to Law

We have already discussed in detail the importance of obedience and submission to the Divine Law (called *Hukam*) while explaining the meaning of the great Question raised in the first stanza of Japjī and the great Answer offered to it.

This logical method of establishing the premises of the thesis or the argument of the whole poem, by posing a

question and answering it briefly and epigrammatically, in the very beginning, proves beyond all doubt and surmise, that this idea of 'obedience to law' is the corner-stone of the whole philosophical and mystical edifice so artistically built up by the genius of Gurū Nānak. It is the centralmost idea of the whole body of spiritual literature produced by the Sikh Gurūs, beginning with Gurū Nānak—in fact, it is the quintessence of all that the great Gurūs taught to the world.

Dr. W.H. McLeod has emphasised the importance of *Hukam*, while discussing the nature of Sikh belief and the essence of Gurū Nānak's teaching. He says :

The fundamental importance of the *Hukam* in the thought of Gurū Nānak is emphasized by its exposition at the very beginning of Japī.*

Expatriating further on the meaning of *Hukam*, Dr. McLeod affirms the necessity of submission to law, for a man who seeks and wants union with God. He says :

Submission, on the other hand, leads to union, the consequence whereof is freedom. He who recognizes the Divine Order perceives the Truth; and he who, having recognized it, brings his life into conformity with it ascends to that eternal union with God which is the ultimate beauty.†

Though the concept of 'submission' has been propounded by Gurū Nānak at the very outset, yet it is not merely the primary or the initial thought in Sikhism. It is, in fact the most ultimate one, to which a Sikh has to revert again and again, because unless and until he understands and realises concretely what *Hukam* is and by constantly

*Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion, P.200.

†Ibid, P.202.

practising what he believes he becomes one with *Hukam*, his union with God remains a remote goal.

So in Japjī the need of submission to law and its consequential benefits have been clearly expressed in four consecutive stanzas each beginning with words 'one who submits' or 'by submitting' (Stanzas 12 to 15). By daily recitation of Japjī, a Sikh, by and by, comes to grasp the meaning of these lines and, then, it becomes easy for him to practise what he has realised.

In the very first line pertaining to 'submission' the Gurū has vouchsafed the highest merit that accrues to the man who submits to the Divine Law or *Hukam*.*

Immediately after dealing with the subject of 'submission' in the four stanzas, the Gurū in the next Stanza (i.e. 16th) mentions the word 'Panch' i.e. the 'Perfect beings', the 'chosen ones'. Evidently the Gurū implies those who have known Truth in full, by submitting fully to the *Hukam*.

4. Ethical virtues

Religion is no empty profession or a theoretical faith in some imagined Being called God. It is no idle observance of some futile ritual.

Religion is something far beyond mere ritual or theoretical discussion. It has a real and practical basis, a stable foundation on which the great spiritual edifice is raised. In other words, a religion, worth the name, should have at its very root, some ethical strata which should appeal to and satisfy all men, who are not mere individuals

*The state of one who submits cannot be said.
If one attempts to say it, he has to repent later on.

but are also social beings. Men cherish nothing better than some ethical norm which should bind them all in one single social fabric, in which both their rights are safeguarded and duties defined.

Ethics ultimately means control of the self or the mind. Gurū Nānak has made it crystal clear in the 28th stanza of Japji.*

But how to control the mind? This question baffles all men and all religions. Gurū Nānak has made it clear in Japji and his other poems, that by verbal profession of faith or by mere recitation of the holy texts, the mind is not affected or reformed. By empty rituals and mechanical practices and even penances, the mind cannot be stilled or tamed. Then what should be done?

The truth about the mind is that it is too deep and subtle for any external means or practices to probe it. The only method for its control, as instructed by the Sikh Gurūs, is the recitation of the Name, inasmuch as the Name, in its spiritual basis and quality, meets the mind at its own level. The Gurūs have expressed this thought in *Gurū Granth Sāhib* at many places, implying therein that only the mind will control (or kill) the mind. The man who does not go deep enough to the bottom of his self which we call his psyche or inner mind, he cannot know or master his self.†

But there are also external aids that can help. These aids are what we call ethical or moral principles. Whereas verbal recitations and empty rituals miserably fail in making the mind of a man chaste or pure, the ethical merit of a Sikh will certainly go a long way to his spiritual progress.

**Man iite jag jīt*: By conquering the mind, you can conquer the world.

† O Nānak, say it that without realising the self (a man's) superstition and ignorance can never be removed.

—Gurū Teg Bahādur.

Gurū Nānak says in Japjī (stanza 21) that without acquiring moral virtues, no one can become a devotee of God. In his words :

All virtues are thine, my Lord, while I have none.
Without acquiring virtues, I cannot serve Thee.

Gurū Nānak has discussed the ethical subject * , so essential for the Sikhism taught by him, in the 16th, 28th and the 38th stanza of Japjī. If we study these together and as a whole, we can make a list of the main human virtues, which are found only in the perfect human beings viz. charity (*daya*), forbearance (*santokh*), patience (*dhīraj*) , continence (*jat*), honour (*sarm-pat*), faith (*parit*), fear (*bhau*), penance (*tap-tāu*), love (*bhau*), tolerance (*sagal Jamāṭī*), absorption (*dhyān*), discrimination (*ved*) and understanding (*mat*).

It is a common flaw in all religions that with the passage of time, the followers of a preceptor or prophet forget or half-forget his spiritual message and gradually tend to adhere to the external rituals and professions which are easy to understand and follow. Men always choose the easy path or the short-cut, and thus lose sight of the subtle truth or reality which all religions wish to emphasise and inculcate.

It is, therefore, a truism that few people understand religion and follow it in the real sense. Very few among the so-called religious persons have the urge to recite or realise the Holy Name or translate the spiritual experience into actual moral habits. They never know how to follow religion as they should.

* cf. *Āsā dī Vār*, Gurū Nānak has described, in his usual axiomatic vein :
Sweetness and humility are the essence of all ethical good.

Given a religious man, the first thing we should know or mark in him should be his ethos or his moral character. It is the social behaviour that determines what a man is. We do not need to know what a man professes in private or in public ritual ; we want to know what he is, in actual social conduct. Gurū Nānak has said that a man is called by the name according to what he does.* He further says that whatever a man is, (that is, what he is from inside) will be out ; his mere speech is like air.†

*Āsā dī Vār, 12.

† *Ibid.*, Salok Gurū Angad Dev, preceding stanza 22.

The Unknowable

The great Persian mystic poet Jalālud-dīn Rūmi says in one of his exquisite Gazals* that 'no one saw the beauty of God except God Himself'. The same mystical idea was expressed by Gurū Nānak in his own intimitable way in Japī (stanza 24) :

Great is the Lord and lofty His abode.
Still more lofty is His Holy Name.
If one rises so high as that,
He may (perhaps) know such a lofty one.

The truth about God, unknowable as it is, is known only to the mystics who in a state of ecstasy or intuitional experience get a fortuitous glimpse of the ineffable Divinity and then they express metaphorically or symbolically in human terms, what they have experienced at the highest spiritual level.

Gurū Nānak was a mystic, par excellence. All else about him becomes extraneous if we ignore this fact that he lived and taught all his life as an extraordinary human being. Though outwardly he may have appeared an ordinary man of the world, he was inwardly so beyond and remote from the common earthliness and grossness of physical world that many will regard him as a super human person.

*The collection of his Gazals is known to literary world as *Dewān-i-Shams Tabrez*. He had dedicated his mystical lyrics called Gazals to the memory of his famous Murshid or Gurū, Shams Tabrez.

Writing on Gurū Nānak's original mystical concept of the monotheistic nature of God (more akin to the Islamic view of God than to the monistic conception advanced by Shankar), Dr. McLeod has aptly remarked: "The basis of Gurū Nānak's thought is best understood if approached as the thought of one who was essentially a mystic."*

The very first words of Japjī, known as "Mool Mantra", are deeply expressive of the absolute nature and reality of God—a statement at once direct, brief and epigrammatic. But these few words encompass the whole area and scope of our knowledge about the Divine Being.

In *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Gurū Nānak and the other Sikh Gurūs, who contributed their poetic compositions to it, made certain qualitative and expository statements to clarify this subject. In Japjī also, the main body of thought revolves round this very crucial point related to the absoluteness and beyondness of God.

Probably the best thing we can say about God is that we cannot say anything. He is beyond of the beyond, as we find uttered by the ancient Rishis in the Upanishadic philosophy. The only true idea we can conceive about God is that He is ineffable, unknowable, inscrutable. When we say that He is eternal, everlasting, infinite, peerless, limitless, absolute etc., we clearly affirm that He is beyond our comprehension and outside the premises of human knowledge. He cannot be confined or reduced to any spacial, temporal or ephemeral limits whatsoever. This is the mystical position adopted by Gurū Nānak when face to face with his Divine subject, as propounded by him in Japjī. To quote Dr. McLeod again :

*op.cit., P. 165.

"The ultimate essence of God is beyond all human categories, far transcending all powers of human expression. Only in experience can He be truly known. Man must indeed seek to give human expression to this mystical experience and Gurū Nānak's works are directed to this very end, but the human expression can communicate no more than a glimpse of the ultimate reality."^{*}

The infinity and beyondness of God is such a basic reality that inspite of the fact that Gurū Nānak regards Him as One, True, Pervading or Immanent, Creator, Deathless, Unborn, Self-created, Fearless and Without Enmity, his conceptual position of God's infinity remains unchanged. The transcendental truth about God remains ever the same, however human attributes or postulates we may apply to it.

Gurū Nānak has especially emphasised this *Nirgun* aspect of Godhead† calling him *Nirankār* i.e., the Formless One in Japī, which is possibly the nearest human approach to express the ineffable reality of God.

If we regard the *Nirankār* or *Nirgun* Deity (The Formless Being) as the real one, the question arises what about the other, *Sargun* or Incarnate Godhead, comprising the visible universe? How to resolve this twofold conception of the Divine Being? It is, in fact, a question about the two types of monotheism preached respectively by Shankar and

*Ibid.

†In Japī (Stanzas 16 to 19) we find a clear affirmation of the idea of God's absoluteness, uttered in the form of an invocation repeated in the end of each of these stanzas, in the following words:

How can I say how great His power is?
I cannot even once sacrifice myself to Him.
Whatever pleases thou, O Lord, is best for me.
Thou art the eternally-abiding Formless one.

Ramanuj, the former having been called 'Pure Advaitvād' and the latter 'Qualified Advaitvad'.

There may be two aspects of Godhead, as mentioned above, but the oneness of God is certainly above all question. Gurū Nānak has repeatedly asserted that there is *one* God and only *one* God. He may assume new shapes or forms or change His position temporarily from the formless to the corporal one. But He always remains the same Changeless Being.

When the formless God assumes the state of Creator (in Hindu belief, for creative purpose He becomes *Īshwar* from the position of *Brahm*), it does not mean that He ceases to be the original *Nirankār*. It is only an "assumed mutation", a sort of transformation assumed temporarily. But one thing is certain that God remains an all-inclusive all-permeating entity* whatever new shapes or emanations He may assume. The inner truth of the whole matter of God's primal unchangeability and temporary changeability is that whatever change or mutation Divinity may assume, nothing ever exists beside Him or without Him.† The One becomes many and however vast the progression or plurality there may be, the One always remain the Primal One, just as by adding infinite zeroes to the figure one, the oneness of figure 'one' remains ever indivisible and undiminished.

*Gurū Arjan, the fifth successor of Gurū Nānak, says :

He is the Nirgun and He is, also the Sargun (Lord).
He is the One who bewitched all creations by assuming
artistic shapes. (Sukhmanī, 8, 18)

†In *Gurū Granth Sāhib* we find this idea beautifully expressed in the following words :

Thou Spirit One became the material one.
Thou, art a tree whose branch has sprouted forth.
(Gurū Arjan Dev)

God may have myriad shapes, colours, forms, names, expressions, qualities, aspects, varieties, even contradictions, but what strikes and affects a human being above all these mutabilities, is the existence of an absolutely One Reality.

In Japji (Stanza 21) we find a unique revelation :

All glory and victory to Him who is matter,
language and creativity, all Himself.
He is True, Beautiful and ever Blissful.

God is neither this nor that, but He is everything and yet nothing. He is ever beyond and yet ever immediate. All this baffles and puzzles ordinary men. He is one-coloured and also multi-coloured.*

A strange thing is that though He is everywhere and nothing whatsoever exists without Him, yet He is infinitely far-removed and hidden from sight. We perceive Him, seem to see Him but see Him not. He is supremely invisible to the physical eye, as Gurū Nānak remarks in Stanza 30 of Japjī :

Whatever pleases Him, He orders and gets done according to
His command.
He sees them (the mortals) but they cannot see Him—how
surprising is this ?

As the thesis of Japji proceeds and develops into a full-fledged theological argument. Gurū Nānak again and again reverts to this basic theme of the absoluteness and unlimitedness of God, sometimes expressing its ineffability

*Gurū Rām Dāss, fourth successor of Gurū Nānak, says :

He is Himself in each colour and
again He is in all the colours.
Whatever pleases thee, O Lord, says Nānak,
is the right thing for me.

or inexpressibility in human language (as in Stanza 26 and 37),* sometimes describing in detail His beyondness and limitlessness (as in Stanza 24, beginning with the words : 'There is no end to His praise...') and His unvaluableness (Stanza 26), sometimes expatiating on His bounteousness which includes all positive and negative disposition† (Stanza 25) and sometimes enumerating all those cosmic and supernatural creations who do nothing but sings His praises (Stanza 27).

All this comprehensive subject of the infinitude of God has been brought out, as a whole, in about eighteen stanzas of Japjī (from 16th to the 33rd) in which Gurū Nānak is at his highest and most original level.

All the infiniteness of God is, in fact, His Law or *Hukam*. To know His limitlessness is to know His *Hukam*. And to know His *Hukam* is to submit to Him. To submit to Him is to praise Him. So all these thoughts in Japjī have to be studied together and as one argument.

In the 23rd Stanza, the highest place is given to a man (or, in fact, any animate being) however small or

*The lines in Stanza 26 :

If one speaks something out of limit or propriety,
He will certainly be dubbed as the most foolish
and vulgar among men.

In Stanza 37, we find :

God sees and enjoys the bliss by pondering over His power.
Nanak, to say anything is like (swallowing) hard iron.

†The lines in reference are :

Many are eternally punished by (the pains of)
sorrow and hunger.
O Lord, the Giver, it is also Thine gift and bounty.

insignificant, who keeps the Lord ever in his heart*. The greatest king in the world is the meanest creature, as compared to the man who never forgets his Creator.

But the question is, how can a man remember God at all times ? Is it the fruit of his own effort ? Gurū Nānak answers, No. A man's vanity is utterly disliked and rejected, by the all-powerful Lord!† The whole of 7th Stanza most effectively brings out this point. Again, Gurū Nānak has emphasised this most essential thought—that of the complete rejection of a man's vanity in the spiritual path—in Stanzas 32 and 33.

Gurū Nānak has made the spiritual path straight and almost infallible. A man's job is to deny his self and to reflect the Divine element in his higher consciousness. That is all. One who reflects God like a mirror or abnegates his self completely, is the true votary of God.

Gurū Nānak poses a question in Stanza 32—how to become 'unitive' (the Panjābī word coined and used by him is *ikis*) in face of distraction and plurality ? The answer he gives is most enlightening. He says two efforts are needed. First, infinite and endless repetition of the praise of God. Second, the genuine heart is needed for this effort, not spurious. The genuine heart is that which has, by submission to Law, dispelled falsehood and acquired truth. In other words by the grace of the Lord one shall succeed in the spiritual path, so that none should think that by sporadic and false means a

*The line :

They are nothing compared to an ant,
if it never forgets thee, O Lord !

†In Āsā dī Vār, Gurū Nānak says :

If He gets angry, the kings get beheaded.
If they beg alms, they are refused.

person can go near the Lord of the Lords.* How can a beggar boast of reaching the royal sanctuary unless the king condescends to accept him ?

Ultimately speaking, the whole question comes to this : Whosoever realises the greatness of God, becomes truthful, as the Gurū himself says in Japjī**. But how can a man with limited human understanding and experience realise the limitless and subtle greatness of God ? Surely it is beyond human scope or effort, as discussed earlier in this chapter. God is not only too great and too beyond to come under human purview, but He is also absolutely disdainful and independent in His primal, pristine reality.†

It is, therefore, the merciful, and charitable Gurū who comes to the rescue of the helpless humanity. The Gurū who has himself realised and seen the supreme Lord of the universe, face to face, gives to men the spiritual insight, by which they are enabled to see the Invisible One. The man who takes shelter in the holy sanctuary of the Gurū, is a changed man. He becomes, in Sikh terminology, a 'Gurmukh', from the state of a 'Manmukh'. Gurū Nānak has made this clear in the 5th and 6th Stanzas of Japjī‡. The difference in these two states is a vital difference. The one is Gurū-faced, the other self-faced.

*The last line of Stanza 27 has it :

That Lord of the Lords is the Master.
Nānak, let us obey His Hukam.

**If one realises (the greatness of God), he becomes truthful. (Japjī, 16.)

†In Japjī, Stanza 3 :

The Lord of the Law (Hukam) directs the whole Path
with the help of His Hukam.
Nānak says, He the Disdainful one is ever
in the state of bliss.

‡The Gurū says :

If one listens to the instruction of the Guru, the reason
becomes adorned with gems and rubies and diamonds.

(Japjī, 6)

God-men

God-men are the Perfect Ones, hailed in Japī by the epithet Bhagats. In ordinary language, we may call them man of God*—those who are one with God or those who are perfectly in tune with God.

The idea of 'perfection' has a great spiritual significance in Sikhism. It is commonly believed that there are only two (in fact, they are one, being always united on the transcendental plane) Perfect Beings in the area of human cognition. They are God and the Gurū. Since they are, mystically speaking, one, not two, hence the term coined to express or denote this unity, is God-man. Spiritual perfection or, what we may call, supreme consummation of the human ideal, is the real goal before all men born on this earth. This is what Sikhism teaches as one of its foremost tenets or principles. The Gurū, the great human saviour, the supremely benign and generous

*In *Gurū Granth Sāhib* exact words used to express the idea of a Perfect Man, are 'khudai bandā' (p. 1204) which means Man of God. This lingual construction has a Sūfī connotation, when we recall the term used by Ibnul Arabi as *Mard-i-Kāmil*. The poet Iqbal also used the same words while assessing the greatness of Guru Nanak in his famous verse :

Phir utī ākhir Sadā tauhīd kī Panjāb se.
Hind ko ik Mard-i-Kāmil ne jagāyā khāb se.

Which means :

At last the voice of Oneness of God
arose from the Panjāb.
A perfect man awoke India.
from the slumbers of degradation.

preceptor and guide, truly represents, in his effulgent spiritual majesty, the spiritual perfection mentioned above. Without his help and graceful intercession, no spiritual progress can be made. All votaries have to pass through the door or portal of the spiritual sanctuary* called the Gurū.

The last word in the *Mool Mantra* or prologue, in the beginning of Japī, is 'Gur-Prasād' which means 'with the grace of the Gurū'. The implied meaning in the context in which this word occurs, is that the Supreme Being whose nature and reality has been stated earlier, can only be attained 'with the grace of the Gurū'. There is no other way possible for this.

To follow the Gurū on the lines of his experience is what is most imperatively needed. All learning comes by imitation. It is the greatest human principle for success in life. Unless one has a model example before him for whatever aim that is to be achieved, there can be no onward progress. A thousand preachers cannot match the effectiveness of a single exemplary person. Example is better than a precept, has been rightly said.

This is the answer to the question as to why Gurū alone can make it. A lamp alone can light another lamp. So a perfect being alone can make others perfect. Only one who knows the path can lead others on the path. Spiritual enlightenment certainly involves a personal contact at the closest and the highest level. This fact is at the root of the paramount concept of 'Sangat' or 'holy company' in Sikhism.

After this initial reference to the Gurū or the God-man in the *Mool Mantra*, we pass on to the 5th and 6th Stanzas of Japī to discover the statement, in the clearest terms, of the

*The word 'Gurdwārā' used for a Sikh temple is a clear indication of this unavoidable dependence of a Sikh on the beneficial guidance of the Gurū. 'Gurdwārā' is a heaven or a shelter for the distracted souls, who come to seek enlightenment from the Gurū.

fact of total dependence on the Gurū, expressed in the form of a prayer or invocation. The Gurū has reiterated this invaluable invocation in the end of both the Stanzas, in the following words :

O Gurū ! give me one understanding :
There is but one giver of all beings,
whom I should never forget.

Goethe says : "All knowledge is recollection." Because it comes from inside. It is already in the memory, in the sub-conscious. Similarly all understanding comes from the Gurū who is the compendium of all true understanding. What people know and understand in the objective sense is just ignorance compared to what the Gurū gives us to understand. Therefore, it behoves us to seek insight from the Gurū.

The second point emphasised in the aforesaid prayer is the subject of understanding. It is to firmly grasp the fact that there is no giver of bounties and charities but one God, who has no second or rival. This fact is all-important in the sense that men are too prone to regard fallaciously and ignorantly wrong persons and sources as the givers and donors who are mere agents in the hands of the Supreme Giver.

The Third point in this evocative prayer is to realise that after knowing the one Lord as the source of all things we get in life, we should hold fast to Him and should never efface Him from our mind.

If we devotedly and repeatedly utter this prayer, keeping our mind fixed on the threefold idea :

- (1) to ask the Gurū to give us insight,
- (2) that there is only *one* giver of all beings, and
- (3) that we should never forget him,

our spiritual enlightenment is sure to take place. All glory and

praise be to the Gurū who can make this possible and feasible for the darkness-ridden humanity.

The Gurū's instruction has a miraculous effect. It reorientates and reshapes the whole mental paraphernalia, of feeling, thinking, willing, etc. The mind is, so to say, regearred, rejuvenated. The dead becomes alive. The rotten and decayed becomes refreshed and renewed. The dry becomes verdant. The drab intellect gets enriched and adorned by the precious gems of divine thought and wisdom. So says the great Gurū in Stanza 6 of Japji :

If one listens to the instruction of the Gurū, the reason becomes adorned with gems and rubies and diamonds.

When the shackles and bonds of the lower, carnal self are removed with the help of Gurū's instruction, the soul thus released from misery and distraction, at once shines forth in the eternal bliss of freedom and peace. This is the true spiritual state of the Gurū or the Bhagat i.e. the God-man. In Japji, this epithet (Bhagat) has been used in the plural, denoting the many God-men, accepted and ordained by the Deity. Who will say there is only one prophet or Gurū or Bhagat ? In God's boundless abundance and plenty, many are his 'chosen-ones'. The plural use of such perfect beings in Japji is very significant and revealing. The four serialised Stanzas beginning with the words, "By hearing" (Nos. 8—11) are, in fact, a rhapsody of the Bhagats, the God-men. The two ending lines in these Stanzas which come as a refrain or burden, have the following meaning :

Nānak, the Bhagats are ever in bliss.
By hearing (the name of God)
sorrow and sin are banished.

Gurū Nānak has exalted such perfect or chosen ones above all categories of men, because they are, in the first

place, accepted by the grace of the Supreme Lord (called in Japī 'Parvān') and secondly, they are, in the capacity of having conquered their selves and everything around them, the leaders of men ('Pardhān') * They are not only exalted and esteemed in this material world but also get rich ovation in the next world.

The Gurū has coined and used a very original name for such chosen ones, i.e. the 'Panch' (in plural) which means those who have conquered the five senses of the mind. They are the ones who listened to the word of the Gurū and then acted upon the advice contained therein. They have been praised in Stanza 16, in the following words :

The Panchas (i.e. Bhagtas) are the accepted ones and they are the leaders of men.

The Panchas receive honour in the court (of the Supreme Being).

The Panchas are ones who adore the portals of the kings.

The Panchas are ones who keep their minds fixed only on the Gurū.

These four lines clearly emphasise the moral and social purpose that underlies all real spiritual progress. Those who are spiritually advanced, are also morally high and socially acceptable and exemplary. The Gurū wants men to rise high not only in the eyes of their Creator but also in the eyes of their fellow beings. For this a great practical effort, right in this work-a-day world, is needed, of course with the help and grace of the Gurū. Those who, in their fallacious thinking, regard this life as a pawn to the life after death, are, according to Sikhism, deceived ones and stand to lose this world as well as the next. The Gurū totally rejects such a one-sided human development. Such people, as opposed to the 'Panchas', are the self-faced ones (Manmukh).

*These two words have been used by the Gurū in Stanza 16.

In Stanza 27, the Gurū again refers to the Bhagats after enumerating many great creations and manifestations of God, which do nothing except praising their Creator. The Gurū sums up his thought by saying that only those really sing Him who are liked by Him. And such a category belongs only to the chosen Bhagats.* In his own revealing words :

Only those (can) sing your praises, who stand accepted in
Thine favour and such ones are Thine love-intoxicated
Bhagats who are ever absorbed in Thee.

The five mystical Regions, coming in the end of Japjī, also contain three references to the Panchas or the Bhagats. The divine aura surrounding these 'chosen ones' is probably the truest image that could be devised for them. They are ever exalted, ever accepted, ever praised in the subtle nearness and presence of the Divine Being.

The first reference occurs in Stanza 34 where the Gurū has drawn a mystical picture of the first Region, called 'Dharam Khand' (the Region of the Law). While fixing the ethical basis and the ultimate judgement of human deeds, the Gurū praises the 'chosen ones' who are above all assessment in the Divine Court. He says :

The various actions (of men) will be considered, in the end.
The True Lord holds His court.
There the accepted Panchas will have places of honour.
By the grace (of the Lord) and His favour, the sign (of honour) is
branded (on the forehead).†

*It is indeed, very difficult to explain at length the reason why Bhagats have been placed on the highest spiritual plane—in fact, nearest to the Divine Being. Suffice it here to say that they have done the greatest service to God by sacrificing their selves to the will of the Lord and have thus won His favour and grace.

†In this particular meaning of the text, I have followed the commentary given by S. Sāhib Singh in his *Japjī Saffk Panjābī*.

The second mention denotes the unique spiritual honour vouchsafed to the holy Bhagats. In the 37th Stanza, which deals with the fourth Region (called 'Karam Khand'), the Gurū excludes everyone and everything from the Divine sanctuary except those who praise Him, with heart and soul (i. e. the Bhagats) and those who die for Him (the martyrs). The Gurū speaks of the ever-praising Bhagats as under :

These (the Bhagats) remain ever absorbed in the praise (of the Lord).
Their (sublime) beauty cannot be described.

The same Stanza (i. e. 37) also contains in the last two lines, dealing with the fourth Region and which comes so close to the fifth Region (where God ALONE IS), the clear-cut mention of the various categories of Bhagats who are ever in Praise and ever in bliss ;

There the Bhagats from various worlds have their abode.
The True Lord ever-ingrained in their minds, they are ever in bliss.

The last two lines of Japjī, which are in the nature of a summing-up, coming in the end of the Epilogue*, also eulogize the Bhagats or the God-men, who lend their spiritual blessing to millions of distracted souls. So says the Gurū :

Those who (always) remembered the Name
went (to the Spiritual World)
with their labours fructified.
Nānak, their faces are hallowed
and myriads will be freed
by their intercession.

*This Shalok in the end of Japjī, coming after the 38th Stanza, is said to have been composed by the second Gurū and added to Japjī as an Epilogue. But this view has not been generally accepted. Hence it may be taken as original in Japjī.

The Five Regions

Japī tends to become predominantly mystical as its religious argument, posed in the beginning, moves on to its logical conclusion.

The five Regions† depicted towards the end of this holy text (in the Stanzas 34 to 37) are not only unique in the field of mystical experience and revelation but also represent in the sublimest terms, the spiritual knowledge and contemplation of a Master spirit.

The knowledge born out of a direct experience of union with the Divine Being, is a recondite knowledge, profound and ineffable, while the common human knowledge, based on physical perception and objective experience, fades into nothingness when compared to the higher mystical gnosis.

One cannot know these Regions or say anything about them in tangible human language, unless one gets actual mystical experience of these spiritual domains or regions. Such cognition can only be acquired by a requisite experience of the same nature and quality. In Persian they say, 'only a mystic can recognize a mystic' (*walī ra walī mī shariasad*)*

It is, therefore, meet and correct to paraphrase in the simple, lucid language what the great Gurū has poetically and

†Dr. Mcleod has used the word Realm to denote the idea of the word 'Khand'. op.cit. pp. 221-24.

*Gurū Nānek has himself inadvertently expressed this idea, though in a slightly different context. He says that one can know God if one gets so high as that. (Japī, 24).

metaphorically expressed on the subject of the five Regions. The Gurū himself is so cryptic in the use of language that one may easily go astray while conveying his meaning or thought by way of exposition. The best course, therefore, is to keep close to the meaning and the language as found in the text itself.

At the outset, it should be made clear that the idea advanced by some scholars* that the mystic Regions in Japī can be compared to the Sufi states or stages, is a far-fetched one. Dr. McLeod also doubts the veracity of this view when he says : "There is, however, no evidence to establish this conjecture, and the parallel is not really a close one."†

Similarly, the description of these Regions, however connected and coherent their order and sequence may be (which Dr. McLeod calls spiritual 'ascent')**, cannot be likened to the purely imaginative and fanciful delineation of similar transcendental spheres (such as Heaven, Hell, Aden, Purgatory etc.) that are found in the poetic compositions of some great epic poets, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Goethe's *Faust*, Iqbāl's‡ *Javāidnāmā* and Bhāi Vīr Singh's†† *Rānā Sūrat Singh*.

Whereas the poets mentioned above had free recourse to their rich imaginative flights in order to fill up the gaps created by lack of actual mystical experience of the unknown spiritual regions, Gurū Nānak, in the fullness of his esoteric knowledge, described (rather signified and suggested) in brief language, what he actually saw and realized in his God-saturated soul.

*e.g. Dr. Tāran Singh : *Gurū Nānak Chintan ate Kalā*. (Panjābī)

†op.cit. p.221.

**Ibid.

‡The famed poet of the East, who wrote in Persian and Urdū.

††The well-known Panjābī poet.

Before a discussion of the five Regions is attempted, it seems proper to establish a sequential order underlying these inter-linked and kindred mystical 'states'. It is certain that though they have been separately mentioned and dealt with, they are not independent of each other. Their conception or existence does not seem to be horizontal or parallel to each other, but a vertical one. There is evidently an ascending order in which these Regions have been placed. The evolutionary aspect of the fivefold mystical cosmos cannot be ignored. The human soul in its upward flight has to pass through one state after another as it becomes more and more subtle and astral.

The mystical theory of 'Emanation' associated with Plotinus* may offer an indication of how these spheres assume instantaneous shapes and hues or emerge from one another without any extraneous cause or agent and then remerge into one another, as if the making or unmaking of any of the existences there is a matter of no sequence or source. There are probably some unknown supramundane elements and factors that control the celestial atmosphere. Hence the Regions depicted in Japji are not only mystically related to each other but also have at their basis some spiritual evolution which determines their order and sequence.

It may also be pointed out that the first three Regions out of five are predominantly within the human purview, though their spiritual colouring and motif cannot be ignored. In the spiritual development, it is true, the most potent factor is the 'grace' that comes from beyond but at the same time the human effort, in the form of urgent desire and sincere

*Reference here is to the neo-Platonian philosophy which deals with the nature of the celestial cosmos.

execution of what one professes and aims at, also counts a lot.

The first three Regions, therefore, represent to the human beings the truth of the human destiny which they can build or ensure under the guidance of the Gurū. The last two Regions, being purely of spiritual character, are beyond human knowledge and understanding. They are known only to those who have passed through the earlier stages and have thus attained complete union with the Deity. It is, therefore, hard as iron (as the Gurū says*) to say anything about them.

After this preliminary discussion, we may now deal with the Regions in their respective order.

The first is the Region of Law (*Dharam Khand*). The word 'Dharam' implies human duty. What is expected of a man born on this earth ? Should he waste his life in evil and futile actions or should he realise his basic spiritual nature and thus act fruitfully ? This is the real point at stake.

The life on the physical plane has its own conditions. The earth, made up of physical elements (water, fire, air etc.) and conditioned by solar and lunar effects (nights, days, seasons etc.) and the lower regions, is the hard arena for human actions (good or bad, useful or futile) and it is also a temple in the sense that it is created by the Divine Master to provide a place where men by dedicated actions can seek and find Him on the spiritual level. The earth is thus

*In the last lines of Stanza 37, coming after the depiction of the last Region, we find this idea :

He the Supreme Lord sees and pleases Himself
by contemplation.
Nanak, to say anything is like (swallowing) hard iron.

composed of physical elements as well as ethical and spiritual principles. The former is the immediate and the latter ultimate, the one realistic and the other prospective, aim of human life. The earth is also peopled with many creations and there are many ways of life. This implies human freedom of choice.

This Region is indicative of the Hindu concept of action (*Karma*) and Retribution.* Every action has a reaction, every cause, an effect. Nothing goes unrewarded or unpunished. But the inexorable Law (*Dharam*) works slowly and surely. One has to wait for the proper time when the actions will be weighed and valued, in the court of the True Lord. Then the judgement will come and also retribution. The Gurū says that the goodness or badness, the rawness or maturity* will be determined after men cease their life on earth. They can know of this judgement only after death.

Men can, of course, choose their course of action while they are bound up in the physical limits. But they must choose the right course—they must keep in mind the effect of their actions. They must know and shun actions leading to bad consequences. But it does not totally lie with them to choose correctly. They are by nature and by the effect of previous births bound to act fallaciously. Hence it is that the idea of the divine grace comes in.

*i.e. the theory of Transmigration of Souls, the cycle of birth and death caused by actions in life on this earth.

*The lines in Stanza 34, on this subject, are as under :

The rawness and maturity will be determined
in the next world.

Nānak, men will know of it,
when they go beyond human existence.

The Gurū says that the sign of perfection or rightness comes by the grace of the Lord.* No one can win it by himself. In the Court of the Divine Dispenser of Justice (or Law) the Perfect Beings (the Panchas) will be honoured and praised. They serve as an example of the right actions performed on earth, with the grace of the Guru.

So it is obvious that the first Region represents the need for right actions in the human life—actions performed with selfless aim and with spiritual direction.

The second Region is the Region of Knowledge (*Gyān Khand*). There is infinite bliss and the celestial music to please the soul, in this spiritual state. But it is not knowledge in the ordinary sense. It is knowledge at the highest, cosmic level.†

It is very befitting that the sphere of knowledge follows the sphere of action, because all knowledge comes from doing, from action, from actual experience. Knowledge also comes from the reaction, the effect and the retribution caused by human action, in the form of re-thinking and contemplation.

Knowledge means the widening of the mental horizon and the sharpening of the intellect. By experience one learns wisdom and understands the true nature of things. When a

*The following lines in Stanza 34 :

The accepted Panchas adore
the Court of the True Lord.
The sign (of acceptance and honour) comes
by His grace and favour.

†In Stanza 35 we find the lines :

In the Region of knowledge the knowledge is acute.
There is eternal bliss and myriad pleasures
coupled with the celestial music.

man becomes aware and conscious of his surroundings, far and near, his action, by and by, recedes into the background. The reason for this paradoxical truth is that men act because they want to know and when they come to know, they need not act.

By performing right type of actions (which means, in the true direction of the cognitive faculties), the vast cosmic knowledge comes with leaps and bounds. The whole stanza (No.35) dealing with the Region of Knowledge is replete with this vast, unfathomable, uncontained knowledge. It is boundless, limitless, infinite.

The infiniteness of knowledge in this Region is so colossal and baffling that after enumerating the abundant and unbounded varieties of creations (such as many suns, many moons, many spheres, many spiritual beings, many waters, many airs, many fires etc.), the Gurū in the end says* that there is no end to this recounting and narration.

The third Region is that of Honour (*Saram Khand*). Some scholars have translated the word 'Saram' as labour or effort, which is not correct. The effort was left behind in the first Region, before knowledge came. Now what is needed is moral character, at the spiritual level. There is no doubt about it that high ethics has at its root a rich sense of honour (the literal meaning of the word 'Saram' given by Dr. McLeod is 'shame'† which is not appropriate in the present context). Men always act morally when they want to win honour in the eyes of their family, their society, their beloved ones, their revered ones, their friends etc.

*The line in Stanza 35 :

Many are the cognitions and many cognizants :
Nānak, there is absolutely no end to it.

†op.cit, p.222.

Goldsmith has beautifully said that all beauty lies in morality.†† The good action makes the doer attractive. On the reverse the evil action makes one ugly or hideous.

The Gurū has emphasised this fact in the beginning of Stanza 36 dealing with the Region of Honour. He goes still further to affirm that the beauty of a morally-sound man cannot be described. If one attempts to do so, he ultimately repents having failed in his vain effort.

This moral excellence results in chastening and reconstructing the mental faculties of human being. The pure-hearted man, with the perfect moral action, becomes perfect and harmonious, as a whole. He becomes a man of God, a Perfect Being, a Bhagat. He acquires, in the words of the Gurū, the wisdom of the celestial beings (Devas) or the siddhas (Perfect-men).

The fourth Region is that of Divine Grace (*Karam Khand*). The meaning of the word 'Karam'* suggested by some commentators as 'action' is totally off the point. At this advanced mystical stage, the question of action or effort does not arise. To talk of action after the attainment of knowledge and moral character is simply meaningless. This Region is definitely indicative of the infinite power of the Divine Lord whose presence pervades this Region exclusively.

This is the Region where God alone in His pristine and refulgent majesty dwells. Who else can be there, in this

††His exact words :

Handsome is that handsome does.

*For detailed discussion of the controversial meaning of this word, as that of 'Saram', please refer to Dr. McLeod's *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion* pp 222-23. He has translated the word 'Karam' as 'fulfilment'.

domain of His boundless grace and bounty, except His 'chosen ones' whom He has accepted in His favour ? The 'chosen ones' are the Bhagats, the martyrs, the devoted ones, who always keep Him in their minds. They have an everlasting existence in this blissful spiritual state which is given to very few mortals. They always keep themselves busy and absorbed in the praise of Lord. Joined with the Eternal One, they also become eternal and immortal. Their beauty and grandeur, the Gurū says, cannot be described. There the Bhagats from various spheres find sanctuary and reward of their supreme dedication to the Will of God.

The fifth and the last is the Region of Truth (*Sach Khand*). This is, in common religious language, the highest heaven, where the Formless One (*Nirankār*) dwells. Though no place, anywhere in the Universe, is without Him, yet this is the place about which no being ever knows anything.* It is beyond of the beyond. The human beings, however exalted and perfect they may become in the eyes of the graceful Lord, cannot go beyond the fourth Region.

The imaginative stories in many religions and even in Sikhism the prevalent account, in the *Janam-Sākhīs*, of Gurū Nānak's having been called to the presence of the Deity and his drinking a cup of divine milk† from the hand of God (called *Brahm*), are just symbolic representations of truth.

Gurū Nānak himself says in Japī (Stanza 37) that in the Region of Truth, there is none but the Formless and the

*Gurū Nānak in Japī (Stanza 27) fondly and curiously asks :

Where is the door and where is the house in which, O Lord,
thou dwellest and taketh care of all the creation ?

†cf. the interesting account found in *Janam Sākhī Meharbān*, Published by Sikh History Research Deptt., Khālsā College, Amritsar in two volumes (Vol. 1, p. 88).

Absolute One who bestows His bounties and grace after creating various categories of beings and species of objects. There are myriads of regions and spheres and universes, which, the Gurū says, cannot be described or stated. There His Will reigns supreme and none exists beside Him. There are countless forms and divine habitations that exist in His Region of Truth. Infinitude is the key-note of his most ineffable Region.

In the end, the Gurū says :

He the Supreme Lord sees and pleases
Himself by contemplation.
Nānak, to say anything is like (swallowing)
hard iron.

(Japjī 37, last two lines)

Translation of Japji



This rendering in English is by the author himself, as an effort on his part to make the sacred text of Japji available to the English-knowing world. The original text has also been provided in Roman character.

Japji

Ik-Onkār Sat(i)nām(u) Kartā-Purukh(u) Nirbhau
Nirvair(u) Akāl Mūrat(i) Ajūnī Saibhang Gurprasād(i).*

God is One and All-pervading.
His Name is True.
He is the Creator and Immanent Being.
He is Fearless.
He is Without Enmity.
He is the Deathless Being.
He is Not Physically Born.
He is Self-created.
He is known and realised by the Grace of the Guru.

JAP (U)

*Ād(i) Sach(u). Jugād(i) sach(u).
Hai bhī sach(u). Nānak hosī bhī sach(u).*

God was True in the beginning, True in the various
Ages.
True He is, says Nānak, and True He will ever be.

*Diacritical mark (-) has been used to denote double or accentuated sound e.g., Onkār (*onkaar*). Ajūnī (*Ajunii*), Mūrat (*Muurat*). In Panjābī they are equivalent to ਠ, ਠ and ੰ respectively.

ONE

*Sochai soch (i) na hovaī je sochī lakh vār.
Chupai chup na hovaī je jāe rahā liv-tār.
Bhukhiā bhukh na utarī je ānnā puriā bhār.
Sahas siānpā lakh hohe ta ik na chalai nāl(i).
Kiv sachiārā hoīai kiv kūrāi tutai pāk(i).
Hukam(i) rajī chalanā Nānak likhiā nāk(i).*

If I clean myself a hundred thousand times (by bathing etc.), I cannot clean myself by such cleanliness.

If I constantly keep absorbed in silent meditation, I cannot still my mind with the help of mere silence.

If I gather together the provisions of many worlds, the inner hunger (i.e. human desire) cannot be appeased.

If I acquire a thousand or a hundred thousand wisdoms, not one will avail in the life after death.

How to be truthful and how to break the wall of falsehood ?

Nānak says : By following the path of obedience and resignation (to the Will of the Supreme Being) as ordained and determined (in the very fact of our beings).

TWO

*Hukamī hovan(i) ākār hukam(u) na kahiā jāī.
Hukamī hovan(i) jā hukam(i) milai vadiāī.
Hukamī uttam(u) nīch(u) hukam(i) likh(i) dukh sukh
pāiah (i).
Ikñā hukamī bekhsīs ik(i) hukamī sadā bhavāīah(i).
Hukamai andar sabh(u) ko bāhar(i) hukam na koe.
Nānak hukmai je bujhai ta haumai kahai na koe.*

By Divine Law, all bodies are formed, (but) His Law cannot be said.

By Divine Law, all beings are created and by Divine Law they are honoured.

By Divine Law, one is high or low; by Divine Law, beings are destined to get sorrow or happiness.

By Divine Law, some are blessed and favoured, while others are eternally discarded.

Every-body is under the sway of Divine Law; no one is out of its domain.

Nānak, if one understands this Divine Law, then he will not utter (the words of) vanity or selfhood.

THREE

Gāvai ko tān(u) hovai kisai tān(u).

Gāvai ko dāt(i) jānai nīsān(u).

Gāvai ko gun vadiāiā chār.

Gāvai ko vidiā vikham(u) vichār(u).

Gāvai ko sāj(i) kare tan(u) kheh.

Gāvai ko jā lai phir(i) deh.

Gāvai ko jāpai disai dūr(i).

Gāvai ko vekhai hādarā hadūr(i).

Kathanā kathī na āvai tot(i).

Kath(i) kath(i) kathī kotī kot(i) kot(i).

Dedā de laide thak(i) pāhe.

Jugā jugantar(i) khāhī khāhe.

Hukamī hukam(u) chaīāe rāh(u).

Nānak vigsai veparvāh(u).

Let somebody have the power to sing His great power.*
Let somebody discover the sign of His bounty and sing
its praises.

Let somebody sing His virtues and wonderful acts of
greatness.

Let somebody sing His knowledge which is hard to
conceive.

Let somebody sing His power to create and destroy the
bodies.

Let somebody sing His taking life and then recreating it.

Let somebody sing His appearing beyond human
reach.

Let somebody sing His being utmost near and a seeing
presence.

There is no end to his description and His praise.

Myriads of beings have made countless efforts to
describe Him.

Lord, the Giver, continues giving but the takers get tired.

For ages and ages they go on using and eating His
bounties.

The Lord of the Law (*Hukam*) directs the whole Path with
the help of His *Hukam*.

Nānak says, He, the Disdainful One, is ever in the state
of bliss.

FOUR

Sāchā sāhib(u) sāch(u) nāē bhākhīā bhāō apār(u).

Ākhah(i) mangah(i) deh(i) deh(i) dāt(i) kare dātār(u).

*The implied meaning is that no one possesses the power to sing or express
the infinite power of God Almighty.

*Pher(i) ki agai rakhīai jit(u) disai darbār(u).
Muho ki bolan(u) bolīai jit(u) sun(i) dhare piār(u).
Amrit velā sach(u) nāu vadiāi vichār(u).
Karamī āvai kaparā nadarī mokh(u) duār(u).
Nānak evai jānīai sabh(u) āpe sachiār(u).*

The true Lord, having true Justice, has a language made of measureless love.

We seek and ask for His bounties which the Giver pleases to bestow.

What should we give in return in order to see His presence ?

What words should we utter by hearing which He may show His love ?

In the ambrosial early morning hours (we should) concentrate or ponder on the true Name and the greatness (of the Lord).

By His grace one gets the robe of honour (of the divine praise) and by His favour, the door of salvation is attained.

Nanak says, we know this much that He the Truthful is all by Himself.

FIVE

*Thāpiā na jāe kītā na hoe.
Āpe āp(i) niranjan(u) soe.
Jin(i) seviā tin(i) pāiā mān(u).
Nānak gāvīai gunī nidhān(u).
Gāvīai sunīai man(i) rakhīai bhāo.
Dukh(u) Parhar(i) sukh(u) ghar(i) lai jāe.
Gurmukh(i) nadang gurmukh(i) vedang gurmukh(i)
rahiā samāi.*

*Gur(u) isar(u) gur(u) gorakh(u) baramā gur(u) parabatī
māī.*

Je hau jānā ākhā nāhī kahnā kathan(u) na jāī.

Gurā ik deh(i) bujhāī.

Sabhanā jāā kā ik(u) dātā so mai visar(i) na jāī.

God can neither be created nor can He be made.

He is all by Himself—the Absolute One.

Those who remembered Him, were honoured.

Nānak says, let us sing the praises of that Treasure of Virtues.

Let us sing His praises and hear them, keeping love in our hearts.

In this way we shall banish all sorrow and acquire all bliss.

By facing (or meeting) the Gurū, we acquire God's Name and His knowledge and also realise that He is all-prevading.

Gurū is 'Shiva', Gurū is 'Gorakh' (i.e. Vishnu) and 'Brahma' and the same Gurū is the Mother Pārbatī.*

Even if I may know, I cannot describe Him, for He is beyond all expression.

O Gurū, give me one understanding :

There is but one Giver of all beings, whom I should never forget.

*For a Sikh, the Gurū is the highest spiritual being, representing all the divine incarnations or deities conceived by the Hindū mystics. He is next only to the One God with whom he is spiritually united. The epithet 'Gurū' has also been used for the Divine Being Himself.

SIX

*Tīrath(i) nāvā je tis(u) bhāvā vin(u) bhāne ki nāe karī.
Jetī sirath(i) upāī vekhā vin(u) karamā ki milai laī.
Mat(i) vich(i) ratan javāhar mānik je ik gur kī sikh sunī.
Gurā ik deh(i) bujhāī.
Sabhanā jāā kā ik(u) dātā so mai visar(i) na jāī.*

I may bathe at a holy place, if it pleases my Lord.
Without pleasing Him, what use is my bathing ?

The whole creation that God has made, let me see if any
of these can meet the Lord without His grace ?

If one listens to the instruction of the Gurū, the reason
becomes adorned with gems and rubies and diamonds.

O Gurū, give me one understanding :

There is but one Giver of all beings, whom I should
never forget.

SEVEN

*Je jug chāre ārajā hor dasūnī hoe.
Navā khandā vich(i) jānīai nā(i) chalai sabh(u) koe.
Changā nāo rakhāe kai jas(u) kīrat(i) jag(i) le-e.
Je tis(u) nadar(i) na āvai ta vāt na pucchai ke.
Kītā andar(i) kīt(u) kar(i) dosī dos(u) dhare.
Nānak nirgun(i) gun(u) kare gunavantiā gun(u) de.
Tehā koe na sujhai ji tis gun(u) koe kare.*

If a man's age is equal to the span of the four Yugas;
nay, it may be multiplied tenfold ;

And if he is known in all the nine regions of the world
and all men take pride in attending upon him ;

Further, if he wins good name and fame and the whole world is full of praise for him ;

Yet, no one will care a fig for him, if he is not liked by his Creator.

The Lord will regard him as a worm among worms and will dub him as an impostor and a stigmatic person.

Nānak says, the Lord gives virtues to the virtueless and also to those who possess virtues.

There is no man conceivable, who can lend or add any virtue to the Lord Himself.

EIGHT

Suniai sidh pīr sur(i) nāth.

Suniai dharat(i) dhaval ākās.

Suniai dīp loa pātāl.

Suniai poh(i) na sakai kāl(u).

Nānak bhagtā sadā vigās(u).

Suniai dūkh pāp kā nās(u).

By hearing (the Name of God and His praise), one becomes a Sidh, a Pīr, a Celestial being and a Nāth.*

By hearing, one knows (the essence) of the earth, the mythical ox holding the earth on its horns and the heavenly spheres.

By hearing, one knows (the essence) of the regions of the earth, the various heavenly bodies and the lower regions.

By hearing, one is saved from the clutches of death.

Nanak, the Bhagats are ever in bliss.

By hearing the Name of God, sorrow and sin are banished.

* Sidh, Pīr and Nāth denote persons having spiritual attainments from among the Yogis and Suffis.

NINE

Suniai īsar(u) baramā ind(u).
Suniai mukh(i) sālāhan mand(u).
Suniai jog jugat(i) tan(i) bhed.
Suniai sāsāt simrit(i) ved.
Nānak bhagatā sadā vigās(u).
Suniai dūkh pāp kā nās(u).

By hearing (His name) one attains the (spiritual) heights of Shiva, Brahma and Indra.*

By hearing, even evil persons praise (the Lord) by word of mouth.

By hearing, one knows the secrets of the human body and the (spiritual) methods of attaining union with God (i.e. Yoga).

By hearing, one knows (the essence) of Shastras, Simrities and the Vedas.†

Nānak, the Bhagats are ever in bliss.

By hearing the Name of God, sorrow and sin are banished.

TEN

Suniai sat(u) santokh giān(u).
Suniai athasath(i) kā isanān(u).
Suniai parh(i) parh(i) pāvah(i) mān(u).
Suniai lāgai sahaj(i) dhiān(u).
Nānak bhagatā sadā vigās(u).
Suniai dūkh pāp kā nās(u).

*These are names of the famous Hindū deities.

† Names of ancient Hindū scriptures.

By hearing (His Name) one acquires charity, forbearance and insight.

By hearing, one acquires the purity which comes by bathing at all the sixty-eight holy places.

By hearing, one acquires the honour which comes by constant pursuit of knowledge.

By hearing, one becomes inadvertently absorbed in the Divine element.

Nānak, the Bhagats are ever in bliss.

By hearing the Name of God, sorrow and sin are banished.

ELEVEN

Suniaī sarā gunā ke gāh.

Suniaī sekh pīr pāt(i) sāh.

Suniaī andhe pāvah(i) rāh(u).

Suniaī hāth hovai asgāh(u).

Nānak bhagtā sadā vigās(u).

Suniaī dūkh pāp kā nās(u).

By hearing (His name) one acquires the depths of countless virtues.

By hearing, one attains the (exalted) position of a Shaikh, Pīr, or a monarch.

By hearing, the ignorant ones find the true path (of life).

By hearing, one gets to know the Unknowable (Lord).

Nānak, the Bhagats are ever in bliss.

By hearing the Name of God, sorrow and sin are banished.

TWELVE

Manne kī gat(i) kahī na jāe.

Je ko kahai pichhai pachh(u) tāe.

Kāgad(i) kalam na likhanhār(u).
Manne kā bah(i) karan(i) vichār(u).
Aisā nām(u) niranjan(u) hoe.
Je ko mann(i) jānai man(i) koe.

The state of one who submits (to the Lord) cannot be described.

If someone attempts to describe it, he will repent of it later (having failed to do so).

The paper and the pen suffice not if one attempts at writing out (the state of a resigned person).

Men (therefore) can only sit and ponder over the state of such a man.

Such is the (power of the) immaculate Name.

If only one knows it in his heart of heart.

THIRTEEN

Mannai surat(i) hovai man(i) buddh(i).
Mannai sagal bhavan kī suddh(i).
Mannai muh(i) chotā na khāe.
Mannai jam kai sāth(i) na jāe.
Aisā nām(u) niranjan(u) hoe.
Je ko mann(i) jānai man(i) koe.

By submitting, one possesses (true) intelligence and (acute) reason,

By submitting, one becomes conscious of the whole cosmos.

By submitting, one overcomes the temptations of the lower self.

By submitting, one is saved from the clutches of the minions of death.

Such is the (power of the) immaculate Name.

If only one knows it in his heart of heart.

FOURTEEN

Mannai mārag(i) thāk na pāe.
Mannai pat(i) sio pargat(i) jāe.
Mannai mag(u) na chalai panth(u).
Mannai dharam setī sanbandh(u).
Aisā nām(u) niranjan(u) hoe.
Je ko mann(i) jānai man(i) koe.

By submitting, one strays not from the (true) path (of life).

By submitting, one goes out of life with honour and eminence.

By submitting, one is not lost in the many paths and ways (of worshipping God).

By submitting, one conjoins with the (true) Law.

Such is the (power of the) immaculate Name.

If only one knows it in his heart of heart.

FIFTEEN

Mannai pāvah(i) mokh duār(u).
Mannai paravārai sādḥār(u).
Mannai tarai tāre gur(u) sikh.
Mannai Nānak bhavah(i) na bhikh.
Aisā nām niranjan(u) hoe.
Je ko mann(i) jānai man(i) koe.

By submitting, one finds the door of freedom (from the lower self) or salvation.

By submitting, one brings his kith and kin into the holy shelter of the all-saving God.

By submitting, the Gurū is saved himself and also saves his disciples.

By submitting, says Nānak, one does not wander in darkness and hunger.

Such is the (power of the) immaculate Name.
If only one knows it in heart of heart.

SIXTEEN

Panch parvān panch pardhān(u).
Panche pāvah(i) daragah(i) mān(u).
Panche sohah(i) dar(i) rājān(u).
Panchā kā gur(u) ek(u) dhiān(u).
Je ko kahai karai vīchār(u).
Karate kai karanai nāhī sumār(u).
Dhaul(u) dharam(u) dayā kā pūt(u).
Santokh(u) thāp(i) rakhiā jin(i) sūt(i).
Je ko bujhai hovai sachiār(u).
Dhavalai upar(i) ketā bhār(u).
Dharatī hor(u) parai hor(u) hor(u).
Tis te bhār(u) talai kavan(u) jor(u).
Jia jāt(i) rangā ke nāv.
Sabhanā likhiā vurī kalām.
Eh(u) lekhā likh(i) jānai koe.
Lekhā likhiā ketā hoe.
Ketā tān(u) suālih(u) rūp(u).
Ketī dāt(i) jānai kaun(u) kūt(u).
Kītā pasāo eko kavāo.
Tis te hoe lakh darīāo.
Kudarat (i) kavan kahā vīchār(u).
Vāriā na jāvā ek vār.
Jo tudh(u) bhāvai sāī bhālī kār.
Tū sadā salāmat(i) nirankār.

The Panchas (i.e. Bhagats) are the accepted ones and they are leaders of men.

The Panchas receive honour in the Court (of the Supreme Being).

The Panchas are ones who adore the portals of the kings.

The Panchas are ones who keep their minds fixed only on the Gurū.

However one may try to describe it or consider it in his mind, the doings of the Creator are beyond our reckoning.

The (mythical) Ox denoting the Law (*Dharma*) is the son of Charity ; it has been made steadfast by having been tied down with the rope of patience.

If one understands this, he will be truthful.

How much weight the (poor) Ox can bear ?

There are many earths, beyond this earth.

What force or stake there is underneath the (so called) Ox ?

There are beings of many species, colours and names.

All of them tried to describe (His creations) with their constantly-flowing pens.

If (suppose) one learns how to describe (His creations).

How much will be the whole description or reckoning ?

How much (His) power, how many (His) beautiful forms ?

Who can know the extent of (His) charity and (His) storage of food ?

(God) created all the worlds by uttering one Word.

From this Word flowed out millions of rivers (of life).

How can I say how great His power is ?

I cannot even once sacrifice myself to Him.

Whatever pleases thou, O Lord, is best for me.

Thou art the eternally-abiding Formless one.

SEVENTEEN

Asankh jap asankh bhāo.

Asankh pūjā asankh tap tāo.

Asankh granth mukh(i) ved pāth.
Asankh jog man(i) rahah(i) udās.
Asankh bhagat gun giān vichār.
Asankh safī asankh dātār.
Asankh sūr muh bhakh sār.
Asankh mon(i) liv lāe tār.
Kudarat(i) kavan kahā vīchār(u).
Vāriā na jāvā ek vār.
Jo tudh(u) bhāvai sāi bhālī kār.
Tū sadā salāmat(i) nirankār.

Countless are the recitations and countless lovings.
Countless are the prayers and countless penances.
Countless are the oral readings of Vedas and other
religious books.

Countless are the Yogic practices and countless those
who are melancholy-hearted.

Countless are Bhagats who meditate on virtues and
knowledge.

Countless are givers and countless generous ones.

Countless are the warriors who bear the wounds of war
on their faces.

Countless are the silent ones who keep constantly
absorbed (in thought).

How can I say how great His power is ?

I cannot even once sacrifice myself to Him.

Whatever pleases thou, O Lord, is best for me.

Thou art the eternally-abiding Formless one.

EIGHTEEN

Asankh mūrakh andh ghor.

Asankh chor harām khor.

Asankh amar kar(i) jāh(i) jor.
 Asankh gal vadh hatiā kamāh(i).
 Asankh pāpī pāp(u) kar(i) jāh(i).
 Asankh kūrīār kūre phirāh(i).
 Asankh malechh mal(u) bhakh(i) khāh(i).
 Asankh nindak sir(i) karah(i) bhār(u).
 Nānak(u) nich(u) kahai vīchār(u).
 Vāriā na jāvā ek vār.
 Jo tudh(u) bhāvai sāl bhālī kār.
 Tū sadā salāmat(i) nirankār.

Countless are the inveterate fools.
 Countless thieves and ungrateful ones.
 Countless are the despots and aggressors.
 Countless sinners who leave behind heinous acts and a record of sins.

Countless liars who move about perpetrating lies.
 Countless are the evil-minded who take evil foods.
 Countless traducers who take upon themselves other's burdens.

The humble Nanak expresses only his (humble) thought.

I cannot even once sacrifice myself to Him.
 Whatever pleases thou, O Lord, is best for me.
 Thou art the eternally-abiding Formless one.

NINETEEN

Asankh nāv asankh thāv.
 Agamm agamm asankh loa.
 Asankh kahah(i) sir(i) bhār(u) hoe.
 Akharī nām(u) akharī sālāh.
 Akharī giān(u) gīt gun gāh.
 Akhari likhan(u) bolan(u) bān(i).

Akharā sir(i) sanjog(u) vakhān(i).
 Jin(i) eh(i) likhe tis(u) sir nāh(i).
 Jiv phurmāe tiv tiv pāh(i).
 Jetā kitā tetā nāo.
 Vin(u) nāvai nāhī ko thāo.
 Kudarat(i) kavan kahā vīchār(u).
 Variā na jāvā ek vār
 Jo tudh(u) bhāvai sāl bhālī kār.
 Tū sadā salāmat(i) nirankār.

Countless are the names and countless places.

Countless are the unknowable regions.

It is folly even to say (the word) countless.

Through letters (i.e. language) is the Name and the praise (of God).

Through letters comes knowledge and the songs in praise of His virtues.

Through letters comes the writing and speaking of language.

Through letters comes the description of the destiny of men.

He who wrote these scripts of destinies is Himself free from this reckoning.

As He ordains, men fulfil their destinies.

Whatever He has created, is (the manifestation of) His Name.

There is no place (or object) where His Name is not.

How can I say how great His power is ?

I cannot even once sacrifice myself to Him .

Whatever pleases thou, O Lord, is best for me.

Thou art the eternally-abiding Formless one.

TWENTY

Bharīai hath(u) pair(u) tan(u) deh.

Pānī dhotai utaras(u) kheh.

Mūt palītī kapar(u) hoe.
 De sābūn(u) laīai oh(u) dhoe.
 Bharīai mat(i) pāpā kai sang(i).
 Oh(u) dhopai nāvai kai rang(i).
 Punnī pāpī ākhan(u) nāh(i).
 Kar(i) kar(i) karanā likh(i) lai jāh(u).
 Āpe bij(i) āpe hī khāh(u).
 Nānak hukamī āvah(u) jāh(u).

If hands and feet and the body get dirty, their impurity can be removed by washing with water.

If clothes become soiled by urine and refuse, they can be washed and cleansed with the help of soap.

If the reason gets polluted by indulging in sins, it can be purified by constant meditation on the (holy) Name.

The pious and the sinner are not only in name.

What you will earn by action, that goes with you.

You will reap what you will sow.

Nānak says, at the Lord's bidding you will come and go.

TWENTY ONE

Tīrath(u) tap(u) dayā dat(u) dān(u).

Je ko pāvai til kā mān(u).

Suniā manniā man(i) kītā bhāo.

Antar gat(i) tīrath(i) mal(i) nāo.

Sabh(i) gun tere mai nāhī koe.

Vin(u) gun kīte bhagat(i) na hoe.

Suast(i) āth(i) bānī baramāo.

Sat(i) suhān(u) sadā man(i) chāo.

Kavan(u) su velā vakhat(u) kavan(u) kavan thit(u)
kavan(u) vār(u).

Kavan si rutī māh(u) kavan(u) jlt(u) hoā ākār(u).

Vel na pāiā pandatī ji hovai lekḥ(u) purān(u).

Vakhat(u) na pāio kādiā ji likhān(i) lekh(u) kurān(u).
Thit(u) vār(u) nā jogī jānai rut(i) māh(u) nā koī.
Jā karatā sirathī kau sāje āpe jānai soī .
Kiv kar(i) ākhā kiv sālāhī-kiu varanī kiv jānā.
Nānak ākhan(i) sabh(u) ko ākhai ik dū ik(u) siānā.
Vadā sāhib(u) vadī nāī kītā jā kā hovai.
Nānak je ko āpau jānai agai gayā na sohai.

Visiting of holy places, penances, charity and donations earn very little merit, if at all they mean anything.

(On the other hand) God's Name heard, accepted and cherished in heart, is (equal to) a spiritual ablution at the holiest level.

All virtues are thine, my Lord, while I have none.

Without acquiring virtues, I cannot serve thee.

All glory and victory to Him, who is matter, language and creativity, all Himself.

He is true, Beautiful and ever Blissful.

What time was it, what lunar condition, what(solar) day was it ?

What season was it, what month—when the world was created ?

The *Pandits* could not know the time (of creation) otherwise it would have been mentioned in the *Purānas*.

The Muslim divines (also) could not know the Time, otherwise they would have apprised of it in the *Quran*.

The *Yogīs* (also) could not know the lunar condition or the season or the month (when the world was created).

Only God Himself knows when He creates the world.

How can I say (anything) about God or praise Him ?

Nānak, everyone has something to say; everyone thinks he is wiser than others (but none can say anything).

Great is the Lord, great His Name, all creation is His.

Nānak, if any man vainly knows (or says) something, he will not be liked (or accepted) in the life after death.

TWENTY TWO

Pātālā pātāl lakh āgāsā āgās.

Orak orak bhā(i) thake ved kahan(i) ik vāt.

Sahas athārah kahan(i) katebā asulū ik(u) dhāt(u).

Lekhā hoe ta likhīai lekhai hoe vinās(u).

Nānak vadā ākhīai āpe jānai āp(u).

Millions are the nether regions, millions are the heavenly spheres.

The *Rishiṣ* tried to find out the farthest limits (of space) but they failed—the Vedas declare this as a final word.

The religious books (of the Semitic religions) say there are eighteen thousand (heavens) whose source is the one Lord.

We can have a counting, if a counting be possible ; but the counting will destroy the counters themselves.*

Nānak, let us praise the Great One who only knows what is, what.

TWENTY THREE

Sālāhī sālāh(i) etī surat(i) na pālā.

Nadiā atai vāh pavah(i) samund(i) na jānīah(i).

Samund sāh sultān girahā setī Māl(u) dhan(u).

Kīrī tul(i) na hovani je tis(u) manah(u) na vīsarah(i).

Those who go on praising the praiseworthy Lord, do not realise the truth that they cannot praise Him ;

Just as streams and rivulets flow into the ocean, but they cannot know the (extent of the) ocean.

*Here I have radically differed with Prof. Sahib Singh's translation.

The ocean-like great kings and monarchs, whose riches and treasures are mountain-like, are not equal to an ant, if it never forgets the Lord*.

TWENTY FOUR

Ant(u) na sifati kahan(i) na ant(u).
Ant(u) na karanai den(i) na ant(u).
Ant(u) na vekhan(i) sunan(i) na ant(u).
Ant(u) na jāpai kiā man(i) mant(u).
Ant(u) na jāpai kītā ākār(u).
Ant(u) na jāpai pārāvār(u).
Ant kāran(i) kete bilalāh(i).
Tā ke ant na pāe(i) jāh (i).
Eh(u) ant(u) na jānai koe.
Bahutā kahīai bahutā hoe.
Vadā sāhib(u) ūchā thāo.
Uche ūpar(i) ūchā nāo.
Evad(u) ūchā hovai koe.
Tis(u) ūche kau jānai soe.
Jevad(u) āp(i) jānai āp(i) āp(i).
Nānak nadarī karamī dāt(i).

Endless His praise, endless what is said about Him.
Endless His doings, endless His givings.
Endless the seeings and endless the hearings.
Endless seems to be His divine will.
Endless seems to be His created world ;
No end, no limit, no bounds, whatsoever.
Many cry and bewail to know His end ;
But they can never find His limits.

*My difference with Prof. Sahib Singh's translation, in these lines, is very substantial. The judgement of correctness is left to the scholars and the spiritually-advanced readers.

No body knows any such limits (of the Infinite Lord) ;
 The greater we say, still greater He is.
 Great is the Lord and lofty His abode ;
 Still more lofty is His Holy Name.
 If one rises so high as that,
 He may (perhaps) know such a Lofty One.
 He alone knows how great He is.
 Nānak, by His grace and favour, comes the bounty.

TWENTY FIVE

Bahutā karam(u) likhiā nā jāe.
Vadā dātā til(u) na tamāe.
Kete mangah(i) jodh apār.
Ketiā ganat nahī vīchār(u)
Kete khap(i) tutah(i) vekār.
Kete lai lai mukar(i) pāh(i).
Kete mūrakh khāhī khāh(i).
Ketiā dūkh bhūkh sad mār.
Eh(i) bhi dāt(i) terī dātār.
Band(i) khalāsī bhānai hoe.
Hor(u) ākh(i) na sakai koe.
Je ko khāik(u) ākhan(i) pāe.
Oh(u) jānai jētā muh(i) khāe.
Āpe jānai āpe de-e.
Ākhan(i) si bhi keī ke-e.
Jis no bakhase sīfat(i) sālāh.
Nānak pāt(i)sāhi pāt(i) sāh(u).

His bounty is so great, it cannot be said.
 Great is the Giver who is above desire.
 Many are the brave warriors, who beg at His door.
 Their number is beyond counting.

Many are the men who exhaust themselves in vicious acts.

Many are the men who take and deny His bounties.

Many are the fools who go on eating the bounties (but realise not the Giver).

Many are the men who are eternally punished by (the pangs of) sorrow and hunger ;

O Lord, the Giver, it is also Thine gift and bounty.

His will decides the perdition or salvation (of man) :

No one else can say anything about it.

If a braggart dares say anything, he alone knows how much punishment he is meted out.

There are, however, a few (grateful ones) who say that the Lord alone knows and He alone gives.

To whom the Lord grants (the power of) praising Himself.

Nānak, such a man is the king of kings.

TWENTY SIX

Amul gun amul vāpār.

Amul vāpāñe amul bhandār.

Amul āvah(i) amul lai jāh(i).

Amul bhāe amula samāh(i).

Amul(u) dharam(u) amul(u) dibān(u).

Amul(u) tul(u) amul(u) paravān(u).

Amul(u) bakhsīs amul(u) nīsān(u).

Amul(u) karam(u) amul(u) phurmān(u).

Amulo amul(u) ākhiā na jāe.

Ākhi(i) ākh(i) rahe liv lāe.

Ākhah(i) ved pāth purān.

Ākhah(i) parhe karah(i) vakhiān.

Ākhah(i) barame ākhan(i) ind.

Ākhah(i) gopī tai govind.
 Ākhaḥ(i) īsar ākhah(i) siddh.
 Ākhah(i) kete kīte buddh.
 Ākhah(i) dānav ākhah(i) dev.
 Ākhah(i) sur(i) nar mun(i) jan sev.
 Kete ākhaḥ(i) ākhan(i) pāh(i).
 Kete kah(i) kah(i) uth(i) uth(i) jāh(i).
 Ete kīte hor(i) kareh(i).
 Tā ākh(i) na sakah(i) kei ke-e.
 Jevad(u) bhāvai tevad(i) hoe.
 Nānak jānai sāchā soe.
 Je ko ākhai bol(u) vigār(u).
 Tā likhīai sir(i) gāvārā gāvār(u).

Priceless His virtues ; priceless dealings (of virtues).
 Priceless those (men) who practise virtues ; priceless
 His treasure of virtues.

Priceless the birth of men (on this earth) ; priceless the
 value of good deeds they take to the next world.

Priceless those who love Him ; priceless those
 immersed in Him.

Priceless His Law ; priceless His Court (of justice).

Priceless His 'balance' ; priceless His 'weight'.

Priceless His grace ; priceless the signs of His grace.

Priceless His bounty ; priceless His command.

He is so priceless that it cannot be expressed.

Those who attempt to express (His greatness) in the
 end, get absorbed in Him.

The texts of Vadas and Purānas try to state His worth.

The learned scholars who declaim to others (also)
 attempt to say (how great He is).

Many Brahmas explain Him ; so do many Indras.

Many Gopis (the female votaries of Krishna) and many
 Krishnas express Him.

Many Shivas and Sidhas speak of Him.

The countless Buddhas created by Him expatiate on Him.

The demons and the angels (all) discourse of Him ;
So do angelic men and holy persons and servants of God.

Thus many are those who are expressing Him or attempting to express Him.

Many are those who spend their lives in speaking of Him and then quit this world, in the end.

If God creates as many more beings as He has created , already ;

Even then they cannot say forth (how great He is).

God is as great as He wishes to be ;

Nānak, He the Truthful One alone knows about Himself.

If one bespeaks something out of limit or propriety, he will certainly be dubbed as the most foolish and vulgar among men.

TWENTY SEVEN

So dar(u) kehā so ghar(u) kehā jit(u) bah(i) sarab samāle.

Vāje nād anek asankhā kete vāvanahāre.

Kete rāg parī sio kahīan(i) kete gāvana hāre.

Gāvah(i) tuhano paun(u) pānī baisantar(u) gāvai rājā dharam(u) duāre.

Gāvah(i) chit(u) gupat(u) likh(i) jānah(i) likh(i) likh(i) dharam(u) vīchāre.

Gāvah(i) īsar(u) baramā devī sohan(i) sadā savāre.

Gāvah(i) ind indāsan(i) baithe devatiā dar(i) nāle.

Gāvah(i) sidh samādhī andar(i) gāvan(i) sād h vichāre.

Gāvan(i) jatī satī santokhī gāvah(i) vīr karāre.

Gāvan(i) pandit parhan(i) rakhīsar jug(u) jug(u) vedā nāle.

Gāvah(i) mohanīā man(u) mohan(i) surgā machh
 payāle.
 Gāvan(i) ratan upāe tere athasath(i) tīrath nāle.
 Gāvah(i) jodh mahābal sūrā gāvah(i) khānī chāre.
 Gāvah(i) khand mandal varabhandā kar(i) kar(i) rakhe
 dhāre.
 Sei tudh no gāvah(i) jo tudh(u) bhāvan(i) rate tere
 bhagat rasāle.
 Hor(i) kete gāvan(i) se mai chit(i) na āvan(i) Nānak(u)
 kiā vīchāre.
 Soī soī sadā sach(u) sāhib(u) sāchā sāchī nāī.
 Hai bhī hosī jae na jāsi rachanā jin(i) rachāī.
 Rangī rangī bhātī kar(i) kar(i) jinasī māiā jin(i) upāī.
 Kar(i) kar(i) vekhai kitā apanā jiv tis dī vadiāī.
 Jo tis(u) bhāvai soī karasī hukam(u) na karanā jāī.
 So pāt(i) sāh(u) sāhā pāt(i) sāhib(u) Nānak rahan(u)
 rajāī.

Where is the door (or portico) and where is the house, in which O Lord, thou dwellest and taketh care of all the creation ?

Infinite are the melodies and sounds (in thy praise) and countless are those who strike them.

Numberless are the Ragas and Raginis* and countless are their singers (who chant thy praises).

They sing thy praises—the air, the water, the fire and also the *Dharam-Rāja* (the Divine Reckoner) who stands at thy door.

*i.e. Indian musical notes divided into masculine and feminine categories.

They sing thy praises—the *Chitra* and *Gupta** who know and record (the deeds of men) under the scrutiny of the *Dharam-Rāj*.

They sing thy praises—the Shiva, the Brahma and the Goddess, who stand ever exalted in thy presence.

They sing thy praises—the many Indras (the kings among gods) sitting on their thrones, at thy door, surrounded by (millions of) gods.

They sing thy praises—the Sidhas absorbed in meditation and the Sadhūṣ† in introspection.

They sing thy praises—the celibate, the charitable, the contended ones and also the mighty warriors.

They sing thy praises—the learned pandits and the great Rishis who study the Vedas during various ages of history and the Vedas themselves (sing thy praises).

They sing thy praises—the heart-ravishing beautiful females belonging to the heavens, the earth and the nether world (*Pātāl*).

They sing thy praises—the precious objects (the *Rattans*) created by thee along with the sixty eight holy places of pilgrimage.

They sing thy praises—the valiant and mighty fighters and also the four sources of creation.‡

They sing thy praises—the various worlds, the heavenly spheres and the whole universe, which all have been created and eternally-fixed by thee.

Only those whom thou liketh, sing thy praises—the love-intoxicated *Bhagats* who are ever absorbed in thee.

*The familiar names of two angels, who, in Hindu religious belief, are supposed to see and record all good and bad deeds of human beings.
†i.e. the ascetics or saintly persons.

‡i.e. the four *Khānis* : *andaj*, *jeraj*, *setaj* and *utbhuj*.

Nānak, there are many more who sing thee, but I cannot recollect them—how can I think of all thy devotees ?

The same, the selfsame Lord, the eternally True One, whose greatness is True† :

He who has created the whole universe, is existent now, will exist in future and will remain ever in existence ;

He who has created the ephemeral world (*Māyā*) of various colours, kinds and species ;

He witnesses His created world and cherishes it as and how it pleases His mind.

He does what pleases Him—and who can question his doings ?

That Lord who is the Lord of Lords, is the Master.
Nānak, let us obey His *Hukam*.

TWENTY EIGHT

*Mundā santokh(u) saram(u) pat(u) jholī dhiān kī karah(i)
bibhūt(i).*

Khinhā kāl(u) kuārī kāiā jugat(i) dandā partit(i).

Āī panthī sagal jamātī man(i) jītai jag(u) jīt(u).

*Ādes(u) tisai ādes(u).**

Ād(i) anīl(u) anād(i) anāhat(i) jug(u) jug(u) eko ves(u).

O yogi, let contentment be your rings; honour be your bowl and bag, meditation your ashes ;

Let the fear of death be your cloak, celibacy be your yogic method and faith be your staff ;

Let 'sympathy with all beings' be your great yogic sect and (thus) by conquering the mind, you conquer the world.

†Here the word 'nai', according to S. Sahib Singh, does not mean the 'Name' but the greatness of God. (*Japji* Saṅk (Punjabī), P. 119).

Salutation to the Lord who is primal, absolutely pure, without beginning and everlasting—who does not change through ages.

TWENTY NINE

*Bhugat(i) giān(u) dayā bhandāran(i) ghat(i) ghat(i)
vājah(i) nād.*

*Āp(i) nāth(u) nāthī sabh jā kī ridh(i) sidh(i) avarā sād.
Sanjog(u) vijog(u) due kār chalāvah(i) lekhe āvah(i)
bhāg.*

Ādes(u) tisai ādes(u).

Ād(i) anīl(u) anād(i) anāhat(i) jug(u) jug(u) eko ves(u).

O yogi, let knowledge (of God) be your holy food, charity be your distributor and the divine throb in every heart be your meal-time music.

The Lord Himself is the Master (*Nāth*); the whole world is under His sway; and the spiritual powers (miracles called *Ridhis* and *Sidhis*) are extraneous occupation.

The divine causation named 'union' and 'separation' are agents that run the world and it is they that determine the destinies of men.

Salutation to the Lord who is primal, absolutely pure, without beginning and everlasting—who does not change through ages.

THIRTY

Ekā māi jugat(i) viāi tin(i) chele paravān(u).

Ik(u) sansārī ik(u) bhandārī ik(u) lāe dībān(u).

Jiv tis(u) bhāvai tivai chalāvai jiv hovai phurmān(u).

*Oh(u) vekhai onā nadar(i) na āvai bahutā eh(u)
vidān(u).*

Ādes(u) tisai ādes(u).

Ād(i) anīl(u) anād(i) anāhat(i) jug(u) jug(u) eko ves(u).

The one (divine) Mother (called *Māyā*) got conceived by a strategem and manifestly gave birth to three children.

One of them (Brahma) became the creator of the world, the second (Vishnu) became the bread-giver and the third (Shiva) became the holder of the court (i.e. destroyer of the world).

Whatever pleases the Lord, He orders and gets done according to His command.

He sees them (the mortals) but they cannot see Him—how surprising is this ?

Salutation to the Lord who is primal, absolutely pure, without beginning and everlasting—who does not change through ages.

THIRTY ONE

Āsan(u) loe loe bhandār.

Jo kichh(u) pāiā so ekā vār.

Kar(i) kar(i) vekhai sirajanahār(u).

Nānak sachē kī sāchī kār.

Ādes(u) tisai ādes(u).

Ād(i) anīl(u) anād(i) anāhat(i) jug(u) jug(u) eko ves(u).

Every sphere (created by God) contains a store-house of treasures.

Whatever was stored in them, was once for all and inexhaustible.

The Creator looks after everything He creates.

Nānak, true are the doings of the True Lord.

Salutation to the Lord who is primal, absolutely pure, without beginning and everlasting—who does not change through ages.

THIRTY TWO

*Ik dū jībhau lakh hoh(i) lakh hovah(i) lakh vīs.
Lakh(u) lakh(u) gerā ākhīah(i) ek(u) nām(u) jagdīs.
Et(u) rāh(i) pat (i) pavariā charīai hoe ikīs.
Sun(i) galā ākās kī kītā aī rīs.
Nānak nadarī pāīai kūrī kūrai thīs.*

If there be a hundred thousand tongues, instead of one, and even if they become millions ;

With so many tongues, if the One Name of God be recited millions of times ;

In this manner, one can ascend to the (lofty mansions of the) beloved Lord by becoming single-minded.

Hearing such heavenly talks, even low people became envious.

Nānak, such heights are attained only by (God's) grace, (because) false professions lead but to false results.

THIRTY THREE

*Ākhan(i) jor(u) chupai nah jor(u).
Jor(u) na mangan(i) den(i) na jor(u).
Jor(u) na jīvan(i) maran(i) nah jor(u).
Jor(u) na rāj(i) mā(i) man(i) sor(u).
Jor(u) na suratī giān(i) vīchār(i).
Jor(u) na jugatī chhutai sansār(u).
Jis(u) hath(i) jor(u) kar(i) vekhai soe.
Nānak uttam(u) nīch(u) na koe.*

It is not in our power to speak or to be silent.

It is not in our power to ask for or give anything.

It is not in our power to live or to die.

It is not in our power to rule, to acquire wealth or to have pleasure.

It is not in our power to have introspection, knowledge or thought.

It is not in our power to know the 'way of true living' which emancipates humanity (from the shackles of sin).

The Lord who has the 'power' knows how to use it.

Nānak, no one is high or low (by his own effort).

THIRTY FOUR

Rātī rutī thitī vār .

Pavan pānī aganī pātāl.

Tis(u) vich(i) dharatī thāp(i) rakhī dharamsāl.

Tis(u) vich(i) jā jugat(i) ke rang.

Tin ke nām anek anant.

Karamī karamī hoe vichār(u).

Sachā āp(i) sachā darbār(u).

Tithai sohan(i) panch parvān(u).

Nadarī karam(i) pavai nīsān (u).

Kach pakāi othai pāe.

Nānak gayā jāpai jāe.

The nights, the seasons, the lunar positions, the days ;

The air, the water, the fire and the nether region ;

In this ensemble God placed the temple-like earth.

On this earth He created beings of many species and colours.

Their names are numberless and infinite.

The various actions of men will be considered in the end.

The true Lord holds His true court.

There the accepted *Panchas* have places of honour.

The sign (of acceptance and honour) comes by His grace and favour.

The rawness and maturity will be determined in the next world.

Nānak, men will know of it, when they go beyond human existence.

THIRTY FIVE

Dharam khand kā eho dharam(u).

Giān khand kā ākhah(u) karam(u).

Kete pavan pānī vaisantar kete kān mahes.

Kete baramē ghārat(i) ghāriah(i) rūp rang ke ves.

Ketiā karam bhūmī mer kete kete dhū upades.

Kete ind chand sūr kete kete mandal des.

Kete siddh buddh nāth kete kete devī ves.

Kete dev dānav mun(i) kete kete ratan samund.

Ketiā khānī ketiā bānī kete pāt narind.

Ketiā suratī sevak kete Nānak ant(u) na ant(u).

This was (exactly) the characteristic of the Region of Law.

Let the nature of the Region of knowledge be (now) described.

Many are the airs, many waters and fires, many Krishnas and Shivas (in this Region).

Many are the Brahmas, who create all objects and many are the categories of form and colour.

Many are the earths, many mountains, many preachings of the Dhrū Bhagtas.

Many are the Indras, many moons, many suns, many spherical areas.

Many are the Siddhas, many Buddhas and Nāths, many forms of goddesses.

Many are the angels, many demons, many *Munis*† many *rattans*‡ and oceans.

Many are the sources of creation (the *Khānis*), many languages, many kings and sovereigns.

Many are the cognitions and many cognizants : Nānak, there is absolutely no end to it.

THIRTY SIX

Giān khand mah(i) giān(u) parchand(u).

Tithai nād binod kod anund(u).

Saram khand kī banī rūp(u).

Tithai ghārat(i) gharīai bahut(u) anūp(u).

Tā kiā galā kathīā na jāh(i).

Je ko kahai pichhai pachhutāe.

Tithai gharīai surat(i) mat (i) man(i) buddh(i).

Tithai gharīai surā sidhā kī suddh(i) .

In the Region of Knowledge, knowledge preponderates.

There is eternal bliss and myriad pleasures coupled with celestial music.

The expression of the Region of Honour is beauty.

In this Region, immensely beautiful creations take place ;

So beautiful, that they cannot be described.

If someone describes, he will repent later on.

Created in that Region are the cognition, the reason, the mind and the intellect.

Also is created the awareness of the angels and the Siddhas.

†i.e.Rishis who remain absolutely reticent.

‡Priceless gems, a popular metaphor for any precious object.

THIRTY SEVEN

Karam khand kī bānī jor(u).
Tithai hor(u) na koī hor(u).
Tithai jodh mahā-bal sūr.
Tin mah(i) rām(u) rahiā bharpūr.
Tithai sīto sītā mahimā māh(i).
Tā ke rūp na kathane jāh(i).
Nā oh(i) marah(i) na thāge jāh(i).
Jin kai rām(u) vasai man māh(i).
Tithai bhagat vasah(i) ke loa.
Karah(i) anand(u) sachā man(i) soe.
Sach khand(i) vasai nirrankār(u).
Kar(i) kar(i) vekhai nadar(i) nihāl.
Tithai khand mandal varabhand.
Je ko kathai ta ant na aṅt.
Tithai loa loa ākār.
Jiv jiv hukam(u) tivai tiv kār.
Vekhai vigasai kar(i) vīchār(u).
Nānak kathanā kararā sār(u).

The expression of the Region of Grace is (divine)
power.

There none exists except the (powerful) Lord Himself.

There (only) the valiant and mighty warriors are
honoured.

In their minds only the presence of God exists.

There (the Bhagats) remain ever absorbed in the praise
of the Lord.

Their (divine) beauty cannot be described.

They never die and are never deceived (by the effect of
Maya).

Because God ever remains ingrained in their hearts.

In this Region, Bhagats from various worlds have their
abode.

The True Lord (ever ingrained) in their mind, they are ever in bliss.

In the Region of Truth only the Formless Lord exists.

He creates and looks after and blesses all His creations.

In this Region, there are (infinite) worlds and spheres and universes.

If one attempts to describe, he cannot.

There are infinite places and infinite bodies and forms.

The whole creation works as He wishes.

He the Supreme Lord sees and pleases Himself by contemplation.

Nānak, to say anything is like (swallowing) hard iron.

THIRTY EIGHT

Jat(u) pāhārā dhīraj(u) suniār(u).

Aharan(i) mat(i) ved(u) hathiār(u).

Bhau khalā agan(i) tap tāo.

Bhāndā bhāo amrit(u) tit(u) dhāl(i).

Gharīai sabad(u) sachī takasāl.

Jin kau nadar(i) karam(u) tin kār.

Nānak nadarī nadar(i) nihāl.

Let continence be the (goldsmith's) workshop and patience be the goldsmith.

Let reason be the anvil and knowledge be the instrument.

Let fear be the bellows and penance be the fire.

Let love be the utensil in which the holy nectar is poured.

In this manner, the Gurū's Word (Sabad) can be minted in the true mint.

Those who are blessed in His eyes, win His favour.

Nānak, it is only Divine Grace that saves man.

SALOK (Epilogue)

Pavan(u) gurū pānī pitā mātā dharat(i) mahat(u).

Divas(u) rāt(i) doe dāī dāīā khelai sagal jagat(u).

Changiāīā buriāīā vāchai dharam(u) hadūr(i).

Karamī āpo āpnī ke nerai ke dūr(i).

Jinī nām(u) dhiāīā gae musakat(i) ghāl(i).

Nānak te mukh ujle ketī chhutī nāl(i).

Air is the Gurū, water the father, the venerable earth is the mother.

Day and night are the nurses and the whole world (as a child) is in play.

The good and evil acts are being watched by *Dharam-Rāj* in the Divine presence.

By their actions some men get nearer to God and others go farther from Him.

Those who remembered His Name, got their labours fructified.

Nānak, their faces were hallowed and millions were saved along with them.