

A BRIEF LIFE OF
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Guru Nanak

The Child Nanak

He came like a song of Heaven, and began singing as he felt the touch of the breeze and saw the blue expanse of sky.

He was a child of smiles, and his eyes were silent and wise; he loved quiet of soul, he loved joy and thought.

Whoever saw the child, or touched him accidentally praised God. A thrill of unknown delight came to anyone who lifted the child, or played with him. But none knew whence came to him that gladness of soul.

Every one saw that he was the child of Heaven; he was so beautiful, so mysteriously fair in colour and form with a radiance that was new to earth. He cast a spell that none could escape. Rai Bular, the Moslem Governor of the place of his birth, loved him both as a child and as a boy; the Brahman teacher loved him whoever came in contact with him was irresistibly drawn to him.

His sister Nanki saw from his very infancy in him the light of God, and kept her discovery a profound secret. She was the very first inspired by Heaven to be his disciple. Rai Bular was the second; he had seen that gleam of soul in Nanak, which is seen only once many centuries, and even then by the rarest chance. In his old age Rai Bular cried like a child for his saviour.

Nanak the child gave the signs of Nanak the Saint and a Guru at a very early age. He composed music, he talked of God and life; his untutored mind was a marvel to every one.

The Boy Nanak

He ate little, slept little, and shut himself in his own thought for days and days ; and no one could understand him.

He was sent to school, but he could not learn anything. "Teach me." said he to his teacher, "only this one large letter of life. Tell me of the Creator, and the wonder of this Great World."

Thinking he might do as a trader, his father gave him a few silver coins to set him up in that way of livelihood. But no ! Having started out, he feasted the saints of God, and returned empty handed. Then he was sent to take the cattle out to graze ; he drove out the herds upon the green sward, and left them free to graze themselves as he sat alone. The solitude of the Indian noon was good for him, for then the whole creation taught him the language of the gods. He heard the songs of the shade. Every blade of grass intoned a hymn in his ears. His animals loved him ; they knew nothing of any man's ownership of meadows that, for them all appertained to God. The cows could make no difference between "his" grass and "my" grass: so a clamour arose, and they drove out Nanak and his cattle from the fields. He was declared a failure as a cowherd, though he loved to sit alone with stars, and to talk to animals when they were in distress.

People anxious about his health brought a physician for to them Nanak's unworldliness appeared insane. When the physician put his fingers on the pulse of Nanak the boy's voice, which had been silent for days came thrilling with anew and unsurpassed sweetness:...

"They have called the physician to *me* !

The poor doctor feels my pulse !

What can a pulse disclose ?

The pang is in my heart !

Their life is a disease, and they seek nothing else.

The doctors come to cure, when there is no cure for the pain of death.

Oh, physician ! why touch my pulse when the pain is in my heart ? Go back ! go back whence you came !

None has a cure for the pang of love.

I pine for my Beloved :

Who gave the pain will cure it.

Oh, poor physician, what can a pulse disclose ?

You have no cure for me."

When the family Brahman came to invest him with the sacred thread, he spoke again subduing all that heard :—

"Oh Brahman ; You have no sacred thread.

If you have,

Give me the forgiveness of the creator,

Draw round me a sacred line that no desires dare cross.

Unfold the Divine in me,

Which then will be a sacred thread—

Never showing wear or break.

Fires shall not burn it, nor the storms destroy !

Blessed of God, O Brahman, is the man such thread
surrounds !

That is salvation .”

Nanak the Strange Youth

They married him, believing marriage and home life would bring him back to earth. And they asked him to set out and earn a living for his wife. Nanak started to Sultanpur, where his loving sister Nanaki lived. It was thought that Jai Ram, Nanaki's husband, would get him some employment. As he was setting out from Talwandi, his native place, his wife came to him and said: “Pray, take me, too, with you.” “Dear lady,” said he, “I go in search of work; if I succeed, I will send for you.”

Jai Ram got Nanak the position of officer in charge of the storehouse of Daulat Khan Lodi, Nawab of Sultanpur. Nanak loved to distribute the provisions; it is here that he began distributing himself also. None begged at Nanak's storehouse in vain, he lavished his goodness on every comer. It is said of him in a Panjabi proverb that God gave him His stores and then forgot all about them; key, lock, all were with Nank.

It is here that he sang his famous song of one word. In Panjabi language, the word *Tera* means, both the arithmetical figure *thirteen* and the phrase *I am thine*. Once Nanak, weighing out wheat flour, counted the weighings—“One, two, three;—till he reached the *thirteen*; but at this forgot all his counting, and went on weighing and calling on: “*Tera ! Tera ! Tera ! Tera ! Tera ! Tera !*” “*Thine ! Thine ! Thine ! Thine ! Thine ! Thine !*”

Nanak the World Teacher

He was lost in this flood of his own thought and wonder, a river that flowed out of him and at the same time engulfed him, so that he was looked on as one dead. What they saw of him was but as his garment cast upon the shore of life, while Nanak himself was swallowed by the Infinite. Truly, never did they see him again in the form in which they knew him so well. He came out and spoke as Guru Nanak the world teacher, to the awe of everyone. Said he: "There is no Hindu, no Mussalaman!"—a heresy so paralyzing that they felt bound to suppose he had now lost every particle of sense. He could no longer take an interest in his work, and shortly afterwards left it altogether. He was not Nanak now, but Guru Nanak.

His father came to counsel him, but without effect. Of the many conversations that he had with his parents, on different occasions when he returned to his native place again from his travels abroad, we faithfully preserve the following few, without attempting chronological order.

Father : My son ! They say you do nothing, I am ashamed of you. Why not plough the fields if you can do nothing else.

Nanak : I do something that others cannot understand, father. I, too, plough, but my ploughing is different from theirs. I sow the seeds of *Hari Nam*; my heart is my fields and my mind is my plough, and God waters my fields. I plough both day and night, and sow my songs.

Father: Why not have a village shop and sit there and rest and sell merchandise ?

Nanak : Time and space are my shop, and I sit and deal in song. I praise him who has made all this.

Father : None can understand what you say, your speech is so difficult. Why not enter again into the Government service, which is fairly easy ?

Nanak : I have already entered His service. I can not serve another. I go wither. He takes me and I do as He bids me.

At another time, when he met his mother after a long interval, the following conversation took place.

• Mother. My son ! Do not go away now, but come and live in your house as of old.

Son. My house is His Temple, mother ! God is my home and his grace is my family. His pleasure is my utmost riches, mother ! He judges me not; He is kind and merciful as none else is. He blesses and blesses without end. He provides me with everything, and I am for ever happy in him.

Of what use is this life of houses, wherein a thousand desires consume the man, and there is no rest, neither in walking nor in dreams, mother ?

Mother. Wear clothes such as we wear; and be not so sad, so strange; go not away from us.

Son. My clothes are white and stainless, mother; for I live in love of Him who has given me so much love.

I am made to wear His Presence and His Beauty, mother !

He is my food and raiment.

The thought of him, mother, is my covering of honour.

His treasures contain everything.

My clothes are eternal youth,

I wear the perpetual Spring.

Of what use are these clothes, the wearing of which gives so much trouble ?

And then a thousands desires consume the man; and there is no rest, in walking or in dream.

Mother. Oh ! Why do you not live like us and eat what we eat ?

Son. I drink His very Presence. I eat of His precious Substance, and partake of His Light.

In His glance is my heavenly substance. I have neither hunger nor thirst. Of what use is this bread, mother, the eating of which gives so much trouble? And a thousand desires consume the man; and there is no rest, neither in walking nor in dreams.

To the Hindus he said, "You are not Hindus;" to the Mussalmans, "You are not Moslems;" to the Yogis, "You are not Yogis; and so was it whereher he went. He not only withheld these names, but by his very presence changed those that had borne them into men. When he left the place, his eye seemed to be still upon them, keeping their minds steadfast. A new life came to the people in him they found their God, their world, and their lost souls.

In him they began a new; and in him they ended.

Nanak and his sister

When he prepared to go on his long journeys into the trackless lands around, usually on foot, Nanaki (his elder sister and his disciple) could not brook even the thought of such a long separation from him.

She, said "O, divine one ! what will be our condition then ? How shall thy lotuses live and breathe without thee !"

"Bibi," said the brother, "this is Heaven's call, I must go whither it leads my feet. Many will attain the heavenly life if you forego for a while your own yearnings. I would not be gone from you. Whenever you will think of me, I will be with you."

Guru Nank did return to her frequently, interrupting his travels.

Mardana, the rebec player, joined him; and Nanak took up his royal residence under the stars.

He went to Sangladeep and other isles in the south of India, he visited the Nilgiri hills. He crossed the borders of Assam in the east and the Trans-Himalayas in the north, and went by Baghdad and Bokhara right up to the Caucasian mountains. He visited Mecca, whither he came by way Baluchistan. He travelled throughout the north-western frontier of India and the Kashmir. None ever travelled so much with one single purpose; namely, to thrill the earth from pole to pole with the working of his spirit.

Nanak and Duni Chand.

A banker named Duni Chand lived in Lahore in the times of Nanak. He flew many flags over his house each

flag representing ten millions. One day he came to see the Master, and Nanak gave to him a needle, which he said he would receive again from him in the world beyond this after death. Duni Chand took the needle home, and told his wife of the Master's strange speech, and request to keep a needle for him in his books. Both went to the Guru again, and said, 'Sir, how can we carry a needle with us beyond death, when all we have shall be left behind?' 'Of what use is your all, then.' said Nanak, 'if it will be of no use to you in regions beyond death, where you will have to pass long centuries?' 'Pray, then, tell us what we can take with us.' said they.

'The wealth of loving Him,' said the Guru; 'Hari Nam will go with you.'

'How can we have that wealth.' said they.

'Just as you have this if the Guru so pleaseth, if he giveth the grain of life, if he favoureth ye.' said the Guru.

Both Duni Chand and his wife entered the path of discipleship.

Nanak and a Jeweller

The Master sat as usual under a tree outside a city on the Gangetic plain in Eastern India. He gave Mardana a jewel; and asked him to go and get it valued in the city. None could value it truly: some offered gold for it, and some mere silver. Mardana at last met a jeweller, who, when he saw the Guru's jewel, brought all his jewels and offered them to Mardana, and said, 'Who can say the price of this priceless jewel? Who can buy Beauty? I offer my all for the joy of its auspicious sight. It is the

beginning of my luck. It is the favour of God that I have seen it to-day." The jeweller Sals Rao and his wife followed Mardana and sought the refuge of the Guru. They were initiated into the path of discipleship.

Nanak at Eminabad

There at Eminabad in the Punjab, lived in those times a carpenter who used to make pegs of wood and other implements for the village. He lived in "pure poverty," as the Japanese would say. His life was simple, his needs were few and he was happy. He was a disciple of the Master, but full of natural simplicity. Nanak went straight to his house and lived with him for days. He neglected the table of the king and preferred plain bread and water at the house of this man of God. The king sent for Nanak and asked, "Why do you refuse my bread and eat at the house of a low-caste, though they say you are a saint?" "Your bread is blood and his bread is milk," replied Guru Nanak.

Nanak and the Tantrik Koda.

In a thick forest of India, Koda met Guru Nanak under strange circumstances, Mardana had lost his way and fallen into hands of Koda; Mardana was just, what he wanted for his man-sacrifice. Koda bound him hand and foot, and began his preparations, lighting a fire under a huge cauldron of oil. The wind blew, the rain came and the fire went out. He tried again, with the same result; and he knew not why the elements went against him that day. He looked up and there stood Guru Nanak, his look disconcerted Koda, who went into his cave to consult his mirror. The mirror gave him the image of man and he came out and asked for forgiveness.

Nanak said: "Koda ! Sing His Great Name."

Koda entered the path of discipleship.

Nanak and Sajan Thag.

Sajan kept a Moslem mosque and a Hindu shrine side by side for the weary travellers to rest in a lonely jungle pathway. There lay the bones of many a traveller that came hither to rest in the midst of the temple or the mosques. Once Nanak was the guest of Sajan for a night. Sajan served the Guru with the utmost devotion, for he took him to be a very rich man. He saw the sparkle of a million jewels on the Guru's forehead. Late at night Sajan, as usual, invited the Guru to retire to rest.

Such heavenly music was uttered by the Guru when Mardana began playing his rebec, that Sajan was overwhelmed with remorse; he was washed with music. He cried, "Save me ! even me: O Divine One !" "Be poor," said the Guru, "and sing His name!"

Nanak and Vali Qandhari.

Once Nanak was near the ancient Buddhist city Taxila. A bleak mountain now called Vali Qandhari (the prophet of Qandhar) stands with its bare peak at a little distance from Taxila, towards the Peshawar side on the great trunk road by which came Alexder the Great and other invaders to India. This mountain is so called because in the times of Guru Nanak there lived a Vali—a prophet—a native of Qandhar, on its high summit. He had built himself a house by the side of a little spring of crystal fresh water on the top of the mountain. This was the only spring of water near the place where once encamped Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana. Mardana was very thirsty. The Guru asked him to go

up and drink water from the mountain of Vali Qandhari. Mardana went up, but the reception of the Vali was very indifferent. "Who are you?" said he. "My name is Mardana, and I am a disciple of Nanak," replied Bhai Mardana. "What brings you here?" "I feel thirsty, and wish to have some water from your spring." "There is no water here for such as you; go back and ask your Master for it." Nanak asked Mardana to go again, saying that they were simple folk of god and wanted some water from his spring. Mardana went three times as bidden by the Guru, but to no purpose. The last time when he came back, Guru Nanak said. "Never mind Mardana! Dig here. There is a fountain of water flowing at your feet." The spring was there, it came with its cool crystal waters kissing the feet of the Master. Vali Qandhari, too, came down to see Guru Nanak who so naturally attracted every one. Guru Nanak spoke to Vali Qandhari saying: "O friend. those who live so high, should not be rock-like dry."

Vali Qandhari was enriched with the wisdom of the Master, and blessed with poverty; he too, drank the waters and flowed at the Master's feet.

Kamal and Brahamdas enter Discipleship.

Nanak was in Kashmir, living in the forest near the great lake. Kamal, a Mohammedan Faqir, lived near by on milk that the wandering shepherds gave him; he was very pious and sad, pining for the life of the spirit. He pined for that celestial goodness which comes to man only through the grace of God. He was an old man now, and looked at the setting sun and the rising moon with feelings as of a begger whom, when he came to them with

his bowl, they had turned out of doors. Brahamdas and Kamal were friends : one an orthodox Brahman, and the other a Pathan with glowing eyes. Pandit Brahamdas always had three camels following him, loaded with volumes of ancient wisdom. He always carried his stone-god hung by a thread round his neck. Brahm-das informed Kamal of the strange visitor to Kashmir who "wore leather and ate fish." He said, "It is strange. Many a man who has gone and tasted the nectar of his kindness is transfigured." Kamal, who had been thirsty all his life, sought the presence of Nanak, fell at his feet and fainted with joy. As he rose he found in his own heart the light which he had sought in vain in the forests. Kamal followed the Master. Nanak asked him to settle in the Kurram valley (now the tribal frontier of India) . it was from here that the song of Nam spread towards the West, Kamal was servant of his Master, the soldier of his King, a temple of holy song. Mardana entered his final rest here; passing away in the great concourse of the disciples of Kabul, Qandhar, and Tirah, when Nanak paid his second visit to Kamal.

Brahmdas wished at first to discuss his lore with the Gurū, and began thus :

Brahmdas. Where was God before Creation, and how were things created ?

Nanak. He opens His eyes and he closes them, according to his pleasure. He knows.

Brahmdas. Who are you, who being a teacher of religion, wear leather ?

The discussion ended in a trance. Like dawn,

singing through every leaf of the forests of Kashmir,
came the Guru's heavenly voice :

"Blessed is the disciple that hath met the Master !
He is gay as the face of earth adorned with flower
and leaf.

He seeth this world, the garden of Beauty, in full
bloom.

All lakes are brimful of nectar.

He is only made divine and rich in colouring as a
garment with madder dye.

The Mystic body of the Master has melted into
his silver limbs.

And the lotus of life bursts in blossom in the heart-
lake of the disciple.

The whole world cries as the antelope caught in a
hunter's trap.

Fear and pain and thirst and hunger crowd from
all sides.

But blessed is the disciple that hath met the
Master !"

The Guru gave him the celestial vision, Brahmadas
entered the Path.

He was given the authority, to distribute amongst
the folk of the Kashmir valley the Divine riches given
him by God.

**Nanak and a poor man (One of thousands of
such who met him).**

Once Guru Nanak lived with a poor man. On
leaving, he burnt the poor man's hut, the walls and the
thatching of grass and all he had.

When the Guru came again, there was a palace for
him in place of the hut, and there was a bed of gold for

him to rest upon, when singing in ecstatic elation the Vision of God.

Whosoever met him, the Guru burnt his poverty and his clingings thereto and made him rich.

Nanak and the Leper.

The leper was in his hut; and late at night the Guru called him out---it was a moonlit night. "Who is it?" said the leper. The song flowed from the Guru as soft as loving light from the moon.

"It is but for a night, as the birds rest on the tree;
For at earliest dawn we go—no talk of me and thee !
A night on the roadside—a night and a day;
It is but as the meeting of travellers on their way !
Each noisy bird of passage from its branch its bear-
ings takes :

Then every bough is silent ! we'er flown as morning
breaks !"

How could the leper believe that he could have a guest ! He came out and saw him. The song descended on the leper as the moonlight clothed him with affection. Nanak said : "When in the song of Nam we cry aloud, all our past suffering is seen to come of our forgetfulness of the Beloved. Suffering sets us on fire, makes us, as it were, red hot, and cools us again till we pass through a hundred fires !",

Nanak gave him the song and went away.

Nanak and God's House.

Nanak the Master was at Mecca. The Master slept out of doors with his feet turned inadvertently towards the Qaaba, the House of God. The chief priest of the place came and said, "O forgetful stranger ! awake and

see your feet are turned towards the House of God !”

The Guru replied : Is it so ? Pray, turn my feet yourself in the direction where the House of God is not.”

It is here they asked the Guru : “Pray tell us what does your God eat and wear.”

“Music is His food, and the colours of life are His garment,” replied the Guru.

Nanak and Two Cities

Once Nanak was the guest of the City of Light, where lived good people. At the time of departure thence, the Guru cursed them : “Be ye scattered, and may there be no city here !” After a while the Guru was the guest of the City of Darkness, where lived evil minded persons. Nanak, on leaving the City, blessed them : “May this be your settlement for a long time to come !”

Nanak and The Fools

Once he was at Multan. Many false hermits lived there, and they were all afraid of some true one coming and disillusioning the crowds that assembled and worshipped them. They thought Nanak had come to deprive them of their living. It is said they sent Nanak a bowl of milk too full to have another drop, meaning thereby there was no room for him. Mardana wished the Guru to accept it, for he was thirsty and hungry after a long tramp. He smiled, and returned the bowl, placing a little flower jasmine on the surface of the milk. “There is room for me everywhere,” said the jasmine flower.

Nanak at Hardwar.

Some people were throwing water towards the Sun while they bathed in the Ganges. “O men ! what are you doing?” said the Guru. “We are offering water to our

dead ancestors living in the Sun," said they. At this, the Guru began throwing water in the opposite direction with both his hands. When they asked what strange thing he was doing, he replied. "I am watering my fields of wheat in the Punjab."

The priests of Hardwar collected round him and said: "Of what caste are you, and of what town?" My caste is the same as that of wind and fire, and I come from a town whence come both day and night."

Nank at Kuruk-Shetra

During a great fair, the Guru was at Kuruk-Shetra. He asked Mardana to go and get fire to cook his meals, and Mardana went and touched the fire of an 'orthodox.' The orthodox cried out in a rage, and fell upon Mardana; whereupon the Guru said :

"The evil is still in his mind, hatred resides in his heart;
And yet his cooking Square is pure !
Of whar use are these lines of the Square when lowcaste thoughts still sit with him in his mind ?".

Nanak and Emperor Sikandar Lodhi.

It was Sikandar Lodhi, then Emperor of unfortunate India, who along with others, put Guru Nanak in prison; where he had to labour on the hand mills. He did the labour; but the music flowed from him in the prison, and all came to listen, and all stood to listen in awe and wonder. Sikandar Lodi also came and stood listening, and asked forgiveness of the Master. The gates were opened, and for the sake of the Master everyone was set at liberty.

Nanak at Jagannath.

The priests of the temple began their hymn to their God. In a huge salver they put many little lamps of ghee, the pearls of the temple, and the offerings and incense : and all stood to offer it to God. There were priests that held each one a feathery chowrie in his hand and stood at the back of the enshrined god to fan it. The priests began the ceremony, but the Guru paid no heed. After the ceremony, the priests were very angry with him. Then came Guru Nanak's voice like the voice of God, and all stood listening dumb as cattle.

Here Nanak sang his famous hymn, when the night was rich with her stars in full glow.

ARTI

(Hymn of Praise)

The whole Heaven with its myriad lights goes round
and round my Beloved !
The little stars are pearls !
The winds fan him,
And there rises in His temple the Incense from the
hearts of a million flowers,
The endless music of creation resounds !
A million eyes hath my Beloved !
And yet no mortal eyes !
A million Lotus feet are His.
And yet no mortal feet !
I die with joy of the perfume of His presence !
His flesh emits a million perfumes !
Add yet He hath no scent !
He is the Light of Life,

By the beams of His face the stars burn bright,
 And He is the soul of everything,
 My Arti is my waiting for things to be as He willeth.
 When the master comes and stands, by Divine Light
 is revealed !

The Moon of His lotus feet draws me like a thirsty
 sarang whose thirst daily increases.

O Gon ! come and bend on my Thy saving glance,
 And let me repose for ever in Thy Holy, Holy

o Naming Thee.

Nanak and Nur Shah of Assam.

Guru Nanak was in Assam in the city of Nur Shah, a woman of black magic, who excercised strange powers over all that locality. She fascinated and subordinated many by her spells, compelling them to dance to her tunes. She owned the whole country around, and many a mystic and many a celibate and Yogi had fallen into her snare.

Mardana went into the city to get some bread for himself, and he fell a victim to the machinations of the slaves of Nur Shah. They fed him, worshipped him, but "make him a lamb." They put him under their spell, and he without water and he ate without bread. Mardana was thus imprisoned in the spell of black magic of Nur Shah, and could not return to the Guru. Guru Nanak went to search for his Mardana, and found a lost disciple in Nur Shah also. She came at last and renounced her magic at the Guru. All her slaves were set free, and she obtained her freedom in the Song of of Nam.

Nanak and the King of Sangladip.

The Master went to the city of the King Shivnabh. Shivnabh had been pining to see the Master. A disciple Mansukh had already gone there from Guru Nanak's Panjab, and his personality had stirred the surrounding country. The whole royal family, after the King's years of sadness, entered the path by the kindness of the master. The mystic words once uttered by the Master, here, are not fully understood as the chronicles put them, but they are clear and most significant. Shivnabh said : "Sir: What do you eat?" "I eat of man." Shivnabh brought a man to him, "No I eat of the son of king, not of a poor man." The king brought his own son. The family collected together : the Master would verily eat the prince such was the wild thought they had of the Master. The wife of the prince was addressed by the Master "He is yours, not of the king who gives him to me. Do you agree to give him up." "Yes," said the princess; "with all my heart if the Master wants him for his service." Nanak closed his eyes and all sat together in the sweetest rapture of Nam. All were there and remained there but when they opened their eyes Nanak had gone! He had "eaten" of the prince ; who was thence forward a Disciple, and not a king,

Nanak and Babar's Invasion of India.

(Sung at Bhai Lallo's but long before the invasion of Babar.)

Listen, Bhai Lallo !

Lallo ! I say, as He says to me,

The darkness of Sin has spread around.

Both the Mohammedan and the Hindu are masks of Sin.

The Lie is sitting on the Throne !

I see the Bridal Procession of Sin start from Kabul and engulf the country in sorrow !

Lallo ! There will be sung a wedding song red with blood, And human blood will fall on the hands of the new brides !

He alone knows how things come about;

But Lallo ! a great calamity cometh !

The heaps of flesh—clothes will be torn into rags !

They will come in Seventy-eight, and in ninety-three they will go.

When He will rise—the Mard Ka Chela—the disciple of Man.

And scatter the hosts of darkness,

And strike the False with Truth, and the Truth shall triumph at last !

Translated from Guru Grantha Sahib)

Nanak saw the massacre of Saidpur. Babar was marching through the Panjab, and was ruthlessly destroying everything before him. We have in Guru Grantha, Nanak lament for his people and country, which he uttered on that occasion :

I

“Save Thy people, my Lord !

Save them at any of Thy doors,

The soul of the people is on fire,

Send down Thy mercy, Lord !

Come out to them from any direction as it be Thy pleasure,

Save the people, my Lord,
At any of Thy numerous doors !”

II

“O, Master Divine! To-day Khurasan is Thine ! why
not India ?

The Moghal cometh as Yama towards India, and who
can blame Thee ?

We only say it is the Moghal, the Yama, coming towards
us !

O Beloved ! How many Thy people have been brutally
slain ?

Is it not all pain inflicted on Thy heart ?

Thou art the husband of all, Thou feelest for all !

If power strikes power, it must be witnessed in dumb
helplessness;

But I do complain when the tigers and wolves are let
loose as now upon the herds of sheep.

O Beloved ! Thou canst not endure the tyrant of a
conqueror that wasteth the jewels of life thus, and
prideth himself on his power, seeing not his death
nor what cometh after death.

O Master ! It is all Thy strange dispensation !

Thou bringest us together, and severest us; in Thee

We meet, and in Thee we separte from each other!

They call themselves kings, and they do as it pleaseth
them.

But Thou seest, my Lord !

Thou seest even the little insect that crawlth, and Thou
contest the corn he swalloweth with his little mouth!

A hundred blows of death come and strike, and yet the
tyrant knoweth not Thy will !”

The Message of Saidpur

III

'There lie, rolling in dust, the honoured heads of the beautiful women of the palace; their hair-dressing still moist with perfumed wax, and the sacred vermilion-mark still wet on their forehead !

The swords of Babar have clipped their heads without a thought, and their tresses lie scattered in dust, no one can say whose heads are these !

How strange is Thy dispensation, Lord, ! How strange Thy visitation !

These women adorned the bright halls of pleasure once and new brides sat with their bridegrooms.

And they were once swinging in swings of love, the lucky ivory bangles shook on their arms, and their feet made music as they walked.

There was a day when the old mothers of the families came and drank water after having touched the heads of the new brides with their golden vessels; drinking health and joy to their wedded life, and drinking all evil from off their heads—so great was the welcome given them !

They are dried grapes and nuts and dates, and their homes were resplendent with the leisure of passion and youth !

To-day the some brides walk along the highways; their pearl necklace broken, and halters round their necks: as poor mean captives led !

Youth and Beauty are deemed foes !

The mere slaves of Babar march them forth in utter disgrace and filth !

It is Thy will, Lord ! Thou givest and Thou Takest away !

Thou rewardest and Thou chatisest as Thou willest.

O people ! If you had not cheated yourselves in pleasure !

O people ! If ye had not turned your back in truth !

The Baber's cohorts are rolling over the land now and and there is no escape !

The people cannot eat in peace, nor can they bathe nor offer food to their gods !

No women can sit and cook, nor anoint themselves with tilak on their foreheads !

There it no leisurely life now; It is all confusion and death !

They only see their ruined homes, their widowhood and orphaned life, they sweep and cry and wail !

Ah ! what can the people do if such be His will ?

And who can be spared if it be net His will ?

The Master and the Cohorts of Baber.

The cohorts of Babar had razed Saidpur to the ground; and; as the Master says, there lay in the dust the fairy heads of the beautiful woman, with their dressing of that morning still moist with perfumed wax. He saw the sacred vermilion parting on their foreheads – the auspicious sign of wedded life – with feeling of a wounded father. He was unwilling to leave the people that the Baber's made soldiery had taken captive. He, too, was caught by them, and pressed into service. They

put a heavy load on his head, and his minstrel was made a groom. The Guru called him and said; 'Touch the strings of your rebec, Mardana ! For the song comes from Heaven. Let go the horse.' The horse followed Mardana, and Mardana followed the Guru, and the music came as the shower of cooling rain to the thirsty people. The miserable crowd heard the celestial hymns, and everyone forgot his distress.

Baber came and listened and said, "I see god in the face of this holy man !"

He wcu'd be Emperor of India approached, and asked if he could do anything for the Guru

"I need nothing from you," said the Guru. "Set at liberty, if you please, these people, who have been wantonly oppressed "

All were set at liberty forthwith.

Nanak and the Emperor Baber.

Baber took Nanak to his tent and offered him a glass of wine. "My cup is full." said Nanak. "I have drunk the wine of His love !"

And these winged words of Nanak carried Baber away to the celestial Realms. He would be emperor of India saw in His presence the true Empire of Pure Beauty. Never did a prince or a peasant meet Guru Nanak in vain !

Nanak and Mardana.

Mardana was his Mohammedan minstrel. He first met Guru Nanak at the time of the latter's marriage. Mardana came and asked the bridegroom for a gift. The master gave him the gift of Divine song, and said, "Wait

till I call you." Mardana was called, and he never felt the presence of the "Bridegroom". When he died, his children took his place in the service of the Guru. To this day his off-spring sing the Master's songs in the Sikh temples. But old love is passing its place is not filled.

Mardana is the Master's rebec player and companion with all the wit and humour of the Panjabi Minstrel. Mardana is blunt philosopher "O Guru! you live in Heaven's breath and whispers, but we men need food and raiment. Please leave these forests, and let us go to the haunts of men, where we may get something to cure hunger." The daily accounts of his hunger and thirst, related with all the confidence of his supreme love for the Guru, are genuine items of prayer which a child of man can utter to his God. After all we need no more than a loaf of bread now and then. The name Mardana was so much on the Master's lips that we cannot think of Guru Nanak apart from Mardana, playing by his side on his rebec. "Mardana play the rebec, the music of Heaven cometh." This is the first line of almost every hymn of Guru Nanak.

Under the stars, under trees, on the roadside, in forests, and on the eternal snows of the highest mountains in central Asia, the Guru sang his hymns. In his discussions with the countless varieties of Indian and Eastern mystics and faqirs, the Hindu and the Moslem, the Yogi and the ascetic, the royal and the poor, in a thousand different studies of man and nature, in a deep association of silence with life and labour and love with death.

Guru sang his soul out, as the rebec of Mardana played trembling beyond itself.

When Mardana is afraid, Nanak smiles and says :
 "Mardana ! have faith. Keep kalm; see the works of the beloved ! Wait and thou shalt see what God does !"

Nanak and His Wheat Farms at Kartarpur.

Guru Nanak started wheat farms at Kartarpur the town of Kartar (Creator) as he called it. His people came and worked with him in the fields. The Guru took keen delight in sowing wheat and reaping the Golden harvests: he was of the people. Once again his stores were open to them. The bread and water were ready for all at all hours of the day and crowds came and freely part took of the Guru's gifts. All comers were filled from the Guru's treasury of thought and love and power; the diseased and distressed were healed by him.

He was an old man then; and loved to see the crowds of God's disciples coming from the distant Kabul and Central Asia and Assam and southern India—all the places where he had been in his younger days.

In the trackless world of that time, the old Father of his people travelled on foot singing his Hymns of Nam and gathering every trace of love. The Afghan and the Biloch, the Turk and the Tartar, the Sufi and the Brahman, the white and the dark races, mingled in his great heart. The disciples, both men and women, came from all directions, and took part freely in the song of the Guru.

So great was the reverence of his own country for him that Pir Bahauddin, the great Sufi Teacher who counted his followers by thousands, one morning sudden'y, turned his back on Qaaba (which no Moslem would do), and began bowing, in his Namaz, in the direction of Kartarpur, "Why so?" cried his faithful followers, in alarm. "This morning I see the light of God in this direction, my friends!" said he.

Nanak and Brother Lehna.

(Lehna in our vernacular means 'the dues to be collected,' and it also happened to be the name of a great man of the Panjab.)

Lehna was a flame-worshipper. There was flame within his soul, so he loved nothing but flame. He would go up the Kangra hills to worship flame—the flame of the valcano: called, by the primitive villagers, the Goddess Durga i.e., the lion riding goddess of the great Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses. The flame, as it came up from the valcano, seemed to leap into his sou'; he burned more than ever with love of the Divine Flame. He was beautiful and godlike, a leader of the Durga-worshippers in those days. He would light for himself, while in the privacy of his sanctuary, a little lamp of ghee, and would watch the little flame for hours devotedly, and then, slowly rising, go round it in sacrifice, and suddenly begin to dance in rapture round the little flame. One day he heard of Nanak, and the name fascinated him. He was on his way to Kangra, when he stopped to see the Master at the Town of God. Nanak asked him his name; and when he replied that his name was Lehna. the Guru said:

"Welcome, Lehna ! You come at last, I am to pay your *lehna*." After that Lehna never left Nanak. His companions, worshipers of goddess, went on their way, beating their cymbals and ringing their bells as usual. The flame of his little lamp in the silver plate waited for him at home, and departed with the night.

Beyond all expression was the love on each side between Lehna and Guru Nanak. The heights Budha attained by his almighty struggle, Lehna attained through love. Lehna entered Nirvana in his love of the Master. Everything else that can be thought or seen was very small for Lehna beside his love for the Guru. Nanak in this divine statue of love, chiselled his own image. He saw in it his eidolon, his transfigured self and bowed down to it.

The Saffron-Anointings :

Lehna was the son of a very rich man, and he used to dress in yellow silk of Bukhara. One day he came from his native place to see the Guru, and went to the field where the Guru was working. The Guru put a heavy load of wet grass on the head of Lehna, who then followed the Guru home, the mud dripping from the wet grass and stained his silken clothes. As they entered the house the Guru's wife said with great concern : "Sire ! see how his fine clothes are stained with mud !" Guru Nanak looked back and said, "Mud ! Seest thou not, good lady ! He bears the burden of suffering humanity. They are not mud stains, they are sacreg saffron-anointings ! The Heaven anoints him, he is a Guru."

Nanak and his departure from this planet

The disciples and saints assembled. Bright was the day and beautiful the hour of his departure.

“Assemble, ye comrades,
And sing the song of his praise !
Anoint the Bride
And pour oil on her forehead,
And pray together,
The Bride may meet her Lord !”

Guru Nanak left the earth amid a chorus of song :
“They search for the Master in vain who search him on
this earth.

The old father of his people is not to be found,
Neither in the grave nor in the cremation flame;
He is in the heart of Guru Angad.”

Brother Gurudas, a disciple sang :

“Heaven heard at last the prayers of the people,
Guru Nanak descends on earth !
The Disciples meet him and drink the nectar of his
lotus-feet !

In Kaliyuga (*this dark age*) we realize the Divine,
All the people are the people of God,
Guru Nanak makes all the castes one caste of man !
The rich and the poor combine in one brotherhood.
From this Founder of humanity, a new race of love goes
forth :

Nanak bows down to his disciple.
The Master and the disciple are one !

He is the Father of His people,
 His song of Name is our life for ages !
 Nanak comes, the worlds are lighted.
 Wherever the Guru goes, the golden temple of worship
 fellows him !

Whatever mound or earth he puts his foot on is our
 Shrine.

The tree he sits under is our Temple.
 The far-famed seats of Sidhas (*Yogis and adepts*) change
 their names, and the yoga-houses become the Guru-
 houses !

The temples of all the creeds seek refuge in him !
 Humanity resounds with his hymns, and all is divine !
 The Guru goes in all directions, seeking his own, all over
 the face of the earth.

He makes our hearts his gardens of love and peace.
 And rivers flow in us singing his his song !"
 Another says :

"The dead rose out of their graves.
 As they heard the song of Guru Nanak.
 He healed us by showering on us the sparks of Divine
 Fire !

The veils were lifted up, and the disciples went freely in
 and out of the door of death, in concourse of song
 with the Immortals !

Nanak the Master, sowed the seed of Nam in the hearts
 of men :

And the fields are ripe with the golden corn.
 The harvests shall come and the harvests shall pass.

But the seed is of God and is growing !
 He gave him His own love, His own face and name and
 soul,
 He gave him His own throne in the hearts of men.
 Called him "Born of my lions," and made another Nanak
 on this earth !
 This is Nanak the Master, the Spirit of God, that fashions
 Himself for ever in the imge of man !
 The harvests shall come and the harvests shall pass,
 But the seed is of God and is growing.

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