

Guru Nanak Re-interpreted

BY
NARAIN SINGH

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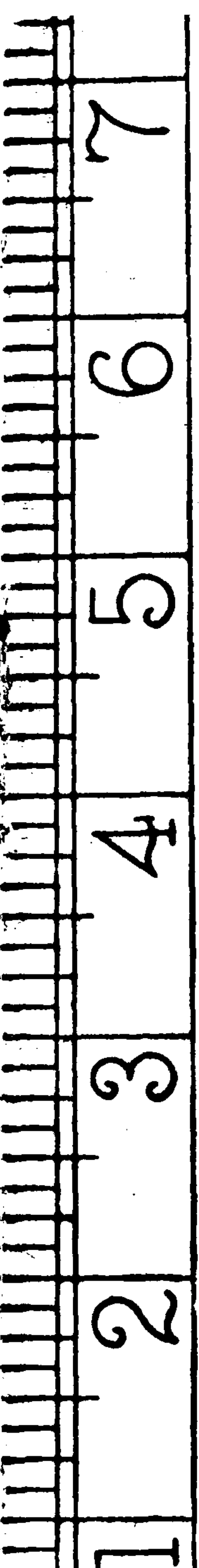
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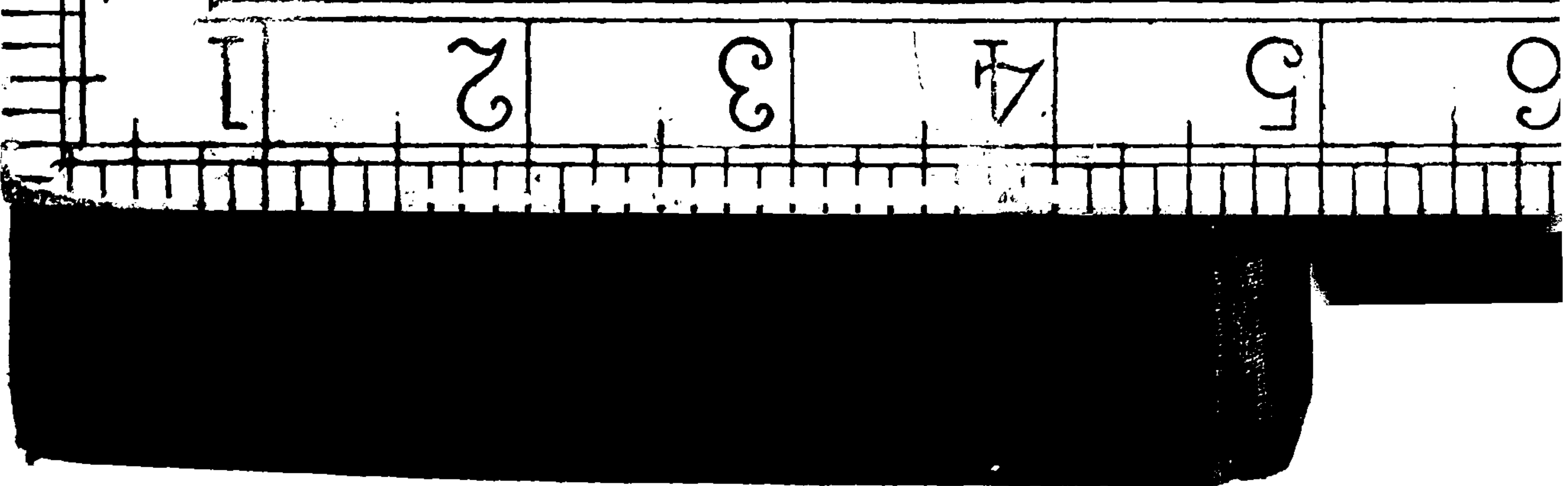
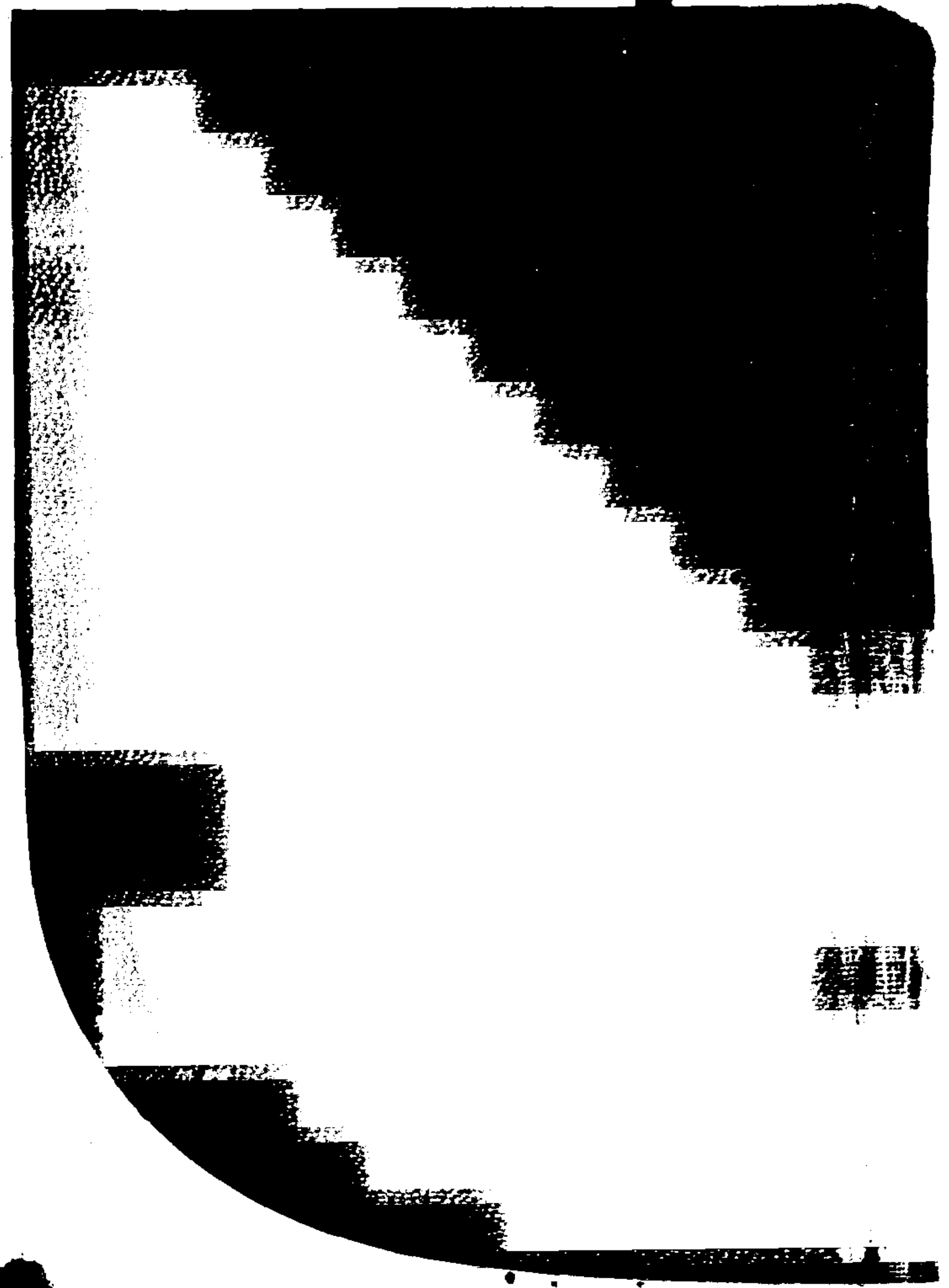
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RITIKA 999



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Guru Nanak Re-interpreted

at the life of

By

NARAIN SINGH

With Best Compliments

from:-

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Dedicated with utmost humility and profound reverence
To all those who believe in the Religion of the Formless
One and so aim at the life of the Spirit and employ the
outer form, the symbol or the label for the enrichment
of that life.

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Errata

The errors or misprints given below are a selection of only such of them as cannot be considered as quite insignificant. The reader is requested to enter the corrections before actual reading is taken up.

Page	Line	Error	Correction
16	17	in it	Delete
75	last line	eh	he
115	25	ਤਨੁ	ਤਨੁ ਖੇਤੁ
134	8	know	known
135	17	requerted	requested
138	16	armie's	armies
192	13	ਬਲਾਸਪਤਿ	ਬਨਾਸਪਤਿ
197	18	ਤਹਿਉ...ਗਇਆ	ਰਹਿਉ...ਰਾਇਆ
199	7	wich	which
204	9	religions	religious
210	21	dross	cross
215	16	ਅਕੂਘਣਾ	ਅਕੂਅਣਾ
215	23	priceless	priceless jewel
257	11	so were	were so
268	last line	ਧੜਿ	ਧੂੜਿ
269	9	ਸਰਤਿ	ਸੁਰਤਿ
273	2	ਪਵੈ	ਪੜੈ
299	26	ਬਾਨੁ	ਬਾਨੁ
312	8,9	ਸਮੁੰਰੁ, ਖੁਬੇ	ਸਮੁੰਦੁ, ਖੁਬੇ
322	21	bidden	hidden
324	19	ਜਿਵਰਾਤ	ਸ਼ਿਵਰਾਤ
331	6	ਪਰਜ ਤੰਤ	ਪਰਮ ਤੰਤ
339	9	ਇਹੇ ਜਾਇੰਦਾ	ਇਹੇ ਭਾਇੰਦਾ
344	13	redely	rudely
351	23	ਬਿਰੁ	ਬਿਰੁ
410	18	Homer	Home

Introduction

THE IMAGE OF THE GURU

(What he was and what he was not)

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਿਟੀ ਧੁੰਧ ਜਗ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਆ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਕਰ ਸੂਰਜ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਤਾਰੇ ਛਪੇ ਅੰਧੇਰ ਪਲੋਆ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾ : ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

i.e. “With the brilliant advent of Nanak, the true Guru, the mist (of ignorance and sham) disappeared from the world and light spread everywhere as with the rising of the sun, the stars are dimmed and the darkness is dispelled.”

Var Bhai Gurdas.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was born, about five centuries ago, in a small village of the Punjab,

in an out of the way place and in a comparatively humble home. Yet God had willed that he should be the Guru of all mankind. He was destined to play the role of a saviour and a guide to the erring people of all ages. People often asked him what his name was and what religion, denomination or sect he belonged to. Every time he humbly replied that people called him Nanak Nirankari (Nanak of the Formless One), which meant that he belonged to Him who had no form and who was beyond time and space. To the question as to where he had come from and where he was going, his reply significantly was that he had come from God and was going to Him. Such a man could not confine himself to a particular place or to a particular people. His outer appearance confirmed that he was above all narrow loyalties. In Mecca he was dressed in a long blue coloured robe and looked like a Muslim pilgrim. He had a staff in hand and a collection of his own hymns under his arm. He carried a cup for his ablutions and a carpet upon which to sit for prayer purposes, in the fashion of a Muslim devotee. He even shouted the Muslim call (Azan) to prayer. In other places he appeared to be a Hindu and joined Hindus in the worship offered by them. When he met the Yogis he had put off the pilgrim's dress and had donned the householder's garments. During his tours to the eastern regions of the country he wore a jacket and had a hat on his head in the fashion of Muslim pilgrims. But simultaneously he had a saffron mark, the symbol of Hindu faith, on his forehead. When he was on his tours to the south he looked most odd. He had sandals of wood on his feet, rolls of ropes about his head, a necklace of bones round his neck

and carried a begging bowl in one hand and a staff in the other. He deliberately did it to appear non-attached to this or that people, race, community, creed or country. He was to become the synthesis of all that was good and true, cutting across all narrow loyalties. His message, therefore, could not be confined to a particular time or to the place of his birth, though undoubtedly, he was the product of his age and had come at a time when the land was plunged in complete chaos—political, religious, moral, social and economic—and had before him the terrible picture of people sunk to the depth of degradation. History bears testimony to the fact that the times which produced him were the darkest, indeed Lodhi dynasty was reigning in name only. Actually it had broken up and was unable to afford any consolation to the people groaning in the midst of uninterrupted scenes of bloodshed and tyranny. Politically the country was hopelessly weak and disorganised and attracted outsiders for its riches and beauty. The Guru has himself described the state of affairs in four words,

“ਰਾਜੇ ਸ਼ੀਂਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥” ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“*Kings are tigers and their officials dogs.*”

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

Again,

“ਕਲਿ ਹੋਈ ਕੁਤੇ ਮੁਹੀ ਖਾਜ਼ ਹੋਆ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ ”

ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘*O my Lord, What evil times have come ! Men have faces like dogs that eat carrion.*’

Guru Nanak in Sarang

Again,

“ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਥ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥
ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ ॥
ਹਉ ਭਾਲਿ ਵਿਕੁੰਨੀ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਆਧੋਤੇ ਰਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“This Kal Age is a drawn sword, kings are butchers and justice hath fled. In this dark night of utter falsehood, the moon of truth is never seen to rise. I am bewildered and in this darkness know not the way.”

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

The people had lost their moorings. They were poor, illiterate and fed on superstition. The inhuman and debasing treatment they received at the hands of the rulers had killed their self respect. In fact, they had become too weak to offer even a protest. The Hindu corporate life had completely disappeared due to the rigidity of caste distinctions. People were compelled to follow the callings in terms of the castes bequeathed to them from their forefathers and this resulted in disunity and distrust of each other. Religion had become a matter of ceremonies, formalities, ritualism and a superficial worship of idols, gods and goddesses. The lowering of religious values and the moral deterioration into which both Hindus and Muslims, the two main religious communities of the land, had fallen were described by Bhai Gurdas thus :—

“ਚਾਰ ਵਰਨ ਚਾਰ ਮਜਹਬਾ ਜਗ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੈ ॥ ਖੁਦੀ ਬਖੀਲੀ
ਤਕਬਰੀ ਖਿਚੋਤਾਨ ਕਰੇਨ ਧਿਛਾਣੈ ॥ ਗੰਗ ਬਨਾਰਸ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਮਕਾ ਕਾਹਬਾ

ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੇ ॥ ਸੁੰਨਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਵੂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੋਭਾਣੇ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ
ਭੁਲਾਇ ਕੇ ਮੋਹੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਦੁਨੀ ਸੈਤਾਣੇ । ਸਚ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਰਹਿਗਿਆ ਖਹ ਮਰਦੇ
ਬਾਹਨਣ ਮਉਲਾਣੇ ॥ ਸਿਰੋਂ ਨਾ ਮਿਟੈ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

“The Muslims and the Hindus were broken up into four sects and four castes. Enwrapped in pride, jealousy and arrogance they entered into aimless conflicts. The Hindus recognised as sacred the Ganges and Benaras while the Muslims recognised Mecca and Kaaba. Islam was reduced to mere circumcision while Hinduism was reduced to a frontal mark and the sacrificial thread (i. e. mere outer form of religious life remained and the path of God was forgotten) Although Ram and Rahim represented the same God yet in ignorance and superstition His worshippers had diverged along two paths. They had forgotten altogether the teachings of their Holy Books—the Vedas and the Quran—and were beguiled by the Satan into ways of avarice and attachment. Truth was thrown aside, the Brahmins and the Mullahs destroying each other, in disputatious squabbles. So the cycle of births and deaths was inescapable.”

Thus the licentiousness of the rulers and the abject slavery, moral depravation and spiritual wretchedness of the ruled had created a situation in which sensitive people could find escape only in renouncing the world with all its responsibilities. The country was sunk to such low depths of moral degradation and utter helplessness that Mahmud Ghaznavi, in his crusade of loot and destruction,

invaded India seventeen times without ever meeting any resistance worth the name.

When the Guru met the Yogis, they asked him,

“ਫਿਰ ਪੁਛਣ ਸਿਧ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਾਤ ਲੋਕ ਵਿਚ ਕੇ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

“The Yogis asked him how the mother country was doing ”

Var Bhai Gurdas

The Guru's reply, full of anguish, speaks volumes and is the truest testimony to the actual state of affairs obtaining then.

“ਬਾਬੇ ਕਹਿਆ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਸਚ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਫੂੜ ਅੰਧਾਰਾ ”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘The moon of truth hath fled and there is utter darkness’

Var Bhai Gurdas

Bhai Gurdas describes the whole situation in just four words,

“ਪਾਪੇ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ॥ ”

i.e. *‘sin reigned supreme’*

The gist of his narrative on the subject is that man's ideas and aspirations were the lowest then. The world, fascinated by Maya, was lost in wilderness. Goodness had no longer any attraction for men. They were burning

themselves in egotistic pursuits and had no respect for each other. Kings were unjust and nobles were butchers, and they held knives to men's throats. Peace had fled from the smiling earth which seemed filled with tearful eyes of the afflicted humanity. In fact, all seemed lost for the time being.

Shri Krishna had said "Whenever there is decay of righteousness I come for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil and for firmly establishing Dharma on earth. I am born from age to age."

When men acquire demonic propensities resulting in complete moral and spiritual stagnation, He sends a seer or a Prophet to destroy the wicked, to uphold the virtuous and to re-establish Dharma upon the earth. The seer is the product of the age and in God's scheme of things plays the role of a redeemer. Bhai Gurdas said the same thing poetically thus :

“ਸੁਣੀ ਪੁਕਾਰ ਦਾਤਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਠਾਇਆ ।”

i.e. “God, the benefactor, heard the cry of suffering humanity and sent Guru Nanak to the world.”

The Guru was thus destined to fulfil God's high purposes. But he repudiated in unmistakable terms all theories of incarnation of God, in the popular sense. Of course, all embodied life can, in a way, be considered as His incarnation, for God resides in every human soul. But one who had realised Him and had become one with Him, as the Guru had become, was in this sense, most certainly, the perfect incarnation. Self realisation and

God realisation are identical terms. When God's light enters the soul of a man, it is correct to say that God had taken birth in Him. The phenomenon of such a birth is not an exceptional historical event confined only to a particular period or place but takes place off and on, in every age, to guide and serve humanity. There was certainly a Rama, the son of Dasratha, a historical figure. But there is a Rama that resides in every heart. It is this Rama that can produce revolution in every soul and in all ages.

“ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਭੈ ਕਹਹਿ ਸੋਈ ਕਉਤਕਹਾਰ”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘The name of Rama is uttered by all yet the Supreme Rama can produce revolutions in every heart.’

Shalok Kabir

When awakening takes place in the soul, it merges in it in God and then the individual soul and God become one. This is how God takes birth for the regeneration of man-kind. Mohammed said, he was the last Prophet. Orthodox Christians affirm that Jesus was the final self-manifestation of the Divine. The Hindus also hold a similar Avtar theory. But neither Mohammed nor Jesus nor Rama nor, for that matter, even Guru Nanak, could be regarded as closing the door for future revelations. Who can impose a limit on the limitlessness of the Divine? Rama or Christ cannot be limited to the Historic personalities of Rama or Christ. It is He, the Eternal Being, who takes birth in men whenever they are inwardly united with Him. There is hidden in every soul the Divine

spark which when kindled becomes a flame that burns out self or Ego resulting in Union with the Supreme and this can happen at any time. The Guru did not claim for himself anything more than a human being. He had the apprehension of the usual tendency among followers to deify the founder of their religion and to regard him as God or as a superhuman power and therefore he told his listeners that God was one and was unborn (Ajuni) and so all other supposed creative agencies like Brahma or Maya and all seers and prophets, however highly conceived, should be considered insignificant, in the context of the Supreme Reality.

“ਸੋ ਮੁਖ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ।”

ਭੈਰਉ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

i. e. ‘*May thy tongue be burnt that says God taketh birth*’.

Guru Arjan in Bhairon

He had founded his faith on his revelations or on his illuminations i. e. on the knowledge revealed to him in the highest consciousness of the self merging in the Universal Self. As a matter of fact, all knowledge the world has, is the product of a contemplative spirit. But it becomes perfect only if it comes through a perfected, enlightened being. It is true to say that all religions are the reflections of the experiences of their founders. But when unity with Him is attained it is only then that the inner voice becomes the Voice of God. When realisation comes to a person it brings with it every thing good, true and beautiful. Then it is something personally experienced by him and when he

reveals it to others he is regarded by them as a seer or a prophet. Whoever is thus led by the spirit of God is the son of God or is His Prophet or is the Messenger of God. Kabir says he is the child of Allah Ram because he is devoted through and through to Him and to the spiritual realisation that had come to him through Him. This means in other words that all prophets and Avtars who had merged in God had become one. Then it is always the Supreme Spirit who is incarnated whether in Rama or in any other holy person. It is this same Spirit that was made concrete and personal in Guru Nanak.

To emphasise and clarify this aspect of incarnation we may quote from the Holy Granth. The bard (bhat) Kal says about Guru Angad,

“ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਜਨਿਕ ਰਾਜਾ ਅਉਤਾਰੁ ।”

“Thou art the incarnation of king Janak”

Again, he says about Guru Arjan.

“ਗੁਰੁ ਅਰਜੁਨੁ ਕਲਚਰੈ ਤੈ ਜਨਕਹ ਕਲਸੁ ਦੀਪਾਇਉ ॥”

“The bard Kal says, ‘O Guru Arjan, thou hast enhanced the glory of Janak’”.

Again, the same bard says about Guru Nanak.

“ਤ੍ਰੇਤੈ ਤੈ ਮਾਨਿਉ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਘੁਵੰਸੁ ਕਹਾਇਉ ॥

ਦੁਆਪਰਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ਕੰਸੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਾਰਥੁ ਕੀਉ ॥”

i. e. *“In the Treta Age thou wert called the Rama, of Raghu clan. And in the Duapar Age thou, incarnated as Krishna, delivered Kans”.*

The bard Mathra clinches the whole matter by saying about Guru Arjan thus,

“ਭਨਿ ਮਥੁਰਾ ਕਛੁ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਤਖ ਹਰਿ ।”

“*Mathura says, ‘Guru Arjan is clearly God Himself’*”

So Janak, Rama, Krishna, God and the Gurus may be considered all as one because whoever had attained unity with God had become indistinguishable from Him. It is only one way of saying that the spiritual loftiness associated with Rama, Krishna or Janak, conceived as symbols of perfection on achieving unity with God, had entered into Guru Nanak, because he had become one with Him. In this way, Guru Nanak was verily the incarnation of God, though mythologies woven round him are often interpreted too literally and therefore, basically, quite off the mark. The Guru never attributed to himself the attributes of the Supreme Lord in the absolute sense. He should be considered as the most perfect human being and so the truest Guru. Bhai Gurdas’s description of him is most apt. He calls him Gurmukh (mukhi Guru) i.e. the greatest Guru.

“ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਕਲਿ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਆ ।”

“*The Greatest Guru was born in the Kal Age*”

He was the Avtar, the Prophet or the True Guru because he had realised Him and had merged in Him.

“ਸਤਿਪੁਰਖੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ।”

ਰਾਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

"The true Guru is one who hath realised the True One"

Guru Arjan in Gauri

He had made his vision of God into a concrete reality. It is true that in an age of sin, suffering and darkness when evil forces had attained dominance, he appeared on the Indian scene as its Guru or a redeemer. But it will be too narrow to suppose about such a person that he was intended by Providence to serve only a particular people of a particular Age. He was God's servant and was meant for all people of all ages.

"ਚੜਿਆ ਸੋਧਨ ਧਰਤ ਲੁਕਾਈ ।"

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

i. e. *"He set out for the regeneration of all mankind"*

Var Bhai Gurdas

Again,

"ਕਲਿ ਤਾਰਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਇਆ ।"

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

i. e. *'Guru Nanak came in Kal (Dark) Age to save all'*

Var Bhai Gurdas

His message cannot be aged by time. The lustre of its newness and the freshness of the vision behind it must for ever remain.

"ਸਚੁ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਨਾਹੀ ।"

ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i. e. *'Truth is never old'*.

Guru Nanak in Var Ram Kali

At the prime of his life he decided to leave his home. The task before him was full of difficulties and he knew it. He had on the one hand to deal with wicked people and cruel tyrants and on the other to lift humanity, in general, from the morass of utter helplessness into which it had fallen. He was to attack cherished beliefs of ages and to expose superstition, cant, sham of faith and barren ritualism. All this was enormous work, yet he did not give it up in despair. He was humble to the extreme but had confidence in his competence for the task ahead. He, therefore, set out upon his travels to carry the message of hope to every human heart in every nook and corner of the world. He covered the whole of India and then went beyond to Burma, China, Egypt, Tibet, Ceylon, Arabia, Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan and this at a time when facilities of travel did not exist as they do today and the meagre communications that existed were precarious and most unsafe. He met people of different races, creeds and colours and explained to them the problems of life and how to solve them. He moved slowly so that he could stay sufficiently to consolidate his work. His travels are indeed a matchless performance of endurance and missionary zeal. He discussed with people spiritual matters in their own spoken language or dialect, as is evident from his hymns in the Holy Granth. This he did so that spiritual pursuits and consolations of philosophy should be stripped of priesthood, monopoly and isolation and made accessible to every human being without distinctions of caste or creed. He deliberately avoided, so far as possible,

metaphysical subtleties. and learned expressions and preferred simple colloquial words to express himself and these went straight to the heart as being akin to everybody's nature and spirit. Though he did not read in any good school, his utterances are characterised by clarity, charm, rationality, analytical understanding, sweetness and beauty. He could separate skilfully the grain from the chaff and thus transcend all difficulties of comprehension. Yet he dealt with all aspects of human personality, such was his searching survey of things, through a remarkably critical mind. There is a sublime simplicity and naturalness in the questions he poses or in the answers he gives. Yet, if one were to examine closely one would find in those questions and answers high spiritual idealism which throws light on religious, moral and philosophical questions of all times. He had the courage, the presence of mind and, above all, the spiritual and moral wealth of the highest order. He had achieved equableness of mind and serenity of spirit so necessary for the kind of task he had undertaken. He drew people towards him and kept them with him because he loved them, led them gently and affectionately. He knew that he had to attack dearly cherished beliefs and reverently worshipped gods, and that prejudices & beliefs of ages died hard. But he was sure that these could always be changed through love, sympathy and understanding. He spoke sparingly but he had such mastery over the right word at the right place that whatever he said was full of meaning and went straight to the heart. He had to sow the seed of revolution into the hearts of people and knew that if it was properly laid it would germinate and grow up into

a full tree. He was the greatest revolutionary but this revolution was to be brought about not by creating chaos and disorder but by a change of heart. All movements grow and flourish if the heart is converted through methods of love and the adoption of peaceful ways. True religion implies a complete mental revolution, a total overcoming of brute nature and a transforming of it into the human and the Divine. The rest is Avidya (Ignorance) which is spiritual blindness as distinct from intellectual ignorance and is the real cause of bondage and suffering. Release comes through enlightenment and through a life lived in accord with it.

The main theme of his discourses is, of course, God. Whatever the subject before him, he inevitably relates it to God. He explained that man had not only emerged from God but had Him engraved in his soul. He had, therefore, a profound and unbreakable relationship with Him, in whom he lived and had his whole being. Hence it was not possible to live without Him or to ignore Him. Whoever did it, ignored the the law of his own being, cut himself away from his own spiritual self, and thus alienated himself from his own true nature. The result must inevitably be pain and suffering. It means clearly that God was to be realised in one's own soul and this realisation was absolutely necessary if a true and fruitful living was desired.

“ਸੋ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਜੀਵੈ ਕੋਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

i.e. *"The person in whose heart God dwells lives truly. Nanak, others do not live."*

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

It is only when a man is awakened to this realisation that he acquires an equable frame of mind and becomes at peace with himself. So long as his nature is not thus integrated his actions are confused and contradictory. Earthly goods, riches and fame etc. that delight the senses are all hollow things and cannot become the food for the soul. When God is realised it brings with it integration which is a sublime state, the state in which action, thought and word become of one piece. All contradictions of life are automatically resolved. This is true religion and can lead men out of all pain, woes and suffering and fix them in the highest bliss.

There is thus no doubt that the source of inspiration of Guru Nanak everytime and everywhere is God. He is steeped in Him through and through and then everything—birds, rivers, beasts, trees and in fact the whole creation becomes to him holy and sanctified. It is, therefore, that he never indulges in arguments to prove the existence of God. He is ever intensely alive to His Presence in every manifestation of life. His vision had confirmed it and he feels sure that without Him the whole world would crumble instantly into nothingness. This is his mysticism. This is true realisation which is not an intellectual process nor does it come through mere intellectual attainments, nor through the reading of books but through moral purification and discipline and above all through the love of the Name. It must become a personal experience growing out of one's own consciousness through a full surrender and a denial

of the self, entailing an entire and deeply felt dependence on Him. His teachings, therefore, came from the depth of his being. He was in living touch with the Creator and whatever he said, had in it the impress, the authority and the conviction that he spoke God's Word.

“ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥”

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

“O Lalo, I speak as the Divine Word of the Master cometh to me.”

Guru Nanak in Tilang

Again,

“ਇਹੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਤਿਨਿ ਆਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗਤੁ ਸਭੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪

‘This Word cometh from Him who hath created the World.’

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri

In Rag Tilang he declares.

“ਸਚ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖੈ ॥”

i.e. *‘Nanak revealeth the True Word.’*

It is true that he dispassionately examined other religions, the main among them being the religion of his forefathers. Yet he had drawn directly from the Highest Source, the Source from which all others had drawn. We should remember that all philosophic, metaphysical or theological thought and all knowledge people have are a mere pool as compared to that Source which is as endless

as the sea. And mere knowledge may not lead to much.

“ਪੜਿਆ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i.e. ‘A learned man is a fool if he is governed by greed, pride and craving.’

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

Knowledge without personal experience is like the spider's web which may entangle a man in its tentacles without leaving him any way of escape. Learned people often get lost in the maze of metaphysical subtleties and forget the one thing that matters.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਲੇਖੈ ਇਕ ਗਲ ਹੋਰ ਹਉਮੈ ਝਖਣਾ ਝਾਖ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i. e. ‘Nanak, it is only the Reality that matters. Rest is vanity and vexation of spirit.’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

Failure to realise this fact leads to division of men into religious groups quarrelling with one another. Their approach is merely intellectual. It is only a perfected being that can extricate them out of the web thus created by the so-called men of religion and it is here that the Guru's real greatness lies. His songs are revelations which do not come to ordinary mortals but only to those who raise themselves above the level of common humanity, and to a state where they are not liable to error in the reception of the revealed Truth. The shutting of sense organs is the prerequisite for a spiritual perception of this kind.

When sense experience is transcended, the inner eye is opened to the Spiritual Reality and captures the celestial musical notes that come from above.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਅਖੜੀਆਂ ਬਿਅੰਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਡਿਸੰਦੋ ਮਾ ਪਿਰੀ ॥”

ਮਾਰੂ ਡਖਣੇ ਮਹਲਾ ੫॥

‘Those eyes are different, O Nanak, with which my beloved is seen’.

Guru Arjan in Maru,

When the external world is shut up, the splendour behind it becomes visible. It is Divine contact which is the consciousness of higher influences. As a fruit of this vision it is wrong to suppose that the world is negated. Only that what is petty, mean and worthless in it, is thrown off. Then the oneness of the self with the Universal Self or with the whole creation is discovered. It was this kind of vision that had produced the call to the Guru to go out. And when this call came he threw off all worldly attachments and found himself in the midst of the people, rich and poor, high or low, They all were now his first love. He said he was needed in the wide world outside and could not remain at his small home. Even Panjab was too small for him. It is true that he aligned himself more with the poor, without of course, being hostile to the rich. Of his two life long companions - Bala and Mardana - one was a low caste Vaishya Hindu, and the other a low caste Muslim. Both of them were his Bhais (brothers). He always chose to bestow his special attention on those who were forsaken, shunned and segregated as out - castes. This discrimination, he considered, was an affront to human dignity. His warm words, ready

smile and glittering eyes brought hope and cheer to them as also to many others afflicted by this or that trouble. He had to raise the humble and the suffering people through creating in them the power of faith. There are stories and legends of his universal love and kindness. He was intensely human and whoever met him was deeply charmed and impressed by his superb humanity. His greatness and his holiness were visible to all even in his small deeds. His boundless love was reflected in all his performances, major or minor. Whomsoever he met he saw in him the image of God. The ideal of oneness of all life was to be put into practice in actual life. The Guru was the apostle of 'advaitism', the foremost gospel of his religious philosophy. When applied to human beings it meant fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. All were the children of the same father and therefore caste or other distinctions between man and man had no place in God's scheme of things. The congregation he addressed consisted of people of different religious persuasions and social classes and they all sat and ate together in the same row (pangat) in the free community kitchen called the Guru Ka Langar. Each person, he said, emerged from the same Divine Source and therefore people should act in a disinterested way, free from self or egotism and work for the good of all. Vulgar appetites, selfish desires and material interests are a negation of the oneness of human spirit. If God is to come to live in a man, pride must first die.

“ਜਬ ਹਮ ਹੋਤੇ ਤਬ ਤੂੰ ਨਾਹੀਂ ਅਬ ਤੂੰ ਹੀ ਮੈਂ ਨਾਹੀਂ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ॥

“When I am, Thou art not. Now that Thou art

(realised in me), I no longer remain."

Ravidas in Sorath

The law of true living is love and through this law alone could He be realised. To work against it is to sin and to suffer. The doctrine that 'God is love' should be practised in action. A man who can say that he sees his brother everywhere can truly claim that he has seen God. This is real contact with the Transcendental Being. When that happens, God's Divine Presence shines in the world in general and in His humanity in particular and then service of all becomes life's mission ; otherwise whatever one's religion it loses its vitality and creative fire and gets reduced to mere dogmas and formalities. Therefore, the true Test of having discovered Him is love and service. It is thus that one becomes at peace with oneself and with one's surroundings.

With this background of the Guru's thinking, it was quite natural that in all situations, whether in talking to the helpless and needy, or administering to the sick, or suggesting cures to the lepers, he created the impression that God's man had come to deal with them and to serve them. For him there was the Personal God who was to be expressed through love, service and Truth. The same God was devoid of fear (Nirbhau) and devoid of enmity (Nirvair). The Worship of Him thus entailed the relentless pursuit and practice of Truth, Love, Service, in a spirit of complete detachment and without fear or enmity. The care of the poor and the sick and the struggle against injustice wherever it may be springs from such a worship which makes one a true Karma Yogi. But all this can come about if it is

preceded by the living faith in Him, the faith that demands no proof by any extraneous evidence. The proof of it is always in the heart itself and in the conduct and character of the person concerned, the living presence being actually experienced in the mind. It is a testimony which no man can reject as untrue. The Guru felt God within him and there was no need to argue about it.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਰਾ ।”

ਅੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘The Lord of Nanak was clearly visible to him’

Guru Arjan in Asa

When this state is actually reached it must inevitably end in service of all and more of the helpless and the downtrodden. What worth, one may ask, are rituals and ceremonies if they do not enable a person to see God in all. He who clings to the mere letter of the teachings and does not come forward for active service cannot be conceived of as a truly religious person. The Guru was a realist first and foremost. His approach to life was practical having its emphasis on practical achievements in respect of social objectives and measured in terms of moral and spiritual advancement both in private and public life. He worked to cure the world of all its maladies in all spheres of life, the political conditions too receiving his full attention. He told Babar that the test of a good ruler was the amount of service he rendered to the people and the love he got from them. He put his spirituality into things mundane, into material relationships and sanctified them. He applied eternal truths to the daily life and its problems. He stood

for truth, love, light and liberty and proved that with all the frailties the flesh was heir to, it was still possible to rise above human failings and cling to truth in all trials of life. He showed how to live by truth and further that this was more easily achieved as a householder. The last 14 years of his life were spent in Kartarpur as a full-fledged family man. It is a sin, he said, to treat the world as a deception. It is the abode of God and is holy. It is a place where human individual has to attain his fulfilment. Therefore, cravings and desires are not to be destroyed through austere living but transformed. Nor is this body to be treated with contempt as it is the only instrument the soul has for achieving its objective. People wrongly believed that since true existence was nonmaterial, unchangeable and eternal, therefore, temporal existence was untrue and false and the good of man lay not in transforming altogether this world of woe into a heaven but in transcending it and so it was right to turn away from it. That showed an unnatural and morbid condition of mind. Fasts, mental or physical exercises and austere practices could not be considered as ends in themselves, though discipline acquired through them could well be utilised to realise Him and to hear His Voice.

We may refer to another very important aspect of his way of thinking. He approached men of all faiths as one who belonged to them. He revealed to them his Truths by entering into their hearts and touching the finer chords there. His aim always was to destroy all barriers that stood between man and man on the score of religion.

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਭਸੈ ਦੇਇ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

i.e. *"The true Guru is one who uniteth all."*

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag

He believed that all religions were divinely inspired though they, not unoften, pointed different ways of reaching Him, and therefore no one religion should claim exclusive divinity for itself. There was no religion that did not contain some great Truths sufficient to enable the seeker to have the necessary inspiration and spiritual benefit. All religions came from the One Divine Source, of course, in varying degrees of their purity in the process of transmission as also according to the capacity of those through whom they had come. Different religions were thus the various gates through which His Light had emerged. The intensity of the splendour might vary but the nature of the rays was the same. Therefore he never attacked the religious label men had adopted and insisted only on inner life, the thing that really mattered.

"ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਇ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ।"

ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਸਲੋਕ

"It was difficult to be a true Muslim. But if one were really so, let him remain a Muslim."

Guru Nanak in Manjh.

Staunchness in one's own faith is not inconsistent with reverence for every other faith. Also the Universal Truths are accepted and emphasised by all religions even though there may be differences in detail in their applications. In course of time truths get mixed up with excrescences, yet

essentially all religions are one as they all have the capacity to inspire mankind. If that be so it is unwise to quarrel over differences on non-essentials. Truth should, therefore, be considered as a universal thing and not the monopoly of this class or that.

“ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਿਮਾਜ ਓਈ ॥”

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“The temple and the mosque are one. The Hindu worship and the Muslim Nimaz are the same.”

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat

It goes to his everlasting credit that his teachings transcend all narrow loyalties. According to him, all religious intolerance springs from religious pride which often is worse than individual ego. He raised religion from sectarianism to a humanitarian level. His emphasis was on true religious spirit in preference to external forms and ceremonies. If religion is to be lived there can be no place for bigotry or a narrow sectarian outlook. Worship of one God, love of humanity and personal piety were for him the most cardinal things. It is these alone that bear the mark of true religion. He wanted to strengthen people's faith in God and at the same time to raise their moral, ethical and spiritual standards. He was clear that unless the individual's moral fibre was strong, the society would stagnate and perish. So every time he spoke to people it was of God and of the moral and spiritual significance the belief in God entailed. Truth and love were regarded by him as the true principal sides of a

spiritual life. He had in him a combination of perfect purity and perfect wisdom. He knew that when religions get lost in the dry sands of dead rituals, outer forms, mechanical practices and meaningless ceremonies they lose vitality and die. So he consistently tried to mend the false ways into which people had fallen, but this was done through persuasion and kindly advice, by simply highlighting their errors and lovingly winning over their hearts. It was deeds and not labels that would judge men in the next world.

“ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜੋਰ ਹੈ ਆਗੈ ਜੀਉ ਨਵੇ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Here-after caste and power do not count. The soul is, then, in the naked form’.

Guru Nanak in Var Asa.

It seems necessary to point out in this connection that although he insisted so much on moral life he did not consider it as an end in itself but only as an aid to the development of spiritual life. It makes for spiritual insight and is the basis for spiritual advance. It is not possible to by-pass the ethical which alone provides the indispensable means for a spiritual life. But Truth should possess and take hold firmly of the inward nature and not be a mere conformity to outward conduct. It is very much higher than sacrifices, dogmas, rituals and ceremonies. Yet people want fruits of religion and not religion itself which is a hard task master and demands love, humility, service and truthful living.

Let us now pause and think. We have gathered some image of the great Guru Manak and his way of thinking. His great humanity and his unparalleled moral and spiritual grandeur, as revealed through his life and teachings, shed lustre and beauty all around and cannot fail to elevate people in spirit and make them good and happy. Truly, 'a thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' Those who are devoted to him have every right and justification to be proud of him. But when we turn to the current biographies of this great man whom the world had the good fortune to produce, we find incongruities, distortions and muddled thinking about him. He has not been dealt with fairly and there is often utter confusion. It seems that some of the chroniclers either did not understand him or were incapable of comprehending his philosophy of life. A lot of material has been introduced which is clearly unhistorical, incorrect, twisted, illogical and, above all, not in conformity with the Guru's teachings. It is a matter of common knowledge that his biographies originally were written long after his death and at a time when the printing of the present age had not yet come into being. They were then only as manuscripts and therefore could be easily altered, forged and even destroyed. The dark, unsettled and destructive period during which Sikh religion was born and grew and with all the persecution it had to face at the hands of the muslim rulers, the original manuscripts were either lost or tampered with and in this, political motives, religious prejudices and personal inclinations of the writers played no small part. It is true that Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary of four of the Gurus and a great scholar of Sikh philosophy and mysticism and one whose

writings are accepted as a key to the Holy Granth, had sung in his 'vars' (odes) Guru Nanak's glories. But he has dealt mostly with theological and philosophical subjects and has not given a concrete and detailed History of the Guru. In fact, he never wrote any history in the sifting manner of a historian but as a poet devoted to the Guru, aiming to instil, into the Sikhs' minds, devotion and loyalty to the Guru and faith in his spiritual leadership. His writings, are, therefore, not to be interpreted too literally. There may be allegorical or figurative interpretations as in the case of every great poetry including the Guru's own poetry. Also his works were not preserved with that care as should ensure against any interpolations. But whatever little of historical value is in them, it was intended by him mostly to counter the propaganda cleverly carried on by the rival sects led by Prithi Chand, his son Meharban and a section of the Udasis under their influence as also by the Handali sect that had, in fact, done the greatest damage to the Guru's personality. Bhai Gurdas seems to be very much upset by the machinations of these propagandists and speaks out his mind in very bitter and resentful terms. But, even the clarifications he made were later distorted and misinterpreted by those very people to fit them into their own line of thinking.

Prithichand, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev, was deeply offended with the Guru. He had set up a parallel Guruship of his own and his followers had distorted the Janam-Sakhi written, even by Sodhi Meharban. (The original is not traceable upto this day).

The Udasis had earlier followed the lead of Baba Sri

Chand and grew up into a distinct sect antagonistic to the Gurus.

Bidhi Chand, a follower of Handal who himself was a Sikh of Guru Amar Dass, had founded a separate religion. The Handalis had great political influence and they purposely destroyed older accounts in order to give currency to their own fabricated stories and fictitious narratives in the Janam-Sakhi they wrote. And when a manuscript is once destroyed, for whatever reason, all information about true facts is lost for ever. Also in most of these Janamsakhis there is a lot of legendary and incredible mythical material handed down the centuries in a form which cannot be accepted as true. Originally it may have been intended as symbolic in meaning but later it began to be accepted as literally true and in course of time became the holy writ, as it were. It is also admitted that at one time the sikh people grew very anxious about the History of their Gurus as it was clear to them that the 'Minas' (Bhai Gurdas describes the followers of Prithi Chand as 'minas' i. e. hypocrites) had interpolated much incorrect material in the biography. They commissioned Bhai Mani Singh to prepare and complete a trustworthy life of Guru Nanak. In pursuance of it he wrote what is known as Gyan Ratnavali. But after his death copyists were able to introduce ideas repugnant to Sikh teachings.

The most popular Janam-Sakhi is the one, known as Janam-Sakhi by Bala, claiming to have been written at the time of Guru Angad by one, Bhai Paira, at Bhai Bala's dictation. But any body can see that the language does not correspond with the dialect people used at the Guru's

time and is very much more akin to the current Panjabi. Also its original is not traceable.

Kavi (Poet) Santokh Singh has also written a biography called Nanak Parkash. But in a poet's writings particularly when he is also a devotee, colourful and fired imagination can be let loose to exaggerate things and even to create or elaborate stories out of imagination and feelings. Some times poetic details may be dramatised only for effect and are not intended to be taken too literally. The Puratan Janam-Sakhi and the one by Sewa Singh and yet another by Meharban (Guru Arjan's contemporary) are believed to be the most ancient of them but as we have seen above none of them can be depended upon as fully rational, consistent and correct. Meharban's so-called biography is unmentionable. He has created a biography mostly out of his imagination and has given it a new look perhaps to meet demands of his father's parallel Guruship. In many biographies stories were frequently enlarged and interpolated keeping in view only the popularity they could gain among followers, without any regard to truth and these were transmitted from generation to generation resulting in the deplorable mess that we see today. No two copies of the same historical record agree completely with each other. Then the interesting thing is that chroniclers accuse each other of corrupting the true records. Bhai Mani Singh had justly warned against accepting history written by Meharban. Kavi Santokh Singh equally rightly blames Handalis for introducing incorrect legends. Many Historians do not agree even on the existence of Bala, accepted by others as the Guru's life long companion.

There is a controversy among a section of Sikh opinion even on the date and month of the Guru's birth.

So the position is that if one were to read the biographies with care one would meet with hopeless confusion, contradictions and muddled thinking. Some of the writers do not seem to possess a proper mental equipment, a good theological grounding and philosophic knowledge of Gurbani, so very necessary to form a correct image of the Guru's personality. The result is that their accounts are steeped in ignorance and superstition. In respect of geography, no consideration whatever has been given in the Guru's itineraries so that one may find him off and on in impossible situations. Then the details of miracles associated with his name totally confuse and disfigure his personality. But we will have to say a lot about it presently.

Macauliff who wrote recently the History of the Sikh Gurus claims to have followed Janam-Sakhi by Sewa Singh. He is a good intentioned person generally and has improved upon the material before him to some extent. He has admitted that the Guru's History is badly presented. He says that on perusing the current accounts of the life of the Guru he found them overladen with puerile, heterodox and repulsive details. Yet, it is regrettable that he has not produced something very much different from what he found already, nor was he himself able to rise above his own political bias, prejudices and prepossessions. We may illustrate. He has introduced into his chronicle a curious story clearly woven out of political motives. He was working over the idea of insuring Sikh loyalty to the

British Crown and produced, in consequence, the following story :—

When Guru Tegh Bahadar was in Aurangzeb's captivity, and was one day strolling at the top storey of the prison in a casual way he happened to be looking towards the South which was the direction of the private imperial apartments of the queens. The Guru was charged with breach of etiquette and propriety to which the Guru replied that he was not looking towards the queens but in the direction of the Europeans who were coming from beyond the seas to tear the queen's purdah and the king's empire. Macauliff says further what in effect only condemns the Sikh soldiers as traitors to their own country that the above incident later on became the battle cry of the Sikhs under general Nickolson in the assault on mutineers. He does not stop at that but puts it in the mouth of Guru Gobind Singh as having said that the combined army of the English and the Sikhs would become very powerful and the British empire would vastly increase and prosper.

This is how political influence works in creating a record even about the lives of such great persons as Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh were. There is a similar story about Guru Nanak having blessed the kingdom of Babar whom the Guru had actually called in the bazars of Eminabad as jabar (tyrant). This man was really the most cruel genius of the times. Thus we should agree to conclude that the Guru's biographies have not come to us in their original, complete and comprehensive form and these cannot be depended upon for a correct appraisal of the Guru.

Coming back to the subject of miracles, it can be

said quite confidently that the association of miracles with the Guru's name has done greater harm to the Guru's image than distortion of his history, generally. We may state without fear of contradiction that the Guru has been most categorical in asserting that to aspire for any magical or miraculous powers and a display of such powers to other people are both ignoble things and they have absolutely nothing to do with spirituality. Rather they are petty and accursed things, often born out of a hankering for material gains and for self aggrandisement and out of a desire for fame and applause. The Gurus condemned and bracketed them with aspirations for the treasures of the world.

“ਪ੍ਰਿਗ ਸਿਧੀ ਪ੍ਰਿਗ ਕਰਮਾਤੁ”

ਵਾਰ ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥

“Aspirations for super-physical powers and for such occult powers as yield worldly treasures are accursed”.

Guru Amar Dass in Var Sorath

Also such aspirations reveal a morbid mental condition, inclined to think in terms of the violations of the natural laws while God's people should want their acceptance as the unchangeable Will of God. There is thus the basic difference of approach between the two. The Guru calls this approach as something unholy and blasphemous. It is like posing on one's part as God's rival and running counter to His Will. Have not men been accepted as Avtars simply because they could break God's Laws? The Guru's greatness lies not in any so-called supernatural powers but in having attained the highest spiritual stature, attuned to His Will. He asserted that he was in every way as human

as the rest of mankind is. He was made of flesh and bones like others and was subject to the laws of nature and of God. When, for instance, burning sand was poured over the body of Guru Arjan it could not but get scarred and cause pain although he had learnt to withdraw himself from physical pain through a strong spiritual background. Guru Harkrishan was carried away prematurely from the scene of his work through the inflictions of small pox and he made no supernatural attempt to change the course nature had to take. A sword was applied to cut off Guru Tegh Bahadur's head which yielded before it and cheerfully. Not only that. The Gurus had to fight sin like other human beings and had to overcome it. Some of them lived in error for a long time but when they became perfect, sin still came to tempt them but failed to deflect them as they had attained the state of perfection through self discipline and through the same Divine Grace as was available to all other men. They had attuned themselves to the Divine Will by destroying the tiny self or Ego and this was the real miracle of their lives, something of which any one attaining it could be justly proud.

“ਜੋ ਵਰਤਾਏ ਸਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

i. e. *'Whatever He ordains is the right way.'*

Guru Arjan in Gauri

Therefore, when Guru Nanak met the Sidh Yogis and they asked him to show his supernatural powers to prove to them that he had any spiritual greatness; he laughed at them and told them that he had no miracles of the sort

they wanted him to perform.

“ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲੇ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਸਚੁ ਮੁਖਹੁ ਅਲਾਈ ॥
ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਰਾਮਾਤ ਅਸਾਥੇ ਨਾਹੀਂ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

“The great Guru said, ‘Listen, dear sir, to my word. I tell you the truth. I have no miracles to show you except the miracle of the true Name’ ”.

Var Bhai Gurdas

There can be no clearer and more vigorous enunciation of the Guru's position in respect of miracles. It is like declaring solemnly, on oath, that what he said was a perfect truth.

Again he said.,

“ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲੇ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਅਸਾਂ ਵੇਖੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਵਸਤੁ ਨ ਕਾਈ ।
ਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਬਿਣਾ ਦੂਜੀ ਓਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਰਾਈ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

“The great guru said, ‘I have no miracles to show to the Yogis. I depend on nothing beyond the holy congregation and the Guru's Word’ ”.

Var Bhai Gurdas

The claims the Yogis made for having acquired supernatural powers were not all unfounded. Just as outer physical restraints may generate physical powers, so also mental restraints and discipline can produce mental powers. Through concentrations, practice of mental postures and employment of mental and physical exercises, the Yogis claimed to acquire levitational and other extranormal

powers. Even today some people are engaged in making experiments of a similar kind. To develop the sixth sense capable of breaking barriers of time and space, to look into the future or the past by cutting across matter and distance, to cure diseases and mental disorders through auto-suggestions, to send thoughts and messages across long distances, to arrest the movements of the heart, to perform acts against the gravitational pull without any apparent support, to transport an object from one place to another without a visible force, are some of the things that are being made possible today. It can be demonstrated without much difficulty that by giving a powerful auto-suggestion, the mind gets a stimulus and awakens in itself new vital forces lying hidden in the sub-conscious mind and can heal not only hysterical and neurotic but even physical ailments. The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali also confirms that from mortification after the destruction of impurities there arise occult powers of the body and the senses. The Guru never denied the Yogi's claim. But he wanted to emphasise that these things had no power to awaken the soul for its liberation, the only thing that mattered. He emphatically told them,

“ਪਹਰਾਂ ਅਗਨਿ ਹਿਵੈ ਘਰੁ ਬਾਧਾਂ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਸਾਰੁ ਕਰਾਈ ॥ ਸਗਲੇ ਦੂਖ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰਿ ਪੀਵਾਂ ਧਰਤੀ ਹਾਕਿ ਚਲਾਈ ॥ ਧਰਿ ਤਾਰਾਜੀ ਅੰਬਰੁ ਤੋਲੀ ਪਿਛੇ ਟੰਕੁ ਚੜਾਈ ॥ ਏਵਡੁ ਵਧਾ ਮਾਵਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਭਸੈ ਨਥਿ ਚਲਾਈ ॥ ਏਤਾ ਤਾਣੁ ਹੋਵੇ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕਰੀ ਭਿ ਆਖ ਕਰਾਈ । ਜੇਵਡ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇਵਡ ਦਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਦੇ ਕਰੇ ਰਜਾਈ । ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸੁ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“If I could clothe myself in fire and live in a house

of ice with iron only for my food, if I could drink up all pain as if it were water and carry the whole world before me, if I could weigh the sky with a mere copper piece on one side of the scales, if I became so great that I could not be measured and yet could drive all else before my own will, if I possessed such powers as enabled me to do whatever I liked (it would all be vain as compared to the glory of the Name)."

Guru Nanak in Manjh.

It is thus clear that the Guru considered the moral and spiritual development of man as the only real miracle worth performing and this, he asserted, could be brought about by the power of the Name.

“ਜਿਨ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਬਾਰ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

i.e. ‘He (the Guru) made angels of men and this was done in no time.’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

People came to him with all sorts of their problems for solution. Some even wanted him to cure them of their physical and mental ailments. He always told them,

‘ਜਾਉ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਜਪੋ’

i.e. ‘Go and meditate on His Name.’

When he tended the sick and sometimes even cured them of their physical troubles, he did it through the power of the Name by awakening their soul to the unlimited

power hidden within the soul and this power always became operative through the Simran of the Name.

‘ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਠਾਮੁ’

(ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫)

‘The Name is the medicine for all ailments.’

Guru Arjan in Gauri

He was sure that the cure of all ills rested in God and in His Name. In that context, he condemned miracles, charms and mantras in unmistakable terms,

“ਤੰਤੁ ਮੰਤੁ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ।”

(ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫)

‘I attach no value to the trickeries of incantations and mantras (charms). My mind loves to enshrine His Name.’

Guru Arjan in Suhi.

“ਨ ਜੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੈ ਨ ਤੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੈ ਨ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਵਸ ਆਵਈ”

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘The Lord cannot be owned through tantras, mantras or magic.’

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Super-physical powers may be achievements in the material sense but when we remember that there is God in every human soul it is not difficult to realise that tremendous power can be generated through union with Him. Also there resides in every

man the beast i. e. the self or the ego which goes about attired in various forms and tricks people. Sometimes it is sheer greed, or rage and at other times it runs about for fame, wealth or other wordly gains. The desire for supernatural powers is also born out of this lower self and is, therefore, unholy. Here is, then, the clear distinction to be made between the Guru's approach and the Yogis' who underwent rigorous mental and physical discipline for no better purpose than to acquire fame and wordly applause. But Guru Tegh Bahadur refused to save even his life through a display of miracles which he considered too petty and ignoble a thing for a man of God to countenance or even to entertain in his mind.

“ਨਾਟਕ ਚੇਟਕ ਕੀਏ ਕੁਕਾਜਾ । ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਗਨ ਕੈ ਆਵਤ ਲਾਜਾ”

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“God's people are ashamed of indulging in unholy tricks of supernatural achievements ”

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachitar Natak.

It shows littleness of mind that needs to prove any spiritual greatness for itself and that through a show of powers which could be acquired even by ordinary men with no claims on spirituality. It is an act of jugglery. It can also be likened to the pursuit of wealth by people who lose all sense of proportion, dignity and right conduct and are all out for amassing huge fortunes at the cost of inner peace and happiness.

“ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਸਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥”

(ਵਾਰ ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੩)

'To hanker after occult and miraculous powers is a false attachment as it shuts out the love of the Name'

Guru Amar Dass in Wadhans.

Again,

“ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਅਵਰਾ ਸਾਦ ”

(ਜਪੁਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ)

'To run after superphysical powers is an ill-conceived and unwholesome taste.'

Guru Nanak in Japji

Like wealth these powers cannot become the food for the soul and will perish along with the body. They cannot awaken the soul to generate spiritual strength. Birds fly in the air but that does not make them spiritual. Just as mere knowledge with all the powers that come with it may create darkness for the self and thus become an accursed thing, so also, every kind of power that does not touch the soul, brings no strength to it. It is the seeking for God within the soul that enriches the mind and brings infinite power. The Guru has, therefore, only one aim before him—to give to people spiritual awakening. The rest will take care of itself. Here is a hymn to explain what lepers he cured, what sick and blind he healed, what poverty he banished and what kind of wealth he blessed people with. It is always spiritual health, spiritual wealth and spiritual sight.

“ ਪਿੰਗਲ ਪਰਬਤ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰੇ ਖਲ ਚਤੁਰ ਬਕੀਤਾ ॥

ਅੰਧਲੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸੂਝਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਭੇਟਿ ਪੁਨੀਤਾ ॥ ਮਹਮਾ ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਗ ਕੀ ਸੁਨਹੁ

ਮੇਰੇ ਮੀਤਾ ॥ ਮੈਲ ਖੋਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਅਘ ਹਰੇ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਭਏ ਚੀਤਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਐਸੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਕੀ ਕੀਟਿ ਹਸਤੀ ਜੀਤਾ ॥ ਜੋ ਜੋ ਕੀਨੋ ਆਪਨੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਅਭੈ
 ਦਾਨੁ ਕੀਤਾ ॥ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਿਲਾਈ ਹੋਇ ਗਇਓ ਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਮੇਰੁ ਦਿਖੀਤਾ ॥ ਸ੍ਰਮੁ ਕਰਤੇ
 ਦਮ ਆਢ ਕਉ ਤੇ ਗਨੀ ਧਨੀਤਾ ॥ ਕਵਨ ਵਡਾਈ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਉ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਗੁਨੀਤਾ ॥
 ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਮੁਹਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਸ ਰੀਤਾ ॥”

(ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮਹਲਾ ੫)

“The lepers (diseased souls) have scaled the mountains (attained spiritual stature), the ignorant have become orators, the blind (men without moral and spiritual eyes) have been able to see the three worlds through meeting the holy Guru. Such is the glory of association with the Guru-saint; all dirt is washed off, myriads of sins are dispelled and the mind becometh pure. So meritorious is the worship of the Lord that an ant over-powereth the elephant (Humility subdues pride). Whoever is owned by the Lord is blessed with fearlessness. The lion (the haughty person) becometh a cat (meek and submissive), and a mere straw assumeth the height of the mountain (The lowliest are lifted). Those who were striving for a trite become wealthy (Spiritual wealth). How can I describe Thy greatness, O Lord. Thy Praise is boundless. Bless me Thou in Thy Mercy with Thy Name, for, I am bereft of Thy Vision.”

Guru Arjan in Bilawal

In this hymn it is pointedly stated what the foundations of a man's advancement should be. There can be no short cuts through the so-called powers of mantras.

magical formulae or miraculous achievements but through a man's own humanity and his own character, and this alone can help him in every situation or in any moral crisis.

Thus the proof of the Guru's real power or his greatness lay in this that he was able to give to people a new vision and a new hope. And what is more beautiful and great than to have lifted men from out of the morass into which they had fallen? This is real service to the sick, the poor, the down trodden and the lowliest of human beings. If we look to the pages of the Holy Granth there is never any reference whatsoever of his having performed miracles other than the miracle of spiritual transformation that he had the capacity to bring about. The Holy Granth contains thousands of hymns of the Gurus. They speak of the several aspects of the Guru's spiritual personality as well. The bards Satta, Balwand, Kal, Mathra, Harbans and many others eulogise some of the Gurus for their spiritual greatness. But nowhere do we find any mention of any miracles having been performed by any of the Gurus anywhere nor have their greatness been ever measured in terms of the so-called miracles. This is a very significant fact and should not be explained away lightly. The Guru met people all over the world and won ideological supremacy over them in the natural way, through argument, persuasion and the power of Truth that he possessed in a rich measure. If he had scored philosophical or theological victory over all people and over all schools of thought this was never brought about through any miracles or charms but through the power of the Name, as he always put it.

Bhai Gurudas said,

“ਪਤਾਲਾਂ ਆਕਾਸ਼ ਲਖ ਜਿਤੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਜਗਤ ਸਬਾਇਆ ॥

ਜੀਤੀ ਨਵ ਖੰਡ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਕਾ ਚਕਰ ਫਿਰਾਇਆ ॥”

i.e. ‘Guru Nanak acquired spiritual victory over heaven, over the netherlands and over the whole earth. He won ideological supermacy over the regions of the earth through the true Name.’

Thus the position of the Guru in respect of miracles is quite clear. Yet the history that people have built up round him, from the time of his advent upto the end of his life, speaks of him as a miracle man, a charmer, a magician, a privileged person whom God had invested with all powers to do whatever he desired, even to turn the world up-side down if he so chose. Perhaps it provides people great satisfaction that their Guru was the sovereign Prophet whose very appearance on earth was hailed in a mysterious way not only by men but by the elemental nature. Circumstances of the birth are embellished with stories like the mid-wife having seen light and of the astrologer having worshipped the child. Even over his dead body there is the story that on the controversy as to how his funeral rites were to be performed, i.e. whether these should be in accordance with Hindu rites or Muslim rites, it was found that the body had disappeared leaving only flowers behind to be shared by the Hindu and the Muslim claimants. In fact, mystery surrounds him in all things related to him. He is thus made to appear to a person of even ordinary intelligence that he went about contradicting himself and his teachings

not only on different occasions but even during the same event. We may explain the above statement.

People fed on misconceived notions and impressed by his holiness requested him sometimes to bring back to life a person or a child that had died during his visit to their place. He invariably told them that it was God who created and God who destroyed and that no man had the power to revive the dead. Yet in the next moment, on a few words of praise, entreaties or wailings of women about him he is represented as having performed the miracle of restoring life to the corpse before him. In one moment he condemned miracles as something unholy and yet in the next, he contradicted himself by a display of powers he had denied earlier and thus threw all his cherished ideals to the winds.

These and other considerations examined above prove beyond any doubt that there have been not only interpolations in the biographies by interested parties but also wholly mis-conceived appraisals of the working of the Guru's mind. The result is a complete disfigurement of his personality and now the emphasis is shifted from the really beautiful things of his life to non-essential matters and even to things he had so categorically condemned. We may be permitted to mention in this connection that an offer of publication of this book was made to a Sikh organisation that had earlier published our book named 'Our Heritage', and the offer could not be accepted for fear of antagonising people charmed of the so-called miracles in the Guru's life. The offer was also made to another Sikh organisation with the same result. At last we were obliged to bring out this publication ourselves, though it entailed a considerable

monetary risk to us. It is really deplorable that any Sikhs of Guru Nanak for whom freedom of thought & respect for the views of others were cardinal things, should think in a narrow way. The Guru, as we shall see later on, had, on occasions, taken personal risks to his life on this issue. Perhaps we do not seem to realise that nations that compel regimentation of thought can make no progress in the present day world. Our views, as expressed here, may not be all correct but no one can claim infallibility for himself. We seem to have lost our moorings. This sorry state of affairs is the result of a totally wrong emphasis on things which are of no consequence at all. The things seem to have reached such lengths that if the Guru were to appear to-day in the human form, it is not too much to suppose that he would not be recognised by many of his so-called followers, nor perhaps would he find where his people were.

So the position is this. There is no record with us that we may call a correct life history of the Guru. Whatever we have is badly mutilated and is a caricature of what it actually was. It is not merely mixed up with excrescences and interpolations but is a complete misrepresentation and distortion of his personality. He is made to appear today as a myth to the rising generations and people are fast losing values for which he stood and worked in life. It is a strange phenomenon that the very people who are otherwise ready to die in his name have failed to understand him and his way of thinking. Perhaps the world has become too materialistic in their thoughts and actions to understand the right values of things. Lust for power and pelf is the sole objective of life. Moral, ethical and spiritual values have been forgotten, yet no individual or

nation can be strong without these values. True religion is love. It is quest for truth, wisdom and the expression in life of finer human qualities. It should be remembered that any mistake in correct thinking and right values cannot be made good and is irrevocable. Nothing can be done to save people who are affected in their mental make-up and structure. Such people cannot form the raw material for being worked upon in the laboratory of religion and spiritual life. The best investment in this sphere always is the development of man. He should first be fed on correct values of things, and then urged to live in accordance with those values. It is only in this way that any religion can become the window through which the whole world out side can be looked upon with confidence. A religion can live only if it insists on moral, ethical and spiritual values and above all has a rational basis that can stand scientific inquiry. The world today is not going to accept stories about the Guru even, repugnant to Truth, reason, common sense and moral sense. Modern mind, shaped by the influence of science and criticism, is not prepared to take anything on trust or anything built on irrational faith. Truth can no longer remain a concealed book and cannot be accepted with eyes closed. It has to become a universal common-wealth for the entire human race.

The life History of the Guru should, therefore, be an orientation in terms of the Guru's philosophy of life and should not contradict that philosophy as it does in our case. The followers of the Guru have a duty towards him as also towards humanity. He was a very great man and it is not

fair to him that he should go to the world in a hopelessly disfigured form, the form in which it has become difficult to recognise him. His life should go to the world in its pristine purity and not as something outmoded and unintelligible. What right have we got to complain that Sikhism has not made much headway in the present day world? Why should it make any headway at all in the context of what we have done in the presentation to the world of the Guru's life and teachings? If it was really desired that Sikhism should live and thrive and the Guru's life should become a living prescription to men for a good, noble, true and fruitful living, we would have to rid it of all blemishes that were allowed to creep in through negligence or ignorance. Every artificial halo created round him through ignorance should disappear. Nothing can be grander in a man than that he had achieved moral and spiritual perfection. We have examined already that the Guru was a perfect man. It is really a wonder that a man in flesh and blood could have been so great. There can be no greater compliment to him than that he had achieved all that any human being could achieve. His spiritual greatness is all that needs to be associated with his name. We should see to it that the Guru's history faithfully interpreted and reflected his philosophy as was originally taught by him and which was still preserved in his Word (Gurbani). In it his teachings should appear as having been made concrete and personal. His history should appear as the translation of those teachings in action; for the eternal truths he had understood and lived for, must have been reflected in his daily life. After all, these truths were meant to be lived by him too and were not things

merely to be talked or argued about. If he knew the art of right living, the same must be revealed in his own life. Thus if it be accepted that he interpreted his religion in his own life we should be able to know him in his life as truly as through his Word, which fortunately has come to us in its original purity. This Word is God's Word. It is God, the Perfect Guru, who sends human and historical teachers to guide humanity from time to time and it is His Message or His Word that can claim to be the true Guru. The fact of Sikh Gurus being one in spirit can be accepted only in the sense that God inspired Word (the Shabad) is the Guru that guided them. The Guru's deeds or his historical performances in life have to be given a second place. In any case they must conform to the Word otherwise they should be considered as a misrepresentation. The test always has to be the Word which is the living Guru to be revered. Therefore, to understand the Guru rightly and to achieve a real harmony with him, the most important and basic thing is the devotion to the Word in preference to his biography which may some times be, as in our case, full of contradictions and imperfections. Being conscious of this possibility the Guru was sagacious enough to declare,

“ਗੁਰ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਾ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਕਾਹੇ ਧਾਵਹੁ ॥”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“Act on the Guru's Word. There is no need to ape his actions blindly.”

Guru Nanak in Ramkali

Actions may be misleading and often be misunderstood. They are related to time and space and may appear

contradictory. But the Word is immutable.

“ਸਚੁ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਨਾਹੀ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“Truth cannot become old by time.”

Guru Nanak in Ram Kali Var

The Guru's religion is the religion of truth and is not a collection of dogmas and rituals. It can therefore stand the test of time. Also every seeker in every age can find solace from it.

This provides a clue as to what should be done in the present situation. It is undoubtedly true as we have examined above that Sakhis (Guru's life events or adventures) cannot all be accepted as a true historical record in all the details. There are contradictory versions of them. But the main narratives of events generally are very much the same. They had come down through centuries by word of mouth before they were actually recorded. Thus all the different works that we still have must contain germs of truth in respect of historical facts and a careful study of them can bring out the truths. Fortunately the basis of the framework of the sakhis generally happens to be the Guru's hymn, the whole story revolving round the hymn. Will not this provide all that we essentially need? Could it not enable us to find out how the Guru's mind had worked in a particular situation? If in this way too we could not claim to have produced a hundred percent true history in all its details we will have the satisfaction of having understood and presented him to the world in terms of his thoughts and views. If this history had the merit of conveying the

message of the Guru quite correctly in accord with his teachings and his moral and spiritual concepts, without being quite correct in all details, it should serve the purpose a biography had in view—to inspire mankind.

“ਬਾਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪੁਤ ਸਪੁਤ ਕਰੇਨਿ ।”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘The achievements of the forefathers inspire sons to become noble’.

Guru Amar Dass in Ramkali

If, as in the present case, the biographical and chronological accounts were either not available or were in contradictions of what the Guru had taught, then the next best thing, is to base the biography on his Word, which fortunately even the present biographies have retained. For practical purposes, therefore, it should now be quite enough to read the incidents of the Sakhis through the scriptural quotations that have come to be associated with them since the time the biographies came into existence. All that is in accord with the Word is all right for inspiring future generations and all the rest which ill-accords with the Word should be thrown off and rejected as untrue. If, for example, a story is spun to say that the Guru worshipped a stone it is untrue as the Guru's Word unsparingly condemns idolatory or worship of gods and goddesses. We should have courage enough to face realistically the situation as it obtains today. How can we afford to look with equanimity at being ridiculed by others at the sort of Janam-Sakhis that we have. They are in their present form the greatest disservice to the Sikh

religion as also to the great Guru himself. We must reject all talk of the so-called miracles, having been performed at all by the Guru as these contradicted his whole approach to religion. In fact, he asserted solemnly, as we noticed earlier, that he had none of them and that is a thing which not only distinguishes him from so many other greatmen but also enhances his stature in the estimation of men of right understanding, men who cherish true values of things above everything else. Why should we withhold from the Guru the credit that is due to him? Why should we convert the credit into a debit?

We should also note that there is woven round the Guru a lot of legendary or mythical material, originally intended, perhaps, to beautify and strengthen truths and thus to deepen impression. It may be born out of the loving devotion of the chronicler and so need not be taken too literally but only as a symbolic or figurative representation of some great truth interpreted through the human, devotional and imaginative mind of the writer. The poetry, the devotion and the piety behind the description are of no small value if the true significance is not missed. From this point of view such a narrative is bound to become something more than mere history. The highest and the ultimate values that emerge out of it, however, should always receive the primary stress. The things that only embellish but have no intrinsic bearing on life should be looked upon in perspective so that the best and the most beautiful in it stood out conspicuously before all. The aim before a biographer should always be that the accounts of events reflected his personality truly, were in accord with eternal verities, helped people to a fuller understanding of

his thoughts and ideals and clarified certain things that had remained incomprehensible even if this entailed supplying missing links in the narratives. That may appear too bold for any person to suggest in the context of false beliefs and notions having been permitted to prevail for generations. But adherence to basic principles is always the best policy for any wide-awake people to follow.

We may point out here some other aspects of the Guru's personality that need to be carefully kept in mind for a correct perspective in this study. There is often abundance of incisive wit, humour and imagination in what he says. He is very sparing of words but the few words he employs are often home-thrusts to awaken the mind and conscience of the listener. Whatever little he says is full of meaning which goes straight to the heart, provided the listener possesses the quality of mind that can rise to those heights. In discourses with people representing different schools of thought he frequently talks in parables and allegories. This, in fact, had become a regular method with seekers of his times, who often employed it perhaps to test the spiritual enlightenment of the other party. We may illustrate.

In Multan, the stronghold of Sufi mystics, the faqirs gathered there sent him a cup of milk filled to brim signifying that the city was already full of holiness and there was no room for him. The Guru returned the cup with a jasmine flower placed over the surface of the cup implying equally mystically that he would be like the flower and would stay there in perfect peace and humility without causing any hardship to anybody.

In the suburbs of Sialkot he sent Mardana with a paper on which was written 'what is true and what is untrue.' He wanted to see how many people were serious about life and cared to look upon it with earnestness and in right perspective. Most people simply laughed at and ridiculed Mardana.

The Guru's discourses with Sheikh Braham, a Sufi Muslim of Pakpattan, provide interesting material as to how mystically the seekers of the time expressed themselves to each other.

In Hardwar the Guru saw people offering water to the sun in the East direction for the benefit of the manes of their departed ancestors. He started offering water to the West and told the laughing crowd that he was irrigating his fields in Kartarpur. He was exposing to ridicule the people's stupid belief, in that dramatic manner.

Again, after the Kamrup visit, the Guru accompanied by Mardana came to a village where they were received most inhospitably. Not only were they refused food and shelter but were also laughed at and ridiculed. The Guru quietly left but remarked that the people of the village should live in peace where they were. In some other village, later, the party received a warm welcome. But when they started the following day to depart, the Guru said to Mardana that the people of the village should be thrown out. Mardana was much surprised that his Master had cursed good men and their hospitality and had blessed bad men and their satanic ways. The Guru's words had, however, a deeper meaning which Mardana did not under-

stand. It was explained to him that bad men should remain where they were otherwise evil would spread with them wherever they went. So also if good men deserted their village for other places, their influence would work for the good of humanity.

With this comprehensive picture of the Guru before us we have tried in this book to read the direction in which the Guru's mind had worked in any given situation. We have indicated the same in the beginning of each chapter, by a short pithy line chosen from the Holy Scriptures. This line will be found to be the gist of what the chapter has to teach. We have dealt with almost all sakhis. If, here or there, any has been left out, it will not be the one that had a new lesson to give, different from what had already been examined in one place or the other. If on this basis or any other, it is not considered a complete biography, or even a biography, strictly speaking, we will still have learnt all that the Guru had to teach us through his life. Our main purpose is to understand him correctly, specially through the outstanding events of his life, so that we may love and cherish him and may rededicate ourselves to the ideals and aspirations that he espoused and valued most. In this sense it is something much more true than the existing biographies, as it is in accord with his Word and therefore interprets him correctly. We have carefully studied the Guru's life events with a view to read the message they have for humanity and have also elaborated the message so that its significance is not lost, missed or clouded.

The book is, in short, an humble attempt to rediscover

the Guru. We cannot say how far we have succeeded in this. In fact, we have no claim to make except to assert with all the emphasis at our command that we have worked hard over it and with the best of motives. We have not followed any particular biography too rigidly. Of course we have examined most of them, but in the choice of a Sakhi or in its presentation we have preferred the one that accorded better with the Word. We are fully conscious of our own limitations as also of the difficulties involved in the task we have undertaken. We wish very much that some more efficient and better equipped person should soon take up this work and produce a really good biography, the present attempt serving as a pioneer work, however humble in quality. This book is intended as a very humble offering at the feet of the Master on the eve of his 5th centenary, which is just a few years hence. It will remind the world of his great message that ever remains fresh and new. It has a lustre that never becomes old with time. Let us now enter and dive deep into the nectar-spring of Guru Nanak's life.

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CHAPTER I

The advent and early age.

“ਜੰਮਿਆਂ ਪੂਤੁ ਭਗਤੁ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਕਾ”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘The son, devoted to God, was born’

Guru Arjan in Asa

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 A. D. in a village, then called Talwandi and now known as Nankana Sahib (the holy home of Nanak). Sodhi Meharban, however, gives the name of the Guru's birth place as Chahilawala. There is also a controversy over the exact date of his birth. But for the purposes of this book there is no need to go into these matters which are comparatively quite insignificant. The country, then, was under the reign of Bahlol Lodhi, one of whose relatives named Daulat Khan had the charge of the Panjab. Talwandi was originally built by a Hindu Raja but, in the course of Muslim invasions later, it was destroyed. It was rebuilt by one, Rai Bular, who was its gevernor when the Guru was born. History gives credit to this Rai Bular as being the man who soon recognised the child Nanak as a God-conscious being. He loved him intensely and was himself greatly influenced by the piety, spiritual grandeur and moral fervour of Nanak. He

thought there was something mysteriously great and inspiring in him which could not be expressed or explained in human terms. There surely seemed in him the Light of God, but only those having eyes could see it.

The Guru's father, Mehta Kalu, was a minor official, designated as the village accountant. The Guru had a kind mother in Tripta and a very loving sister in Nanki who ever cherished her younger brother and was the first to recognise him as God's being. Even as a child the Guru was noticed to be quite unlike other children in many ways. He had a quiet and peaceful countenance. His eyes were gay, cheerful, brightly shining and seemed to reflect wisdom. He did not cry when he was hungry and the mother happened to be away, as if he could wait in silence and patience till she returned. Whoever met him found him all smiles. People were so thrilled on seeing him that they could not help admiring him and getting irresistibly drawn towards him. It was always a pleasure for discerning men to meet him and to talk to him. He was humble and sweet with every body and shed lustre, radiance, joy and glory all around. He was also found occasionally absorbed in himself in mystic broodings, entailing perfect silence, as if in some deep meditations and in communion with some higher power and this happened even before he grew up into boyhood. He talked of God and His Will and went about singing Him in ecstatic joy. His utterances seemed inspired by the Divine Power. In fact, he was a marvel to everybody, on account of his queer ways and mystical behaviour. Yet he bore a compassionate and beaming countenance from which flowed charity and sympathy for the poor and needy. No mendicant would go from his

door without a gift. He considered it a thing of unbounded pleasure to share his food, clothings and playthings with his mates and to fraternise with them. Yet he ate and slept moderately. There was a deep and genuine affection in his heart for everydody.

He was, as we shall see in the next chapter, sent to school at an early age but he was so vastly gifted that he acquired from his teachers all that they could impart in the shortest time and then talked to them of Divine things which they could not understand. As he grew up, he discussed Divine topics with Hindu scholars and Muslim saints whom he frequently met in forests close by where they often gathered and stayed for long periods. He was very thick with them and felt happy in their company. Through their association he became all the more rich and powerful spiritually and when he returned he seemed doubly surcharged with love, sympathy and true understanding.

Thus it is quite true to say that he was not only precocious but possessed exceptional divine gifts. God had willed that he should be the Saviour, the world Teacher and the Guru of mankind. No mere child at that age could have been so great in his word, thought, actions and behaviour. He was potentially fit for Guruship and should be taken as the born Guru, destined to guide humanity in a most difficult period of human history. Truly, genius is not necessarily a function of age but of attainments in consequence of a previous mental or spiritual development. Guru Gobind Singh had found himself on the Guru's Gaddi at the age of only nine years and yet no other person could have been

more competent for the great tasks ahead than he was. Guru Harkrishan was even younger. These are really miracles of human history and cannot be measured in the ordinary way.

Sodhi Meharban's biography speaks of Guru Nanak as the incarnation of Janak. There is no need to dispute this description provided it does not refer too literally to any historical person of the name of Janak. As we stated in the Introduction all prophets and Avatars like Rama, Krishna and Janak when united with God and got merged in Him had become one. Thus it is only another way of saying that the spiritual loftiness associated with the name of the historical Janak who was believed to have merged in God, was possessed by Guru Nanak. Janak should be regarded as a symbol of a perfect being who had attained Unity with God in the midst of the impurities of the world and as Guru Nanak had also attained perfection in the same way, playing the same role in this drama of creation, he was another Janak called upon by Providence to embark on a great mission. It is in this very sense that the bard Kal refers to Guru Angad as the incarnation of Janak.

“ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਜਨਿਕ ਰਾਜਾ ਅਉਤਾਰ”

‘Thou art the incarnation of Janak’.

Meharban and Prithichand had, however, their own purposes to serve when they described Guru Nanak as the incarnation of Janak. Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas had to clarify to the Sikhs that Guru Nanak came from the Perfect Being and was not to be related to any historical Janak.

CHAPTER II

The pupil teaches the teacher.

“ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰ ਮਤਿ ਹੋਰ ਹੋਰ”

(ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧)

‘O Sir, all knowledge, unrelated to Him, is vain.’

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag.

At the age of seven, Guru Nanak was taken to the Pandit in charge of the village school. The teacher wrote the alphabet for the boy to learn. Now this was an opportunity for the Guru to highlight what he regarded as really essential but what was either ignored altogether or missed. As a matter of fact, every task entrusted to him was for him, as the coming events reveal, an occasion to be utilised to expound his philosophy of life. His penetrating eye could go into the depths of situations and bring out from there the thing that was really important but which had been thrown into the background as if it were of no consequence. In this way he turned the mere temporal or mundane aspect of the task before him into the spiritual. His father had sent him to the Pandit to learn so that this knowledge was later utilised for his son's material advancement. The bread was the only

problem before him. The Guru was not at all against that kind of knowledge but he wanted to draw attention to what was very much more important, from the point of view of the ultimate good of man.

The Pandit urged on him to learn whatever knowledge he could give him so that he became fit to earn wealth, influence and power in the same way as he himself had done. On this occasion the Guru composed extempore the following hymn as a prescription for the right kind of knowledge to grow within oneself. Mere theoretical knowledge of books, however important it might be in itself, did not produce wisdom. True learning implied illumination of the mind and an awakening to a true sense of human values, quite different from the ordinary concept of common people. Without that awakening man would be reduced to the status of an animal having no better aim than to earn, spend and beget children. The hymn indicated the direction the spiritual effort should take to produce enlightenment and wisdom. Attachments were to be burnt to make the ink. Mind, the writer, holding the pen of love should write the Guru's wisdom, on the paper of pure intelligence. This would lead to liberation.

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ “ਜਾਲਿ ਮੋਹੁ ਘਸਿ ਮਜੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਤਿ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਕਰਿ
ਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਭਾਉ ਕਲਮ ਕਰਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਲੇਖਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਪੁਛਿ ਲਿਖੁ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥ ਲਿਖੁ
ਨਾਮੁ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਲਿਖੁ ਲਿਖੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰ ॥ ਬਾਬਾ ਏਹੁ ਲੇਖਾ ਲਿਖਿ
ਜਾਣੁ ॥ ਜਿਥੈ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਹੋਇ ਸਚਾ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥”

i.e. ‘Burn thy earthly attachment, break it into a powder to be thy ink and make thy pure intelligence the

paper to write on. With the pen of love make thy mind the writer to write wisdom as instructed by the Guru. Write thou His Praises and His Name. Write thou that He is Infinite and without end. O, dear sir, learn to write such an account as should become a true certificate when checked up here before the people or hereafter at God's Court.'

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag.

One wonders at these words of true wisdom uttered at that young age. Sceptics may say that such a loftiness of mind, as the above composition reveals, could have come only at maturity. But that does not detract anything from the Guru's holiness. The important thing is that he had attained perfection. Whether it had come to him at that age or a little later is comparatively a small matter. The world is now concerned with what he had said and not with the stage of life at which he said it. That may be a thing of historical interest without having any practical value. The Guru had, however, himself stated so many times that whatever he spoke came to him from God. He was really in tune with His Master and spoke His Word.

“ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ”

ਸੂਹੀ ਛੰਤ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

'I say what He commandeth me to say.'

Guru Nanak in Subi.

Again,

“ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ॥”

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'O Lalo, I relate the Divine Word of the Master.'

Guru Nanak in Tilang.

Thus whatever he said came to him as a revelation. He was only the amanuensis or the agent of the Supreme Being. He was the bard who sang to the tune of the Master.

He explained to the Pandit that the knowledge imparted by him pertained to the advancement of material objectives which could, at best, lead to the enjoyment of sense organs. Power, wealth and influence, which it could bring, if at all, were all fleeting things, in their very nature, and were thus unreal. Man should not think merely in terms of his body and its material needs. The body had to be looked after but it should be considered as a temporary instrument designed by the Creator for the sole purpose of service it could render to its master, the soul, the permanent element within it. Life was an opportunity for the realisation of spiritual objectives and if missed, it would not easily come again. All people, big and small, rich and poor, high and low were destined to be reduced ultimately to dust. Nothing except God's Name remained to accompany the soul after its body had perished. Then he sang the following hymn to stress this point.

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ “ ਇਕਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਇਕਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਉਠਿ ਰਖੀਅਹਿ
ਨਾਵ ਸਲਾਰ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਮੰਗਤੇ ਇਕਨਾ ਵਡੇ ਦਰਵਾਰ ॥ ਅਗੈ
ਗਇਐ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੇ ਵੇਕਾਰ ॥ ਭੈ ਤੇਰੈ ਡਰੁ ਅਗਲਾ ਖਪਿ ਖਪਿ ਛਿਜੈ
ਦੇਹ । ਨਾਵ ਜਿਨਾ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਖਾਨ ਹੋਏ ਡਿਠੇ ਖੇਹ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਠੀ ਚਲਿਆ
ਸਭਿ ਕੂੜੇ ਤੁਟੇ ਨੇਹ ॥ ”

"Some come into the world and others go therefrom. People call some of them their leaders. Some are born beggars, others are big men holding courts. But it is only when they go to the other World that they come to know their real worth, and realise that, without the Name, all is vain. O Lord, Thy Fear to me is great and in that Fear my limbs are crumbling. They who call themselves lords and kings here, are seen reduced to dust. Oh, when men (great or small) pass out of life all false attachments are snapped."

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag.

What good was this knowledge, he asked the Pandit, if it had no spiritual basis and did not subserve to the needs of the soul ?

"ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਪੜਿਆ ਤੇਤਾ ਕੜਿਆ"

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

i.e. *'The more one learns mere reading and writing the more one worries.'*

Guru Nanak in Asa.

The things of the world were of no consequence if there was no touch in them of God and of spirituality. Man should, therefore, know and serve Him. This was true wisdom.

The Pandit seems to have put a lot of questions and received answers to those questions. These answers were later put together in a consolidated form in what is known

as Patti or the acrostic (tablet) in Rag Asa, a beautiful composition on the thirty five letters of the alphabet. It explained to the teacher, in the Guru's own vocabulary, the new meaning each letter should assume to make knowledge worth acquiring and without which all other knowledge was nonsense. All along the hymn, the Guru spoke of God, man, his ultimate destiny and the universe. He tried to impress upon his teacher the things of ultimate value. We propose to make some important selections for a gist of what he said. He begins with the letter S (ਸ) the first letter in the formation of the word Soi (ਸੋਇ) which means He.

“ਸਸੈ ਸੋਇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਸਭਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਏਕੁ ਭਇਆ ॥

ਸੇਵਤ ਰਹੈ ਚਿਤੁ ਜਿਨ ਕਾ ਲਾਗਾ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਸਫਲੁ ਭਇਆ ।”

‘He is the Lord and the Creator of all that exists. It is only they who love and serve Him that fulfil the purpose for which they were born’.

It is the first line of the Patti and it points out that life without Him has no meaning or purpose.

“ਆਖਾਂ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘I live when I remember Him. It is death to forget Him.’

Guru Nanak in Asa

Thus the foremost purpose the letters and the knowledge gained therefrom should serve was to relate that knowledge to Him so that it became a means to realise Him in life.

This aspect was emphasised several times in the 'Patti' thus,

“ਏਨਾ ਅਖਰਾਂ ਮਹਿ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੂਝੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ।”

'One who, by the grace of the Guru, realiseth Him through these letters hath no accounts to render'.

Again,

“ਮਨ ਕਾਹੇ ਭੂਲੇ ਮੂੜ ਮਨਾ ॥ ਜਬ ਲੇਖਾ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਬੀਰਾ ਤਉ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ॥”

'O ignorant mind, why forgeteth thou the Lord ? Thou, brother, wilt be considered learned if thou renderest well thy account'.

Again,

“ਗਗੈ ਗੋਇ ਗਾਇ ਜਿਨਿ ਛੋਡੀ ਗਲੀ ਗੋਬਿੰਦੁ ਗਰਬਿ ਭਵਿਆ ॥
ਘੜਿ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਜਿਨਿ ਆਵੀ ਸਾਜੀ ਚੜਨ ਵਾਹੈ ਤਈ ਕੀਆ ॥”

'He who singeth not his praises and is inflated by ego, thinketh to please Him by mere talk. The Creator burneth him in the furnace as a potter burns the claypots'.

And lastly,

“ਜਜੈ ਜਾਨੁ ਮੰਗਤ ਜਨ ਜਾਚੈ ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀ ਭੀਖ ਭਵਿਆ ॥
ਏਕੋ ਲੇਵੈ ਏਕੋ ਦੇਵੈ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ਮੈ ਸੁਣਿਆ ॥”

'Man, the beggar, seeketh that knowledge through which he goeth the roud of transmigration. Thou alone O Lord, givest or takest away, I know not any other'.

The Pandit had now realised that the kind of knowledge eh could impart to others was truly inadequate to meet the

needs of the soul unless the same was related to God. But he wanted to know in a more concrete form how this was to be done so that God could become the basis of knowledge. The Guru replied in the 'Patti' that as God was present in all, His love as expressed in humanity, was the way, in a concrete form.

“ਭੰਡੈ ਭਿਆਨੁ ਬੂਝੈ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਸੋਈ ॥

ਸਰਬ ਜੀਅ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਤਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥”

'A true Pandit is he who acquireth God's Wisdom. He who seeketh the one Lord in all life discardeth his ego'.

Again.

“ਵੇਵੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

ਤਿਸੈ ਸਰੇਵਹੁ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥”

'When He sendeth grace, I see no other. Serve Him who is immanent in all things and thou wilt become happy'.

Again,

“ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਮਾਹੀ ।”

'The one Lord pervadeth all places and resideth in every soul'.

A truly learned Pandit is therefore he who has the Divine wisdom to see Him in all beings. The world is blind for it has no eyes for that kind of seeing. It means seeing through love and this should be considered as the law of a man's being. When we ignore this law we sin and suffer. Ego should completely disappear if this seeing is to bear

fruit. Just as hydrogen and oxygen in the right proportion produce water so does love, in the pure heart without any ego left in it, pave the way for realising Him. In this way man becomes the architect of his own destiny. This aspect is brought out in the Patti in these words,

“ਦਦੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਉ ਕਿਸੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਕਰੰਮਾ ਆਪਣਿਆ ॥

ਜੋ ਮੈਂ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਮੈਂ ਪਾਇਆ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੀਜੈ ਅਵਰ ਜਨਾ ॥”

‘Blame not others, blame thou thy own deeds. What thou sowest, thou reapest. Why, then, blame others’.

There is a beautiful line in the Patti which embodies the gist of the Guru’s thinking on the subject, considered above.

“ਮੰਮੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਮਰਣੁ ਮਧੁਸੂਦਨ ਮਰਣੁ ਭਇਆ ਤਵ ਚੇਤਵਿਆ ॥

ਕਾਇਆ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਅਵਰੋ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਮੰਮਾ ਅਖਰੁ ਵੀਸਰਿਆ ॥”

“There is so much of attachment that man thinketh not of Death, nor of God. Of them he thinketh only when overtaken by Death. In life, he cherisheth other things and forgetteth the letter M”.

This line needs some explanation. The meaning which the letter ‘mumma’, the Gurmukhi equivalent of the letter M, should assume is being dwelt upon here. The words ‘Moh’ (attachment) ‘Maran’ (Death) and ‘Madhsudan’ (God), all begin with this letter. Man forgets that attachment is the cause of his bondage. It makes him blind to reality. He cannot see the transitoriness of physical existence till Death overtakes Him. He forgets God and forgets Death and suffers in consequence. He dies and is born again so that he is carried the round of transmigration. Thus by

forgetting the letter M which symbolises attachment, Death and God, he damns himself. Then how is he to be saved ? The Guru replies in almost the last lines of the Patti,

“ਹਾਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਦਾਤਾ ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਇ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਦੀਆ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਵਹੁ ਅਨਦਿਨ ਲਾਹਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੀਆ ॥”

‘There is no other Giver but He who createth and then sustaineth all, So contemplate thou on and merge in God’s Name and ever gather the fruit of the Name’.

By singing His praises and enshrining Him in the heart He is realised.

It is thus that the Guru taught his own teacher the things that the teacher did not know.

We may refer here in passing that the Guru was also sent first to a Sanskrit teacher named Brij Nath, a scholar of Vedas and Shastras and then to a Persian scholar, the Mulla. It was thought that as the Guru had a religious and devotional bent of mind, he would be more at home in the atmosphere of scholastic learning. But there too, he had to teach things to his new masters which were beyond them. The sort of learning which they had acquired could not help them to understand him.

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CHAPTER III

The Sacred thread.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਣ ਕਿਆ ਟਿਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਤਗੁ”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Nanak, without the True Name what worth is the Hindu frontal mark or sacrificial thread’.

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

The Guru was now nine years old. Mehta Kalu was one day busy in arranging to invest him with the sacred thread (ganeu), a symbol of Hindu dharma. As Hindu families considered the wearing as something eventful it was done through a very important religious ceremony and celebrated with much enthusiasm and unusual rejoicings. Entertainment parties and feastings on a grand scale were arranged. As a part of the ancient religious rite goat meat, considered a privileged food for such occasions, was freely used. It was in this atmosphere that the family Brahmin named Hardyal was engaged in reading out Vedic mantras and sacred hymns prescribed for the occasion and these, it was believed, made the ceremony as also the thread holy and sublime. When all rites and ceremonies were over, the Pandit proceeded to put the thread round the Guru's neck and shoulder. But the Guru held his hand

and would not let this be done as a matter of course and without inquiring as to what all that had meant for him. He said, the thread as it obviously seemed to him, was no more than a mere piece of cotton and he should know the benefit it conferred before he was required to become its wearer. The priest explained that it had come to possess spiritual power. The mantras that had been chanted in its preparation had sanctified it and made it pure and therefore to go without wearing it, a high caste Hindu like him would remain a Sudra. From the artificial atmosphere round him the Guru knew at once that it was all a superficial formality and so he refused to have anything to do with the thread. He told the priest that the thread by itself was a physical matter, made out of cotton, and subject to decay and disintegration and there was nothing inherently spiritual about it. In spite of the mantras chanted over it, it still remained a cotton thread with no vitality or strength in it. That could come only through a truly lived religious life. A mere cotton thread would fall off when the wearer died and the soul would go to the next world without any thread to save it from the consequences of a life of error lived by it. How could thieves, scoundrels and villains, he asked, become pure simply by putting on the thread? How could the soul polluted with greed, lust, wrath and a thousand other sins be saved by a mere cotton thread? Was it not strange that people should continue to practise deceptions, tell lies, indulge in robbing or stealing and yet expect to become holy and pure through a thread? If they had no thread for the organs to control their passions, what purpose would the cotton thread serve? How could lustful acts committed by people fail to bring,

in consequence, punishment and disgrace ? How could the ill effects of wrong actions be escaped through such a simple device ? The thread should provide an answer to these questions if it were to be accepted as something good and holy.

The Guru chanted the following hymn ;

“ਚਉਕੜਿ ਮੁਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਬਹਿ ਚਉਕੇ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕਨਿ
ਚੜਾਈਆ ਗੁਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਥਿਆ ॥ ਉਹੁ ਮੁਆ ਉਹੁ ਝੜਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਵੇਤਗਾ
ਗਇਆ ॥ ਲਖ ਚੋਰੀਆਂ ਲਖ ਜਾਰੀਆਂ ਲਖਕੂੜੀਆਂ ਲਖ ਗਾਲਿ ॥ ਲਖ ਠਗੀਆਂ
ਪਹਿਨਾਮੀਆਂ ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਜੀਅ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਤਗੁ ਕਪਾਹਹੁ ਕਤੀਐ ਬਾਮਣੁ ਵਟੇ
ਆਇ ॥ ਕੁਹਿ ਬਕਰਾ ਰਿੰਨਿ ਖਾਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਆਖੈ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਹੋਇ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ
ਸੁਟੀਐ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਹੋਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਈ ਜੇ ਤਗਿ ਹੋਵੇ ਜੋਰੁ ॥
ਤਗੁ ਨ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਨਾਰੀ ॥ ਭਲਕੇ ਥੁਕ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਦਾੜੀ ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਪੈਰੀ
ਤਗੁ ਨ ਹਥੀ ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਜਿਹਵਾ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਅਖੀ ॥ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਆਪੇ ਵਤੈ ॥ ਵਟਿ ਧਾਗੇ
ਅਵਰਾ ਘਤੈ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The thread worth four pice is put on (by the twiceborn) in a place lined all round and instructions are muttered in the wearer’s ear and the Brahmin becometh the guru. But when the wearer dieth the thread falleth off leaving him to go threadless. Countless thefts, villainies, falsehoods and blasphemies are going on, countless deceptions are practised and countless secret sins are carried within the soul, day and night. And yet a thread is spun out of cotton and the Brahmin’s duty ends with twisting it. A goat is killed, cooked and eaten and then all think the thread is worth putting on. When however,

this thread becometh old by time, it is thrown off and another has to be put on again. Nanak, the thread would not have broken if it had any strength in it. There is no thread for controlling the male and the female organs. The result is that people go about disgracing their beards. There is no thread for the hands and the feet, nor any for the tongue, nor any for the eyes. The Brahmin is himself without the true thread and yet he must twist cotton for others to put round their necks".

Guru Nanak in Asa

Then the Guru explained to the Pandit what things were necessary if the thread were to become strong. It should have to be made out of moral and spiritual stuff to be able to serve its real purpose. In other words, the thread should help to create and become a moral and virtuous basis of life if it could be accepted as a symbol of religious life. Here are the ingredients of a true thread that would save.

“ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ ॥ ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ
ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ ॥ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੇ ਪਾਇ ॥ ”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'From the cotton of Mercy make theads of contentment and then with knots of continence, apply twists of righteousness. The thread prepared in this way will be of use to the soul. O Pandit, if thou canst really make such a thread put it on me. It will neither break, nor get soiled, burnt or lost. Blessed, Nanak, is the person who goeth about with such a thread on his neck.'

Guru Nanak in Asa.

The thing emphasised here is that without positive virtues like mercy, righteousness etc. the sacred thread will not have that strength in it, which is absolutely essential for a religious life.

Then the Guru points out how such a thread should be actually worked out.

“ਨਾਇ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਤਿ ਉਧਜੈ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਚੁ ਸੂਤੁ ॥

ਦਰਗਹ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਸਿ ਪੂਤੁ ॥ ”

‘It is by believing in God’s Name that the durability of the thread prepared with the strings of God’s praises, can be produced. Such a thread will not break and being worn by the soul will be carried by it into God’s Court’

Guru Nanak in Asa.

It should be carefully noted that the ingredients of the thread had been indicated earlier. It must be composed out of moral fibre. But the Guru did not consider that much as sufficient to provide it with permanent durability. Therefore he declared that the thread must have to be prepared through the Simran of the Name. Here is the essential point that he always emphasised. Spiritual living as generated by the Name was very much more important than mere moral and ethical living. He insisted on the realisation of God as the condition for the right kind of living. Mere moral life is no substitute for a spiritual living. God is the soul’s spiritual food. To ignore Him who controls every aspect of a man’s life is like putting the cart before the horse. Also mere morality as the basis of life, is a partial solution and can at best provide some

temporary strength. It is all right as a basis for spiritual life but evil remains hidden and returns on favourable occasions unless union with Him, the Source of all true life, is achieved. Conflicts and tensions will continue to harass without spiritual strength. It is always the ego that creates conflicts and it is God that destroys evil in every form. Coming back to Him is like coming back to one's own true self. It is essential to recognise that man's true Self is God. When this realisation comes, evil goes. Just as when light enters, darkness goes, so also when God enters all conflicts depart.

“ਹਉਮੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਵਿਰੋਧੁ ਹੈ ਦੁਇ ਨ ਬਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਠਾਇ ॥”

ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘The ego is opposed to the Name. Both cannot reside in the same place.’

Guru Amar Dass in Wadhans.

It is the Name always that makes men spiritually rich and powerful to combat every evil.

From the above it is not difficult to understand that the Guru was not against any outer religious form designed to serve as a symbol of inner purity. But he wanted to use this occasion to draw the attention of people to the hollowness of mere outward form divorced from inner life without which the symbol had no significance. Symbols are originally always intended as means or as aids for promoting moral and spiritual development. But they are not ends in themselves nor have they any inherent efficacy in them. When they do not fulfil the purpose

for which they were symbols they become dead and lifeless things. It is thus not the symbols as such but the hypocrisy and superficiality that in course of time gets attached to them that he condemns. His approach, as we have seen, was universal based on the conviction that all religions were in essence one. Let Muslims and Hindus, he said, remain wedded to their own faiths but they should become good Muslims and good Hindus. With this liberality and catholicity of outlook on religion he could not attack any religious label or any symbol as such. In fact, it was the same Guru incarnated in Guru Tegh Bahadur who died a martyr to protect the Hindu faith symbolised by the same sacred thread and the frontal mark (Tilak) which he was now attacking. He died because he was clear that all men had the right to choose their own form of belief.

“ ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਤੂ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾਰਾ ॥ ”

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

i.e. *‘The great Master protected the Tilak and the Janeu (the sacrificial thread) of the Hindus.’*

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachitar Natak.

The Guru fully realised that symbols and outer forms of religion were helpful provided people were sincere about them. The same Guru in his tenth incarnation i. e. when he entered in Guru Gobind Singh, had created the Sikh nation or the Khalsa Brotherhood as an organised unit based on discipleship. That was the most natural thing for him to have done. Religion, according to him, was not merely a set of views and doctrines but a way of life

to be lived and practised. It is not a mere intellectual process of listening and learning the teachings of the Gurus but of translating them into life, intended to be lived in the service of humanity. He had to create the Panth which means 'the Way' and all those who treaded on the 'Way' were organised into a Panth and were bound together to become a force to work for nobility in the world. Organisation, he knew, enhanced very much the scope, the possibility and the effectiveness of the work before it. So the principle of organisation in this wide sense is a part of Sikhism. Sikhs are required not only to attend to their individual character but to prepare for responsibility to serve in a corporate body of the Panth. Also no doctrines or teachings could be expected to remain for long in the air, as it were. There must be a corporate body in which they are practised and preserved and in which its history, traditions and a distinctive culture are built up. The Sikh nation underwent a course of discipline in the hands of the ten Gurus, the process completing itself with Guru Gobind Singh, the last Guru. He brought into being the organised Khalsa Panth and this organisation entailed certain additional disciplinary outfit in the form of five distinctive symbols. He gave the Khalsa an outer form and declared,

“ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ ॥ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮਹਿ ਹਉ ਕਰਉ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥”

i.e. *'The Khalsa is in my own image and I reside in the Khalsa.'*

Panth Parkash

The Khalsa was to resemble the Guru in every way,

including the outer form which was created as a link so that the Guru's personality became all along operative within the Khalsa, controlling his whole being and shaping it into something divine. The Guru placed a great responsibility on the Khalsa both in his individual capacity and as a unit of the nation. He gave to the Khalsa through these symbols a signal of a new birth, the spiritual birth, as distinguished from the mere physical or earthly birth.

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਜਨਮੇ ਗਵਨੁ ਮਿਟਾਇਆ ॥”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘By being born at the Guru's, all idle wanderings have disappeared.’

Guru Nanak in Ramkali.

The Guru became the father and Mata Sahib Kaur, the mother. But, after this birth, if it were to bear fruit, there must be a complete surrender to the Guru so that he could freely enter within the soul to give it a truly new birth. He had conferred a gift of the symbols which must serve as a link to unite the Khalsa with him, the perfect being possessing dynamic powers. The Khalsa must live as the Guru lived otherwise he will not be in the guru's image. The personality of the Guru is a model of a saint soldier and this should become the guiding star for the Khalsa. After the baptismal ceremony, the Sikh gets wedded, as it were, to the Guru and the symbols are an open declaration of this marriage. The symbols should generate cohesion and bind every Sikh with the Guru and through him with others of the Brotherhood, so that it became a force to work

more effectively, generating transcendental capacity for service of mankind. Flags and uniforms etc. are devices employed in the army to create a proper psychology to cement people, to bind them to each other as also to the cause the army has in view. The outer religious form prescribed to the Sikhs was intended to constantly wake up the vivid picture of the personality of the Guru and to surcharge them through and through with that personality so that the form of the wearers ultimately reflected the inner life. When that actually happened, the love of symbols would come with it and then the temptations of life could be more easily overcome. Bhai Joga Singh was a good Sikh prepared to carry out the Guru's orders to the letter. But sin came to tempt him and he yielded before it too. Yet his love for his Master and his image, reflected through the forms he was having on his own person, saved him. The forms with him had become a reflection of the Guru's personality and came to his aid because he was already surcharged with that personality. The form and the inner life had become one.

After the creation of the Khalsa, the Guru declared that the Panth was to be the Guru in future, to take the place of the person of the Guru and to work in the Guru's name and on his behalf. History bears testimony to the fact that after this declaration, the Khalsa treated itself as the Guru's representative and whenever it met in a full congregation and took decisions on questions of religious and political interest its decisions were supposed to have the Guru's sanction. The Khalsa was to look in his outer form exactly like the Master, the intention behind it being that he was to become like him in word, thought and action. The Master

had appeared before the world in the most natural form and his Khalsa was to adopt the same form to be like him, not merely in the outer form but in the inner life as well. The Guru wore long hair (Keshas) as did the rishis of old, the hair representing spirituality and saintliness of these rishis. The comb is a simple necessity for keeping clean and tidy the hair and is thus a symbol of moral purity, which as we have seen above, is the true basis of spirituality. The Kirpan (Sword) is the symbol of power, self respect and service. The Kachhera (the knicker) is a useful under wear that ensures briskness of movement and thus symbolises an active and chaste living. An iron ring on the right arm is a sign of constraint so very essential for a soldier who has many temptations to overcome. The whole presents a beautiful and impressive picture of a saint soldier in the making. The symbols were thus designed pregnant with deep meaning and and were considered essential for the life of a soldier saint, the Guru himself presenting the ideal picture of a man in whom the qualities the symbols represented, were present in the best form. But they can become aids to religion only if narrowness of perspective does not cloud vision and create divisions or exclusiveness. If the spirit in which they were originally conceived dies out then they become handicaps to religion and stop progress. Thus it is not symbols as such that the Guru had ever condemned but their degeneration into something that destroyed the spirit of religion and alienated men from God. Symbols should be related to inner life in the same way as words are related to their meanings or tears are related to grief. But when the meanings of the words are ignored or when tears are mere cloaks for hypocrisy they are not only meaningless but harmful.

Although the Guru had here to deal with the Pandit as the champion of the Hindu faith and referred to the Hindu symbols only, the teachings contained therein were of universal application. When he had occasion to meet the followers of other faiths, as we shall see later on, he spoke to them in respect of symbols, exactly in the same manner as he was doing now. To the Yogis he said that true Yoga was neither in the coat, nor in the Yogi's staff, nor in the shaven head, nor again in the blowing of horns but in living non-attached in the midst of worldly impurities. To the Muslim divines he said,

“ਮੇਹਰ ਮਸੀਤ ਸਿਦਕ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣ ॥
ਸਰਮ ਸੁਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Let mercy be thy mosque, faith thy prayer mat and honest living thy Quran. Let humility be thy circumcision and good conduct thy fast. Thus wilt thou become a true Muslim’.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

It is, therefore, clear that the sermons delivered to the Hindu Pandit or to the Yogis of his time or to the Muslims whom he chanced to meet, had their import for peoples of all faiths including the Sikhs themselves. Symbols should never be considered as ends in themselves but merely as aids for promoting moral and spiritual life. But it is a great pity that religions in the course of time begin to place greater emphasis on symbols than on the inner life for whose sake symbols were created. It is forgotten that symbols by themselves cannot produce spirituality. On

the other hand, adherence to the moral and spiritual values for which the symbols stand is bound to create love for the symbols too. If, for instance, the Sikhs loved their Guru who had made a gift of these symbols to them, it could not but generate a genuine respect for the symbols which the Guru himself wore. History confirms that whenever the Sikh character was high, the Sikhs insisted rigorously on the baptismal vows and symbols. But tempted by power and luxurious living, as in the days of Sikh rule, they considered the vows and the outer form too hard to accept. They had, then, lost their anchor and had become superstitious about God and His Worship. The unchallengeable fact always is that in any moral crisis it is only the character man builds up that saves him. Temptations allow no time to think as they enter into the mind unexpectedly and suddenly. When, for instance, bribe is offered, one has to decide quickly what course of action was to be adopted. A weak man is soon over-powered because a decision has to be taken on the impulse. It means goodness should become a part of man's being so that he was drawn habitually towards it. Unless evil had lost all its attractions, even comparatively good men fell easy prey to temptations which were many and varied. Therefore the symbols must be always related to inner life. No actor in a drama who puts on merely the garb of a king can actually become the king. Guru Gobind Singh once dramatised for ridicule a show presenting a donkey clothed in the skin of a lion, let loose to frighten other animals. The donkey was then pursued for some time till it braved out of fear and was recognised and given a good beating. What the Guru wanted to emphasise was that he had given

his Sikhs the lion's outer form. They must throw off the old ways and begin life anew. Mere form would not save them unless that was related to the Guru's personality. The Sikhs were intended by the Guru to become the true replica of his unique personality, reflecting him in the life they lived. The world has witnessed how the Sikh Nation was, for a time, completely revolutionised when that personality had a firm hold on them. The Sikhs, during the Mughal rule, were known to be strictly truthful, honest and reliable, so much so, that if a Sikh ever made a statement in a court of law, it was accepted as true. Muslim Historians having strong political bias against them called them dogs (sagān), yet they recognised the fact that they had very high moral and ethical standards. The forms had without doubt given them cohesion and distinctiveness but these were to be employed in the service of mankind. It should be remembered that distinctiveness is not the same thing as exclusiveness. On the contrary, this distinctiveness was intended to kill every form of exclusiveness and to foster kinship with all.

CHAPTER IV

The Guru as a herdsman.

“ਸੂਕੇ ਤੇ ਫੁਨਿ ਹਰਿਆ ਕੀਤੋਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਚੋਜ ਵਿਡਾਣੀ ਹੇ ॥”

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਭਲਾ ੪

‘He causeth the parched to blossom forth, so dwell on the Lord of Wonder.’

Guru Ram Dass in Maru.

Mehta Kalu was a wordly man, through and through. He very much desired that his son should do something to make his future. He did not like his care-free ways and his uncommon behaviour. He was minutely observing him to find out what exactly was the type of work that would interest him. He saw that he loved solitude, had a natural affinity for birds and animals and took delight in serving them. Open air, fields, shades of trees, flowing streams, all had fascinations for him. He suggested it to him to take to herding his cows and buffaloes outside in the pasture grounds. The Guru readily agreed. In fact, he never said ‘no’ to his father, whatever the kind of work proposed to be entrusted to him. When the heart was willing every job had a fascination and could be done with zest and relish.

“ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਭੁ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ਭਲਾ ਜੇ ਸਹਜੇ ਕੀਜੈ ਰਾਮ ॥”

ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘Every work is pleasant if performed in the right spirit.’

Guru Amar Dass in Wadhans.

He took up the assignment in right earnest. He loved his cattle and took good care of them. He would never beat the animals and attended to the needs of each of them as much as to his own.

But, as we have seen, he was often absorbed in thought and meditations. The solitude of the place and the vast expanse about him had contributed further to engross him in the wondrous beauty of Nature.

“ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਰੰਗ ” ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

Wonderful is the form and wonderful the colour.’

Guru Nanak in Asa.

Again,

“ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਪਉਣੁ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਪਾਣੀ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Wonderful is the air and wonderful the water.’

Guru Nanak in Asa.

Again,

“ਵੇਖਿ ਵਿਡਾਣੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'Wonderstruck am I to behold wonder everywhere.'

Guru Nanak in Asa.

The whole creation appeared to him full of enchantment. But it was not merely its beauty that charmed him. From nature he rose to the Feet of His Master. It was all God speaking to him the language of peace and beauty.

One day when he sat under a tree absorbed thus in his meditations he forgot about the cattle which freely entered the field and damaged the crop. There was nothing uncommon or unnatural about it. That would happen even with the most careful herdsman. The owner of the field noticed it and thought that either the herdsman was sleeping unmindfully or was purposely letting the cattle graze in the fields and destroy his crops. He was very angry, not unnaturally. He thundered at the herdsman and hurled abusive language. The Guru was all humility and sweetness and craved forgiveness. But the farmer was much upset. He complained and remonstrated to Rai Bular, the village governor, and requested that the boy's father, Kalu, should be summoned and made to pay compensation to him for the grievous loss he had suffered. Rai Bular, as we stated in the beginning, had developed a liking for the boy. He had heard and even personally observed so many marvels about his ways and behaviour. He had seen him once or twice grazing his cattle too and found him perfectly at peace with the world around him. His cattle seemed to have become to him a family, as it were. A cobra once appeared on the branch of the thick tree under which he sat, and exactly over his head without

frightening him. On the contrary, he continued to be occupied with his own thoughts in the normal way and in this situation his cattle were taking their own rest by his side. It seemed to Rai Bular that the boy had become one of them. He had seen all this with his own eyes and so could not help believing that he was really filled with God, one who had identified himself thoroughly with God, and hence with His creation and His Nature. Once he had to pass by him the same day twice with interval of several hours in between and yet both times he found him in the same position under the protective shade of the same thick tree engrossed in his contemplations, quite oblivious to his surroundings. It appeared that the sense of time had been lost on him completely. Rai Bular got the impression of an atmosphere of no change. Everything there seemed to remain stationary and he was naturally bewildered.

Thus the boy was already a mystery to him when the farmer approached him with his complaint. He told the aggrieved man, whatever he knew about the boy and counselled him to be patient with such a holy person. When the Guru was summoned to explain things he was very apologetic. He admitted that the cattle had damaged the crops. But he remarked good humouredly but significantly that the damage was caused by God's cattle, too innocent to know that any farmer was the sole owner of the farms. For them everything was God's and therefore they believed instinctively that they too had a share in it. All the same, he spoke with full confidence that as God's cattle had caused the loss, He could still, if He willed, bless the crops in spite of the damage and therefore these should be looked after with due care. The Guru was in an humble

and prayerful mood. Rai Bular had already counselled patience and he repeated it. The farmer, touched by the Guru's humility, faith and reasonableness, accepted the governor's advice, relented and went away in a spirit of calm resignation. His heart had softened and with that he felt relieved. He bestowed very good care to the damaged crop which grew up well and yielded quite a good harvest. Every honest prayer backed by faith and effort generates a power that may produce unexpected results. How apt is the statement in Ram Kali of the bard Satta, though made in a different context.

“ਸਤਹੁ ਖੇਤੁ ਜਮਾਇਓ ਸਤਹੁ ਛਾਵਾਣੁ ।”

‘By His Power the farm grew green and by that Power came the protective shade.’

CHAPTER V

The spirit that cannot be charmed out.

“ਕਬੀਰ ਬਿਰਹੁ ਭੁਯੰਗਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਬਸੈ ਮੰਤੁ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਇ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘Kabir, the consciousness of separation is like the serpent that cannot be charmed out’

Shalok Kabir

When the Guru was sixteen years old, his so-called abnormality had reached its climax. He was already regarded as unusually eccentric by the people around him. But now it was much more. He was seen constantly absorbed in himself. Many people thought that evil spirits or demons had possessed him and they guided his movements and behaviour. He was seen alone for long periods and often at places like the cremation grounds. He frequently went about without food too and this had affected his general health as well. Surely he was under the influence of a power over which he visibly had no control. Yet people were unable to understand what power it was and went about speculating over it. It was actually the period of his life when inner struggle had started. He was intensely in love with his Beloved and could not live without Him.

“ਰਾਮ ਬਿਓਗੀ ਨ ਜੀਐ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘One conscious of separation from God cannot live’

Shalok Kabir

A moment's separation was too unbearable and this really was the pain (ਕਰਕ) in his heart that he spoke of, now and then. One who had ever loved could know the condition of the mind of a lover. His was the Divine Love and therefore unfathomable and deep. Even love on a lower plane can have immense potentialities for romance as revealed in human history. The Guru was in love of the highest order and people did not understand what it was, for they did not have any such personal experience and what they had never experienced did not exist for them. Some thought he had become insane, others that he was possessed of evil spirits. Kalu Chand grew anxious about his son and readily accepted any advice people gave him. Magical formulae and incantations of mantras were tried. Amulets with God's Name written over them, were put in the Guru's neck to ward off the evil spirits. The mullah, a well known exorcist was called to exorcise the spirits by the power of incantations. The Guru ridiculed the Mullah thus :

“ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਵੇਚਹਿ ਨਾਉ ।

ਖੇਤੀ ਜਿਨਕੀ ਉਜੜੈ ਖਲਵਾੜੈ ਕਿਆ ਥਾਉ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Accursed is the life of those who write to sell God's Name. Those who have ruined their crop in the field cannot expect to gather anything on the thrashing’

Guru Nanak in Sarang

The Mullah lived on selling God's Name and the Guru was uncompromisingly opposed to it. In one of his missionary travels later on Mardana had brought from the village people large presents in the form of money, clothes and other gifts. The Guru refused to take them, reprimanding Mardana for having accepted them. Offerings, he said, were like poison that could not be digested except through the service of the Lord and His Worship and therefore these should be thrown off and they were actually thrown off. After pointing out to the Mullah the ruinous effect of his profession on his character he related to him what exactly was the trouble with himself (the Guru) and where-in lay the inability of the world to understand that trouble.

“ਕੋਈ ਆਖੈ ਭੂਤਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਬੇਤਾਲਾ ॥ ਕੋਈ ਆਖੈ ਆਦਮੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ ॥ ਭਇਆ ਦਿਵਾਨਾ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬਉਰਾਨਾ ॥ ਹਉ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਣਾ ॥”

‘Some call me a sprite, others that I am out of sorts and still others that I am Nanak, the hopeless man. But (they do not know that) Nanak hath gone mad through being madly in love with his Lord and knoweth none else but Him’.

Then he goes on to explain to the Mullah that it was not easy to be mad in that way. All were not qualified for that kind of madness.

“ਤਉ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾਂ ਭੈ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਏਕੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਤਉ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਏਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਖਸਮ ਕਾ ਦੂਜੀ ਅਵਰ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਕਾਇ ॥ ਤਉ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਧਰੈ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਮੰਦਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪ ਕਉ ਅਵਰ ਭਲਾ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥”

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

"I would love to be mad if I had the fear of the Lord and knew not any but the Lord ; if I served the one Master only and realised His Will, considering every other wisdom as of no avail. Yes, he indeed is mad who enshrineth Him in his heart, considereth himself low and all others high".

Guru Nanak in Maru

He said, 'blessed are they who are mad in this sense.' But strange are the ways of this world. It takes what is unreal and illusory as real. People who love the Lord are considered mad and those who hanker after transitory things of the world are considered wise. Man's values have become topsy turvy. Guru Arjan has truly said, in Gauri :

“ਜੋ ਛਡਨਾ ਸੋ ਅਸਥਿਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨੈ ॥ ਜੋ ਹੋਵਨ ਸੋ ਦੂਰਿ ਪਰਾਨੈ ॥

... ..

ਚੰਦਨ ਲੇਪ ਉਤਾਰੈ ਧੋਇ ॥ ਗਰਧਬ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਭਸਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਹੋਇ ।”

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

'Man believeth as permanent what is impermanent. What is so near he taketh as afar. He laboureth to attain that what he ought to throw off and giveth up that what provideth protective companionship. He washeth off the plaster of chandan and rolleth in dust like an ass'.

ਕਉੜੀ ਬਦਲੇ ਰਤਨ ਤਿਆਗੈ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

'He giveth up jewel for a mere trite'.

Guru Arjan in Gauri

How could the Mullah have any cure for a man who

not only knew his ailment but also the way to cure himself through the Love of the Lord's Name ? He told the Guru's father that his son was truly possessed but the Spirit that had possessed him was unconquerable, beyond the powers of a mere exorcist like himslef.

NOTE : Some biographies have given the above sakhi at a later stage, after the call had come and had been accepted. But to us it seemed more relevant to give it here, as Bala's Janam Sakhi had done.

CHAPTER VI

The physician is healed.

“ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘The Name is the medicine for all ailments.’

Guru Arjan in Gauri Sukhmani.

The Mullah had found no cure and Kalu Chand looked for other treatments. There was the physician, Haridass, having a good reputation for curing physical ailments. He was approached and requested to suggest a cure for restoring the Guru's health which was visibly much impaired. The physician felt the pulse. But the Guru withdrew his hand and spoke out thus,

“ ਵੈਦ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਵੈਦਗੀ ਪਕੜਿ ਢੰਢੋਲੇ ਬਾਂਹ ॥

ਭੋਲਾ ਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਈ ਕਰਕ ਕਲੇਜੇ ਮਾਹਿ ॥ ”

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘The physiciah has been sent for to diagnose the ailment and he feeleth the pulse. But the ignorant physician knoweth not that the pain is in the heart.’

’

Guru Nanak in Malar.

The sense of separation from Him was really the cause of his pain, and this the physician did not know. The Guru started to explain to the physician the basic cause of man's sufferings of all kinds, including the physical ailments. He said, the whole world including the physician himself, was suffering, on that account and it was his duty to heal himself first before he set out healing others. Also, unless the real cause of so much of suffering everywhere was correctly diagnosed no permanent cure was ever possible. Guru Angad had aptly stated the same thing in a hymn in Var Malar :

“ ਵੈਦਾ ਵੈਦੁ ਸੁਵੈਦੁ ਤੂੰ ਪਹਲਾਂ ਰੋਗੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ ਐਸਾ ਦਾਰੂ ਲੋੜਿ ਲਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਵੰਞੈ ਰੋਗਾ ਘਾਣਿ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਰੋਗੁ ਉਠਿਅਹਿ ਤਨਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਵਸੈ ਆਇ ॥ ਰੋਗੁ ਗਵਾਇਹਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਤ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਵੈਦੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥ ”

‘ O physician, first find the real cause, if thou art a true physician and then search for a remedy that cureth all maladies, a remedy by which one is rid of all diseases and true happiness abideth within. If thou first cured thyself thou wouldst justify thyself as a true physician.’

Guru Angad in Var Malar.

The physician was bewildered. To explain to him what he meant, the Guru sang the following hymn,

“ਦੁਖ ਵੇਛੋੜਾ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਭੂਖ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਸਕਤਵਾਰ ਜਮਦੂਤ ॥
ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਲਗੈ ਤਨਿ ਧਾਇ ॥ ਵੈਦ ਨ ਭੋਲੇ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਾਇ ॥
ਦਰਦੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਗੈ ਸਰੀਰ ॥ ਐਸਾ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਬੀਰ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਕੀਏ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਤਨਿ ਉਠਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਰੋਗੁ ॥
ਮਨ ਅੰਧੇ ਕਉ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਵੈਦ ਨ ਭੋਲੇ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਾਇ ॥

ਚੰਦਨ ਕਾ ਫਲੁ ਦੰਦਨ ਵਾਸੁ । ਮਾਣਸ ਕਾ ਫਲੁ ਘਟ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਸੁ ॥
 ਸਾਸਿ ਗਇਐ ਕਾਇਆ ਢਲਿ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਕੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥
 ਕੰਚਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਹੰਸੁ । ਜਿਸ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਅੰਸੁ ॥
 ਦੂਖ ਰੋਗ ਸਭਿ ਗਇਆ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਛੂਟਸਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਨਾਇ ॥”

ਮਲਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“There is the pain of separation (The mother becomes unhappy when her child goes away or dies. The husband becomes unhappy when separated from his wife. Thus separation from dear ones is one cause of unhappiness). Then there is the pain of hunger. Then again there is the pain from the fear of the Messengers of Death as also the pain of diseases that overtake the body. O, ignorant physician, give me no medicine for it is ineffective, besides being inadequate for all ills. The pain continueth because the body remaineth in affliction (of this or that kind). Brother, such medicines as thou hast cannot be an effective cure. Man forsaketh God and devoteth to sensual pleasures and therefore within him ariseth pain. The ignorant man is thus punished. So, apply not thy cure to me, O, ignorant man. A sandalwood is useful so long as there is fragrance in it. So also is man of any consequence as long as his body holdeth breath within. When the breath departeth, the body crumbleth away and becometh useless. No one taketh medicine after that (The physician's medicine is no cure for the ills from which the soul suffers. It works, if at all, only for the period the body lives. When it dies the medicines lose their significance). The body is bright as gold and pure is its swan (soul), provided the essence of the Pure Name is enshrined within. (It is through the Name that) the soul shedeth off all its sufferings and ailments. Yes, it is through the True Name that one is delivered.”

The hymn above pointed out that the world suffered in a variety of ways. It suffered from hunger, from the pain of separation from dear ones, from the fear of the myrmidons of Death, from countless diseases the body was subject to, and from so many other things. Men run after doctors and physicians who prescribe remedies and sometimes even succeed in curing one or the other ailment. All the same, men continue unhappy from many more causes. The unfortunate thing is that the world thinks only in terms of the body which is only a temporary instrument that God had provided the soul with, for the fulfilment of its destiny. When the body perishes all its ailments perish with it and the cures that were being worked out lose their significance. But the soul, the permanent element within, and man's true self continues to suffer because of the kind of ailments that afflict it. The five passions are its deadly enemies and nothing is done to rid it of these enemies. The result is that although all efforts are directed at curing the body of its diseases and seeking happiness for it, the objective is not achieved.

“ ਜਤਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੁਖ ਕੇ ਕੀਏ ਦੁਖ ਕੋ ਕੀਓ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ”

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੬

‘All efforts are directed to attain happiness and not one for unhappiness.’

Shalok Guru Teg Bahadur.

Yet the result is quite the opposite because the whole approach is basically wrong, mis-conceived and unreal. The springs of the mind, the sense organs, are habituated to look for happiness outwards. The search always is for

pleasurable sensations of temporary nature for the satisfaction of senses. This is illusion, or ignorance out of which can emerge nothing but pain. Hatred, jealousy, anger, cravings and attachments are the by-products of an unreal living. It is like suffering in a dream, a thing illusory and unreal. There is the kingdom of heaven within all and within easy reach of every body, yet illusion distorts vision and causes unhappiness. The Guru tells the physician that man's true self is non-material and permanent and has no need for the impermanent and material pleasures the world can give it. Thus for true happiness there is no other course for man except to live in accord with that Life Principle from which he has emanated and which is engraved in his whole being. It is the spiritual needs of the soul that must be looked to if one were to attain permanent peace and happiness.

“ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਕੀਏ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਤਨਿ ਉਠਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਰੋਗ ।”

“Man forgetteth God and devoteth to sensuous pleasures and therefore within him ariseth pain or suffering.”

The soul must therefore be restored to its original natural condition and must revert to its true self and live a life of truth, goodness and love which are the real food for the self. This is the true life of the spirit. The permanent life of the soul must be linked with the Permanent Being in whom the soul has its roots and from which it had emanated. The Permanent Being is the source of all real happiness. When the soul learns to turn inward it enters the realm of bliss. In the language of the Guru, it is the Simran of the True Name that has the saving grace that creates a condition in which this inward turning is

brought about. Infinite power then flows from it and provides a cure for all ailments. It induces a state of mind in which the ups and downs of life cannot ruffle. It is the state of perfect peace and equilibrium. It is the natural condition of the soul in which it rediscovers itself in its original purity and then there can be no pain.

The physician thus rediscovered the healing balm which provided health to the mind, from which all health flowed. In fact, with the removal of soul-sickness, every other sickness is dispelled. He realised that the young Nanak was truly a physician of the right kind, a Divine person who knew the art of true living. Here is a part of another hymn in Rag Malar which the Guru composed on this occasion for the benefit of the physician and for a further elucidation of the Name-cure against all ailments.

“ਦੁਖ ਮਹੁਰਾ ਮਾਰਣੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਸਿਲਾ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਪੀਸਣੁ ਹਥਿ ਦਾਨੁ ॥
ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਲੇਹੁ ਨ ਛੀਜੈ ਦੇਹ ॥ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲਿ ਜਮੁ ਮਾਰੈ ਠੇਹੁ ॥ ਐਸਾ ਦਾਰੂ
ਖਾਹਿ ਗਵਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਾਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਰਾਜੁ ਮਾਲ ਜੋਬਨੁ
ਸਭ ਛਾਵ ॥ ਰਥਿ ਫਿਰੰਦੈ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਥਾਵ ॥ ਦੇਹੁ ਨ ਨਾਉ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਜਾਤਿ । ਓਥੈ
ਦੇਹੁ ਐਥੈ ਸਭਿ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਸਾਦ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਧਾਂ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਘਿਉ ਤੇਲੁ ॥ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ
ਅਗਨੀ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲ ॥ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਅਰੁ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਰਾਣ ॥ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਪਰਵਾਣ ॥
ਤਪੁ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਨੀਸਾਨੁ ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਏਹੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ । ਸੇ
ਧੰਨਵੰਤ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨਨੀ ਧੰਨੀ ਮਾਇ ॥”

‘Pain is the poison which can be burnt into an antidote through the Name. Pound it with the stone of contentment and with the Pestle of compassion. If thou takest this antidote, thy body sufferest not (from pain), nor the Yamas

strikest thee at the end. O, ignorant man, if thou takest this medicine, thou wilt be delivered of all thy sins. Dominions, wealth, beauty are all shadows and these appear in true perspective when the chariot of the Sun (Divine Wisdom) dawneth. Neither the body, nor name, nor caste are of any worth there because it is all Day there and here it is all night. Make firewood of all thy tastes, oil of all the cravings, and fire with the matchstick of lust and wrath. Of all sacrificial acts, Yagnas and reading of Puranas, only those are approved that please Him. Let disciplined life be the paper and the Name the certificate. Whoever hath the writ of such a treasure, he is declared rich in the Lord's Abode. Blessed is the mother who hath brought him forth''.

Guru Nanak in Malar

The gist of the above is that when the Name enters the soul, all pain goes. It is rather burnt into an antidote. Moral qualities like contentment and compassion are aids in the preparation of this antidote. All tastes, cravings, lust and wrath get burnt in the process. This is true Yagna. It covers all sacrificial acts and the reading of Puranas and Shastras. Nothing else can match it. Riches, power, beauty and dominions are shadows and illusions and are of no use to the soul.

The physician was now fully converted. But there was still one thing weighing on his mind. He asked the Guru to think of the pain he had caused to his parents and to his other relations who were unable to understand the philosophy of his life. The Guru knew it and was not happy about it. But he also knew that he was helpless. He had already explained to the physician that the life of the

spirit was the only thing that mattered, otherwise human life would reduce itself to animal existence, too painful a thing to contemplate. Further he wanted him to view the matter from another and a wider perspective. He spoke this time like a revolutionary. Mother, father, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters have a meaning in respect of a particular span of life which really is a phase or a term in a long endless series. It is not a fact that an individual is without a past when it appears at birth or that it disappears at death into nothingness. Death and birth are only changes of state. One span of life ends to give place to another. Who knows how many lives man had lived to have his present state? The process of evolution may have taken millions of years to take a particular shape. In this process how many births and deaths could be associated with any individual existence and how many parents and other relatives could be supposed to have been created by one during this long process? If that be so, the term parents could be referred to a particular span of life only and not in the context of eternity. For that span it is necessary to love and serve them as also to be reasonably guided by them. But that does not mean that higher duties should be forgotten in blind attachments and irrational sentimentalism. That is the way little minded people reckon. For the high minded the whole world is the family home. The love of relatives should not become entanglements and bondage. The needs of the soul could not be overlooked just because the parents would not like it or could not understand its meaning. Facts of life must be faced realistically and courageously. Forgetting God was the cause of all sin and suffering. No trickery could work to

escape from the law of cause and effect. A sinner must pay for his sins, for he cannot keep his secret from the Omniscient Lord. Only he who attunes to God's Will attains eternal peace. It is this subject which the Guru explained to the physician through a beautiful hymn composed on the occasion. Here is the hymn,

ਗਉੜੀ ਚੇਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਕਤ ਕੀ ਮਾਈ ਬਾਪੁ ਕਤ ਕੇਰਾ ਕਿਦੂ ਥਾਵਹੁ ਹਮ ਆਏ । ਅਗਨਿ ਬਿੰਬ ਜਲ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਨਿਪਜੇ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੰਮਿ ਉਪਾਏ ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਬਾ ਕਉਣੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਗੁਣੁ ਤੇਰੇ । ਕਹੇ ਨ ਜਾਨੀ ਅਉਗੁਣੁ ਮੇਰੇ । ਰਹਾਉ । ਕੇਤੇ ਰੂਪ ਬਿਰਖ ਹਮ ਚੀਨੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਪਸੂ ਉਪਾਏ । ਕੇਤੇ ਨਾਗ ਕੁਲੀ ਮਹਿ ਆਏ ਕੇਤੇ ਪੰਖ ਉਡਾਏ । ਹਟ ਪਟਣ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਭੰਨੈ ਕਰਿ ਚੋਰੀ ਘਰਿ ਆਵੈ । ਅਗਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਪਿਛਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਕਹਾ ਛਪਾਵੈ । ਤਟ ਤੀਰਥ ਹਮ ਨਵਖੰਡ ਦੇਖੇ ਹਟ ਪਟਣ ਬਾਜਾਰਾ । ਲੈ ਕੇ ਤਕੜੀ ਤੋਲਣਿ ਲਾਗਾ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ । ਜੇਤਾ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਨੀਰਿ ਭਰਿਆ ਤੇਤੇ ਅਉਗੁਣੁ ਹਮਾਰੇ । ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਮਿਹਰ ਉਪਾਵਹੁ ਡੁਬਦੇ ਪਥਰ ਤਾਰੇ । ਜੀਅੜਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਤਪੈ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਵਗੈ ਕਾਤੀ । ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਵੇ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ॥”

“*Since when did one come to have one's mother and since when one's father? Where did we come from? Out of the fire (of the mother's womb) and water drop (of the father's sperm) all were created. But what was the purpose behind creation? O, my Lord, who can measure Thy Virtues and who can count my vices? How many forms have we assumed-of trees, of animal life, of reptiles in the race of snakes and of winged birds? If a man breaketh shops and strong houses in cities to commit thefts and yet cometh home safely, he can not keep his secret from Thee, whatever the precautions successfully taken to escape the eye of man. We may have*

visited the holy places, the banks of holy rivers, the world over, the shops and the bazars of the cities. But in the end this pedlar of the man must look within for weighing Him (who resides in the heart). As the ocean is full of countless water drops, so are my sins without count. Take pity, O Lord, bless me with Thy grace. Thou hast saved many drowning stones like me. My life burneth like fire, and within my heart is the knife (of pain). But, prayeth Nanak, 'he who realiseth God's Will attaineth eternal peace' ''.

Guru Nanak in Gauri

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CHAPTER VII

God-Consciousness.

“ਓਤਿ ਪੋਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੰਗਿ ਰਾਤਾ ॥”

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

“Nanak is permeated, warp and woof, by Him.”

Guru Arjan in Dhanasari.

Time passed on and the Guru had not changed to the liking of his father. This was not possible for one so deeply in love. The father was unhappy. Yet he continued to hope for the best. He loved his son as all fathers do and could not help doing this thing or that to cure his son of the ways which were an enigma to him. He married him too, rather at an early age, in the hope that conjugal affections might impart a new direction to his life and might also divert his attention to some useful work for a living. It caused deep pain to his sensitive heart when people said Nanak had lost his sanity, or that he had turned a faqir. The Guru's wife Sulakhani by name (Ghumi, according to some biographers), one day reported to his mother about the abnormal and highly eccentric ways of her son and this made her unhappy. She

pleaded with her son imploringly to forget his devotions and come back to them as wholly theirs. Now he loved his mother. He knew she possessed a tender, loving heart. There was sincerity behind it and for this he adored her more. It was not easy for him to say 'no' to such a mother, whatever be the nature of her demands on him. Also he could not be indifferent to the afflictions at her heart, which, according to her way of thinking, he himself was responsible for. But, with all that, he was helpless. He respectfully told her that God was the breath of his life and he would die without that breath. He recited the following hymn on this occasion to give her a picture of the condition of his mind.

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥ “ਆਖਾਂ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ । ਆਖਣਿ ਅਉਖਾ
ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਉ । ਸਾਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਕੀ ਲਾਗੈ ਭੂਖ ॥ ਉਤੁ ਭੂਖੈ ਖਾਇ ਚਲੀਅਹਿ ਦੂਖ ॥
ਸੋ ਕਿਉਂ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਇ। ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੈ ਨਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ । ਸਾਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਕੀ
ਤਿਲੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ । ਆਖ ਥਕੇ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਈ । ਜੇ ਸਭਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕੈ ਆਖਣ
ਪਾਹਿ॥ ਵਡਾ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਘਟਿ ਨ ਜਇ । ਨਾ ਉਹ ਮਰੈ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੋਗੁ । ਦੇਦਾ ਰਹੈ
ਨ ਚੂਕੈ ਭੋਗੁ । ਗੁਣੁ ਏਹੋ ਹੋਰੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ । ਨਾ ਕੋ ਹੋਆ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਹੋਇ । ਜੇਵਡੁ
ਆਪ ਤੇਵਡੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਤਿ । ਜਿਨਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਖਸਮੁ
ਵਿਸਾਰਹਿ ਤੇ ਕਮਜਾਤਿ । ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਵੈ ਬਾਝ ਸਨਾਤਿ ।”

“I live when I utter His Name, I die when I forget Him. Hard indeed it is to utter the True Name. I am ever hungry for the True Name, but it is a kind of hunger which when satisfied destroyeth all pain. O mother, how can I forget Him? He is the True Lord, realisable through the True Name. Many have tried to measure the the greatness of His True Name. They have described Him but have found not even a small part of His True Worth. Even if the whole

world were engaged in describing His Worth, He would neither be any the more nor any the less. He dieth not and so there is nothing to grieve for. He giveth and there is no end to it. His greatness is that there is no other like Him. Neither there ever was the other, nor will the other ever be. His Beneficence is as unlimited as He Himself is. He made the day followed by the night. They who forget Him are indeed low caste ; for, without the Name they have to be considered as low born."

Guru Nanak in Asa

There was now nothing more for the mother to say after this categorical assertion by her son. But she decided to talk to the father about it. He was already so sore on this account. Yet he had resolved to study more minutely the son's mind with a view ultimately to change entirely the course his life had taken. He tactfully introduced the subject of work and suggested different alternatives in respect of available professions. He knew that inspite of his oddities, the boy was most obedient and would accept whatever advice he ultimately gave him. In fact, the boy loved every work, though he accomplished it in his own way. The father asked him first his views on agriculture and farming. The Guru replied that he loved farming and was famelier with it too, though it was a farming with a difference.

“ਮਨੁ ਹਾਲੀ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੀ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਰਸੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਤੁ । ਨਾਮੁ ਬੀਜੁ ਸੰਤੋਤੁ
ਸੁਹਾਗਾ ਰਖੁ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਵੇਸੁ । ਭਾਉ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਿ ਜੰਮਸੀ ਸੇ ਘਰ ਭਾਗਠ ਦੇਖੁ ॥
ਬਾਬਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਾਥ ਨ ਹੋਇ । ਇਨਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਗੁ ਮੋਹਿਆ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'Let the mind be the farmer and good actions the farming ; let the body be the farm to be watered with endeavour. Let the Lord's Name be the seed, contentment the furrowing and humble living the fence. With deeds of Love the seed will sprout. Fortunate indeed are such homes (as possess this farming). O Sir, Maya hath lured away the whole world, yet rare is the person who knoweth this'.

Guru Nanak in Var Sorath

Now this kind of farming was too novel, vague and even meaningless a thing for the worldly father to comprehend. What the Guru meant, however, was that whatever the work men were called upon to do, must be linked with God and Truth. Unless the mundane aspect of a task were turned into the spiritual it would degenerate into something unholy, being then accompanied by greed, attachment, pride and anger etc. leading to strife, conflict and dissensions. If farming or, for that matter, any other profession was to be undertaken it should be conducted in a way that it helped in realising the goal of life.

Then the subject of shop business was considered to which the Guru replied :

“ਹਾਣੁ ਹਟੁ ਕਰਿ ਆਰਜਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਵਖੁ ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸੋਚ ਕਰਿ ਭਾਂਡ-
ਸਾਲ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚ ਤਿਸ ਨੋ ਰਖੁ । ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਵਣਜੁ ਕਰਿ ਲੈ ਲਾਹਾ
ਮਨ ਹਸੁ ॥”

ਸੋਰ ਠ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'Let the feeling that time was fleeting, be the shop, God's Name the stock in it and Divine thought within the consciousness the store (for vessels), wherein the Lord be treasured. Let the dealings be with God's dealers, the saints. Thus thou

wilt reap the profit and become happy.'

Guru Nanak in Sorath

Then the topic of dealings in horses was taken up. The Guru said,

“ਸੁਣਿ ਸਾਸਤ ਸਉਦਾਗਰੀ ਸਤੁ ਘੋੜੇ ਲੈ ਚਲੁ ॥ ਖਰਚੁ ਬੰਨੁ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆਂ
ਮਤੁ ਮਨ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਕਲੁ ॥ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਕੈ ਦੇਸਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਖਿ ਲਹਹਿ ਮਹਲੁ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Let the hearing of holy books be the trade, righteousness the horses to ride and virtuous living the fare carried for the journey. The day’s task must not be left till the next day (dealings of the above kind must not be delayed even for a day). When thus thou arrivest in the land of the Formless One, thou wilt enjoy the Heavenly Bliss.’

Guru Nanak in Sorath

And lastly service, preferably govt. service, was discussed. The Guru said.

“ਲਾਇ ਚਿਤੁ ਕਰਿ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਮੰਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਕੰਮੁ ॥ ਬੰਨੁ ਬਦੀਆਂ ਕਰਿ
ਧਾਵਣੀ ਤਾਂ ਕੋ ਆਖੈ ਧੰਨੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਚਵਗਣ ਵੰਨੁ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Let the whole hearted Service of the Master be the job, and the faith in the Name, the particular work in that job, and let the stilling of vice be the urge for the same job. Those, thus engaged in it, will be blessed. Nanak, the Lord looketh on them with His Grace and their glory is enhanced four-fold’.

Guru Nanak in Sorath

Here he emphasised the point that he was ever ready to enter the Service of his Master and would carry out His

Bidding. It was the greatest pleasure to him to go wherever He called him, as it was the surest way to win His Grace. But it must be preceded by extirpating vice and sin in every form. He was ever ready for service of this purest variety.

Now this did not at all mean that he was up against any mundane work or service. He only wanted to highlight the fact that people entered worldly affairs without keeping God in mind and were in consequence lost in wilderness. He was not prepared to follow that course and destroy himself. He was so completely filled with God that he wanted to carry with him what may be called God-consciousness, in all the affairs of the world. He lived in God, moved in God and had his whole being in Him. He was prepared to work so as to live in Truth and to make any sacrifice to please His Master.

“ਸਚੁ ਤਾਂ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਚਾ ਹੋਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Truth is realised when the True One dwelleth in the heart’.

This was the essence of what he told his father and this was exactly the thing his father could not understand. There was a basic difference of outlook between the two and it was this that created estrangement at times. While one of them was God-conscious through and through, the other was Maya-conscious and therefore the conflict.

“ਭਗਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੈਂਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਜੋੜੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

"It is never possible for men of God and men of the world to pull together."

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

The Guru had a clear attitude towards life. It concerned every thing he did, how he went about his work and discharged duties, how he talked to others and how he behaved towards them. In fact, he believed in living religion every minute of life, from the cradle to the grave. Thus his God-consciousness was put to the test every moment and in every walk of life and, in consequence, something often came out of it that displeased his father. He was truthful, honest, liberal minded and sympathetic in dealing with people. He gave away to the needy whatever he could lay his hands upon. He once gave away a gold wedding ring and a brass utensil to a person posing as a faqir but whom he knew to be a cheat. He wanted to touch the heart of the evil minded man through his own generosity and thus convert him. And, on that account he earned his father's displeasure. But what could he do? Charity was in his grain. And He had to obey the call of His Lord with whom he was ever in communion. Many other similar things happened that, as we shall see in what follows, aggravated the situation.

CHAPTER VIII

Good bargain

“ ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਸਚੁ ਟਹਲ ਕਮਾਣੀ ॥ ”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

“ For me, the service of the saints is the true service.”

Guru Arjan in Ram Kali.

One day Kalu Chand suggested to the Guru to take to trade and grow into a rich businessman. His main purpose was, as before, to divert his son's attention from his present moorings, but this time he was providing him a secular work expected to engage him to a daily routine. He gave him some money—Rupees twenty to begin with—and commissioned one of the Guru's comrades, Bala, to accompany him, with clear instructions that some good bargain was to be struck. He explained to Bala in the manner of a businessman that, some cheap commodity was to be purchased at the market and then sold at such a higher price as should yield handsome profits. The Guru agreed to work as a tradesman quite readily and prepared to go with Bala. In the way they came across a set of holy men camping under a grove of trees. They were naked with only the loin-cloth as a covering and were

hungry too. It was gathered that they had not taken their meals for the last five days and yet were quite happy. On further inquiry it was revealed that they were sincere seekers and believed honestly that the needs of the body should be reduced to the minimum. They had adjusted themselves to it so well that they would willingly go without food for as long as human body permitted. In any case they would not go to any one to beg for food. The Guru was pleased at meeting such people as looked more to the needs of the soul than to those of the body and were so high minded that they could deny to themselves mere physical pleasures. The Guru came to the conclusion that there could be no better opportunity to carry out the wishes of his father for striking a good bargain than the present one. These hungry saints must be fed and he spoke to Bala about it. But Bala was a different man with a different outlook. He was clear in his mind that it was a ruthless waste to throw off money like that. In spite of Bala's remonstrances, however, the food was purchased from the nearest village and served to the sadhus. When they came back home, Bala carried the news to the father while the Guru stayed outside. Kalu Chand was much enraged. He had not yet quite forgotten the gift of the wedding ring to a loafing faqir known to be a cheat. In anger and distress he gave to his son slaps on the face which the son received in quiet equanimity, without offering any resistance whatever. But soon Rai Bular intervened and pacified the father. He said that the aim was noble as the money had been used to relieve distress and therefore the young Nanak deserved to be excused. He had, however, felt in his own mind that there was some recklessness in the

Guru's ways. He thought Kalu Chand was not a rich man who could afford to look with equanimity when his money was being thrown away like that. So, he took the Guru aside and entered into conversations with him to study the working of his mind. The Guru told him that there was nothing reckless about what he had done. He always followed the dictates of God within him, the voice of his highest Self. The voice of the Inner Guide should be accepted as the surest guide in all matters. He had surrendered himself completely into Its Hands and he was sure It never failed him. How was it possible for him, he asked, to run away with his money when he was faced with the spectacle of some really good men in acute distress, for not having found food for many days ? His God would have cursed him if he had done so. Money, undoubtedly had value of its own so long as it served the needs of human beings, otherwise it was a dead metal. No one had a right to be happy alone. Happiness should always be shared with others. He, who lived at ease while others starved, had blood guilt upon him. He who loved truth, justice and mercy and worked for them in life dwelt in the bosom of God. A man really created his own world. If his thoughts were mean the world was a place of suffering. If they were generous and true the same world was good, free and noble. Rai Bular realised the truth of what the Guru said but he wanted to know how he was able to hear that voice and how people could not or did not hear it. The Guru replied through a hymn given below. The part of that hymn as a direct reply to the Rai's query may be stated here immediately.

“ਤੇਰਾ ਸਦੜਾ ਸੁਣੀਜੈ ਭਾਈ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਬਹੈ ਅਲਾਇ ॥”

ਸਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ Brother, whoever dwelleth on His Name heareth the Voice of God within himself.”

Guru Nanak in Suhi.

Everyman had a soul which was the Light of God and this Light always provided guidance to whosoever was willing to hear it. The Divinity was within everybody's reach but one must work constantly through dwelling on Him to attain it. One must retire within oneself and listen in quiet contemplation the Voice that speaks perpetually. Purity of mind was the first condition to qualify a person for a true inner guidance.

“ ਸੁਚਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਚੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Truth is realised through the purity of the soul.’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa.

The rest of the hymn elaborates how people go about following the trends of their own minds and do not care to listen to the True Voice within. In this category are included not only worldly men running after sense enjoyments but also seekers practising Yoga, austerities and meditations. The pursuits may be well intentioned but they are often wrongly directed and therefore produce no results. In consequence, the law of Karma goes on taking its toll. Let all remember that life lived without the love of God was lived in vain. Here is the complete hymn referred to above :

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ “ਜੋਗੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੋਗਵੈ ਭੋਗੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਤਪੀਆ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਪੁ ਕਰੇ ਤੀਰਥ ਮਲਿ ਮਲਿ ਨਾਇ ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਸਦੜਾ ਸੁਣੀਜੈ ਭਾਈ ਜੇ ਕੋ

ਬਹੈ ਅਲਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਇ ॥ ਜੈਸਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਲੁਣੈ ਜੋ ਖਟੈ ਸੋ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਅਗੈ ਪੁਛ
ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸਣੁ ਨੀਸਾਣੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਤੈਸੇ ਜੈਸਾ ਕਾਢੀਐ ਜੈਸੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਇ ॥
ਜੋ ਦਮੁ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਸੋ ਦਮੁ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਇਹ ਤਨੁ ਵੇਚੀ ਬੈ ਕਰੀ ਜੇ
ਕੋ ਲਹੇ ਵਿਕਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੰਮਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਜਿਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥”

“ *The Yogi practiseth the Yoga, the enjoyer of sensual pleasures reveleth in these pleasures, the man given to austerities practiseth austerities and washeth himself at the pilgrim-places (All of them are pursuing courses according to the notions and trends of their own minds and not listening to the voice within). But, brother, whoever dwelleth on His Name heareth His Voice within himself. Whatever one soweth that one reapeth and whatever one earneth, that one eateth. But if one goeth thither, with the certificate (Passport) of the Name, one hath no accounts to render. One is known as are one's deeds, and the breath that goeth without cherishing the Lord, goeth in vain. Of no worth is this body if it enshrineth not the Lord's True Name and I would sell it off to any one prepared to buy it.*”

Guru Nanak in Suhi.

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CHAPTER IX

The Guru as storekeeper

“ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੇਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Those who toil to earn their living and then share the earning with others, have found the true Way.’

Guru Nanak in Var Sarang

The money utilised to feed the sadhus was for Kalu Chand so much money wasted away and therefore too bitter a pill for him to swallow. The pleadings of Rai Bular and the indulgent attitude of the mother and the sister were factors that worked gradually to soften him and to induce rethinking. The Guru's sister was married to Jai Ram who was the Dewan to Nawab Daulat Khan at Sultanpur. It was decided to send him to Sultanpur to live with his sister. It was known that she loved and cherished him and was in turn respected by him and so it was natural to expect that the influence she had over him would work well. She had also assured the family that through her husband's good offices some remunerative work in the service of the Nawab could be secured. The Guru agreed to the proposal without the least hesitation and got ready to depart. Prior to this departure Rai Bular specially

came to offer his best wishes to the Guru and asked if he could be of any use to him. The Guru replied that he regarded service rendered to humanity in general as service rendered to him.

In Sultanpur he was soon appointed as the keeper of the store house (Modi Khana) and the new work appeared to him most congenial. He got an opportunity of meeting all sorts of people who came to him for their food provisions. It gave him immense pleasure to talk to them of their problems and to serve them in every possible way. Surely it was, in itself, a matter of joy to deal with plenty of rations to all people high or low, but he did not omit to provide to them spiritual rations as well. He worked for the new assignment diligently and most conscientiously and soon earned for himself a reputation for honesty, amiability, sympathy and liberality. His own people were also pleased with him now, although they had earlier despaired of him as an altogether lost man. He lived in a separate house now as a full-fledged householder and had by this time, two sons too. Both Bala and Mardana had joined him and stayed with him in his own house. Here he presented a beautiful picture of a true householder free from any narrow worldly or sectarian outlook and was engaged in the service of mankind, in general.

“ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥”

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“Abide in the Pure One amid the impurities of the worldly life. Thus thou shalt find the way of true religion”.

Guru Nanak in Suhi

Being God-Conscious he never forgot his God even though he was engaged in worldly duties. He was no doubt most punctilious about his work but some times when God had absorbed him completely in Himself he was intoxicated and forgot his surroundings.

Once he was weighing out his rations and was counting the weighings, starting from one and proceeding onwards till he reached thirteen. The Panjabi equivalent of 13 is Terān which also means 'thine'. It seems that his mind was already filled with God's Presence when he was engaged in weighing and the word 'thine' simply stimulated the process of sending him into ecstasy. He forgot himself in Him. His hands carried on the weighings in a mechanical manner while his tongue repeated 'Thine, Thine, I am thine'.

Some people love to malign others. The Guru's reputation built on honest dealings did not please them. There were also many fanatical people who did not like the catholicity of his outlook on religious matters and cherished illwill towards him. This single instance of forgetfulness provided them an opportunity to report to the Nawab that his store keeper was not efficient and was recklessly wasting the stores. But when the store-keeper's accounts were examined by the Nawab, the complaint proved malicious and false. It rather proved to the world that even in that perverted age it was possible to achieve success in trade and business through honest and liberal dealings. The fact that he had endeared himself to the people through his detachment and self-denial was his greatest assets and the real cause of his success. It has a lesson for all times for businessmen to learn. It is basically wrong to suppose

as some people do that it is not possible to carry on trade honestly. The business community has acquired a bad name but it excuses itself on the cheap assumption that it is not possible to make a decent living without resort to corrupt practices. The fact, on the contrary, is that even as a matter of policy, honesty is the best course to follow. But the pity is that people are fast losing faith in moral and spiritual values. Money has become the be-all and end-all of life, resulting in strife and discord.

CHAPTER X

The Call

“ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਅਪੁਨੀ ਲਾਇਓ ਸੇਵ ॥”

ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘The Lord engageth His Servant in His Own Service.’

Guru Arjan in Bilawal.

Then came the Master's Call. It had to come in its own time and no one could stand in its way. Kalu Chand had done all he could to stop the course his son's life was taking. But God, in His Own Scheme of things, was preparing him to become the world saviour. We have seen how intensely he was in love with Him. Even a moment of separation had become unbearable. Through that stage and through many other stages he had to pass before the Master made him His Most perfect instrument for the great purposes before Him. He had, finally, learnt to live as a householder too and knew the art of true living in a practical way and he must now go out to the world to share with it the way to live in God and be happy.

The call came like this. One day he had unexpectedly disappeared from the scene of his activities and there was no clue of his whereabouts. He was last seen sitting on

the bank of the 'Veine' stream in a contemplative mood. There he had gone for his usual morning bath and as he did not return home for three consecutive days every body had supposed that he was drowned in the stream, which was subsequently vigorously combed by divers and search parties without yielding any clue. Then it was suggested that he might have committed suicide for the shame of having wasted away the store house. The provisions were weighed and the accounts and cash balances were examined but it was found that there was a good credit balance. This confounded people, all the more. What actually happened, however, was that he had moved to a retreat close by, engaged in deep thought, and had undergone the mystic experience of union with the Infinite. He was already steeped in God's Love. The bath in the Veine, the freshness of the hour and the tranquil atmosphere about him had stimulated the process of union. He got so completely lost in Him, wrapt in His mute adoration, that he remained overpowered for some days, swallowed by that experience. This simple spiritual phenomenon of union of the soul with the Universal Soul has been unnecessarily stretched in the chronicles perhaps with a view to make it intelligible to people who did not understand the language of the realm of the Spirit. The Puratan Janam Sakhi says that angels or messengers sent by God had come to take the Guru and led him into the presence of God and there he was cordially received, honoured and finally offered a cup of nectar as a mark of His Grace. He was then entrusted the charge of showing the path to the misguided world which he accepted with due humility. He was then brought back by the same angels to the place from where he was removed. This sort of description

may be all right as a poetic expression. But when people begin to take it too literally, the entire significance is lost on them. The fact, however, is that the Guru had attained a superconscious state, in which the higher hidden faculties of his own mind were in contact with the Universal Mind. In this condition his own will was for the time being completely in abeyance. It was then being controlled by the Supreme Will. In fact, the distinction between the Knower and the Known had disappeared for the time being. It was a state of perfect illumination, spiritual light, an insight into depths of things. The sense of the past, the present and the future had disappeared. All space boundaries were broken so that Truths of far reaching value were being revealed. He had merged in the One Spirit, the embodiment of all Knowledge and Wisdom and, therefore nothing remained outside the pale of this union. His soul found itself awakened and freed from all limitations of time and space. He saw God face to face as a Spirit in the purest and the absolute form, and so no illusion had remained to limit the vision. He was filled with a sense of wonder that defied every description or expression in human terms. In fact, it was impossible to express the glory of the vision through the medium of the language. Here is a hymn he composed to indicate the Lord's boundless Glory the vision had revealed and of his own limitations in expressing it to others.

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਕੋਟਿ ਕੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਰਜਾ ਪਵਣੁ ਪੀਅਣੁ ਅਪਿਆਉ ॥ ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਦਇ
ਗੁਫੈ ਨ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਸੁਪਨੈ ਸਉਣੁ ਨ ਬਾਉ ॥ ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ
ਆਖਾਂ ਨਾਉ । ਸਾਚਾ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਨਿਜ ਬਾਇ ॥ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਆਖਣੁ ਆਖਣਾ ਜੇ

ਭਾਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਤਮਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕੁਸਾ ਕਟੀਆ ਵਾਤ ਵਾਰ ਪੀਸਣਿ ਪੀਸਾ ਪਾਇ ॥
ਅਗੀ ਸੇਤੀ ਜਾਲੀਆ ਭਸਮ ਸੇਤੀ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਉ। ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ
ਆਖਾਂ ਨਾਉ। ਪੰਖੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਜੇ ਭਵਾਂ ਸੈ ਅਸਮਾਨੀ ਜਾਉ ॥ ਨਦਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ
ਆਵਉ ਨਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪੀਆ ਨ ਖਾਉ। ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾਂ
ਨਾਉ। ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਗਦ ਲਖ ਮਣਾ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਮਸੂ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ
ਆਵਈ ਲੇਖਣਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਚਲਾਉ ॥ ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾਂ
ਨਾਉ ॥”

“If I were to live millions and millions of years and the air were my food and drink, and if I were to shut myself in a cave (for meditation) where the sun or moon did not enter (to disturb me), and if I were so absorbed that I did not have sleep even in dream, I would still not be able to measure Thy Greatness nor the Glory of Thy Name. The True, the Formless One is centred in Himself. There are hearsay descriptions of Him, But if it pleaseth Him, He in His Grace revealeth Himself. If I were cut into bits and ground like grain in a mill, if I were to burn myself in fire and then mix with the ashes, I would still not be able to measure Thy Greatness nor the Glory of Thy Name. If I were to fly forth, like a bird across a hundred skies and became invisible and neither ate nor drank, I would still not be able to measure Thy Greatness nor the Glory of Thy Name. If I read millions of pages of books and interpreted their meaning correctly, if there be no end to the ink in my possession and I could write with the speed of winds, I would still not be able to measure Thy greatness nor the Glory of Thy Name.”

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag.

The Guru narrates in the above hymn the four methods people usually employ for knowing His Glory—concentration,

austerities, super physical powers and Knowledge. But he says none of these can be a sufficient guarantee for knowing and measuring His Glory, because no one can know Him without being in Him. It is a psychological happening of a spiritual kind within the soul itself and comes, not through mere reading of books or through practising methods of austerities or of concentrations, but through a complete merger, just as the river merges in the sea and becomes its part. He had merged in Him all right, but how could he convey its Glory to other people through the medium of mere words. The Guru composed another hymn, but this time expressing not only the Glory of God, which was then the uppermost thing in his mind, but also his own shortcomings. He gave vent to his feeling that he considered himself far removed from Him, not well qualified for the task for which God in His Mercy was choosing an humble man like him. He prayed to God that He might grant him a clear vision to see Him in all human beings so that he might dedicate his body and soul to Him through the service of His humanity.

“ਤੂੰ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਦਾਨਾ ਬੀਨਾ ਮੈ ਮਛਲੀ ਕੈਸੇਅੰਤ ਲਹਾ । ਜਹ ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਤਹ ਤਹ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਨਿਕਸੀ ਫੂਟਿ ਮਰਾਂ । ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਮੇਉ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਜਾਲੀ ॥ ਜਾਂ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਾਗੈ ਤਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਸਮਾਲੀ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਮੈ ਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਜੋ ਕਛੁ ਕਰੀ ਸੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਹਉ ਮੁਕਰਿ ਪਾਉ ॥ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੰਮਿ ਠ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਇ ॥ ਜੇਤਾ ਦੇਹਿ ਤੇਤਾ ਹਉ ਖਾਉ । ਬਿਆ ਦਰੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੈ ਦਰਿ ਜਾਉ । ਨਾਨਕੁ ਏਕ ਕਹੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥ ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੂਰਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਆਪੇ ਮੰਝਿ ਮਿਆਨੇ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੈ ਸੁਣੈ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਹਾਨੇ । ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸੋਈ ਪਰਵਾਨੇ ॥”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“O Wise and All-knowing Lord, Thou art the River ; how can I, Thy fish, measure Thy End ? Wherever I look I find Thee present and without Thee I break and die. I see not the fisherman and his net and when in consequence I get pain I call on Thee. Thou pervadeth all yet I take Thee as afar. Whatever I do, it cannot be beyond Thy Presence. Thou see-est me but I deny it. I have not been in Thy Service nor have I know the Glory of Thy Name. What Thou givest I eat. There is no door for me other than Thine ; whither else then shall I go ? Prayeth Nanak ‘Let my body and soul be dedicated to Thee.’ Thou art near, Thou art far and Thou art in the middle, Thou see-est and hearest everything, Thou, by Thy Power, Createst all ; and Whatever pleaseth Thee, Nanak, that alone prevaieth.”

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

After this vision, when he came back home, to the great joy of his parents and of all those who loved him so well, he was in a state of perfect peace, calm, confidence, inner strength and happiness and yet he was most humble. He was now a man transformed into a new being, a dynamite, full of power, full of hope, with a passionate divine love for humanity, completely attuned to the Master's Will and determined to work for Him and thus perpetuate Him in his own self. His face sparkled with a sense of mission, a call to carry God's message to the world. The Unity with Him that he had experienced was going to become, in that way, a permanent and an unbreakable phenomenon. The self in every form had already gone and with it all distinctions of race, colour, creed and country. His first pronouncement was, 'There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim'. All were

now one. All distinctions were man-made and not at all approved by His God. He had now tendered his resignation from service and gave away all his earnings he had made, as the store-keeper, to the poor and needy. All those near and dear to him tried to persuade him to change his resolve but he could not do it. His mother entreated him in most touching terms to stay on with them to make the house cheerful which, she said, would otherwise grow dreary. The sister said, she could not live or blossom without him. His wife timidly and meekly implored him not to forsake her and the children. He firmly told them all, that the call was irresistible and was urging him to free himself from all narrow loyalties. To his father, he humbly and respectfully said, he had also another Father to serve, whose commands it was impossible for him to disobey. He said, he had already accepted the call and there was no going back. He requested them all not to think in the narrow way. They should not imprison him in the affection of the small family circle when millions of fellow creatures constituting a bigger family, were awaiting him. The whole humanity was his family that called him to act and he must go wherever God wanted him to go. But it was not easy to convert his people. He was, however, able to enter into the loving heart of his sister and told her that he valued her love and would be ever by her side whenever the power of that love was strong enough to attract him towards her. And she was satisfied and cheerfully agreed to let him go. Then he read out to them the hymn in Var Manjh indicating the background of the Call.

“ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੇ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ

ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਲਿ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ
ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਆਇਆ । ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਖਾਧਾ ਰਜਿ
ਤਿਨਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਢਾਢੀ ਕਰੇ ਪਸਾਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ
ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥”

“The Lord hath called me, a bard of no consequence, to service. Any time of day or night I am at His beck and call, that is His Will. The Master called His Bard in His Presence and there the bard received the Robe of Honour to sing the True Praises of the Lord. And now the Nectar Name hath become my everlasting food. The bard hath to sing out the Word and spread out His Mission. Nanak, the Perfect Lord is revealed to those who praise the True One”.

Guru Nanak in Manjh

Thus he had already agreed to become His Bard singing His praises and carrying the love of God's Name to the whole humanity. This alone, he knew, was the perfect cure of all ills of the suffering humanity. The pressure of the family he was now facing had already been disposed of before the Call was accepted during his long drawn out Samadhi, at Veine. The biographers describe in parables and figures the struggle that had gone on into the Guru's mind, but these should not be interpreted too literally. People sometimes fail to appreciate the poetry behind them and take to literal interpretation. It is really a beautiful picture of the Guru's mind resisting every temptation urging to ignore the call. The Kalyug is trying to exercise his influence and the devil is asserting his superamacy. The Kalyug frightens him of the dangers involved in the difficult task before him. It takes hideous shapes of frightening

rains and terrible thunders. All this is a figurative way of pointing out the difficulties involved in a mighty struggle that was to be waged. These difficulties are, in fact, one's own inner weaknesses and one's own inner passions and attachments that always stand between the task and oneself. Here the love of wife, parents and children, the worldly temptations of wealth, power and influence were all pulling in one direction and the Master's irresistible urge for service of the suffering and groaning humanity, in the other. All these pulls had come but without producing any ripple in the mind that had attained its perfect peace and calm. There is a hymn in Sri Rag, he had composed to explain how different pulls had failed to frighten him from his resolve and how he had come back filled with God and His Mission. Worldly prosperity, in the form of wealth, power and dominions, occult or miraculous powers, charms of women and so many other things that can entice the mind had lost all temptations in his case. Here is the hymn:

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਮੋਤੀ ਤ ਮੰਦਰ ਉਸਰਹਿ ਰਤਨੀ ਤ ਹੋਇ ਜੜਾਉ ॥ ਕਸਤੂਰਿ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਅਗਰਿ
ਚੰਦਨਿ ਲੀਪਿ ਆਵੈ ਚਾਉ । ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾਂ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ
ਨਾਉ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਜੀਉ ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ । ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਛਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ
ਅਵਰੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਥਾਉ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਧਰਤੀ ਤ ਹੀਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਜੜਤੀ ਪਲਘਿ ਲਾਲ
ਜੜਾਉ ॥ ਮੋਹਣੀ ਮੁਖ ਮਣੀ ਸੋਹੈ ਕਰੇ ਰੰਗਿ ਪਸਾਉ ॥ ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾਂ ਵੀਸਰੈ
ਤੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਧੁ ਹੋਵਾਂ ਸਿਧਿ ਲਾਈ ਰਿਧਿ ਆਖਾਂ ਆਉ ।
ਗੁਪਤੁ ਪਰਗਟਿ ਹੋਇ ਬੈਸਾ ਲੋਕੁ ਰਾਖੈ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾਂ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ
ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ । ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ਹੋਵਾਂ ਮੇਲਿ ਲਸਕਰ ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਖਾਂ ਪਾਉ ।
ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹਾਸਲੁ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਸਭ ਵਾਉ ॥ ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾਂ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ
ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ ॥”

If I had a palace, built up with jewels and studded with rubies and if the same were so well plastered with musk, saffron and chandan (Sandal wood) as to provide joy to me, I would not lose myself in these allurements and forget my Lord and His Name. My soul burns itself without Him as I have made sure from my Guru that there is no other place for me except His Abode. If the earth were made of diamonds and be mine and if my bed-coach were strung with rubies and beautiful girls with diamonds shining on their faces tempted me through love glances, I would not lose myself in all these allurements and forget my Lord and His Name. If I were a Sidha Yogi possessing occult powers and could gather wealth at my bidding, and if I could assume a subtle or a manifest body (through miraculous powers) and people had faith in me, I would not lose myself in all these allurements and forget my Lord and His Name. If I were a king having armie's and were seated on a throne and if I commanded peoples thorough allegiance, I would consider it all as vain and would not lose myself in these allurements and forget my Lord and His Name."

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

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CHAPTER XI

What is true religion ?

“ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘By mere talk none goeth to Heaven. Emancipation cometh by living Truth’.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

The Master's Call had been accepted with the utmost humility. The Guru was now preparing to go with his mind full of the new mission. As we shall see, he put on, shortly afterwards, the actual pilgrim's garb too, to symbolise his new role of God's missionary with His Message for the world. His first utterance after the Call was, as we have already seen, 'there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim', and this he repeated as a regular slogan wherever he met people. It was never his purpose to belittle or condemn Hinduism or Islam or, for that matter any other faith. A Hindu attendant, Bala, and a Muslim minstrel, Mardana, were the irrefutable and living proofs against such a notion and were a constant declaration of the catholicity of his outlook. The fact is that he never said a word in disparagement of this or that faith. Yet the slogan was all important for him. It was going to

become the symbol of his mission. He was out to destroy all artificial barriers that men had created on the basis of caste, race, or creed and bring about unity in the prevailing diversity and conflict of every shape or form.

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਨੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਭਸੈ ਦੇਇ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The True Guru is one who uniteth all’.

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

He had achieved Unity with God and this must now find its expression in seeking unity with the whole world through working for its well-being. For him all humanity was now one. He recognised only the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

“ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਕ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

i. e. *‘There is one Father and we all are His Children.’*

Guru Arjan in Sorath

“ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਣ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ ॥”

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘From One Light the whole world came into being. So who is good and who is bad.’

Kabir in Parbhati

This means that all distinctions between man and man on any basis whatsoever must disappear. Every true religion must recognise this basic fact that all men were one. His new slogan was only an expression of this

philosophy. Yet he loved all religions. He believed that different religions were intrinsically all paths that presented ideals worthy of attainments and had the capacity to elevate and inspire men for a healthful living and if these were allowed to disappear, men would be lost into the wilderness with nothing to sustain them. Therefore he could not condemn any of them. But he insisted that people should not think in a communal way and should not cut themselves away from each other into water-tight compartments leading to conflicts and dissensions. Religion was to be lived and not to be merely talked about. What really mattered was the inner life. The intellectual views of a religion, its dogmas, its rituals, its ceremonies and its outward forms, however important they might be in themselves, were not the real religion and they must be subordinated to the real needs of the soul, attained through realising its true nature. When that happened all distinctions between Hindus and Muslims would disappear. It was in this sense that he said 'there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim'. All were one, united through their common Fatherhood. But if that is forgotten and religion is allowed to become a mere lip homage or a worship of untruth, then there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim and there is no Sikh too.

The people, however, did not understand what his new slogan meant. The fanatics among the Muslims raised a hue and cry. Reports reached the Nawab that the Guru had grievously offended against the holy Islam and he should be punished. They said, it was heresy to declare that there was no Muslim left. Orders were sent forthwith that the Guru be produced before the Nawab. But the Guru

refused to obey such haughty orders and the arbitrary manner in which they were issued. Then the Qazi was sent to explain to the Guru that the Nawab wanted to discuss with him the controversy which his new slogan had engendered and that he should come to explain his point of view so that unnecessary bitterness could be avoided. Now this was the right approach and the sensible way to resolve differences and the Guru readily agreed to see the Nawab and to explain to him what he meant by saying 'there was no Hindu and there was no Muslim'. The following hymn was composed on the occasion to emphasise the essentials of a true Muslim. It explained that it was difficult to be a true Muslim and if a man really qualified himself for the same he was blessed and whoever lived according to the teachings of his religion, had the right to call himself a religious man. Thus alone the label of religion had any justification. Also, at that level all religions could be considered to have become one. Here is the hymn :

“ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਇ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥
 ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ ॥
 ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨੁ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ ॥
 ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੈ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ ॥
 ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥”

‘It is difficult, indeed, to be a true Muslim. If a man possesseth the following qualities then alone is he a true Muslim. First, let the religion of the Prophet become sweet to him (i. e. He should love and live the teachings of the Prophet with sincere faith) and then with the scrapper (of humility) let him scrub himself clear of the possession of pride.

And then with faith in the founder of religion let him break the illusion about life and death, accept God's Will and believing the Creator as Supreme, lose his self. And lastly, if he is compassionate to all beings, he will be worthy of being called a true Muslim'.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

After pointing out, in the above way, the essentials of a religion, the Guru actually takes up the whole Muslim way of life-the Holy Book, the rituals, the ceremonies, the dogmas, the Muslim prayer and the outer forms and symbols of the Muslim faith and, without denouncing any of them, points out what is needed to make all of them yield fruit, so that they become symbols of inner life. If this is achieved by a person there will then be the fullest justification for him to call himself a Muslim. Here is the hymn on this subject :

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕਰਾਣੁ ॥ ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥ ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜ ॥”

ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰੁ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਂਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥”

ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਪਹਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥ ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ

ਜੇਤੇ ਕੁੜਿਆਰ ਕੁੜੈ ਕੁੜੀ ਪਾਇ ॥”

“Let compassion be thy mosque, faith the prayer-mat, honest living the Quran, humility thy circumcision and good conduct thy fast. Thus dost thou become a true Muslim. Let pious works be thy Kaaba, Truth thy Pir (teacher), good actions thy prayer, and acceptance of His Will, thy rosary. Thus wilt the Lord give thee honour.

Remember, that to take away what is not one's own is to eat the forbidden cow (for the Hindu) and the swine (for the Muslim). Thy Guru and thy Teacher will stand by thee only if thou livest not on carrion (another's due). By talk alone none goeth to the Heavens. Release cometh by living truth. If one were to season one's sinful food with condiments of falsehood it becometh not pure thereby. Through false talks one gathereth nothing but falsehood. Thou sayest thy prayers five times and givest them five names. But let truth be thy first prayer, honest living the second and working for the good of all, the third. Let good intentions of the mind be the fourth prayer and the praises of the Lord, the fifth. Say thou, the prayer of good deeds and thus become thou a true Muslim. All the rest are false Muslims and they achieve nothing but falsehood”.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

The discussions, as above, were proceeding when it was announced that the time for Nimaz (Muslim prayer) had reached. The Guru was asked to join the prayer as he had just then propounded the view that all religions were in essence one. He readily agreed. The news spread like wild fire that the Guru was joining the Muslim prayer.

Some thought he was going to be converted to the Muslim faith. The Hindus, including the Guru's brother in-law, Jai Ram, came rushing to the mosque to see what was going to happen. The Qazi stood up to begin his service and the rest of the audience kneeled but the Guru kept sitting throughout. This was considered a sacrilege and an insult to the Holy prayer and to Islam. Both the Qazi and the Nawab were furious and asked the Guru to explain what, to them, appeared a blasphemy. The Guru told them frankly that he wanted to draw their attention to the fact that prayer to be of any value must proceed from the heart. It was not a mere mumbling of words or of hymns from the holy scriptures nor had it a merely material or worldly objective before it. Every prayer should satisfy the needs of the soul. It should mean an intercourse with God and that demanded a complete surrender to Him as a child surrendered to his mother, so that the deepest impulses of the mind were stirred up generating infinite spiritual energy, Its aim should be to inspire the soul to rise above all material environments and to come in unison with the Supreme Spirit. Then he laughed heartily and said that the prayer which was being offered by them was not accepted by God as their minds were occupied elsewhere in worldly things and the so-called prayer had become mere outward movements and mechanical repetitions. The soul had no need for a prayer that did not provide spiritual food to it. True prayer was that which was accompanied by mental effort of high devotion and intense love, God becoming its focus.

“ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਕਹਿਐ ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸੈ ਤਾਂ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਇ ॥” ਗੁਜਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

'All repeat God's Name without realising Him. If by the Guru's Grace, He cometh to reside in the mind, then the fruit is acquired.'

Guru Amar Dass in Gujri.

Both the Qazi and the Nawab admitted that prayer with them had become a mere mechanical process, a mere lip homage to God and it did not touch the heart at all. The Qazi was in a mood to confess that his mind was not in the prayer and had gone home to look after the new born filly lest it fell into the well close by. And the Nawab, in his turn, confirmed by revealing that although he had joined the prayer with the rest, his mind was engaged in the transactions that were being carried on by his men in Kandhar where they had been sent to buy horses for him. The Guru admired their frankness. He wanted them to realise that the aim of prayer was to teach a man to live in truth, love, righteousness and justice so that greed, lust and attachments were all cast at the Feet of the Master.

It is really this kind of prayer that God answers thus 'Ask it and it shall be given thee, seek and thou shalt find.' It is the content of the prayer that really matters. If a man continues at heart to worship wealth, power and other base things, his prayer can have no meaning. On the contrary, the prayer should break down the power and the charm of wealth from the heart. Change of heart is the only objective the prayer has before it and that is what it should bring about if it is to serve any good purpose.

NOTE : The biographies insist that the Guru had read into what was passing in the minds of the Qazi and the Nawab during the prayer. That may be true but it is not

a very important point for emphasis. It adds nothing to the spiritual elevation the Guru had already attained. The science of telepathy and clairvoyance has amply demonstrated that men without having any spiritual achievement can do it. The Guru did not have the need, nor the inclination to indulge in thought reading. He could see easily from the superficial atmosphere prevailing at the prayer meeting that people's minds were not in it. That was the only point worth emphasising.

The Guru's views on the subject of prayer as stated above have been expressed by him at other places also. In a Hindu temple once, in some village, he had found a large number of worshippers gathered to offer their prayers. One of them approached the Guru and urged him to join them in the worship. He told them that for a true prayer the temple should be built in the heart where God dwelt. He wanted to emphasise that mere formal worship in temples or mosques was nothing if it did not mean inner worship.

Now to come back. The Guru had found the audience in a receptive mood and he wanted to impress on their minds that without living religion no mere label could save. Here is another hymn he composed to re-emphasise this point, through the metaphor of a farmer growing his field.

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ “ਅਮਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਸਬਦੋ ਕਰਿ ਸਚ
ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਾਣੀ ॥ ਹੋਇ ਕਿਰਸਾਣ ਈਮਾਨੁ ਜੰਮਾਇ ਲੈ ਭਿਸਤੁ
ਦੋਜਕੁ ਮੂੜੇ ਏਵ ਜਾਣੀ ॥ ਮਤੁ ਜਾਣਸਹਿ ਗਲ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਮਾਲ ਕੇ ਮਾਣੇ
ਰੂਪ ਕੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਇਤੁ ਬਿਧੀ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਐਬ ਤਨਿ ਚਿਕੜੇ ਇਹੁ
ਮਨੁ ਮੀਡਕੋ ਕਮਲ ਕੀ ਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੂਲਿ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਭਉਰੁ ਉਸਤਾਦੁ ਨਿਤ

ਭਾਖਿਆ ਬੋਲੈ ਕਿਉਂ ਬੂਝੇ ਜਾ ਨਹ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥ ਆਖਣੁ ਸੁਨਣਾ ਪਉਣ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ
ਇਹੁ ਮਨ ਰਤਾ ਮਾਇਆ । ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਦਿਲਹਿ ਪਸਿੰਦੇ ਜਿਨੀ ਕਰਿ ਏਕੁ
ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥ ਤੀਹ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਪੰਜਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਥੀ ਨਾਉ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ਮਤੁ ਕਟਿ ਜਾਈ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੈ ਰਾਹਿ ਪੈ ਚਲਣਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਧਨੁ ਕਿਤਕੁ ਸੰਜਿਆਹੀ ॥”

“ Let good actions be thy farm, the Guru's Word the seed and the display of truth the daily water. Be thou thus a farmer growing thy field of true religion. In this way wilt thou get at the true meaning of Heaven and Hell. O ignorant man, thou canst not attain Wisdom by mere talk. In the pride of thy wealth and the glamour of thy beauty thou hast wasted away thy life. The sin in thy body is the mud in which rolleth the frog of thy mind. It knoweth not that it liveth with the lotus. The Guru is the bee (that loves the lotus). It calleth thee each day to hear what it teacheth but thou art not qualified to understand it. To speak to thee of these high things is like the blowing of wind (to no purpose), as thy mind is engrossed in Maya (the illusion). The Grace of the Lord will visit those who cherish Him in their hearts and meditate on Him alone. Thou fastest for thirty days and sayest thy prayers five times each day but thou takest no care that the Satan is there to destroy all thy merit. Sayeth Nanak, 'thou hast to go the way to Death. Why, then, thou gatherest wealth and possessions?’”

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag.

The Nawab was much impressed with the loftiness of the Guru's teachings and offered an estate to him if he agreed to stay on in his service. But the Guru respectfully declined the offer as his mind was already set on much bigger things, in obedience to the Call of another Master.

CHAPTER XII

Milk and blood.

“ਕਿਰਤ ਵਿਰਤ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘Let thy work and profession be in accord with dharma.’

Var Bhai Gurdas.

At long last, the Guru set out on what are popularly known as his Udasis (missionary tours intended to carry God's message to the world in pursuance of the Call). It may be mentioned here that biographies speak of the first Udasi having begun after he had donned the pilgrim's (missionary's) garb and this he had done on starting towards the East after he had already visited Eminabad, reclaimed Sajjan, met the Pandits of Kurkushetra and Hardwar and visited places like Panipat and Delhi. But we make no such distinction. That will be too narrow a view of the mission. When he left his home in obedience to the Call, his work as a missionary had started. He was then thirty two years old. He left his wife and two children in the early hours of the morning to find himself in the wide world where he was called upon not to practise austerities for any personal salvation as Budha had done but to serve humanity, to kindle hearts ready to receive

him as also those that were yet enveloped in complete darkness. He was accompanied by Mardana, the rebeck player, who was destined to become his constant companion throughout these travels. It is this simple and sincere hearted man who in difficult situations becomes panicky and nervous and often provides, by his innocent questionings, the key to the Guru's mind. The party reached Saidpur (Eminabad), now in Pakistan, and stayed in the house of a humble carpenter named Lalo.

The Guru always preferred to stay with the poor and the so-called low caste people and enjoyed their hospitality with the greatest relish. Also he had an instinctive kinship with those who, for a living, hewed the woods, tilled the soil and built houses for others. He regarded them as the salt of the earth. Lalo was one such man but he was much more. He was poor, yet quite contented and perfectly happy with his poverty. He believed in simple living and high thinking. It was thus a thing of the greatest pleasure to the Guru to stay with this man of God, and to partake of his poor dwelling and coarse food. He ever sought good men wherever they could be found. The people of Eminabad, fed on caste superstitions, did not like that the Guru, a Khatri by caste, should live and eat in the house of a Sudra.

A rich man, Malik Bhago, the Dewan of a Pathan Governor, was then holding a sumptuous dinner to which he had invited Brahmins, sadhus, high caste Hindus and holy men. He thought that through feeding them he would get their blessings and grow richer. He learnt that a new sadhu, regarded by his followers as holy, had arrived and

he ordered that he should also be invited. The Guru declined the invitation by humbly but significantly pointing out that as the food was to be served to high caste people and as he had no caste he was not qualified for the same. Also he preferred to remain away from the rich and luxurious dainties. The Malik, however, insisted that he should come and the Guru agreed. The people gathered there knew this sadhu's earlier refusal, looked at him in curiosity and expected some explanation from him. The Guru had with him a piece of coarse bread procured that day from Lalo. Taking this piece in one hand and the dainties of the Malik in the other he squeezed them both. While the wondering audience waited in amazement, he declared in all seriousness that milk was trickling from Lalo's coarse food and blood from the Malik's rich dainties and that any one having inner eyes would see the same.

Then he started to explain how the one earned through honest labour carried milk within it while the other earned by cruel exactions and sinful ways had nothing better in it than blood sucked of the poor and innocent people. The basic fact of life was that every one should work for oneself and earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow. In the context of poverty prevailing all around it was a sin to amass huge fortunes. If a man was idle and yet wealthy, another man must have been robbed and therefore he had the flesh of his brother in his stomach.

“ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'To take away what belongs to another is like eating the forbidden flesh of cow (for the Hindu) and of the swine (for the Muslim).'

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh.

Ill-gotten wealth could not become holy by breathing God's name over it or through a dinner intended to secure the blessings of saints. Whoever thought of acquiring more at the cost of others was a thief. Every idle man must consider himself a criminal. Whoever shirked honest toil and lived on the labour of others was a mean parasite. Also wealth had the capacity to corrupt the possessor.

“ਮਾਇਆ ਧਾਰੀ ਅਤਿ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਬੋਲਾ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

'Man attached to wealth is deaf and extremely blind.'

Guru Amar Dass in Gauri.

Such a person grows rich by employing dubious and unholy means and loses his soul in consequence. Behind every great fortune lies hidden a crime which God's men will soon find out.

“ਪਾਪਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਇਆਂ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'Wealth is not possible without sinful ways and keepeth not company after death'

Guru Nanak in Asa

Those who live on the toils of others, kill their creative faculties and become harmful for society. They indulge in

sensual pleasures and destroy themselves. And yet they remain discontented and want more.

“ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਬੁਝੀ ਹੇ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘It is a rare man whose cravings are stilled’

No amount of ill-gotton wealth can satisfy cravings. The more the wealth, the more avaricious one becomes. The result is that the poor starve unless they have inner spiritual strength to sustain them. Possessions create divisions and privileges in life. Fruits of wealth are pride, pomp, show and persecution. One who has killed roots of these from his heart is truly great and free. Therefore let each be for all and the hind most should be the first charge on society. A true seeker has faith in God and will not care to hoard anything for the next day. When did God store for the coming day? It is said of Guru Amar Dass that all rations for the Guru's free Kitchen were cooked and distributed free reserving nothing for the morrow. If some food still remained it was served to the animals. That really was the approach of Guru Nanak. He wanted to put an end to exploitation of all sorts. Nothing was nearer to his heart than social justice. There may be no emphasis in his writings on any particular isms which in course of time merely become distractions, yet he was the greatest revolutionary who was ever with the depressed and the suppressed sections of humanity.

It is in this context that Guru's actions in respect of Malik Bhago's dinner should be judged. The accumulated wealth had for him a repugnance of its own. But, when the same was being utilised for acquiring the blessings of the saints to grow more rich, his

mind revolted against this cruel mockery. Therefore he purposely dramatised the simple event of a dinner to expose the wretchedness behind that dinner. He was uncompromisingly opposed to exploitation of man by man in every form. But a show of it through a dinner appeared a cruel joke played on holy men. Here was an occasion to emphasise that every honest earning was the sacred milk while huge fortunes dishonestly earned were the unholy blood. He possessed wit, humour and superb imagination which he frequently employed for a dramatic effect. He was able to see quickly the ludicrous and comic in men and in their way of thinking and could give his humour an edge of social satire as well, though at the back of it there was always the mark of humanist spirit, tenderness and compassion. It was not enough in this case to have simply stated, in a matter of fact way, as any other reformer would have stated, that ill-gotten wealth was a poison to be shunned. He chose to demonstrate the same for a maximum effect. In fact, dramatic demonstration to high-light an evil was a regular method with him as amply revealed in so many of his life events. In Hardwar, Mecca and Kurkushetra, for instance, this method yielded immediate results. He extensively employed wit and humour to draw people's attention to the ridiculous aspect of their beliefs, ways and conduct. He was sweet and humble, yet he had to expose, through a dramatic touch, sometimes, the folly behind things that ordinarily remained hidden from view. He knew that the Malik was a rich and powerful man and it was not easy to expose him and to hurt his pride. Yet he must act fearlessly when the interests of righteousness and truth were to be served. Ill-gotten wealth was the greatest evil and he must dramatise its wretched aspect to public view.

CHAPTER XIII

Sajjan, the great deceiver (thug)

“ਮਿਟਹਿ ਕਮਾਣੇ ਪਾਪ ਚਿਰਾਣੇ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਮੁਆ ਜੀਜੈ ।”

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘Past sins are effaced through the association of saints, the slumbering soul coming back to life’.

Guru Arjan in Dhanasari

During the Guru's travels further on, the party came upon a very wicked man, Sajjan by name. The locality he lived in, has not been well defined in the biographies. The poet, Santokh Singh, however, claims that it was in a thick forest near Talamba in the District of Multan, where the party reached after visiting Harrapa and other places. Sajjan was believed to be a holy man while, in fact, he was a great hypocrite and a cruel robber. His place had become a resort for weary travellers who should like to take their night's rest, and he had provided, in that out of the way place, all comforts for them. He had built, side by side, a temple for the use of Hindus and a mosque for the Muslims. To give credence to his assumed holiness he dressed himself in pure white, put on a Tilak mark (symbol of Hindu faith) on his forehead and wore Muslim rosary

round his neck. He had also spread out a carpet in the lawn for prayer purposes. Many people were thus taken in robbed of their money and then murdered in a secret way.

The Guru and Mardana both were welcomed with unusual cordiality. The look of spiritual peace and satisfaction on the Guru's face was mistaken for a sign of wealth and wordly prosperity. Sajjan was inwardly pleased that he had that night a rich prey expected to yield huge fortunes. The Guru on the other hand, had determined to reclaim this evil man through touching the deepest chords of his slumbering heart. He did not indulge in any long discourses with him nor was there any use delivering hard sermons to such a man. He told Mardana that they must not sleep that night but only sing God's praises in accompaniment to the music of his rebeck.

He knew that every soul, however misguided, was potentially divine and there were times in the life of a man when it was possible to awaken the slumbering soul through the power of the Divine Song or of the Guru's Word and then it would look at life in a new way. Surely it was a difficult task yet it was not impossible to rouse men from the course their life had continued to take for a long time, by awakening them to a state of higher consciousness which they had never known before. Every soul possesses multi-dimensional traits and sometime even in an immoral life there may be lying hidden germs ready for spiritual illumination and if these are helped by powerful souls like that of the Guru the results can be more quickly achieved. Life of sin is not a permanent phenomenon that must go on only in one particular direction. All sins can be washed away by spiritual

efforts if the soul possesses in its deepest recesses ingredients for growth and progress. One moment of a powerful inward perception can lead to an inner change. This happened, as the stories go, with Ajamal, with Ganika and with Kauda. God's servants call it God's Grace that brings about in life a sudden and unexpected departure from the past.

“ਏਵ ਭਿ ਆਖਿ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਜਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਆਣੈ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਆਪਿ ਕਰੇ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੨

i. e. “who can say whom He will redeem? Nanak, he only can turn God-ward whom He Himself illumines.”

Guru Angad in Asa.

But it must not be taken to mean that His Grace falls arbitrarily or that it is opposed to spiritual effort. Rather it is the direct outcome of that effort. It means that the devotee's one honest step towards Him invites and paves the way for hundred steps from Him.

The following hymn was sung by the Guru himself, with Mardana playing on the rebeck. It was intended to convert Sajjan by making inroads on the hidden impulses of his soul.

ਸਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਉਜਲੁ ਕੈਹਾ ਚਿਲਕਣਾ ਘੋਟਿਮ ਕਾਲੜੀ ਮਸੁ ॥ ਧੋਤਿਆ ਜੂਠਿ ਨ
ਉਤਰੇ ਜੇ ਸਉ ਧੋਵਾ ਤਿਸੁ ॥ ਸਜਣ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਲਿ ਮੈਂ ਚਲਦਿਆਂ ਨਾਲਿ ਚਲੰਨਿ ॥
ਜਿਥੈ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਖੜੇ ਦਿਸੰਨਿ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕੋਠੇ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾੜੀਆਂ ਪਾਸਹੁ
ਚਿਤਵੀਆਹਾਂ । ਢਠੀਆਂ ਕੰਮਿ ਨ ਆਵਨੀ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਸਖਣੀਆਹਾਂ ॥ ਬਗਾ ਬਗੇ ਕਪੜੇ
ਤੀਰਥ ਮੰਵਿ ਵਸੰਨਿ ॥ ਘੁਟਿ ਘੁਟਿ ਜੀਆ ਖਾਵਣੇ ਬਗੇ ਨ ਕਹੀਅਨਿ ॥ ਸਿੰਮਲ

ਰੁਖੁ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਮੈ ਮੈਜਨ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੁਲੰਨਿ ॥ ਸੇ ਫਲ ਕੰਮਿ ਨ ਆਵਨੀ ਤੇ ਗੁਣ ਮੈ ਤਨਿ
ਹਨਿ ॥ ਅੰਧੁਲੈ ਭਾਰ ਉਠਾਇਆ ਡੂਗਰ ਵਾਟ ਬਹੁਤੁ ॥ ਅਖੀ ਲੋੜੀ ਨ ਲਹਾ
ਹਉ ਚੜਿ ਲੰਘਾ ਕਿਤੁ ॥ ਚਾਕਰੀਆਂ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆਂ ਅਵਰ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਕਿਤੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਮਾਲਿ ਤੂੰ ਬਧਾ ਛੁਟਹਿ ਜਿਤੁ ॥”

‘The bronze sparkles bright, but if I were to rub it, its black would come off. If I were to wash it a hundred times its inner impurity would not go. Friends, indeed, are they who accompany me when I depart from here and wherever the account is to be rendered by me they stand by my side. The houses, the halls and the mansions, merely painted from without crash and are of no use, for they are hollow from within. The heron is robed in white and liveth at a place of pilgrimage, yet it cruelly devoureth life. Its whiteness can not signify its inner purity. My body is like the Simmal tree and men are taken in by my outward grand appearance. But as its fruits are of no avail, so is my life without any virtue. The blind man that I am, I am carrying a load uphill on a difficult mountainous road, and I have no eyes to see the way. How shall I scale to reach the end? Of What avail is service, goodness or cleverness other than the Lord’s Name? So, O, Nanak, cherish the Name so that all thy bonds are broken.’

Guru Nanak in Suhi

The above hymn was sung in the first person. The Guru appeared to be talking only to himself, the word Sajjan appearing only once in the hymn and that too in its meaning of friend. But Sajjan’s mind had accepted the whole hymn as a true picture of his own wicked heart. He

saw before him his real character. He thought it was he who was the sparkling bronze, the painted mansion, the heron, the Simmal tree, the blind man scaling mountainous path and that the hymn depicted him as he was. through these illustrations. He realised that all wordly gains acquired by him through his cruel ways would not avail him at the end. These were the things that would not benefit his soul and it would go without them naked to the next world. The consciousness of guilt yawned terribly before him and he felt the load unbearable. He was filled with remorse which, in fact, was the beginning of his regeneration. He fell at the Guru's feet, bathed them with his tears and craved forgiveness. The celestial song had worked this miracle. The repentance when it comes from the heart is always the first step in the direction of reform. It is true, Sajjan was a very bad man, made of a very bad material, but no man is perpetually damned. God has the power to forgive when a man qualifies himself for forgiveness.

“ਆਜੁ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਟਾਕਿਮ ਕੂੰਜੜੀਆਂ ਮਨਹੁ ਮਚਿੰਦੜੀਆਂ”

ਆਸਾ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

‘I would meet my Lord today if I held the wandering geese of my mind's desire.’

Farid in Asa.

The Guru told Sajjan that God had been very merciful to him and the beginning had been made. He should immediately throw off all his ill-gotten wealth for the use of the poor and the needy, earn living by honest labour, adopt poverty as the way of life, crave forgiveness

of all those whom he had wronged, make a complete confession of all his guilts and, above all, take to the love of the Name which alone was the true and abiding wealth.

Sajjan was deeply moved and repeated that he might be forgiven. The Guru explained to him that the seed of forgiveness lay not any where outside but within his own heart. No one else could do for him what he had to do for himself. There was no such thing as vicarious doing. All must reap the fruit of what they did. The Grace of God was boundless but every one must invite that Grace through one's own actions. The power of the awakened soul was unlimited. But that power had to be first generated through the operation of the mind itself so that all bonds of the Karma were burnt completely and did not take root again. Every soul could fulfil itself through spiritual life and through reuniting with its Source. As this Source remained above Karma, the soul that was united with it would also destroy all bonds of the past Karma. Sajjan was converted and was now a changed man. A new light had been shown to him providing him with a new perspective, new vision and therefore an altogether new life.

CHAPTER XIV

The Guru cooks meat

“ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਲੁਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“The ignorant man debateth and quarreleth over meat, but he lacketh true wisdom and deep thought.”

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

On the occasion of solar eclipse, people from all parts of the country gathered in Kurkushetra believed, to be a holy place, to offer their prayers for the safety of the Sun-god. It was supposed that the eclipse was caused by the sun's enemies, Rahu and Ketu and if they succeeded in engulfing the sun and destroying it, the whole world would be plunged in terrible darkness. Therefore, to ward off the danger, people gathered and prayed at Kurkushetra.

Many stupid and irrational superstitions of this kind have continued to hold people's minds up to this day. Did not the world witness only recently at the natural phenomenon of the conjunction of eight stars how the Indian people had lost their heads along with every sense of proportion and balance and made themselves the laughing stock of the whole world ?

The gathering in Kurkushetra was for the Guru a great opportunity to meet large congregations of people and he would always avail such opportunities for the spread of his own mission. He knew that people everywhere were in the grip of one superstition or the other and he must meet them to turn their minds from futile and idle pursuits to healthy and constructive channels and thus lay the foundations for inner purification. A young devotee of the Guru in that part of the globe had shot a deer and he presented it to the Guru as an offering and the same was allowed to be cooked by Bala under the Guru's instructions. When people came to know of it they were struck with horror at the enormity of what they supposed to be a sacrilege, particularly on that sacred occasion when the Sun-god was engaged in combating his enemies. They were fed on the superstitious belief that to light fire on that occasion, even for cooking purposes, was to invite disaster. And to go so far as to cook meat was an unpardonable crime. The Brahmins were terribly furious and were ready to smite the Guru and his men. In this campaign they were led by a Pandit named Nanun. But the Guru was the image of fearlessness. Absolutely unperturbed, he proceeded towards the leader and offered himself to be struck at. At the same time he meaningfully observed that if the killing of a deer was a sacrilege, the killing of a human being like him must be something much worse. Now this observation went straight to everybody's heart and set people thinking, providing an opportunity to the Guru to meet them in argument in which he was sure they would be overpowered. Not that he was opposed to the philosophy of non-killing. The most cardinal principle of his teachings was 'advaitism' i. e. oneness of all life.

This could not but demand reverence for, devotion to, and a sense of union or kinship with all life, existing in diverse forms.

“ਜਉ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਕਹਤ ਹਉ ਤਉ ਕਿਉਂ ਮੁਰਗੀ ਮਾਰੈ ॥”

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

“If thou sayest God resideth in all, then why dost thou kill a hen”

Kabir in Parbhati

Non-killing as a principle of life was already being preached in the land and Saint Kabir had been its most vocal protagonist. Here are some of his utterances :

“ਕਬੀਰ ਜੋਰੀ ਕੀਏ ਜੁਲਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਹਤਾ ਨਾਉ ਹਲਾਲੁ ॥

ਦਫਤਰਿ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਤਬ ਹੋਇਗੋ ਕਉਨੁ ਹਵਾਲੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘Kabir, it is cruel to kill animals by force and yet thou callest it a sanctified food. When thou art called to render account at the Lord’s Court, what shall be thy fate?’

“ਕਬੀਰ ਖੂਬ ਖਾਨਾ ਖੀਚਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਹਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਲੋਨੁ ॥

ਹੇਰਾ ਰੋਟੀ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਗਲਾ ਕਟਾਵੈ ਕਉਨੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘Blessed is the rice food dressed with the nectar of salt. For, who would like to offer his head for the food of meat one eats here’

Shalok of Kabir

“ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀਅ ਜੁ ਮਾਰਹਿ ਜੋਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਹਤੇ ਹਹਿ ਜੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ॥

ਦਫਤਰੁ ਦਈ ਜਬ ਕਾਢਿ ਹੈ ਹੋਇਗਾ ਕਉਨੁ ਹਵਾਲੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

'Kabir, those who kill living beings by force and yet call it a sanctified act have to render accounts before the Benefactor. What will be their fate then?'

Shalok of Kabir

“ਕਬੀਰ ਜੋਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਜੁਲਮੁ ਹੈ ਲੇਇ ਜਬਾਬੁ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥
ਦਫਤਰਿ ਲੇਖਾ ਨੀਕਸੈ ਮਾਰ ਮੁਹੇ ਮੁਹਿ ਖਾਇ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

'Kabir, it is cruel to kill animals by force. The Lord will ask to account for it. And when the account is answered, one would be struck in the face.'

Shalok of Kabir

“ਜੀਅ ਬਧਹੁ ਸੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਬਾਪਹੁ ਅਧਰਮ ਕਹਹੁ ਕਤ ਭਾਈ ॥
ਆਪਸ ਕਉ ਮੁਨਿਵਰ ਕਰਿ ਬਾਪਹੁ ਕਾ ਕਉ ਕਹਹੁ ਕਸਾਈ ॥”

ਮਾਰੂ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

“Thou killest life and callest it a thing of religion. Then brother, what is irreligion? Thou considerest thyself the great sage, then who is the butcher?”

Kabir in Maru

The Indian philosophy, culture and tradition are thus uncompromisingly against killing of living beings. It is agreed that this killing brutalises nature, kills humanity and destroys refinement of feelings. The Guru had accepted the above philosophy in principle but he took care that this noble concept was not toyed with or made a fetish of, so as to become something absolutely meaningless and irrational. Some of the protagonists of non-killing had made it so ridiculous a thing that they would keep their nose and mouth covered to avoid injuring micro-organisms. They did not

realise that the whole atmosphere remained always filled with them and there was no escape.

‘ਗੋਹੇ ਅਤੇ ਲਕੜੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕੀੜਾ ਹੋਏ । ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਨੇ ਅੰਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆਂ ਬਾਝ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥’

ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“There is worm life in the cow-dung and the wood (used in the kitchen). Of all food grains there is none without life.”

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

To-day disinfectants have to be used to kill microbes that cause diseases and are responsible for so much suffering to man. The world now knows that by merely letting the air and light enter into a room one unwittingly causes the killing of these microbes. Could and should this killing be avoided? Should flies and mosquitoes in a house be fed or killed? After all human life is very much more important than other forms of life which have to be sacrificed some times so that human life could be sustained. A mad dog or even a mad man may have to be killed if one does not want to get killed himself. The highest idealism has thus to be reconciled with the practical compulsions that life entails. Without discrimination, clear vision, rational interpretation and sagacious thought, the whole philosophy of non-killing becomes a joke. Even in respect of compassion to the needy and the beggars, discrimination has to be used otherwise it will only serve to encourage idleness and multiply beggars and idlers. And then if we go to the origin of life we shall find that it is water that gives life and makes everything fresh and green. Carrying the argument to its logical conclusion, therefore, we should have to think of giving up

water too, which is the real cause and source of all life. This is not at all possible for man to do.

“ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Water itself is the foremost life, for it bringeth all to fresh life.’

Guru Nanak in Asa.

It follows, therefore, that any concept, however good, cannot be stretched to such a length as to reduce it to a mere farce and a stupid joke. How can non-killing be avoided in all circumstances of life? There are regions in the world where it is not possible for a man to live without meat. Even in a forest it may not be easy to live without making meat as a necessary part of daily diet. In scarcity conditions caused by wars, floods and other natural calamities, meat may become indispensable.

And then if life alone is the consideration in the matter of choosing a food then all vegetables will have to be given up. But this too is not possible.

“ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪੁ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Which food is sinful, the animal food or the vegetable food’?

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

Thus emphasis on vegetable as against non-vegetable diet in this sense becomes illusory and unsustainable. Yet looking at it from a different angle a distinction between

one form of life and another has to be made. One form may be more highly developed and may possess greater keenness of perception and a higher sensitiveness to pain than the other. Vivekanand went too far when he said 'For Indians, in the present state, meat is necessary and should be used freely'.

This approach is not wholly correct. To cause suffering to animals merely for food unless it is absolutely necessary in the interests of human life itself is not humane. It must be admitted that there is a general weakness with people in the matter of palate. From the religious point of view, therefore, it is wrong to disregard altogether the restraints on one's food and give full reins to one's appetite as most people do. Tasty meat provides to them satisfaction in that regard.

“ਰੋਜਾ ਧਰੈ ਮਨਾਵੈ ਅਲਹੁ ਸੁਆਦਤਿ ਜੀਅ ਸੰਘਾਰੈ ॥

ਆਪਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਅਵਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖੈ ਕਾਹੈ ਕਉ ਝਖ ਮਾਰੈ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ।

'Thou keepest fast to please God but slayeth life for mere relish. Thou lookest to thy own interest and not of those whom thou killest. Then why dost thou prate ?'

Kabir in Asa

Kabir has, in this last line, touched the most vital aspect of this problem. Those who kill for mere relish can not be quite ignorant of the brutality involved in the process of killing. They must have become feelingless and utterly callous if the shrieks of the victims fail to rouse them. It may be a pleasant thing for them to savour with relish the

salt that had made the food delicious but it cannot fail to reveal the men behind that preparation. A man who is not entirely devoid of humane instincts is bound to think of the bird that by its own sacrifice had made his dish palatable. The world is not made for man. He can reach his full stature only if he realises the worth of all life whether human or animal. If all life were considered as His Manifestation then reverence for and kinship with life must flow out of it, as a matter of course. But the so-called religious men do not mind becoming slaves to the palate, even if it makes the body and soul suffer.

“ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਖੁਆਰ ॥ ਜਿਤ ਖਾਧੇ ਤਨ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ
ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥ ”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“O friend, all pleasurable food that fills the mind with evil and makes the body suffer in pain is vain.”

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag.

It means every food that impairs the body or creates passions and complexes in the mind has to be avoided. It is a great pity that even the use of intoxicants for which there can be no excuse are accepted thoughtlessly, regardless of evil consequences. The Guru is clear and emphatic regarding the use of intoxicants generally.

“ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਮਤਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਬਰਲੁ ਪਵੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਇ ॥ ਆਪਣਾ
ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਧਕੇ ਖਾਇ ॥ ”

ਵਾਰ ਬਿਹਾਗੜਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

“Drinking wine maketh man lose his head and become

devoid of his reason. Then he cannot distinguish between his own and another's and he is cursed by God.'

Guru Amar Dass in Bihagra.

Again,

“ਝੂਠਾ ਮਦਿ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਪੀਚਈ ”

ਵਾਰ ਬਿਹਾਗੜਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“Drink not the vicious wine at all.”

Guru Nanak in Var Bihagra.

This aspect of diet is all right. Yet, religion cannot and must not be summed up in terms of this or that diet and to the extent that it should become its be-all and end-all, as it had become with the Pandits of Kurkushetra. The Guru saw clearly that the killing of five passions and of endless desires which were man's deadly enemies had been altogether forgotten in the zeal for a non-meat diet, and so it was most necessary to reemphasise their supreme importance for the promotion of inner life. A man driven by circumstances to eat meat may yet possess love, compassion, truth and may live in the fear of God. Such a person is truly religious and not that who makes a fetish of flesh alone which, after all, is not such a repugnant thing as can be avoided altogether. All living beings including man are made of and born out of flesh. The mouth, the tongue, the bones and the skin are all of flesh. When man grows up and marries, he brings home a wife, again of flesh. How inconsistent people are that in one breath they condemn flesh and in the other they offer the same to gods on the occasion of Yajnas ? They abandon meat and cannot stand even its flavour and yet devour men in the darkness of

night. They read Vedas and Shastras that do not forbid the use of meat on sacred occasions and yet wrangle with bitter animosity over its use by others. How strange is this logic! That shows they are essentially ignorant. They do not possess deep thought and true wisdom. The more important thing, therefore, is to kill the evil that defiles the mind. Mere abstinence from eating meat is a small thing comparatively. It is like throwing away the core for the sake of shell. Impurities of the mind are caused by greed, lust, slander, lying, hate and wrath. If these are allowed to remain, nothing is gained. The Guru is stressing to the Pandits of Kurkushetra the essential aspect of religious life which they had thrown to the back ground. His views on the subject as explained above are contained in the hymn that he composed for the benefit of the Pandits on that occasion. The reverence for life and a feeling of kinship with it are, according to him, subject to the conditions, as examined above. We may give here the hymn in full. It will indicate clearly how the Guru's mind had worked in this regard when he was faced with an over-emphasis on non-killing in the context of the sort of religious life people lived.

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਪਹਲਾਂ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿਮਿਆਂ ਮਾਸੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥ ਜੀਉ ਪਾਇ ਮਾਸੁ ਮੁਹਿ
ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹਭੁ ਚੰਮੁ ਤਨੁ ਮਾਸੁ ॥ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕਢਿਆ ਮੰਮਾ ਮਾਸੁ ਗਿਰਾਸੁ ॥
ਮੁਹੁ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੁਾ ਜੀਭ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੀ ਮਾਸੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਾਸੁ ॥ ਵਡਾ ਹੋਆ ਵੀਆਹਿਆ ਘਰਿ
ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਮਾਸੁ ॥ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਹੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਸਭੇ ਸਾਕੁ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ
ਮਿਲਿਐ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਬੁਝੀਐ ਤਾਂ ਕੋ ਆਵੈ ਰਾਸਿ ॥ ਆਪਿ ਛੁਟੈ ਨਹ ਛੁਟੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ
ਬਚਨਿ ਬਿਣਾਸੁ । ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ

ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥ ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ । ਗੈਂਡਾ
ਮਾਰਿ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਕੀਏ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੇ । ਮਾਸੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਬੈਸਿ ਨਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਰਾਤੀ
ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ । ਫੜੁ ਕਰਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੋ ਦਿਖਲਾਵਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੂਝੈ ।
ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਧੇ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਕਹੀਐ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਬੂਝੈ ॥ ਅੰਧਾ ਸੋਇ ਜਿ ਅੰਧੁ
ਕਮਾਵੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਿ ਲੋਚਨ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਕੀ ਰਕਤੁ ਨਿਪੰਨੇ ਮਛੀ ਮਾਸੁ
ਨ ਖਾਹੀ । ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਜਾਂ ਨਿਸਿ ਮੇਲਾ ਓਥੈ ਮੰਦ ਕਮਾਹੀ ॥ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ
ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੈ ਭਾਂਡੇ । ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕਛੁ ਸੂਝੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਚਤਰੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਪਾਂਡੇ ।
ਬਾਹਰ ਕਾ ਮਾਸੁ ਮੰਦਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਘਰ ਕਾ ਮਾਸੁ ਚੰਗੇਰਾ । ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਮਾਸਹੁ
ਹੋਏ ਜੀਇ ਲਇਆ ਵਾਸੇਰਾ । ਅਭਖੁ ਭਖਹਿ ਭਖੁ ਤਜਿ ਛੋਡਹਿ ਅੰਧੁ ਗੁਰੁ
ਜਿਨ ਕੇਰਾ । ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੈ ਭਾਂਡੇ । ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕਛੁ
ਸੂਝੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਚਤਰੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਪਾਂਡੇ । ਮਾਸੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗਿ ਮਾਸੁ
ਕਮਾਣਾ । ਜਜਿ ਕਾਜਿ ਵੀਆਹਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ਓਥੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ । ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੁਰਖ
ਨਿਪਜਹਿ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਸੁਲਤਾਨਾ । ਜੇ ਓਇ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਨਰਕਿ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ ਕਾ
ਦਾਨੁ ਨ ਲੈਣਾ । ਦੇਂਦਾ ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਰਗਿ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਏਹੁ ਧਿਝਾਣਾ । ਆਪਿ ਨ ਬੂਝੈ
ਲੋਕ ਬੁਝਾਏ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਖਰਾ ਸਿਆਣਾ । ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੂੰ ਜਾਣੈ ਹੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਿਬਹੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਉਪੰਨਾ ।
ਤੋਇਅਹੁ ਅੰਨੁ ਕਮਾਦੁ ਕਪਾਹਾਂ ਤੋਇਅਹੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਗੰਨਾ । ਤੋਆ ਆਖੈ ਹਉ ਬਹੁ
ਬਿਧਿ ਹਛਾ ਤੋਐ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬਿਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਏਤੇ ਰਸ ਛੋਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹੈ
ਵਿਚਾਰਾ ॥”

“Every one is first conceived in flesh and then abideth in (the womb of) flesh. And when one getteth life, the mouth feedeth on the flesh, and the skin, the bones and in fact the whole body is all flesh. When one cometh out one sucketh the flesh of the (mother's) breast. The mouth and the tongue are of flesh. The whole life breatheth within the flesh. And when one groweth up one marrieth flesh and bringeth it home. From one flesh groweth another, all one's relationship is with the things of the flesh. By meeting the true Guru and attuning to God's Will one becometh right. No one is released

through one's own cleverly efforts. In mere prattle one is only lost away. The ignorant man debateth and quarreleth over meat but lacketh true wisdom and deep thought. Which food is sinful, the animal food or the vegetable food? Men have offered to the gods the meat of rhinoceros as sacrificial food on the occasions of Yajnas, the same being considered in keeping with gods' nature. But they who abandon meat and cannot even stand its flavour, devour men in the darkness of night. They make a fetish of it before others and know not real wisdom. Nanak, what to say to the blind who knoweth not and heareth not. Truly blind is he who doeth dark deeds and hath no spiritual eyes. Born of the mother's and the father's blood he eateth not fish meat. When man and woman meet at night what evil of flesh thereof is that they commit not. Conceived in flesh, born of flesh, we are the vessels of flesh. Yet the Pandits who know not real wisdom consider themselves clever. How is the flesh of home good and that from without bad? All creatures come out of the flesh and have remained within the (womb made of) flesh. The teachers that teach them are blind and so they eat what is uneatable and eat not what can be eaten. Conceived in flesh, born of flesh, we are the vessels of flesh. And they who know not real wisdom consider themselves clever. In the Puranas, in the Kitebas (Semetic holy Books) meat findeth a mention. Through all four Ages men have been dealing with flesh. In Yajnas, marriages and on festive occasions meat is accepted as all right. All men and women are born of flesh, including kings and chiefs. If all of them go to the hell, then why dost thou, O Pandit, accept their gifts in charity? (How strange) that he who giveth goeth to hell and he who receiveth, goeth to the heavens? The Pandit knoweth not himself, yet considereth

himself wise and teacheth others. O Pandit, thou knowest not whence came all the flesh. Well, it is from water that food grains, the sugar cane, the cotton and, in fact, the three worlds get sustenance. Sayeth the water, 'I am pure in many ways.' Yes, this water takes many forms. Nanak, a Sanyasi would indeed be he who would abandon all the flavours that water produceth.'"

Guru Nanak in Malar.

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CHAPTER XV

The Hardwar anomaly.

“ਸੂਚੇ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“Nanak, pure are they in whose heart He dwelleth.”

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

From Kurkushetra, the Guru went to Hardwar, a place of pilgrimage of the Hindus. It was believed that the water of the Ganges there was sacred and whoever bathed in it had all his past sins washed off. The Guru saw a large number of pilgrims washing themselves in the Ganges and offering water to the sun in the eastern direction. with their right hands. The water, thus offered, was supposed to reach the manes of their departed ancestors. The tide of superstition had, then, overtaken the Indian people in various forms and the Guru availed of every opportunity to show them light in his own inimitable style. He entered the water and started throwing it to the West, with his left hand. The people were surprised at his ignorance and inquired what he was doing. He told them with all the assumed air of confidence that he had his fields in Kartarpur, only three hundred miles from there, and he was irrigating

them. The people laughed at his simplicity. They had not yet realised that he was exposing to ridicule the defect in their own way of thinking, in that dramatic manner. They asked him how it was possible for water to reach his fields so very far off. He replied that it would reach the fields in Kartarpur in the same way as the water offered by them reached their ancestors, millions of miles away. They had now begun to realise the lacuna in their own belief. It was time now to explain to them that superstitious, irrational and formal ceremonies did not generate God's love and therefore could not save a man whatever the effort behind. The pilgrims had now fully realised the futility of what they were doing.

Then in the same place, Mardana was sent to fetch some wood for cooking food for themselves. An orthodox Brahmin was preparing his food inside a marked circle—a sort of a cooking square. He had a sacrificial mark on the forehead, a thread round his neck and a loin-cloth to cover himself. Mardana requested him for live firewood and was about to enter inside when the Brahmin came upon him enraged at his attempt to pollute his food by entering in that unceremonial manner. He believed that a mere touch of a person who had not gone through the formalities of ceremonial purity, associated with cooking, defiled all the food within the cooking square. Mardana came back much sore about what had happened and related the event to the Guru who went to meet the Brahmin personally, to break the shackles of superstition and the pride of the so-called high caste. He was not against taking every precaution in the preparation of food in a neat way, but

he must expose the over-emphasis on external purity when the heart inside was allowed to carry with it all sorts of impurities. It was really the sin that defiled and not the external objects. Greed, lying and lust were the things that caused impurity of the mind and all efforts should be directed to cleanse it of these impurities. It is ignorance that builds such strange notions of purity or impurity, and there is no end to them. Even at births and deaths it is believed that all members of the concerned family become impure for the time and their touch defiles every cooked food.

The Guru read out to the Brahmin, the following hymn :

“ਕੁਬੁਧਿ ਡੂਮਣੀ ਕੁਦਇਆ ਕਸਾਇਣਿ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਘਟ ਚੂਹੜੀ ਮੁਠੀ
ਕ੍ਰੋਧਿ ਚੰਡਾਲਿ ॥ ਕਾਰੀ ਕਢੀ ਕਿਆ ਥੀਐ ਜਾਂ ਚਾਰੇ ਬੈਠੀਆਂ ਨਾਲਿ ॥”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“Ignorance is the drummer-woman, compassion-lessness, the butcheress, slander the sweeperess, residing in the mind, and anger, the chandal-woman, that destroyeth. What use is it (O, Pandit) to have a circle round thy kitchen when all the four outcastes are already within thee ” ?

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag.

Then he composed a hymn to point out what things were really needed for the right kind of a cooking square.

“ਸਚੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੇਹੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਉਤਮ
ਕਹੀਐ ਜਿ ਪਾਪਾਂ ਪੰਦਿ ਨ ਦੇਹੀ ॥”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'Let truth, continence and good deeds be thy cooking circle and the meditations of the Name thy bath. Nanak, they alone will be deemed holy who lead not on the path of evil.'

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag.

The Pandits felt overpowered and bowed before the Guru in acknowledgement of their discipleship.

Another party of Brahmins met him there and protested that he was not observing rules of ceremonial purity as laid down in the Shastras. He sang to them the following lines ridiculing the over-emphasis on external purity at the cost of inner purity :

“ਦੇ ਕੈ ਚਉਕਾ ਕਢੀ ਕਾਰ ॥ ਉਪਰਿ ਆਇ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ॥ ਮਤ ਭਿਟੈ
ਵੇ ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ ਇਹੁ ਅੰਨੁ ਅਸਾਡਾ ਫਿਟੈ ॥ ਤਨਿ ਫਿਟੈ ਫੇੜ ਕਰੇਨਿ ॥ ਮਨਿ ਜੂਠੈ
ਚੁਲੀ ਭਰੇਨਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਪਿਆਈਐ ॥ ਸੁਚਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਤ ਸਚੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥”

“They plaster a place with cow dung and draw a line round it (for a cooking square). They, the false ones, sit within it and cry out, ‘defile it not by thy touch or else our food will get polluted’. But their bodies are already impure by their filthy actions. With unclean minds, what use is cleaning the mouth? sayeth Nanak, ‘dwell thou on the True One. Union with Him is attained through the purity of the soul.’ ”

Guru Nank in Var Asa.

The Guru stayed there for sometime and then started for his next journey. He visited Panipat, met a Sufi faqir, Sheikh Sharif there, showed him the path of love and service and then proceeded to Delhi. It is here that he met the emperor Sikandar Lodhi, a very bigoted and a cruel man.

The Guru and Mardana were put in prison with so many others arrested already for no other fault except that they were Hindus and did not accept conversion. All of them were required to grind corn at the hand mills. The Guru was ever happy wherever he was but here he blessed the rest too with his Divine songs sung in tune with Mardana's rebeck. Even the Emperor's heart was touched and he threw open the prison gates and set free the captives. The Guru advised him to think of the Great King and to serve His People. That was the only way to please Him and to ensure His Grace.

After a brief stay at Delhi, the Guru proceeded to the East and put on the regular garb of a missionary. It consisted of a jacket and a hat in the fashion of a Muslim pilgrim but there was also the saffron mark, the symbol of Hindu Faith, on his forehead. The mixed dress was deliberately chosen to appear as one belonging to all and above all narrow loyalties of race, caste or creed. He had also worn round his neck a necklace of bones so as to excite curiosity and attract large crowds towards him and thus to enable him to deliver his message.

CHAPTER XVI

Yogis of Gorakh Mata.

“ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗੁਰੁ ਭਗਵੰਤੁ ”

ਗੋਂਡ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘The Supreme Lord is my Guru, the Lord of all Glory.’

Guru Arjan in Gond.

It is a fact of History that the Yogic cult had become very popular in India in the Guru's time and therefore it was no ordinary task, even for him, to break the shell of power, the Yogis had exercised over people's minds. He found many occasions to meet and discuss with them topics that had then the uppermost hold on their minds. Among these occasions, the most prominent as specifically mentioned in the biographies are his visits to Gorakh Mata (now called Nanak Mata) in U.P., then to Mount Sumer, then again to Gorakh Hatri, a locality in Peshawar and finally to Achal Batala in Gurdaspur district.

In Gorakh Mata, he met a party of Sidha Yogis, the followers of Gorakh Nath, in a temple also of Gorakh, built in that place. After an exchange of greetings, the Yogis asked the Guru who he was and what religious denomination or sect he belonged to. He told them in his usual way.

that he was Nanak, Nirankari (one who belonged to the Formless One) and therefore his religion or sect was the same as that of the Formless One and in his view, that should be the religion of everybody. If God resided in all hearts there was nothing more to be done than to seek and find Him there and this was all that any religion should claim to aim at. The Yogis of Gorakh Mata had accepted Hatha Yoga as the way of life. The Hatha Yoga system as we shall see, was quite popular among Yogis of other places as well. We may briefly sum it up here.

It was believed that there were hidden streams of power within the body and these could be stirred up through the method of inhalation and exhalation of breath. Sitting in undisturbed contemplation, the Yogis suspended breath and practised mental and physical exercises (Pranayam and Asanas), involving severe discipline and self mortifications. The aim was to control the activities of the mind through the control of the nervous system. This control was to lead to the flow of sweet nectar falling on the tongue sending the Yogi into ecstatic joy. The Yogis claimed to acquire, in this way, occult powers through which miracles and magic feats could be performed, as also such other powers over nature as enabled them to overcome old age and prolong life. The Guru was never opposed to the practice of self control as such, but the same should not be carried to such lengths as to become another name for self mortification, unnatural austerities, severe penances and so many other ugly things associated with ascetic life. The determination (Hatha) employed in cruel restraints of that kind should be put to a better use than

merely the attainment of such powers as could never lead to spirituality. The energy wasted on external penances should instead be employed to control and sublimate lower desires. It should help turn the mind inward to strengthen it through self denial, moral discipline and inner purity. The inner discipline requires dying to the outer world of desires and passions. It is this kind of discipline that leads to union with God. When it is attained one lives and moves in the Pure One, above the world of mere senses. This is Sehaj Yoga as against the Hatha Yoga of the Yogis. Here the Divine Word is the source of inspiration and illumination resulting in life becoming blissful and musical. Sweet unstruck music, as it were, flows from such a life and makes it free from all pain and suffering. The mind acquires a natural and spontaneous stillness as opposed to the state the Yogis claimed from concentrations practised through the unnatural and difficult processes of Hatha Yoga. The control of breath in the Yogi's way is a physical process and the mind being beyond the physical can not be rid of its evil propensities in that way. Nor can the search for nectar produce anything other than physical. Also the State of perfect peace can not come by renouncing the world, wandering in forests and practising physical austerities but by subduing the self and attuning it to His Will. And what good is long life which the Yogis claimed for themselves if it does not confer peace to the soul? The Guru's views, as stated above, were explained to the Yogis through a hymn, he recited on this occasion.

ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਖਿਛਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੈ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ ॥ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ

ਮੂੰਡਿ ਮੁੰਡਾਇਐ ਜੋਗ ਨ ਸਿੰਛੀ ਵਾਈਐ ॥ ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ
ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਗਲੀ ਜੋਗ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਏਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਸਰਿ
ਜਾਣੈ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਨੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ
ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ ॥ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਦੇਸਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਈਐ ॥
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੈ ਤਾਂ
ਸਹਸਾ ਤੂਟੈ ਧਾਵਤੁ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਈਐ ॥ ਨਿਝਰ ਝਰੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਘਰ ਹੀ
ਪਰਚਾ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਤਿਆਂ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਐਸਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਵਾਜੇ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਿੰਛੀ
ਵਾਜੈ ਤਉ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ
ਤਉ ਪਾਈਐ ॥”

“Yoga is neither in patched coat, nor in the Yogi's staff, nor in ashes smeared over the body, nor in the ear rings, nor in a shaven head, nor again, in the blowing of horns. Abide in the Pure one amid the impurities of the worldly life, thus shalt thou find the way of true Yoga. The Yoga cometh not by mere talk. He who looketh on all alike is a true Yogi. The Yoga consisteth not in abiding at tombs, or at the crematorium or in postures of empty contemplation nor in roaming about in foreign lands nor in bathing at places of pilgrimage. Abide in the Pure One amid the impurities of the worldly life, thus thou shalt find the way of true Yoga. On meeting the true Guru, doubt is dispelled and the outgoings of the mind are restrained. Then the nectar (of spiritual bliss) continually raineth, the unbeaten music of the fourth State floweth and the satisfaction of the soul cometh within. Abide in the Pure One amid the impurities of the worldly life, thus thou shalt find the way of true Yoga. (The Guru is employing, throughout the language of the Yogis and

pointing out to them in his own way what true Yoga is and where they had gone wrong. There is no need to practise rigorous mental and physical exercises to control the mind. The fourth State, the state of perfect equipoise can come through the practice of the Guru's Word and then life becomes spiritualised and turns musical, the music, in this case, keeps on flowing unbeaten, without any external aids). Nanak, in the midst of life let there be death of the self. Practise thou such a Yoga that thy horn soundeth without being blown, then, thou shalt obtain the state of fearlessness. Abide in the Pure One, amid the impurities of the worldly life, then thou shalt find the way of true Yoga."

Guru Nanak in Suhi.

The Yogis heard the above discourse with rapt attention and soon realised that the Guru was a man of divine wisdom and had attained the highest spiritual state while they were still groping in the dark. They became curious to know as to how he had attained that state, who his Guru was and who had shown him the way to realisation and if it was possible for others also to reach such heights as he had reached. He told them that God or His Light was his Guru and He alone was the highest, the truest and the most perfect Guru.

“ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਏਕੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੋਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮਝਿਉ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥”

ਚੌਪਈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Know that He is my Guru who, from the beginning to the end, is incarnated in all’

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaupai.

Again,

ਅਪ੍ਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਓ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The Supreme Being who is beyond everything is the Guru whom Nanak hath met.’

Guru Nanak in Sorath.

And this is a fact of history too that Guru Nanak had no earthly Guru. His Guru was God Himself, the Infinite Source from Whom he got Light and Awakening direct. But this God dwells in every human heart and so there is available to every person the inner Guide, the Conscience or the mind itself. This guide is undoubtedly the Light of God, provided one is fully qualified for a true inner guidance. There is no doubt that every man is potentially Divine and is capable of infinite power though it remains hidden within him. There is really nothing which he is not competent to achieve. It must also be borne in mind that every man must work out his own destiny, by his own efforts and by means of his own mental and physical powers. No other person can do for him what he has to do for himself as there is no such thing as vicarious doing in God's scheme of things. The kingdom of God is man's own Divine nature and is therefore within everybody's reach, but all must work for it and must know how to reach it. All are not, however, equally pure in mind and properly qualified in other ways to enter the realm of the spirit and to see God shine spotless within them. All the

same, the fact remains, as the Guru stresses here, that God within is the surest and the the truest Guide. He is the most perfect Guru and all are equal heirs to His Guidance. And yet men remain far removed from Him. They can hear the Voice of the Inner Guide constantly speaking to them only if they knew how to hear Him, and hence the need for a perfect Master who had realised Him. This perfect Master and God are frequently spoken of in identical and inter-changeable terms, but perfection in the case of human Gurus is to be taken in the relative & limited sense. Here, however, the Guru is stressing the point that God was the Perfect Guru and this Guru was present within every human soul. To hear His Voice and to realise Him, one has to look within. He recited on this occasion the following very important hymn on the subject :

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਕਉਣ ਤਰਾਜੀ ਕਵਣੁ ਤੁਲਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਸਰਾਫੁ ਬੁਲਾਵਾ ॥ ਕਉਣੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਕੈ ਪਹਿ ਦੀਖਿਆ ਲੇਵਾਂ ਕੈ ਪਹਿ ਮੁਲੁ ਕਰਾਵਾਂ ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਜੀਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਜਲ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਭਰਿਪੁਰਿ ਲੀਣਾ ਤੂੰ ਆਪੇ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਣਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਤਾਰਾਜੀ ਚਿਤੁ ਤੁਲਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਰਾਫੁ ਕਮਾਵਾਂ ॥ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਸੋ ਸਹੁ ਤੋਲੀ ਇਨੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਰਹਾਵਾਂ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਕੰਡਾ ਤੋਲੁ ਤਰਾਜੀ ਆਪੇ ਤੋਲਣਹਾਰਾ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਦੇਖੈ ਆਪੇ ਬੂਝੈ ਆਪੇ ਹੈ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ ॥ ਅੰਧੁਲਾ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਖਿਨੁ ਆਵੈ ਤਿਲੁ ਜਾਵੈ ॥ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਹੰਦਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਮੂੜਾ ਪਾਵੈ ॥”

“Where is the balance and where the weights, O Lord, (to weigh Thy Glory) ? Where to find the tester (to test Thy Greatness) ? What teacher Shall I go to for instructions

and whom shall I ask to evaluate Thee ? O My Loved one, I know not Thy End. Thou pervadeth the earth, the water and the inter-space, Thou fillest all. Let mind be the balance, the heart the weights and Thy Service the tester. And I should thus weigh Thee, My Lord, within my own heart and keep my mind from wandering astray. Thou Thyself art the Balance, Thou Thyself the Weights, Thou Thyself the weigher. Of Thyself Thou see-est, of Thyself Thou Knowest, O Thou Thyself art the dealer (Pedlar of Thy Virtues). (But) my mind is blind, of low caste (It is too petty) and remains stranger to me. It is now here, now there. Nanak liveth with such a mind, then, how, shall he, the ignorant one, attain (to his Lord)''.

Guru Nanak in Suhi

In the above hymn the Guru points out clearly, first, that the immeasurable Lord was within every soul ; second, His Voice was the most perfect Guru for guidance ; third, the struggle must be waged with the mind itself to hear Him, for mind is everything and yet the same mind can be blind, in which case, it will not attain the Lord. The hymn begins with a poser as to how and through whom to measure the Jewel i. e. how and through which Guru the Lord is to be realised. The reply is specifically contained in the lines,

‘Let mind be the balance, the heart, the weights and Thy Service, the tester. And I should thus weigh Thee, my Lord, within my own heart and keep my mind from wandering astray.’

CHAPTER XVII

Symbolic worship.

“ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਬਿਰਥੇ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘All actions that do not lead to Him are illusions’.

Guru Arjan in Gauri

Benaras (now called Varanasi) has always been treated by the Hindus as the holy city and the seat of Hindu culture and learning. It is this place about which the irrational belief had prevailed among Hindus that whoever died there reached Heavens. Saint Kabir refers to it in Rag Asa, of course, in repudiation of this belief,

“ਮਨਹੁ ਕਠੋਰੁ ਮਰੈ ਬਾਨਾਰਸਿ ਨਰਕੁ ਨ ਬਾਂਚਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਰੈ ਹਾੜੀਥੈ ਤ ਸਗਲੀ ਸੈਨ ਤਰਾਈ ॥”

‘If a hard hearted man died at Benaras he was not thereby saved from hell. But if the Lord’s saint died even in Haramba (where if one died one would, according to belief, get a donkey’s birth) he redeemed all those associated with him’.

Kabir was born in Benaras but it is not correct to say as some people do that Kabir was the Guru’s contemporary

and met him in Benaras on the occasion of his visit there. Kabir had died long before the Guru's advent.

Benaras was the Shiva's abode and it was believed that a mere touch of the garments of Shiva, kept in the Shiva temple, purified. When the Guru reached Benaras, he met a learned Brahmin named Chattar Dass. He was in charge of the temple of Vishnu, where a "saligram" was installed for worship. Saligram is a stone found in the Gandak river and believed by the Hindus to represent Vishnu god. Chattardas was a learned man. He had read Vedas and Puranas and other Hindu holy books. It is said he possessed knowledge of 15 sciences like reading, swimming, medicine, astrology, music, alchemy, grammar, horsemanship, dancing, archery etc. etc. But inspite of his learning he was an orthodox Brahmin, most fanatical and assertive about his views and beliefs. He ridiculed the Guru for going about as a man of God but without having the "saligram", the necklace of Tulsi (basil) and the rosary, the three important possessions of a saint. The Guru's views about idol worship were clear. The worship of the One Supreme Being was for him, the only true worship. Yet he would not be too rigid in this matter provided the approach was right and the idols were treated as mere symbols. Image worship or symbolic worship in any form can be an aid to the worship of the object symbolised. It is really on account of man's own imperfections that he has to relate the omnipresent God with limited abodes, limited forms and specific names. These can be means for realisation but when the end is achieved the means may then be dropped off. Lamps are useful so long as

there is darkness all around. But when the sun rises the lamps are no longer required. The worship of stones or of gods and goddesses in the symbolic form may be justified if these are conceived as different names or aspects of the same God-head. That which is really One can be represented in diverse ways, representing His diverse aspects. In that sense each god as representing one aspect of God-head is as good as all gods, other aspects having, for the moment, disappeared from view, the single aspect only engaging the mind's attention. Thus it is always He standing before the devotee though not in full measure. Common notions of polytheism, however, are repugnant to human feelings and understandings. To limit the Limitless to a stone, for instance, could not but lead to mental debasement and a degrading narrowness of vision. This is the sort of idolatry which must be condemned and which the Guru had always condemned.

“ਥਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥”

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ, ਜਪੁਜੀ

‘He cannot be installed in a place nor created.’

Guru Nanak in Japji

In this sense the images are lifeless things that cannot speak, nor can they inspire. The Guru, therefore, told the Pandit that what he was doing was futile and he should enshrine the love of God in his heart if he desired his worship to bear fruit. He sang the following hymn :

ਬਸੰਤੁ ਹਿੰਡੋਲ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਸਾਲਗਰਾਮ ਬਿਪ ਪੂਜਿ ਮਨਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ

ਜਪਿ ਬੇੜਾ ਬਾਂਧਹੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ ॥ ਕਾਹੇ ਕਲਰਾ ਸਿੰਚਹੁ ਜਨਮੁ
ਗਵਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਕਾਚੀ ਢਹਗਿ ਦਿਵਾਲ ਕਾਹੇ ਗਚੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਰ ਹਰਿਹਟ
ਮਾਲ ਟਿੰਡ ਪਰੋਵਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਮਨੁ ਜੋਵਹੁ ॥ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਿੰਚਹੁ ਭਰਹੁ ਕਿਆਰੇ
ਤਉ ਮਾਲੀ ਕੇ ਹੋਵਹੁ ॥ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਦਇ ਕਰਹੁ ਬਸੋਲੇ ਗੋਡਹੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਭਾਈ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਗੋਡਹੁ ਤਿਉ ਤੁਮ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਨ ਮੋਟਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਬਗੁਲੇ ਤੇ
ਫਨਿ ਹੰਸੁਲਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਕਰਹਿ ਦਇਆਲਾ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਦਾਸਨਿ ਦਾਸਾ
ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ ।”

“O Brahmin, Let God be thy image (idol), the right living the rosary of Tulsi (basil). Build thou the boat of the Lord's Name and pray, 'O merciful God, be merciful to me.' Why waterest thou the barren land and thus wastest thy life. The mud wall thou buildest will fall, why plaster it? Let (service with) the hands be thy Persian wheel, the chains and the buckets and let thy mind be the bullock, yoked to run the wheel. And then irrigate thy mind with Nectar of the Name. In this way, the Gardener owneth thee. Let lust and wrath be thy weeder and with them weed thy farm, and as thou weedest the farm thus, thou shalt become happy, for, thy labour will surely bear fruit. O God, if thou art merciful, one becometh a swan from a crane. Prayeth Nanak, the slave of the Lord's slaves 'O God, be Thou merciful to me'.”

Guru Nanak in Basant

The Guru tells the Brahmin categorically through this hymn that the display of his rosary of Tulsi and his worship of the idol were superficial things and were as useless as watering a barren land or plastering a mud wall. Instead he should take to the love of God and the life of righteousness. Here a metaphor of the irrigation of land is employed

to emphasise how human life could be worked upon to yield a good harvest. If that is done, cranes will become swans, i. e. a petty human being will be converted into an angel. The service of people, the love of God and the right moral living were the tools to be employed for this kind of irrigation. God given gifts of the body, the mind with all its faculties and the soul are to be put to the best use to achieve the end. Even lust and wrath can be of service in this task of weeding out. The gardener employs both of them when he throws out weeds in anger and retains some lovingly that can serve as a manure. The evil propensities are all to be weeded out and healthy aptitudes are to be nursed.

The Pandit was very much impressed but he still wanted to know the place of knowledge and learning. He thought, the Guru had omitted to emphasise it in the above hymn, which was otherwise alright as a prescription for a life of fruition. The Guru fully realised the place of knowledge, reason and intellect in the shaping of human personality. But at the same time, he scorned knowledge that did not lead to action, True test of learning according to him, is action.

“ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ॥ ”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

i. e. *‘The true purpose of learning is achieved by him alone who doeth good to others.’*

Guru Nanak in Asa.

A man may carry cartloads of books but all this know-

ledge was of no consequence if it ended in vanity which only added to Karmic fetters. The one thing that mattered was to acquire the love of God. The Guru asserted to the Pandit that all his knowledge, even of the Vedas, belonged to the same category. If a person lost in wilderness looked merely at the light that showed the way, he would not find the way unless he treaded along the path shown by the light. The following hymn was uttered for the benefit of Chattar Dass :

ਬਸੰਤੁ ਹਿੰਡੋਲ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਰਾਜਾ ਬਾਲਕੁ ਨਗਰੀ ਕਾਚੀ ਦੁਸਟਾਂ ਨਾਲਿ ਪਿਆਰੋ ॥ ਦੁਇ ਮਾਈ ਦੁਇ
ਬਾਪਾ ਪੜੀਅਹਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੋ ॥ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਪੰਡਤਾਤੁਮ ਦੇਹੁ ਮਤੀ ॥ ਕਿਨ
ਬਿਧਿ ਪਾਵਉ ਪ੍ਰਾਨਪਤੀ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਬਲਾਸਪਤਿ ਮਉਲੀ ਸਾਗਰੁ
ਪੰਡੇ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਦੁਇ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਐਸਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਰਵੰਤਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਹਿਕ ਮਾਈ ਭੋਗੁ ਕਰੇਇ ॥ ਤਾਕੇ ਲਖਣੁ ਜਾਣੀਅਹਿ ਖਿਮਾ
ਧਨੁ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹੇਇ ॥ ਕਹਿਆ ਸੁਣਹਿ ਨ ਖਾਇਆ ਮਾਨਹਿ ਤਿਨਾਹੀ ਸੇਤੀ ਵਾਸਾ ॥
ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਦਾਸਨਿ ਦਾਸਾ ਖਿਨੁ ਤੋਲਾ ਖਿਨੁ ਮਾਸਾ ॥”

“The King (the mind) is a child. His kingdom (body) is impermanent. The King loveth the demons (lust, wrath, greed etc). He readeth of two mothers (hope and desire), of two fathers (attachment and envy). O Pandit, just reflect thou, on this. O master Pandit, give me thy advice as to how I am to attain unto the Lord of Life. The vegetation is in bloom though there is fire within it. The earth is swamped not, though bounded by the seas ; the (hot) sun and the (cool) moon both reside in the same sky, but I realise not the wisdom (behind these wonders). Only he utters God's Name truly who eateth up the Maya. The distinctiveness of such an one

is that one gathers the riches of forgiveness. But my mind liveth with those who hear not and who deny what they feed upon. Prayeth Nanak, the slave of the Lord's slaves, "Such is my mind, now high, now low."

Guru Nanak in Basant.

The hymn points out, through a beautiful metaphor, that sustained practice of truth is essential to overcome evil. The path is difficult to tread and man is inexperienced and weak like a child. There are obstacles in the way. Lust, wrath, greed, attachment, envy, hope, desire and so many other baneful ingredients of his personality make it difficult for even the learned man to follow the path leading to his salvation. But this is not a complete picture. Mind is a strange mixture of good and evil. The evil overpowers the good and the weak man knows not what to do. He does not realise that unless the struggle is persistently and earnestly waged against the evil, it will not go. Mere knowledge or even lip repetitions of God's Name cannot be of any help. All efforts are to be directed to overcome the mighty Maya, the root of evil. In God's wonderful design, good and evil have throughout existed side by side. There is fire in the bosom of the blooming vegetation. The earth is not swamped off even though it was bounded by the mighty ocean all along. The hot sun and the cool moon have from ages resided in the same sky. There is Divine Wisdom behind this wonderful design and man has a lesson to learn. Evil is there for his good. He has to overcome it to the extent that its existence did not bother him or throw him off his feet. If fire can live in the bosom of vegetation without burning it why cannot

evil remain in its place without disturbing the equilibrium of life ? The aim of life is to acquire that equilibrium, which is called Sehaj.

The Pandit realised that inspite of all his knowledge he had not found peace and what the Guru said was true. He was converted.

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CHAPTER XVIII

(Salis Rai, the jeweller of Patna)

“ਇਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕੋ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਦੇਵੁ । ਸੋ ਦੇਹੀ ਭਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ॥”

ਭੈਰਉ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘The angels pray for a gift of human life ! O man, engage it in meditation on and in the service of the Lord.’

Kabir in Bhairon

The Guru happened to come across a jewel, at the time he was in the precincts of Patna. He gave it to Mardana to sell it for food to some one in the town, while he himself waited outside. Mardana found the jewel very bright to look at but he had no idea of its worth, in terms of money. He moved about with the jewel from place to place and offered it for sale. But most people were as ignorant of its true value as he himself was. Some offered a few copper coins and others some grains worth a few annas and still others money just sufficient to buy food with. At last he reached the place where a jeweller, Salis Rai, lived. He was delighted to see the jewel and handed it back along with a hundred rupees as the price just for having been allowed the privilege to see it. Mardana could not believe his eyes. He thought the jeweller was being tricked and returned the money. The jeweller told him

that he should take both the jewel and the money to his master who must be knowing its true worth. The jewel, he said, was a thing of limitless beauty and could not be priced in material terms. Mardana had no option but to take back the jewel and the money but the Guru would not have anything to do with the money, He sent him back to the jeweller with the money. When Mardana returned on the completion of his mission, the Guru told him that this episode had a great lesson for everybody to learn. Like the jewel, human life was also a priceless gift of God but it was a rare man that knows its worth and utilised it to good purpose. Others wasted it away in sinful ways, for they had no eyes for it.

“ਹੀਰੇ ਜੈਸਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਉਡੀ ਬਦਲੇ ਜਾਇ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The life is a jewel but is thrown away for a trite’.

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

“ਇਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕੋ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਦੇਵ ॥ ਸੋ ਦੇਹੀ ਭਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ॥”

ਭੈਰਉ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

‘The angels pray for a gift of human life. O Man, engage it in meditation on and in the Service of the Lord.’

Kabir of Bhairon

But the generality of men throw it away as if it were a trite.

ਕਉਡੀ ਬਦਲੈ ਰਤਨ ਤਿਆਗੈ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘But gives up jewel for a mere trite.’

Guru Arjan in Gauri Sukhmani

By this time Salis Rai and his servant Adhraka also came to see the strangers. They had thought that the strangers must be holy and God-conscious men, because money had no fascination for them. Adhraka had reached a little earlier and had heard the Guru singing thus :

“ਕਿਆ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰੈ ॥ ਸਾਚੇ ਸਿਰਜਨਹਾਰ ਮੁਰਾਰੈ ॥

ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਮੇਲੇ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਮੇਲਾਈ ਹੈ ॥”

ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘How can I praise the Infinite, Unfathomable Lord? He is the True One, the Creator Lord. And, on whomsoever is His Grace, him He uniteth with Himself’.

Guru Nanak in Maru

When Salis arrived, the Guru and Mardana were both singing the following lines :

“ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਤਹ ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲਾ ॥ ਆਇ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਿਰਪਾਲਾ ॥

ਜੀਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਮਾਈ ਤਹਿਉ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਗਇਆ ॥”

ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Wherever I see I find the One Compassionate Lord. He, the Merciful Lord, neither cometh nor goeth. He pervadeth all life in a mysterious way and yet, keepeth detached’.

Guru Nanak in Maru

The hymn spoke of God present everywhere and in all

beings and yet remaining, apart unrealised.

Salis Rai had in him the ingredients of a good man. But although he was a good judge of the material jewels he did not yet know that there was another jewel within himself nor did he know the way it could be realised. He requested the Guru to explain the mystery to him. The Guru expounded the philosophy of the Simran of the Name. He told him that unless man learnt to live in his true self which in essence is God or Truth, he would solve no problem of life and suffer in consequence, for he would continue to burn in the fire of desires. But one who had realised his own true self was one with God, the source of all happiness. Here is the way, the man of the World should live so as to find Him and become happy.

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਬਿਮਲ ਮਝਾਰਿ ਬਸਸਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਜਲ ਪਦਮਨਿ ਜਾਵਲ ਰੇ ॥ ਪਦ ਮਨਿ ਜਾਵਲ ਜਲ ਰਸ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸੰਗਿ ਦੋਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੇ ॥ ਦਾਦਰ ਤੂੰ ਕਬਹਿ ਨ ਜਾਨਸਿ ਰੇ ॥ ਭਖਸਿ ਸਿਬਾਲੁ ਬਸਸਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਜਲ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨ ਲਖਸਿ ਰੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਬਸੁ ਜਲ ਨਿਤ ਨ ਵਸਤ ਅਲੀਅਲ ਮੇਰ ਚਚਾ ਗੁਨ ਰੇ ॥ ਚੰਦ ਕੁਮੁਦਨੀ ਦੁਰਹੁ ਨਿਵਸਸਿ ਅਨਭਉ ਕਾਰਨਿ ਰੇ ॥ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖੰਡੁ ਦੂਧਿ ਮਧੁ ਸੰਚਸਿ ਤੂੰ ਬਨ ਚਾਤੁਰ ਰੇ ॥ ਅਪਨਾ ਆਪੁ ਤੂੰ ਕਬਹੁ ਨ ਛੋਡਸਿ ਪਿਸਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਜਿਉ ਰੇ ॥ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਸੰਗਿ ਵਸਹਿ ਜਨ ਮੂਰਖ ਆਗਮ ਸਾਸ ਧੁਨੇ ॥ ਅਪਨਾ ਆਪੁ ਤੂੰ ਕਬਹੁ ਨ ਛੋਡਸਿ ਸੁਆਨ ਪੂਛ ਜਿਉ ਰੇ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਪਾਖੰਡੀ ਨਾਮਿ ਨ ਰਾਚਹਿ ਇਕਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣੀ ਰੇ ॥ ਪੂਰਬਿ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਪਾਵਸਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਸਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਰੇ ॥”

“Out of the clear water of the pond sprouteth the lotus as also the film of dirt. The lotus liveth with both and keepeth detached from them. But O frog, thou knowest not and eatest

only the dirt discarding the pure nectar. Thou bidest ever in water but not the black bee and yet it cometh and taketh the juice out of the lotus top. The Kamina flower lowers its head in love when it see-eth the moon from afar, being intuitively awake to the moon's glory. O frog, thou deemest thyself clever biding with mere water, but in the nectar-sweet milk are also treasured honey and sugar wick the louse (tick) tasteth not and sucketh only blood, considering itself clever like thee. Thou art like the unwise one who liveth with the wise one and heareth the Vedas and the Shastras but remaineth unwise. Thou abandonest not thy-self (nature) like the dog who can straighten not his crooked tail. Some hypocrites (false men) there are who love not the Lord's Name, others there are who remain attached to the Lord's feet. If thou seekest to fulfil thy destiny, O Nanak utter the Lord's Name with the tongue''.

Guru Nanak in Maru

The hymn is full of metaphors. The lotus and the frog live the same pond. The former remains detached while the latter discards the pure nectar and eats the film of dirt over water. The black bee is not among them yet it comes to take the juice out of the lotus top. There are honey and sugar in the milk but the louse would have nothing to do with them and must suck only blood. The Kamina flower is in love with the moon and goes into ecstasy when the moon rises. People read holy books and live among learned men, yet they do not change their habits as do dogs not straighten their crooked tails.

The last line is very important. It emphasises that if

a man wants to live in harmony with his true self and thus fulfil his destiny he must meditate on God's Name.

Both Salis Rai and his servant Adhraka became the Guru's devotees, the latter getting imbued with the love of the Name through and through. It was this man who was later entrusted with the task of spreading the Guru's mission in that part of the country.

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CHAPTER XIX

The Guru in Gaya.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਅਗੈ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿ ਖਟੈ ਘਾਲੈ ਦੇਇ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Nanak’ one gets in the next world only what one earns through honest effort, sharing the same with others.’

Guru Nanak in Asa.

In Gaya, the Guru came across Brahmins on the river bank, engaged in preparing balls of rice to be made an offering of, to the gods and to the dead ancestors. Small lamps were also being lighted as it was supposed that they would illumine the paths of the departed souls. The Brahmins invited the Guru to join them, as a duty, in certain ceremonies that were to be performed for the peace and happiness of the forefathers. Now this was a mere superstition. It was palpably irrational for a wide-awake man to believe that anything done here by the Brahmins could be of any use for others in the next world.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਅਗੈ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿ ਖਟੈ ਘਾਲੈ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

i.e. 'Nank, one gets in the next world only what one earns through honest effort, sharing it with others.'

Guru Nanak in Asa.

The Guru wanted to impress that men's own actions made them what they were and nothing that others did could be of any value to them. Every man evolved and became exactly in accordance with what he did. He told them to desist from aimless and superficial pursuits and instead learn to love God through His Name. That was the surest way to win God's benedictions and in consequence to destroy all sin, pain and suffering. He sang the following hymn in Rag Asa that embodied the above views on the subject :

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਦੀਵਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਪਾਇਆ 'ਤੇਲੁ ॥ ਉਨਿ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਉਹੁ
ਸੋਖਿਆ ਚੂਕਾ ਜਮ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ ॥ ਲੋਕਾ ਮਤ ਕੋ ਫਕਤਿ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਲਖ ਮੜਿਆ
ਕਰਿ ਏਕਠੇ ਏਕ ਰਤੀ ਲੇ ਭਾਹਿ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਤਲਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਕੇਸਉ ਕਿਰਿਆ
ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਐਥੈ ਓਥੈ ਆਗੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਏਹੁ ਮੋਰਾ ਆਧਾਰੁ ॥ ਗੰਗ
ਬਨਾਰਸਿ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ਨਾਵੈ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਉ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਤਾਂ ਥੀਐ ਜਾਂ
ਅਹਨਿਸਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਇਕ ਲੋਕੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਛਮਿਛਰੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਵਟਿ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਬਖਸੀਸ ਕਾ ਕਬਹੂ ਨਿਖੂਟਸਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥”

' i.e. The Name is my lamp into which I have put the oil of Pain so that as the lamp burneth it sucketh up the oil (of Pain and Suffering) and in consequence I am saved from meeting the Yama (messengers of Death). O men, do not ridicule my belief (that Name can destroy all pain). Is it not a fact that a little bit of fire can burn down heaps of

logwood ? The rice balls and the leafy plates are for me, the Lord, and the rites performed for the dead, are the creator and His True Name. For, both here and hereafter, behind and in front, the Name alone is my sustainer. The Ganges and Benaras are for me the singing of Thy praises in which my soul ever bathes. For, True bathing is done when one bathes ever in the Love of the Lord. Some people offer balls to the gods and others to the souls of the dead, but it is the Brahmin that eats up all (They are of no use to the gods or to the dead ancestors). Nanak, seek thou the rice ball of his Grace and such balls will never be exhausted.'

Guru Nanak in Asa.

CHAPTER XX

The significance of Karma Theory.

“ ਜੋ ਮੈਂ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਮੈਂ ਪਾਇਆ ”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i. e. “*I got the fruit of what I sowed.*”

Guru Nanak in Asa.

The Guru had left Gaya for his next journey. In a close by village, on the precincts of Gaya, lived a shop-keeper, very pious and religions minded. He heard of the Guru's arrival and rushed to see him for the peace of his soul. He found himself very much uplifted in the Guru's presence and so he made it a daily routine to pay a visit to the Guru for inspiration and guidance. A fellow shop-keeper of the same place came to know of it and had an urge within to accompany him to the Guru. The names of the shopkeepers have not been given in the biographies. They both proceeded together but in the way they came across a bad woman. She was soon able to wean the second shopkeeper away from his companion in whose heart, on the other hand, her lustful ways had completely failed to produce any ripple. They, however, agreed between themselves that they would meet at a particular place after their respective missions were done. The man caught up by lust

arrived at the rendezvous earlier and waited there for his friend. In this leisure time he was looking aimlessly into clods of earth before him and, to his joy, he found unexpectedly a gold coin among them. In the hope to find more, he dug into the earth and could not find anything beyond pieces of charcoal. When the other man arrived he came limping painfully, his foot having caught a thorn in the way. At this his companion laughed at him and ridiculed him for his claims that he was deriving benefit from the inspiring association of the holy Guru. He boasted that in this world many worldly wise men like himself prospered and many so-called pious fools like his companion suffered. He said that while he was able to get reward for his lustful cravings, the other fellow got a thorn as a reward for the Guru's service. But the good man remained unaffected. On the contrary he urged on his friend to see the Guru and, he was sure, all his doubts would be removed. The next day they both went to the Guru and requested him to explain to them how it was that while bad men prospered in the world, good men were often found to suffer. They frankly told him all that had happened the previous day. The Guru explained to them that their approach to the problem of the fruit of good and evil was basically wrong. This fruit was not to be measured in material terms but in terms of their effect on character from which ultimately sprang happiness or suffering. Virtue was its own reward just as evil was its own punishment. A wicked man might derive some pleasure or satisfaction for any temporary advantage he might get from his misdeeds but, this pleasure or satisfaction was not a boon but a curse. The reward for a virtuous life

should not be taken to mean a life of ease, comfort and sensual pleasures here or hereafter, nor was the punishment for a sinful life, a life of perpetual pain and suffering in the physical sense. The Guru explained to them the right way of looking at the theory of Karma through a hymn in Rag Maru. Here is the hymn:

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਸਵਾਣੀ ਬੁਰਾ ਭਲਾ ਦੁਇ ਲੇਖ ਪਏ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਚਲਾਏ ਤਿਉ ਚਲੀਐ ਤਉ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਹੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਹਰੇ ॥ ਚਿਤ ਚੇਤਸਿ ਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਵਰਿਆ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਸਰਤ ਤੇਰੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਲਿਆ ॥ ਰਹਾਂਉ ॥ ਜਾਲੀ ਰੈਨਿ ਜਾਲੁ ਦਿਨ ਹੂਆ ਜੇਤੀ ਘੜੀ ਫਾਹੀ ਤੇਤੀ ॥ ਰਸਿ ਰਸਿ ਚੋਗ ਚੁਗਹਿ ਨਿਤ ਫਾਸਹਿ ਛੂਟਸਿ ਮੂੜੇ ਕਵਨ ਗੁਣੀ ॥ ਕਾਇਆ ਆਰਣੁ ਮਨੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਲੋਹਾ ਪੰਚ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਿਤੁ ਲਾਗਿ ਰਹੀ । ਕੋਇਲੇ ਪਾਪ ਪੜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਉਪਰਿ ਮਨੁ ਜਲਿਆ ਸੰਨੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਭਈ । ਭਇਆ ਮਨੂਰੁ ਕੰਚਨੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਿਨੋਹਾ ॥ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਉਹ ਦੇਵੈ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸਟਸਿ ਦੇਹਾ ॥”

i. e. “*Mind is the paper, actions are the ink. Good and bad (virtue and vice) are both recorded therewith. Man's life is as his accumulated acts constrain him (Man is driven to act along lines determined by his past Karmas). There is no limit to thy virtues, O Lord, (By taking refuge in Him the embodiment of all virtues, man comes to possess virtues and can save himself). O mad man, why dost thou not keep God in mind? Thy virtues get dissolved away in the forgetfulness of God. Night and Day have both become nets for man. There are as many meshes in this net as there are 'gharies' in a day. (Every minute man is being ensnared). Thou are caught every day while engaged in picking food at the bait. O fool, by what qualification wilt thou be saved?*

The body is the furnace, the mind, the iron therein, and the five fires (passions) are ever applied to consume it. Sin is the charcoal added thereto by which the mind is burnt, the anxiety being the pincers. (Then how to end this suffering?) The mind, turned into dross, can still become gold if it meeteth such a Guru as would bestow the nectar of the Name of God and then O Nanak, the fires of the body would be extinguished (and man shall have his fulfilment).''

Guru Nanak in Maru

The hymn pointed out that man carried with himself his whole past in the form of character he had built up through the accumulated tendencies that had become a part of his nature. At death the same nature was carried by the soul with itself into its next journey and that was the real problem which every man must face. It should never be forgotten that every act good or bad, had at once an effect on the doer affecting his character and his evolution. It must leave behind an impression on his mental structure. If the same act were repeated the impression got deepened and if this were persisted on, it became a part of one's nature. Then one's future actions became more spontaneous and easy flowing. The moral effects of one's doings are thus worked in the character of the self. Every action, thought or word enters into one's being in this sense and makes one what one is. This is the Law of cause and effect. Man's own actions make him what he is. If he sows evil he must reap evil. The Law cannot stop operating at any time, not even after death, because death causes only the body to break up, the soul being indestructible. The congenital qualities with which he starts his next life journey shall become the determining

factor for what he will then do. He is helpless before the immutable law, a mere slave to habit, the past influencing the present actions. The desire to commit the act comes spontaneously in the heart even against one's will which becomes too weak to resist as a result of previous impressions having become engraved in one's being. For instance a person who drinks habitually does so in obedience to an element in his nature. Even when he realises its evil effects and resolves to give it up the habit will, on the slightest temptation, send him off his feet and make him a helpless victim before it. No one can extinguish fire by feeding it with wood. The more people have sex experiences the more lustful they grow. The more the wealth they procure the more avaricious and greedy they become and thus more unhappy and dissatisfied. They cannot escape the Karma law.

“ਲੇਖ ਨ ਮਿਟਈ ਹੇ ਸਖੀ ਜੋ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

i .e. ‘O friend, the record of my deeds, cannot be effaced. They are recorded by (the law of) God’.

Guru Nanak in Ramkali

Coming back to the fate the two friends met the previous day, it was now easy for them to understand that evil had so taken possession of one of them that he could not resist the temptation offered by the courtesan, even when he had the urge to see the holy Guru. As against this the good that had become a part of the other man's character was such a force in itself as enabled him inspite of temptations to stand stead-fastly to the noble

programmes he had set for himself. Good and evil thus affected character and personality and it was from this point of view that the fruit was to be judged. The law of Karma thus makes a man responsible for what he does. He must reap the fruit of what he does yet this is not an unmitigated evil. Looked at in another way it is a great boon. Instead of leaving things to external agencies it makes man the master of his own destiny. He becomes the creator of his own future and should be able to change the course his life had taken. He is not merely the product of the past but is also the moulder of the future. If he can mar his future he can make it too. Prayer, love, repentance and above all, the Simran of the Name have the power to purify the soul, invite His Grace and divert life's course in the right direction, through making the mind operate in the realm of the Spirit. In the last lines of the above hymn the Guru had stressed this point ;

“ਭਇਆ ਮਨੁਰੁ ਕੰਚਨੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਵੇ ਜੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੇ ਤਿਨੇਹਾ ॥

ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਉਹ ਦੇਵੇ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਟਸਿ ਦੇਹਾ ॥”

‘The mind, turned into dross, can still become gold if it meeteth such a Guru as would bestow the nectar of God’s Name and then O Nanak, the fires of the body would be extinguished’.

No one is therefore damned for ever. Evil in one’s nature should not be considered a permanent blot that could not be washed away through spiritual effort. It may be a difficult thing to change one’s character but whenever one regains one’s spiritual origin one is saved and then all Karmas get burnt and there is no cycle of births and

deaths. Thus it is quite possible that a bad man may succeed in cancelling his bad past. In the same way a good man through constantly bad associations may not only destroy his good past but may also build an ugly future. One may turn one's gold into dross and the other one's dross into gold.

The two friends had now realised the true significance the Law of Karma had for everybody. Their thinking was now rightly directed and they looked at the previous day's happening not in terms of material gains or losses but in an entirely new way and in terms of the ultimate happiness or unhappiness of the soul. The happening had now assumed a new interpretation and had a new lesson for them to learn. The Guru's association was a boon, for it provided life to the soul. The courtesan's association was a curse for it destroyed the soul and thus destroyed true peace and happiness. When the two friends exchanged notes between themselves they thought that the lesson to be learnt, if put figuratively, was that while one of them had turned his gold into pieces of charcoal, the other had his dross turned into a mere thorn. One had destroyed his spiritual wealth and the other killed all his sufferings to open up the way for real happiness.

CHAPTER XXI

Nur Shah of Kamrup (Assam)

“ਤੰਤੁ ਮੰਤੁ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥”

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫,

*‘I know not trickeries of charms, incantations and mantras.
My mind loveth to enshrine His Name.’*

Guru Arjan in Suhi.

The Guru and the party travelled further on, passing through Behar and Bengal, and reached Kamrup (Assam) which was then ruled by a queen named Nur Shah or Nuran. She was notorious for her skill in the practice of black magic and incantations which she and her father had learnt from a faqir named Nurshah. The faqir had also cured her in her early age of a virulent ulcer by the power of magic. Her original name was Parbati but after she acquired skill in the magic art from the faqir she began to be called Nurshah to signify her discipleship to her benefactor. The black magic of that age worked on people, specially on weak men, more or less in the same manner as hypnosis of the modern age does. It is a science which is daily growing and benefiting mankind in the cure of many diseases. Through autosuggestion the mind

of the subject is influenced so as to think, believe and act in a certain way and that really is the basis of this science. It is the mind that controls every part of the body, every organ, tissue or cell. When this control centre gets weak and inefficient the body begins to grow wrong. By autosuggestion this control centre is tightened up. The sub-conscious mind is really a power house which provides energy for conscious faculties to operate. One can, by making mental suggestions, improve habits, memory and character, and can also repair, build and heal the body. Even in surgical operations the mind of the patient is withdrawn purely through suggestions and then it feels no pain. Diseased limbs and mental disorders are cured in this way. Under suggestions the sensibility of a man can be transferred to any outside object, say the wall and then live coal may be put on the hand without causing pain or burns. The subject may behave as the hypnotiser wants him to behave. He may be given a bitter food and yet he can be caused to take it as very sweet and tasty. Nuran's magic art had also some such significance. People were afraid of her and made offerings of money and of so many other kinds to keep her appeased.

Mardana was hungry and wanted food immediately. This good hearted man freely admitted to the Guru, everytime he was hungry, that he was a mere mortal, subject to the demands of his earthly self in the same way as all mortals were, though the spiritual food he got from his Kirtan (the Divine song sung in music) had a sustaining effect too. The Guru, on his turn, readily agreed every time and allowed him to go.

Thus, Mardana had on this occasion gone to the city while the Guru stayed outside under a tree. Some richly attired women trained in the magic art by Nuran met him. These women had mentally become Nuran's slaves completely and danced to the magic tunes she spelt for them. Now Mardana was hungry and had come in search of food. Here he was so well received and so plentifully served with all kinds of dainties that he forgot everything else for the moment. The so-called magic was tried on him which in his present mental condition worked with ease and as he was a weak minded person too he quickly fell a victim to it and lost his balance and equilibrium. In fact, he was reduced to a state of mind in which he considered himself a lamb and behaved also like a lamb. He was so completely overpowered that he even cried, bleated and stood upon fours as lambs do. Then he forgot even his food and drink and seemed to go without them for long periods.

When he did not return to the Guru, Bala was sent to find him out. But the women had designed that he too should meet a similar fate. He was to be brought under a magic spell so as to think and behave like a dog. A rope had actually been put round his neck when the Guru arrived. Nuran's methods were tried on the Guru too but these failed completely in casting any spell on his powerful mind and he stood in calm silence, unmoved. Then in perfect serenity, he spoke thus :

“ਕਲਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਣਜਾਰੀਆਂ ਝੁੰਗੈ ਮੁਸਕ ਮੰਗੇਨ ॥ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ
ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਕੰਤ ਮਿਲੇਨ ॥”

‘They who deal in sand expect musk as a byproduct.’

Nanak, how can they meet the Bridegroom without pious deeds ?'

(These lines are given in the Janam Sakhis but not anywhere in the Holy Granth.)

The above lines pointed out the hollowness of the inglorious magic trade into which Nuran was indulging. She was being painted as a trader dealing in sand and yet foolishly expecting musk to come out of it. This was the direct attack on her magic art in which she prided so much and which she knew had earned for her so much name and fame. She was firmly told that all her magic feats were mere tricks to deceive others and would not be of any permanent use to her. That was not the way to meet the Lord and make life worthwhile. Only good actions could benefit a person in the ultimate sense.

Then he sang a hymn in Wadhans to point out the right kind of charm or magic that should be employed to win the spouse. All the rest she was doing was sham and nonsense. It may also be noted here how skilfully the Guru's mind was working to bring about Nuran's reclamation. The Guru had the rare gift of knowing at once what was basically wrong with the person he was tackling. He had a deep and clear understanding of human nature and human psychology and could go into the heart of things. To discover, first, the type of a brute in man and then to break its spell is never an easy job. Different men pose problems of different dimensions. Yet the Guru was capable of meeting every situation with courage, faith and understanding.

Nuran was a bright woman and had acquired powers too. It cannot be said, that she was intrinsically a bad woman. Only her outlook on life had received a twist and got deformed and needed to be set right. She was the queen of the land and had everything any worldly woman would like to have. But she took delight to trick other people and to enjoy at their expense. She had thus set up false values of things before herself and the Guru was attacking those values and then pointing out what was really needed. Here is the hymn referred to above :

ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਵਿਆ ਨਿਰਗੁਣਿ ਕੂਕੇ ਕਾਇ ॥ ਜੇ ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਥੀ ਰਹੇ
ਤਾ ਭੀ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਵਣ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਮੇਰਾ ਕੰਤੁ ਰੀਸਾਲੂ ਕੀ ਧਨ ਅਵਰਾ ਰਾਵੇ ਜੀ ॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਮਣ ਜੇ ਥੀਐ ਜੇ ਮਨੁ ਧਾਗਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਮਾਣਕੁ ਮੁਲਿ ਨ
ਪਾਈਐ ਲੀਜੈ ਚਿਤਿ ਪਰੋਇ ॥ ਰਾਹੁ ਦਸਾਈ ਨ ਜੁਲਾ ਆਖਾਂ ਅੰਮੜੀਆਸੁ ॥
ਤੈਂ ਸਹ ਨਾਲਿ ਅਕੂਘਣਾ ਕਿਉ ਥੀਵੈ ਘਰ ਵਾਸੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੀ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਦੂਜਾ
ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਤੈ ਸਹ ਲਗੀ ਜੇ ਰਹੇ ਭੀ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਵੇ ਸੋਇ ॥”

‘The virtuous woman enjoyeth her Spouse but the one without virtue bewaileth to no purpose. If she also becometh virtuous she can enjoy her Lord. My Lord is All-loving, why then the woman reveleth with another? Let good deeds be the charms and thy mind be the thread, then the priceless wilt thou wear in thy mind. I ask for the way but tread not on it and yet claim to have reached the destination. I speak not with my Lord, how then shall I be ushered into His Presence? Nanak, without the One there is no other. And whosoever attacheth to the Lord, enjoyeth her Spouse’.

Guru Nanak in Wadhans

Then the Guru sang another hymn to the effect that wealth, possessions, mansions add power were illusions and led to sin and suffering. Only those were saved who cherished the Virtuous Lord.

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਮੰਵ ਕੁਚਜੀ ਅੰਮਾਵਣਿ ਡੋਸੜੇ ਹਉ ਕਿਉਂ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਵਣਿ ਜਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥
ਇਕ ਦੂ ਇਕਿ ਚੜਦੀਆਂ ਕਉਣੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਜਿਨੀ ਸਖੀ ਸਹੁ
ਰਾਵਿਆ ਸੇ ਅੰਬੀ ਛਾਵੜੀਏਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਸੇ ਗੁਣ ਮੰਵ ਨ ਆਵਨੀ ਹਉ ਕੈ ਜੀ
ਦੋਸ ਧਰੇਉ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਕਿਆ ਗੁਣ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਥਰਾ ਹਉ ਕਿਆ ਘਿਨਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ
ਜੀਉ ॥ ਇਕਤੁ ਟੋਲਿ ਨ ਅੰਬੜਾਂ ਹਉ ਸਦ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਸੁਇਨਾ
ਰੁਪਾ ਰੰਗਲਾ ਮੋਤੀ ਤੈ ਮਾਣਿਕੁ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਸੇ ਵਸਤੂ ਸਹਿ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ ਮੈ ਤਿਨ ਸਿਉ
ਲਾਇਆ ਚਿਤੁ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਿਟੀ ਸੰਦੜੇ ਪਥਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਹਉ
ਏਨੀ ਟੋਲੀ ਭੁਲੀਅਸੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਕੰਤ ਨ ਬੈਠੀ ਪਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਅੰਬਰਿ ਕੁੰਜਾ ਕੁਰਲੀਆ
ਬਗ ਬਹਿਠੇ ਆਇ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਸਾਧਨ ਚਲੀ ਸਾਹੁਰੇ ਕਿਆ ਮੁਹੁ ਦੇਸੀ ਅਗੈ ਜਾਇ
ਜੀਉ ॥ ਸੁਤੀ ਸੁਤੀ ਝਾਲੁ ਥੀਆ ਭੁਲੀ ਵਾਟੜੀਆਸੁ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਤੈ ਸਹ ਨਾਲਹੁ
ਮੁਤੀਅਸੁ ਦੁਖਾਂ ਕੂੰ ਧਰੀਆਸੁ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਤੁਧੁ ਗੁਣ ਮੈ ਸਭਿ ਅਵਗਣਾਂ ਇਕ
ਠਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਸਭਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਮੈ ਡੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਕਾਈ
ਰਾਤਿ ਜੀਉ ॥”

“I have no merit. Countless are my sins. How shall I enjoy my spouse? Many more, besides myself, and each better than the other, seek Him. No one even knoweth my name (so insignificant I am). They who enjoy the Spouse are under His Mango-Shade. But I have none of their virtues, O, whom shall I blame for this? O Lord, which of Thy countless Merits shall I describe, which of Thy Names shall I utter? I cannot reach upto even one of Thy Virtues, so a myriad times I am a sacrifice unto Thee. Gold, silver, pearls and rubies may be good to look at. But these are all

Thy gifts and yet I have loved them instead of Thee. The mansions built up with earth and decorated with stones guiled me away and I sat not by the side of Spouse. Over the skies (of my head) the swallows (of age) cry out, the herons (of white hair) have come upon me, I am preparing to leave for my 'In-laws' ; O, how shall I face the future ? I slept and the night (of life) passed into the dawn (of death) ; and losing my way I remained separated from Thee so that I gathered only suffering. All Virtues are Thine, I am meritless, O Lord. The only prayer Nanak hath to offer is, 'if Thou hast blest all Thy brides with Thy company for all these many nights, is not there a night also for me, the seprated one' ?''

Guru Nanak in Suhi

Then the women made another effort. This time they came before the Guru and with ankle bells worn on their feet they danced in accompaniment with cymbals and drums. The Guru did not seem even to notice the dance. His mind was set on diverting their whole attention from all the foolish things they were indulging in and to concentrate it on what was really essential for life and what they had never cared to know. He referred to another dance which the whole world went about having. It was the mind that was dancing to the tune of the Kal-Age (the age of sin and suffering). The result was that truth had disappeared and men were human in form only, being otherwise no better than curs in respect of their deeds. He sang the following hymn :

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਤਾਲ ਮਦੀਰੇ ਘਟ ਕੇ ਘਾਟ ॥ ਦੋਲਕ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਾਜਹਿ ਵਾਜ ॥ ਨਾਰਦੁ ਨਾਚੈ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਭਾਉ । ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਕਹ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਪਾਉ । ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੁ ॥ ਅੰਧੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਜਾਣੁ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਸਹੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਚੇਲਾ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਤਾਮਿ ਪਰੀਤਿ ਵਸੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇ । ਜੇ ਸਉ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਜੀਵਣ ਖਾਣੁ ॥ ਖਸਮ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੋ ਦਿਨੁ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥ ਦਰਸਨਿ ਦੇਖਿਐ ਦਇਆ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਲਏ ਦਿਤੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ । ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਕਹੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਇ । ਮਾਣਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕੁਤਾ ਦਰਿ ਵਰਮਾਨੁ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਮਿਹਮਾਨੁ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਛੁ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਵੈ ਮਾਨੁ ॥”

‘The desires of the mind are like the cymbals and ankle-bells, with them thumps the drum of the world. The mind danceth to the tune of this Kal-age, O, where can men of Truth and continence set their feet? Nanak is a sacrifice to the Name, for the world is blind and God alone see-eth. The disciple cometh to the Guru to eat his fill. It is the bread that lureth him to the Guru’s place. Even if thou livest to eat for centuries, only that day of thine is approved when thou knowest thy Lord. On seeing a man’s sombre face, compassion cometh not to us. No one doeth for another anything without something in return. The king ministers justice when his palm is greased, but he is not moved in the name of God. Human in form, Nanak by name, but in deeds a cur waiting for command at others’ doors. He who, by the Guru’s Grace, taketh himself to be a mere guest in the world, alone geteth honour at the Lord’s Court’.

Guru Nanak in Asa

When the above hymn was finished and its meaning well carried to the hearts of the women, another hymn was sung :

ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਗਲੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਆਚਾਰੀ ਬੁਰੀਆਂ ॥ ਮਨਹੁ ਕੁਸਧਾਂ ਕਾਲੀਆਂ
ਬਾਹਰਿ ਚਿਟਵੀਆਹ ॥ ਰੀਸਾਂ ਕਰਹਿ ਤਿਨਾੜੀਆਂ ਜੋ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਦਰੁ ਖੜੀਆਹ ॥
ਨਾਲਿ ਖਸਮੈ ਰਤੀਆਂ ਮਾਣਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਰਲੀਆਹ ॥ ਹੋਦੇ ਤਾਣਿ ਨਿਤਾਣੀਆਂ ਰਹਹਿ
ਨਿਮਾਨੜੀਆਹ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਕਾਰਥਾ ਜੇ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਮਿਲਾਹ ॥”

‘We are good at talk but vicious in deeds. Our minds are black from within, though white from without. We mimic the ways of those who serve at the Lord’s Door, are imbued with the love of their Spouse and revel in His joy, who consider themselves powerless even when they have power and remain humble. Nanak, blessed is the life of one who meeteth them.’

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag

Nuran was being gradually converted but she made once again her last desperate effort. Now she wanted to tempt her saviour with her gold, riches, women and so many other things that men of the world prized. She had thought all her life, that there was nothing in the world more powerful than these things. For her the yardstick of success in life was money because it brought power and prestige. She did not know that there were things which money could not buy. She had yet to know that there was such a thing as spiritual wealth and one who possessed it was above all temptations. She was going to have a new revelation and a complete disillusionment of her cherished beliefs. In fact it was this slowly dawning realisation that there was with the Guru some thing else much more valuable, which was going to reclaim her. She had possessed the power for mischief and a mind that gloated over the sufferings of others. It was a strange mental condition

and it was this which must first receive a shock before any inner change could take place. She had made up her mind to find out the secret of the Guru's power and to discover what it was that afforded perpetual peace to him, which she, with all her achievements, did not possess. The Guru sang the following soul-stirring song :

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਇਆਨੜੀਏ ਮਾਨੜਾ ਕਾਇ ਕਰੇਹਿ ॥ ਆਪਨੜੇ ਘਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗੋ ਕੀ ਨਾ ਮਾਣਹਿ ॥ ਸਹੁ ਨੇੜੇ ਧਨ ਕਮਲੀਏ ਬਾਹਰੁ ਕਿਆ ਢੂਢੇਹਿ ॥ ਭੈ ਕੀਆਂ ਦੇਹਿ ਸਲਾਈਆਂ ਨੈਣੀ ਭਾਵ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੋ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਲਾਗੀ ਜਾ ਸਹੁ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੋ ॥ ਇਆਣੀ ਬਾਲੀ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ਜਾ ਧਨ ਕੰਤ ਨ ਭਾਵੈ । ਕਰਣ ਪਲਾਹ ਕਰੈ ਬਹੁਤੇਰੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਮਹਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਵਿਣ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਾਹੀ ਜੇ ਬਹੁਤੇਰਾ ਧਾਵੈ ॥ ਲਬ ਲੋਭ ਅੰਹਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਮਾਤੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ ॥ ਇਨੀ ਬਾਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਈ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਇਆਣੀ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਵਾਹੈ ਕਿਨੀ ਬਾਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨੀਐ ਹਿਕਮਤਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਈਐ ॥ ਜਾਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਤਉ ਚਰਣੀ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਈਐ ॥ ਸਹੁ ਕਹੈ ਸੋ ਕੀਜੈ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੋ ਦੀਜੈ ਐਸਾ ਪਰਮਲ ਲਾਈਐ ॥ ਏਵ ਕਹਹਿ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਭੈਣੇ ਇਨੀ ਬਾਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਈਐ ਤਾਂ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਅਉਰੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਚਤਰਾਈ ॥ ਸਹੁ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖੈ ਸੋ ਦਿਨੁ ਲੇਖੈ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਸਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਸਭਰਾਈ ॥ ਐਸੈ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਸਹਜ ਕੀ ਮਾਤੀ ਅਹਿਨਿਸ ਭਾਇ ਸਮਾਣੀ ॥ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਾਇ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਿਚਖਣਿ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਾ ਸਿਆਣੀ ॥”

“O thou ignorant one, what prides thou for? Why enjoyest not thou the love of thy Spouse at thy own home? O thou ignorant Bride, thy Lord is near thee, then whom thou seekest outside? Apply the Collyrium of Fear to thy eyes and decorate thyself with Love. Then alone art thou the

true bride if thou lovest thy Lord. O ignorant child, what worth art thou if the Lord liketh thee not. Thou criest out for Him in vain if thou mountest not to thy Lord's Mansion. Withot good deeds, o, what can she find, however much she runneth about intoxicated with pride, greed and cravings, she is engrossed in Maya. But this is not the way to find the Spouse so long as she remainth ignorant of Him. Go, and ask the Brides how they had attained unto their Lord. (The reply follows) Whatever He doeth, they submit to His Will without either arguing or asserting their will. It is through His love one findeth life's object, so let the mind be fixed on His Feet. Both the body and the mind are to be surrendered to what He commandeth-this is the true fragrance that should be applied. The Bride sayeth 'Sisters, thus is the Lord attained'. If we lose ourselves we attain to the Spouse? By no other clever device is He attained. And the day the Lord looketh with Grace upon the Bride should be considered as thy day accounted for and the bride gathereth the treasures. She who is Beloved of the Lord is alone the true bride and is fortunate. Imbued thus with Lord's Love, intoxicated in the state of equipoise and merged day and night in His love, she becometh beautiful and attractive and is considered truly wise".

Guru Nanak in Tilang

The above hymn stressed the point that if a woman humble and sweet to her husband, possessed love for him in her heart and was ever ready to obey his call. he was sure to come to her of his own accord and give her his love. So also those who love and serve Him and obey His Call, find Him. Nuran learnt that for a spiritual living it was

essential to throw off pride and to live in the fear of God, perfectly attuned to His Will. She fell at the Guru's feet, set free all her slaves employed for her evil trade and accepted the Guru as her saviour. The Guru showed her the path of the Name, the path through which all could obtain deliverance. A short hymn was sung at the end to give a resume of what was to be accepted and what to be rejected.

“ਸੁਣਿ ਮੁੰਧੇ ਹਰਣਾਖੀਏ ਗੂੜਾ ਵੈਣੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥ ਪਹਲਾਂ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿਵਾਣਿ ਕੇ
ਤਾਂ ਕੀਚੇ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ॥ ਦੋਹੀ ਦਿਚੈ ਦੁਰਜਨਾ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਕੂੰ ਜੈਕਾਰੁ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਦੋਹੀ ਸਜਣ
ਮਿਲਨਿ ਲਹੁ ਮੁੰਧੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਸਜਣਾ ਐਸਾ ਹਸਣੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਤਿਸ
ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ਨ ਕੀਚਈ ਜਿ ਦਿਸੈ ਚਲਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨੀ ਇਵ ਕਰਿ ਬੁਝਿਆ
ਤਿਨਾ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਧੀਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“O maid, with deer-like bewitching eyes, hear thou the Word of infinite wisdom, that one must trade only in the thing whose true worth one knoweth. O maid, proclaim to the world that thou wilt break off with the evil doers and wilt shout victory of thy true friends (saints). Give thou thy thought to the proclamation that leadeth thee to thy friends. Only that pleasure is good that maketh thee surrender thy body and mind to thy true friends. Love not that which cometh and then passeth away. Nanak is a sacrifice unto them who have understood things in this way’.

Shalok Guru Nanak

In the above hymn the Guru is referring to people like Nuran who easily become victims of fascinating things without knowing their real worth. She had thoughtlessly

given herself to evil ways not knowing that the so-called joys of evil life were superficial and transient. She had not realised that the value of things should be judged by their moral and spiritual worth. The essence of a happy and good life is a life of virtue, in the company of saints who in the ultimate analysis, are man's real friends. It is only a virtuous life that can yield happiness and peace of the soul.

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CHAPTER XXII

Kauda, the man eater

“ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਰਸੀ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

“The God-conscious divine raineth nectar from his gaze”.

Guru Arjan in Gauri

Once the Guru and his two companions, Bala and Mardana, during further travels lost their way and found themselves in a thick forest. Its exact geographical location has not been defined. Some biographers have related the Sakhi about Kauda with the Guru's travels to South India after he had already visited places like Ujjain, Madras etc. This, however, is a small matter.

Mardana was hungry and requested his Master to be allowed to go in search of food. He was, however, warned that in that desolate place a wild tribe known as Bheels lived. The people there ate human flesh as well, as a part of diet and did not have any scruples about it. In fact, they took human meat with the same clear conscience as many people take animal meat. Mardana in his search for food fell into the hands of a cruel man named Kauda, who felt pleased to find a human being to serve as his meal that

day. He had lost his humanity & killed strangers for his dish without remorse. Mardana was to be roasted in the boiling oil in a huge cauldron. When Kauda attempted to light the fire, heavy wind and torrents of rain interevened and the fire was extinguished. In the meantime the Guru accompanied by Bala arrived on the spot. They were looking for Mardana and were not quite free from anxiety about him. When Kauda looked up, he found the Guru's steady gaze fixed on him but it was the gaze the like of which he had never seen before. It reflected perfect peace, serenity and composure. He was accustomed to see men extremely frightened when he captured them for his food. But the Guru was completely unruffled and showed no sign of excitement or nervousness. On the contrary, he cast on him a loving, sweet and penetrating look that seemed to snap the rigid chords deep down his heart. His countenance showed the peace and glory of the mind behind it. There was lustre and radiance in the gaze that emitted nectar and seemed to affect Kauda's dark heart. Then he sang the following hymn :

ਆਸਾ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਸਾਹਿਬ ਹੋਇ ਦਿਆਲੁ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਈ ਕਾਰ ਕਰਾਇਸੀ ॥ ਸੋ
ਸੇਵਕ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਮਨਾਇਸੀ ॥ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਤਾਂ
ਖਸਮੈ ਕਾ ਮਹਲ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥ ਖਸਮੈ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਕਰੇ ਮਨਹੁ ਚਿੰਦਿਆ ਸੋ ਫਲੁ
ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਪੈਧਾ ਜਾਇਸੀ ॥”

‘When the Master is in Mercy He showeth Mercy by making us do as He Willeth. And, a true servant is he whom He maketh to serve His Will ; for, whoever submitteth to His Will is approved and reacheth the Lord's Palace. Yes, he who followeth the commands of the Master geteth his heart's desire.

In the Lord's Court he is blessed with a robe.'

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

The hymn above spoke of God, His Will and of a true servant who had attuned himself perfectly to that Will. The Guru was in Kauda's hands and was yet happy because God had willed it and the servant must accept that Will with faith, love, humility and devotion. It was a pleasure and an honour to be in that situation. Kauda was shaken mentally and in this confusion went inside his cave, as if the Guru's gaze had frightened him. There was a mirror hanging in the cave into which he chanced to look and found his own face in it. He noticed the great difference between his own ugly and brutalised face and the one he had just seen outside. He felt ashamed of himself. He realised that he was a man in name only and had lost all claims to humanity. Repentance had set in and this was the beginning of his reform. It was the mirror that proved to be his saviour. It presented him to himself into his true colours and brought to him the conviction that he was no longer a man. It awakend his slumbering soul to the realisation that it was far removed from what it was intended by the Providence to be. No sermons had been delivered to him yet his dead soul was awakened to see itself as it was. He came out, fell prostrate at the Guru's feet and begged forgiveness. The Guru told him that it was enough for the moment that inner change had started and he should allow that change to grow and blossom. It would surely lead to his regeneration. The change brought about in Kauda may be likened to the one that we noticed in the reclamation of Sajjan, the thug. The reader may kindly refer to it for a better appreciation of Kauda's reform.

CHAPTER XXIII

Arti in Puri

“ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ॥”

ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘I am a sacrifice to Thee, O Lord. Thou dwellest in Thy Nature and I cannot comprehend Thy End’.

Guru Nanak in Aṣṭa.

In a rich temple in Puri, called the Jagan Nath temple, priests performed a special kind of idol worship with all the religious trappings that accompanied the worship, of an idol. This kind of worship is known as Arti. Small lamps of ghee were put on a salver, the lamps shedding their lustre inside the whole temple. The salver contained rich offerings and was waved by the priests in accompaniment to the ringing of bells, blowing of conches and burning of incense. The Guru and party arrived there at a time when a great Hindu festival was taking place. They were invited by the priests to join them in the ceremonies associated with the Arti but as he saw before him mere formality and artificiality, he could not oblige them. Instead, he quietly left the place and sat outside under the sky to perform his own

Arti (Worship), in the lap of Nature. That was his method of drawing people's attention to the futility of what they were doing. He was to demonstrate to them the right kind of Arti that every one should perform. He was ever steeped in the Divine through and through and loved the whole creation heartily. He was a poet and a mystic with an unusual keen perception of Reality, which seemed to him diffused everywhere and which he loved to sing in his eternal songs. In fact, God had endowed him with a very high aesthetic sensibility. So he must engage himself in a worship that afforded him direct communion with his Master. But the priests could not understand it. After the Arti was over, they gathered round him and complained to him for his woeful omission to join in their worship.

‘Where is the God you were worshipping’ ? he asked.

They pointed to the statue placed in the temple for worship. He told them that a lifeless statue, made of mere wood, could not become the god of worship. His views on idol worship have already been examined in his talks with Pandit Chattar Dass during the Benaras visit. He condemned idolatry in clearest terms and proclaimed that God's worship alone was the true worship. He, therefore, told the priests to look round and find the boundless presence of God every where and in that context the worship of mere idols would appear meaningless. God was wonderfully present in the sun, the moon, the stars, the firmament and in fact, in all things and above all, in the soul of man. The whole creation had a divine message if only one had the eyes to see. It provided real worship through which He was to be sought, loved and realised. And the sacred Name

was the key to it. Here is the Arti he sang at the place. It now comprises the third hymn of the 'Kirtan Sohila' recited by the Sikhs before retiring for the night'.

ਰਾਗ ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਥਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ ॥
 ਧੂਪੁ ਮਲਿਆਨਲੋ ਪਉਣੁ ਚਵਰੋ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਏ ਫੂਲੰਤ ਜੋਤੀ ॥ ਕੈਸੀ
 ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਭਵ ਖੰਡਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਰਤੀ ॥ ਅਨਹਤਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਾਜੰਤ ਭੇਰੀ ॥
 ਰਹੁਉ ॥ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹੈ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹੀ ॥
 ਸਹਸ ਪਦ ਬਿਮਲ ਨਨ ਏਕ ਪਦ ਗੰਧ ਬਿਨ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਗੰਧ ਇਵ ਚਲਤ ਮੋਹੀ ॥
 ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
 ਗੁਰਸਾਖੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੇ ਸੋ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ
 ਕਮਲ ਮਕਰੰਦ ਲੋਭਿਤ ਮਨੋ ਅਨਦਿਨੋ ਮੋਹਿ ਆਹੀ ਪਿਆਸਾ ॥ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਜਲੁ ਦੇਹਿ
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਰਿੰਗ ਕਉ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਇ ਵਾਸਾ ॥”

“The firmament is the salver, the sun and the moon are the lamps and the galaxy of stars are the pearls studded in it, all this for Thy worship, O Lord. The incense is the scent of the sandal wood from Malai (mountains in Madras, over which grows scented Chandan), the chauri (fan) of feathers is the wind and flowers are the forests, O Lord of Light. Thus is going on Thy wonderful worship. O Thou, the destroyer of births, this Worship is Thine and through it rings the unstruck melody of the Guru's Word. Thousands are Thy eyes and yet Thou hast no eyes, thousands are Thy forms, yet Thou hast no form, thousands are Thy stainless Feet, yet Thou hast no Feet, thousands are Thy noses to smell with, yet Thou hast no nose-all this is Thy Charming Play. Thou art the Spirit that pervadeth all. It is Thy Light that lighteth all hearts and through the Guru's Word this Light is illumined and

then that what pleaseth Thee becometh Thy Worship. I crave day and night for the honey of Thy Lotus Feet in the same way as the honey-bee longs for the flowers. O Lord, grant the Chatrik, the nectar of Thy Mercy, so that he mergeth in Thy Name''.

Guru Nanak in Dhanasari

This beautiful hymn describes God as being present every where and in all, from the lowest to the highest. All are lit by the Divine Spark though revealed in different degrees, more in men than in the lower forms of Creation. All the same all are filled with Him. As all beings emerged from Him, they are His manifestations and are in a sense, His Ownself. Yet the Supreme Soul is not limited by Name, Forms, Time and Space and is the Permanent Basic Element. All eyes are His and yet He has no eyes. All forms are His, yet He has no form. The soul, the Universe and God are not three distinct and permanent realities but are one, the soul and the Universe being real and permanent only in the relative sense. Both of them are the creation of the Supreme that sustains them. The way to reach Him is through His Name.

In the same place the Guru heard of a learned Brahmin claiming supernatural powers. He had studied Puranas and Vedas and knew all rules of analysis and grammar. People said he could shut up his eyes, his nose and other sense organs to the outer world and he had developed an inner sense so acute that he could know all that was happening in the outside world through that sense. The Guru instinctively knew that he was a hypocrite exploiting, in a holy place, the religious sensibilities of people of faith

and decided to expose him. It was bad enough to cheat people anywhere but worse still if the cheating was done in a place considered holy by the people. Also it was a sorry spectacle that a man claiming so much for himself should think in terms of duping fellow human beings when, on the contrary, it was his duty to give them the right lead. The Guru seems to have been reminded from this kind of leadership, of the political subjugation of his people resulting in their mental slavery and consequent aping of the ways of the rulers. It was time, he thought, to expose everybody. People had lost self respect and blindly followed the ways of the rulers. The learned men who had read Puranas and Vedas and possessed knowledge of rules of analysis and grammar should have known better. But they too had forgotten their national character. They had accepted the foreign language as their own and had no scruples in reading the foreigners' scriptures, joining their service and slavishly aping their manners and their ways of living. The Guru hid the Brahmin's lota behind him and told the people that the Brahmin, with his claims of inner vision, would not be able to find it out. The Brahmin stood exposed to people's ridicule and ran away. The Guru uttered the following hymn in Dhanasari in which he castigated the people also for their slavish mental condition.

“ਕਾਲੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਤ ਕਾ ਢਬੁ ॥ ਥਾਨਸਟ ਜਗ ਭਰਿਸ਼ਟ
ਹੋਏ ਡੂਬਤਾ ਇਵ ਜਗੁ ॥ ਕਲ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਅਖੀ ਤ ਮੀਟਹਿ ਨਾਕ
ਪਕੜਹਿ ਠਗਣ ਕਉ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਆਂਟ ਸੇਤੀ ਨਾਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਸੂਝਤੇ
ਤਿਨਿ ਲੋਅ ॥ ਮਗਰ ਪਾਛੈ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਸੂਝੈ ਏਹੁ ਪਦਮ ਅਲੋਅ ॥ ਖਤਰੀਆਂ ਤਾ
ਧਰਮੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ ॥ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ ਧਰਮ

ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ ॥ ਅਸਟ ਸਾਜ ਸਾਜਿ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਸੋਧਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੇਦ ਅਭਿਆਸੁ ॥
ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਮ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸੁ ॥”

“Times are gone when people knew the true Yoga and the Way of Truth. Now, even places of worship are polluted and the world is being drowned. In this Kal Age the Name is the most effective means for realisation. Yet there are men who beguile others by closing eyes and nostrils. They close their nostrils with their three fingers and claim they have seen the three worlds but they see not even what is behind them (refers to the lota.) O, how strange is this lotus-posture (a certain posture for religious meditations, the eyes being fixed on the tip of the nose) ! The Khatrijs have given up their religion and taken to the foreign tongue. (It appeared to the Guru a clear sign of their political subjugation as also mental slavery that they should accept a foreign language as against their own mother tongue.) Their distinctiveness as a people is gone (for, they have accepted the ways of foreign rulers) and no one has any regard for righteousness. Knowing all rules of analysis and grammar, they study the Puranas and the Vedas, but prayeth Nanak, the Lord's servant, 'Without His Name no one is emancipated'.”

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CHAPTER XXIV

Discourses with Sheikh Braham

“ਘਰ ਹੀ ਬੈਠਿਆਂ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ”

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘God can be realised in home’

Guru Amar Dass in a Shalok

Mardana now seemed tired of long travels and desired to go back home. The Guru agreed and marched back. On return to the Punjab, he visited Pakpattan and with this the first Udasi ended. When after his stay at home for some time, he restarted for his next Udasi, he again visited Pakpattan. The place was sacred to the memory of Sheikh Farid, the Sufi Muslim Saint whose compositions were accepted by Guru Arjan Dev for incorporation in the Holy Granth. During Guru Nanak's time, Sheikh Braham was the incombent of the shrine of Sheikh Farid. He was the head of the Sufi School and his devotees lovingly called him the second Farid. He was a noble hearted man but was unhappy for not having been able to find peace of the soul even though he had reached old age. He lived a very austere life subjecting himself to ascetic exercises, rigorous penances, fasting and exposure to severe heat and cold. He had believed like so many other seekers of the time that as fire could come from dry wood only, so also enlightenment would

come when, through self torture, all passions were stilled. He was indifferent to his physical needs and lived on milk alone which he could get from the shepherds grazing their cattle close by. He also firmly believed that for a spiritual living it was necessary to turn away from society. He knew that Budha had left at midnight when his wife and a new born baby were sleeping, and practised alongwith five of his best companions, severe asceticism till he had become a skeleton with no fire or spirit left in him. That was the position which the Sufi sect had also accepted. Farid, the Sufi saint, had thus subscribed to the current philosophy of his times which had declared that the world was a place of sin and suffering and release could come only through complete dissociation with it. When the Guru arrived, the Sheikh was passing through the deepest slough of despair, pessimism and cynicism. He was bitter about life and its evils but had no idea of the triumphs of life. He did not know that there was such a thing as the emotional and psychic life of man, and paid heavily for it. Emotional isolation and deprivation must make life insipid. Complete absence of social and family environment and a consequent lack of affection must result in disharmony and disequilibrium. The Guru had a natural affinity for seekers in general and for the Sufi School in particular for its freedom from bigotry and intolerance, quite unlike other Muslim Schools, and so we find in the biographies long discourses he had with some of its representatives. We take here the two Pakpattan interviews one by one and give a gist of the important subjects discussed during these interviews.

The Sheikh started with the problems that were uppermost in his own mind. He said,

“ਅਕੈ ਤ ਲੋੜ ਮੁਕਦਮੀ ਅਕੈ ਤ ਅਲਹੁ ਲੋੜ ॥

ਦੁਹਿ ਬੇੜੀ ਨਾ ਲਤ ਧਰ ਮਤੁ ਵੰਝਹੁ ਵਖਰ ਬੋੜਿ ॥”

i. e., ‘Either seek worldly prosperity or seek God. Put not thy feet on two boats lest thou lovest the entire capital’.

This question was in keeping with his firm view that it was not possible for a house-holder to seek and find God. The Guru replied equally firmly. The exact words of the reply have not come down to us but the biographers have versified the reply thus.

“ਦੋਹੀਂ ਬੇੜੀ ਲਤ ਧਰ ਦੋਹੀ ਵਖਰੁ ਚਾੜਿ ॥ ਕੋਈ ਬੇੜੀ ਡੁਬਸੀ ਕੋਈ ਲੰਘੈ ਪਾਰਿ ॥ ਨਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਨਾ ਬੇੜੀਆਂ ਨਾ ਡੁਬੈ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਖਰੁ ਸਚ ਧਨ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥”

‘Put thy feet on both boats (Abide in the True one in the midst of worldly impurities. Remain a householder and a man of God simultaneously). One boat may sink but the other will cross over (It means if one boat were in the process of sinking, the other will come to its rescue. The love of God will save from worldly entanglements and the love of family with responsibilities it entailed, will curb renunciation taking extreme forms. Thus imbalance in both extremes will be liquidated and harmony restored. This view is explained further in the next line). When a man possesses the wealth and the capital of Truth and liveth naturally in God there will be no boat, no water, no sinking and no loss’.

The Sheikh now pointed out the obstacles in the path which the Guru had indicated above. The dreadful Maya was the real obstacle in the way of realisation.

“ਫਰੀਦਾ ਚੂੜੇਲੀ ਸਿਉ ਰਤਿਆਂ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਕੂੜਾ ਭੇਤ ॥
ਹੇ ਨਾਨਕ, ਅਖੀ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਉਜੜਿ ਵੇਵੈ ਖੇਤ ॥”

‘Farid, untrue becometh the world’s mystry because of the love of the dreadful witch (i. e. Maya). O Nanak, I have seen with my own eyes the field (of life) being ruined’.

The Guru replied.

“ਫਰੀਦਾ ਧੁਰਹੂ ਧੁਰਹੂ ਹੋਂਦਾ ਆਇਆ ਚੂੜੇਲੀ ਸਿਉਂ ਹੇਤੁ । ਨਾਨਕ ਖੇਤੁ
ਨ ਉਜੜੈ ਜੇ ਰਾਖਾ ਰਹੈ ਸੁਚੈਤ ॥”

“O Farid, the dreadful witch (Maya) hath her fascinations. This hath gone on from the beginning of creation. But if the master of the field were wide awake, it would be saved”.

Maya is God’s creation. It may be an evil in one sense but it carries in itself the seed for progress and advance and is therefore a necessary evil. What appears evil is a partial view of the whole. When a man takes refuge in Him, Maya with all its evil aspects will disappear. So there is no need to run away from home and turn a mendicant. The self has to be controlled to make room for God to enter. The Light, the Sheikh was vainly searching for in the forests, was already in the heart. It was only to be illumined by the torch of God’s Name. One might fly to the forests but Maya would overtake one even there. The world was, therefore, to be lived in its fulness. It was cruel to run away from people groaning in pain, though due to their own unnatural ways of living. Man was indebted to society in a hundred and one ways. In fact he could not exist without it. To run away from the post of duty i. e. from service of society was the height of

ingratitude. It was utterly selfish to think of one's own so-called advancement when the society, of which one was a part, suffered for want of right leadership. In a nutshell, the human personality would be incomplete unless both the mundane and the mystic aspects of life were advanced. That was the correct practical approach to life. The Sheikh now thought of his own old age and wanted to know if it was still possible for him to realise God. So he said,

“ਫਰੀਦਾ ਤਨੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਫਟਿਆ ਤੇ ਗਤ ਰਹੀ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਉਠੀ ਪਿਰੀ ਤਬੀਬ ਥੀਉ ਕਾਰੀ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਾਇ ॥”

‘Farid, the body is shattered, the mind is broken and all vigour is gone. Be Thou my physician, O Lord, and apply an effective cure’.

The Guru knew that there was a good deal of truth in what the Sheikh said. But it was never too late to begin. He replied,

“ਸਜਣੁ ਸਚ ਪਰਖ ਮੁਖ ਅਲਾਵਣ ਬੋਥਰਾ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਮਨ ਮਝਾਹੁ ਲਖ ਤੁਧਹੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਮੁ ਪਿਰੀ ॥”

i. e. Recognise the True Friend. Mere prattle is vain. Find Him in thy own heart. My Lord is not far away from thee’.

Sheikh Braham was not quite satisfied with this reply. He was continually being reminded of his age and the terrible obstacles of Maya. So he once again referred to the pessimistic note his own guru, Sheikh Farid, had already sounded in this regard.

ਸੂਹੀ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ ॥

“ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਉ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੀ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ ਭਰਿ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਜਬ ਉਛਲੈ ਤਬ
ਤਰਣੁ ਦੁਹੇਲਾ ॥ ਹਥੁ ਨ ਲਾਇ ਕਸੁੰਭੜੇ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਸੀ ਢੋਲਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਇਕ
ਆਪੀਨੇ ਪਤਲੀ ਸਹ ਕੇਰੇ ਬੋਲਾ । ਦੁਧਾ ਥਣੀ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਮੇਲਾ ।
ਕਹੈ ਫਰੀਦੁ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ ਸਹੁ ਅਲਾਏਸੀ ॥ ਹੰਸੁ ਚਲਸੀ ਭੰਮਣਾ ਅਹਿ ਤਨੁ
ਢੇਰੀ ਥੀਸੀ ॥”

‘When it was time I did not build my boat (of life). And, now when the sea waves were lashing in full, how difficult it was to cross the sea of life. O dear, touch not the safflower (Maya), it will burn thy hand. The poor woman is weak and the command of Her Lord is hard to bear. (He meant to say that he had already become too weak to tread the difficult path he was called upon to tread). When the animal’s teats had yielded their milk, it would not go back to them (When time for action had passed nothing could be done). Sayeth Farid, ‘O my friends, the Lord will call ye all. Then this swan-soul will fly away, sad at heart, and the body shall be reduced to dust’.

The Sheikh spoke in utter despondency. He said, his time was up and there was no hope left. He had failed to find a solution at the right moment for the ills from which human life suffered and nothing could be done. When the animal’s teats had yielded the milk, the same would not go back to them. So also his time for action having passed, no cure was possible. The Guru replied through the following song pointing out that it was never too late to mend, though at old age the task was more difficult to accomplish. The Name was always the surest key to liberation.

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਜਪ ਤਪ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਬੇੜੁਲਾ ਜਿਤ ਲੰਘਹਿ ਵਹੇਲਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਨ
ਉਛਲੈ ਐਸਾ ਪੰਥੁ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਜੀਠੜਾ ਰਤਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਚੋਲਾ ਸਦ
ਰੰਗ ਢੋਲਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ । ਸਾਜਨ ਚਲੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਕਿਉ ਮੇਲਾ ਹੋਈ । ਜੇ ਗੁਣ
ਹੋਵਹਿ ਗੰਠੜੀਐ ਮੇਲੇਗਾ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਵੀਛੜੇ ਜੇ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਈ ।
ਆਵਾਗਉਣੁ ਨਿਵਾਰਿਆ ਹੈ ਸਾਚਾ ਸੋਈ । ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰਿ ਨਿਵਾਰਿਆ ਸੀਤਾ ਹੈ
ਚੋਲਾ ॥ ਗੁਰਬਚਨੀ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹ ਕੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬੋਲਾ । ਨਾਨਚ ਕਹੈ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ
ਸਹੁ ਖਰਾ ਪਿਆਰਾ । ਹਮ ਸਹ ਕੇਰੀਆਂ ਦਾਸੀਆਂ ਸਾਚਾ ਖਸਮੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ।”

“Build thou the boat of meditation and self control. Then thou shalt cross unhampered the sea of life. There is then no sea to be crossed, no tides to be contended with, so easy becometh thy path. O my beloved, Thy Name is like the madder that hath dyed the skirt (of my body) in Thy Eternal Colour. O dear, friends have gone out in search of the Beloved, O, How shall they meet Him? If they have gathered merit, the Lord will surely unite them with Himself. And if ever one is really united one is never separated from Him; and then one's comings and goings cease, such is (the Power of) the True One. He who overcometh his ego prepareth such a robe of honour, and he, through the Guru's Word, gathereth the fruit of the Lord's Blessings. Sayeth Nanak, 'O my friends, the Lord is most lovable. We all are His maids-slaves and Our Spouse is ever True.' ”

Guru Nanak in Suhi.

After this there was not much questioning but only an exchange of the spiritual experiences on the two sides. The two great souls had met and it was natural for them to share with each other their personal experiences. The

Sheikh was a sincere seeker though his search was, in some respects misguided. He began with the hymn in Rag Asa of Sheikh Farid, his guru. It spoke of the love of God, with all that this love entailed, of man's own shortcomings, and of His Grace as the only hope for redemption.

ਆਸਾ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ :

“ ਦਿਲਹੁ ਮੁਹਬਤ ਜਿਨ ਸੇਈ ਸਚਿਆ । ਜਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਰ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਸਿ
ਕਾਢੇ ਕਚਿਆ । ਰਤੇ ਇਸਕ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਰੰਗਿ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਕੇ । ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਜਿਨ ਨਾਮੁ
ਤੇ ਭੁਇ ਭਾਰੁ ਥੀਏ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ । ਆਪਿ ਲੀਏ ਲੜਿ ਲਾਇ ਦਰਿ ਦਰਵੇਸ ਸੇ ।
ਤਿਨ ਧੰਨੁ ਜਣੇਦੀ ਮਾਉ ਆਏ ਸਫਲੁ ਸੇ । ਪਰਵਦਗਾਰ ਅਪਾਰ ਅਗੰਮ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਤੂੰ।
ਜਿਨਾ ਪਛਾਤਾ ਸਚੁ ਚੁਮਾਂ ਪੈਰ ਮੂੰ ॥ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਹ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਤੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਦਗੀ ॥ ਸੇਖ
ਫਰੀਦੈ ਖੈਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਬੰਦਗੀ ॥”

‘They alone are true who love their Lord with their heart, but they who say one thing and do quite the opposite are considered as untrue. They who are inebriated with God’s Vision are imbued with His Love and they who have forgotten the Lord’s Name are a burden to the earth. The true Faqirs are they whom the Lord Himself owneth. Blessed is their mother and fruitful is their coming into the world. Thou art the Great Sustainer, the Infinite and the Unknowable. I kiss the feet of those who have realised Truth. O Lord, I seek Thy Refuge, Thou art the Forgiver, So bless Thou, Thy Farid, the Sheikh, with the bounty of Thy worship.’

Farid in Asa,

It was now the Guru’s turn and he sang the following hymn, Mardana playing on the rebeck. The lesson of the hymn is that for life to bear fruit one must learn to abide

by the Immutable Will. All are strung to that Will and whoever attunes to it, is saved. Whenever a man is caught up in moral crises it is His Grace that can save. Complete self surrender can mitigate the relentless process of cause and effect.

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਜਾ ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਸਭ ਕੇ ਤੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਹਿਬ ਮੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਤੁਧੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਹਉ ਸੁਖਿ ਵਸਾਂ ਤੂੰ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਾਬਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਭਾਣੈ ਤਖਤਿ ਵਡਾਈਆਂ ਭਾਣੈ ਭੀਖ ਉਦਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਭਾਣੈ ਥਲ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਹੁ ਵਹੈ ਕਮਲੁ ਫੁਲੈ ਆਕਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਭਾਣੈ ਭਵਜਲੁ ਲੰਘੀਐ ਭਾਣੈ ਮੰਵਿ ਭਰੀਆਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਭਾਣੈ ਸੋ ਸਹੁ ਰੰਗੁਲਾ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਰਤਾ ਗੁਣਤਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਭਾਣੈ ਸਹੁ ਭੀਹਾਵਲਾ ਹਉ ਆਵਣਿ ਜਾਣਿ ਮੁਈਆਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਤੂੰ ਸਹੁ ਅਗਮ ਅਤੋਲਵਾ ਹਉ ਕਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਢਹਿ ਪਈਆਸ ਜੀਉ । ਕਿਆ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਕਹਿ ਸੁਣੀ ਮੈ ਦਰਸਨ ਭੂਖ ਪਿਆਸਿ ਜੀਉ । ਗੁਰਸ਼ਬਦੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ ॥”

‘When Thou art with me, all are with me. Thou art my Master and all my Stock (Capital). When Thou abideth in me I am at peace. Yes, blessed am I, as Thou abidest within me. If such be Thy Will, Thou makest me an honoured king or a thrown-out beggar. If such be Thy Will, the sea (of Thy Love) will flow in the deserts (of my mind) and the lotus (of Thy Love) will bloom in the Sky (of my mind). In Thy Will the sea of life can be crossed and in Thy Will the load is drowned in the sea. In Thy Will, Thou appeareth dreadful to me and then I get doomed to the cycle of transmigration. O Lord, Thou art Unknowable and unweighable and while uttering this I fall in submision at Thy Feet. What shall I ask and what shall I be heard uttering save, that I hunger and thirst for Thee? Through

the Guru's Word I attain the Lord and the prayer of Nanak is ever for attaining the True One.'

Guru Nanak in Suhi.

We may here describe an interesting anecdote. A villager was watching that the Guru and the Sheikh were absorbed, the whole day, so completely in their discourses that they forgot about food and drink. He hastened to his village and brought a jar-ful of milk for them. He also put four gold coins into the jar to serve as an offering to the holy men. He was a worldly man and expected rich dividends through their blessings.

“ਦੇ ਦੇ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਸਹਸਾ ਗੁਣਾ ਸੋਭ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

'They give (in charity) but demand in return a thousand-fold more as also applause from the world.'

Guru Nanak in Var Asa.

The night had already come and the Guru rose for rest. In keeping with the austere way of his living the Sheikh, however, kept on his meditations. When the milk was brought, the Sheikh being already very hungry, partook his share and placed the jar aside for the benefit of the Guru after he had his rest. When the Guru woke up, the Sheikh pointed out to him the milk he had missed for not keeping awake. To this simple matter he significantly gave a spiritual interpretation thus, to emphasise the superiority of his austere living:

“ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਫਲੜਾ ਫਲੁ ਭੀ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਜੋ ਜਾਗੰਨਿ ਲਹੰਨਿ ਸੇ
ਸਾਈ ਕੰਨੋ ਦਾਤਿ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

'The first part of the night yields flower and the other part fruit. Those who keep awake are eligible to God's bounties.'

Shalok Farid.

The Guru replied equally significantly after he had taken not only his share of the milk but also found the gold coins as a by-product.

“ਦਾਤੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਆ ਚਲੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਇਕ ਜਾਗੰਦੇ ਨ ਲਹਿਨਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਸੁਤਿਆਂ ਦੇਇ ਉਠਾਲਿ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'The bounties are all God's. But who can take them from Him as a matter of right? Some are deprived even when awake while others He Himself (In His Grace) awakens to bestow.'

Guru Nanak in Var Siri Rag.

The villager had heard all this and realised that they were talking of gains in spiritual terms while his own approach was entirely materialistic. He regretted very much and left the place but now he was a changed man. He had expected a jar-ful of gold coins as reward for the service he had done. But now he got some thing much more valuable—to love to think in spiritual terms. The Guru then sang more hymns as desired by the Sheikh. We give two of them here. They expound the Guru's whole concept of a truly religious life. The second hymn needs to be studied very carefully. Here they are :

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਮਿਲਿ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਤਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਲਿਖਾਇਆ ॥

ਲਿਖ ਦਾਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਵਡਿਆਈ । ਮਿਲਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗਵਾਈ ॥ ਮੂਰਖ ਮਨ
ਕਾਹੇ ਕਰਸਹਿ ਮਾਣਾ । ਉਠਿ ਚਲਨਾ ਖਸਮੈ ਭਾਣਾ । ਰਹਾਉ । ਤਜਿ ਸਾਦ ਸਹਜ
ਸੁਖ ਹੋਈ । ਘਰ ਛਡਣੇ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਈ । ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਜੈ ਕਿਛੁ ਧਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ । ਜੇ
ਬਾਹੁੜਿ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਆਈਐ ॥ ਸਜੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਪਟ ਹਢਾਏ ॥ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਸਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ
ਚਲਾਏ । ਕਰਿ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਜੋਵੈ । ਹਥੀ ਪਉਦੀ ਕਾਹੇ ਰੋਵੈ । ਘਰ ਘੁੰਮਣਵਾਣੀ
ਭਾਈ । ਪਾਪ ਪਥਰ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ । ਭਉ ਬੇੜਾ ਜੀਉ ਚੜਾਉ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ
ਦੇਵੈ ਕਾਹੂ ॥”

“The union of the father and the mother bringeth into being the body, and the Creator inscribeth in each case the writ of His Will. This Writ embodieth His Light and His Glory. But the right consciousness is lost through union with Maya. O fool, why pridest thou when thou hast to quit soon according to the Lord's Will By abandoning thy tastes thou wilt attain the peace of the fourth state (above the three qualities). Every one hath to abandon his home and no one stayeth here for long. If we were to come back to the same world again there was sense in spending only some to save the rest for the future. Man³ adorneth himself with silks and commandeth others much. He sleepeth merrily on couches, yet when Yamas seize him why doth he grieve? Brother, the household is the whirlpool in which he carrieth (on his head) the stones of sin and so cannot swim. But if he were to board the boat of the Lord's Fear (he would cross over). But rare is the person, O Nanak, who is so blest.”

Guru Nanak in Maru.

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਆਵਹੁ ਭੈਣੇ ਗਲਿ ਮਿਲਹ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਹੇਲੜੀਆਹ ॥ ਮਿਲਿ ਕੈ ਕਰਹਿ
ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਸੰਮਥ ਕੰਤ ਕੀਆਹ ॥ ਸਾਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਅਉਗਣ ਸਭਿ

ਅਸਾਹ ॥ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਤੇਰੇ ਜੋਰਿ ॥ ਏਕੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਜਾ ਤੂੰ ਤਾ ਕਿਆ
ਹੋਰਿ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਤੁਸੀ ਰਾਵਿਆ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਗੁਣੀ ॥ ਸਹਜਿ
ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੀਆ ਮਿਠਾ ਬੋਲਣੀ ॥ ਪਿਰ ਰੀਸਾਲੂ ਤਾਂ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ
ਸੁਣੀ ॥ ਕੇਤੀਆਂ ਤੇਰੀਆਂ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਕੇਵਡ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਤਿ ॥ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ
ਸਿਫਤਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਕੇਤੇ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ॥ ਸਚੁ
ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਹੋਵੇ ਮਤਿ ਉਗਵੈ ਗੁਰਬਚਨੀ
ਭਉ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੁ ਆਪੇ ਲਏ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥”

“Come, sisters, my bosom friends, come and clasp me in thine embrace, and let us recite together the glories of our All-Powerful Lord. He, the True Master, hath all the Merit, and we, all the vices. O Creator. all that is, is subject to Thy Power. The one word to be pondered over is that where Thou art, nothing else may be sought. Go and ask the Bride for what merit did she enjoy her Spouse so well? (Here is the reply), I bedecked myself with peace and contentment and spoke to everybody with sweetness. He, the Joyous One meeteth only when one hearkens to the Guru's Word. How wonderful is Thy Nature and how wonderful are Thy gifts, how countless are Thy creatures that speak day and night of Thy Greatness ! How many are Thy Forms and Colours and how many are the high and low (through whom Thou manifestest Thyself) ! When one meeteth the True Guru, the Truth is revealed and through that Truth one mergeth in the True One. When through the Guru's Word, one fears the Lord, one's super-consciousness is awakened and true wisdom groweth. And then the True King Himself uniteth one with Himself.

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

(We will have something to say about this important

hymn later, in another chapter).

The Guru's second visit to Pakpa'tan took place when he was again on tour after having a brief stay at home. He had proceeded to the West for his next Udasi and then abruptly had changed his programme simply because he loved to meet Sheikh Braham. The news of the Guru's arrival was conveyed to the Sheikh by his disciple Kamal, a very pious, highly devoted and fully trustworthy person. Kamal had seen the Guru and Mardana seated in the open outside the town, where he had gone to fetch fire-wood. He heard a couplet in Var Malar being sung in accompaniment to Mardana's rebeck. Here it is :

‘ਆਪੇ ਪਟੀ ਕਲਮ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਰਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਭਿ ਤੂੰ । ਏਕੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕਾ
ਦੂਜਾ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੂੰ ॥”

ਮਲਾਰ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Thou art the tablet, Thou the writing on it and Thou the pen. Nanak let us say, He is every thing. How can there be any other ?’

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

Kamal gave his thought to the couplet, learnt it by heart and then reported the same to His Master, Sheikh Braham, who was much pleased to hear the news and came personally to meet the Guru to exchange views on this and other religious topics. He was a spirit hungry man and found his rest in the companionship of the Guru. The Sheikh had the couplet in mind and asked,

“ਏਕ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਤੇ ਦੋਇ ਹਦੀ ॥ ਕੇਹੜਾ ਸੇਵੀ ਕੇਹੜਾ ਰਦੀ ।’

i. e. *“There is one Lord but there are two Ways (The*

Sheikh was thinking of the two prominent religions of his time - Islam and Hinduism). Which of these two is to be accepted and which is to be rejected ?

The Guru's reply is significant.

‘ਇਕੋ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਕਾ ਹਦਿ ॥ ਇਕ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਤੇ ਦੂਜਾ ਰਦਿ ॥’

i. e. *‘There is one God and therefore there can be only one Way. Accept that one Way and reject all others’. (This line is not given in the Holy Granth).*

The Guru goes on to say,

“ਦੂਜਾ ਕਾਹੈ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਜੰਮੈ ਤੇ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਇ । ਏਕੋ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਲਿ
ਬਲਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥”

‘Why serve the one that is born and dies ? Nanak, dwell on the One who resideth in land and water’.

The Guru's view, as explained so many times by him, was that there was nothing else that had an existence independent of God. He is the source of everything conceivable and nothing can exist without Him. In this drama of creation He is the Book, the Author, the Reader, the Plot and the Characters. The rivers, the birds, the trees, the fire, the wind are all His wonderful manifestations, man being the best of them all. This may be termed as pantheism but it is not the pantheism of any crude variety that limits the Limitless to this or that thing and leads to mental debasement. God surely assumes all roles and yet remains apart. All are His manifestations. The spark that fire produces is indeed fire but the spark cannot exist without fire. The spider spins out a web out of its own

being, yet this web cannot be considered as different from the spider. So also all that emanates from Him, is, in a way, His Ownself. This is true Advaitism. The Unity of God means, He is indivisibly One and above every other being, however, highly conceived. It completely rules out the other. There is nothing eternal and self existent except God. The other can have no existence in fact. If that is so, the Way to Him, in its essential aspects, must be unique. So basically religion is one and the same for all. Those who quarrel over religious views about God have not understood Him. Every path is the right path if it leads to Him and every path that creates divisions and dissensions will not lead to Him and is therefore no path. Then Sheikh Braham changed the topic and came upon some of the old topics for a more thorough examination. Old beliefs die hard. Also, since, he was discussing all spiritual matters he must refer to the things that had, for a long time, been nearest to his heart. He said,

“ਫਰੀਦਾ ਪਾੜਿ ਪਟੋਲਾ ਧਜ ਕਰੀ ਕੰਬਲੇੜੀ ਪਹਰੇਉ ॥

ਜਿਨੀ ਵੇਸੀ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸੇਈ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੇਉ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

“I am ready to tear all my clothes and live in a mere shawl. Whatever wear leads to my Lord, I will appear in that wear”.

Farid meant to say that he was ready to wander about in rags or in any tattered form if he could thus meet his Beloved. The Guru replied,

“ਕਾਇ ਪਾੜ ਪਟੋਲਾ ਧਜ ਕਰੀ ਕਮਲੀ ਪਹਰਹਿ ਕਾਇ ॥

ਘਰ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਜੇ ਮਨ ਰਾਖੇ ਥਾਇ ॥”

“Why tear thy clothes and wear a mere shawl. God can be realised in the very home if the mind is integrated”.

The biographer has here interpreted the Guru's reply in his own language. He seems to have in his mind the following composition of Guru Amar Dass which he has modified a little, perhaps, to express himself in a precise manner.

“ਕਾਇ ਪਟੋਲਾ ਪਾੜਤੀ ਕੰਬਲੜੀ ਪਹਿਰੇਹਿ ॥

ਘਰ ਹੀ ਬੈਠਿਆਂ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਜੇ ਨੀਅਤ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰੇਇ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

The Guru also said,

“ਘਰ ਹੀ ਮੁੰਧਿ ਵਿਦੇਸਿ ਪਿਰੁ ਨਿਤ ਝੂਰੇ ਸੰਮਾਲੇ ॥

ਮਿਲਦਿਆਂ ਢਿਲ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਨੀਅਤ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰੇਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਵਡਹੰਸ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“The Bride at home supposeth the Spouse to be afar. and pineth. He is met immediately if the mind is integrated”.

Guru Nanak in Var Wadhans

Then the Sheikh referred, as in the earlier interview to his old age.

“ਫਰੀਦਾ ਨੰਦੀ ਕੰਤੁ ਨ ਰਾਵਿਉ ਵਡੀ ਥੀ ਮੁਈਆਸ ॥ ਧਨ ਕੂਕੇ ਦੀ ਗੈਰ
ਮੈ ਤੈ ਸਹ ਨਾ ਮਿਲੀਆਸ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ

“When she was young she enjoyed not her Spouse. Then she grew old and died. And now she crieth out from the grave. ‘O, I met not my Lord’.

Shalok Farid

The Guru replied that what was really needed was merit and not the age so much,

“ਮਹਲ ਕੁਚਜੀ ਮੜਵੜੀ ਕਾਲੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਕਸੁਧ ॥
ਜੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਤਾਂ ਪਿਰੁ ਰਵਾਂ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਮੁੰਧ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਰੂ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The Bride is meritless, she is proud of her body but is black with sin and is unclean of mind. If she possessed merit she would enjoy the Lord. But, alas, she hath no merit’.

Shalok Guru Nanak in Maru

Then the Sheikh asked what merit was required to meet Him,

“ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਮਣੀਆਂ ਮੰਤੁ ॥
ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਸੋ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਵਸਿ ਆਵੈ ਕੰਤੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

‘What words to utter, what merit to acquire, what charms to master and what clothes to wear so that I could have my Beloved wholly to myself’ ?

Shalok Farid

Here is the Guru’s reply in the words of Sheikh Farid himself, to emphasise his point of view :

“ਨਿਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਖਵਣੁ ਗੁਣੁ ਜਿਹਬਾ ਮਣੀਆ ਮੰਤੁ ॥
ਏ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਭੈਣੇ ਵੇਸ ਕਰਿ ਤਾਂ ਵਸਿ ਆਵੈ ਕੰਤੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

‘Humility is the Word, forgiveness the merit, sweetness of tongue the charm. These three are the clothes to wear, O

sister, to make the Lord thine'.

The Sheikh admitted that evil was powerful. But, was there a weapon that would destroy evil and produce merit? The Guru replied thus :

“ਸਚ ਕੀ ਕਾਤੀ ਸਚੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਘਾੜਤ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰ ॥
ਸਬਦੇ ਸਾਣ ਰਖਾਈ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਗੁਣ ਕੀ ਥੋਕੇ ਵਿਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਹੋਵੇ
ਸੇਖੁ ॥ ਲੋਹੁ ਲਬੁ ਨਿਕਥਾ ਵੇਖੁ ॥ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਹਕਿ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ
ਦਰਿ ਦੀਦਾਰਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Make Truth the knife and Truth its steel. Its cutting is of unparalleled glory. Let it be sharpened on the whetstone of the Word and kept protected in the sheath of virtue. Then if the Sheikh surrenders his head to this knife, all his blood of greed floweth out. His life is fulfilled and he is yoked to God, and he mergeth in God’s vision at His Gate’.

Guru Nanak in Var Ramkali

Another hymn was recited to emphasise the need to avoid evil influences as a first step in acquiring the Knife of Truth.

“ਰੂਪੈ ਕਾਮੇ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੁਖੈ ਸਾਦੇ ਗੰਢੁ ॥ ਲਬੈ ਮਾਲੈ ਘੁਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਮਿਚਲਿ
ਉਘੈ ਸਉੜਿ ਪਲੰਘੁ ॥ ਭਉਕੈ ਕੋਪੁ ਖੁਆਰ ਹੋਇ ਫਕੜੁ ਪਿਟੈ ਅੰਧੁ ॥ ਚੁਪੈ
ਚੰਗਾ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਮੁਹਿ ਗੰਧੁ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Lust loveth beauty as spontaneously as hunger is linked with taste, the greedy mergeth in wealth as naturally as a man feeling sleepy sleepeth even on a narrow bed, the wrath barketh

and wasteth away and blindly indulgeth in abusive strife. It is good to avoid them all. Except for God's Name, all that man uttereth is dirt'.

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

And finally the Sheikh asked,

“If God is indivisibly One, what place do you assign to the Prophet? Who will unite with God, except the Prophet? The Guru read out and explained his first and third shaloks in the beginning of Var Asa.

“ਬਲਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦਵਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ
ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨਾ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨ ਚੇਤਨੀ ਮਨਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੁਚੇਤ ॥
ਛੁਟੈ ਤਿਲ ਬੁਆੜ ਜਿਉਂ ਸੁੰਝੇ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਖੇਤ ॥ ਖੇਤੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਛੁਟਿਆਂ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ
ਸਉ ਨਾਹ ॥ ਫਲੀਅਹਿ ਫਲੀਅਹਿ ਬਪੁੜੇ ਭੀ ਤਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੁਆਹ ॥”

‘I am a sacrifice to my Guru, a myriad times a day, who hath made angels of men and without any delay. Nanak, they who dwell not on the Guru and consider themselves wise, are like the spurious sesame, deserted in the farm with a hundred masters to own them. Though they the poor things, seem to flourish all right, yet within their bodies there is nothing but ashes’.

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

On this subject we have already explained the Guru's views in the Introduction and therefore we have not dilated upon it beyond giving the two shaloks which the Guru had recited to the Sheikh.

CHAPTER XXV

The Guru with the leper

“ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆਂ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“Nanak is ever with the lowliest. He has nothing in common with the highly placed.”,

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag

After Pakpattan, the Guru visited Dipalpur, Kanganpur and other places and then reached a village where he halted for the night. He heard the cries of a leper whom, he discovered, every body had abandoned for fear of catching the disease. But for the Guru all humanity was one. The poor, the down-trodden, the sick, the wounded and the outcasts, however, attracted his special attention because they were forsaken by others. God resided more conspicuously in the humble and therefore to serve them was the surest way to please Him. He had once dramatised his affinity for the lowliest at a dealer's shop in Sialkot, in the manner of a poet that he was, by picking up the smaller weights and blessing them. He explained that small weights served the poor and the humble mostly and were therefore holy. Yet all men, high or low, were to be considered equal because they were men. Whoever made a distinction between one

man and another on any basis whatever, ran against the spirit of humanity and violated God's law of love. With that kind of mind that he had, the Guru could not help knocking at the leper's door. The leper was both pleased and surprised to see by his side a man who tended him, gave him his sympathy, love and blessings and, above all, bestowed on him the gift of the Name. The Guru explained to him, as he had done earlier to the physician the way to cure all ailments, both physical and mental. Mardana was told to sing the following hymn in Dhanasari :

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਜੀਉ ਤਪਤੁ ਹੈ ਬਾਰੋ ਬਾਰ । ਤਪਿ ਤਪਿ ਖਪੈ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬੇਕਾਰ ॥
 ਜੈ ਤਨਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਜਾਇ । ਜਿਉ ਪਕਾ ਰੋਗੀ ਬਿਲਲਾਇ ॥
 ਬਹੁਤਾ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਝਖਣੁ ਹੋਇ । ਵਿਣੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਜਾਣੈ ਸਭੁ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਜਿਨਿ ਕੰਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਅਖੀ ਨਾਕੁ । ਜਿਨਿ ਜਿਹਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਤਾਤੁ ॥
 ਜਿਨਿ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਖਿਆ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਇ । ਵਾਜੇ ਪਵਣੁ ਆਖੇ ਸਭ ਜਾਇ ॥
 ਜੇਤਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਪਰੀਤਿ ਸੁਆਦ । ਸਭਾ ਕਾਲਖ ਦਾਗਾ ਦਾਗ ॥
 ਦਾਗ ਦੋਸ ਮੁਹਿ ਚਲਿਆ ਲਾਇ । ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾਇ ॥
 ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਆਖਣੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ । ਜਿਤੁ ਲਗਿ ਤਰਣਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਉ ॥
 ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭੂਬੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਾਰ । ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਰਬ ਦਾਤਾਰ ॥”

‘My soul is burning in continuous anguish. It is over-powered by sin that leadeth it to intense suffering. He who forgetteth the Word waileth like one gripped by chronic malady. Why prattle much, it is all vain, for the Lord knoweth all without being told. He who gave us eyes, ears and nose, and then tongue, too, which speaks so well, and who preserved our consciousness in the fire of the mother's womb, and made the breath move and speak every where

(Let us think of Him). All attachments and love of tasty things are black that blacken our whole being. He who goeth with the brand of sin on him geteth not refuge in the Lord's Court. Through Thy Grace, O Lord, we utter Thy Name. This is the way how we can be emancipated and in no other way. Whoever is drowned can be saved thus, for the True Lord is Beneficent to all.'

Guru Nanak in Dhanasari.

The leper now knew that all sufferings were the result of forgetting God.

“ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਤੇ ਭੁਲਿਆ ਵਿਅਪਨਿ ਸਭੇ ਰੋਗ ॥”

ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

'All ills proceed from forgetting God.'

Guru Arjan in Manjh.

And all cures also lie in coming back to Him.

“ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

'The Name is the cure of all ailments.'

Guru Nanak in Sukhmani.

The healing power of the Name is limitless and the awakened soul finds a cure for every ailment if that power is adequately released. It is by releasing that power that the Guru saved people. It is said about him that he burnt the poor man's hut with all its petty belongings and built palaces there. Yes, he burnt people's poverty in the spiritual sense and made them spiritually rich. He gave them

spiritual health and spiritual wealth through the power of the Name. For a further emphasis on the Name, the following hymn was sung :

ਗੁਰੂੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਛੰਤ

“ਸੁਣਿ ਨਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਜੀਉ ਏਕਲੜੀ ਬਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥ ਕਿਉਂ ਧੀਰੈਗੀ ਨਾਹ ਬਿਨਾ
ਪ੍ਰਭ ਵੇਪਰਵਾਰੇ । ਧਨ ਨਾਹ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਰਹਿ ਨ ਸਾਕੈ ਬਿਖਮ ਰੈਣਿ ਘਣੇਰੀਆ ।
ਨਹ ਨੀਦ ਆਵੈ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੁਣਿ ਬੇਨੰਤੀ ਮੇਰੀਆ । ਬਾਝਹੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਕੋਇ ਨ
ਸਾਰੇ ਏਕਲੜੀ ਕੁਰਲਾਏ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਮਿਲਾਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਦੁਖੁ
ਪਾਏ ।”

“Hear Thou, O Lord, the prayer of Thy lone one in wilderness. O, Thou care-free Lord, how shall she be comforted without Thee? She cannot live without Thee, the night is so utterly dark. In Thy Love I get no sleep, hear Thou then my prayer. Without Thee, O Beloved, there is none to take care of me and I wail all alone. The bride meeteth Him when it is His Will but without her Lord she remaineth in anguish.”

Guru Nanak in Gauri.

CHAPTER XXVI

Babar's invasion

“ਜਿਸਨੋ ਆਪਿ ਖੁਆਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਖੁਸਿ ਲਏ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“When He Willeth to destroy one He destroyeth one's virtues first.”

Guru Nanak in Asa.

Babar had invaded India and his military hordes were busy, quite uncontrolled, carrying fire and sword through out the land. The heart rending scenes of murder, arson, loot and rape intensified on an unprecedented scale had created terror everywhere. The people so were completely frightened and demoralised that they could not offer any effective resistance. The Lodhi rule had already cracked and there was none to provide leadership in that frightful hour. The Guru had himself witnessed at Saidpur (Eminabad) the massacre and the terrible sufferings through which people had passed. He described Babar as an evil genius bringing about havoc with his satanic hordes.

“ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਝ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ॥”

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'Babar came from Kabul with sin as his wedding party.'

Guru Nanak in Tilang.

Eminabad was razed to the ground. The Guru's compassionate heart was touched to the very depths and it shed tears of blood not merely at the atrocities involved but more at the wretchedness of his own countrymen who instead of meeting the challenge of Babar like brave and self respecting men lay prostrate before him. He was himself an eye witness of the holocaust and the orgy of dreadful carnage and related the pathetic scenes of political tyranny and mass demoralisation in two hymns in Rag Asa which have an unquestioned authentic historical value and give a lurid picture of an unfortunate period of Indian History. These two hymns we propose to give later in the same chapter. Women and children were rolling in dust. The ladies' hair that were adorned in plaits and filled in their partings with vermillion, the symbol of wedded life, were now sheared with scissors, and dust had darkened their necks. Married women carried in palanquines, wearing ivory bangles with perfumes sprinkled over them and fanned with showy fans and looking so beautiful by the side of their spouses had now iron chains round their necks in place of their necklaces of jewels now broken into pieces. They were in the hands of the Mughals who had ordered to disgrace them and carry them off.

In this connection he also gives a graphic detail of how people were sunk to the depth of degradation before Babar came and then points out that it was this degradation which was the cause of

their ultimate ruin. A life of luxury and ease had made India lose its vitality, character and soul. Riches and beauty that had lured them away into enjoyments of life's pleasure had now proved to be their enemies. Both the Pathan rulers and the ruled people had lost their anchors and revelled in luxurious living leading to impotence and helplessness. The Guru had, earlier too, grieved over this sorry state of affairs.

“ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੂੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥ ਕਾਜੀਆਂ
ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਗਲ ਬਕੀ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜੇ ਸ਼ੈਤਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਵੋ ॥”

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Righteousness and modesty have fled and falsehood hath prevailed. The influence of Qazis and Brahmans hath waned and the devil himself playeth the priest in the performance of marriages.’

Guru Nanak in Tilang

He had predicted to his friend, Lalo, the Carpenter of Eminabad, that the nation was destined to die. He had said,

“ਕਾਇਆ ਕਪੜੁ ਟੁਕੁ ਟੁਕੁ ਹੋਸੀ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਸਮਾਲਸੀ ਬੋਲਾ”

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘The bodies of Indians will be cut like cloth. India will realise the truth of what I say.’

Guru Nanak in Tilang

Just as a wise physician could predict from the unhealthy conditions in which a man lived that he would fall ill or might even die if those conditions were allowed to persist, likewise the Guru saw clearly what was inevitably coming.

“ ਅਗੋਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਚੇਤੀਐ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਇਤ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘If one fore-thinketh of God, why must he be the punished.’

“ ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਕੀਏ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ਤਾਂ ਤਨਿ ਉਠਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਰੋਗ ”

ਭੈਰਉ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Man forsaketh God and indulgeth in sensual pleasures and thus inviteth suffering.’

Guru Nanak in Bhairon

“ਜਿਨ ਕੀ ਚੀਰੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਟੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਭਾਈ ॥”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Those who had lost their claim at the Lord’s Court had to die.’

Guru Nanak in Asa

“ ਜਿਸਨੇ ਆਪਿ ਖੁਆਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਖੁਸਿ ਲਏ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ ।”

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“When He Willeth to destroy one, He destroyeth one’s virtues first,”

Guru Nanak in Asa

So he says God is just and His actions are just.

“ਸਚਾ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇਗੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥”

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘The Master is true, His justice is true, so true too must be His Command.’

Guru Nanak in Tilang

Mardana had thought that the rulers were depraved and people suffered for no fault of their own. He asked his Master why God had caused all people to suffer for the sins of the Pathan rulers. Then as he slept under a tree a drop of honey fell from above on his chest and one of the ants coming on for the honey bit him. When he waved his hand mechanically to push off the ant, he killed it as also so many other ants. This provided the Guru an opportunity to explain to Mardana that although only one ant had bitten him yet all were there for the honey and were thus equally guilty of the bite. In the same way the people who tolerated evil and offered no resistance to it deserved to be punished along with those actively engaged in evil ways. It is sin in one form that, in God's Scheme, sometimes, serves to destroy the sin in another form. God's so-called wrath thus becomes holy in this sense. True, His wrath had fallen on India, but behind this Wrath lay His Mercy. Suffering is one of the ways by which He improves the world.

Yet the Guru's mind revolted at what he saw. He found himself helpless. The people were not ready for any action. They had yet to be hardened through education and indoctrination. The seed of revolution had yet to be planted into their hearts. There was no army at his back which he could utilise for the defence against the sort of wanton bloodshed and rape he saw before him. Yet he could not help complaining to God and in a way invoking his blessings to fight out the evil when the right time for resistance came. Here is a hymn in Rag Asa through which he expressed the deep anguish of his mind over what he saw. The lines to be particularly noted in this hymn are,

'O Creator, dost thou not feel pain when so intense is our suffering? Thou belongest to all. If a powerful party attacketh another powerful party I may then grieve not. But if a wild lion falleth on a flock of sheep the master must answer.' Here is the whole of the hymn:

ਆਸਾ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥ ਆਪੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ ॥ ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨਾਂ ਆਇਆ ॥ ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਸਕਤਾ ਸ਼ੀਹ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ ॥ ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ । ਆਪੈ ਜੋੜਿ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਆਪੈ ਵੇਖੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ । ਜੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ਧਰਾਏ ਵਡਾ ਸਾਦ ਕਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਣੇ । ਖਸਮੈ ਨਦਰੀ ਕੀੜਾ ਆਵੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਚੁਗੈ ਦਾਣੇ । ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥”

'O Lord, Thou hast owned Khurasan and hast terrified Hindustan (India). Thou takest not the blame on Thyself and sendest the myrmidon of Death, disguised as Mughal. Intense is our suffering, O Lord, but, feelest Thou no compassion? O Creator, Thou belongest to all. If a powerful party attacketh another powerful party I may then have no protest to make. But if a terrible lion falleth on a defenceless herd then the Master of the herd must answer. The Jewel (of my country) has been laid waste by curs and so many of our people have died that there can be no counting. Thou Thyself separatest and Thou Thyself unitest, O Lord, it is all Thy Glory. If a person calleth himself great and indulgeth in pleasures, to his heart's fill, he is, in the eyes of the Master, a petty worm that goes about picking grains. But, Nanak,

he who liveth by dying to self and uttereth God's Name, is the man who achieveth something."

Guru Nanak in Asa.

The Guru was fully aware of his countrymen's failings and he has referred to those failings briefly even in the above hymn as being the real cause of their sufferings. Uncontrolled indulgence must lead to pain. That was God's law of justice. Yet he must feel for them and suffer along with them. He and Mardana became captives and had to work on the grinding mills for the victorious army and carry loads on their heads. The Guru worked on the mill so well that it seemed to work by itself. There was utter despondency and frustration all around him but while others cursed their fate, the Guru's mind was at peace and was fixed on God. His hands surely worked on the mill and worked very well yet he appeared to be engaged in God's service. He was in Babar's custody but God had willed it so and therefore he must accept that Will. He did not feel the weight of the load on his head as if it were not there or was being carried in the air, as it were. True, his people were defeated and crushed. It pained him. But he wanted them to realise that if they had lost their possessions they should, at least, keep their spirits high. If they were physically weak and helpless, they could still maintain their inner peace. If God had willed it that they should suffer for their own weaknesses, they should accept that Will in a spirit of surrender and quiet resignation. He was himself absolutely unshaken and so was Mardana who took his cue from his Master and played unperturbed and in perfect peace over his rebeck the following hymn in Maru:

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਮੁਲ ਖਰੀਦੀ ਲਾਲਾ ਗੋਲਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ ਸੁਭਾਗਾ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਚਨੀ ਹਾਟਿ
 ਬਿਕਾਨਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਲਾਇਆ ਤਿਤੁ ਲਾਗਾ । ਤੇਰੇ ਲਾਲੇ ਕਿਆ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ।
 ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਰਣਾ ਜਾਈ । ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਮਾਂ ਲਾਲੀ ਪਿਉ ਲਾਲਾ ਮੇਰਾ
 ਹਉ ਲਾਲੇ ਕਾ ਜਾਇਆ ॥ ਲਾਲੀ ਨਾਚੈ ਲਾਲਾ ਗਾਵੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰਤੇ ਤੇਰੀ
 ਰਾਇਆ । ਪੀਅਹਿ ਤ ਪਾਣੀ ਆਣੀ ਮੀਰਾ ਖਾਹਿ ਤ ਪੀਸਣ ਜਾਉ ॥ ਪਖਾ
 ਫੇਰੀ ਪੈਰ ਮਲੋਵਾ ਜਪਤ ਰਹਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ । ਲੂਣ ਹਰਾਮੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਲਾ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਹਿ
 ਤੁਧੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਦਇਆ ਪਤਿ ਦਾਤਾ ਤੁਧੁ ਵਿਣੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ
 ਪਾਈ ॥”

“O Lord, I am a bought-slave of Thine and my name is ‘the Fortunate one’. I was sold at the Guru’s shop and at his bidding and now I go the way Thou biddest. How can Thy slave be clever when he cannot carry out even Thy Command so well ? My mother is Thy slave, my father is Thy slave; in fact, I am an offspring of Thy slaves. The mother danceth and the father singeth to Thy Tune and so do I worship Thee, O King. When Thou art thirsty I bring water for Thee, and when hungry I grind corn for Thee ; I wave fan to Thee, rub Thy Feet and ever keep contemplating on Thy Name. O Lord, Nanak, Thy Slave, is ungrateful. If Thou still forgivest, it is Thy Glory. Thou art the Lord of Mercy since the beginning and since ages began and without Thee no one can be emancipated”.

Guru Nanak in Maru

The hymn describes the Guru’s condition of mind at the time. He calls himself a bought-slave of His Master. As such he must carry out His biddings what-ever they be. Mardana was entrusted with a horse that followed him as he

went his way singing the above hymn. The contagion spread among other prisoners and they too forgot their misfortunes through the inspiration provided by the Heavenly song. The optimistic outlook and the buoyant hopefulness displayed by the Guru served to keep their morale high. For the first time they had learnt to find joy even in suffering because they had realised that they had themselves invited it. Even a cruel man like Babar was touched. He realised that the Guru was truly a man of God, who was able to work that miracle in the minds of the people. He became friendly towards him and told him to ask for a gift. The Guru who had already called Babar a 'Jabar' i. e. a tyrant, could not accept a present from a tyrant and so replied, in the words of the biographer, thus:

“ਕਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣ ਬਾਬਰ ਮੀਰ ॥ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਮਾਂਗੇ ਸੋ ਅਹਿਮਕ ਫਕੀਰ ।”

'Nanak said, 'Hear, O Babar, one must be a foolish faqir if one asked thee for a gift'.'

He, however, urged on him to set free all prisoners and, in deference to his wishes, all the prison gates were thrown open. Babar was so pleased with the Guru that he offered him a cup of Bhang (hemp) as a token of his regard for him. The Guru replied that he had his own cup, though of a different kind, and that was already full. It was the Bhang of God's love and it could be prepared by every body in the following way:

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਭਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਭਾਂਗ ਖਲੜੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ ਮੈਂ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਅਤੀਤੁ ॥

ਕਰ ਕਾਸਾ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀ ਭੁਖ ॥ ਮੈਂ ਦਰ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਨੀਤਾ ਨੀਤ ॥

ਤਉ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀ ਕਰਉ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਮੈਂ ਦਰਿ ਮਾਂਗਤੁ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਕੇਸਰ ਕੁਸਮ ਮਿਰਗ ਮੈ ਹਰਣਾ ਸਰਬ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਚੜਨਾ ॥
 ਚੰਦਨ ਭਗਤਾ ਜੋਤਿ ਇਨੇਹੀ ਸਰਬੇ ਪਰਮਲ ਕਰਣਾ ॥
 ਘਿਅ ਪਟ ਭਾਂਡਾ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਐਸਾ ਭਗਤੁ ਵਰਨ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ॥
 ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਮਿ ਨਿਵੇ ਰਹੈ ਲਿਵਲਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਦਰਿ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਪਾਇ ॥”

‘Thy fear, O Lord, is my hemp and my mind is the purse which holds it. I am thus intoxicated with Thy love and have become detached. My hands are the begging bowl and I crave for Thy vision. I beg at Thy door ever and for ever more. I practise the way that illumineth me with Thy vision and I beg at Thy door for nothing else. Bless me Thou with Thy Grace. The saffron, the flowers, the musk and gold embellish the bodies of all, and as with the scented ‘chandan’, so with the saints, the merit is that they make fragrant all who come unto them. Doth anyone ever consider butter or silk condemned by touch? So dost thou take Thy devotee, O Lord of whatever caste he be, as pure. Those who surrender themselves to Thy Name and are attuned to Thee, Nanak begs at their door (for the Glory of Thy Name)’.

Guru Nanak in Tilang

Here we give the two hymns in Rag Asa, referred to earlier. They describe, in the Guru’s own language, the invasion of Babar, the consequent massacre as personally witnessed by the Guru in Eminabad (Saidpur) and the acute anguish caused to him over people’s helplessness. One can see from this how wrong it is to suppose, as some ignorant people do, that the Guru devoted himself entirely to religious matters and had no political aims. To say that is to reveal a bankruptcy of a true understanding of his

philosophy of life which, as can be easily seen, had secularised religion itself. Performance of secular duties was the necessary part of his religion and politics was no exception. We shall see later that he administered a severe rebuke to the Sidhas for cowardly running away from the battle of life. He was uncompromisingly opposed to a philosophy that a man of God had nothing to do with the affairs of the world or with the politics of the country. On the contrary, he believed that only the truly religious minded people had the power to change the established order built on wrong values. But their practice of politics is based on high principles of religion. Only seers and saints can be adequately sensitive to the sufferings of society which they consider as their own. The Guru wanted to solve all social, economic, religious and political problems that faced man but he did it through bringing about inner revolution that was so necessary in every walk of life. Political freedom may be very important in its own way but it is only one element of freedom. The world recognises three other freedoms--freedom from want, hunger and disease. But all these four freedoms are not enough if human happiness is the goal. Has not modern man conquered the air, the sea and the land and obliterated distances ? Has he not dazzling achievements to his credit, that provide him all physical comforts ? Yet peace and happiness have eluded him. In spite of political, social & economic freedoms he is not happy. And freedom may mean different and incompatible things for different people. With some it may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and with the product of his labours, while with others the same word may imply for each to do as he pleases

with other men and with the product of other men's labour. The concept of freedom has therefore to be properly, defined widened and made multi-dimensional. Freedom is not merely material, restricted to socio-political or socio-economic spheres, but it is essentially spiritual. Real freedom, comes through freedom from the bondage of self, entailing self abnegation. It is always the sick and the unclean soul that is responsible for the backwardness of man in all walks of life. Therefore, all maladjustments and contradictions must be set right through the inner change. That was the programme the Guru had set before himself. Unless the entire man was changed, no social order could work whether based on socialism, communism or any other ism. His thesis was that the betterment of society must proceed from the soul. That is the reason that we do not find in the Guru's teachings any special emphasis on politics as such. But it was he who had sown the seed of political awakening and had made it possible for his successors to rescue the country from political bondage. Every movement, social, economic or political must have a spiritual content. Material progress, however necessary, cannot provide food for the spirit, or ideals to live and die for. There must be a sound philosophic basis that could elevate above the routine of everyday existence. Without such a basis all programmes of life founder and therefore the Guru proceeded to strengthen that basis :

Here are the two hymns:

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆਂ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ ॥ ਸੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ
ਮੁਨੀਅਨਿ ਗਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਵੈ ਧੜਿ ॥ ਮਹਲਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹੋਦੀਆਂ ਹੁਣਿ ਬਹੁਣਿ ਨ

ਮਿਲਨਿ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਆਦੇਸੁ ਬਾਬਾ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨਾ ਪਾਇਆ
ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਵੇਸ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਜਦਹੁ ਸੀਆ ਵੀਆਹੀਆਂ ਲਾੜੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ
ਪਾਸਿ ॥ ਹੀਡੋਲੀ ਚੜਿ ਆਈਆਂ ਦੰਦ ਖੰਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ ॥ ਉਪਰਹੁ ਪਾਣੀ
ਵਾਰੀਐ ਝਲੇ ਝਿਮਕਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਬਹਿਠੀਆਂ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ
ਖੜੀਆਂ ॥ ਗਰੀ ਛੁਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਮਾਣਨਿ ਸੇਜੜੀਆਂ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਸਿਲਕਾਂ
ਪਾਈਆਂ ਤੁਟਨਿ ਮੋਤਸਰੀਆ ॥ ਧਨੁ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਦੁਇ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਨੀ ਰਖੇ ਰੰਗੁ
ਲਾਇ ॥ ਦੂਤਾਂ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਚਲੇ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇ
ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇਹਿ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਅਗੋ ਦੇ ਜੇ ਚੇਤੀਐ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਇਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ
ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਾਹਾ ਸਰਤਿ ਗਵਾਈਆ ਰੰਗਿ ਤਮਾਸੈ ਚਾਇ ॥ ਬਾਬਰਵਾਣੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਈ
ਕੁਇਰੁ ਨ ਰੋਟੀ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਇਕਨਾ ਵਖਤ ਖੁਆਈਅਹਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਚਉਕੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀਆਂ ਕਿਉ ਟਿਕੇ ਕਢਹਿ ਨਾਇ ॥ ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਚੇਤਿਓ
ਹੁਣਿ ਕਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਘਰਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਇਕਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ
ਪੁਛਹਿ ਸੁਖ ॥ ਇਕਨਾ ਏਹੋ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਬਹਿ ਬਹਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਦੁਖ ॥ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ
ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਨੁਖ ॥”

“The ladies’ hair that were adorned in plaits and filled in their parting with vermillion are now sheared with the scissors, and the dust suffocates their throats. They who revelled in their palaces now know not where to sit. Hail Thee, O Lord. Inscrutable are Thy Ways. O Primal Lord, I know not Thy End, for Thou changest the scene of Thy Play many times. When the maidens were married, they looked beautiful by the side of their spouses. They were carried in palanquins and the ivory bangles dangled round their arms and, perfumes were sprinkled over them and they were fanned with glamorous fans. A hundred thousand rupees were offered to them as presents on being seated into the new home and also the same amount when they stood up and they chewed nuts and dates and enjoyed the bridal couch. But today there are the chains round their necks and the necklaces of jewels are broken into pieces.

Both riches and beauty have proved to be their enemies which had lured them away to enjoy life's pleasures. Now the myrmidons of the Mughals have been told to disgrace them and carry them off. If the Lord Willeth He blesseth with Glory and if He Willeth the other way, He punisheth. If one fore-thinketh of God why should he be punished in this way. The rulers had lost their heads and revelled in revelries. But now the writ of Babar prevaieth and even the princes do not get bread to eat. The Muslims have lost their prayer time and Hindus of worship. How can the Hindu ladies now draw their cooking squares and annoint their forehead with the saffron mark ? They who remembered not Rama are now not accepted even if they shouted Allah. Some of them who had fled come back home and others ask about the dear ones they had left behind. In the lot of some it is so writ that they will weep in anguish their whole lives (for having lost their dear ones). Nanak, that what the Lord Willeth hath come to pass, what could a man do by himself ?"

Guru Nanak in Asa

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਖੇਲ ਤਬੇਲਾ ਘੋੜੇ ਕਹਾ ਭੇਰੀ ਸਹਨਾਈ ॥ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਤੇਗਬੰਦ ਗਾਡੇਰੜਿ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਲਾਲ ਕਵਾਈ ॥ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਆਰਸੀਆ ਮੁਹ ਬੰਕੇ ਐਥੈ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਤੂੰ ਗੋਸਾਈ ॥ ਏਕ ਘੜੀ ਮਹਿ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪੈ ਜਟੁ ਵੰਡਿ ਦੇਵੈ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਘਰ ਦਰ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਹਲਾਂ ਕਹਾਂ ਸੁ ਬੰਕ ਸਰਾਈ ॥ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਵੇਖਿ ਨੀਂਦ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਕਹਾਂ ਸੁ ਪਾਨ ਤੰਬੋਲੀ ਹਰਮਾ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਛਾਈ ਮਾਈ ॥ ਇਸੁ ਜਰ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਘਣੀ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ ਇਨਿ ਜਰ ਘਣੀ ਖੁਆਈ ॥ ਪਾਪਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਜਿਸਨੋ ਆਪਿ ਖੁਆਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਖੁਸਿ ਲਏ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ ॥ ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂੰ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾਂ ਮੀਰ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥ ਥਾਨ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਜਲੇ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ

ਕੁਇਰ ਰੁਲਾਇਆ । ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਨ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੇ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਮੁਗਲ
ਪਠਾਣਾ ਭਈ ਲੜਾਈ ਰਣ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਗ ਵਗਾਈ ॥ ਉਨੀ ਤੁਪਕ ਤਾਣਿ ਚਲਾਈ
ਉਨੀ ਹਸਤਿ ਚਿੜਾਈ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀ ਚੀਰੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਟੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਭਾਈ ॥
ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਰਕਾਣੀ ਭਟਿਆਣੀ ਠਕੁਰਾਣੀ ॥ ਇਕਨਾ ਪੇਰਣ ਸਿਰ
ਖੁਰ ਪਾਟੇ ਇਕਨਾ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਸਾਣੀ ॥ ਜਿਨਕੇ ਬੰਕੇ ਘਰੀ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ
ਰੈਣਿ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਿਸ ਨੋ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਈਐ ॥ ਦੁਖੁ
ਸੁਖੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਕਿਸ ਬੈ ਜਾਇ ਰੂਆਈਐ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਚਲਾਏ ਵਿਗਸੈ
ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਪਾਈਐ ॥"

'Where are now the stables where horses played? Where are the drums and where the flutes? Where are the sword belts, where the chariots and where the red liveries of the soldiers? Where are the looking glasses and the enchanting faces, I see them not before me. O Lord, this World is Thine and Thou art its Master. Thou buildest and destroyest in the twinkling of an eye, and through lure of wealth separateth brother from brother. Where are the homes, the mansions and where the stately inns? Where are the charming damsels on the beds of roses seeing whom one would get no sleep? Where are the betel leaves, the sellers thereof, and where the Harems? They have all vanished like the shadow. Many have been consumed by the love of riches which has brought about their ruin. Without sin wealth accumulath not and it parteth company on death. When the Lord willeth to destroy one He destroyeth one's virtue first. Hearing of Babar's invasion, countless 'pirs' endeavoured to stop his advance through incantations. But Babar burnt mansions, palaces and well built temples and the princes, cut into pieces, were thrown to the winds. Yet no Moghul was blinded by the power of incantations. No charm or magic saved men from the disaster. The Mughals and the

Pathans grappled with each other and the swords clanged in the battlefield. And while the Mughals fired with their guns, the Pathans put forward their elephants. But they who had forfeited their claim at the Lord's Court had to die. Some of the Hindu, the Muslim, the Bhatti and the Thakur women veiled from head to foot got these torn off and others found their rest in the crematorium. And those whose beloved ones returned not to their homes how could they pass the night in peace? The Lord himself is the Doer and the Cause. So who is it that one may go to ask? For, all joy and sorrow come from the Lord. Who other then can one go to complain? The Lord of His Will yoketh all to His Will and is thus pleased. We gather what is writ in our lot''.

Guru Nanak in Asa

After Babar had left, people who had deserted Eminabad returned to their homes and found complete devastation of hearths and homes. There was immeasurable loss of life, honour and property and people were crying and wailing for their kith and kin who were either killed or were missing. The Eminabad massacre had no parallel and therefore could not but cause widespread suffering and terror. That was again the time to pull up people and to make them rise above themselves. The Guru read out the following hymn pointing out the transitoriness of life and the futility of giving life any exaggerated importance. All must die sooner or later and so it was wrong to cry over the inevitable.

ਆਸਾ ਕਾਫੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਜੈਸੇ ਗੋਇਲੁ ਗੋਇਲੀ ਤੈਸੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਆਦਮੀ ਬਾਂਧਹਿ

ਘਰ ਬਾਰਾ ॥ ਜਾਗਹੁ ਜਾਗਹੁ ਸੁਤਿਹੋ ਚਲਿਆ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਨੀਤ ਨੀਤ
ਘਰ ਬਾਂਧੀਅਹਿ ਜੇ ਰਹਣਾ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਵੈ ਜੀਉ ਚਲਸੀ ਜੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਈ ॥
ਓਹੀ ਓਹੀ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਸੀ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਰੋਵਹੁ ਗੇ ਓਸਨੋ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਕਉਣ
ਰੋਈ ॥ ਧੰਧਾ ਪਿਟਿਹੁ ਭਾਈਹੋ ਤੁਮੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਮਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਉਹ ਨ ਸੁਣਈ ਕਤਹੀ ਤੁਮ
ਲੋਕ ਸੁਣਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਸੁਤਾ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਾਗਾਏ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਜੇ ਘਰੁ ਬੁਝੈ ਆਪਣਾ
ਤਾਂ ਨੀਦ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਜੇ ਚਲਦਾ ਲੈ ਚਲਿਆ ਕਿਛੁ ਸੰਪੈ ਨਾਲੇ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਧਨੁ
ਸੰਚਹੁ ਦੇਖਿਕੈ ਬੁਝਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥ ਵਣਜੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਮਖਸੂਦੁ ਲੈਹੁ ਮਤ ਪਛੋਤਾਵਹੁ ॥
ਅਵਗੁਣ ਛੋਡਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਕਰਹੁ ਐਸੇ ਤਤ ਪਰਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਧਰਮੁ ਭੂਮਿ ਸਤੁ ਬੀਜੁ ਕਰਿ
ਐਸੀ ਕਿਰਸ ਕਮਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਵਾਪਾਰੀ ਜਾਣੀਅਹੁ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈ ਜਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਕਰਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਬੁਝੈ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਸੁਣੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਾਮੇ ਬਿਉਹਾਰਾ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਲਾਹਾ ਤੋਟਾ ਤਿਵੈ ਵਾਟ ਚਲਦੀ ਆਈ ॥ ਜੋ ਤਿਸ ਭਾਵੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਈ
ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥”

“Men in the world are like the shepherd in a pasture-halt (Their stay is short). They build up hearths and homes by committing false deeds. Ye slumbering people, wake up and see that the roving pedlar is departing. If we were to abide for ever we might build permanent houses. But let it be known that the soul would escape when the body fell. Why do ye wail crying for the dead when He alone remaineth for ever? And, while ye wail for the dead, who will wail for ye? Thou art engrossed in vain strife and committest falsehood, for the dead hear not thy wailing. Only the living world hears. He, Who putteth to sleep, also awakeneth. If one knoweth one's real home, then one sleepeth not. If the departed one hath ever taken something along, then ye also may gather some goods. So gather true riches after careful scrutiny. Trade ye for something profitable lest ye grieve. Abandon demerits, achieve merits and thus realise the essence. Practise farming by making righteousness the farm and truth the seed. Ye are

true traders only if ye reap profit. If one is visited by His Grace one meets the Perfect Guru from whom True wisdom is revealed. Then one utters the Name, hears the Name and deals only in the Name. And then worldly profit and the worldly loss become one. That is the true Way since the creation. So in the acceptance of the Will of God lies the Glory''.

Guru Nanak is Asa.

CHAPTER XXVII

What is True and what is Untrue

“ਤੁਧੁ ਬਾਝੁ ਕੂੜੋ ਕੂੜੁ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Without Thee, O Lord, all is untrue.’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

There lived in Sialkot, a Muslim Sufi faqir, Hamza Gaus. He was believed to have acquired occult powers through the practice of severe penances and religious austerities. He was popularly known as the Pir of Sialkot. It was supposed that he could, by the power of charms and spells, avert impending disasters, bless barren women with children, exorcise evil spirits and do hundred other things to fulfil people's desires. He had struck a bargain with a local Khatri that he would work his powers to bless him with sons and in return would get from him the first born child. The Khatri came to have three sons in succession but it was a difficult thing for him to part with any of them. Yet he was afraid of the faqir who, he thought, would destroy everything he had. He offered him huge sums of money but the Pir would have nothing but the first born son. This had led to a bitter estrangement between the two and, in consequence, the Pir had declared that he

would destroy the whole town of Sialkot for the offense of one of its inhabitants. He had shut himself in a dome, started his penances of forty days' duration with the declared intention of inviting God's wrath on the town and had proclaimed that on the expiry of forty days the whole population would be reduced to ashes. The people were terribly frightened and had gone to him in a deputation and begged forgiveness, but he continued to remain unyielding. The Guru accompanied by Mardana was then on the suburbs of Sialkot. He heard people wailing and crying and decided to discuss the matter personally with the Pir. Mardana was sent to him a number of times with a simple request for an interview but the Pir was angry beyond measure and not at all in a mood to listen. The Guru consoled the crowd of people gathered round him and assured them that no harm was going to befall them and that the Pir was a hypocrite playing upon their fear for his own selfish purposes. He said, it was foolish to believe as they did, that this tiny man had made the Almighty God subservient to his will. The people felt somewhat relieved and reassured, although the spell of the Pir too continued to haunt them at times.

As soon as the stipulated deadline for the doom expired, there were heard loud cheers and rejoicings every where. The farce of the dome had broken. The Pir felt exposed, frustrated and humbled. He came like a broken man to meet the Guru and to explain to him how he had been grievously wronged. Mardana was by now feeling hungry and spoke to his Master to let him go for food. The Guru took a piece of paper and wrote on it 'What is true and what is untrue.' He told Mardana that the paper should be

carried to the town and shown to the people there for an answer. Whoever cared to give the right answer would serve him with food too. In the meantime he decided to stay in the open air under the shade of a 'ber' tree. He loved nature and preferred, so far as possible, to remain away from the unwholesome and artificial atmosphere of the towns. Mardana went to the town and showed the piece of paper to whomsoever he met. But people could not understand what it meant. Some of them laughed and jeered at him and made him unhappy. But the Guru's aim in sending him to the town was deeper than merely to provide food to him. He had the Pir in his mind and his reclamation. Also he had an affinity for good men and sought them in many novel ways and this was one of those ways. We know with what eagerness he always sought and met savants and saints among both Hindus and Muslims at their holy places. In fact, he admitted to the Yogis, as we shall see later, that the main purpose of adopting the pilgrim's garb was to find out holy men. They had asked him :

“ਕਿਸੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਤਜਿਓ ਉਦਾਸੀ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਇਹੁ ਭੇਖੁ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ” ॥

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧ ਸਿੱਧ ਗੋਸਟ ॥

*‘Why hast thou for-saken thy home and become a recluse?
Why hast thou donned the garb of a mendicant’ ?*

He replied,

“ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਖੋਜਤ ਭਏ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੈ ਤਾਈ ਭੇਖ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ।”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਸਿੱਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ ॥

*‘I became a recluse to seek out holymen and, to have
their vision I have donned the mendicant's garb.’*

Through that simple slip of paper he wanted to discover if there was really any seeker or a wise man in the town. Also he had to show to the Pir the way of true wisdom. Now the answers to his poser could be many. But whoever gave some suitable answer must possess a questioning mind and must have some seeking for a true and right living as against untrue and wrong living and must in consequence provide not only food to Mardana but also provide an answer to the mis-guided Pir. The best answer of course, was as the Guru had himself given in Asa-Di-Var that God was True and all else divorced from Him was untrue.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਾਝੁ ਕੂੜੋ ਕੂੜ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧ ॥

“Nanak prayeth, ‘O Lord, without Thee all is untrue’.”

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

Again,

“ਕਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਚਲਣਹਾਰੁ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧

‘Whom shall I be-friend when the whole world has to pass away’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

Again,

“ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੁ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕੁਚੁ”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧ ॥

i. e. *Those who dwell on the true one are true. But those who go the round of transmigration are absolutely untrue’*

Guru Nanak in Var Asa.

Now to come back. Mardana was hungry and therefore in spite of the rebuffs he had, he continued his quest. At last he met a petty shopkeeper called Moola who served him with food and wrote back, 'Life is untrue and Death is true'. What he meant was that every life was shortlived and was destined to break up one day. On the other hand, death being inevitable was a reality, from which no one could escape. Moola thus proved himself a seeker and an earnest minded person. Accompanied by Mardana, he came to the Guru to find out the man behind the chit and to learn from him any good lessons he might offer in respect of life and its problems. He was really keen to know what the path of right living was. The Guru forwarded the chit to the faqir and pointed out to him that there lived in the town, he was out to destroy, men like Moola who had absolutely no terror of death and therefore he could not have succeeded in cowing down the whole town. The Pir realised the error of his ways and went away, now a changed man. Moola, however, found his rest in the Guru and decided to stay on with him. He gave up his home and joined the Guru in his mission. The Guru told him that he should remain where he was and there was no need to give up the house-holder's life for attaining emancipation. But Moola insisted, so much fed up was he with the temptations life offered and wanted an escape, like so many other good intentioned people of the time. He remained with the Guru for a long time during his travels abroad. The next time the party happened to pass by Sialkot, Moola was told to go home and meet his people and he did so. His wife had not taken kindly to her husband having been turned into a faqir and had nursed a grievance against the

Guru. She succeeded in breaking mentally her husband's ties with the Guru so that when Mardana came to call him, she hid him in the house where Moola died of a snake bite. The Guru felt sorry for the man and said,

“ਨਾਲਿ ਕਰਾੜਾ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਕੂੜੈ ਕੂੜੀ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੇ ਮੂਲਿਆ
ਆਵੈ ਕੇਹੜੇ ਥਾਇ ”

ਸਲੋਕ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੀਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Friendship with fickle-minded people cannot be lasting. In untruth the foundations are falsely laid. O Moola, no one knoweth where one's end would come ’

Shalok Guru Nanak

Moola was undoubtedly a seeker, yet temptations could overpower even such good men if the foundations had not been firmly laid.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

No intercession

‘ਮੰਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਵਣਾ’

ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“The good and the bad that men do, they themselves reap the fruit thereof.”

Guru Nanak in Asa

From Sialkot, the Guru proceeded towards the South of Panjab and reached a place called Mithan Kot or Mithe Ka Kotla, where a Sufi Muslim faqir, Mian Mitha lived. He was a haughty man given to making preposterous claims about his spiritual achievements. When he heard of the Guru's arrival as also of the high esteem he was held in by the people generally and even by his own teacher, Pir Abdur Rahman, jealousy seized him. He started boasting about his own superiority and his so-called powers. He said he would give the Guru a crushing defeat in argument if he met him. Here is a sample of his boastings. He said, he would crush the juice, out of the Guru as if he were a mere lemon and reduce him to skimmed milk that had no cream left over it. Mardana heard the slanderous boastings and reported the same to the Guru who, in turn, remarked pertinently, ‘Mardana, this man seems to me an automaton

and so will play to the tune you set.' The Guru meant to say that hollow and superficial people like Mitha did not have any legs to stand upon and therefore could be easily made to play to the tune of other people. The Mian, however, was quite confident of himself and came to meet the Guru to wean people away from him. Immediately on arrival, he started thus,

“ਅਵਲਿ ਨਾਉ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਕਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਬੀ ਰਜੂਲੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ, ਕਲਮਾਂ ਜੇ ਪੜਹਿ ਤਾਂ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਵਹਿ ਕਬੂਲੁ ॥ ”

'The first is the Name of God and the second is that of the Prophet. O Nanak, if thou recitest the Kalma (the Word as taught by Islam) thou shalt be accepted in God's Court'

The Guru agreed with the first part of the statement that God was the Supreme Lord but he wanted to correct him in respect of the other part of the statement. The Prophet and for that matter, all others, however highly conceived, were subject to His Will even though they might have been the reclaimers of mankind. Also mere lip homage to the Kalma or to the Prophet would not save the Faithful from the Karma Law. What people sowed that surely they would reap. Therefore the Guru said,

“ਅਵਲਿ ਨਾਉ ਖੁਦਾਇਕਾ ਦਰਿ ਦਰਵਾਨ ਰਸੂਲੁ ॥ ਸ਼ੇਖਾ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਤਾਂ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਵਹਿ ਕਬੂਲੁ ”

'The first is the Name of God. There are many prophets at His Gate as His gate-keepers. O Sheikh, keep thy mind whole if thou desirest acceptance in His Court.'

(This is not Gurbani but the biographer's own versification of the Guru's reply).

Then, The Janam Sakhi goes on to say that the Mian was asked to close his eyes and say first 'La' and then :Allah'. The Mian was in a trance. When he uttered 'La', the creation including the Prophet disappeared and when he uttered :Allah', the creation reappeared. Another Janam Sakhi puts the same thing slightly differently, thus :— The Guru had taken Mian aside and had told him to utter the Name of Allah. When this was done, the Prophet disappeared and was ultimately reduced to a handful of dust. God alone remained. Both biographies do not explain the beautiful metaphorical sense behind the statements. The Mian was simply made to visualise that God alone could create creation and destroy it too through the power of His Own Will. There was no Prophet before He created the world and there would be nothing left when He chose to destroy it. So to talk of the Prophet as second to Him had no meaning. The whole world was His pastime and subject to His Will. When all else perished, the Imperishable alone remained. Then the Mian asked, 'Whom does God love ?' He believed that only those who owed allegiance to the Prophet were the chosen people and the rest were damned. The Guru in reply told him that all people, high or low, were equal before Him. He loved the humble at heart and not particularly those who owed allegiance to this or that religious faith. All were judged by their actions and not in terms of any allegiance. There was no such thing as human intercession to get forgiveness for sins, no special privilege for a direct and exclusive revelation, no incarnations, no direct emanation from Heaven, no special privileged position from the Creator, no rewards without undergoing a life of discipline, service, piety and love and no promise of salvation. **Love**

and service were the only means to secure a place in Heaven and these means were open to all. Also there was no need for a mediator to reach Him. He was accessible to all, high or low, rich or poor, white or black. If a man really believed in one God, as the Mian claimed to believe, he would love all alike, even those who differed with him because God resided in all. The actual fact, however seemed to be that those who owed allegiance to the Prophet believed more in the Prophet than in God otherwise they would not hurt and kill others who did not do so. That was blind fanaticism and irreligion. If God created all, no one should be hated.

In the end the Mian touched upon a very important topic that concerns every human being. He asked what the Guru later put in his own language thus,

“ ਬਿਨੁ ਤੇਲ ਦੀਵਾ ਕਿਉ ਜਲੈ । ”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i.e. “*How shall the lamp of life burn without oil ?*”

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag.

The Mian wanted to know how life could be lived in a perfectly harmonious and smooth way so that it was free from all pain and suffering. Maya (the illusion) was most powerful and solely responsible for pain and unhappiness and it had its hold on everybody. Even good men got overpowered and caught in its tentacles and lost in the wilderness. The Guru pointed out that the fear and love of God, service dedicated to Him and wisdom gathered

from sacred books would produce harmony in life resulting in peace and happiness. Thus Gyan, Bhakti and Knowledge (Divine wisdom) all three were emphasised. It was generally believed that there were three distinct paths leading to liberation. But the Guru did not take them as three exclusively alternative paths. All three must go together in harmony otherwise human personality would be lop sided and incomplete and the lamp of life would not burn smoothly. A man of knowledge should also be a man of action engaged in the service of humanity and imbued with the love of God, which is Bhakti. Also personality built on feelings alone unchecked by reason might degenerate into the sentimental, and knowledge that did not lead to action and was not fired by emotions of faith, love and devotion was not of much value. The Guru stressed all the three with equal vehemence. Thought, feeling and will are the three aspects of consciousness and they all need satisfaction for a harmonious development. All this was explained to the Mian through the hymn given below :

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਅਛਲ ਛਲਾਈ ਨਹ ਛਲੈ ਨਹ ਘਾਉ ਕਟਾਰਾ ਕਰਿ ਸਕੈ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ
ਰਾਖੈ ਤਿਉ ਰਹੈ ਇਸ ਲੋਭੀ ਕਾ ਜੀਉ ਟਲਪਲੈ ॥ ਬਿਨ ਤੇਲ ਦੀਵਾ ਕਿਉ ਜਲੈ ॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਪੋਥੀ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਭਉ ਵਟੀ ਇਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਸਚੁ
ਬੂਝਣੁ ਆਣਿ ਜਲਾਈਐ ॥ ਇਹੁ ਤੇਲੁ ਦੀਵਾ ਇਉਂ ਜਲੈ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ
ਸਾਰਿਬੁ ਤਉ ਮਿਲੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਇਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ॥ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੇਵ
ਕਮਾਣੀਆਂ ॥ ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੀਆਂ ॥ ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾਂ
ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਂਹ ਲੁਡਾਈਐ ॥”

“*Maya, the unconquerable, no one can deceive, no dagger*

can hurt her. Man liveth as the Lord Willeth. The greedy mind remaineth lost in its cravings. (Then) how shall the lamp of life burn without oil? (This oil of the lamp of life is destroyed by Maya which is most powerful and unconquerable as described in the first part). But Maya is all His Will and therefore man has to learn to live subject to that Will. Then follows the remedy for a true living in a concrete way). Let living in accord with the sacred books be the oil, let the Fear of God be the wick, to be ignited with the torch of True Wisdom. This provides the right kind of oil and thus wilt the lamp of life burn brightly and thus wilt the Lord be met. If in this way, the Word enters within and His Service becomes a passion, happiness is attained. The world cometh and goeth. But if life is dedicated to His Service, a seat in the Lord's Court is attained and then one goeth about in ever-joy."

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

CHAPTER XXIX

Shauh Sohagan

“ਵੇਸੀਂ ਸਹੁ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘The Lord cannot be found through mere outer garbs’.

Guru Amar Dass in Suhi

From Mithan Kot, the Guru proceeded to meet a faqir who, though a hypocrite, yet enjoyed respect and reputation in the whole area. The faqir called himself Shauh Sohagan which literally means ‘the Bride of the Lord’. Bioraphies do not give the name of the place where he lived. The faqir claimed that he was wedded to God, had realised Him and was in constant communion with Him. A huge fair was in progress on the day the Guru arrived. The Guru sent word to the faqir that he desired very much to see him. But he was told that the faqir was merged in God that day and could not meet anyone else. Now all this seemed hypocritical to the penetrating eye of the Guru. How could a man who had known God refuse to see a brother and a man of God of the eminence of Guru Nanak ?

His house too was enclosed all round by walls and he had taken every precaution to ensure that no body entered inside without his knowledge or consent. The mystery surrounding the faqir, the tall claims he made about his spirituality and the unnatural manner of his living had convinced the Guru that all was not well with the faqir and he had decided to expose him. He told the people gathered there that the faqir had nothing of a faqir in him and they could check up the truth of his statement by a personal inspection. A group of critically minded youngmen forced their way inside to see what was actually going on there. The so-called faqir was found secretly engaged with a number of women. The people were in rage and the faqir became the topic of ridicule everywhere. In the meantime the Guru had gone to a place where a cripple had stayed and had blessed him with the secret of the Name. When the Guru returned he found the faqir running for his life. People were disillusioned and were very much upset with him and wanted to give him a good beating for the trick he had been playing on them. He was running for safety towards the Guru whom he had earlier refused admission into his own house. The Guru sensed the danger and controlled the infuriated mob. He said there might be justification for that show of anger against a man who had made fools of everybody for so long but violence must always be eschewed. Through it, they would destroy not only the evil doer but also themselves, for they would kill that within them which made them feel superior to the faqir and which alone gave them the right to life. Charity, patience and forgiveness were the things that distinguished man from the brutes and evil doers.

When people became virtuous or wise they were generally impatient of their less fortunate brethren. They would not tolerate mistakes in others and would be most quick to condemn them. The result was that they were generally blind to their own faults and in their zeal to stamp out wrong they failed to understand the wrong doer. But an humble man would look more to his own weaknesses and therefore deal with others with sympathy, tolerance and large heartedness. One ought to hate evil but not the evil doer. The Guru believed in the healing balm of love to those who had gone wrong and could thus feel kinship with them. That is the attitude of a truly religious man. When we meet a man full of lust we should remind ourselves of the possibility of the same weakness in us. The fact is that all mental confusion springs from vanity. If we really accept the basic equality of all men and the bond of humanity in the common origin and common destiny then we cannot belittle or disparage others. The wrong doers should be morally lifted even though their wrong doings were to be resisted. It was true the faqir had become a blood sucker, in a way, but violence bred hatred and induced the very evil, which had provoked that holy wrath. When the Guru turned to the faqir and said that it was not a joke to find the Beloved through mere show of bridal arments. The faqir had worn those garments all right but the evil inside had remained unconquered. How could such powerful vices as greed, lust and cravings be got rid of by merely putting on the outer garb ? It was only when the Name entered the mind that the soul was made pure and then pain, disease and suffering were dispelled. The Guru thus saved here two kinds of people, one mentally

and the other physically disabled.

“ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਨਾਮੁ”

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘The Name is the cure of all ailments’.

Guru Arjan in Gauri

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CHAPTER XXX.

Duni Chand of Lahore

“ਬਾਬਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥”

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“O Friend, wealth keepeth not company after death”.

Guru Nanak in Sorath

Duni Chand, a man of huge fortunes, lived in Lahore. He was at one time engaged in the Shradh of his deceased father, a ceremony performed in Khatri Hindu families for the propitiation of dead ancestors. Brahmins are fed on this occasion, on sumptuous dainties and it is supposed that the food thus served reaches the ancestors. It was on this occasion that the Guru reached Lahore on his return from his tour of the South of Panjab. He saw hundreds of flags flying over Duni chand's house, each flag displaying an amount of wealth added to the fortune. Duni Chand came to see the Guru whose reputation had now reached every nook and corner of the country. He saw before him a holy man possessing a towering personality and an unparalleled loftiness of soul. He was very much impressed. That showed at once that he was a good man at heart and could be easily made to see things in a new way. For the first

time he was beginning to doubt his cherished beliefs including the one then uppermost in his mind that food or anything else served to the Brahmins was of some use to his father. To deepen the impression, the Guru, in his own inimitable style, dramatised the same by giving a needle to him which, he said, he would get from him in the world beyond death. Duni Chand was confounded and related to his wife the ridiculous and impossible demand the Guru had made. Accompanied by her he came once again to inquire how it was possible for a needle to be carried to the next world. The purpose of the Guru was being well served and he utilised the occasion to dispel all illusions, Duni Chand and his wife had. If it was not possible for a mere needle to accompany a man to the next world, surely nothing else would, neither the food served to the Brahmins nor all the wealth he had accumulated. It is the good that men do that serves them here and hereafter.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਅਗੈ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿ ਖਟੇ ਘਾਲੇ ਦੇਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘Nanak, one gets in the next world only what one earns through one’s honest effort and shares it with others’.

Guru Nanak in Asa

There can be no merit in the charity of a thief who sends the earnings of his evil trade to the manes of his fore-fathers, through the Brahmins. Man’s own actions make him what he is. Nothing that others do for him can be of any use to him. Every act, good or bad, that he does has an effect on the doer affecting his character and personality, for, it must leave behind an impression on

his mental structure and thus he must carry his whole past wherever he goes and at death his real nature has to be carried by his soul into the next journey. If that is the stark reality, how could Duni Chand's father get any thing that others had done for him during his life time or after his death ? If he was a bad man he had carried the evil with him. If he was a greedy man with material longings and brutish cravings he was a brute, a wolf, in effect. He could not shake off this wolf in him that had become a part of his being and must be reincarnated in him. From the simile of the needle the Guru further emphasised that the wealth he was engaged in accumulating would not keep him company and his soul would go naked. Also his soul had no use at all for all the wealth he possessed.

“ਕਾਚਾ ਧਨ ਸੰਚਹਿ ਮੂਰਖ ਗਾਵਾਰਾ ॥”

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘The unwise folk gather the wealth that is illusory and false’,

Guru Amar Dass in Dhanasari

It was meaningless to hoard wealth as he was doing. What purpose did gold hidden in the depths of the earth serve ? Wealth had a meaning and a justification only if it was employed for service of others. A wealthy man, therefore, ought to consider himself a custodian or a trustee so that his less fortunate brethren might benefit from his wealth.

Duni Chand asked ‘What is it, then, that we can carry with us and will be of service to us’ ? The Guru replied,

‘It is the wealth of the Name. Through it the soul will be enriched and it is the kind of wealth that will never forsake.’

He recited the following hymn to impress upon Duni Chand the futility of running after material things which are all illusory.

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਕੂੜੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਪਰਜਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਸਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਮੰਡਪੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਮਾੜੀ
ਕੂੜੁ ਬੈਸਣਹਾਰੁ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਰੁਪਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਪੈਨਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੂੜੁ
ਕਪੜੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਰੂਪੁਅਪਾਰੁ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਮੀਆ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੀਬੀ ਖਪਿ ਹੋਏ ਖਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜਿ ਕੂੜੇ ਨੇਹੁ
ਲਗਾ ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਚਲਣਹਾਰੁ ॥
ਕੂੜੁ ਮਿਠਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਮਾਖਿਉ ਕੂੜੁ ਡੋਬੈ ਪੂਰ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਾਝੁ
ਕੂੜੋ ਕੂੜੁ ॥”

“False is the ruler, false are the subjects, false is the whole world. False is the palace, false are the skyscrapers, false the indwellers. False is gold, false is silver, false is the wearer. False is the body, false the garments, false the limitless beauty. False is the groom, and false is the bride, for they are engaged in fruitless pursuits and waste themselves away. The false ones remain attached to falsehood and forget the Creator. O whom shall I be-friend when the whole world passeth away. False are the sweets, false is the honey and falsehood drowneth boat-loads of men. Prayeth Nanak, ‘O Lord, all is false without Thee’.”

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

The last line should be read carefully, ‘Without Thee,

O Lord, all else is false.' It means He alone is true. If that be so, the Creation of the True One must also be true. It is wrong to suppose as some do that the world has no existence in fact and what appears is a delusion caused by the senses and this delusion disappears as soon as the senses stop perceiving. The world created by Him cannot be false in this sense. He is Good, Beautiful and Perfect and so is His creation.

‘ਆਪਿ ਸਤਿ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਸਤਿ ’

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘He is real and so is His Creation.’

‘ ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ’॥

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੨ ॥

‘The World is the Abode of the True One because He resideth in it.’

Guru Angad in Var Asa.

But there is another world that man creates for himself and the one that is as illusory and false as a dream. He becomes a prey to temptations and in consequence creates a false world with false values of things around him. By pursuing illusory pleasures his inside treasures remain hidden from him. In this way he transforms the real into the unreal. He must change his false outlook by turning the mind inward. Then alone the world will change its complexion and provide a life of peace and happiness which in the soul's natural state are its unmistakable possessions. Happiness is always a mental condition. A

rich man is not necessarily happy nor a poor man unhappy. It is always the problem of the mind that remains unsatisfied whether one is rich or poor. The more are passions indulged in the more they grow and the result is unhappiness. Then what is the use of becoming a slave of money and of the things money can procure if they lead to loss of peace and harmony ?

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CHAPTER XXXI

Baba Budha

“ਤਿਥੇ ਕਾਲੁ ਨਾ ਅਪੜੇ ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰ ਦਾ ਸਬਦ ਅਪਾਰੁ”

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮੱਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“Death reacheth not him who enshrineth the unsurpassed Word.”

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

The Guru, in course of his travels, reached a place, now called Kartarpur, on the river bank of Ravi and chose to stay there for sometime. He found himself in the lap of nature and felt happy and at home in that kind of atmosphere. The exquisite beauty of the place had drawn him because it could make his communion with the Creator easy. The town of Kartarpur was soon built up there through the financial aid of a wealthy man, Karori, then turned a disciple of the Guru. The Guru had now put on the dress of the people amid whom he found himself. The town grew round him and whoever heard of his stay there came to see him. One of the unusual visitors was a boy of seven years who regularly attended the morning congregation. He seemed to be particularly fond of listening to the Guru's hymns sung to the tune of musical instruments. People were amazed at his regular attendance

and this was noticed by the Guru too who asked him one day how it was that at that age he attached more importance to serious things of life than to playing and enjoying children's company. The boy answered in the manner of an old man. He said, he had observed one day, when his mother was lighting fire, that little sticks were the first to burn and this phenomenon created fear in his mind of meeting death at an early age. Some chroniclers give a different version of the boy's reply to the Guru. According to them, he had seen Pathans in his village cutting forcibly away all crops, ripe and unripe, and yet people watched it helplessly without being able to save their crops. This had created fear in his mind that like the crop, he would also be removed by the mighty hand of Death. The whole congregation felt that the boy was very earnest minded; one, who looked on life in its sombre aspects too. In this world that has so many temptations to offer, a man who does not forget that he has to die some day must be an unusual person and he will not fall an easy victim to those temptations. The consciousness of the transitoriness of life keeps the outlook on life in perspective and properly balanced. The Guru was pleased with the boy for the words of wisdom he had uttered and at that young age and called him Budha (an old man) who later on began to be addressed by everybody as Baba Budha or Bhai Budha. Verily, he had carried an old head on his young shoulders. This great man, later, came to be very intimately associated with the Gurus and enjoyed the respect and affection of the Sikhs. He was the teacher of the Guru's children and had the rare privilege of performing the ceremony of succession to Guruship up to the time of the sixth Guru, Baba Budha was a rare example of a thoroughly selfless person who

served the Guru and his causes upto the end with unswerving devotion and loyalty. He might not be a literary man like Bhai Gurdas who was an intellectual giant, but he was perhaps the greatest Sikh of his time. The Guru was, on this occasion, inspired to compose the following hymn on Death, indicating how its fear could be overcome. It was the answer to Baba Budha's fears. It asserted that those who lived in the fear of the Fearless One had no terror of Death. A beautiful metaphor of the fish getting caught unawares in the net is employed. The fish lives in the deep unfathomable sea full of saltish water that can meet all its needs, Yet, in ignorance, it forgets that the sea is the source of its existence and is tempted into the net. So also men forget the Source of Life, live in disharmony with It and remain in perpetual fear of Death till they are overtaken by it one day. The way to destroy the fear of Death is to live in harmony with that Life Principle.

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਮਛਲੀ ਜਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਸਰੁ ਖਾਰਾ ਅਸਗਾਹੁ ॥ ਅਤਿ
ਸਿਆਣੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਕੀਤੋ ਵੇਸਾਹੁ ॥ ਕੀਤੇ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਪਾਕੜੀ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਟਲੈ
ਸਿਰਾਹੁ ॥ ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਇਉਂ ਸਿਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਕਾਲੁ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਮਛੀ ਤਿਉਂ
ਮਾਣਸਾ ਪਵੇ ਅਚਿੰਤਾ ਜਾਲੁ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਸਭ ਜਗੁ ਬਾਧੋ ਕਾਲ ਕੋ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ
ਕਾਲੁ ਅਫਾਰੁ ॥ ਸਚਿ ਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਉਬਰੇ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਛੋਡਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥ ਹਉ ਤਿਨਕੇ
ਬਲਿਹਾਰਣੇ ਦਰਿ ਸਚੈ ਸਚਿਆਰ ॥ ਸੀਚਾਨੇ ਜਿਉ ਪੰਖੀਆਂ ਜਾਲੀ ਬਧਿਕ
ਹਾਥਿ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਰਾਖੇ ਸੇ ਉਬਰੇ ਹੋਰਿ ਫਾਬੇ ਚੋਗੇ ਸਾਥਿ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੇ ਚੁਣਿ
ਸੁਟੀਅਹਿ ਕੋਇ ਨਾ ਸੰਗੀ ਸਾਥਿ ॥ ਸਚੈ ਸਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਸਚੈ ਸਚਾ ਬਾਨੁ ॥
ਜਿਨੀ ਸਚਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਤਿਣ ਮਨਿ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥ ਮਨਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਚੇ ਜਾਣੀਅਹਿ
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਿਨਾਂ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਅਗੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਜਨੁ ਦੇਇ

ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥ ਸਾਜਨਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਮਦੂਤ ਮੁਏ ਬਿਖੁ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਵੈ
 ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹਉਂ ਵਸਾਂ ਨਾਉ ਵਸੇ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥ ਬਾਝੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੇ
 ਬੂਝ ਨ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ਹੋਇ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੇ ਲਿਵਲਾਇ । ਤਿਥੈ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ
 ਸੰਚਰੈ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਹੈਂ ਸਾਜਨੁ ਤੂੰ ਸੁਜਾਨੁ ਆਪੇ ਮੇਲਣਹਾਰੁ ॥
 ਗੁਰਸਬਦੀ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ । ਤਿਥੈ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਅਪੜੈ ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰਕਾ
 ਸਬਦ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਭੈ ਉਪਜਹਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਲੈ
 ਵਸਿ ਹੈ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਹਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਤਿਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਇਨਾ ਜੰਤਾਂ
 ਵਸਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥”

“The fish knoweth not the net laid for it while it liveth in the deep saltish water. It is surely a pretty clever thing, but why did it thoughtlessly repose its trust? It is trapped for its own shortsightedness and now Death is inevitably upon its head. Brother, so is Death waiting for thee; like the fish, men are also caught in the net unawares. The whole world is bound up to (the chariot of) Death and without the Guru's grace no one can break the Death's hold. Those who are merged in the True One are saved because they cast away their doubt, the cause of all sin. I am a sacrifice to them who are tested as true at the True One's Court. As the hawk is to the birds and as the net is in the hands of the hunter so are men caught (by the bait of Death) except those who are saved by the Guru. Without the Name they are cast aside and there is no one to stand by them. True is He called, True is His Abode, they who accept Him as true, their minds dwell in the True One. They are pure in thought and word who are blessed with wisdom through the Guru, Pray thou to the true Guru to unite thee with thy Lord. By meeting the Lord happiness cometh and the Angels of Death die taking poison. I abide in the Name which hath now come to stay in my mind.

Without the Guru all is darkness but without the Word this fact is not realised. Through the Guru, my mind is illumined and I remain absorbed in the True One. Then Death cometh not, for one's light mergeth into God's Light. Thou art the Friend and Thou art wise, Thou unitest with Thyself Through the Guru's Word; let, us praise him who hath no end. Death reacheth not him who enshrineth the unsurpassed Word of the Guru. In His Will all are created and in His Will all do their deeds. In His Will are all subject to Death, and in His Will they merge in the True One. Nanak, that alone happens what He willeth for nothing is in the hands of man''.

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag

There is an interesting and instructive anecdote in the Guru's life history bearing on the same subject of Death, which may be given here. Once the Guru with his party reached a village where they heard cries of moaning interspersed with sobs signifying deep anguish. They found that a widow had lost a son who was the only earning member of the family. The village folk had gathered for condolence and expressed deep sympathy. Yet the pain at her heart did not abate. The Guru was touched deeply and comforted her with kind and affectionate expressions. He also told her that she should accept death as the law of life, for all must die and she should think of God who would provide for her also as he provided for all. She instinctively felt within her that the man before her was holy and therefore his prayers must have the power to bring back his child to life. She implored him to do something for reviving the child and thus save the family from starvation. He told her that God alone had the

power to give life or to take it away as it pleased Him and no one could stand in His Way. Yet, if she could bring some gur (brown sugar) from a house where no one had ever died, he would do something for her. She felt relieved and ran about the village from door to door for the kind of gur, the Guru desired. But she soon realised that every family had at one time or another lost a member. She came back fortified with the conviction that no one could escape Death and that it was good always to accept it as the unchangeable Will of God. The Guru was pleased at her conversion and blessed her with God's Name as the only remedy for becoming Deathless. He told her that forgetting the Lord was the only death which every one should fear. One could become eternal or deathless by attuning oneself to the Deathless Lord. Those who wandered away from him died and were reborn again and again and those who took shelter in Him were ever saved.

CHAPTER XXXII

No caste distinctions

“ਜਾਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨਾ ਕਰੀਅਹੁ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੇ ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਹੋਈ॥”

ਭੈਰਉ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥

‘Be not proud of thy caste. He alone is a true Brahmin who knoweth God.’

Guru Amar Dass in Bhairon

The Guru's stay in Kartarpur could not be indefinitely prolonged. He had yet a lot of work to do in the troubled world outside, waiting for the touch of his healing balm. He restarted for his missionary tours and this time towards the South of India. He had changed his garments also. He wore sandals of wood on his feet, rolls of rope round his head, a necklace of bones round his neck and he carried a staff in one hand and a begging bowl in the other. He visited places like Bhatinda, Sirsa, Bikaner, Ajmer, Pushkar and then reached Ujjain. He was accompanied by Jat Sikhs Saido and Siho and later joined by Ghebo. Here he went straight to the house of a man regarded by others as an untouchable and stayed with him for some days. The Hindu society, as all know, was divided on religious basis into four classes – Brahmins, Khatri, Vaisha and Sudra. Originally

caste distinctions may have meant division of men into classes according to their capacity, temperament and qualities. But later they got mixed up with heredity and became an evil, striking at the very foundation of religion. The prevalent Hindu religion of the time seemed to believe that it had its roots on caste distinctions and in this it had gone to such lengths that human beings were treated not only as untouchables but also as unapproachables and even as unseeables. When the Pandits and other high caste Hindus learnt that the Guru was staying with an untouchable, they were much perturbed. They thought it was an unholy and a sacreligious act against Hindu Dharma for a Khatri to stay with an outcaste. But the Guru's philosophy of life was diametrically opposed to their way of thinking. He regarded all men as equal, for they had emanated from the same Divine Source. According to him a man should be honoured not because he was high or low, rich or poor, nor because he belonged to this or that caste or lineage but because there was God in him. This is true humanism and it embraces the whole world. Beneath all differences of race, creed, country and caste there is the deep unity of human nature. Rather it extends to the entire creation including the animal and the vegetable kingdoms with which man ought to have profound sympathy. Even rivers, mountains and trees reflect His Presence. With that outlook the Guru beheld the Self dwelling in all beings, particularly human beings, and all human beings dwelling in That Self. Therefore he ever delighted in the weal of all. This was with him an active principle of life that regulated his dealings with others. All humanity the world over including woman was one. Woman was considered a sudra in some

ways and looked upon as inferior to man and treated with contempt. It was not realised that to call her a tempter as so many well intentioned men did was to sin against God and humanity. Life without her was incomplete and therefore discrimination practised against her in any form cut at the very root of a right social order. The Guru wanted to raise the dignity and self respect of all and specially of those who were treated as dregs of society and thus to inspire them with a new courage, new hope, new joy, new understanding and a new meaning in life. It is a myth to accept too literally that certain castes as such are superior to others and possess talents and characteristics peculiar, inborn and natural to them which cannot be possessed by others. In any case to treat humanity on the basis of inequality in any form is to violate God's law of love. Men cannot be considered high or low on the basis of birth but on the basis of their actions and character.

“ਅਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨਾ ਜੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਅਗੈ ਜੀਅ ਨਵੈ ॥”

ਵਾਰਾ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Hereafter caste and power are of no account, for, every soul appears new i. e. (naked) or in its true colours before Him.’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

There are no structural, physical or mental, differences between one man and another and therefore no distinctions except on the basis of character can be justified. This is humanism as propagated by the Gurus and it found its expression in a practical form in the opening of the doors of Sikh temples to all people irrespective of caste or creed and in

inviting all people to dine in the common kitchen called the Guru's kitchen. The Khalsa Brotherhood was intended to become an open and universal society. The following verses were uttered on this occasion to repudiate caste distinctions and to emphasise moral and spiritual attainments in judging man's true worth, in relation to his social environments.

“ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੁ ਜੋ ਬਿੰਦੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ॥ ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਕਰਮੁ ॥
ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕਾ ਰਖੈ ਧਰਮੁ ॥ ਬੰਧਨ ਤੋੜੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤੁ ॥ ਸੋਈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੁ
ਪੂਜਣ ਜੁਗਤੁ ॥ ਖਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੋ ਜੋ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਾ ਸੂਰੁ ॥ ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਕਾ ਕਰੈ
ਸਰੀਰੁ ॥ ਖੇਤੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਬੀਜੈ ਦਾਨੁ । ਸੋ ਖਤ੍ਰੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ । ਲਬ
ਲੋਭੁ ਜੇ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ॥ ਆਪਣਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਆਪੋ ਪਾਵੈ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਧੀਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“He alone is a true Brahmin who knoweth Braham (God) and practiseth contemplation, discipline and self control and doeth good deeds. He taketh it as a dharma to possess contentment and character. He breaketh bondage and attaineth emancipation. Such a Brahmin is worthy of being worshipped. He alone is a true Khatri who is a hero in deeds and dedicates his body to compassion and charity. He knoweth what true farming is and soweth the seed of charity ; such a Khatri is acceptable at the Lord's Court. But whoever practiseth cravings, greed and falsehood reapeth the fruit of what he soweth.”

Shalok of Guru Nanak

This is what according to the Guru makes a man high or low. Deeds and not castes determine superiority of one man over another.

“ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੂਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ ॥ ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ
ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ॥”

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“The Lord mindeth not our castes, or births. So we must seek the place of Truth, for, as be one's deeds, so be one's caste or one's birth.”

Guru Nanak in Parbhathi

The emphasis must therefore always be on true living. A man had learnt nothing of religion if he had not learnt, for instance, to control anger or if he had not driven out of his mind, falsehood, cravings, greed, pride and lust. If a Brahmin lived on lies then his sacred thread, the symbol of his faith, had no purpose to serve. In Asa Di Var, the Guru has further exposed the futility of caste or class pride by referring to the hypocrisy and inconsistency of people's practices and professions. The Brahmin and the cow were on the one hand considered sacred yet on the other even they were not spared from taxation. They who considered themselves pure by virtue of their caste and for the Hindu symbols they had put on and who regarded Muslims as untouchables had, for the sake of money, no scruples in joining their service, reading their scriptures and aping slavishly their manners, customs and ways of living. This was making mockery of religion.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Making nonsense of non-violence

“ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਨੇ ਅੰਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆਂ ਬਾਝ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“Of all food grains there is none without life.”

Guru Nanak in Asa

During his visits to the South of India, the Guru was once in Madras among the sarevaras (a sect of the Jains), in a Jain temple. Non-violence is the cardinal principle of life with the Jains. It is truly a noble concept deserving to be cherished by all but it is sometimes stretched to such absurd lengths as to reduce it to a mere farce. The Jains would avoid even the use of corns, suspecting worms in them. They would make a distinction between the old and the new corns, only from that point of view. They would walk with the greatest care lest they treaded on insects. They would keep the nose and mouth covered to avoid inhaling and thus injuring micro-organisms, without realising that the whole atmosphere was filled with them and there was no escape. They would pluck their hairs with their hands for fear of injuring microbes and would go to the length of looking into their own excreta to find out that no life was crushed within

it. They would even avoid water for bathing purposes and in consequence remained unclean. They did not realise that non-killing could not be avoided in all circumstances of life. When they met the Guru they discussed with him the subject of non-killing. They ridiculed him for claiming to be a religious man without accepting non-violence as the fundamental life principle. They told him that he would not be saved if he did not conform to what they called the basic fact of life, as understood by them. The Guru in all humility replied that non-violence was the breath of his life but he could not go to the length they had gone, as it was not humanly possible for any one to do so even if one wanted it. They retorted angrily that he was a hopelessly incorrigible man and was for ever lost. The Guru replied with a hymn which emphasised the point that if a man could win God's Grace or the true Guru's blessings he would not be lost and would get emancipation. Further, love of God and service of mankind were the surest guarantee for winning God's blessings. In a way, he wanted to tell them that they should take to the path shown by the true Guru. Ill-conceived notions, however rigorously pursued, would not be of any use. Here is the hymn in Var Manjh.

ਪਉੜੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤ ਸਰਧਾ ਪੂਰੀਐ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ
ਦਇਆਲੁ ਨਾ ਕਬਹੂ ਝੂਰੀਐ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਾ
ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾਂ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੀਐ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ
ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾਂ ਜਮ ਕਾ ਡਰ ਕੇਹਾ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾ ਸਦ
ਹੀ ਸੁਖੁ ਦੇਹਾ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾ ਨਵਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ

ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾਂ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਈਐ ॥”

“With the true Guru’s blessings one geteth ones fulfilment. With the True Guru’s blessings, one grieveth not ever. With the true Guru’s blessings, there is no pain. With the true Guru’s blessings one enjoyeth the Love of the Lord. With the true Guru’s blessings, Death loseth its terror. With the true Guru’s blessings, one is ever happy. With the true Guru’s blessings, one receiveth the nine treasures. With the true Guru’s blessings, one mergeth in the True One”.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

But the Jains were not satisfied and insisted that he should accept their point of view. It was in this context that the Guru had to speak to them bluntly his own mind. We have already examined the Guru’s views on the subject of non-killing expressed by him to the Pandits of Kur-Kushetra. We will not repeat them here. It is enough to give here his hymn on the subject. One can easily notice in the hymn a shift in the emphasis. The problem with Jains was not merely the eating or non-eating of flesh. They had gone much further. They shied away from such a good thing as water for fear of harming microbes. The Guru sang to them poetically the glories of water. It was water that turned the pilgrim-stations holy. The sea water, again, was churned by Gods and demons to bring out the fourteen jewels from its bosom. Both at birth and deaths it washed people and provided peace to their souls. All prayers were offered and all worships were preceded by a water bath. The rains produce joy every where. All life human, animal or plant, grew out of it and so it could

truly be said to be a key to life. What should, then, one think of those who avoided such a holy and useful thing as water ? Not only that. The Jains of the Guru's time were leading the lives of parasites, characterised by escapism, laziness and irresponsibility. The Guru wanted to show to them the path of honest and hard work and to wean them from all idle pursuits into which they were indulging. He ridiculed and exposed incisively the unclean ways of their living in consequence of the impossible position they had taken up. The man who remained unclean had learnt nothing of religion, for, healthy soul must live in a healthy body. In this longish hymn, as in the previous one, he reiterated that the path as shown by the true Guru should be followed if life was to bear fruit. The Guru, he said, was the sea in which they should bathe to achieve a creative, purposeful, progressive and glorious living. Here is the hymn in Var Manjh, composed by him later, to embody his reactions to the absurdities that had taken hold of a section of the people.

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਸਿੱਰੁ ਖੋਹਾਇ ਪੀਅਹਿ ਮਲਵਾਣੀ ਜੂਠਾ ਮੰਗਿ ਮੰਗਿ ਖਾਹੀ ॥ ਫੋਲਿ
ਫਦੀਹਤਿ ਮੁਹਿ ਲੈਨਿ ਭੜਾਸਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇਖਿ ਸਗਾਹੀ ॥ ਭੇਡਾਂ ਵਾਂਗੀ ਸਿਰੁ
ਖੋਹਾਇਨਿ ਭਰੀਅਨਿ ਹਬ ਸੁਆਹੀ ॥ ਮਾਉ ਪੀਉ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਗਵਾਇਨਿ ਟਬਰ
ਰੋਵਨਿ ਧਾਹੀ । ਓਨਾ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਤਲਿ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਨ ਦੀਵਾ ਮੁਏ ਕਿਬਾਓ ਪਾਹੀ ॥
ਅਠ ਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੇਨਿ ਨ ਢੋਈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਅੰਨੁ ਨ ਖਾਹੀ ॥ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਚੀਲ
ਰਹਹਿ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਥੇ ਟਿਕੇ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ ਝੁੰਡੀ ਪਾਇ ਬਹਨਿ ਨਿਤਿ ਮਰਣੈ ਦੜਿ
ਦੀਬਾਣਿ ਨ ਜਾਹੀ । ਲਕੀ ਕਾਸੇ ਹਥੀ ਫੁਮਣ ਅਗੋ ਪਿਛੀ ਜਾਹੀ । ਨਾਂ ਓਇ
ਜੋਗੀ ਨਾ ਓਇ ਜੰਗਮ ਨਾ ਓਇ ਕਾਜੀ ਮੁਲਾਂ । ਦਯਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਵਿਗੁਤੇ

ਫਿਟਾ ਵਤੈ ਗਲਾ । ਜੀਆਂ ਮਾਰਿ ਜੀਵਾਲੇ ਸੋਈ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਰਖੈ ॥
ਦਾਨਹੁ ਤੇ ਇਸਨਾਨਹੁ ਵੰਜੇ ਭਸੁ ਪਈ ਸਿਰੀ ਖੁਬੈ ॥ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਰਤਨ ਉਪੰਨੇ
ਮੋਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਮਾਧਾਣੀ ॥ ਅਠ ਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੇਵੀ ਥਾਪੇ ਪੁਰਬੀ ਲਗੈ ਬਾਣੀ ॥
ਨਾਇ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਨਾਤੇ ਪੂਜਾ ਨਾਵਨਿ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਜਾਣੀ ॥ ਮੁਇਆ ਜੀਵਦਿਆ ਗਤਿ
ਹੋਵੈ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਪਾਣੀ । ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਰ ਖੁਬੈ ਸੈਤਾਨੀ ਏਨਾ ਗਲ ਨ ਭਾਣੀ ।
ਵੁਠੈ ਹੋਇਐ ਹੋਇ ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਜੀਆ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ । ਵੁਠੈ ਅੰਨੁ ਕਮਾਦੁ ਕਪਾਹਾ
ਸਭਸੈ ਪੜਦਾ ਹੋਵੈ । ਵੁਠੈ ਘਾਹੁ ਚਰਹਿ ਨਿਤਿ ਸੁਰਹੀ ਸਾਧਨ ਦਹੀ ਵਿਲੋਵੈ ॥
ਤਿਤੁ ਘਿਇ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਸਦ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਇਐ ਕਾਰਜੁ ਸੋਹੈ । ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮੁੰਰੁ ਨਦੀ ਸਭਿ
ਸਿਖੀ ਨਾਤੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇ ਸਿਰ ਖੁਬੈ ਨਾਵਨਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਸਤ
ਚਟੇ ਸਿਰੀ ਛਾਈ ॥”

“ (What a pity that) some ignorant people, pluck the hairs of their heads, drink the washings and beg for the leavings of food to eat ! (What a shame that) they rake up their own excreta, thereby suck bad odours and shy away from pure water ! Like sheep they get their heads' hairs plucked and their hands soiled with ashes. They have given up the way of their ancestors and their families wail bitterly (because they lead idle lives). At their death no rice balls on leafy plates are offered, no earthen lamps are lighted and no funeral rites performed, what a tragic end ! Holy places are shut out against them, no Brahmins are invited to eat food, there is no annointment of their fore-heads and they remain unclean to the end. Covering themselves from view they sit in silence as if they were in mourning and never appear in public places. A begging bowl (for alms) slung on their side and a broom in hand (to avoid killing germs) they walk one behind the other. They are neither Yogis nor Jangams (the followers of Shiva), nor Qazis, nor Mullahs, they are given up by the Lord and go about aimlessly, the whole tribe is lost. God alone giveth

life and He destroyeth it as well, none else can save life. So whoever goeth without a wash and without charity to others, let ashes be thrown over his shaven head ! Out of the water (of the ocean) emerged the fourteen jewels when the seas were churned (by Gods and demons) with the gold mount as stick. The sixty eight places of pilgrimage were created by the Gods, all on the banks of the waters, where men gather during festivals and utter God's Name. Prayers are offered after a bath in water and every worship is preceded by a bath. At birth as at death are men washed with water for the peace of their souls. But (what a pity that) the bald headed ones, led by the devils, are pleased not with it. When it raineth, there is joy everywhere ; in water lies the key to all life. It is the water of the rains that maketh food and sugar grow as also cotton which giveth to all a covering. Rains make it possible for cows to graze grass and for house wife to churn curds. From this churning cometh out the ghee that propitiates the sacred fire, and with which the Yagnas and the worship are performed and all our ceremonies are blest. The Guru is the sea and his disciples are the streams. By bathing in the sea (Guru) glory is achieved. But, Nanak, if the bald headed ones bathe not there, let dust be on their heads."

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Shivnabh of Ceylon

“ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਆਵਹੁ ਜਾਹੁ” ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੁਪਜੀ

“Man cometh and goeth as He ordaineth.”

Guru Nanak in Japji

Raja Shivnabh was the ruler of Ceylon (Sangla deep). He was a God fearing man who along with his queen loved to seek holy men. He was in quest of truth but had not found it. On the contrary he was beginning to feel that there were no holy men left in the world and that those who laid claims on holiness were mere pretenders. A trader from Lahore, named Mansukh and a disciple of the Guru, happened to be staying in Ceylon. But he was not liked by the people generally, for he did not conform to their social, religious and cultural customs. He had his own way of life as taught to him by the Guru and strictly adhered to it, ignoring every criticism by the people. It was his daily routine to sing the Guru's hymns in the early hours of the morning casting a spell on holy men in his neighbour-hood. This attracted the attention of the Raja too and he discovered that there was on this man's face ineffable calm. He noticed something sublime about him and he liked him.

He learnt from Mansukh that he was the disciple of a very great man whom people called Guru Nanak, Nirankari. The king had the ingredients of a good man in him but because of his experience of the so-called holymen he had misgivings about everybody's bonafide. Yet he desired very much to see the Guru. Mansukh told him that the Gnru was moving from place to place, guiding people and alleviating their sufferings and he hoped he would come to Ceylon too, if he and his country really wanted him. He spoke with such confidence and deep rooted convictions that the king took him at his word, prepared and dedicated a garden for the Guru and waited with most expectant eyes for his arrival some day. And the Guru did come soon after and settled in the garden. The king was happy inwardly at his arrival, yet he would test the genuineness of his holiness and spirituality before he actually met him. He sent a party of beautiful dancing girls for the purpose, as he had thought that only a true saint could resist the temptations offered. But the girls on reaching the Guru's presence found an atmosphere surcharged with holiness, through the Divine hymns that were being lovingly sung in praise of God. The Guru's superb personality touched every heart and this was reported to the king who then personally rushed to the place to see the Guru. He found that all he had heard from Mansukh about the Guru was true. He discussed various topics uppermost in his mind. He was, after all, already a man of religion. Of the various subjects discussed, two very important out of them, as explained by the Guru, are contained in the hymn given below. The Raja had asked about the Guru's name, his caste and religion etc. The Guru's answer was characteri-

stically his own. He referred, the same question to his God, as it were, for an answer and then answered on His behalf that as God had no form all distinctions of name, form, caste, race and creed should disappear. Thus a true Yogi or a man of religion is one who knows the true Name. So also a true Brahmin is one who is bathed in God's wisdom and meditates on His Name. The Yogi and the Brahmin thus get united and become one. God is in every heart. Through the practice of the Word and the Simran of the Name He can be realised by all. God is the true merchandise and every man should become a dealer in this business and at His shop, as he calls it. That is the true purpose of life and of religion.

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਜੋਗੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲੁ ਤਾਕੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਰਾਤੀ ॥ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਨਾਥੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਸੰਗੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਗਤਿ ਥੀਤੀ । ਗੁਸਾਈ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਹਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਕੈਸੇ ਜਾਤੀ ॥ ਜਾ ਤਉ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਮਹਲਿ ਬੁਲਾਵਹਿ ਪੂਛਉ ਬਾਤ ਨਿਰੰਤੀ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨੀ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਪੂਜੇ ਪਾਤੀ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਏਕਾ ਜੋਤੀ ॥ ਜਿਹਵਾ ਡੰਡੀ ਇਹੁ ਘਟੁ ਛਾਬਾ ਤੋਲਉ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਜਾਚੀ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੁਟੁ ਸਾਹੁ ਸਭਨਾ । ਸਿਰਿ ਵਣਜਾਰੇ ਇਕ ਭਾਤੀ ॥ ਦੋਵੇ ਸਿਰੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਬੇੜੇ ਸੋ ਬੂੜੇ ਜਿਸੁ ਏਕ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ ਜੀਅਹੁ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਭਰਾਤੀ ॥ ਸਬਦ ਵਸਾਏ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਏ ਸਦਾ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ । ਉਪਰਿ ਗਗਨੁ ਗਗਨ ਪਰਿ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਤਾਕਾ ਅਗਮ ਗੂਰੂ ਪੁਨਿ ਵਾਸੀ ॥ ਗੁਰਬਚਨੀ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਇਆ ਉਦਾਸੀ ॥”

‘The Yogi who knoweth the Way of the Pure Name, not a trace of soil sticketh to him, for, the Loved One, the Master of the Universe, the True One, is ever with Him and he overcometh the state of coming and going. O God, what

is Thy Name and what is Thy Caste ? If Thou Callest me in Thy Presence I would get this doubt removed. A Brahmin is he who is bathed in God's wisdom and who worshipeth God with the leaf-offering of virtue and who meditateth on the Name of the Lord, whose Light illumineth the three worlds. I make my tongue the beam, the heart the scales and I weigh therewith the unweighable Name. There is but one Shop, one Merchant-king and all His Dealers deal in the same thing (the Name). The True Guru saveth at both ends (here and hereafter) but he alone knoweth it who is attuned to the One Lord and whose mind is free of all doubts. He inscribeth the Word in the mind, serveth God night and day and hath no doubt left in his mind. High above is the sky (of the Tenth Door) wherein abideth the Lord, and wherein the unfathomable Guru also bideth. Through the Guru's Word I see, within and without, the One (all distinctions are lost to me), and I am now truly detached'

Guru Nanak in Maru

The other topic related to transmigration. The Raja had asked, from where does man come and where to he goes and how is he in bondage and how can he be released etc.? The Guru replied.

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਜਾਤੋ ਜਾਇ ਕਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਆਵੇ । ਕਹ ਉਪਜੈ ਕਹ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਵੇ ॥ ਕਿਉਂ
ਬਾਧਿਓ ਕਿਉ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਪਾਵੇ । ਕਿਉਂ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਮਾਵੇ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਰਿਦੇ
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਨਰਹਰ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਰਹਰ ਨਿਹਕਾਮੁ । ਰਹਾਉ । ਸਹਜੈ
ਆਵੈ ਸਹਜੇ ਜਾਇ । ਮਨ ਤੇ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੁਕਤੋ
ਬੰਧੁ ਨਾ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਬੀਤਾਰਿ ਛੁਟੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਇ ॥ ਤਰਵਰ ਪੱਖੀ ਬਹੁ ਨਿਸਿ

ਬਾਸੁ ॥ ਸੁਖੁ ਦੁਖੀਆ ਮਨਿ ਮੋਹ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥ ਮਾਂਝ ਬਿਹਾਗ ਤਕਹਿ ਆਗਾਸੁ ॥
 ਦਹ ਦਿਸਿ ਧਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਮਿ ਲਿਖਿਆਸੁ । ਨਾਮ ਸੰਜੋਗੀ ਗੋਇਲਿ ਥਾਟੁ ॥ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ
 ਫੂਟੇ ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਟੁ । ਬਿਨੁ ਵਖਰ ਸੂਨੈ ਘਤੁ ਹਾਟੁ ॥ ਗਤ ਮਿਲਿ ਖੋਲੈ ਬਜਰ
 ਕਪਾਟ ॥ ਸਾਧੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਪੂਰਬ ਸੰਜੋਗ । ਸਚਿ ਰਹਸੇ ਪੂਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਲੋਗ ॥ ਮਨੁ
 ਤਨੁ ਦੇ ਲੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਲਾਗਉ ਪਾਇ ॥”

“Man is born and then he dies. O, wherefrom does he come? Whence he cometh and where to goeth he? Why is he bound down and how is he released? How doth he merge in the natural way in the Eternal Lord? He who hath the nectar Name in the heart and in the mouth and dwelleth on the Name becometh detached like the Lord. Then he cometh and goeth in the natural way. He was born because of the desires of the mind and mergeth into the Higher Mind again. The Guru - Wards are emancipated and are not bound again. For, they dwell on the Word and get deliverance through the Name. It is like the coming of birds that abide on the tree of life at night; of those some are happy and some not, attachments in the mind are the cause of ruin, day and night they look towards the skies and wander about in all directions as is the Writ of their Karma. But they who are merged in the Name take the world as a pasture-halt and shedding their lust and anger break the pitcher of the poisonous Maya, Without the capital stock (of the Name) the home and the store are empty. But when the Guru meeteth, he openeth the impregnable Door, If one is so destined, one meeteth the holy saints, who are the Lord's Own and who are pleased with Truth. They who surrender their body and mind in the natural way to the Lord, Nanak, take thou to their feet.”

Guru Nanak in Gauri

In the first line of the above hymn, the Guru projects the questions the Raja had put to him and then answers them. All men are bound by the law of Karma and come and go in consequence. Those who live in the natural way are reunited with God and the others have to go the round of transmigration. It is the Name that saves and restores to the natural State. Others must carry out God's Will expressed through the law of Karma. There is reference here to transmigration. It is undoubtedly true that belief in transmigration has been more or less universal. It is idle to speculate how it may have originated. On the prospect of sure death before men they may have found support in the hope of survival after death as it mitigated to some extent the bereavement. But the nature of survival has varied from crude notions to exalted conceptions. The Guru does not seem to believe in the transmigration of souls in the generally accepted sense (which has become the distinguishing feature of the Hindu thought) that the souls have to be changed from the human to the animal bodies to finish the cycle. He certainly believed in personal immortality but he has not defined in concrete terms what shape it takes. He has in the Holy Granth allowed expression of divergent views on this subject which he regarded as too metaphysical for human comprehension. Along with the Hindu view of the transmigration of souls, we find the Muslim view as accepted by Sheikh Farid regarding the final day of judgement when the souls are supposed to rise to face the accounts they build up in the human life.

“ਗੋਰਾਂ ਸੇ ਨਿਮਾਣੀਆਂ ਬਹਸਨਿ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਮਲਿ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਸ਼ੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ॥

“The poor souls shall remain within the tombs (till the doom’s day).”

It does not seem to matter to the Guru if there was some difference of opinion in detail provided the belief in the personal immortality was accepted. The soul is immortal and does not die with the body. This is the basic fact recognised and accepted by the Gurus. The assumption of a body by an individual which may be called the individual’s birth cannot be considered as an isolated accident without having any past or future. Sudden embodiment of a conscious life is not possible. Life is like one phase or a term in a long series, a slow development. It is meaningless to assume that man as an individual chanced to appear at birth and then disappeared into utter extinction at death. The body should be treated as the basis or the opportunity for the development of life, mind and spirit. Death is a change of state. One span of life ends to give place to another. As one life is not enough for achieving perfection it is God’s great Mercy that opportunities not availed of in one life were renewed in the other lives till the soul had found its fulfilment. Again, if it were supposed that every soul was created only at its birth having no past behind it, why should it be created sinful? Also some people were born from the very birth in a de-formed or diseased state or into circumstances of poverty, squalor and helplessness while others into lives of health, well being and happiness. That would mean that Providence first made men helpless and then held them responsible for what they did. How could they in that way be different from what they were originally designed to be? It offended the logical and ethical sense

of men to assume that men started at unequal levels and yet were punished for the actions resulting from these inequalities. Therefore these inequalities could not be traced to God. The individual, being a living organism, was modified by the life it chose and by the way it acted and was thus responsible for what it did. He chose an environment that answered to his character. Thus he was born in the world which he had himself made. The variety was the result of Karma. As in the physical world, there is the law for the mental and the moral world too. What man sowed he reaped. An individual is full of desire and this becomes the agent or impeller of his future actions. He continually shapes his own destiny. What he has done is unalterable in the ordinary course. Character is one's destiny. Man, the image of God, is thus the creator like Him. He builds for himself his future. It is true, man is subject to physical laws as all animals are. For instance, he cannot disobey the law of gravitation. If he jumps he must inevitably fall on the ground as a stone does. He is also subject to various biological laws which he shares with all living organism. But he has the brain which he uses for good or for bad. He has in a way the power to disobey God's moral laws and pay for it too. God permits evil because he has given man an individuality and does not interfere in his choice of good or evil. Moral delinquency does not apply to animals but to man only. God could have eliminated evil from the world by denying to man freedom of choice. But then man would be a mere machine and there would be no evil and no sin.

Thus it seems clear that the Guru accepted personal immortality of the soul and personal responsibility. When,

however, man takes refuge in Him, through Simran, he frees himself from desire, the root of bondage, and gets reunited with the Source, from which he emanated. Desire in the soul had created a body for it. When desire is killed through a refuge in Him, the soul has no need for the body and thus the cycle of transmigration ends. So long as Ego rules, man is in bondage. When he kills ego he becomes a power and is liberated.

The two hymns, one in Rag Maru and the other in Rag Gauri, both given above, need to be very carefully examined here. They speak of the Tenth Door where God resides. It is the Impregnable Door but can be broken by the aid of the Guru and his Word. It means that behind the physical body and the mind there is an occult existence called the soul, without which the superficial or the lower consciousness cannot exist. But man has learnt to move in the restricted orbit due to the influence of Maya and matter about him. He employs his mind for desires of the body, as if it were its slave and not its master. He is thus bound up by limitations and has no idea of the limitless power lying bidden within him, even though seers and saints with their glimpses, flashes and occult intimations from the Inner Secret Source have appeared from time to time and have broken all shakles of physical existence to prove to the unbelieving world that the gospel of materialism is an illusory and a helpless creed and real happiness lies in acquiring mastery over the self. Jealousy, fear, lust, anger and other passions spring from within the self and are born out of attachment with matter. They are the real cause of unhappiness. It is from these evils that freedom has to be achieved. When self is conquered, the con-

sciousness is raised from the physical plane to the spiritual plane. It is only when the mind asserts its independence against the tyranny of matter and Maya that man grows to stature. It is a step in the direction of release. The more this state is attained, the nearer he is to God. He has to go beyond the veil of superficial mind to elevate his consciousness into those higher regions from where he can receive revelation, inspiration and intuition. Just as the mind's eye can be opened to the inner world of imagination, clairvoyance, telepathy and extra sensory perceptions, so also it can be opened through the love of the Name to a new world of the spirit. It is foolish to think that matter and its experiences are real and other experiences are hallucinations or are the result of superstitious credulity. Why should a fact be unacceptable simply because it was not objective and physical in character? A thing may not be explicable by a physical cause and may yet exist. It is irrational to demand a physical cause for a supra-physical fact. The body and the mind are not the whole of us. Their dimensions are restricted to the surface mind. The limitless powers of the soul are beyond them.

The Raja was converted completely. The Guru stayed with him for a long time, One day he became very mystical with the Raja. He said, he wanted to eat a man. When the Raja brought a man the Guru said the man should be the son of the king, and not of a poor man. Then the Raja's son was presented. The Guru facing the queen asked if she also agreed. She replied in the affirmative. Then he made the boy his disciple and said he had, in a way, eaten the prince by cutting him away from his people and making him his own to be yoked to the service of humanity.

CHAPTER XXXV

Shivrat Fair in Achal Batala

“ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਰਾਮਾਤ ਅਸਾਥੇ ਨਾਹੀ ”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘I have no miracles to show except the miracle of the True Name.’

Var Bhai Gurdas

In a place called Achal Batala, in Gurdaspur district, a fair of Shivrat was being held and attended, among others, by the Yogis, the priests and the followers of the six Hindu schools of philosophy. The Guru was now returning to the Panjab and it was an opportunity for him to meet leaders of different religious opinion, and such an opportunity he would never miss. The Hath Yoga system, as we have seen earlier, was very much in vogue among the Yogis of the time. We need not dilate upon that topic once again. It will be enough if we give here important portions of the statement of Bhai Gurdas regarding the Guru's visit to Achal Batala as also the dialogue he had with the Yogis.

“ਮੇਲਾ ਸੁਣ ਜ਼ਿਵਰਾਤ ਦਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਅਚਲ ਵਟਾਲੇ ਆਈ ॥ ਦਹਸ਼ਨ ਵੇਖਨ
ਕਾਰਨੇ ਸਗਲੀ ਉਲਟ ਪਈ ਲੋਕਾਈ ॥ ”

“On hearing about the Shivrat fair in Achal Batala, the

Guru reached there. And all people rushed to the place to see him "

Then the dialogue ensued. Bhangarnath Yogi asked,

“ ਪੁਛੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਭੰਗਰਨਾਥ ਤੁਹਿ ਦੁਧ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਾਂਜੀ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਫਿਟਿਆ ਚਾਟਾ ਦੁਧ ਦਾ ਰਿੜਕਿਆ ਮਖਣ ਹਥ ਨ ਆਈ ॥ ਭੇਖ ਉਤਾਰ ਉਦਾਸ ਦਾ ਵਤ ਕਿਉਂ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਰੀਤ ਚਲਾਈ ॥ ”

“The Yogi named Bhangar-Naih asked him why he had mixed the sour vinegar with milk i.e. (Why he had polluted the saintly life he was originally leading by becoming a family man). The whole pot containing the milk of spirituality was thus wasted and no butter (the essence of spiritual living) was possible in the churning. Why had he put off the holy garb of a hermit and started to live as a man of the world ?”

The Guru replied,

“ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਭੰਗਰਨਾਥ ਤੇਰੀ ਮਾਉ ਕੁਚੱਜੀ ਆਹੀ । ਭਾਂਡਾ ਧੋਇ ਨ ਜਾਤਿਓਨ ਭਾਇ ਕੁਚੱਜੇ ਫੁਲ ਸੜਾਈ । ਹੋਇ ਅਤੀਤ ਗ੍ਰਹਸਤ ਤਜਿ ਫਿਰ ਉਨਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਜਾਈ । ਬਿਨ ਦਿਤੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥ ਨ ਆਈ ॥ ”

“Nanak told Bhangarnath that his (the Yogi's) mother (i. e. his teacher) was an unskilful woman who did not even know that the churning vessel must be cleaned well before the churning was done and thus she spoiled the butter in the process of bringing out ghee (The Guru was here impressing upon the Yogis that God would come to reside only in the clean heart. No milk of spirituality was possible without that. The struggle had therefore, to be waged with the mind through the Guru's Word to rid it of its impurities and for this it was not necessary to run away from the world. The control of

breath in the Yogi's way would not be of any avail. It was a physical process and the mind being beyond the mere physical would not be rid of its evil nature in that way. Nor would the Yogi's search for nectar produce anything other than physical. Thus the whole philosophy and approach of the Yogis was wrong. Anything physical is neither the cure nor the food for the soul). The Yogi called himself an anchorite simply by giving up the family life and yet he was going about begging at the door of the family men. When a man did nothing here, how could he expect anything hereafter ?"

True Yoga, in the words of Bhai Gurdas, is described thus,

“ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਗਦੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕਰਨਿ ਓਦਾਸੀ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

“God-conscious men are the true Yogis. They are always wide awake and remain detached in the midst of Maya.”

Var Bhai Gurdas

It is possible for the springs of the soul to release peace and power even in the midst of tumultuous society, while a man having the evil hidden in the soul finds no rest by merely cutting himself off from it. What is needed is to live an inward spiritual life.

Then after having been defeated in argument the yogis tried to overawe the Guru by a show of miracles or through a display of their occult powers. By means of concentrations practised through various mental and physical exercises they claimed to have acquired levitational

powers. The Guru, without ever disputing or questioning the Yogi's claim, remained steadfast to the views he held, and these we have already explained in the Introduction. He was quite clear that the Yogis were, on this topic, basically in the wrong as possession of occult powers had no bearing on spirituality. A man did not conquer pride, anger, lust etc. through acquiring miraculous powers nor did he find any peace of mind that way. The spiritual power and greatness acquired through the Name was the only thing of value and was far superior to any thing that the Yogis could have.

Finding the Guru unconcerned they asked him to give to them a display of his own powers. They always measured power in terms of the miracles one could perform and this was exactly the thing the Guru disapproved. He replied.

“ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲੇ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਅਸਾਂ ਵੇਖੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਵਸਤ ਨ ਕਾਈ । ਗੁਰ ਸਗਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਬਿਨਾ ਦੂਜੀ ਓਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਰਾਈ ॥”

“The great Guru said, ‘dear sir, I have nothing to show to the Yogis. I depend on nothing beyond the holy congregation and the Guru’s Word.’”

Again he said, this time more emphatically, thus,

“ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲੇ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਸਬਦ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਸਚ ਮੁਖਹੁ ਅਲਾਈ ॥ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਰਾਮਾਤ ਅਸਾਥੇ ਨਾਹੀ । ਬਸਤਰ ਪਹਰੇ ਅਗਨਿ ਕੇ ਬਰਫ ਹਿਮਾਲੈ ਮੰਦਰ ਛਾਈ । ਕਰੋ ਰਸੋਈ ਸਾਰ ਕੀ ਸਗਲੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਨਥ ਚਲਾਈ । ਏਵਡ ਕਰੀ ਵਿਥਾਰ ਕੋ ਸਗਲੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਹਕੀ ਜਾਈ । ਤੋਲੀ ਧਰਤ ਅਕਾਸ ਦੋਇ ਪਿਛੇ ਛਾਥੇ ਟੰਕ ਚੜਾਈ ॥ ਇਹ ਬਲ ਰਖਾਂ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਸ ਆਖਾਂ ਤਿਸ ਪਾਰ ਕਰਾਈ ॥

ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਬਿਨ ਬਾਦਰ ਛਾਈ ॥”

“The great Guru said ‘Listen, dear sir, my word. I tell you the truth that I have no miracles to show except the miracle of the true Name. If I could clothe myself in fire, and live in a house of ice in the Himalayas, if I could subsist only on iron and steel as my food and drink, and had the power to bind the carth strung to my will, if I could expand and carry the whole earth before me, if I could weigh the earth and the sky with a mere copper piece put on one side of the scales, if I became so great that I could not be measured and yet could drive all others before me, if I possessed such powers as enabled me to make others cross the ocean, all this would be vain without the glory of the Name.’”

That shows what value he attached to the super-physical capacities a man might acquire. He did not want to be credited at all with the so-called miracles that were, for the Yogis, the be-all and end-all of life. He wanted to appear to them just natural and so human in every way—human in approach to public problems, human as a family man, human as a leader of men and human as a saviour. He was just a man, of course, man in the perfect sense, and thus being a humanist, he could not keep himself aloof from the common run of men and from the ordinary concerns of life. It was out of this mental make up that human qualities like love, truth, service, courage, sense of responsibility and selflessness had sprung up and made him so great.

The Yogis saw it all clearly and soon realised that, apart from Divine Wisdom that he possessed, they were not his equal even in scholarship and learning. They bowed before

him in acknowledgement of having accepted him as their Guru. This is what Bhai Gurdas says about it.

“ਜਿਨ ਮੇਲਾ ਸਿਵਰਾਤ ਦਾ ਖਟ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰਾਈ ॥
ਸਿਧ ਬੋਲਨ ਸੁਭ ਬਚਨ ਧੰਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡੀ ਕਮਾਈ ॥
ਵਡਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਕਲਜੁਗ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੋਤ ਜਗਾਈ ॥”

“At Shivrat fair he defeated in argument all those gathered there including leaders of the six Schools of philosophy. They complimented him thus, ‘O Nanak, thy achievements are great. Thou art a great being who hath lit the light of wisdom in this Kal Age.’ ”

Then the leader of the Yogis named Bhartari offered to the Guru a cup of wine. The Yogis believed that the drink helped in the practice of concentrations and in forgetting the world and its temptations. The Guru was against the use of intoxicants for stimulating the mind even for some religious purpose. But that was a small thing comparatively. He wanted to give them a recipe for the preparation of a kind of wine that spiritualised and whose effect was permanent. Here is the reply.

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਾਵੈ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਸੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਭਾਠੀ ਭਵਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕਾ ਪੋਚਾ ਇਤੁ ਰਸਿ ਅਮਿਉ ਚੁਆਈਐ ॥ ਬਾਬਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਤਵਾਰੋ
ਨਾਮ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਵੈ ਸਹਜ ਰੰਗ ਰਚਿ ਰਹਿਆ । ਅਹਿਨਸਿ ਬਨੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ
ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਅਨਾਹਦ ਗਹਿਆ । ਰਹਾਉ । ਪੂਰਾ ਸਾਚੁ ਪਿਆਲਾ ਸਹਜੇ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਪੀਆਏ
ਜਾ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ । ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿਆ ਮਦਿ ਛੂਛੇ ਭਾਉ ਧਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੀਵਤ ਹੀ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਭਇਆ ॥ ਦਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਕਾ
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਬੈਕੁੰਠੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਿਆ । ਸਿਫਤੀ ਰਤਾ ਸਦਾ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਜੂਐ ਜਨਮੁ
ਨ ਹਾਰੈ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣਿ ਭਰਥਰਿ ਜੋਗੀ ਖੀਵਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਧਾਰੈ ॥”

'Let Divine knowledge be thy molasses, concentration the Mahwa flowers and deeds the bark of the kikar tree ; let Faith be the distilling pot plastered with love. Thus wilt thou distil the nectar of life. O dear brother, the mind so intoxicated drinketh the wine of the Name and is dyed in the colour of equipoise. It is ever attuned to Him, being in love with the Lord and in harmony with the unstruck music within. The cup of perfect Truth cometh without effort to one on whom God's Grace descends. Whoever dealeth in this Nectar, loveth not the shallow worldly wines. He who imbibeth the Guru's instructions, the Nectar-Word, is approved. He seeketh the sight of the Beloved at His Gate. O, what use is to him Heaven or Salvation ? The true renouncer is for even imbued with the Lord's Praise and so loseth not his life in a gamble. Sayeth Nanak, 'listen thou, O Bharthri, the true Yogi is he who is intoxicated with the Elixir of the Lord' ''.

Guru Nanak in Asa

The hymn speaks of the intoxication which the nectar of the Name engenders. It keeps the mind ever in tune with Him. It is the state of equipoise (Sehaj), a state of perfect harmony. It is that natural state which is man's true possession and in which his whole life, his thoughts, his feelings and his actions are attuned harmoniously to His Will, i.e. they function as He desires. The whole life becomes musical, as it were, full of peace, joy and happiness. From such a life flow lofty thoughts and noble deeds of service and love. A mental condition is first cultivated and then perpetuated in which unbroken poise and calm become perfectly normal, independent of the ups and downs of life. Here is another important

hymn addressed to the same Yogi (Bharthri) emphasising the characteristics of a true Yogi.

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਮਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਮੁੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਖਿੰਥਾ ਖਿਮਾ ਹਢਾਵਉ ॥ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰੈ
ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਉ ਸਹਜ ਜੋਗ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਵਉ । ਬਾਬਾ ਜੁਗਤਾ ਜੀਉ ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗ
ਜੋਗੀ ਪਰਜ ਤੰਤ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਗੰ । ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਗਿਆਨ ਕਾਇਆ
ਰਸ ਭੋਗੰ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ । ਸਿਵ ਨਗਰੀ ਮਹਿ ਆਸਣਿ ਬੈਸਉ ਕਲਪ ਤਿਆਗੀ ਬਾਦੰ ।
ਸਿੰਛੀ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਦਾ ਧੁਨਿ ਸੋਹੈ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਪੂਰੈ ਨਾਦੰ । ਪਤੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ਗਿਆਨ ਮਤਿ
ਡੰਡਾ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਥਿਭੂਤੰ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਰਹਰਾਸਿ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪੰਥ ਅਤੀਤੰ ॥
ਸਗਲੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਸੰਮਿਆਂ ਨਾਨਾ ਵਰਨ ਅਨੇਕੰ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣਿ ਭਰਬਰਿ
ਜੋਗੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਲਿਵ ਏਕੰ ” ॥

“*The Guru's Word, enshrined in my mind, is my ear rings and compassion is my coat. I attain the Treasure of the Sehaj Yoga by submitting lovingly to His Will. O dear brother, he whose mind is ever united with Him, the Supreme Essence, is the True Yogi and he tasteth the Nectar Name of the Pure One and his body bathes in divine wisdom and enjoyeth the juice of love. I am seated within my self and have forsaken desire and disputations. My horn is the Guru's Word and its music, ever pleasing to me, ringeth in my mind. Reflection is my begging-bowl and Divine knowledge my staff ; To live in His Presence is the ashes I besmear my body with. The Lord's Praise is my daily routine and the Guru's Way is my ascetic way of life. To see the Lord's Light in all beings and in different garbs and forms is my support (on which the Yogis rest their arms). Sayeth Nanak, 'listen thou, O Bharthri, the true Yogi is he who is ever attuned to the Supreme Lord' ”.*

Guru Nanak in Asa

CHAPTER XXXVI

Pandit Braham Dass of Mattan

‘ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਲੇਹਿ ਟਿਆਣੇ ’

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘O ignorant man, surrender thyself to the Guru’s Wisdom.’

Guru Arjan in Gauri

Braham Dass, an orthodox Brahmin, lived in Muttan, (near Srinagar). He was very well read in the classical lore and carried loads of Sanskrit books of ancient wisdom on camel’s backs, wherever he went. He was inordinately proud of his learning and wanted to make a show of it to the people to impress upon them his holiness, as if holiness were a function of knowledge. A stone-God was ever hung from his neck to symbolise his devotion to the god, Shiva. People believed that the worship of Shiva had blessed him with levitational powers and he could fly, like a bird, in the air, along with the carpet he sat upon. The Guru was then on his missionary tour of the north. He was accompanied by Hassu, a smith, and Sihan, a Calico printer. He had dressed himself in a very odd fashion, though he appeared a Hindu on account of the Tilak he had on his forehead. He wore leather on his head and carried

a rope twisted on his body. He heard of the Pandit on arrival in Muttan and went to see him. Braham Dass did not notice his arrival or was too haughty, perhaps, to look at one whom he considered too small for him. Pride had blinded him and created an artificial atmosphere round him. The Guru knew at once the man and the deep rooted malady he suffered from. He had not utilised knowledge for promoting any moral or spiritual advancement but to feed his vanity. Such a man could find no rest or peace of mind ; for, the pursuit of mere knowledge, even of sacred books, divorced from spiritual awakening and the touch of the Spring of True Knowledge, was a dead weight. When he looked up he found the Guru before him. He was greatly amused at the sort of dress the Guru wore. He did not like that a religious man should wear leather which he regarded as unclean. He sneered at the dress and asked him, rather impertinently, how a man who claimed saintliness could dress himself in that eccentric way and make himself the laughing stock of the world. The Guru replied that he never claimed any saintliness for himself. All the same, outer forms did not have anything to do with piety and religious stature. Choice of dress was a matter of opinion, taste or social conventions. The dress a man wore in one part of the country might look ridiculous in an other part. What was good for one might not be good for another. What was sauce for the goose was not necessarily sauce for the gander. Men's ideas of good and bad, generally, were in relation to their own desires, ambitions and intelligence. Music might be good for a man in high spirits but bad for mourners. Rains might be good for the crops of one person but they must be an

evil for another person whose house they had demolished. The Guru actually listed out four types of beings who benefitted from rains and the other four types that suffered from the devastations the same rains caused. Here is the hymn about it :

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਵਣਿ ਜੇ ਵਸੈ ਚਹੁ ਉਮਾਹਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਗਾਂ ਮਿਰਗਾਂ ਮਛੀਆਂ
ਰਸੀਆਂ ਘਰ ਧਨੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਵਣਿ ਜੇ ਵਸੈ ਚਹੁ ਵੇਛੋੜਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਗਾਈ
ਪੁਤਾਂ ਨਿਰਧਨਾ ਪੰਥੀ ਚਾਕਰੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ”

‘Nanak, when it raineth in the month of Sawan, the four beings are immensely pleased—the snakes, the deer, the fish and the indulgers who have wealth enough. And when it raineth in the month of Sawan, four other beings are unhappy in their separation—the calfs, the poor, the wayfarers and the slaves.’

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

The Guru's illuminating talk and his mighty presence shook mildly the waters of the shallow and barren mind of the Pandit. The Guru went on to draw his attention to matters that really constituted religion. He talked of God and His limitless Power. He talked of the Guru who had merged in God and through whom His Word was revealed. The outer forms of religion with all the glamour attached to them became too insignificant in that context. Religion had to deal with the life of the spirit and of the things of permanent value. The Pandit, however, with all his knowledge, had his vision dwarfed and regarded petty matters as essential

things. Here is the song that the Guru sang on this occasion.

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਪਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਤੂੰ ਸਚਾ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਚੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ॥

ਬੈਠਾ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਇ ਕਵਲੁ ਛਪਾਇਆ ॥

ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਵਡਾ ਕਹਾਇ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਾਪੁ ਨਾ ਮਾਇ ਕਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਾ ਰੇਖ ਵਰਨ ਸਬਾਇਆ ॥

ਨਾ ਤਿਸ ਭੁਖ ਪਿਆਸ ਰਜਾ ਧਾਇਆ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਮਹਿ ਆਪੁ ਸਮੋਇ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਚੇ ਹੀ ਪਤੀਆਇ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥”

“Thou art True, O Lord, Thou hast manifested Truth. Thou art absorbed in Thy self, hiding Thy Lotus-Source. The great Brahma knew not Thy End. Thou hast neither form nor feature, nor any cost. Thou neither hast hunger nor thirst and yet Thou goest about Thy work ever-satiated. Thou art merged in the Guru and revealest Thy Word through him. By pleasing the True One, one mergeth in Him.

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

Then another song purporting to the same topic was sung. In particular, it glorified the Guru for being the laddar through which the True Self of man was to be realised. The Limitless and the Unfathomable Lord resided in the soul of every man. Self realisation was, therefore, God realisation and that was attained through the Guru. There was One Door and one Road leading to it. Thus all religions in this essential sense became one. All other things

associated with religion were relatively insignificant. Here is the hymn.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ॥

“ਹੋਕੋ ਪਾਧਰ ਹੋਕੁ ਦਰੁ ਗਰ ਪਉੜੀ ਨਿਜ ਥਾਨੁ ॥ ਰੂੜਉ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ
ਨਾਨਕਾ ਸਭਿ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਚਉ ਨਾਮ ॥ ਪਉੜੀ ॥ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਆਪੁ
ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ॥ ਅੰਬਰੁ ਧਰਤਿ ਵਿਛੋੜਿ ਚੰਦੋਆ ਤਾਣਿਆ ॥ ਵਿਣੁ ਬੰਮਾ ਗਗਨ
ਰਹਾਇ ਸਬਦੁ ਨੀਸਾਣਿਆ ॥ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਚੰਦੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਣਿਆ ॥ ਕੀਏ
ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਨੰਤੁ ਚੋਜ ਵਿਡਾਣਿਆ ॥ ਤੀਰਥ ਧਰਮ ਵੀਚਾਰ ਨਾਵਣ ਪੁਰਬਾਣਿਆ ॥
ਤੁਧੁ ਸਰਿ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ਕਿ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣਿਆ ॥ ਸਚੈ ਤਖਤਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ਹੋਰ
ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣਿਆ ॥”

“There is one Road leading to the One Door. The Guru is the ladder by which the True Self is reached. Nanak, the beautiful Master resideth there and all bliss is in His True Name. The Lord createth and knoweth Himself. He separateth the earth from the sky and spreadeth the canopy of Heavens over the world. He supporteth the sky without any pillars through the manifestation of His Will. He createth the sun and the moon, illumining them by His Own Light. He maketh night and day, how wonderful are His Powers ! By His Powers, the pilgrimage places, bathing in those places and giving thought to religious philosophies, came into existence. There is no other like Thee, O Lord, how can I describe Thee ? Thou, on Thy Throne, art Eternal, the others but come and go.”

Guru Nanak in Var Malar

The Pandit heard the Guru with rapt attention and was impressed too. But his mind could not be so easily weaned from his life long moorings. It had all along worked

merely on the intellectual plane. He was habituated to indulge in debates and it always pleased him to score a victory over the opponents, although it was all mental quibblings and jugglery of words without the least touch of faith and love. In keeping with his mental make up he asked the Guru how or when the world was created and where God then was. The subjects of the nature of ultimate Reality and its relation to creation have always been a baffling mystery to men and have, throughout ages, shaken even learned men to their depths. These subjects were often touched upon also by leaders of different faiths during the Guru's discourses with them. The Yogis had frequently asked these and similar other questions. In a monastery in Tibet when the Guru was with the Head Lama, the lamas of the place had also brought in these subjects. The Guru generally avoided entering into topics of mere metaphysical interest. But knowing the man he was now dealing with, he answered him through a hymn in Rag Maru on the theory of creation and the relation of man with God. Of course, these topics cannot be understood merely on the intellectual plane. It is only a man who had merged in God and had become timeless with Him who could have the vision to answer such questions. One has to enter the realm of the Spirit, the realm where the distinction between the knower and the known disappears. It is a state of perfect knowledge, an insight into depths of things where the past, the present and the future become one. The soul gets lit up there and truth of far reaching values are revealed, which no mere reading of books can impart or explain. Have not the development of clairvoyance and telepathy proved that knowledge of the external world can come through channels

other than the sense organs? Thought is transmitted from one man to another even when both of them are separated by thousands of miles. A man endowed with the gift of clairvoyance can detect hidden things at great distance and can perceive events remote in space and time—events that had happened already or were yet to take place in some future time. The clairvoyant is able to travel in time, the sense of which is so lost on him that he finds it difficult to distinguish an event of the past from that of the future. These experiments point unmistakably to the immense power that can be generated as a result of the union of the soul with the Universal Soul, through the soul's journey beyond the dimensions of the physical world. Then a state of higher level of consciousness is reached where the soul becomes for the time being timeless and spaceless. Here is the hymn the Guru uttered, in reply to the Pandits query.

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹੱਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੰਧੂਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥ ਨ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨਾ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰ ਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇੰਦਾ ॥ ਖਾਣੀ ਨ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਉਣ ਨ ਪਾਣੀ ॥ ਓਪਤਿ ਖਪਤ ਨ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੀ ॥ ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਸਪਤ ਨਹੀ ਸਾਗਰ ਨਦੀ ਨ ਨੀਰੁ ਵਹਾਇੰਦਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਮਛੁ ਪਇਆਲਾ ॥ ਦੋਜਕੁ ਭਿਸਤੁ ਨਹੀ ਖੈ ਕਾਲਾ ॥ ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਨਹੀ ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਆਇ ਨ ਜਾਇਦਾ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸ਼ਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਨਮਾ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਬਨਵਾਸੀ ॥ ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਸਿਧ ਸਾਧਿਕ ਸੁਖਵਾਸੀ ॥ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੰਗਮ ਭੇਖੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਨਾਥੁ ਕਹਾਇਦਾ ॥ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਨਾ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਪੂਜਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਕੇ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੇ ਦੂਜਾ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਵਿਗਸੇ ਆਪੇ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ ॥ ਗੋਪੀ ਕਾਨੁ ਨਾ ਗਊ ਗੋਆਲਾ ॥ ਤੰਤੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਨ ਕੋ ਵੰਸੁ

ਵਜਾਇਦਾ ॥ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਾਖੀ ॥ ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮ ਨਹੀ ਦੀਸੈ
ਆਖੀ ॥ ਮਮਤਾ ਜਾਲੁ ਕਾਲੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਾਥੈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਿਆਇਦਾ ॥ ਠੰਦੁ ਬਿੰਦੁ
ਨਹੀ ਜੀਉ ਨਾ ਜਿੰਦੋ ॥ ਨ ਤਦਿ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਨਾ ਮਾਛਿੰਦੋ ॥ ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ
ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕੁਲ ਓਪਤਿ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਗਣਤ ਗਣਾਇੰਦਾ ॥ ਵਰਣ ਭੇਖ ਨਹੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ
ਖਤੀ ॥ ਦੇਉ ਨਾ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਗਊ ਗਾਇਤੀ ॥ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਨਹੀ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਨਾ
ਕੋ ਪੂਜਾ ਲਾਇੰਦਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਮੁਲਾ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਾਜੀ ॥ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਸੇਖੁ ਮਸਾਇਕੁ
ਹਾਜੀ ॥ ਰਈਅਤ ਰਾਉ ਨਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਹਣੁ ਕਹਾਇੰਦਾ ॥ ਭਾਉ
ਨਾ ਭਗਤੀ ਨਾ ਸਿਵ ਸਕਤੀ ॥ ਸਾਜਨੁ ਮੀਤੁ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਕਤੀ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਸਾਹੁ
ਆਪੇ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ ਸਾਚੇ ਇਹੇ ਜਾਇੰਦਾ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਨ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਤ ਸਾਸਤ ॥ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਰਾਨ
ਉਦੈ ਨਹੀ ਅਸਤ ॥ ਕਹਤਾ ਬਕਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਆਪੇ ਅਲਖ ਲਖਾਇਦਾ ॥
ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਬਾਝੁ ਕਲਾ ਆਡਾਣੁ ਰਹਾਇਆ ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਣੁ ਮਹੇਸ਼ ਉਪਾਏ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਵਧਾਇਦਾ ॥ ਵਿਰਲੈ ਕਉ ਗੁਰ
ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖੇ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸਬਾਇਆ ॥ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਪਾਤਾਲ
ਅਰੰਭੇ ਗੁਪਤਹੁ ਪਰਗਟੀ ਆਇਦਾ ॥ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ
ਸੋਝੀ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚਿ ਰਤੇ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੀ ਬਿਸਮ ਭਏ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਦਾ ॥"

'For millions of ages there was all darkness over void. There was then neither the earth, nor the sky. Only the Will of the Infinite prevailed. There was neither night nor day, neither the sun nor the moon and God was centred in Absolute Void. There were no four sources of creation, no speech, no air, no water, no birth, no death, no coming, no going, no regions, no underworlds, no seven seas, no rivulets, no streams, no heavens, no world and no underworld. There were then no celestial regions, no nether regions, no death, no time, no Heaven, no Hell, no being, no becoming, no coming, no going. There was neither the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. There was no other but the One Absolute Lord. Neither woman there was, nor man, nor caste, nor

station, neither pleasure nor pain. Neither were there the celestials nor men of charity, nor the forest dwellers, nor the possessors of miracles, nor the seekers, nor the enjoyers of the pleasures of the flesh, no Yogis, no Jangams, no Naths (Gurus). There were no practicers of austerities, contemplations or self control, no worshippers, no fasting men. There was none to say that there was Another. The Lord only Himself had things in His imagination and was happy over it and Himself prized His Own Glory. There was no ablutions, no practices of self control, no Tulsi rosary. There was neither Krishna nor his consorts nor cows, nor herdsmen, nor deceptions of Tantra or mantra, nor any one played on the flute. There was no law of Karma, no code of righteousness, no vicious fly of Maya, no caste, no birth, no high or low could be seen. There was no Ego, no involvement, no death writ in any one's lot, no one to contemplate on anything. There was no slander, no rejection, no life, no body, no Gorakh (the Guru of the Yogis), nor Machhindra (his disciple), no knowledge, no contemplation, no creation of claims and no reckoning of accounts. There were no distinctions of colour or of form or of Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. There were no gods, no temples, no sanctity of cows, no recitation of the Gayatri, no offering to the sacrificial fire, no Yajnas, no pilgrimages, no worship of the Gods, no Sheikhs, no Haji (pilgrims), no kings, no subjects, no world of ego, and no one prided on one's self. There was no loving adoration, no Shiva, no Maya, no friend, no foe, no ovary, no sperm. He, the Lord Himself was the Merchant and Himself the Pedlar, for such was His Pleasure. There were no Vedas, no Semetic Books, no Simrities, no Shastras, no reading of Puranas, no sunrise, no sunset. He the Lord was alone centred in Himself, remaining unperceived, knowing only Himself, His

Unknowable Self. When it pleased Him, He brought the Universe into being ; And without any visible power He upheld its vast Expanse. He created the Brahma, the Vishnu and the Shiva and instilled in men the love of Maya. But rare is the one whom He caused to hear the Guru's Word. The Lord's Will prevailed and He saw it working. Thus He created all the Universe, its parts and the underworlds. From the Absolute Self He became manifest. No one knoweth the Extent of the Lord. It is through the perfect Guru that He is revealed to men. Nanak, they who are in love with His Truth are imbued with His Wonder and thus wonderstruck they sing His Praises."

Guru Nanak in Maru

The above hymn describes God in two aspects—the Absolute or the Nirgun and the Personal or the Sargun. Before He created the Universe there was, for millions of ages, nothing else except God absorbed in Himself. In this State He cannot be conceived of in any human attributes, There was complete darkness over utter void. There was no air, no water, no birth, no death, no time, no space, no heaven, no hell, no worship, no fasting, no law of Karma, no Maya, no life, no knowledge, no Gorakh, no Machhindra, no distinction of caste or colour, no ovary no sperm, no sun, no moon. In this Absolute State He was endowed with the All-pervasive Will, the unfathomable yet wonderful Will. All was then in a State of oneness as a single unit. But then He willed and became manifest in His Creation. The act of creation afforded Him immense pleasure. The power of creation lay potentially hidden in Him. He transformed a part of Himself in His

Creation, in His Manifestations.

“ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥”

ਜਪੁਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ

‘The True One was in the beginning, the true One was before ages began, the True One is and ever shall be.’

Guru Nanak in Japji

He is Absolute and Transcendent and yet His immanent Spirit moves the creation from within. He is not outside His Creation, merely watching it. He is continually present in the Universe which depends entirely on His Will.

“ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i.e. *“Seated in the Universe He watcheth His creation with delight.”*

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

All are strung to His Will and depend on Him but He has not to depend on anything. He conditions the creation's existence but yet remains beyond time and space. But though He is thus present everywhere He can be revealed to man through the aid of the perfect Guru. The emphasis on the perfect Guru in the last lines of the hymn was intended significantly for the benefit of the Pandit. It is the true Guru that enlightens otherwise there is nothing but wilderness and confusion. Mere knowledge could not break the bonds of Karma. The Pandit must, therefore, find a teacher imbued with the love of the Lord

who should fill his dry heart with love and devotion. The Pandit recognised that the Guru before him must be a man of Divine Wisdom and all his knowledge must have come to him through contact with the Divine Presence. He admitted that inspite of his vast learning he was not happy and wanted the Guru's guidance. The Guru first advised him to devote more of his time to service. It entailed devotion, humility and selflessness so very necessary to remove the filth of ego which had engulfed him. But the Pandit's mind was not yet ready for the same. After a few days more the Guru said to him that he needed a perfect teacher, a Guru to take care of his soul and he should seek one. He had already emphasised in each of his hymn referred above, the Guru's glory as a saviour. The surrender to the Guru, he knew, would cure him of his ailment. Some faqirs lived in the close by forests, and the Pandit went to them for consultations and he related to them his whole history. The faqirs thought that the man was suffering from limitless vanity and needed a shock treatment that would humble him. He needed to be disgraced and humiliated. He professed to have read books but the knowledge he had gained had resulted in another form of Maya. It had appeared in the form of an overweening sense of pride and this had darkened his path. Whatever he might say he was actually the worshipper of Maya, and so Maya was his Guru, in fact. His professions of religious faith were mere lip homage and had no reference to his life. Maya, his, real Guru, was an evil in one way yet the same Maya could cure him of the malady he was suffering from. Out of evil sometimes comes good. Men do not care to discover what was wrong with them till a catastrophe befell

them to disillusion them and then they looked upon life from a new perspective. Otherwise they go on their way unmindful of consequences, Suffering was one of the ways God had for improving the world and for bringing out the best in man. So the faqirs sent him to a woman guarding a temple, whom they knew to be rude and perverted. She was an evil, a from of Maya. Yet this Maya was going to serve him. When the woman heard the purpose of the Pandit's visit, she thought he had come simply to make a fool of her and she gave him shoe beating. He was thoroughly humbled but the faqir's trick worked well. He became humble at heart too, his pride having been redely shaken.

“ਮੂਰਖੁ ਗੰਢੁ ਪਵੈ ਮੁਹਿ ਮਾਰ ॥” ਵਾਰ ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“The fool is often mended on being struck in the face.”

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh

The Pandit returned to the Guru and threw himself at his feet. He flung the idol he had round his neck as also all his books and admitted that the knowledge the books had imparted to him had done him no good. Now he was to be blessed with spiritual vision by the true Guru whom he had met at last. It was this man who later became the Guru's messenger to spread spiritual light and wisdom of the Guru among the Kashmiris. The following hymn was, in the end, read out to him to indicate that the Name was the only cure of the ills from which men suffered in various ways.

ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮ ਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਸਹਸਰ ਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੁ ਰੋਆਇਆ ॥ ਪਰਸਰਾਮੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ ॥

ਅਜੈ ਸੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਐਸੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ
ਨਿਕਾਲਾ ਭਇਆ ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲਖਮਣੁ ਵਿਛੜਿ ਗਇਆ ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਦਹਸਿਰੁ ਲੰਕ
ਗਵਾਇ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੀਤਾ ਆਂਦੀ ਡਉਰੂ ਵਾਇ ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਭਏ ਮਜ਼ੂਰ ॥ ਜਿਨ
ਕੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਤ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਜਨਮੈਜਾ ਖੁਇ ਗਇਆ ॥ ਏਕੀ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਪਾਪੀ
ਭਇਆ ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਸੇਖ ਮਸਾਇਕ ਪੀਰ ॥ ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਮਤੁ ਲਾਗੈ ਭੀੜ ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ
ਰਾਜੇ ਕੰਨ ਪੜਾਇ ॥ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਕਿਰਪਨ
ਸੰਚਹਿ ਧਨੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ ਬਾਲੀ ਰੋਵੈ ਨਾਹਿ
ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਮੰਨੇ ਨਾਉ ਸੋਈ ਜਿਣਿ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਅਉਰੀ
ਕਰਮ ਨ ਲੇਖੈ ਲਾਇ ॥”

‘Indra came to grief, cursed (by Gautama) with a thousand marks (resembling female organ) on his body. Paras Ram also came crying (Rama had deprived him of his powers). Aja (Rama’s grand sire) wailed when made to eat (the dung) he had given to a sadhu in charity. So doth one suffer at the Lord’s Court. Rama too wailed on being banished from home and later separated from his wife, Sita and his brother, Lakshmana. The ten headed Ravana cried when he lost his Lanka, he who had carried away Sita in the guise of a mendicant. The Pandvas wailed on becoming labourers from kings even though their Lord (Krishna with his golden flute) had abided with them. Janamejaya grieved that he lost the way and he became a sinner only for one error in life. The Sheikhs, the Pirs, the Seers, all cry out of fear, that at the time of death they may not die in peace. Kings (like Bhartari) regretted, pained at heart that they got their ears torn and they had to beg for alms from door to door. The miser weepeth that the riches he assembled were

lost in the end. The Pandit waileth lest he loseth his wisdom. The woman crieth out for her lost spouse. Nanak, the whole world is unhappy. He who believeth in the Name wineth, for, no other deeds are of any account to the Lord."

Gur Nanak in Var Ram Kali

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CHAPTER XXXVII

The Yogis of Mount Sumer

“ਬਾਝ ਗੁਰੂ ਡੁਬਾ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘Without the true Guru the world drowns itself.’

Var Bhai Gurdas

We have seen already that the Guru's times were of great political upheaval. The Lodhi empire had virtually collapsed and Babar was building his empire in its place. The ruthless persecution of the people and the indiscriminate repressive measures adopted, had created fear everywhere. Utter chaos and demoralisation prevailed throughout the land. Holy-men, seers, sages and ascetics had taken refuge in the mountains and forests, away from the haunts of men, and there was none left to guide the suffering people. They had accepted the philosophy that the world was a snare and a place of suffering and it was good to remain indifferent to it. The terror Babar had created only strengthened that belief. After his visit to Kashmir, the Guru met a party of such men hiding at the Mansarowar Lake and over other parts of Mount Sumer. They were the Sidh Yogis engaged in idle pursuits of acquiring supernatural powers, and were quite

oblivious to the sufferings of their countrymen. Yet when they saw the Guru, they asked him how he was able to reach that difficult place and how the mother country was doing. It seems that the indiscriminate slaughter they had already witnessed and the terror it had created were not altogether forgotten and they still wanted to hear some good news from the plains. Bhai Gurdas has written about it thus,

“ ਸਿਧ ਪੁਛਣ ਸੁਨ ਬਾਲਿਆ ਕੋਣ ਸ਼ਕਤ ਤੁਹਿ ਏਥੇ ਲਿਆਈ । ”

‘The Yogis inquired of him what power it was that had brought him to that place.’

And then,

“ ਫਿਰ ਪੁਛਣ ਸਿਧ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਾਤ ਲੋਕ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ । ”

‘Further, they inquired of him how the mother country was doing,’

Earlier, they had also asked him about his name and his religious faith, but we shall deal with this matter presently, in connection with the Sidh Goshat, a long composition in the form of questions and answers, embodying the discourses he had with the Yogis of this place. Puratan Janam Sakhi, however, claims that the ‘Sidh Goshat’ discourses had taken place in Gorakh Hatri. It may also be stated in this connection that there are theologians who accept neither Mount Sumer nor Gorakh Hatri as the place of the discourses. According to them these had taken place with the Sidh Yogis of Achal Batala. For us, however, the important thing is not the place, which now has only an academic interest, but the ‘Goshat’ itself which

provides a very important study.

The Guru was surprised when he learnt that the Yogis had the mother country still in mind. His own mind was, of course, already full on this matter and he came out with it spontaneously. He totally disapproved people sinking into selfish individualism. In the face of so much evil in the world the so-called personal salvation sought by misguided men had no meaning. The ethics of indifference to the world was a thing wholly unacceptable to him. How could a man of God witness tyranny without revolting against it? He believed the whole humanity as one. The Love of God was to be expressed through the service of man. Perfection was not possible without this service because the basis of perfection was the love of God and this love could not but lead to the love of man. Thus true enlightenment and inner purity must provide inspiration to serve humanity. This is what may be called spiritual humanism. It looks upon human life as one, being the manifestation of God. Here is the Guru's reply to the Yogis, in the words of Bhai Gurdas.

“ਬਾਬੇ ਕਹਿਆ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਸਚ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਕੂੜ ਅੰਧਾਰਾ ॥ ਕੂੜ ਅਮਾਵਸ
ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹਉ ਭਾਲਣ ਚੜਿਆ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਪਾਪ ਗਿਤਾਸੀ ਪਿਰਥਮੀ ਧੌਲ ਖੜਾ
ਧਰ ਹੇਠ ਪੁਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਸਿੱਧ ਛਪ ਬੈਠੇ ਪਰਬਤੀ ਕੌਣ ਜਗਤ ਕਉ ਪਾਰ ਉਤਾਰਾ ॥
ਜੋਗੀ ਗਯਾਨ ਵਿਹੂਣਿਆਂ ਨਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਅੱਗ ਲਗਾਇਨ ਛਾਰਾ ॥ ਬਾਝ ਗੁਰੂ ਡੁਬਾ
ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥”

“Dear sir, darkness of untruth hath enveloped the moon of truth. In this dark night of utter falsehood I am groping the world over in the dark. Sin stalks the earth and the Bull of Dharma (righteousness) cries in vain for help. Who will

save the world when the Sidhs hide themselves in mountain retreats? The Yogis who day and night go about with ashes smeared over them have no real wisdom. The world is drowning without a true leader."

The Guru's actual words as given in Var Manjh are :—

“ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਥ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ।
ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ ॥
ਹਉ ਭਾਲਿ ਵਿਕੁੰਨੀ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਆਧੇਰੇ ਰਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥”

“This Kal Age is a knife, kings are butchers, justice hath taken wings. In this dark night of utter falsehood the moon of truth is never seen to rise. I am bewildered and in this darkness cannot find the way”.

The Yogis realised the force in the Guru's thinking which was also backed by his high intellectual attainments. They thought to themselves that if he could be persuaded to accept the Yogic order, their religion would grow greatly. So they tried to impress upon him the superiority of their faith through the display of the powers of miracles. They proudly claimed to have acquired such powers by the practice of their religion. The Guru was sent to bring a jar-ful of water from the lake, which was to appear covered with precious stones. He paid no heed to it and came back quietly. The Yogis felt acutely frustrated. Then they started discussions on different topics of philosophy to understand his point of view, particularly in respect of their own beliefs. The 'Sidh Goshat' is a resume, summing up these discussions. We propose, however, to give here only a gist of the discourses, by means of important selections we have made

out of this 'Sidh' Goshat.' Most of the subjects dealt with have already been considered at other places and need no elaboration. We would spare the reader repetitions unless it seemed necessary to emphasise a point here or there. Here are the selections :—

Question : “ਕਵਨ ਤੁਮੇ ਕਿਆ ਨਾਉ ਤੁਮਾਰਾ ਕਉਨ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਕਉਨੁ ਸੁਆਓ ॥”

“What is thy name, what is thy religion and what is the mission of thy life ?”

Answer : ‘ਸਾਚ ਕਹਉ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਹਉ ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾਂ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਓ ।’

“I am a sacrifice unto the saints who have taught me the right prayer (worship), ever to speak the truth.”

The Yogis were not satisfied with the reply. They put the same question in another form,

“ਕਹ ਬੈਸਹੁ ਕਹ ਰਹੀਐ ਬਾਲੇ ਕਹ ਆਵਹੁ ਕਹ ਜਾਹੋ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਬੋਲੇ ਸੁਣ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਕਿਆ ਤੁਮਾਰਾ ਰਾਹੋ ।”

“Where livest thou, wherefrom hast thou come and whither art thou going, youngman ? O thou, detached one from the world, what really is thy religion” ?

(The Yogis address the Guru as a youngman. They treated him as young, not in age but in spiritual experience).

Answer : “ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਬੈਸਿ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਚਾਲਹਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭਾਏ । ਸਹਜੇ ਆਏ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਿਧਾਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਦਾ ਰਜਾਏ॥ ਆਸਣਿ ਬੈਸਣਿ ਬਿਰੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਐਸੀ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪਾਏ । ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੂਝੇ ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੇ ਸਚੇ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਏ ॥”

“I live in the One who resideth in all and I walk in the true Guru’s will, Such wisdom have I received from the Guru that the Eternal Lord is the object of my worship in my sitting postures. The truly God-conscious is he who knoweth his Self and mergeth in the True One ”

The Guru gives further a detailed reply as to what true Yoga (Religion) is :

“ਦਰਸਨੁ ਭੇਖ ਕਰਹੁ ਜੋਗਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਮੁੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਝੋਲੀ ਖਿੰਥਾ ॥ ਬਾਰਹੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਸਰੇਵਹੁ ਖਟੁ ਦਰਸਨ ਇਕ ਪੰਥਾ ॥ ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝਾਈਐ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਬਾਹੁਤਿ ਚੋਟ ਨ ਖਾਈਐ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੋਲੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੂਝੇ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਮੁੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਮਤਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸ਼ਬਦਿ ਸੁ ਸਮਝ ਪਰੀ ॥ ਖਿੰਥਾ ਝੋਲੀ ਭਰਿਪੁਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾਰੈ ਏਕੁ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਾਚੀ ਨਾਈ ਪਰਖੈ ਗੁਰਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਖਰੀ ॥ ਉਧਉ ਖਪਰੁ ਪੰਚ ਭੂ ਟੋਪੀ ॥ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੜਾਸਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਗੋਟੀ ॥ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਿ ॥”

“O Yogi, let God’s Vision be thy outer form - the coat, the ear rings and the wallet. Let the worship of the One be the aim of each of the twelve Yogic sects and His Path, the wisdom of the six Shastras. If thou teachest thy mind such wisdom thou wilt not suffer again. Whoever knoweth this Way through the Guru, attaineth the Way of true Yoga. Let the Word enshrined in the heart be thy ear-rings by which thy ego is dispelled, and let thy wrath, lust and pride be thrown off through the Guru’s instructions. Let the realisation that God pervadeth all be thy coat and wallet, thus wilt thou be saved by the One Lord. The Master is true, so is His Name, He is the test of the Truth of the Guru’s Word. Let the mind turned away from desire be thy begging bowl, the Essence of

the five elements, the cap, the alertness of the body, the mat, the control of mind, the loin-cloth and Truth, contentment, and continence, the companions. Sayeth Nanak, 'Dwell thou, thus, on His Name, through the Guru's instructions'." 2.

Question : "ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਦੁਤਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਪਾਰੇ ॥
ਚਰਪਟੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਅਉਧੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਹੁ ਸਚਾ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

"The Yogi Charpat said, 'The sea of the world is impassable. How to cross it? O Nanak, the detached one, what is the right reply thou givest to it?'"

Answer : "ਜੇਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੇਸਾਣੇ ॥
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸੁਬਦਿ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥"

As the lotus liveth detached in water, or as the duck floateth care-free on the stream, so doth one cross the sea of life by attuning to the Word and enshrining the Lord in the heart."

The Yogis were not satisfied with this reply which seemed to them rather abstract and impracticable. They thought that their own way of life was superior. With a feeling of pride they said that they lived far away from society completely detached from the turmoil of life. They could live only on roots and fruits and had acquired purity of mind through bathing in holy waters. This is what they said,

"ਹਾਟੀ ਬਾਟੀ ਰਹਹਿ ਨਿਰਾਲੇ ਰੂਖਿ ਬਿਰਖਿ ਉਦਿਆਨੇ ॥ ਕੰਦ ਮੂਲ ਆਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਈਐ ਅਉਧੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਗਿਆਨੇ ॥ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ ਸੁਖੁ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਿਲੁ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ਕਾਈ ॥ ਗਰਬ ਪੂਤੁ ਲੋਹਾਰੀਪਾ ਬੋਲੈ ਜੇਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਾਈ ॥"

"We abide in the forests and woods, away from the paths

of society. We feed on roots and fruits That is the path of wisdom," affirmed the Yogis. "We bathe at the holy places and attain the fruit of peace, without getting the mind defiled." Sayeth Loharipa, the disciple of Gorakh, "this is the way of true Yoga."

The Guru replied that the mind continued to wander even when one was away from society. It should be controlled by the love of the Name.

“ਹਾਟੀ ਬਾਟੀ ਨੀਂਦ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਪਰ ਘਰਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਨ ਡੋਲਾਈ ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਮਨੁ ਟੇਕ ਨ ਟਿਕਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੂਖ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥”

“One should not go to sleep in the midst of society (i. e. one should always remain alert) and not falter on seeing other people's wealth or beauty. Wherever one might be, the mind was not controlled without the Name nor were the cravings satisfied .”

Question : “ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਬਾਧਾ ਸਰਪਨਿ ਖਾਧਾ ॥ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਖੋਇਆ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਲਾਧਾ ॥”

“How is one bound and eaten up by Maya, the snake ? How doth one lose and how doth one gain ?”

Answer : “ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਬਾਧਾ ਸਰਪਨਿ ਖਾਧਾ ॥ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਖੋਇਆ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਧਾ । ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਉਮੈ ਮੇਟਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥”

“The evil understanding bindeth and then the Maya eateth. The ego centred loseth and the God-conscious gaineth. On meeting the true Guru one's darkness is dispelled and then one's ego is stilled and into God one mergeth.”

Question : “ਕਿਸੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਤਜਿਉ ਉਦਾਸੀ ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਇਹੁ ਭੇਖੁ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਵਖਰ ਕੇ ਤੁਮ ਵਣਜਾਰੇ ॥ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਬੁ ਲੰਘਾਵਹੁ ਪਾਰੇ ॥”

“Why hast thou forsaken home and become a recluse ? Why hast thou donned the garb of a mendicant ? What is it that thou seekest to trade in and how wilt thou lead others across ?”

Answer : “ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਖੋਜਤ ਭਏ ਉਦਾਸੀ । ਦਰਸਨ ਕੈ ਤਾਈ ਭੇਖ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ । ਸਾਰ ਵਖਰੇ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਵਣਜਾਰੇ । ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਉਤਰਸਿ ਪਾਰੇ ॥”

“I became a recluse to discover God conscious beings. To have their vision I have donned the mendicant's garb. I am out to trade in truth, being a pedlar of truth. It is through the God-conscious saints that others will cross the sea.”

Question : “ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਪਰਖਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਵਟਾਇਆ । ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਤੁਝ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਇਆ । ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਆਸਾ ਮਨਸਾ ਖਾਈ । ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਪਾਈ ।”

“How hast thou changed the course of thy life ? To whom art thou attuned and for what ? How hast thou stilled desire and hope ? How hast thou found the Light within thee ?”

Answer : “ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਜਨਮੇ ਗਵਨੁ ਮਿਟਾਇਆ ॥ ਅਨਹਤਿ ਰਾਤੇ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਇਆ । ਮਨਸਾ ਆਸਾ ਸਬਦ ਜਲਾਈ । ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਪਾਈ ।”

“Being born at the Guru's, my coming and going have ceased, and being attuned to the Indestructible, my mind is in check. Through the Word have my hope and desire been stilled. Through the Guru I have found Light within.”

Question : “ਆਦਿ ਕਉ ਕਵਨੁ ਬੀਚਰੁ ਕਥੀਅਲੇ ਸੁੰਨ ਕਹਾ ਘਰ ਵਾਸੈ ॥”

“What sayeth thou about the Beginning ? Where did the Absolute God abide then ?”

Answer : "ਆਦਿ ਕਉ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਕਥੀਅਲੇ ਸੁੰਨ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ
ਵਾਸੁ ਲੀਆ ॥ ਅਵਿਗਤੋ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਤੇ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਥੀਆ ॥"

*To think of the Beginning is a wonder. Then, the
Absolute Lord abideth in Himself... From the Absolute,
He became Manifest.*

Question : 'ਕਹਾ ਓ ਆਵੈ ਕਹਾ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਵੈ ਕਥਾ ਇਹੁ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ ॥'

*Wherefrom hath man come, whither doth he go and
wherein doth he merge*

Answer : "ਹੁਕਮ ਆਵੈ ਹੁਕਮ ਜਾਵੈ ਹੁਕਮ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ ॥...
ਹੁਕਮੁ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਪਛਾਣੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਚੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਸਈ ॥"

*Man emergeth from God's Will and goeth as is the Will
and mergeth too as is the Will... Wonderous is the Lord's
Will and it is realised only when one walketh in the Will.
Then one knoweth the Way of true living.*

Answer : "ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੇ ਚੇਲਾ ॥"

'Who is thy Guru to whom thou art the disciple' ?

Answer : "ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥"

*'The Word is the Guru and the mind well attuned to it
is the disciple.'*

Question : "ਮੈਣ ਕੇ ਦੰਤ ਕਿਉ ਖਾਈਐ ਸਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਤ ਗਰਬ ਜਾਇ
ਸੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਆਹਾਰੁ । ਹਿਵੈ ਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਅਗਨਿ ਪਿਰਾਹਨੁ ॥ ਕਵਨ ਗੁਫਾ ਜਿਤੁ
ਰਹੈ ਅਵਾਹਨੁ । ਇਤ ਓਤ ਕਿਸ ਕੋ ਜਾਣਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥ ਕਵਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਮਨੁ ਮਨਹਿ
ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥"

Q. 2. *How may one eat iron with the teeth of wax? (Mind is weak and finds it hard to live the life of truth). What should be one's food to destroy one's pride? The house (body) we live in is of snow (easily vanishable) and the robes are of fire (The fire of evil destroys this house), pray which is the cave where the mind findeth rest? Who is it here or there in whom one is to merge? What contemplation is it that maketh the mind abide within itself?*

Answer. "ਹਉ ਹਉ ਮੈ ਮੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਖੋਵੈ। ਦੂਜਾ ਮੈਟੇ ਦੇਖੋ ਹੋਵੈ॥ ਜਗੁ ਕਰੋੜਾ ਮਨੁਮਖੁ ਗੁਵਾਰੁ॥ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਖਾਈਐ ਸਾਰੁ॥ ਅਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਰੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕੈ ਭਾਣੈ। ਸਚੁ ਭੈ ਰਾਤਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੈ॥ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਤਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੈ॥"

"When the sense of the Other is destroyed, ego is stilled. The egocentric is an ignorant fool and so the world becometh hard to him, but by practising the Word, the iron is eaten. When one seeth the Lord within and without, the (inner) fire is quenched through the Guru's Word. When one feareth the True One, one stilleth one's ego, and knowing the One alone reflecteth on the Guru's Word."

Question. "ਕਵਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਹਿਵੈ ਘਰੁ ਛਾਇਆ॥ ਕਵਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਰਜ ਤਪੈ ਤਪਾਇਆ॥ ਕਵਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਕਾਲੁ ਜੋਹਤ ਨਿਤ ਰਹੈ। ਕਵਨ ਬਧਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਤਿ ਰਹੈ। ਕਵਨ ਜੋਧੁ ਜੇ ਕਾਲੁ ਸੰਘਾਰੈ॥ ਬੋਲੈ ਥਾਣੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ॥"

"How doth the moon (mind) build for itself the house of ice (life without any aspirations in it)? How doth the sun (True wisdom) burn to destroy this ice house? How doth one overcome the limitations that Time ever imposes? What wisdom is it that saveth the honour of the God-conscious

beings ? Who is the Warrior that overpowereth Death? Say, O Nanak, what thinkest thou of these ?

Answer. “ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਭਾਖਤ ਸਸਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਪਾਰਾ। ਸਸਿ ਘਰਿ ਸੂਰੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਿਟੈ ਅੰਧਿਆਰਾ। ਸੁਖ ਦੁਖ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਧਾਰਾ। ਆਪੇ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਾਰਣਹਾਰਾ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਚੈ ਮਨੁ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ॥ ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥”

“By uttering the Guru's Word, the Light of the Sun (God's Wisdom) entereth the moon's house of ice (mind). The darkness is dispelled and infinite Light illumineth. The support of God's Name maketh one look on pain and pleasure alike, for, God Himself saveth then. Through the Guru's instructions, one mergeth in Truth and then,” sayeth Nanak, “Death destroyeth not (loses its terror)”.

Question : “ਸੁਨੋ ਸੁਨੋ ਕਹੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ। ਅਨਹਤ ਸੁਨੁ ਕਰਾ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ॥”

‘Everybody speaketh of the state of Void, but how is one to attain that eternal State ?’

Answer : “ਨਉ ਸਰ ਸੁਭਰ ਦਸਵੈ ਪੂਰੇ ॥ ਤਹ ਅਨਹਤ ਸੁਨ ਵਜਾ ਵਹਿ ਤੂਰੇ ॥”

‘Those who fill up the nine doors (destroy outpourings of the mind and fill completely the Tenth door (the seat of the mind) with God's Love, the unstruck music (of spiritual Bliss) ringeth within them’.

Question : “ਕਥਪਿ ਚਵਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਕਿਤੁ ਠਾਇ ॥ ਕਿਉ ਤਤੁ ਨ ਬੂਝੈ ਚੋਟਾ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਬੂਝੈ ਪਾਵੈ ਪਾਰ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਨ ਬੂਝੈ ਗਵਾਰੁ ॥”

“What place can he find who talketh words of unwisdom ? Why doth he not know the Quintessence and why cometh he to grief ? How is then one to know the way to cross the ocean

of life ?” Sayeth Nanak, ‘this, the unwise egocentric knoweth not.’ ”

The last line is the reply to the other lines put negatively, which is further elaborated thus,

Answer : “ਕੁਬੁਧਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਗੁਰ ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭੇਟੈ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰਾ । ਮਾਨੈ ਹੁਕਮ ਸਭੈ ਗਣ ਗਿਆਨ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਵ ਮਾਨ ॥”

‘Ignorance goeth by reflecting on the Guru’s Word. By meeting the Guru, the Door of Salvation is attained. By submitting to the Will, all wisdom and all merit are acquired and then one is honoured at the Lord’s Court.’

Question : “ਸੁ ਸਬਦ ਕਾ ਕਹਾ ਵਾਸੁ ਕਥੀਅਲੇ ਜਿਤ ਤਰੀਐ ਭਵਜਲੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੋ ! ਤੈ ਸਤ ਅੰਗੁਲ ਵਾਈ ਕਹੀਐ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਹੁ ਕਵਨੁ ਅਧਾਰੋ ॥”

‘Where is that Word (musical sound) through which the sea of life is crossed ? What supporteth the air that, when outbreathed, spanneth the distance of ten fingers ? (The exhaled breath was supposed to reach a distance of ten fingers).’ The Guru’s reply skilfully gives a new meaning to the perverted technique of the Yogis.

Answer : “ਸੁ ਸਬਦ ਕਉ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਤਹ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਪਵਨ ਕਾ ਵਾਸਾ ਸੁੰਨ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ ਅਕਲ ਕਲਾ ਧਰ ਸੋਈ ॥ ... ਤੈ ਸਤ ਅੰਗੁਲ ਵਾਈ ਅਉਧੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਚ ਆਹਾਰੋ ॥ ਸੁਖਮਨਾ ਇੜਾ ਪਿੰਗਲਾ ਬੁਝੈ ਜਾਂ ਆਪੇ ਅਲਖੁ ਲਖਾਏ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਹੁ ਤੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਸਮਾਏ ॥”

‘The Word (God’s Wisdom) pervadeth all beings yet remaineth unperceived. Wherever I see, I see Him. As is the air all pervading, so is the Lord of Void pervading all

by an art that is artless.... The True Lord is the support of the air that one outbreathes upto a distance of ten fingers When the Lord revealeth Himself to one, one knoweth the meaning of true discipline of the breath control (which the Yogis claimed to acquire through the practice of inhalation and exhalation of breath). When one mergeth in the True Guru's Word, the Lord beyond the three channels of breath is attained.

Question : "ਮਨ ਕਾ ਜੀਉ ਪਵਨੁ ਕਬੀਅਲੈ ਪਵਨੁ ਕਰਾ ਰਸੁ ਖਾਈ ॥
ਜਿਸੁ ਗਿਆਨ ਕੀ ਸੁਖਾ ਕਰਨ ਅਉਧੁ ਸਿਧ ਕੀ ਕਰਨ ਕਮਾਈ ॥"

'The air is considered as the life of the mind but on what does the air feed ! What is the way to Wisdom and what are the achievements of a Sidha Yogi.'

Answer : ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਰਸੁ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਅਉਧੁ ਹਉਮੈ ਪਿਆਸ ਨ ਖਾਈ ।

ਸਬਦਿ ਰਤੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਰਸੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਾਚੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਘਾਈ ॥

'Without the Word, O Yogis, one attaineth not the Juice of Bliss and the thirst of ego is quenched not. Those saturated in the Word taste the Nectar-Juice and remain satiated in the True One.'

Question : ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਮੈਗਲੁ ਕਹਾ ਬਸੀਅਲੈ ਕਹਾ ਬਸੈ ਇਹੁ ਪਵਨਾ ॥

ਕਹਾ ਬਸੈ ਸੁ ਸਬਦ ਅਉਧੁ ਤਾਂ ਕਉ ਚਕੈ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਭਵਨਾ ॥

'Where doth mind, (the self willed) elephant abide ? Where abideth the vital-breath ? Where doth the word (sound) abide when the wanderings of the mind cease ?'

Answer : ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ
ਪਾਏ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪੁ ਖਾਇ ਤਾਂ ਠਿਰਮਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਧਾਵਤੁ ਵਰਜਿ ਕਹਾਈ ॥

'When God is Merciful, He maketh one meet the True Guru and then this mind abideth in its own self. When one eateth up one's ego, one becometh pure and the outgoings of the wandering mind are stilled.'

Question : "ਕਿਉ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਆਤਮੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਿਉਂ ਸਸਿ ਘਰਿ ਸੂਰੁ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥"

"How is one to know the Source and how to know the Self? How is the Sun to enter the house of the Moon?"

Answer : "ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਖੋਵੈ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥"

'As the God-conscious person loseth his ego, he mergeth in the State of equipoise (and then all questionings of the mind cease).'

Question : "ਜਾਂ ਇਹੁ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਦੇਹ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਤਉ ਮਨੁ ਕੈਨੈ ਰਹਤਾ ॥ ਨਾਭਿ ਕਮਲ ਅਸਥੰਭੁ ਨ ਹੋਤੋ ਤਾ ਪਵਨੁ ਕਵਨ ਘਰਿ ਸਹਤਾ ॥ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਹੋਤੋ ਰੇਖ ਨ ਕਾਈ ਤਾਂ ਸਬਦਿ ਕਹਾਂ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ । ਰਕਤੁ ਬਿੰਦ ਕੀ ਮਝੀ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਮਿਤਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਈ ॥"

"When the body and the heart were not, where was then the mind? When the 'lotus of the navel' supported not the breath, then where did the breath abide? (The Yogis believed that the navel region where they held their breath was the starting point of the breath). When there was no form or feature assumed by the Absolute One, to whom, through the Word, was one attuned? When there was no human mould of sperm and ovary, how could one evaluate the Supreme?"

Answer : "ਹਿਰਦਾ ਦੇਹ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਅਉਧੁ ਤਉ ਮਨੁ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਰਹੈ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ॥"

ਨਾਭਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਅਸਬੰਭੁ ਨ ਹੋਤੋ ਤਾ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਬਸਤਉ ਪਵਨੁ
ਅਨਰਾਗੀ ॥ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਤਉ ਅਕੁਲੀਣਿ ਰਹਤਉ
ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਗਉਨੁ ਗਗਨੁ ਜਬ ਤਬਹਿ ਨ ਹੋਤਉ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਨ ਜੋਤਿ
ਆਪੇ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥”

‘When there was no human body nor heart, the mind abided in the Absolute, Detached Lord. When the lotus and the navel supported not the vital air then the Life Force abided within Itself in the form of Love. When there was no form, no feature, no individuation then the Word, in its essence, abided in the Absolute One. When there was neither the earth nor the sky, then the Light of the Formless One permeated all the three worlds.’

Question : “ਵਰਨੁ ਭੇਖੁ ਅਸਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੀ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਪਸਿ ਸਾਚਾ ॥”

‘If God hath no colour, nor garb, nor form, how is the True One known’ ?

Answer : “ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਇਬ ਤਬ ਸਾਚੇ ਸਾਚਾ ।”

‘Nanak, they who are detached and saturated with the Name, know the True One residing everywhere.’

Question : “ਕਿਤੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਦੁਖਿ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਈ ।”

‘How doth the world come into being ? How doth it destroy itself in Pain ?’

Answer : “ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਿਸਰਿਐ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਈ ॥”

‘The world cometh into being through a sense of ego and forsaking the Name, it cometh to grief’.

Question : “ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਆਵੈ ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਜਾਇ । ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਨ
ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥”

*‘Who is it that cometh and who goeth. And who is it that
remaineth in the One pervading in the three worlds ?’*

Answer : “ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ । ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਾਚਿ
ਸਮਾਇ ॥”

*‘It is the egocentric that cometh and goeth. But it is
the God-conscious who mergeth in Truth.’*

The following lines describe the characteristics of a God-
conscious person, referred to in some of the above lines,

“ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਕਾ ਭਉ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਘੜੁ ਘੜਾਵੈ ॥
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵੈ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਪਰਮਪਦ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰੋਮ ਰੋਮ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥”

*‘The God-conscious being abideth in the Fear of the True
One, and through the Guru’s Word overpowereth the untutored
mind. He becometh pure by singing the Praises of the Lord
and attaineth the Supreme State (of Bliss). He dwelleth
on the Lord, body and soul, and thus mergeth in the True
One.’*

Here is emphasised the glory of the Name.

“ਨਾਮੇ ਰਾਤੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੇ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ
ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਨ
ਸੋਝੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥”

*‘Those saturated with the Name rid themselves of the ego
and ever abide in Truth. They know the way of the True*

Yoga and are emancipated. They know the secret of the three worlds and are ever in bliss.'

And finally, the gist of the talks with the Yogis is given thus :

“ਸਬਦੈ ਕਾ ਨਿਬੇੜਾ ਸੁਣਿ ਤੂੰ ਅਉਧੂ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਨਾਮੇ ਰਾਤੇ ਅਨਦਿਨ ਮਾਤੇ ਨਾਮੇ ਤੇ ਸੁਖ ਹੋਈ ॥”

'Hear Ye, O Yogis, the quintessence of the Word (i e. the gist of the discourses that had gone on between us). Without the Lord's Name no Yoga is worth anything. They alone attain Bliss who are saturated with the Name.'

This same gist appeared in the beginning too, in what is familiarly known as the 'Pause' line. Here it is :

“ਕਿਆ ਭਵੀਐ ਸਚਿ ਸੂਚਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਸਾਚ ਸਬਦ ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥”
ਰਹਾਉ ॥

“What good is this wandering in the Yogi's way when purification of the soul comes through Truth alone, and when no one can be emancipated without the True Word.”

It may be noted that in the above discourses the Yogis freely and fervently refer to the Yogic philosophy clothed in the Yogic technique. They speak of the practice of concentrations aided by physical postures, of inhalation and exhalation of breath, the right nostril becoming the vehicle of the sun and the left nostril of the moon, of the sweet nectar falling on the tongue, of the musical notes heard after the breath control is acquired, of the State of Void,¹ of the Tenth Door, of the air exhaled to a distance of ten fingers, of the navel region where the breath is held

and of so many other physical contrivances. They also discuss metaphysical topics absolutely unrelated to life. The Guru has no objection at all to employing the language of the Yogis in expressing an idea but he carefully gives a new meaning to it, politely pointing out to them where they go wrong and what the requisites of a true Yoga are. He does not repudiate any of their theories but ignores them and emphasises the things necessary for a spiritual living. We may illustrate this point. The Yogis employ the word shabad to mean the musical notes they hear within them after the control of breath has been achieved. The Guru, however, uses the same word interpreted as the Guru's Word, or God's Wisdom or His Will or His Name. It is this Word interpreted in this way that spiritualises life and makes life musical, as it were, and this music keeps on flowing unbeaten, without any external physical aids.

It is this Word which the Yogis ultimately accepted as essential for the life of the spirit. Bhai Gurdas confirms it thus,

“ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਾਂਤ ਸਿਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ॥”

‘The Word provided the Yogis the peace of the soul.’

Note : From Mansarowar, the Guru climbed up yet higher mountains and reached Tibet and from there he went to China also. Much, however, is not known of these visits. On his return journey he visited Ladakh and then came to Hasanabdal.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HASANABDAL (Panja Sahib)

"ਗਰੀਬੀ ਗਦਾ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥ ਖੰਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਰੇਨੁ ਛਾਰੀ ॥ ਇਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਕੋ ਨ
ਟਿਕੈ ਵੇਕਾਰੀ ॥"

*'Humility is my bludgeon and to be the dust of the feet of
all is my sword. No evil can stand against this weapon'.*

Guru Arjan in Sorath.

When the Guru returned to the Panjab, he was on one occasion in Hasanabdal. On the top of a small mountain cliff, there lived a faqir who called himself Vali Qandhari. He originally belonged to Qandhar but had settled, long ago, in Hasanabdal. The word Vali literally means prophet and he had chosen this name so as to be considered a prophet, who had come from Qandhar. When a man makes claims of his own spirituality, whether deserved or undeserved, discerning men will see at once that there was something basically wrong with his mental make up. This faqir was haughty and selfish and yet had a following. Mardana found himself very thirsty. There was a spring at the top of the cliff by the side of the place where Vali was staying and it so happened that there was no other spring in the vicinity for long distances. Mardana was sent to the Vali for water from his spring. But when he heard from

Mardana that he had another companion who was also a faqir and his Guru too, possessing great spiritual powers, his jealousy was roused. Being proud of his own so-called attainments as a faqir it was unbearable for him to hear the praises of another faqir. He refused to give him any water. Vanity makes a man callous and utterly selfish so as to cause him to lose his balance and perspective. The Guru sent Mardana again for water and he was again refused. The Vali also remarked tauntingly that if the Guru was really a man of any spiritual powers he should find out the spring for himself. The Guru had no difficulty in knowing the type of man the Vali was, yet he would apply to him the balm of love and humility. Mardana was sent again to repeat the request for water and to particularly point out that the Guru was an humble servant of all and had no claims to holiness. But this also did not produce any effect. Then the place where they stood was dug. The earth had concealed in its bosom and under the travellers' feet a spring out of which gushed forth water, pure and cool, to the great joy of Mardana. The Vali was angered all the more and in utter disregard of consequences rolled down a stone which missed its mark. Such is the length to which haughty men are capable of going, when their vanity is pricked.

Being inordinately proud of his so-called achievements he had lost his humanity. In fact, he had turned himself into a feelingless stone, indifferent to the sufferings of other people. Mardana, a faqir, tired and thirsty, had gone to him several times and in utter humility had begged for water. But the Vali's heart had turned a stone, for only a stone could have gone so far as he had. Even when the attempt was given up and water obtained through other

ways. his rage grew up more violently, so much so, that he hurled a stone to punish him and his companion.

The Guru, however, remained perfectly unruffled and calm inspite of what had happened. He possessed a large heart and a lofty soul. He had determined to enter into the stone of the Vali's heart and save it from damnation. He had seen through the thorn of self conceit that was troubling the Vali and he desired that he should be saved.

“ਸਾਕਤ ਹਰਿ ਰਸ ਸਾਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਕੰਡਾ ਹੇ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਚਲਹਿ ਚੁਭੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਜਮ ਕਾਲ ਸਹਹਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਡੰਡਾ ਹੇ ॥”

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

i. e. *‘The worshippers of power cannot relish the taste of God. In their hearts is the thorn of Ego. And as they move along, the thorn hurts them and they grieve and suffer as from the pangs of death’*,

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri

Vali's anger did not subside and he came down to see for himself who the new comers were. The Guru was all humility and cordiality. The loftiness of his great soul at last touched the Vali's stony heart and he realised the pettiness of his own mind. He got enlightenment through the Guru's blessings and became humble and humanised. The Guru stayed in Panja Sahib for some time and soon became the idol of the people. Both Hindus and Muslims gathered round him in large numbers. They held him in the highest esteem, adored him for his holiness and accepted him as their saviour. When, at last, he got ready to depart, they requested him, as is still proudly claimed by the local

Muslims, for his finger prints as a token of their affection for him and to perpetuate his memory. This may look a novelty now but at that time it was a regular method, specially among the Muslim divines, of honouring saints and holymen, in more or less the same way as is the taking of autographs to-day. Looking back, it was really the most befitting monument to commemorate him and his love conquest there. A great miracle had, without doubt, taken place there. The imprint of the Guru's fingers of humility had entered deep into the stone of the Vali's heart, then made soft like wax, and had permanently stayed there. A stone with fingers imprintd into it still stands out in Panja Sahib to mark the victory of love and humility over unfeeling haughtiness

“ਨੀਵਾਂ ਜਿਣੈ ਉਚੇਰਾ ਹਾਰੇ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

'The humble win and the proud fall.'

Var Bhai Gurdas

CHAPTER XXXIX

How God is realised ?

“ਕਿਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਾਗਰ ਤਰੀਐ ॥”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘How is the ocean of life crossed.’

Guru Nanak in Ram Kali

Gorakh Hatri (literally, Gorakh's shop) is a locality in the city of Peshawar. In the Guru's time, it was an important centre of Yogic activities. There was in the city a temple of Gorakh Nath under the supervision of a Yogi. Hatha Yoga, as accepted by Gorakh Nath himself, was practised and preached there in the same manner as in Gorakh Mata, examined earlier. The Guru's name was by that time quite familiar to the Yogis, wherever they were, for he had many occasions to discuss with their leaders topics of philosophy and religion. When he arrived in Gorakh Hatri, an unusual enthusiasm was noticeable among the Yogis, as the visit provided them an opportunity to know from him, at first hand, his own philosophy of life. They came to him and started discussions directly on different topics. One of them put straight to him the question, which is always the foremost

one in every seeker's mind, as to how God was to be realised. It is the question of questions and, surely, the only question worth asking and knowing and to which a religion should have the right answer. This same question was already the cry of the Guru's own mind and so he answered it in an equally direct manner. In fact, he had already answered it a number of times to so many others,

“ਹਉਮੈ ਬੂਝੈ ਏ ਦਰੁ ਸਝੈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“The Gate-way to Him opens up only when the fire of self is extinguished.”

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

i.e. God is realised when one dies to self.

When that happens the soul gets united with the Supreme Spirit and this is expressed as a union or a merger of the Bride with the Bridegroom. The soul, then, comes to its own and knows itself. It attains the state of equipoise (Sehaj) and is liberated.

The Yogis were not satisfied with this reply. They thought that to say this was to beg the question itself. It was not easy to slay the mighty self that could appear again and again in various forms. They asked the Guru how the self was to be slain so that, in consequence of it, the sea of life was crossed. The Guru admitted that dying to self was not an easy thing to achieve but it had to be done and there was no other way. We may give here both the Yogis' question and his own reply to it as expressed by himself in his own language in a part of the hymn in Ram Kali,

“ਜਿਤੁ ਦਰਿ ਵਸਹਿ ਕਵਨੁ ਦਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਦਰਾਂ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਦਰੁ ਕਵਨੁ ਲਹੈ ।
ਜਿਸੁ ਦਰ ਕਾਰਨਿ ਫਿਰਾਂ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਕੋਈ ਆਇ ਕਹੈ ॥ ਕਿਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਾਗਰੁ
ਤਰੀਐ । ਜੀਵਤਿਆਂ ਨਹ ਮਰੀਐ ॥”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

*“Which is the Door of the House where Thou dwellest ?
Through which of the several Doors should I enter to find
Thee ? Who will lead me on to that Door for which I am
moving about as an udasi (hermit) ? (The answer to this
question is implicit in the next line i. e. by dying to the self.
But then this dying is a difficult thing to accomplish). Then
how am I to cross the sea of life if dying to, self while still
alive amid the things of the world, is so hard to achieve ?”*

Then he goes on to give a recipe for overcoming difficulties before the objective is achieved. The struggle with the mind has to be waged before concrete results are gathered. Here is the recipe, stated in the remaining part of the hymn, which should be read with great care if any lesson is intended to be learnt.

“ਦੁਖੁ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ਾ ਰੋਹੁ ਰਖਵਾਲਾ ਆਸਾ ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ਾ ਦੁਇ ਪਟ ਜੜੈ । ਮਾਇਆ
ਜਲ ਖਾਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਘਰੁ ਬਾਂਧਿਆ ਸਤ ਕੈ ਆਸਣਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਰਹੈ । ਕਿੰਤੇ ਨਾਮਾ
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਤੁਮ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਹਰੇ । ਜਬ ਆਸਾ ਅੰਦੇਸਾ ਤਬਹੀ
ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਕਹੈ ॥ ਆਸਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਰਾਸਾ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੁ ਮਿਲੈ ॥
ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਜੀਵਤਿਆਂ ਇਉਂ ਮਰੀਐ ॥” ਰਹਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ॥

*‘The Pain is the Door, Wrath is the guardsman, hope and
fear are the two planks. Maya is the water in the ditch and
within this water man builds his house (These lines point out
the difficulties that have to be overcome to meet the Lord).
When this ditch is crossed, the Supreme Being abiding in His*

Seat of Truth will be known. Myriads are Thy Names, O Lord, I know not their end. There is no other like Thee. There is no need to shout but to live within. He knoweth and doeth all. But when there are hopes and fears in the mind how can one speak of the One? It is only when one liveth without hope in the midst of hope that one meeteth the One Lord. This is how one is to cross the ocean of life. This is how one is to die to self while still alive amidst the things of the world'.

What a clear exposition of the Guru's mind is contained in the above lines. People generally skip over the lines without going into the depth of their meaning. The Guru tells the Yogis that certain conditions have to be fulfilled in the process of dying to the self before God shines forth within the soul. Man must rise above hope, fear, pain, wrath and all the ill effects of Maya and also attain purity, peace of mind and self control. The soul is to be elevated through self discipline and given to inward looking in order to become qualified for a vision of the unseen Reality. Hopes, fears, desires, the five passions and other evils prevent the seeing of kinship that exists between the soul and God. They shut out the knowledge of the higher self, and stand in the way of the right kind of living. The Yogis agreed with what the Guru had said but they had doubts as to how that could be possible without taking to the path of asceticism. How could the seed of Karma be destroyed by remaining a householder? They believed that the problem of realisation was more difficult of achievement in a family. So they suggested that the Yogic way of life should be accepted. The chief of the Yogis, Machhindra,

had also joined by this time. Finding the Guru in a pilgrim's robe he thought the Guru was already an ascetic and so the question his companions had asked appeared to him rather irrelevant. Yet he wanted to know what the Guru's interpretation of his own religion was. However, he waited.

The Guru replied to the Yogis by a hymn in Ram Kali. Here he employed the language technique of the Yogis and pointed out the requisites of a true Yoga that would spiritualise life and lead to equableness (Sehaj). There is the Divine spark in every heart. When the spark is lighted properly, the soul will unite with its Source. The Yogis had thought that a finite being could not merge in the Infinite. They had yet to realise that the spark within was in essence Divine. It has to be awakened and then it merges in Him in the same way as water merges in the sea. What is needed is inner change and this can come about everywhere and more likely in a family life where constant calls for self denial have to be met. There is thus no need to remain away from the earthly things or to become indifferent to the responsibilities and cares life entails. The world should be considered not as an illusion but as the very house of God. Life must be lived in its fulness in all its various spheres. public and private, the stress always being on inner purity. In a life lived in this way all actions are without desire for fruit and therefore Karmas have no power to bind. A householder leading a humble life of service is superior to a Yogi with all his austere living. The Sehaj Yoga demands inner conversion and comes about by controlling the mind, overcoming the five passions, surrendering the self to the Divine Will and

cultivating positive virtues through the Simran of the Name. Here is the hymn, referred above, indicating the way of true Yoga.

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਾਖੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਿੰਝੀ ਬਾਜੈ ਲੋਕੁ ਸੁਣੇ ॥ ਪਤੁ ਝੋਲੀ ਮੰਗਣ ਕੈ
ਤਾਈ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਨਾਮੁ ਪੜੈ ॥ ਥਾਬਾ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਜਾਗੈ ॥ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਸੋ ਜਿਨਿ ਗੋਇ ਉਠਾਲੀ
ਕਰਤੇ ਬਾਰ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਪਾਣੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਪਵਣਿ ਬੰਧਿ ਰਾਖੇ ਚੰਦ ਸੂਰਜ
ਮੁਖਿ ਦੀਏ । ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਉ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੀਨੀ ਏਤੇ ਗੁਣ ਵਿਸਰੇ ॥ ਸਿੱਧ ਸਾਧਿਕ
ਅਰੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੰਗਮ ਪੀਰ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਬਹੁਤੇਰੇ ॥ ਜੇ ਤਿਨ ਮਿਲਾਂ ਤ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਆਖਾਂ ਤਾਂ
ਮਨੁ ਸੇਵ ਕਰੇ ॥ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਲੂਣੁ ਰਹੈ ਘ੍ਰਿਤ ਸੰਗੈ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਮਲੁ ਰਹੈ ॥ ਐਸੇ ਭਗਤ
ਮਿਲਹਿ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੈ ॥”

‘The Guru’s wisdom is my horn, his Word dwelling constantly in my consciousness is the Yogi’s sound. When this Word is sung, people hear it. And in the begging bowl of my heart I gather God’s Name. O friend, the True Gorakh, the Support of the Earth, is ever awake. He alone is Gorakh who sustaineth the world and taketh no time in doing what He doeth. He hath bound the vital breath of life through water and air etc. and hath given us the mighty Sun and the Moon to light our way. He hath blest us with the Earth to live and die upon and yet we have forgotten all His Gifts. There are many Sidhas, the seekers, the Yogis, the Jangams, the pirs and the holymen. But if I meet them I will sing only the Lord’s Praises as, to my mind, this is the true Service of the Lord. The paper and salt if treated with ghee dissolve not in water. The lotus even liveth in water. So do the Lord’s devotees abide in the midst of Maya (and yet remain attached to Him). O, what can the Yama (messengers

of Death) do to them ?

Guru Nanak in Ram Kali

At this stage Machindra put his own question. He asked, 'what is your own religion ?'

The Guru replied,

“ਸੁਣਿ ਮਾਛਿੰਦਾ ਅਉਧੁ ਨੀਸਾਣੀ ॥ ਆਸਾ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰਾਸ ਵਲਾਏ ॥
ਨਿਹਚਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਪਾਏ ॥”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

'Hear thou, O Machhindra, Nanak speaketh to thee. A true pilgrim is he who disciplineth his desires while being in the midst of desires. Without doubt he will meet the Lord'.

Guru Nanak in Ram Kali

It is only such a pilgrim who can be called truly religious. The inner change is the only true conversion and is the essence of every religion and so labels should not matter.

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CHAPTER XL

The Guru in Mecca

“ਜਿਹਿ ਧਿਰਿ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਤਿਹ ਧਿਰਿ ਮਉਜੂਦੁ”

ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

Wherever I look I find Him present.

Guru Nanak in Siri Rag

Almost all parts of India having been covered by now, the Guru made up his mind to visit the Arab lands. He proceeded towards Mecca first. He was then dressed in a long blue coloured robe and carried a staff in hand and a collection of his own compositions under his arm. He also had a cup for ablutions and a carpet upon which to offer prayers. In fact, he looked like a Muslim pilgrim in every way and, on the top of it, he shouted the Azan (the muslim call to prayer) too. He knew that he was among the Muslims in a Muslim land and it afforded him immense pleasure to feel not only at home but also one with them. His outer appearance and his behaviour simply confirmed that he belonged to them. Truly, he was above all narrow loyalties. In Hindu congregations, as we have seen, he appeared a Hindu and often joined them in their worship too, though, of course, it was done in his own

way. On reaching Mecca he stayed in a mosque. As night came on and he was resting his tired limbs, his feet were turned towards Qaaba, the House of God, as was supposed by the Muslims. A black stone was installed in this Qaaba and the same was kissed by the Muslim devotees as a pious act of religious faith. The Gurn was not opposed to the creation of shrines or temples for the worship of God. He was not against even the worship of idols if these were treated as mere symbols. But to limit the Limitless to a place or to a stone showed narrowness of vision and led to mental debasement.

The Head priest at the mosque, named Rukin Din, was both angered and surprised to find a man in the mosque who was dressed as a muslim pilgrim and yet did not know that it was a sacrilege to let legs be pointed towards the sacred Qaaba, the House of God. The Guru told the priest that it could never be his intention to show any disrespect to the House of God, as he himself was His devotee. If any sacrilege was committed by him at all it was due to his ignorance that God resided exclusively in any particular direction and that there could be a direction in which God was not. So far as his own God was concerned, he knew, He was in all directions, in all places and in all things. The Guru requested the priest to point out to him the direction in which the God of the Muslims did not reside. He also offered it to him to let his legs be turned to that direction, if there really was such a direction. The priest was puzzled and for a time did not know what to do. His eyes were being gradually opened and beginning to see things in perspective. He realised that the God of the Muslims was also everywhere and to restrict Him to a

particular Qaaba was not in keeping with the spirit of the Prophet's teachings. He became the Guru's admirer, for it was he who had changed his narrow outlook to enable him to see Qaaba in all directions. He saw clearly that to impose any limit on the Limitless One revealed only one's own littleness of mind. He was happy over his new born awakening and declared enthusiastically that the Guru had turned his Qaaba in all directions. He, then, entered into discourses with the Guru on God, religion and related matters. He asked him, first, what religion he belonged to. The Guru replied in his usual way that his religion was God. He said, he did not believe in any religion in the strictly narrow sense. But the priests gathered round him wanted to know which of the two main religions of the time—Hinduism and Islam—was superior.

“ਪੁਛਣਿ ਫੋਲਿ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਨੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਵਡਾ ਕਿ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੇਈ ।”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘Opening the book, they inquired if a Hindu or a Muslim was superior.’

Var Bhai Gurdas

The Guru replied,

“ਬਾਬਾ ਆਖੇ ਹਾਜੀਆਂ ਸੁਭ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਰੋਈ ॥ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣ ਦੋਇ ਦਰਗਹਿ ਅੰਦਰ ਲੈਣ ਨ ਦੋਈ । ਕਚਾ ਰੰਗ ਕੁਸੁੰਭ ਕਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਧੋਤੇ ਬਿਰੁਨ ਰਹੋਈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘The Guru told the pilgrims that without good actions both will repent and will not find a place in God's Court. The false

colour of safflower cannot last by merely washing it with water.'

Var Bhai Gurdas

The supreme test of the superiority of a religion is its ethical, moral and spiritual standards. Mere conformity to ritualism or dogmas does not make a man religious. Truth, love, service, contentment, compassion, charity, forgiveness, humility, tolerance are the things that create foundations for the life of the spirit. Without them a man, whatever his religious affiliation, becomes a victim of low cravings. Religion and low cravings cannot go together. Uncontrolled passions hinder spiritual growth by darkening the mind, undermining faith and poisoning the soul. Religion should make the perfection of the spirit possible and this can come about by moral discipline and spiritual effort. But, the Guru asserted, people had reduced religion to a mockery. Even God had become a plaything into their hands. He pointed out to Rukin Din how he had offended him simply because he believed that God could not be restricted to a particular place. It was forgotten, in the misplaced religious zeal, that he was also the son of the same God whom he called his Allah and so was his brother. He should have been treated with the tenderness due to a brother, in spite of a difference of outlook on a particular matter. In the so-called religious zeal, people lose sense of proportions and become irreligious. Dogmatism produces an unhealthy outlook on life and kills initiative and free thinking. The so-called religious men cannot tolerate difference of opinion and compel regimentation of thought. They want all men to think as they do.

They want to imprison truth in the narrow cage of their own vision. The result is conflict and strife. Toleration should be regarded as the first step towards blessedness. The true signs of a good religion are freedom of thought and respect for truth wherever it may be. Truth being universal there was no question of a monopoly of this or that religion. It should be remembered that if some people are convinced of the infallibility of their faith, so also may be others. Why, then, ignore the religious susceptibilities of others and create bad blood. All may not teach the same doctrine or provide the same kind of ritual or the same norm of behaviour but that does not justify discord and strife. Then he recited the following hymn of Kabir to emphasise his point of view :

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

“ ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਇਫਤਰਾ ਭਾਈ ਦਿਲ ਕਾ ਫਿਕਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਟੁਕੁ ਦਮੁ ਕਰਾਰੀ ਜਉ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਾਜ਼ਿਰ ਹਜ਼ੂਰਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥ ਬੰਦੇ ਖੋਜੁ ਦਿਲ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ ਨ ਫਿਰੁ ਪਰੇਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਮਾਹਿ ॥ ਇਹ ਜੁ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਸਿਹਰੁ ਮੇਲਾ ਦਸਤਗੀਰੀ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਦਤੋਗੁ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਇ ਬੇਖਬਰ ਬਾਦੁ ਬੜਾਹਿ ॥ ਹਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਖਾਲਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਮਿਆਨੇ ਸਿਆਮ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਮਿਆਨੇ ਲਹੰਗ ਦਰੀਆ ਗੁਸਲ ਕਰਦਨ ਬੂਦ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਫਕਰੁ ਦਾਇਮ ਲਾਇ ਚਸਮੇ ਜਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਮਉਜੂਦੁ ॥ ਅਲਾਹ ਪਾਕ ਪਾਕ ਹੈ ਸ਼ਕ ਕਰਉ ਜੇ ਦੂਸਰ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਕਬੀਰ ਕਰਮੁ ਕਰੀਮ ਕਾ ਉਹੁ ਕਰੈ ਜਾਨੈ ਸੋਇ ॥”

‘O brother, The Vedas and the Semetic Books are to no purpose if the wanderings of the heart do not cease. But if one keepeth one’s heart whole for a moment, there is before him the Lord’s Presence. O man, search thy heart everyday and go not torn by Doubt. This world is like a

magic show ; Within it there is none to hold thy soul's hand. People read falsehood from Books and feel satisfied (They ignore the essence and give a wrong interpretation to the truths revealed in the Books). In ignorance they talk nonsense. But the Lord of Truth, the Creator, is incarnated within His whole creation and is not incarnated merely in the dark hued Krishna. In thy mind's sky floweth the river of peace; bathe thou in it, thyself. And be thou like a mendicant ever and see with thine eyes well opened and there is thy Lord here, there and everywhere. The Lord is the Purest of the Pure, I would doubt it if there were another. Kabir, all is due to the Lord's Grace. He alone knoweth who Himself doeth it.'

Kabir in Tilang

CHAPTER XLI

The Fatwa—'Stone him to death'.

‘ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘If thou art keen to play the game of Love, come to my path with thy head on thy palm’.

Shalok of Guru Nanak

After a brief stay at Mecca, the Guru went to Egypt and to other parts of Africa. Then he moved back and came to Medina and thence to Baghdad, which was then considered to be the strong-hold of highly bigoted Muslim divines. Places like Baghdad had a special attraction for the Guru. In fact, he always sought eagerly places where he could get an opportunity to storm all that was narrow, hypocritical, superstitious, fallacious and unholy. Mardana was, of course, with him during the Baghdad visit. Both stayed outside the city in a graveyard, and started singing, in loving devotion, the praises of God. Then the Guru stood up to shout the ‘azan’, as he had done in Mecca. But this time, his ‘azan’ was not wholly in conformity with the conventional one. He had purposely added a few words of his own, in praise of God, expressed in his own language and deliberately omitted to utter the name of the Prophet. He knew that he was

in a Muslim land and in a place where bigotry, reaction, intolerance and fanaticism of the worst type had to be faced. There was without doubt a personal risk as well to his own life. But that consideration had never deterred him from his resolve to serve misguided people wherever they might be.

It did not take him long to become the talk of the city. Many people soon gathered round him, some out of curiosity that every stranger rouses and others in holy wrath against a man who had committed the dire crime of distorting their azan and omitting the Prophet's name. But the Guru kept on singing, unconcerned, the glories of God. In this context he also spoke of the limitlessness of God. In particular he said, there were millions of upper and lower regions. Now this was another offence against the teachings of the Holy Book, the Quran, which had declared categorically that there were only seven upper regions and seven lower regions. There was wild uproar among people followed by gesticulations, threats and curses. The matter was also reported to the Pir, named Dastgir who was, then, the religious head of the place. He was not a bad man intrinsically but he was a fanatic all the same. He was afraid of public opinion too, and he knew that the public was already very much agitated. Like other Muslims he considered the Guru's action as an affront to Islam and to the Holy Prophet. He declared his verdict (fatwa) that for that kind of offence the stranger merited to be stoned to death. Now it can be imagined what fury the verdict must have engendered among people already in rage and very much upset. They were not all bad men but religious fanaticism can often turn men into criminal brutes. Guru

Gobind Singh has said,

“ਪਾਪ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਰਮਾਰਥ ਕੇ ਜਿਹ ਪਾਪਨ ਤੇ ਅਤ ਪਾਪ ਲਜਾਹੀ”

'The crimes committed in the name of religion are such that the worst crimes blush before them'.

What crimes have not been committed in the name of religion? It was really against this mental condition that the Guru had taken the extreme personal risk. The mob was now preparing to strike. And why should it not, when the striking was to be done for the glory and advancement of Islam? People had been fed on the belief that killing the 'infidels' was a meritorious act, and the surest way to win paradise. Mardana saw the mad fury raging round him and was greatly frightened. But the Guru counselled him to remain calm and let God's Will be done. He said, if they were called upon to lay down life for the love of God, expressed through the service of misguided humanity, they should consider themselves fortunate.

“ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'If thou settest thy foot on this path, lay down thy head without hesitation'.

Shalok of Guru Nanak

Then, unperturbed, he proceeded towards the crowd, smiled at them and in perfect humility offered himself to be pelted at or butchered alive in any manner they liked, in pursuance of the fatwa. There was in his heart no hatred, no anger and no fear. He was truly brave and fearless and yet humble. He had prepared himself for the

worst if that advanced the cause he had set before himself. Cowards died many times before their death. But this man of God was not to be shaken by the looming of death about him. He had become the embodiment of love, humility, forgiveness, compassion and contentment. He neither inspired fear in others nor had any fear of others. He was determined to revive dead spirits, soothe dry and parched hearts and bless despairing people, wherever they might be, with God's love supported by his own divine touch, whatever the cost. He began to sing God's glory. The furious mob felt quailed before this mighty man. The biographer says the arms people had raised to strike became stiff and their steps remained fixed to the ground. Yes, it is quite true that such a thing did happen, but that is not to be taken too literally. The really beautiful thing about it is that people mad about their so-called religious faith were prevented from perpetrating a barbarity that had no parallel in history, through love and humility. Their steps faltered and their arms became stationary because they did not have the heart to strike the man, so sweet, so humble, so full of love, so devoid of enmity, anger and passion. The loftiness of the Guru's soul produced a ripple in their hearts and they stood in mute stupefaction. They saw a glory in the face they had never seen before. Love, non-violence and the path of sufferings are without doubt powerful instruments to produce change of heart in the evil person. Every person, however far removed from God, has a soul that could be awakened through the power of love. The people he was tackling were not entirely devoid of human feelings. Many of them were religious minded men although their vision was narrow, twisted and clouded.

Therefore it was not difficult to produce in them a change of heart and this by a man possessing such a lofty and pious soul as the Guru had.

By this time the Pir had also arrived and he himself was similarly shaken inwardly in his resolve. People felt like inquiring, discussing and arguing with the Guru about some of his utterances that had provoked so much antagonism, bitterness and animosity. The Pir asked him to explain why he had insulted Islam and the Prophet and flouted his holy teachings. The Guru replied courteously and even respectfully that he had done nothing of the kind. He had every respect for the Prophet and for Islam. He had no desire whatsoever to injure the religious susceptibilities of Muslims. But he was not a Muslim and therefore it should not be binding on, or necessary for, him to shout the Azan as the Muslims did. He should be permitted to offer his prayers in any way he liked. It was quite true that he had omitted the name of the Prophet but he had also added the praises of the Lord in the language he understood best. That was not the Muslim azan but his own and it suited the needs of his own soul all right. Prayer must always come from the heart and in that case it might be couched in any language and expressed through any terms. Allah and Ram, mosques and temples, the Muslim Nimaz and the Hindu worship were all the same. However much, forms of worship might differ, all religions could become good enough to show the way whereby man might find God. Anything that elevated a man at the stage he was, was good for him. But the fanatical image of real or supposed superiority of one religion over the other rendered

outlook narrow and morbid and killed initiative and vitality. Others' points of view must, therefore, be permitted with the same veneration as accorded to one's own. Freedom of thought and respect for Truth where ever it might be were the signs of a living religion. It is only fanatics who would not tolerate difference of opinion and compel regimentation of thought. Truly religious people never quarrelled over dogmas, forms of worship, rituals, books and doctrines. Their primary stress was always on the practice of religious life. Love and service, for them, were the basis of religion from which charity and tolerance towards the views of others flowed in a natural way. Labels did not matter provided they advanced spiritual living. Freedom of the human soul should be considered as the basic principle of a religion and all other things should be subordinated to it. And nothing destroyed liberty so surely as intolerance. Liberty could exist in an atmosphere where the individual was zealous for the freedom of others & whole-heartedly allowed them to differ with him. It is always little minded people who were opinionated and who believed that they were always right. Religions might differ with one another over some matters but it was still possible to meet and unite on the platform of each other's cultures & view points. Truth had many aspects or facets and could not be confined to any one of them nor should any one presume that he knew all.

The Guru went on to explain his views on the indivisibility of God and of the position of the Prophet or, for that matter, of any other man of God in relation to Him. These views have already been explained at length in other places and therefore need not be repeated here.

The Pir was much impressed and this had a sobering effect on the crowd too. A heavy load seemed now to be lifted from over their breast. All were now in a mood to discuss and even learn things from the great and holy man before them. The Muslim divines gathered there started to discuss several topics of religion. We give here some important subjects that came up for discussion in the form of questions and answers.

Question : What is your religion ? To what sect do you belong ?

Answer : I belong to God's religion and to God's sect. He tells me to recognise none else except Him and He wants me to show to the world that He resides in all and therefore all sects and religions are His.

Question : Could you give a glimpse of that God to us ?

Answer : How can the tongue describe Him ? He is the tongue, He is the speech and He is the idea behind. No description can adequately express Him. The soul has to enter itself into the realm of superconsciousness to realise Him from whom it had emerged.

Then he talked in a mystic way. He said,

“Don't you see dawn sleeping in the lap of night. It is light that lies hidden behind the darkness.” He, then, explained that the self was the light. The ego had created darkness for the self. Let it be destroyed to see the self shine in its resplendent beauty. When that happened God entered the soul. The mind was to be purified and attuned

to His Will to awaken the spiritual faculty for a vision of the Lord.

Question : What is the aim behind creation ?

Answer : To realise Him. The body, however, is impermanent. It is just a tool, and a good tool at that, to aid the soul in the realisation of the objective.

Question : You go contrary to the teachings of Quran by declaring that there are millions and millions of upper and lower regions.

Answer : God is limitless, so are His Powers of creation and destruction. Those who have eyes will see that no limit was possible on His limitlessness.

The Pir's son was also present on this occasion. He said if the Guru could see things with his own eyes, the same should be possible for others. Innocently, he continued to insist on a personal vision. There is a reference about it in Kavi Santokh Singh's biography as also in other biographies, though the versions do not always agree with each other on the matter of the vision, the Pir's son was enabled to have. The young man was told to close his eyes and to think of God. He was then flying up with the Guru at an unimaginable speed till he lost all sense of time, space and speed, leading to his eyes getting dazzled. When he came back to the earth he brought from the Heavens above, the sweet food (Karahi). All this description should be treated as an allegory. It was never intended to be taken too literally. The Guru must have dilated upon the wonders of creation and taken the Pir's son on the wings of superb imagination for a glimpse of the Infinite till

the young man realised that there could be no end to His creation. His mental eyes were opened and he was happy and felt convinced that God's limitlessness could not be circumscribed in any way. The sweet impress thus created on his mind was the sweet food that he had brought with this experience. He declared to his father that he had seen with his own eyes the marvel of creation and he could not accept the dictum of seven upper and seven lower regions. The poet seems to have poetically concretised the marvel that the youngman's imagination had visualised. The Pir, the divines and the audience realised that the Guru's views on God and His creation were wider and truer.

CHAPTER XLII

The Guru in Multan

“ਹਉਮੈ ਬੂਝੈ ਤਾ ਦਰੁ ਸੁਝੈ ।” ਆਸਾ ਸਾਹਲਾ ੧

'The Way to the Lord opens up when self goes.'

Guru Nanak in Asa

Multan was the stronghold of Sufis, the Muslim mystics. But many hypocrites posing as faqirs, had settled there and lived on the charity of people. When the Guru arrived in Multan on his return from the Arab lands, they became apprehensive of exposure. The world had known by that time that the Guru was opposed to the priestly class since it lived, traded and flourished on unearned offerings from the gullible devotees. The faqirs sent to the Guru a cup of milk filled to the brim to signify that the city of Multan was already full of holiness and there was no room for any more faqirs. Mardana was hungry from a long, arduous journey and was inwardly pleased at the prospects of milk before him. But to his disappointment, the Guru returned the cup with a Jasmine flower placed over the surface implying that as the flower could remain floating on the surface of the cup already full, he too would stay in Multan in perfect peace and humility and

without causing any inconvenience to any one. The Pir, the then head of the Mausoleum of the late Pir Bahauddin, understood the Guru's meaning and realised that the Guru must be a man of true wisdom and so he came to meet him. The following is the gist of the dialogue that took place between them.

Pir—Where do you come from ?

Guru—From Him, dear Sir, where all come from.

Pir—How do you know that all come from Him ?

Guru—The Unfathomable has revealed Himself to me.
I can speak with confidence as I have seen Him.

Pir—Why don't others see Him in the same way as you can ?

Guru—They have no eyes with which He can be seen.
So long as Ego remains he cannot be seen.

Pir—Where does He reside ?

Guru—Every where and more clearly in every heart.

Pir—How was the world created ?

Guru—This is an irrelevant question and can be suitably answered only when the self has left in all its different forms. The Guru was still thinking of the earlier question the Pir had asked and sang the hymn in Rag Suhi which he had recited to Sheikh Brahm also in Pakpattan. The reader may kindly see it there on page 245, Chapter 24.

It is a very important hymn and was in reply to the

question that was troubling the Pir's mind relating to God-realisation and should be read by every body with due care and its true import understood. It explained to the Pir that through the Guru's Word, the Simran of the Name and the company of holymen the purification of the mind was to be attained and this was the first requisite for the realisation of the Supreme. By acquiring moral and spiritual wealth the way for the union was to be opened up. The actual union of the soul with the Universal Soul could take place when a superconscious state was acquired through singing His praises and dwelling on His Name. We give here one or two important lines out of that hymn,

“ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਤੁਸੀ ਰਾਵਿਆ ਕਿਨੀ ਗੁਣੀ । ਸਹਜਿ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੀਆ ਮਿਠਾ ਬੋਲਣੀ । ਪਿਰੁ ਰੀਸਾਲੂ ਤਾਂ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸ਼ਬਦੁ ਸੁਣੀ ।”

‘Go and ask the Bride for what Merit did she enjoy her Spouse so well’ ; (Her reply is) ‘I bedecked myself with peace and contentment and spoke to everybody with sweetness. He, the Joyous One, meeteth only when one hearkens to the Guru’s Word.’

Again,

“ਸਚੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਮਤਿ ਉਗਵੈ ਗੁਰ ਬਚਨੀ ਤਉ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੁ ਆਪੇ ਲਏ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥”

‘When one meeteth the true Guru, the Truth is revealed and through that Truth one mergeth in the True One. When through the Guru’s Word one fears the Lord, One’s superconsciousness is awakened and true wisdom groweth. And then the True King Himself uniteth one with Himself.’

Then the Pir returned to his topic and asked, 'How is the Name so powerful as to make union possible'.

The Guru replied that it killed the ego, purified the mind and created superconsciousness in which the seeing of the Lord was made possible. In order to see Him one must first be like Him.

After this the Sakhi as given in the biographies assumes a mystic significance but the biographer misses its beauty by taking it too literally.

The Pir wanted the Guru to prove to him the power of the Name. The Guru uttered the Word and reduced him to ashes and then again uttered the Word and the Pir reappeared. The whole thing has a beautiful metaphorical meaning which the biographer fails to point out. The Pir had reduced himself to dust in the figurative sense, through the Guru's Word (teachings). He had forgotten his self through the touch of the Guru's personality and of his teachings and was a changed man at the moment. Thus he was enabled to have a glimpse, however partial, of his true Self. He was reborn, as it were, through the power of the Word.

The Pir was much impressed and desired that the Guru stayed on with him permanently, but the Guru had other people to meet and serve. He could not be confined to a small place like Multan. The work was enormous and time was short. Every one, he said, should realise the transitoriness of this life and prepare for a life of permanence. The following hymn was uttered :

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“ਮੁਕਾਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਬੈਸਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਚਲਣੈ ਕੀ ਧੋਖ ॥

ਮੁਕਾਮ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਹਚਲ ਲੋਕ ॥
 ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਕੈਸਿ ਮੁਕਾਮੇ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਕਰਣੀ ਖਰਚ ਬਾਂਧਹੁ ਲਾਗਿ ਰਹੁ
 ਨਾਮੇ । ਜੋਗੀ ਤਾ ਆਸਣੁ ਕਰਿ ਬਹੈ ਮੁਲਾ ਬਹੈ ਮੁਕਾਮਿ ॥ ਪੰਡਤਿ ਵਖਾਣਹਿ
 ਪੋਥੀਆਂ ਸਿਧਿ ਬਹਹਿ ਦੇਵ ਸਥਾਨ । ਸੁਰਿ ਸਿਧ ਗਣ ਗੰਧਰਬ ਮੁਨਿ ਜਨ ਸੇਖ ਪੀਰ
 ਸਲਾਰ ॥ ਦਰਿ ਕੂਚ ਕੂਚਾ ਕਰਿ ਗਏ ਅਵਰੇ ਭਿ ਚਲਣਹਾਰ ॥ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਖਾਨ
 ਮਲੂਕ ਉਮਰੇ, ਗਏ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਕੂਚੁ । ਘੜੀ ਮੁਹਤਿ ਕਿ ਚਲਣਾ ਦਿਲ ਸਮਝ ਤੂੰ
 ਭਿ ਪਹੂਚ ॥ ਸਬਦਾਹ ਮਾਹਿ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਤਾ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਖਾਣੈ
 ਬੇਨਤੀ ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਸੋਇ । ਅਲਾਹੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਅਗਮ ਕਾਦਰੁ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ
 ਕਰੀਮ । ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀ ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਵਣੀ ਮੁਕਾਮੁ ਏਕ ਰਹੀਮੁ ॥ ਮੁਕਾਮੁ ਤਿਸਨੋ ਆਖੀਐ
 ਜਿਸ ਜਿਸਿ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਲੇਖੁ ॥ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਧਰਤੀ ਚਲਸੀ ਮੁਕਾਮੁ ਓਹੀ ਏਕੁ ॥ ਦਿਨੁ
 ਰਵਿ ਚਲੈ ਨਿਸਿ ਸਸਿ ਚਲੈ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਲਖ ਪਲੋਇ । ਮੁਕਾਮੁ ਓਹੀ ਏਕ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ
 ਸਚੁ ਬਗੋਇ ॥”

“We have made this world as if it were a permanent home but each day the anxiety to pass away soon increases. It would, indeed, be a true home if men stayed in the world permanently. But what kind of staying in this world is this? Do thou then the deeds of faith to serve as thy expense for the journey beyond and dwell upon the Name. The Yogi is in his postures, the Mullah hath also his own place, the Pandits recite the Books and the Sidhas sit in the temple of gods. Yet the godly Sidhas, the worshippers of Shiva, the heavenly musicians, the men of silence, the Sheikhs, the Pirs and men in command have all left, the others too are awaiting their turn. Of the kings, the chiefs, the rich, the mighty, no one can remain. A brief moment or two of stay here and then we pass away. O my mind, know thou, that thou must also leave. The Word revealeth it but rare is the one who knoweth that it is the Lord that pervadeth the earth, the waters and the interspace. So, Nanak speaketh in humility. He is the Allah,

the Unknowable and the Unfathomable, the Creator, the Cause, the Beneficent. All the world cometh and goeth and only the Lord of Mercy remains. True Home is that over whose head the writ (of Death) is not. The skies and the earth will pass away, the One alone will remain. The sun and the day, the moon and the night, the myriads of stars will go. The Abode of the One alone always stays ; hear thou, O man, Nanak speaketh the truth."

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag

CHAPTER XLIII

Settled in Kartarpur

“ਗੁਰ ਸਮਾਨਿ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ ।”

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

i. e. “There is no other pilgrimage-place like the Guru’s”,

Guru Nanak in Parbhati

The Guru had now settled in Kartarpur and lived as a full-fledged householder. The pilgrim's garb had been put off and the ordinary conventional garments of a family man put on—a turban on the head, a cloth round the waist and a sheet over the shoulders. He worked on his wheat farms himself but anything he produced was shared with the needy and all others who came to him for help. He lived a life of self consecration amid the responsibilities and ties of the world, reflecting true renunciation in the most natural manner. He belonged to the people and served their physical, mental and spiritual needs. People from far and wide visited Kartarpur, partook of his Divine wisdom and got their doubts resolved. Topics of religion and philosophy were discussed with seekers and learned men of all communities who thronged to him for inspiration and guidance. He had endeared himself to all and his teachings

had an irresistible appeal for discerning men of all schools of thought. He loved good men and had won their respect and admiration. Hindus and Muslims vied with each other in claiming that he was theirs. Brahmins, Yogis, Sufi saints, Sadhus and others were lovingly devoted to him and occasionally came to him to pay their respects, for they cherished him as their Guru and guide. Kartarpur had now become a place of pilgrimage. It is said of Pir Bahauddin of Multan that once, in a prayer-ful mood, he was facing Kartarpur, and in the process of turning towards Kartarpur he had his back on Qaaba. The orthodox Muslims did not like it and pointed it out to him. But he told them that he should be allowed to see the Light of God from whatever direction it came. Through the Guru's inspiration he had already imbibed a universal and catholic outlook on religion and could not help doing what he did.

The Guru's stay in Kartarpur had now become almost permanent. He visited other places on important occasions but his headquarters remained there. Mardana had died already and he himself had also grown old although his enthusiasm for work had not suffered in any way.

“ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਢੇ ਕਦੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥

“God-conscious men are never old, for, they enshrine within their consciousness the Divine Wisdom.”

Shalok of Guru Amar Dass

People came to him every day and went away satisfied. There are many important interviews he had with his

visitors. We may mention a few notable among them.

I. A learned man conscious of his vast knowledge of Vedas and other Holy Books was discussing with the Guru the theme of God realisation. The Guru asked him if he knew God. He replied that he had read a lot about God but he had not known Him. The Guru explained that realisation was a personal experience in the soul itself and depended on the quality of the soul. Mere knowledge and cold reasoning could not take the place of actual experience of feeling one with the Supreme. Knowledge could surely help to prepare the ground for union but by itself it could not but remain within the limits of time, space and matter. How could it grasp what was beyond its bounds ? The self must be first destroyed to pave the way for enlightenment. For instance, it was not enough to declare merely mentally that all was God. The self must be awakened first, through the Guru's Word, to realise in life that it was He and none else. It must rise above limited human consciousness to know the secret of becoming united with Him. One must rise above the limitations of self in every form to know the Universal Self. No one could see Him unless he killed ego first.

“ਹਉਮੈ ਖੂਝੈ ਤਾ ਦਰੁ ਸੁਝੈ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“The Gate Way to Him opens up when Ego dies”.

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

2 A Sikh came to see the Guru but he soon got ready to go back. On inquiry it was revealed that he had come to see the Guru for a mere physical meeting. He said, he was in a hurry to go back as he had left his ailing friend behind.

He had come only to see the Guru and should go back immediately. The Guru pointed out to him that he had not understood the meaning of meeting the Guru. Mere physical meeting or seeing was not of much value. It was more important to follow the Guru's Word. Serving an ailing person was the essence of the Guru's teaching which he had forgotten just for the sake of having paid a personal visit. The true devotee of the Guru was he who identified himself with God's creation. Serving God's people was equal to serving God and the Guru.

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਮਾਰੁ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ
ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰ ਸ਼ਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰ ॥

ਵਾਰ ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

“The whole world meets the Guru. But mere meeting the Guru does not bring salvation unless one meditates on the Guru's Word”.

Guru Amar Dass in Var Wadhans

3. A Sikh inquired, during the Guru's congregational discourses, 'Sir, why does a man sin, if his soul has a divine origin'? It was a very intelligent inquiry and had baffled many other honest seekers of the Guru's time. The Guru replied that the soul was potentially divine and was capable of rising to any heights. But God had created Maya too against which it had to struggle for its fulfilment. It was a great blessing to man that he was made responsible for what he did. It made him the maker of his own destiny and distinguished him from the animals who had no choice of action. Evil did not lie in passivity or listlessness but in activity. Man was thus not merely the product of the

past but the moulder of the future as well. God had made love as the law of man's being. When he broke that law he sinned and suffered. But when he entered the spiritual realm he became immune from sin or suffering. The law of Karma was operative in the objective world of three gunas (qualities). Only prayer, repentance, love, association of good men and above all, the Simran of the Name, could purify the soul, invite God's Grace and provide liberation, neutralising all the past. The real thing to understand was that the soul must come back to its original Self, to its Divine Nature and then there was no sin. It was the fourth State, the Sehaj, and this was beyond the three gunas. It was a state of mind where neither pain nor pleasure could disturb the soul's peace. It was the Divine Centre, the kingdom of Heaven. When a man learnt to live in God and surrendered to His Will, he was God-conscious and God-centred and was then above Maya and above the Law of Karma and the chain of transmigration. The soul had then nothing to do with sin and passion as they had their origin in Ego, in Maya and in Ignorance. Thus it was in man's power to divert the course his life was taking through spiritual effort. Man emanated from Him and so long as he lived true to his original spiritual nature there was for him no sin and no transmigration. It was when he lost consciousness of his spiritual destiny and became a plaything for the ego that he was subject to the cycle of births and deaths. The more he moved away from his Source, the greater was his bondage and the consequent suffering. Yet all this was necessary for his awakening and progress. Man might not be born free but he was certainly born to be free.

CHAPTER XLIV

Lehna's spiritual transformation

“ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ”

ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸਤਾ ਬਲਵੰਡ

'The mode of life and the light (of Angad) were the same as those of his lord (Guru Nanak). The Master had merely changed body.'

Satta and Balwand in Var Ram Kali

A visitor from Khadur, one day, sent the Guru to immense ecstatic joy. It was Lehna, a devotee of the Goddess Durga (the Goddess of the flaming mouth), located in a place near Kangra. He paid a pilgrimage visit to the Goddess twice a year along with other residents of his village. It was during these visits that he had a chance to meet Jodha, a devout follower of the Guru. He was so well impressed with the Guru's hymns he heard from Jodha that he came to Kartarpur along with him, not to return again. When he met the Guru, he was asked his name. On being told that it was Lehna, the Guru was much pleased and said that he was truly Lehna (the word literally means the receiver) and that a debt was due to him which he must receive in course of time. The knowledge

of what was coming came to him instinctively, quite naturally and effortlessly. God-conscious men are endowed with the gift of the extraordinary power of penetration into the depths of time.

Lehna had also found his rest there. He threw away the tinkling bells he had on his hands and feet for dancing before the Goddess. He had now his place with the Guru and nowhere else. He sometimes asked questions to resolve his doubts. The Guru told him to look within himself. Personal experience of inner life would give answer to every question. The self clouded the vision and man was unable to know his own true self. When the self disappeared all doubts were automatically resolved. After this, Lehna became happy and asked no questions. His own inner development, in fact, was the answer to every question. He surrendered himself completely to his Master's will. He had realised that for attainment of a real spiritual living, leading to realisation, the self had to be completely effaced.

“ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਤਾਂ ਖਸਮੈ ਕਾ ਮਹਲੁ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘To become acceptable to God, His Will must be accepted and then the Palace of the Lord is attained.’

Guru Nanak in Var Asa

He knew now that if a man effaced himself completely and became empty, God was sure to fill him and make him His instrument. So, whether he was engaged in sweeping the floor or cleaning utensils in the Guru's kitchen,

he was doing it to please his Master. Here was an opportunity for his training on a comparatively small scale for ultimately coming in tune with the Supreme Will. He was being spiritually transformed into a new being, into the image of Guru Nanak himself. He was to become his Angad, his own limb, the embodiment of the Guru himself and to attain to the same spiritual height and perfection as the Guru himself had. The Guru also, in his own mind, had made the acceptance of the Will as the supreme test of fitness for the exalted office of Guruship which was soon to devolve upon him. As the transformation was not to happen merely in the intellectual way Lehna was put to many difficult tests and was found most fit.

“ਜਾਂ ਸੁਧੇਸੁ ਤਾਂ ਲਹਣਾ ਟਿਕਿਉਨਿ”

ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸਤਾ ਬਲਵੰਤ

‘And when Angad was found true he was installed on the Throne.’

Satta and Balwand in Var Ram Kali

We may mention here some of these tests.

Heavy rains had caused serious damage to a wall of Guru Nanak's house. It was then the dead of night and the Guru wanted it to be repaired forthwith. His sons would not do this repairing work at that unearthly hour and would like it to be done the next day by the masons and the labourers. Lehna obeyed the call without questioning and finished the work. But the Guru was not satisfied and ordered it to be thrown down and built again. Lehna again obeyed.

but the Guru was again not satisfied. This building and then demolishing went on for a number of times and it appeared to everybody in the family that the Guru's orders were unreasonable. But Lehna paid no regard to what they said and carried on his work with steadfastness and good cheer.

Again, on an other occasion he was asked to carry three bundles of grass, wet and muddy, and the dripping soiled his clothes. The Guru's wife protested that it was not right to impose that sort of menial labour on such a good Sikh as Lehna was. The Guru said that it was not mud that he carried but saffron that represented Divine Wisdom and holiness and that he was being trained for carrying much heavier burdens.

The Guru seemed to be particularly hard on Lehna. For small things he scolded him. He wanted him to fully attune himself to his Master's will and give himself up to the personal service and loyalty of the Guru he had accepted for himself.

Once the Guru assumed a terrible form. He was dressed in torn out clothes, had a knife in hand and carried dogs with him as if he was going to hunt in the forests. Most of the Sikhs had left him soon in fear. Others also fled as they found the Guru becoming more and more difficult to understand. Lehna retained his fortitude and would not leave his Master whatever the cost. He had understood the meaning of true living by a complete effacement of his own self and was now fit to be the Guru. His love and

devotion had been put to the test and he was found one in spirit with his Master, fully competent to bear the responsibility of leading his people.

One day Guru Nanak bowed before his Angad in perfect reverence and installed him formally on the Gaddi (Seat of Guruship).

The sons did not understand how they could be bypassed. They had thought that Guruship was something hereditary like property, temporal rank or authority and therefore it was their right to be the next Gura after their father. They became bitter towards Guru Angad and so Guru Nanak sent him to live in Khadur. Whenever he felt the urge for the pleasure of Guru Angad's company, he went to Khadur himself. He knew that his own life was now drawing to a close but he had the satisfaction that he had found the right successor.

Then came his last day when he was preparing to depart for his eternal Home. He sent for his people, gave them his blessings and told them that God's Will must be done. It was the time not to wail at the inevitable but to think of God and to sing His Glories. Death was not to be looked upon as a terror but only as a stage in the continuous eternal life of the soul with an infinite future given to it by God's Grace. He was departing but there was nothing new about it, for all must depart one day. The following hymn was sung on this occasion to provide consolation and inspiration to the congregation.

ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਅਲਾਹਣੀਆਂ

“ਧੰਨੁ ਸਿਰੰਦਾ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਧੰਧੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਮੁਹਲਤਿ ਪੁੰਨੀ ਪਾਈ ਭਰੀ ਜਾਨੀਅੜਾ ਘਤਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ । ਜਾਨੀ ਘਤਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਅਇਆ ਰੁੰਨੇ ਵੀਰ ਸਬਾਏ । ਕਾਇਆ ਹੰਸ ਥੀਆ ਵੈਛੋੜਾ ਜਾਂ ਦਿਨ ਪੁੰਨੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ । ਜੇਹਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਤੇਹਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਜੇਹਾ ਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਧੰਨੁ ਸਿਰੰਦਾ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਧੰਧੈ ਲਾਇਆ । ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈਹੋ ਸਭਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਪਇਆਣਾ । ਏਥੇ ਧੰਧਾ ਕੂੜਾ ਚਾਰਿ ਦਿਹਾਂ ਆਗੈ ਸਰਪਰ ਜਾਣਾ । ਆਗੈ ਸਰਪਰ ਜਾਣਾ ਜਿਉ ਮਿਹਮਾਣਾ ਕਾਹੇ ਗਾਰਬੁ ਕੀਜੈ । ਜਿਤੁ ਸੇਵਿਅੈ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਅੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਸੇ ਕਾ ਲੀਜੈ । ਆਗੈ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਮੂਲੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਿਹਾਣਾ । ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈਹੋ ਸਭਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਪਇਆਣਾ । ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੰਮੂਖ ਸੋ ਥੀਅੈ ਹੀਲੜਾ ਏਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੋ ॥ ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਾਚੜਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰੋ ॥ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰੋ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨਕਾ ਸਫਲ ਭਇਆ ਹੈ ਇਕ ਮਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥ ਢਾਹਿ ਢਾਹਿ ਉਸਾਰੇ ਆਪੇ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਵਾਰਣਹਾਰੋ ॥ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੰਮੂਖ ਸੋ ਥੀਅੈ ਹੀਲੜਾ ਏਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੋ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰੁੰਨਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਜਾਣੀਅੈ ਜੇ ਰੋਵੈ ਲਾਇ ਪਿਆਰੋ । ਵਾਲੇਵੇ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਰੋਈਅੈ ਰੋਵਣੁ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਕਾਰੋ । ਰੋਵਣੁ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਕਾਰੋ ਗਾਫਲੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੋ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਰੋਵੈ । ਚੰਗਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਸੂਝੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਏਵੈ ਖੋਵੈ । ਐਥੈ ਆਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਜਾਸੀ ਕੂੜਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਅੰਹਕਾਰੋ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰੁੰਨਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਜਾਣੀਅੈ ਜੇ ਰੋਵੈ ਲਾਇ ਪਿਆਰੋ ॥”

The Song of Death (Alahnian)

‘How wonderful is the Creator, the True King who hath allotted to each one in the world, one’s destined task ! But when one’s task is done and one’s cup of life is full this dear soul departeth. The dear soul departeth as is His Writ, yet all its near and dear ones wail over its departure. The body and the swan-soul separate when the allotted time is over. As was the Writ determined by the deeds done in the past, so hath it come to pass. How wonderful is the Creator, the True King

who hath allotted to each one in the world one's destined task.! Brothers, think of the Lord, for this (exit from here) must happen to everybody. The tasks of this world are untrue, for they are shortlived and one inevitably goeth to the next world. Like a guest one must leave this world, so why indulge in ego ? Let us dwell on Him, through whose service happiness in His Court is attained. No one can have things one's own way, no one even knoweth what will be one's lot there. Brothers, think of the Lord, for this (exit from here) must happen to every body. Whatever my All-Powerful Lord Willeth, comes to pass, this world is only a make-believe (unreal). The True Creator pervadeth the earth, the water and the interspace. He is Infinite and Unknowable, for no one can know His End. Fruitful is the coming here of those who dwell singlemindedly on the Lord. He destroyeth, then createth and also decorateth all in His Will. Whatever my All-Powerful Lord willeth comes to pass, this world is only a make-believe (unreal). Nanak, one wailleth truly if one wailleth in love, but if one wailleth for material things then all one's wailings are vain. Vain, really are such wailings because one forgeteth the Lord and wailleth for Maya (Unreality). (In such wailings) one maketh no distinction between right and wrong and so causeth unnecessary pain to the body. He who cometh to this world must depart, so all vanity is vain. Nanak, one wailleth truly if one wailleth in love'.

Guru Nanak in Wadhans

It may be noted that the above hymn makes a distinction between wailing and wailing. People weep and cry on the death of dear ones for the gap caused in their lives but the loss is often measured in material terms only.

“ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਖਟਿਐ ਭਾਉ ਭਾਵੈ ਆਵਉ ਭਾਵੈ ਜਾਉ ।”

(ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧)

‘The love of wife for her husband is for money, otherwise it does not matter to her wherefrom he comes and whereto he goes.’

Guru Nanak in Var Ram Kali

Bhai Gurdas reiterates almost the same thing,

“ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਦਾਮ ਹਿਤੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਆਇ ਕਿਥਾਉ ਜਾਈ ।”

(Its meaning is exactly the same as the rendering of the shalok given above).

But there is another kind of wailing which is absolutely free from any material objective. Shri Rama wept when Lachhmana died. They were two kindred souls united in spirit. There was no worldly attachment in the completely unselfish love they had for each other. This was a case of wailing truly or wailing in love, as the above hymn points out, a kind of wailing that ennobled and humanised. When the Guru was departing for his eternal Home a void was being created which could not be easily filled. He had made the best arrangements for the spiritual food people should get after he was gone, yet it was natural for those who loved him to feel the pangs of separation.

“ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਸੁ ਪਿੰਜਰ ਮਹਿ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੋ ਪਿੰਜਰੁ ਲੈ ਜਾਰਿ ॥”

‘ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੨ ।

‘Nanak, the human body not entertaining pangs of love—

separation should be burnt off'.

Guru Angad in Sri Rag

Then the Guru caused another hymn to be sung, this time, presenting a new picture. He told the audience that he was going back to Him from whom he had come. Death was going to reunite him permanently with his Lord, so it was welcome to him and should be welcome to those who loved him. Guru Amar Dass had also spoken in the same way in a similar situation.

“ਮਤਮੈ ਪਿਛੈ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਵਸੀ ਸੋ ਮੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਭਾਇਆ ॥ ਮਿਤੁ ਪੈਝੈ ਮਿਤੁ ਬਿਗਸੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਮਿਤ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ ਭਾਵਏ ॥” ਸੁੰਦਰ ਜੀ, ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸਦ ॥

'Let no one weep for me when I am gone and whoever doeth it, displeaseth me, for a true friend is happy when his friend whose honour he loveth is honoured in God's Court,'

Sunder in Ram Kali Sadd

Here is the hymn that was then sung,

ਗਉੜੀ ਦੀਪਕੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“ਜੈ ਘਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਆਖੀਐ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਬੀਚਾਰੋ । ਤਿਤੁ ਘਰਿ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ਸਿਵਰਿਹੁ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰੋ । ਤੁਮ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਕਾ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ॥ ਹਉ ਵਾਰੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੋਹਿਲੈ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ । ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਜੀਅੜੇ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਦੇਖੈਗਾ ਦੇਵਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਤੇਰੇ ਦਾਨੈ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਦਾਤੇ ਕਵਣ ਸੁਮਾਰੁ ॥ ਸੰਬਤਿ ਸਾਹਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਤੇਲੁ । ਦੇਹੁ ਸਜਣ ਅਸੀਸੜੀਆ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ । ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਏਹੋ ਪਹੁਚਾ ਸਦੜੇ ਨਿਤ ਪਵੰਨਿ । ਸਦਣਹਾਰਾ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਦਿਹ ਆਵੰਨਿ ॥”

'In whichever place the Creator is dwelt upon and His Praises are sung, sing thou His Glories and meditate on Him there. Yes, sing the Praises of my Fearless Lord. I am a sacrifice unto Him whose Praise giveth the mind peace for ever. He ever taketh care of all and watcheth them. When even His Gifts cannot be evaluated, how can the Giver be comprehended? The appointed hour of the marriage hath come (hour of death that unites the Bride with Her Spouse). O my friends, come and pour oil on the threshold (a Hindu custom on the first entry of the bride into the house of the bridegroom) and bless me that I may meet my Lord. In all homes cometh eachday the message (of death) and so forget not thou the One whose message it is. And this day must come for all of us'.

Guru Nanak in Gauri

Puratan Janam. Sakhi says that the Guru's well-known song of Twelve Months (Baran Maha) was also recited after the above hymn was done. We however propose to deal with this song in a detailed manner in the next chapter, in view of its importance.

The Guru now closed his eyes and the spirit left the body. The mortal end came at the age of seventy. Hindus and Muslims had a controversy over the disposal of his earthly remains, in respect of the right to perform obsequies, one party claiming that he was a Hindu and the other claiming that he was a Muslim. Flowers over his coffin were given away to both parties to provide them satisfaction that he belonged to each of them. Guru Angad felt acutely the pangs of separation from his Master. He shut himself in a room for many days and when Baba Budha's pleadings

brought him out, he said,

“ਜਿਸੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਮਰਿ ਚਲੀਐ ॥ ਧ੍ਰਿਗ ਜੀਵਣੁ
ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ਤਾਕੇ ਪਾਛੇ ਜੀਵਣਾ ॥”

(ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੨)

*‘If thou lovest thy beloved, die then before his death.
Cursed is the life of the lover when the beloved is no more’.*

Guru Angad in Siri Rag.

Again, he said,

“ਜੋ ਸਿਰੁ ਸਾਈ ਨਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੋ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਡਾਰਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਸੁ ਪਿੰਜਰ
ਮਹਿ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਨਹੀ ਸੋ ਪਿੰਜਰੁ ਲੈ ਜਾਰਿ ॥”

ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੨ ॥

*‘Chop off the head that bows not to the Master. Nanak,
the human body not entertaining pangs of love-separation should
be burnt off’.*

Guru Angad in Var Siri Rag.



CHAPTER XLV

The song of Twelve Months (Baran Maha)

“ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਬਿਰਹੁ ਨ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੇ ਤਨੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਮਸਾਨੁ ॥”

ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

“O Farid, the body that hath no consciousness of separation from the Lord is like the graveyard.”

Shalok of Sheikh Farid

In this last chapter we propose to deal exclusively with a poem of the Guru called ‘The Twelve Months’ (Baran Maha). No biography of his can be said to be complete without the study of this great song. It is believed to be his last song composed in Kartarpur during the closing period of his life, a short while before his earthly end came. According to the Puratan Janam Sakhi, the same poem was recited at the time he breathed his last. If studied with care, the poem will appear to be one of his best and profoundest compositions, though comparisons in respect of his works must always be odious. But there is no doubt that he had, by then, grown to maturity poetically as also had acquired mastery over the language he employed. It is a poem of love, the outpourings of a mind intensely in love, so much so that a minute of

separation is unbearable. The theme of the poem is God-realisation or self-realisation. The metaphor of a bride separated from her bridegroom is employed. The soul longs for a merger with the Supreme Soul and this is expressed figuratively as a union between the bride and the bridegroom or between the husband and the wife or between the lover and the beloved. The Divine poet seems drunk with the wine of Spirit and goes into an ecstasy that exalts the spirit with its own elevation and in consequence even the pain of separation humanises the soul. There is certainly the romantic atmosphere about it, yet it is something philosophical, expressing eternal truths and unfolding a vision of the things of the spirit. There is an overflow of passion for the life Divine. There is in it also richness of music and intensity of emotion. The Twelve Months, the title of the poem, represents a poetic form chosen with a view to express, through the changing moods and forms of Nature, the corresponding changes in the moods of the Divine lover. The Guru gazes with his keen observant eye at the sun, the trees, the moon, the black bee, the country shrubs, the rains, the clouds and responds to them through his own urges and emotions. He possesses an unbounded sense of beauty and dwells on the loveliness of things around him but he transforms that loveliness into something divine, wonderful and beautiful. When he is filled with wonder there is in it more than the obvious, or the superficial and the commonplace. It is also not a mere poetic wonder but has in it a divine message. There certainly seems a passionate interest in Nature which provides grist to his poetic mill. Judged from his utterances he seems to love and worship Nature but there is always a mystic note in the experience. He finds in it the immanence of

God. He does not admire or worship Nature merely in the local or geographical setting but because it is all filled with His Presence. He has the great gift of song and employs it well to describe the stages through which the Bride passes before the Union comes about. The poem consists of seventeen stanzas in all. The first four of them deal with the theme of the poem in a general way, without reference to the months of the year, and yet they are complete in themselves. The next twelve stanzas describe the meaning or message each month, taken separately, has for him and are a reflection or an image of his own mind. Like a true analyst of human life, he depicts the causes that lead to its ruin and the way it can be redeemed. The poem is really an essence of his philosophy of life. How is God to be realised? Where has man come from and how does he come to be what he is? How will he fulfil his destiny? He gives his own answers to these questions. The Bride is shown to go through the pangs of separation and then ultimately fulfils herself through the love of the Name and through acquiring moral and spiritual merits. The last stanza is devoted to the joy of Union and is in the form of thanks-giving to the Lord for His great Mercy in uniting the Bride with Himself. We have taken the first four stanzas together and the rest, one by one. The reader will find each stanza packed with rich and expressive phrases. There is evident in it a combination of wisdom in thought and brevity in form. The richness of thought, the overflowing emotional exuberance with which the song emerges and the style of expression make it difficult to be understood at places. It may also appear in-coherent, if examined superficially. We

have, therefore, supplemented the translations with explanatory notes retained in brackets. Read in this way, the whole piece will surely become a unit easier to understand. It is a very great poem and should be studied very minutely, specially its first four and the last three stanzas as also the one on the month of Katak. Here are the first four stanzas, first.

ਤੁਖਾਰੀ ਛੰਤ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਬਾਰਹ ਮਾਹਾਂ

“ਤੂੰ ਸੁਣਿ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰੰਮਾ ਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੁਖ ਸਹੰਮਾ
ਦੇਹੇ ਸੁ ਤੂੰ ਭਲਾ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਕਿਆ ਗਤਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੜੀ ਨ
ਜੀਵਾਂ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਿਆ ਬਾਝੁ ਦੁਹੇਲੀ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਬੇਲੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪੀਵਾਂ ॥ ਰਚਨਾ
ਰਾਚਿ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮਨਿ ਕਰਮ ਸੁਕਰਮਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੰਥੁ ਨਿਹਾਲੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਤੂੰ
ਸੁਣਿ ਆਤਮਰਾਮਾ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਬਾਬੀਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਬੋਲੇ ਕੋਕਿਲ ਬਾਣੀਆ ॥ ਸਾਧਨ ਸਭਿ
ਰਸ ਚੋਲੈ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਣੀਆਂ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਣੀ ਸਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ
ਨਾਰੇ ॥ ਨਵ ਘਰ ਥਾਪਿ ਮਹਲੁ ਘਰੁ ਉਚਉ ਨਿਜਘਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ
ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਨਿਸਿ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਵੈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਚਵੈ ਬਬੀਹਾ
ਕੋਕਿਲ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਸੁਣਿ ਹਰ ਰਸ ਭੁਨੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਆਪਣੈ ॥ ਮਨਿ
ਤਨਿ ਰਵਤ ਰਵੰਨੇ ਘੜੀ ਨਾ ਬੀਸਰੈ ॥ ਕਿਉਂ ਘੜੀ ਬਿਸਾਰੀ ਹਉ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਹਉ
ਜੀਵਾਂ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਏ ॥ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਉ ਕਿਸੁ ਕੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਰਹਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਏ ॥
ਓਟ ਗਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਨਿਵਾਸੈ ਭਏ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਸਰੀਰਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟ ਦੀਰਘ ਸੁਖੁ
ਪਾਵੈ ਗੁਰਸਬਦੀ ਮਨੁ ਧੀਰਾ ॥ ੩ ॥ ਬਰੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਧਾਰ ਬੰਦ ਸੁਹਾਵਣੀ ॥
ਸਾਜਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਹਿਜ ਸੁਭਾਇ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਬਣੀ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਮੰਦਰਿ ਆਵੈ ਜਾ
ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵੈ ਧਨ ਉਭੀ ਗੁਣ ਸਾਰੀ ॥ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਕੰਤੁ ਰਵੈ ਸੁਹਾਗਣਿ ਹਉ ਕਿਉ
ਕੰਤਿ ਵਿਸਾਰੀ ॥ ਉਨਵਿ ਘਨ ਛਾਏ ਬਰਸੁ ਸੁਭਾਏ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੁਖਾਵੈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ
ਵਰਸੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਘਰਿ ਆਵੈ ॥ ੪ ॥”

Guru Nanak's Baran Maha (Twelve Months) in
Tukhari Chhand

'Hear Thou, O Lord, each man's life proceeds as his accumulated Karmas (acts) constrain him. (He is driven to act along lines determined by his past Karmas) and these Karmas bring him, in consequence, happiness or unhappiness. But all is well that cometh from Thee (God is working through His Laws for the good of all. The law of Karma is the law of Justice but it is tempered with Mercy, for it is in suffering that the seed of advance lies hidden). I am Thy creation : what can be the meaning of my existenee? (The next line answers), I cannot live without Thee even for a moment. (This pithy line indicates the meaning and the aim of life. He is the cause of all existence. So how can any one exist without him? All must, therefore, live in Him if life's purpose is to be achieved). Without my Lord, I ever remain in pain and there is no other to be-friend me except the Guru through whom I drink the Nectar (of His Name). I am attached to the creation of the Formless One (because I find Him there), to keep Him ever in mind is the only true deed. Nanak, the Bride, looketh out Thy Way to meet Thee, O All-Pervading Lord, (And how to meet Him? The next stanza points the Way. It is the love of the Name enshrined in the heart that unites the soul with the Supreme Spirit that resides in the inmost Self). The Chatrik (my mind) uttereth the Name of the Beloved and the Koel (my tongue) singeth His Word. The Bride enjoyeth all His joys when she mergeth in His Person. Yes, she mergeth in Him if she pleaseth Him, and then, truly, she is the Bride. (Where is He to be found? The next line gives the answer) He hath created the body of nine doors (opening) but there in the highest Abode in the true in-most Self where He resideth. (Thus to meet Him one must look within one's own highest self). All are Thine, O Love, so Thou art mine too'

and my mind reveleth in Thy love, night and day. Nanak, the chatrik (my mind) uttereth the Name of the Beloved and the Koel (my tongue) looketh pleasing by singing His Word. (The next stanza describes the condition of the lover's mind and the peace it has attained) Hear Thou, O Lord, the condition in which Thy Lover (i e myself) ever intoxicated in Thy love, is. Both my body and mind are inebriated with Thee through uttering Thy Name ; so much so, that I cannot forget Thee even for a moment. How can I forget Thee at any time when I can live only by singing Thy Praises ? I am truly a sacrifice unto Thee. No one else except Thee is mine, nor do I belong to any one but Thee, without whom I cannot live. I have sought Thy Refuge and I abide in Thy Feet and thus my body hath become pure. I have attained deep vision and, in consequence, the soul's peace, my mind hath found its rest through the Guru's Word (The same idea continues in the next stanza). The Nectar (of His Name) raineth, how sweet are its drops ! The Lord meeteth spontaneously when His love comes to stay in the heart. He cometh in the Temple (soul) when it pleaseth Him and the Bride is ready to receive Him by keeping His Merits in her mind. The Lord enjoyeth the Brides in every home, so how could He forget me for long ? The low moving thick clouds overcast the sky, and it hath rained spontaneously, (The Nectar of His Name has rained). The love of the Lord is pleasing to the mind and the body both. Yes, when the rain of the Nectar-Word falleth, the Lord, in His Mercy. cometh into our home.'

The coming stanzas are taken one, by one as stated above .

“ਚੇਤੁ ਬਸੰਤੁ ਭਲਾ ਭਵਰ ਸੁਹਾਵੜੇ ॥ ਬਨ ਫੂਲੇ ਮੰਝ ਬਾਰਿ ਮੈ ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ

ਬਾਹੁੜੇ ॥ ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਧਨ ਕਿਉ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵੈ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਬਿਰੋਧ ਤਨੁ
ਛੀਜੈ ॥ ਕੋਕਿਲ ਅੰਬਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਕਿਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਹੀਜੈ ॥ ਭਵਰੁ ਭਵੰਤਾ
ਫੂਲੀ ਡਾਲੀ ਕਿਉ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਮਰੁ ਮਾਏ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਚੇਤਿ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ ਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਵਰੁ
ਘਰਿ ਧਨ ਪਾਏ ॥”

“How good is the month of Chet ! The black-bees are delightful to look at, and the woods of our native land are blooming. yet I am waiting to meet my Love How can the Bride find her peace if the Spouse cometh not into her home ? Her body withereth away in pain of separation. The lovely Koel singeth on the mango tree, yet unbearable is the pain (of separation) for my limbs. The black-bee goeth about the blooming boughs, but how can I live, mother, without Him ? It is all death to me (The loveliness around her only adds to her pain by reminding her of her own loneliness). Nanak, the Bride would find, in Chet, her peace spontaneously if her Spouse came home.”

(The Bride has become conscious of her separation. This is the first step, without which no union is ever possible).

“ਵੈਸਾਖੁ ਭਲਾ ਸਾਖਾਂ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੇ ॥ ਧਨ ਦੇਖੈ ਹਰਿ ਦੁਆਰਿ ਆਵਹੁ ਦਇਆ
ਕਰੇ ॥ ਘਰਿ ਆਉ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਦੁਤਰ ਤਾਰੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਿਨ ਅਢੁ ਨ ਮੋਲੋ ॥ ਕੀਮਤਿ
ਕਉਣ ਕਰੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ ਢੋਲੋ ॥ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਨਾ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮਾਨਾ
ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਮਹਲੁ ਪਛਾਨਾਂ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਵੈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਮਨੁ
ਮਾਨਾ ॥ ੬ ॥”

“How good is Vaisakh ! The tree-boughs have put on new forms. The Bride looketh for the Lord's Door and prayeth to Him, ‘O Lord, come into my home, for mercy's sake. O Dear One, come to Home to make me cross the

impassable sea of life, without Thee I am worth nothing. But if Thou art pleased with me, I become priceless.' O, who shall see my Lord and then make me see Him. I need not go afar. He is within me only if I recognised His Abode. Nanak, he, whose mind findeth its fulfilment by enshrining Him in the heart, attaineth Him in Vaisakh.'

(The Bride evidently knows His Abode as also the way to find Him).

‘ਮਾਹੁ ਜੇਠੁ ਭਲਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਕਿਉ ਬਿਸਰੈ ॥ ਥਲ ਤਾਪਹਿ ਸਰ ਭਾਰ ਸਾਧਨ
ਬਿਨਉ ਕਰੈ ॥ ਧਨ ਬਿਨਉ ਕਰੇਂਦੀ ਗੁਣ ਸਾਰੇਂਦੀ ਗੁਣ ਸਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵਾ ॥ ਸਾਚੈ
ਮਹਲਿ ਰਹੈ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਆਵਣ ਦੇਹਿ ਤ ਆਵਾਂ ॥ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਨਿਤਾਣੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਉ
ਪਾਵੈ ਸੁਖ ਮਹਲੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਠਿ ਜਾਣੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੈਸੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਣ
ਗਹਿਲੀ ॥ ੭ ॥’

“Blessed is the month of Jeth, yet how can I forget my Lord? The lands burn like oven (The reference to the outside heat is a reflection of the condition of the lover. The pang of separation is the burning fire within). The Bride prayeth to her Lord, thinketh of His Merits and thus seeketh to please Him. The Detached Lord liveth in the Abode of Truth and she can meet Him there if it pleaseth Him. The Bride is meek and weak without Her Lord, so, how can she attain the Abode of peace? Nanak, she can know Him and become like Him in Jeth if by His Grace she cometh to possess Merit.”

(She realises her limitations, yet her goal is clear).

‘ਆਸਾਤੁ ਭਲਾ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਗਗਨਿ ਤਪੈ ॥ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੂਖ ਸਹੈ ਸੋਖੈ ਅਗਨਿ
ਭਖੈ ॥ ਅਗਨਿ ਰਸੁ ਸੋਖੈ ਮਰੀਐ ਧੋਖੈ ਭੀ ਸੋ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਨ ਹਾਰੇ ॥ ਰਬੁ ਫਿਰੇ

ਛਾਇਆ ਧਨ ਤਾਕੈ ਟੀਡੁ ਲਵੈ ਮੰਝਿ ਬਾਰੇ ॥ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਬਧਿ ਚਲੀ ਦੁਖੁ ਆਗੈ
ਸੁਖੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਦੀਆ ਮਰਣੁ ਜੀਵਣੁ
ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਲੇ ॥ ੮ ॥”

“Blessed is the Asahr. The sun burneth in the sky and the earth feedeth on fire, drieth up and suffereth sorrow. Fire destoryeth the earth's sap and burneth it away, yet it forgeteth not its task. The chariot of the sun moveth on, the woman looketh out for a shade and the cricket waileth in the woods. She who goeth carrying the load of sin becometh unhappy hereafter, but she who keepeth Truth in her mind, is happy. Nanak, whomsoever He blesseth with such a mind, he hath the Lord with him in both life and death.”

“ਸਾਵਣ ਸਰਸ ਮਨਾ ਘਣ ਵਰਸਹਿ ਰੁਤਿ ਆਏ ॥ ਮੈ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਸਹੁ
ਭਾਵੈ ਪਿਰੁ ਪਰਦੇਸਿ ਸਿਧ ਏ । ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਮਰੀਐ ਹਾਵੈ ਦਾਮਨਿ ਚਮਕਿ
ਡਰਾਏ ॥ ਸੇਜ ਇਕੋਲੀ ਖਰੀ ਦੁਹੇਲੀ ਮਰਣੁ ਭਇਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਮਾਏ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ
ਨੀਦ ਭੂਖ ਕਹੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਕਾਪੜ ਤਨਿ ਨ ਸੁਖਾਵਏ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਕੰਤੀ ਪਿਰ
ਕੈ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਵਏ । ੯ ॥”

“Bloom now, O my mind, Sawan hath come. It is the season when the clouds bring rain. There is love in my body and soul for my Spouse but He hath gone out into other lands. My Love cometh not into the home when I am sighing to death. The lightening flash terrifies me, for, my bed is lonely. I am very much in pain; in fact, it is death to me, mother. How can I have any sleep or appetite for food without the Lord? Even my clothes seem too irksome for the body to wear. Nanak, the true Bride is one who mergeth in the Person of her Lord.”

, 'ਭਾਦਉ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲੀ ਭਰਿ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਪਛੁਤਾਣੀ ॥ ਜਲ ਥਲ ਨੀਰਿ ਭਰੇ
ਬਰਸ ਰੁਤੇ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੀ ॥ ਬਰਜੈ ਨਿਸਿ ਕਾਲੀ ਕਿਉ ਸੁਖ ਬਾਲੀ ਦਾਦਰ ਮੋਰ
ਲਵੰਤੇ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਚਵੈ ਬਬੀਹਾ ਬੋਲੇ ਭੁਇਅੰਗਮ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਡਸੰਤੇ ॥ ਮਛਰ ਡੰਗ
ਸਾਇਰ ਭਰ ਸੁਭਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਉ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਛਿ ਚਲਉ ਗੁਰ
ਅਪੁਨੇ ਜਹ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਹ ਹੀ ਜਾਈਐ ॥ ੧੦ ॥"

"In Bhadon month, I am wandering in illusion and though blooming in youth, I repent (for what I have missed). The dry land and the seas are all covered with water. It is the rainy season and how I wish the Lord were with me to enjoy. It raineth the whole of this black night: so where is the peace for the Young Bride that I am? The frogs and the peacocks cry, the chatrik, uttereth 'Piro, Piro' (Love, Love), the snakes go about biting, the mosquitoes sting and the pools are overflowing with water, but where is the peace for me without my Lord? Nanak, let me ask my Guru and go, wherever he biddeth me, to find my Lord."

"ਅਸੁਨਿ ਆਉ ਪਿਰਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਝੂਰਿ ਮੁਈ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਲੇ ਦੂਜੇ
ਭਾਇ ਖੁਈ ॥ ਝੂਠਿ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ ਤਾ ਪਿਰ ਮੁਤੀ ਕੁਕਹ ਕਾਹਸਿ ਫੁਲੇ ॥ ਆਗੈ ਘਾਮ
ਪਿਛੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਜਾਡਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਚਲਤ ਮਨੁ ਡੋਲੇ ॥ ਦਹਿ ਦਿਸਿ ਸਾਖ ਹਰੀ ਹਰੀਆਵਲ
ਸਹਜਿ ਪਕੈ ਸੋ ਮੀਠਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਸੁਨਿ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭਏ
ਬਸੀਠਾ ॥ ੧੧ ॥"

"Come, O Love, it is the Asun month now, Thy Bride is worrying herself to death. But one meeteth only when He willeth it, and I am lost in the Other (Here is a recognition of the cause of separation. So long as there is the illusion of the Other there can be no meeting. The next line explains the point further). I am lost in falsehood and therefore the Lord hath forsaken me. The country shrubs (bearing white flowers) are

in bloom, there is the winter before me while I have left the summer behind me and I tremble at all this wonderful play. The boughs everywhere are fresh and green, but those that ripen in their own time are sweet. O my Lord, meet me now in this month of Asun, the true Guru hath become my intercessor (Guru is the key to the union)."

“ਕਤਕਿ ਕਿਰਤ ਪਇਆ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਇਆ ॥ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਸਹਜਿ ਬਲੈ ਤਤਿ
ਜਲਾਇਆ । ਦੀਪਕੁ ਰਸ ਤੇਲੋ ਧਨ ਪਿਰ ਮੇਲੋ ਧਨ ਉਮਾਰੈ ਸਰਸੀ ॥ ਅਵਗਣ
ਮਾਰੀ ਮਤੈ ਨ ਸੀਝੈ ਗੁਣਿ ਮਾਰੀ ਤਾ ਮਰਸੀ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਦੇ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਬੈਠੇ
ਅਜਹੁ ਤਿਨਾੜੀ ਆਸਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਕਪਟ ਦਰ ਖੋਲਹੁ ਏਕ ਘੜੀ ਖਟੁ
ਮਾਸਾ ॥”

“The fruit of Karma in Katak month is as He Willeth (The law of Karma and His Will are inter-changeable terms. The next lines indicate the way to realise His Will and to make life yield its fruit. The law of true living is love, but right actions and right knowledge i.e. Divine Wisdom, are also necessary to make the law of love work effectively. For harmony in life, love, action and knowledge (Divine Wisdom) must go together and cooperate with each other. This is explained through a beautiful metaphor). The lamp (of life) burneth steadily if lighted with (the match stick of) Divine Wisdom and fed with the oil of love. Thus only the Bride meeteth the Spouse, bloometh and becometh happy. How can she be emancipated if she dieth of vice? Only when she dieth of merit, she dieth truly (and is redeemed). They who are blessed with the gift of Thy Name abide in their own true self and meet Him forthwith. Nanak, meet me too, O Lord, open Thy Door to me, for, a moment of separation is like six months to me.”

“ਮਘਰ ਮਾਹੁ ਭਲਾ ਹਣਿ ਗੁਣ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਵਏ ॥ ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਗੁਣ ਰਵੈ ਮੈ
ਪਿਰੁ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਭਾਵਏ ॥ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਚਤਰੁ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ ਚੰਚਲੁ ਜਗਤੁ
ਸਬਾਇਆ ॥ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਣੇ ਤਾ ਭਾਇਆ ॥
ਗੀਤ ਨਾਦ ਕਵਿਤ ਕਵੇ ਸੁਣਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਭਾਗੈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧਨ ਨਾਹ
ਪਿਆਰੀ ਅਭਭਗਤੀ ਪਿਰ ਆਗੈ ॥”

“Blessed is the month of Maghar if the Lord's Merits merge in my person. The Brides possessing merit think of His Merits, O, how I wish I had loved the immutable Lord (and attained His Merits). The Lord is Immutable, Wise, Wide-awake and the Builder of Destiny but the world is all impermanent. If Wisdom, Divine contemplation and Merit entered the soul, He will be pleased and give it His Love. I have heard poems uttered by the poets and songs sung by the musicians but pain departeth by hearing His Name. (Therefore) she alone is the Bride loved by Him, if she is heartily devoted to Him, ever offering her devotions and remaining in His Presence.”

“ਪੋਖਿ ਤੁਖਾਰੁ ਪੜੈ ਵਣੁ ਤਿਣੁ ਰਸੁ ਸੋਖੈ ॥ ਆਵਤ ਕੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ
ਵਸਹਿ ਮੁਖੇ । ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਜਗ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਗੁਰਸਬਦੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੀ ।
ਅੰਡਜ ਜੇਰਜ ਸੇਤਜ ਉਤਭੁਜ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ । ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੇਹੁ ਦਇਆ
ਪਤਿ ਦਾਤੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵਉ ਮਤਿ ਦੇਹੋ । ਨਾਨਕ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਵੈ ਰਸਿ ਰਸੀਆ ਹਰਿ
ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਸਨੇਹੋ ।”

“The snows fall in Pokh month and dry up the sap of plant life. Thou, O Lord, abidest in my mind, body and mouth and yet thou comest not to me. He, the life of the world, pervadeth my mind and body and I can enjoy Him through the Guru's Word. His Light pervadeth all life – the egg-born, the foetus born, the sweat-born and the earth-born

(plant life). O Thou Merciful Lord, bless me with Thy Vision and grant me such Wisdom as should liberate me. Nanak, one in love with the Lord enjoyeth Him in love (The stanza points out that meeting the Lord is a different thing from merely uttering His Name or even entertaining Him in body and mind These are certainly devotions of great value since they are means to create a certain Divine consciousness in which the Union with the Lord becomes possible),”

“ਮਾਘਿ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਭਈ ਤੀਰਥ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ । ਸਾਜਨ ਸਹਜਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਹਿ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਨਿਆ ॥ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਗੁਣ ਅੰਕੇ ਸੁਣਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬੰਕੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵਾ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵਾ ॥ ਗੰਗ ਜਮੁਨ ਤਹ ਬੇਣੀ ਸੰਗਮ ਸਾਤ ਸਸੰਦ ਸਮਾਵਾ । ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਏਕੇ ਜਾਤਾ । ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਘਿ ਮਹਾ ਰਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਅਠ ਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਤਾ ॥”

“In the month of Mangh, I have become pure, for I know now, there is the place of pilgrimage within myself (The Bride is preparing herself for the meeting. She first learnt to enshrine Him in the heart. Now she is achieving moral purity, without which no union is possible. This is made clear in the next line). Those who hold His Merits firmly to their persons meet Him spontaneously. O my Beauteous Lord, hear Thou me ; Thy Merits have become part of my being and if I please Thee, (then I consider) I have bathed in the Holy Places. It is like bathing in the Ganges, the Jamuna, and their confluence with Saraswati and, in fact, in the seven seas. To know that He abideth throughout ages, is for me all the worship and all acts of charity. Nanak, in the month of Mangh, the Worship of the Lord is most blissful and is like bathing at the sixty eight pilgrim stations.”

“ਫਲਗੁਨਿ ਮਨਿ ਰਹਸੀ ਪੇਸੁ ਸੁਭਾਇਆ । ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਰਹਸੁ ਭਇਆ ਆਪੁ
ਗਵਾਇਆ । ਮਨ ਮੋਹੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ਜਾਂ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਘਰਿ ਆਓ ॥
ਬਹੁਤੇ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੀ ਪਿਰ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਮਹਲੀ ਲਹਾ ਨ ਥਾਉ । ਹਾਰ ਡੋਰ ਰਸ ਪਾਟ
ਪਟੰਬਰ ਪਿਰਿ ਲੋੜੀ ਸੀਗਾਰੀ । ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਲਿ ਲਈ ਗੁਰ ਅਪਣੈ ਘਰਿ ਵਰੁ
ਪਾਇਆ ਨਾਰੀ ।”

“In the month of Phalgun, happy are they who love the Lord, in the natural way (The Simran of the Lord should flow in the natural way. The Merits of the Lord should come to stay and then flow spontaneously. All this is implied in the love of the Lord). They lose their self and are in bliss, day and night. I have (also) thrown off attachments from the mind, as it pleased Him, and I pray ‘O Lord, be merciful and come to me.’ When I adorned myself in many ways (with things superficial) I got no refuge. But when the Lord sought me out, I was adorned in the natural way with Necklaces, Garlands and Silk Garments (Moral and spiritual Merits). The Guru hath united the Bride with the Spouse and she hath found her true Home. (The Union has taken place. Thanks givings follow in the next stanza which is the last one).

“ਬੇ ਦਸ ਮਾਹ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ਭਲੇ । ਘੜੀ ਮੂਰਤ ਪਲ ਸਾਚੇ ਆਏ
ਸਹਜਿ ਮਿਲੇ । ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮਿਲੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਾਣੈ । ਜਿਨਿ
ਸੀਗਾਰੀ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੇਲੁ ਭਇਆ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਨੈ । ਘਰਿ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਜਾ
ਪਿਰਿ ਰਾਵੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਭਾਗੇ । ਨਾਨਕ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਰਾਵੈ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਹਰਿ
ਵਰੁ ਥਿਰ ਸੋਹਾਗੇ ॥”

“Blessed now are the twelve months, the seasons, the lunar and the solar days, the hours, the minutes and the seconds, for, He hath come spontaneously to meet me. The Creator

knoweth all my ways and when He hath come, all my purposes are fulfilled. He adorned me because He loved me and when I met Him I enjoyed Him. My bed became Glorious as soon as He enjoyed me, but it is through the Guru's Grace that my Luck hath favoured me Nanak, I enjoy my Lord, my Groom now stayeth with me for ever. (Thanks to the Guru who has brought about the union)."

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