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## PUNJABI SECTION

1. Ardws (vwr sRI BgauqI jI kI sRI dsm gRMQ) ivcoN, sRI gurU goibMd isMG jI
2. prgty nwnk rwie (sRI dsm gRMQ - bicqR nwtK ivcoN), sRI gurU goibMd isMG jI
3. gurU nwnk gun gwvauN (sRI gurU gRMQ swihb ivcoN), kvI kl-shwr
4. gurU nwnk sMbMDI gur-Sbd, mhlw 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, blvMf Aqy s`qw
5. hkIkiq rwh mukwm rwjy iSbnwB kI (purwxI hQ-ilKqI bIV sRI gurU gRMQ swihb dy AMqly pqirAW qoN)
6. gurU nwnk Aqy aunHW dy pRis`D SrDwlU, (vwrW) BweI gurdws
7. krqwrpur (jwlMDr) gurduAwrw SIS mhl ivc bRwjmnw sRI gurU gRMQ swihb dI pihlI ilKqI bIV ivc sRI gurU swihbwn dy joqI joiq smwauX dIAW iQ`qW
8. sUck pRsMg gurU kw, BweI bihlo
9. joiq ibkwI (pMjwbI), BweI nMd lwl goieAw
10. swKI pihly mihly kI, BweI syvw dws
11. gurU nwnk (mihmw pRkws ivcoN), bwbw srUp cMd
12. phly mhly kI jnm swKI (pRwcIn pMQ pRkws ivcoN), BMgU rqn isMG ShId
13. Bgq kbIr gurU nwnk dyv dy gurU nhIN sn, fw. BweI joD isMG

14. bwby nwnk dw hwl (isKW dy rwj dI iviQAw), SrDw rwm PlOrI
15. gurU nwnk jI ky gurduAwry (sRI gur qIrQ sMgRh), pMifq qwrw isMG  
nroqm
16. sRI gurU nwnk swihb dy AsQwn (irpudmn pRkwS) igAwnI igAwn isMG
17. ierwk, eIrwn Aqy A&gwinsqwn ivc gurU nwnk dy AsQwn (gurduvwrw  
drpx) kvIrwj pMifq Arjun munI
18. gur-AsQwn, bZdwd sMbMDI ic`TI, krqwr isMG sMswrpurI
19. gurduAwrw sRI rITw swihb, igAwnI hrcrn isMG

II gurduAwrw JMfw swihb, bwgyvr

1. Aihvwil &rzMdwin vw ^wndwn vw gurduAwirAwin gurU nwnk (^urSI d Kwls w  
aurdU) bwbw inhwl isMG
2. gurU nwnk Aqy nwnk-pMQI (gur Sbd rqnwkr mhwnkoS) BweI kwnH isMG

III vydI vMS (gurSbd rqnwkr mhwn koS) BweI kwnH isMG

1. kY&IAiq ^wndwin swibzwdgwin bwbw nwnk jIE
2. gurU nwnk swihb jI dI bwXI ivcoN kuJ ivSy-vwr cuxy Sbd, sMpwdk

## **PERSIAN AND URDU**

MURSHID-i-KAMIL by Bhai Nand Lal

SALTANAT-i-AWWAL —Guru Nanak by Bhai Nand Lal

NANAK by Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal

GURU NANAK by Munshi Bisheshwar Prasad Manawar Lakhnavi

GURU NANAK by Puran Singh 'Hunar'

SARUR-I-AZAL by Muhshi Tilok Chand 'Mehrum'

MAQTAL-i-NANKANA by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan

TARIKH-i-HIND PAR IK NAZAR by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan

GURU BABA NANAK by Rai Bahadur Kanhaya Lal

BAYAN-i-HALAT-i-GURU BABA NANAK SAHIB by Sayyad Shah Bhika Musafir

VALIMAT-i-NANAK by Janab Mehdi Nazami

## FOREWORD

This Special Guru Nanak Number of the *Punjab Past and Present* is a Souvenir Volume being brought out by the Punjabi University on the occasion of the 500th birth anniversary of the Great Guru. This volume is being released on the occasion of the International Seminar on the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak which is being held from September 3 to 5 in the University highlighting the uniqueness and significance of his great and universal message. The Guru wanted man to understand the essence of religion and not to be lost in the multitude of forms. The form, he held, was the outward crust depicting the time and conditions in which a particular religion was born. The essence or fundamentals in every religion—Truth, Love, Sacrifice, Service, Self-denial remains the same throughout. There could be no better way to pay tribute to the great Guru than to place before those interested in his study all the available source material to think for themselves how great is the message of the Guru.

All the primary/secondary books/writings on Guru Nanak whether in English, Punjabi or Persian, etc., have been included at one place so that every serious student of Sikh religion may have a complete reference material on the Jagad Guru, the World Teacher, Guru Nanak, in a single handy volume. It has been also priced very moderately.

Dr. Ganda Singh, Honorary Research Fellow of the University, who has spent all his life in the study and collection of the original sources on the Punjab history was entrusted with this important and laborious work.

Some rare and valuable material hitherto not very much known has been included in this volume. Among those which deserve special mention are Bhai Sarup Chand Bhalla's *Mehma Prakash* in verse and in prose, *Gurtirath Sangrah* of Pandit Tara Singh Narotam which is now out of print, and the Marathi work *Bhaktalilamrita*. Dr Ganda Singh in the volume under reference has also used *Oriya*, manuscript of the *Chaitanya Bhagvat* of Ishwar Dass which Dr Biman Bihari Mazumdar used in his *Chaitanya Chariter Upadan* establishing beyond doubt the meeting of Guru Nanak with Chaitanya Maha-Prabhu in 1510 at Jagannath Puri.

Apart from reproducing sources on Guru Nanak and translating most of them into English, Dr Ganda Singh has appended a very useful Introduction to this Souvenir Volume. Through this Introduction, the learned Sikh historian has thrown a flood of light on some of the most controversial matters connected with the life and teachings of Guru Nanak. This Introduction coming after Dr McLeod's book on Guru Nanak is all the more important. Dr McLeod has rejected many sakhis of Guru Nanak questioning even the visit of Guru Nanak to Mecca, Baghdad, Ceylon, etc. Dr Ganda Singh has reiterated that evidence of Bhai Gurdas, a relative of the Sikh Gurus and a knowledgeable person and a man of unimpeachable integrity, should not have been easily brushed aside by Dr McLeod. Besides, most of the events connected with Baghdad and Assam visits to which Bhai Gurdas and other Sikh sources refer to, have now been corroborated by Dr Kirpal Singh's recent researches and also by actual geographical and authentic data.

In this Introduction, several other controversial issues relating to the life and teachings "of Guru Nanak in the light of the study of this vast source material have been also taken up. For example, Dr Ganda Singh feels more than convinced that Guru Nanak was born on April 15, 1469, Vaisakh Sudi 3, 1526, and not on Katik Sudi 15, Puranmashi, 1526 Bikrami. He has also tried to establish that Guru Nanak was born at Nankana Sahib and not at the place where his maternal grandparents were settled. Similarly, he has analytically examined the position of Bhai Bala vis-a-vis Bhai Mardana as a companion of Guru Nanak in his Udasis or Missionary tours. He has also tried to throw a good deal of light on the relationship between Guru Nanak and Kabir which to this day is a great controversial point.

As regards the fact that Sikhism is an offshoot of Hinduism or is an independent religion, this Souvenir Volume provides a lot of original material to the reader to draw his own conclusions. To me, it

seems that Sikhism questioned some of the cardinal principles of Hinduism such as the caste system, sanctity of Sanskrit language, Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva Trinity, belief in the divine origin of the Vedas, etc. Besides, Guru Nanak's establishment of Sangats and also his appointing a chosen disciple during his own life time to succeed him as a Guru and to continue and expand his work point to a well-thought out plan that he had in his mind for the development of Sikh community, a regular church under the guidance of the Guru.' Guru Nanak and his successors were also strongly against asceticism and renunciation of the world which are extolled by almost all sections of Hindus.

As will be seen from the study of the original sources as contained in this Volume, Guru Nanak met Sidhs, Yogis, Kazis, Mullas and Brahmins and insisted on one thing that no religious practice or dogma could be of any use to a man in his spiritual salvation unless he attended to his responsibilities and duties towards his fellow-beings. He emphasized over and over again that without rendering selfless service punctuated by Love and compassion for the creator's creation, no one could reach Him.

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## EDITORIAL

In keeping with the objective of the *Punjab Past and Present*, we present in this *souvenir* volume for the Quincentenary of Guru Nanak's birth in 1969 A.D., 2026 Vikrami, rare and out of print material on the life and teachings of the Guru collected from sources not readily available to students and scholars of history. In addition to old English works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we have included extracts from such of the works as are in common demand by research workers but are not easily available to them. There are others which we have included on account of their special value for historical, geographical and philosophical research.

With a view to giving out readers the idea of what the successors of Guru Nanak and their contemporaries thought of him, we have culled relevant portions from *Gurū Granth Sahib*, the *Dasam Granth*, and *Vārān* of Bhai Gurdas and; from the writings of Bhai Nandlal. Some of these have been translated into English.

From amongst the earliest *janam-sākhī*s of the Guru, the *Purātan Janam-sākhī*, Sodhi Meharban's *Janam-sākhī* and Bhai Bala's *Janam-sākhī* are available in print, as also, though rare, the *janam-sākhī* ascribed to Bhai Mani Singh. An old manuscript of the *Purātan Janam-sākhī* was translated into English by Dr. Ernest Trump and was included along with a summary of Bhai Bala's *Janam-sākhī*, in the introductory portion of his translation of the *Ādi Granth*, published by Secretary of State for India in London in 1877.

Next comes Bhai Sarup Chand Bhalla's *Mehmā Prakāsh*, in verse and in prose. The Guru Nanak Section of the manuscript in verse is being soon published by the Languages Department of the Government of the Punjab, Patiala. We have, therefore, included in this volume the biography of Guru Nanak from the *Vartak* or prose manuscript made available to us through the courtesy of the Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College Amritsar. It has been translated for us by Dr. W. H. McLeod to whom we are highly indebted for it.

In addition to the selection of the hymns of Guru Nanak from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, we have also arranged them under different topics for the convenience of scholars. There is yet another selection of them in English translation from the writings of Max Arthur Macauliffe, Prof. Teja Singh, Sir Jogendra Singh, Raja Sir Daljit Singh and of the editor of this volume.

Brief accounts of the shrines of Guru Nanak have been taken from the rare and out of print *Gur-Tirath Sangrah* of Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, the *Ripudaman Prakāsh* of Giani Gian Singh, and the *Gurdwārā Darpan* of Pandit Arjun Muni (for Gurdwaras in Central Asia). For further study, the inquisitive reader may consult the *Nānak Prakāsh* of Bhai Santokh Singh, the *Gurdbām Sangrah*, the *Panth Prakāsh* and the *Tavārīkh Gurū Khalsā* of Giani Gian Singh, in addition to *Gurdwārā Darshan* of Giani Thakur Singh and the detailed list published by the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. There are quite a large number of temples scattered all over the country and in foreign lands raised and managed by the Udasi Saints and Nanak-Panthi Sikhs and Sadhus. A detailed search for them has yet to be made. We hope the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee will soon move in this direction.

The account of the Sikh Shrines in Pakistan by Muhammad Waliullah Khan, Superintendent of the Western Circle of Archaeology, Pakistan, will be found of particular interest, as also the accounts of the visits of Guru Nanak to Ladakh, Tibet, etc.

We have also been able to give from different sources some account of the origin and development, and of the ways and manners, of the Udasi order founded by Guru Nanak's elder ascetic son Baba Sri Chand, and of the lineal descendants of the Guru from his second son Lakhmi Das based on rare manuscript records in the collection of the editor. Much of the information contained therein has come to light for the first time. There are innumerable branches of the family, but we have included here the pedigrees of only the four

representative brandies, the Chola Sahib branch, the Chhannian-wali branch, the Una branch of Baba Sahib Singh and the Kallar branch of Sir Baba Khem Singh.

The accounts of Ritha Sahib and Jhanda Sahib Gurdwaras by Giani Harcharan Singh of Nanak Matta indicate how the records of the Sikh Shrines in the Uttar Pradesh and other states are being calculatedly tampered with by some of their selfish custodians in order to convert them and the lands attached thereto, into their personal properties. The case of the centuries-old Gurdwara at Dacca in East Pakistan is worse still. The Shrine has been demolished and its site has been made over to a private citizen for a residential building.

The publication by Dr. Biman Bihari Mazumdar of two passages from the Uriya manuscript of the *Chaitanya Bhāgavat* of Ishwar Dasa in his *Chaitanya Chāritér Upādān* (Calcutta University, 1939) has established beyond doubt the meeting of Guru Nanak and Chaitanya *Prabhū* and his followers at Puri in 1510. With the help of the *Chaitanya Chāritér Upādān* and other literature on the subject, we have been able to give a brief account of the Vaishnav devotees of Chaitanya along with whom the Guru participated in *Kīrtan*, the divine music, in the sacred city of Jagannath.

The chapter on Guru Nanak in the Marathi work of the eighteenth century, the *Bhaktalīlāmrita* of Mahipati, reproduced here in English translation by Abbot, Godbole and Edwards, introduces into the life of Guru Nanak some new stories which are not to be found in any other biography. Mahipati does not mention the source of his information. No motive, however, can be attributed to him for the play of his imagination in inventing the stories. Evidently, he heard them from some travelling mendicants from the up-country.

In the Urdu section, the reader will find a few selected tributes to the great Guru culled from the works of poets of national and international fame like Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Maulana Zafar Ali, Munshi Tilok Chand Mehrum and others. The poem of Mehdi Nazami on *Talīmāt-i-Nānak* taken from his recent book the *Nāẓar-i-Nānak* is a piece of commendable merit.

Among the Persian sources which have been translated into English for the convenience of scholars, the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* is the oldest and its author Zulfīqar Ardīstāni Azur Sasani, popularly known as Maubid (and wrongly mentioned as Mohsin Fani) counts, himself amongst the acquaintances of the sixth and seventh Sikh Gurus Hargobind (1606-1645) and Hari Rai (1645-1661). The next is the *Khulāsāt-u-Tawārikh* by Sujān Rai Bhandari of Batala who completed it in 1697-98 when Guru Gobind Singh, as mentioned therein, was twenty two years old. He appears to have had first-hand knowledge of the then followers of Guru Nanak. His description of the devotion of the Sikhs to the Gurus and of their relations with their neighbours, both friends and foes, deserve special attention of the students of the Panjab history,

The relevant sections of *Chabār Gulshan* of Rai Chatarman, the *Imād-u-saādat* of Sayyad Ghulam Ali Khan, and of the works of Ganesh Das Badehra (*Chabār Bagh-i-Panjāb*), Ratan Chand Bal (*Khālīs Nāmāh*), Khushwaqt Rai (*Tawārikh-i-Sikhan*), Bakht Mall (*Khālāsā Nāmā*), and of Mufti Ali-ud-Din (*Ibrat Nāmā*) and Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din *alias* Bute Shah (*Tarikh-i-Punjab*) have been translated into English for the first time and will, it is hoped, be found useful for research work. We are thankful to Prof. Bhagat Singh, M A, of the Mahendra College, Patiala, for translating some of them. We have not been able to include here some of the Persian works mainly because their stories are either based on the faulty sources or their writers have been influenced by prejudices of the second half of the eighteenth century when the Sikhs were freeing their land from under the yoke of tyrannical Mughal rulers or of aggressive usurpers from across the north western passes. There were also, among these, some writers who wrote their books to order under the instructions of the political and military officers of the East India Company, then rapidly rising to political power in the country. Their works should, therefore, be cautiously used in researchful studies.

The main subject of the volume being the same, repetition in the narration of events and the explanation of the Guru's teachings was inevitable. It, however, places before the reader the study of the subject from different angles and traces the development of research therein with the availability of new

material and the application of new methods. It is with this point of view that the contents in different sections have been arranged in chronological order.

So far about the material that has been collected in this volume. We now come to some of the problems that scholars have to face in the objective study and use of material available to them. It may be observed in the very beginning that the art of writing of scientific history is of Semitic origin, 'the people of India in the past have, no doubt, been great scholars. But their fields of study were confined mostly to fiction and poetry or to sciences like mathematics, medicine and astronomy. They were not interested in the science of history and the art of writing it. This was mainly due to their attitude towards life which to them was *mayā* and *mithiyā*, illusive and unreal, with an ever-rotating wheel of over eight million transmigrations. The exact recording of them, therefore, had no purpose and meaning for them, with the result that they left to us no chronicles, autobiographical memoirs or factual histories. It was with the advent of Muslim believers in one life that the art of historiography came to be introduced into the land of Bharat, but the caste-tight conservative Hindu mind fed upon poetical fiction of the Puranas could not for centuries get into the spirit of objective history, and their writings on biographical and historical subjects also could not remain uninfluenced by fictional traditions.

This can be very clearly seen in the *janam-sakhis* of Guru Nanak as well with the difference that their writers, instead of drawing upon their own imagination for new stories, have borrowed the idea and details of some of them from Buddhist, Jewish and Muslim sources with modifications to suit the particular events they were narrating. To illustrate this, it will suffice to quote only one example of the physical movement of the Ka'aba at Mecca in support of Guru Nanak's message about the omnipresence of God.

According to the Islamic traditions, the Ka'aba has been occasionally moving from its earthly base to comply with the wishes of the Almighty *Allāh* and His angels, and to do honour to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and to receive and meet, at long distances from Mecca, His accepted saints and holy men.

At the time of Noah's flood, says the biographer of the Prophet, the Almighty Allah ordered his angels to lift up to heaven the house of Ka'aba. On the night of the birth of the Prophet, it is recorded on the authority of his grandfather, Hazrat Abdul Mutlib, who is said to have been then present in the Ka'aba, that all the four walls of the Ka'aba all at once bent down and prostrated in adoration, and the sound of *Allāh-hū-Akbar* came from the *Bait-ul-Allāh*, the temple of Mecca [Muhammad Saleh Sufi, *Swāneḥ-Umrī Rasūl-i-Maqbūl*, p.47; Muhammad Tahir, *Ranḡat-u-Safā Qasas-ul-Ambiā*, p. 151-2; *Ajāib-ul-Qasas*, p. 239].

Maulana Farid-u-Din Attar Nishapuri (523-627 H.) records it in the *Taṣṣīrāt-ul-Auliya*, p. 62, that when the old and infirm *Hazrat* Rabi'a of Basra went for a second time for the *hajj*, she saw Ka'aba in the jungle coming to receive her. This is also mentioned by Muhammad Waris Kamil in his *Safinat-ul-Auliya* p.246.

The author of the *Tarikh-i-Farishtā*, Mullah Muhammad Qasim, states on the evidence of *Hazrat* Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din Husain Bukhari of Uch and of Shaikh Abdullah Shāfi, that on one occasion the Ka'aba itself travelled all the way to India for a pilgrimage to *Qutb-ul-Hind* Shaikh Nasir-ud-Din Mahmood as he was then in a State of self-denial and God-intoxication and could not visit Mecca for the *hajj* [*Tarikh-i-Farishtā* (Persian), Vol. ii, 416; Urdu trans. Vol. ii, 6463].

The *Hadiqat-ul-Auliya* of Ghulam Sarwar Lahauri mentions a number of miracles of saintly persons in bringing to life human beings and animals "and arriving at Mecca from distant places within a short time after closing their eyes and then reopening them [pp. 21, 51-52 "54, and 48].

Taking their cue from these and similar other traditions recorded in religious literature of other creeds, the early Sikh scholars introduced into the incidents of Guru Nanak's life such details as appear to be improbable to modern scholars. But at times, unwarrantedly, they go a step further and reject the whole story



as unacceptable. In saying this, I have in mind the account of the visits of Guru Nanak to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad. Historically speaking, there is nothing improbable in these visits. Ever since the advent of Islam in India, there had been a regular annual flow of Indian pilgrims for *Hajj* to the holy city of the Prophet, both by land and sea. The distance between the western boundary of India and the eastern coast of the Red Sea where Mecca is situated, is almost the same, if not less, as between the northern boundary of Kashmir and the southern point of India, near Ceylon, which were visited by the Guru. And then, there were regular caravan trade routes between Mecca (via Medina) and Baghdad and northern India, via Teheran, Meshed (Iran), Herat and Kabul (Afghanistan). In addition to these, there were other trade routes as well. But the Hajj pilgrims from India generally travelled by the sea route to the Arabian port of Jiddah, nearest to Mecca. There were, as such, no unconquerable hazards in the way of Guru Nanak to the holy city of Mecca and to return home via Baghdad and Kabul.

To conclude; the discussion on the Guru's visits to Mecca and Baghdad, we have the evidence of Bhai Gurdas who is the earliest writer on the subject. He was the most knowledgeable person among the Sikhs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He was born in about 1546 A.D., within a decade of the death of Guru Nanak, and may be said to be a semi-contemporary writer who must have heard the accounts of the Guru's visits to these places from the Master's closest associates. The first line of the 35th *paurī* of *Vār I* (*Vārān* Bhai Gurdas) - *Bābā giā Baghdad nūn bāhir jāē kiā asthānā* (Baba went to Baghdad and stayed outside) — is very significant from historical point of view. The Guru actually did stay outside to the west of the city of Baghdad, near a graveyard across the river Tigris, as is shown in the map facing page 104 (Panjabi Section), and is described by Sewaram Singh in his *The Divine Master*, p. 155, on the authority of his brother Captain Dr. Kirpal Singh, IMS, who was in Baghdad in 1918 and who visited the place several times, prepared a site plan of the memorial and took photograph of the memorial slab. Sardar Kartar Singh of Sansarpur (Jullundur), President of the Central Sikh Committee Baghdad, also prepared for the *Mahānkosh* of Bhai Kahan Singh a map of Baghdad showing the site of the place where Guru Nanak first stayed during his visit to Baghdad, and also took photographs of the compound and of the slab on the platform on the spot. These are being reproduced in the present volume, along with a letter of his dated May 5, 1932, addressed to Sardar Khazan Singh, with a copy to the undersigned.

Bhai Gurdas was a relative of the second successor of Guru Nanak and an uncle of the fifth Guru Arjun under whose guidance he wrote the first manuscript of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. He was, naturally, therefore, one of the best informed persons about the life of the Guru, and his evidence, corroborated by actual geographical facts, cannot be treated lightly or dismissed as improbable.

Similarly, the accounts of the visits to Mecca and Medina, mentioned by Bhai Gurdas, and the voluminous literature on the Guru's discourses with the Muslim divines there, cannot be said to have come out of nothing. They are definitely based on the actual visit of the Guru to those places and on discussions that took place there between Guru Nanak and the Muslim divines, some of whom, apparently, belonged to the Panjab—Multan, Uch, Pak Pattan, Panipat, etc., etc.,— and understood his language.

## LEGENDS ABOUT THE GURU

Like other religious leaders, quite a large number of legends have, no doubt, grown up round the name of Guru Nanak as well. "Legends however legendary they may be," says Greenlees, "are seldom without historical value; for to know the anecdotes that are current about a man during or shortly after his life-time is to know at least something of the man himself." As far as Guru Nanak is concerned, the various anecdotes connected with his life whether legendary or otherwise, point to his spiritual greatness, his faith in the Almighty, his unshakable convictions, indomitable courage and fearlessness, his persuasive eloquence and his winning smile and humour which all contributed to his towering personality and extraordinary success of his mission. Of all the world prophets. Guru Nanak was the greatest travelled man and this speaks volumes for his zeal for the dissemination of his divine doctrines in India and abroad, in countries thousands of miles away from his homeland.

## MIRACLES

Almost all the miracles found in the *janam-Sākhīs* can be traced back to the literature of pre-Sikh religions. The early Sikh *Sadbhūs*, particularly of the Udasi order, were great scholars of Sanskrit, Pali and Persian. Some of them were great travellers as well. With the zeal of inspired missionaries, they soon spread themselves all over the country, and in the border lands, and established Nanak-Panthi centres, popularly known as *deras* and *dharamsālās*, with *Gurū Granth Sāhib* installed therein, at most of the places of Hindu pilgrimage. Here they preached the message of Guru Nanak, ran schools for children and free community kitchens for the casual visitors. Being ascetics, they were in no way entangled in family and property meshes. They employed their leisure hours, therefore, in the study of Sikh scripture and *janam-sākhīs* as well as the ancient lore of India and other countries. In the light of this knowledge they lectured to their audiences on the superiority of their faith. It was, evidently, then that some of the miraculous stories came handy to them and became current among the people to ultimately find their way into the *janam-sākhīs* of Guru Nanak.

If, however, there is any truth in these supernatural stories related about earlier saints and sages of India and other countries, they can also be repeated, in some form or other, in the case of Guru Nanak as well

## THE MIRACLE OF GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak was, however, a great miracle worker in the history of India. His greatest miracle was to inject a new spirit and fresh life into the dry and decaying bones of its people emasculated by the run-away from the world teachings of the Nath Yogis. He availed himself of every opportunity to visit their prominent centres and assemblages and, not unoften, entered into long discussions with their leaders, exposed the evil effects of their sluggish ways on the lives of the Hindu masses and saved them from their demoralising influence.

During his discussion with the Sidh Yogis on the Sumer *parbat*, identified by B.C Law in his *Mountains of India*, p.2, with Rudra Himalaya in Garhwal, the Sidhs playfully asked him: “How goes it with the world, Nanak?” The Guru in a meaningful satire replied:

The Moon of Truth is not to be seen, Nathji, and the darkness of Falsehood prevails...

The Sidhs are hiding themselves in the mountains. Who, then, is there to save the world?

The Yogis, devoid of knowledge (of the real purpose of life) are busy night and day in plastering their bodies with ashes.

Without a true guide, the world is sinking in ignorance.”

—Bhai Gurdas, *Vārān*, I, 29.

Guru Nanak was not, however, the person to sit idle in slumbering meditation like the Sidhs and Yogis. He was deeply interested in active life of useful service to the community through which alone was its salvation possible — *Vich duniyā sēv kamāyē tā dargeh baisan pāyē* - if we serve in the world, then alone can we find a seat in the court of heaven. He, therefore, moved from place to place, and from country to country, from burning sandy deserts to frozen icy mountains, covering thousands of miles on foot, proclaiming the message of his faith and energizing people to be up and doing, through word and deed, for a new struggle in life. His immediate successors could not undertake extensive tours to keep in close touch with all the *Sangats* abroad to keep his work going there. The periods of their Guruship were comparatively short. At home, in the Panjab, however, they knit the disciples together into a community of the servants of the people. But with change in the attitude of the Mughal empire towards the Sikh movement, it willy-nilly developed into a militant church under Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh. Thus, with the inspiration and teachings of the Gurus, the people of the Panjab, who, before the advent of Sikhism, were only a crop for foreigners to mow, were transformed into a new people to be reckoned with, both socially and politically, not only by the rulers of the country but also by the foreign usurpers who were casting their greedy eyes on the land of Bharat. The Panjab, with no geographical entity or political status before the Sikhs stood up as its defenders and saviours, became, in less than a century after the death of the last successor of Guru Nanak, a sovereign

state with its boundaries extending from Sindh to Tibet and from Jamuna to the Khyber pass—a thing which will, perhaps, now remain a dream for all time to come. This was verily a miracle of the teachings of Guru Nanak.

#### THE DATE OF GURU NANAK'S BIRTH

The generally accepted date of the birth of Guru Nanak is Katik *Sudī* 15, *Puranmāsī*, 1526 Bikrami, corresponding to the month of November. This is mentioned in the *janam-sakhī* ascribed to Bhai Bala and in the biographies based on it. The late Sardar Karam Singh however, questioned the authenticity of this *janam-sakhī* in his *Katik kih Vaisakh*, and held, on the basis of more historical and reliable *janam-sakhī*, that the Guru was born on Vaisakh *Sudī* 3, 1526 Bk., April 15, 1469. The *Vilāyat nālī Janam—sakhī* and the others of its group, including the *Purātan Janam-sakhī*, Sodhi Meharban's *janam-sakhī*, Sarup Chand Bhalla's *Mehmā Prakash*, both in prose and verse, all support this date. Sodhi Meharban was a grandson of the fourth Guru Ram Das, and a nephew of the fifth Guru Arjan. His information about the date of Guru Nanak's birth should certainly be more reliable.

It is not improbable that sometime after the creation of the Khālsā by Guru Gobind Singh on the first of Vaisakh, 1699 Bikrami, March 29, 1756 (O.S.) the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday at Nankana Sahib clashed with the celebration of the birth of the Khālsā at Anandpur. Nankana Sahib being away from the centres of Sikhism at Amritsar and Anandpur, with no convenient means of transport, it was, perhaps, feared that the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday, which, at times, according to lunar reckoning, fell within a few days of Vaisakhi, might with the passage of time come to be neglected. It was, therefore, perhaps, found expedient to shift it to the beginning of the winter to suit the convenience of the agricultural classes who formed the bulk of the Sikh community and had to look to the harvesting of their wheat crop beginning immediately after the Vaisakhi festival.

#### PLACE OF BIRTH

There is no doubt about Talwandi Rai Bhoi, now called Nankana Sahib, being the birth-place of Guru Nanak. Raypur, mentioned in some of the early English works, is only a misreading of 'Rai Bhoi' written in Persian *Shikastā* script. Bhatti was the name of the tribe to which the founder of the village, Rai Bhoi, and his descendant Rai Bular, belonged and not of the district in which it was situated.

To say that he was born at the residence of his maternal grandparents (*Nānakā ghar*) is nothing more than a conjecture based on the etymology of his name, Nanak. The Panjab custom for a girl to go to her parents' house for the birth of her first child was not observable in his case. Guru Nanak was not the first child in the family. He had an elder sister named Nanaki. Moreover, the custom was not a 'must' in all families and was not strictly followed in all cases. It only depended upon the circumstances of the two families and on the distance between the places of their residence. In the case of Guru Nanak's mother, none of them was favourable. Guru Nanak's father Mehta Kalu's family was better placed at Talwandi Rai Bhoi than his wife Tripta's parents in the village of Chahal near Batala in the Gurdaspur District. The distance between the two places was about a hundred miles to be covered in (our days in a bullock cart or a palanquin, spending at least three nights on the way. This was neither comfortable nor without risk for her in a delicate state of health.

#### BHAI BALA

With Sardar Karam Singh's criticism of Bhai Bala's *Janam-sakhī*, Bala, a companion (Guru Nanak in early youth, became a controversial figure. Some scholars came to doubt his very existence. A close study of the various *janam-sakhīs* and of the revenue records of the town of Nankana Sahib in the district of Sheikhpura, in West Pakistan, leads us to the conclusion that his existence as a contemporary and a companion of Guru Nanak at Nankana Sahib cannot be ignored. He appears in the pedigree of the Sandhu Jats of Nankana Sahib (the old Talwandi Rai Bhoi), and there still exists, outside the town, a well known as *Bhāi Baké dā Khooh*, Deeply attached and tied down to his ancestral lands, as all Jats generally are, he had not stayed with Baba Nanak at Sultanpur where the latter was employed in the *Modikhānā* of Nawab Daulat Khan

and lived with his wife and children. For his travels in India and abroad. Guru Nanak had found in Bhai Mardana, a professional minstrel, a more congenial and useful a companion who could play on the rebeck while he sang his divine hymns. Bala, therefore does not figure as a permanent and prominent companion of the Guru to appear more often in the pages of history. He is, no doubt, mentioned in the *Janam-sākhi* associated with his name, as a companion of the Guru on his travels also, but in the absence of this mention in the *Purāṭan* and Sodhi Meharban's *Janam-sākhi*, we may reasonably infer that Bala did not accompany the Master in his far off travels either in India or abroad.

### GURU NANAK'S TEACHERS

The name of the Bhakha and the Persian teachers of Guru Nanak, the *Pāndhā* and the *Mullā*, are not mentioned in any of the early *janam-sākhi*s. In later recensions of Bhai Bala's *Janam-sākhi*, however, we come across the names of Pandit Hardyal, the astrologer, and Qazi Qutb-ud-Din as teachers of the two subjects. Talwandi Rai Bhoi was then a small village, a cluster of mud houses, of which there are still many at the present Nankana Sahib. It was neither the headquarters of any administrative unit of the central or provincial government, nor a centre of trade, education or religion, to attract renowned scholars and divines who could have exercised any appreciable influence over the mind of Nanak. It is, therefore, historically unsound to suggest that Guru Nanak's inspiration had come from Muslim saints, particularly from one Sayyed Hasan, mentioned by the *Sijar-ul-Mutākerin*. In the whole range of the Muslim literature of that time we do not find any person by that name who might at any time be said to have come into contact with Guru Nanak at Talwandi Rai Bhoi, Sultanpur or at any other place.

It is true that Guru Nanak's was an age of the mingling of the Semitic and Hindu cultures and there was a conflict in the minds of some of the thinking saints and scholars, Sadhus and Sufis. But centuries-old traditionalism, superstition and fanaticism had been so strongly entrenched in the minds of people that they could not be easily shaken off. The hold of the Brahmans, and of the Yogis, was still there strengthening many a superstition in the Hindus and exploiting them. Some effort had, no doubt, been made by a few Bhaktas in enlightening the people, but that had not been very successful. It was reserved for Guru Nanak to lead and guide the people on to the path of One God, the creator and the common father of the universe, and to lay the foundation of the Sikh church through a line of successors to continue his work, both of spiritual and social service and to remove the artificial barriers created between men and men and between nations and countries. It seems, and we have no doubt about it, that Guru Nanak's thoughts and views had welled up from the depths of inspiration in his own heart and that in his new dispensation he owed practically nothing to what he received either from his teachers or any one else at Nankana and Sultanpur. And when he issued forth from Sultanpur to preach his message, he was thirty years of age and his views had been fully formed and occasionally expressed to all types of people, Hindus and Muslims.

### HIS EDUCATION

The *janam-sākhi*s tell us that Guru Nanak did not pay the desired attention to his studies at the Pandit and Mulla schools. This, however, does not mean that he remained illiterate. The truth, apparently, is that as an exceptionally brilliant and intelligent youngman, he acquired much quicker than other students of his age the knowledge that these schools could impart to him. Talwandi Rai Bhoi was then only a small village with no Muslim *Khanqah* or Yogi *Math* to attract any great divines and scholars to establish schools of advanced studies there. As such, it can only be said that Guru Nanak was not a traditional type of scholar who had learnt up and could repeat from memory rules of grammar and declensions and inflections of words. But there is no denying the fact that he had acquired sufficient working knowledge of Persian and arithmetic to secure the position of a storekeeper in the provincial government of the Lodhis. Without it a non-Muslim could not have been employed in a responsible government job. Macauliffe tells us in *The Sikh Religion*, i., 33, that "Jai Ram introduced Nanak as an educated man to the Governor, Daulat Khan, who appointed him storekeeper and gave him a dress of honour as a preliminary of service." A liberal use of Arabic and Persian words in the Guru's hymns is also a clear indication of his knowledge of these languages.

Some idea of his knowledge of Indian languages and philosophy can be had from a close and critical study of his writings, particularly the *japji* and the *Sidh Gosht*, which speak volumes for his erudition and thoughtfulness. But it is meaningless to talk of Guru Nanak from a dry scholastic point of view. He was a man of God, a divine, and had drunk deep at the fountain of His Knowledge. And in that field he stood second to none.

## GURU NANAK AND KABIR

There is a good deal of misunderstanding, particularly amongst scholars fed on Kabir-panthi literature, about the relations between Guru Nanak and Kabir. Because there is a sprinkling of Kabir's verses in the Sikh scripture, they have come to think that Guru Nanak was directly indebted to him for his teachings. They forget that the Sikh holy book contains, in addition to the compositions of the Sikh Gurus, the verses not only of Kabir, but also of a number of other saints, Hindu and Muslim, like Shaikh Farid, Namdev, Trilochan, Ravidas, Bhikhan, etc., etc. Moreover, the compilation of the scripture was made by the fifth Guru, Arjun, more than sixty years after the death of Guru Nanak. There is no reliable evidence that Guru Nanak met Kabir during his life-time to have any close contact with him or to be influenced by his teachings.

In fact, Guru Nanak's was an age of religious upheavals all over the world which produced great men of revolutionary views. The closing years of the fifteenth century, when Guru Nanak was preparing himself for the dissemination of his doctrines of the unity, omnipotence and omnipresence of the formless and self-existent God, and of the brotherhood and equality of man, the far off Europe witnessed the births of saints and scholars like Martin Luther (1483-1546) and St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), followed by Jean Calvin (1509-1564) in the first decade of the sixteenth century, when the Guru had set out on his first missionary tour.

If the account of Giani<sup>22</sup> Gian Singh's *Tawārikh Gurū Khalsā* (revised 1923 Urdu edition), p. 29, is to be accepted. Guru Nanak and Kabir met near the village of Pusa in 1563 Bikrami, 1506 A.D. He was then thirty seven years of age and had been out on his missionary tours for almost a decade. He had by this time visited most of the Hindu *Tīraths* and the *Dargāhs* of Muslim theologians and Sufis in north-western India and the centres of Gorakhpanti Yogis where he had delivered his message and had long discussions and discourses explaining his ideas of Godhead and of service of humanity without any distinctions of caste and creed. This was certainly not the stage in the life of Guru Nanak when he could be said to have been in any way inspired and influenced by Kabir in the formulation of his spiritual and social ideas. Had he been in any way directly or indirectly indebted to Kabir, he or some one from amongst his successors or disciples, would have referred to it in his writings. On the other hand, he tells us in a number of his hymns that he had had his inspirations direct from the Almighty Lord who alone was his Master and that he was only His Master's voice.

As the word comes to me from the Lord, so (do I speak) know ye, O Lalo.

- *Tilang*, *Ghar* 3, v-1.

By myself I know not what to say, All that I have said is by His Command.

—*Sūbī*, *Gumwanti*-3.

*Japa*, *Tapa* (silent meditation and austerities) and *Sanjam* (the control of desires) — of these *Karma* activities or ways of worship) I know not any;

I only remember and repeat Thy Name;

And so have I met God as my Guru,

And have obtained deliverance through the True Name.

—*Rāmkalī*, *Ghar* I, *Chaupade*, vi-3.

The Imaculate Lord, the Supreme Light (the light of all lights), not separate or away from me (pervading in all),

The Infinite Supreme Being, the Almighty God,

Him, Nanak has found as Guru. —*Sorath*, xi-5.

I have met the True Guru, who is the Creator of the Creation, Reflecting on His works, I have put my faith in Him.

—*Rāmkalī, Asht. Viii-4.*

In the light of the above discussion and the letters of Dr Bhai Jodh Singh dated July 26 and 31, 1969, published in the Punjabi Section, pp. 58-61, dealing with this subject, it will be historically incorrect to say that Guru Nanak owed the inspiration of his spiritual and social ideas to Kabir or to anyone else.

#### SIKHISM NOT A SECT OF HINDUISM

The same may also be said about the views of some scholars who hold that the religion of Baba Nanak was an offshoot or a reformed sect of Brahmanical Hinduism. It is true that Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu family, but the religion founded by him and stabilized by his successors was as separate from his ancestors' religion as were Christianity and Islam from the religions of the ancestors or parents of ~ Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammed. Under divine inspiration Guru Nanak had broken away from his ancestral faith, and had not embraced any other religion.' Whenever questioned, he declared in unambiguous words that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. His religion was his own independent of Hinduism and Islam.

To quote Dorothy Field, the author of *The Religion of the Sikhs* (London, 1914), p. 19:

There is a tendency at the present day to reckon the Sikhs as a reformed sect of the Hindus; and this has become a matter for controversy among the Indians themselves. The word Hinduism is undoubtedly capable of a very wide application, but it is questionable whether it should be held to include the Sikhs in view of the fact that the pure teachings of the Gurus assumed a critical attitude towards the three cardinal pillars of Hinduism, the priesthood, the caste system, and the Vedas. A reading of the *Granth* strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world-religion, rather than as a reformed sect of the Hindus.

#### SIKHISM ESTABLISHED ACCORDING TO A PLAN

The visits of Guru Nanak to the centres of various religions in India and abroad on occasions of special festivals to deliver his message to the latest possible numbers, the establishment of sangats in different places with missionaries attached to them and, above all, the appointment of a chosen disciple during his own life-time to succeed him as Guru to continue and expand his work, point to a well thought-out plan that he had in his mind for the development of Sikh congregations into a regular church under the guidance of the Guru. We have clear indications to this effect in the Varan of Bhai Gurdas who tells us in a number of verses that the Guru installed Bhai Lehna as Guru Angad in his own image for the continuance of his mission of Sikhism as a new and a separate religion independent of Hinduism and Islam. He says:

He (Guru Nanak) struck his coin in the world and inaugurated the establishment of his holy Panth.

He installed Lehna during his life-time and had the Guru's canopy set over his head.

Having merged his light with the light (of Lehna, the great Guru changed his form. [1-45])

He proclaimed the worship of the True God (against that of Gods and goddesses) and, having established a *dharamsalā* (a place of religion) at Kartarpur, he created an abode of truth in the congregation of saints

He firmly laid the foundation of the abode of truth in the congregation of saints and inaugurated the Panth of the Godly saints.

The Hindus have (their religious, centres) on the Ganges (at Hardwar) and at Banares, and the Mussulmans in Ka'aba at Mecca;

But the hymns of Baba Nanak are being sung in every home to, the accompaniment of cymbals, drums and rebecks.

[xxiv, 1-4]

This means that the religion of Guru Nanak was not confined for its worship to the (laces of

pilgrimage, but had spread to every home and hamlet and had become a part of the Sikh community, [i, 27-6]

The subsequent history of the Sikh community stabilized into sangats and prepared for its development into a distinct nationality under the succeeding Gurus, with a new scripture written in the vernacular of the people in a newly developed script, and encouraged to refuse to bow down to suppression and tyranny by priests or princes, show that Guru Nanak was not an enwrapped visionary like Kabir and other saints and faqirs but was a man of practical foresight. He could clearly see that men and women had to live in the world and, therefore, a religion of renunciation of faqirs and Sadhus could not be the faith of an active community engaged in social pursuits, much less of the people living on the borders from across which poured into the country swarms of greedy marauders and unscrupulous invaders. Guru Nanak was deeply interested in the worldly and socio-political well-being of his countrymen. He would not, therefore, confine himself to a life of traditional prayer and meditation. He protested with tears of blood at the helplessness of his countrymen reduced to abject slavery, upbraided the rulers of his day for not manfully standing up against the foreign invaders and awakened his people to a new political consciousness saying, “Kings are butchers, cruelty their knife. *Dharma*, the sense of duty and responsibility, has taken wings and vanished-.” According to him, it was fools and idiots who ruled with little regard to the good of the people.

This, in the due course of time, created, in the followers of Guru Nanak a will to resist evil and to stand up in defence of injured innocence wherever they found it. This led to the Transformation of Sikhs into soldier-saints and saint-soldiers under Guru Hargobind. And when he was questioned by the great Maratha Saint *Samarth* Ramdas in about 1634 at Srinagar, in Garhwal, about this change, which he thought was a deviation from the teachings of Guru Nanak who was a *Tyāgī Sādhū*, Guru Hargobind said: “Guru Nanak had not renounced the world, but had renounced *māyā*, i.e., self and ego. As for himself, he exclaimed, he was “internally a hermit and externally a prince. Arms mean protection to the poor and destruction to the tyrant.” This appealeth to my mind — *yeh hamāre man bhāvti hai* — was the reaction of *Samarth* Ramdas.

This development in religious thought of the Sikh Gurus and their followers, as mentioned earlier, had a revolutionary effect not only on the lives of the Sikhs in the Panjab but, through *Samarth* Ramdas and his followers, it also stirred the soul of Maharashtra to rise against the tyranny of the Mughals in the South.

**GANDA SINGH**

## INVOCATION\*

*by*

GURU GOBIND SINGH

*By the Grace of the One Supreme Being*

*Victory to the One Wonderful God.*

*May the Almighty Lord protect us.*

**Ode to the Lord by the Tenth Guru [Gobind Singh]**

*Having first of all invoked the Almighty Lord, think of Guru Nanak*

*Think then of Guru Angad, Amar Das and Ram Dass; may they help us!*

*Remember Arjun, Hargobind and the great Hari Rai;*

*Think of the great Hari Krishan whose sight dispells all sorrows and pains;*

*Remember Tegh Bahadur, and the nine treasures shall come hastening to our homes;*

*May they help us in all places!*

\*Culled from the *Dasam Granth* of Guru Gobind Singh (*Var Sri Bhagauti ji ki*), and translated by Ganda Singh.



## IN PRAISE OF GURU NANAK\*

by  
Poet KAL

Contemplating, with a single mind, the Beneficent Lord, the God,  
Who is the mainstay of the Saints, and is ever manifest (in His creation), and  
Enshrining His Blessed Feet in my heart,  
I sing the praises of Nanak, the Guru of Gurus. (1)

I sing the praises of the sublime Guru, the Ocean of Bliss, the Dispeller of sin, the Blessor of the Word:  
Yea, of whom sing all men of wisdom and of sobriety and contentment, and whom contemplate the Yogis  
and the Jangams too,  
And of whom sing Indras and God's devotees like Prehlada, who have realised the Soul,  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "I Sing the praises of Nanak, the Guru, who hath attained unto *Rajyoga*". (2)

Of him sing the king Janaka and the great Yogis of the Way, Who is All-Powerful and filled with the essence  
of God:  
Of him sing Brahma's sons, and the Saints and the Adepts, and men of Silence; yea, of him, who is not  
deceived by (*Maya*),  
Of him sing Dhoma, the seer, and Dhruva of eternal station; yea, of him who, through loving adoration (of  
God), Knew His Taste;  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "I Sing the praises of Nanak, the Guru, who hath attained unto *Rajyoga*". (3)

Of him sing Kapila and the Yogis of his kind; yea, of him, who's the Immaculate Prophet of the Infinite God  
And of whom singeth Jamadagani's son Parshurama who was divested of his axe and prowess by Raghuvira.  
And of whom sing Vidura and Akrura and Oodho; yea, of him, who had realised God, the Soul of all;  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "I Sing the praises of Nanak, the Guru, who hath attained unto *Rajyoga*". (4)

His praises are sung by the four castes, the six *Shastras*, and his virtues are dwelt upon by Brahma and his kind  
;  
And his praises are sung lovingly by *Seshnāga* with his thousand tongues, eternally attuned to Him.  
And by Mahadeva too, the detached one, who's ever attuned to Him.  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "I Sing the praises of Nanak, the Guru, who hath attained unto *Rajyoga*". (5)

He enjoyed *Rajyoga*, and within his heart was ever enshrined the Eternal Lord,  
And who saved the whole world which dwelleth eternally on His Name;  
And whose praises are sung by Sanaka and Janaka and their like, from times imemorial;  
O Blessed, Blessed is Guru (Nanak) whose human birth was wholly fulfilled.  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "His Victory was echoed even by the underworlds."  
O Nanak, the Guru, blessed art thou who lovingly relished the Lord's Name. (6)

In the *Satyuga* too, thou enjoyed the state of *Rajyoga*, when thou 'deceived' Bali, becoming a dwarf, whose  
form pleased thee;  
And in the Treta age too, when thou wert called Rama of the Raghu clan,  
And in the *Dwapar* age too as Krishna, when thou delivered Kansa, and blest Ugarsena with a kingdom, and  
thy devotees with the state of fearlessness.  
In the *Kali* age thou wert called Nanak, and Angad and Amar Das.  
Yea, eternal and moveless is thy rule, O Guru: for, such was the command of the Primeval Lord. (7)

Thy praises are sung by Ravidas, Jaidev and Trilochan, and Kabir and Namdev, too, knowing thee to be  
'even-eyed.'  
And Beni too sang thy praises who enjoyed the love of God in a state of Equipoise.

And who knew of no one but God and the Yoga of His contemplation and the Wisdom of the Guru's,  
And Shukdeva and Parikshata, and Gautama, the seer, too sang thy Praise.  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "The sublime Praises of Nanak, the Guru, are sung by the whole world eternally in an  
ever-new form". (8)

Yea, his praises are uttered in the underworld by the Sheshnaga and the like devotees of God;  
And by Mahadeva and Yogis and men of continence and the Jangams too;  
And also by Vyas, who uttered the *Vedas* and the *Vyakarna*;  
And by Brahma too, whose will (they say) brought the world into being,  
Yea, Nanak realised the Perfect, All-filling God, Manifest and yet Unmanifest,  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "Dwell upon the sublime praises of Nanak, the Guru, who hath attained unto *Rajyoga*". (9)

The nine Naths too sing his praises: O Blessed is the Guru who's merged in Truth,  
And also Mandhata, the king, whose rule was over the whole world:  
And Baliraja too, who liveth in the seventh under-world, and Bhartri too, who bideth ever with Gorakh, his  
Guru, and Durbasa and Angira, the seers, and Puru, the king.  
Sayeth the poet Kala, "The praise of Nanak, the Guru, filleth all hearts, all-too-spontaneously". (10)

#### IN PRAISE OF THE SECOND GURU

Blessed is the Creator-Lord, the All-Powerful Doer and the Cause.  
Blessed is Nanak, the True Guru, who places his Hand on thy Forehead (0, Guru Angad).  
Yea, all-too-spontaneously, thou wert so Blessed,  
And thy Nectar rained in torrents, and the seers and angels and gods were manifestly drenched:  
Yea, thy Guru destroyed the demon of death for thee, and ceased thy outgoings and thou contained the five  
desires in thy one Home,  
And by thy Door, O Guru, was the whole world conquered, and thou played with the chess-figures of even-  
handedness, being attuned to the Formless Lord, wrapt in the Supreme State of Bliss.  
O Kal Sahar, utter the praises of Lehna through the seven islands, yea, of him, who became the Guru of the  
whole world, meeting with his God-like Guru [Guru Nanak], (1)

\**Swaiye Mahala* I. II, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 1389-91, adapted from Dr. Gopal Singh's English version (Vol. IV), pp. 1319-20.

**GURU NANAK\***  
as Guru Gobind Singh sees Him

In the family of those Bedis was born the Great Guru Nanak.  
 He bestowed peace upon all Sikhs and protected them in all places. 4  
 He established this [Sikh] dharma in the Kali [-age]; and showed the Way to all good people.  
 Those who came unto his path were never tormented by sin. 5  
 Whosoever took to his path, their sins and worries were all taken away by the Lord.  
 Pain and hunger never worried them. They were never entangled by the snares of death. 6  
 Nanak established Angad as [the succeeding] Guru. He did this to proclaim [and continue] *dharmā* in the  
 world.  
 Then was he known by the name of Amar Das. The Great man lit lamp from lamp. 7  
 When he came to the time of benefaction [transfer of gift, of spirit]. Ram Das was then known as Guru.  
 To him was transferred the old gift, and Amar Das took the path to heaven. 8  
 In Angad was recognized the Great Guru Nanak himself, and in Amar Das was accepted [the presence of the  
 spirit of] Angad.  
 Ram Das was known to be the very self of Amar Das. The saints could see it; the ignorant could not realize  
 it. 9  
 All took them [the Gurus] to be different; their Oneness was realized by the very few exceptional ones only.  
 Those who realized this; they alone got to the reality. Without [the real] understanding, the reality cannot be  
 attained. 10  
 [When] Ram Das became one with the Lord, he gave the status of Guru to Arjun.  
 When Arjun departed for the Lord's abode, Hargobind was appointed in his place. 11  
 On the departure of Hargobind for heaven, Hari Rai was established in his place.  
 Hari Krishan was his son. After him [Hari Krishan] came Tegh Bahadur [as *Guru*], 12  
 The Lord protected the symbols [*tilak* and *janai*]. In the *Kali* [-age] this came to be a great event —  
 For the sake of saintly people he went to such an extent as to surrender his head but uttered not the slightest  
 expression of pain. 13  
 For the sake of *dharmā*, he brought about this great event that he sacrificed his head and surrendered not his  
 faith — the secret of his being.  
 He did away with dramatic deceptions and miraculous performances as unworthy acts, of which Godly  
 people feel ashamed. 14  
 Having broken the potsherd of his [body] over the head of the Emperor of Delhi, he left for his heavenly  
 abode.  
 Nobody did such a thing as Tegh Bahadur did. 15  
 On the departure of Tegh Bahadur, the world was plunged into sorrow.  
 There was *bāi, bāi, bāi* [alas, alas, alas!] in the whole of this world, and there was a triumphal reception [*jaya,*  
*jaya, jaya!*] in world of gods. 16  
 [v]

\*From the *Dasam Granth* of Guru Gobind Singh (*Bachittar Natak*), rendered into English by Ganda Singh.



## THE LIFE OF GURU NANAK *according to Bhai Gurdas*

W.H. McLeod

Bhai Gurdas's account of the life of Guru Nanak is to be found in stanzas 23-45 of his first *var*, and in stanzas 13-14 of his eleventh *var* he gives a list of some of the Guru's more important followers. He has elsewhere devoted other stanzas to Guru Nanak<sup>1</sup> but with the exception of occasional brief references his treatment is exclusively eulogistic and adds little to our knowledge of the life of the Guru. The *var*<sup>1</sup> group of stanzas differs from other such passages dealing with Guru Nanak in that its panegyric includes specific details relating to his life and travels<sup>2</sup>. To this discourse the eleventh *var* appends the names of a few disciples. Although these tell us little about Guru Nanak himself the list derives a certain interest from the author's practice of adding sub-caste titles to many of the personal names.

The theme of the first *var* is the mission of Guru Nanak. Reference is made to his five successors, but with marked brevity in an epilogue of only three stanzas. The *var* begins with an invocation, proceeds to an account of the creation of the world, and then offers some brief comments on the first three of the four cosmic ages (*yuga*). This leads to the primary emphasis of these introductory stanzas, namely the chaos and depravity of the fourth cosmic age, the *kaliyuga*<sup>3</sup>. In a rapid survey the various religions of India are covered, reference being made in turn to each of the six systems of Hindu philosophy, to Buddhist and Jain belief, and finally to Islam. Special stress is laid upon the mounting degeneracy of the age (stanza 17) and upon the hopeless inadequacy of both Hindu and Muslim religious leaders (stanza 21). Stanza 22 reiterates the seriousness of the world's condition and indicates that the remedy can come from God alone. Finally, in stanza 23, Bhai Gurdas brings us to the actual remedy.

### Var 1

- 23     Hearing (mankind's)<sup>4</sup> cry the Beneficent Lord sent Guru Nanak into the world.  
         (Although himself the Guru) he performed the (humble) service of washing feet (and so) provided  
         *charanamrit*<sup>5</sup> for (his) Sikhs to drink.  
         In the Dark Age (with its multitude of deities) he revealed that there is but One, the Supreme God.  
         (He made firm) the bases of the four pillars<sup>6</sup> of *dharma*, and of the four *varnas* he created one.<sup>7</sup>  
         He regarded king and beggar as equal and caused the virtue of humility to be practised in the world.  
         Behold the manner in which God reverses accepted orders, how He makes heads (which are held  
         high) to bow to the feet!  
         Baba (Nanak) redeemed<sup>8</sup> the Dark Age by proclaiming the *mantra* of the True Name.<sup>9</sup>  
         Guru Nanak came for the redemption of the Dark Age!
- 24     First Baba (Nanak) received grace at the court (of God) and then afterwards (went forth) to labour.  
         His food was sand and the pod of the *ak*, and his bed he spread on stones.  
         He performed great austerities, to the supreme satisfaction of God.  
         In *Sach Khand*<sup>10</sup> Baba (Nanak) was robed with honour; (to him) were imparted the Nine Treasures of  
         the divine Name and (the virtue of) humility.
- Baba (Nanak) meditated, and looking forth beheld the whole world in flames.  
         Without the Guru there was darkness (and from it) there issued (the cry of) the people's lamentation.  
         Baba (Nanak) assumed human form and lived the life of one who had renounced all worldly ties  
         (*udasi*).  
         He came to transform the people of the world.
- 25     Baba (Nanak) visited the places of pilgrimage (*tirth*); he went round seeing them all on festival days.  
         Many people were performing the rites of the old religion, but being devoid of loving adoration these  
         earned them no merit.  
         God had Hot preordained (them to practise) love; (and so the Guru) found (them) reading the four  
         Vedas and the Smritis (instead).  
         He searched the entire earth (and reflected upon the conditions of) the *Satiyuga*, the *Dvapara*, and the

*Treta*.<sup>11</sup>

In the *Kaliyuga* (the Dark Age), there was darkness, and all manner of false illusion had led (the people) astray.

The Lord is not found in such a guise; (only if) Self be purged will no trace (of such delusions remain).

No matter what (a man's) caste (*varan*) may be, he who follows the Guru must tread a lowly path, (for such humility must be) the particular quality of the Guru's Sikh.

In this manner the record (of his deeds) will win approval in the (divine) court.

26 (Guru Nanak met) ascetics, devotees of rigorous virtue, deified mortals, yoga adepts, siddhs, naths, gurus, and disciples.

Crowds gathered (to pay homage to) gods and goddesses, perfected rishis, Bhairava, Ksetrapal, (and other such deities).

The hosts (of Siva), *gandharavas*, *apsarasas*, *kinnaras*, *yaksas*, and wonder-workers of various kinds.

Multitudes of savages, *dunavas*, and *daityas* (he saw), suffering (as a result of their entanglement) in maya.

All were ensnared in *haumai*.<sup>12</sup> Gurus with (their) many disciples had sunk (in the Ocean of Existence).

During his round of the pilgrimage centres and religious fairs he searched but found no true believer (*gurmukh*).

Hindus and Muslims (*turk*), (he saw them) all—pirs, prophets, (men of peace and) nations which live by the sword,

The blind were thrusting the blind into a well!

27 (When) Satguru Nanak appeared darkness was dispelled and light shone forth over the world!

As when the sun rises the stars are hidden and darkness flees away;

As at the lion's roar a herd of deer takes instant flight.

Centres of worship were established wherever Baba (Nanak) set foot.

All the Siddh centres in the world became centres of (Guru) Nanak's teaching.

In every house a *dharmasala* was established and *kirtan* was sung (as if it were) an unending Baisakhi festival.

In all directions Baba (Nanak) imparted salvation; truth prevailed throughout the nine regions of the earth.

The supreme Guru was made manifest in the Dark Age!

28 Baba (Nanak) viewed the utmost extremities of the nine regions of the earth.

He then ascended (Mount) Sumeru where a company of Siddhs came into view.

The eighty-four Siddhs, Gorakh (nath) and the others, (were there, and seeing him) they wondered in their minds.

The Siddhs asked (him), 'Hear us, youth! what power brought you here?'

(The Guru replied), 'I repeated (the divine Name of) God and so became imbued with adoring love.'

The Siddhs said, 'Hear us, youth! Tell us your name.'

Baba (Nanak) replied, 'Nathji,<sup>13</sup> Nanak (is my name) and by repeating the Name (of God) I have found salvation.

He who 'regards himself as lowly is the one who is exalted.'

29 The Siddhs then asked, 'Nanak, what is happening in the world below?'

(From his answer) all the Siddhs perceived that it was for the salvation of the Dark Age that Nanak had been born.

Baba (Nanak) replied, 'Nathji, truth is the moon and falsehood is darkness.

Falsehood prevails, (as deep as the darkness of) a moonless night (*amavas*) and I have come into the world to search for the truth.

Sin has enslaved the world and (*Dharma*) the bull, standing beneath the earth, lows (in anguish).

The Siddhs sit silent in the mountains: who then will save the world?

- The yogis (who wander on the earth below) are devoid of knowledge. Day and night they plaster their limbs with ashes and do nothing else.  
Without the Guru the whole world has sunk (in the Ocean of Existence).
- 30 'Masters, the Dark Age is the vomit of dog which feeds on the flesh of corpses.  
Kings commit sinful deeds and fences consume the crops they are meant to protect.<sup>14</sup>  
The people have become blind; devoid of understanding they utter evil and falsehood.  
It is the disciples who play the music, brothers, and the guru who in so many ways dances (to their tune).  
Servants remain at ease in their homes while the master arises and goes to their houses.  
The qazis have become corrupt, taking bribes and ignoring the rights (of the people).  
Women's love for men is only for their money, regardless of its source.  
Sin prevails throughout the entire world.'
- 31 The Siddhs wondered how they might bring this young man into their order.  
'Such a yogi' (they reflected,) 'will bring glory to our *panth* in this Dark Age.'  
A Nath gave him a begging-bowl and arising he went off to fill it with water.  
When Baba (Nanak) reached the water he saw jewels, precious stones, rubies.<sup>15</sup>  
The Satguru is the being beyond human understanding; who can endure the Guru's radiance?  
The Gum returned (and said), 'Nathji, at that place there is no water in the lake.'  
By means of the divine word (*Sabad*)<sup>16</sup> he overcame the assembly Siddhs, distinguishing his way from theirs.  
In the Dark Age (Baba) Nanak (imparted) the divine Name which brings peace.
- 32 Baba (Nanak) then proceeded to Mecca, decked in blue garments (like) Visnu (with his garland).<sup>17</sup>  
He carried a staff in his hand, a book under his arm, a water-pot, and a prayer-mat (for) the call to prayer.  
He went and sat in a mosque where pilgrims (*haji*) had assembled.  
When he went to sleep at night he did so with his feet pointing towards the *miharab*.<sup>18</sup>  
Jivan<sup>19</sup> kicked him (and said), 'What godless infidel (is this) sleeping (here)?  
He has his legs pointing towards God! Why has he lain down in this sinful (posture)?'  
(When the) seized (Nanak's) legs and dragged them round Mecca also moved round, thus revealing (the Guru's) power.  
All were astounded and paid homage to him.
- 33 The qazis and mullahs gathered and began questioning him on religious matters.  
(God) has unfolded an immense creation; none can comprehend His power!  
Opening their books they asked, 'Who is the greater—the Hindu or the Muslim?'  
Baba (Nanak) answered the pilgrims, 'Without good deeds both (will be brought to) weeping.  
Neither the Hindu nor the Muslim finds refuge in (God's) court.  
The safflower's pigment is not fast; it runs when washed in water<sup>20</sup>.  
(Hindu and Muslim) are jealous of each other, (unaware that) Ram and Rahim<sup>21</sup> are one.  
The world has taken the devil's path.'
- 34 In Mecca he won adoration and left his sandals as a relic.  
Wherever he went in the world Baba (Nanak brought salvation); no place remained bereft (of his message).  
In every home Baba (Nanak) was worshipped; Hindu and Muslim (external observances) were ignored.  
When the sun rose, flooding the world with light, nothing that was hidden remained unrevealed.  
When the lion roared in the wilderness the herd of deer all took flight.  
When the moon has risen it cannot be hidden by holding up a pan.<sup>22</sup>  
From (farthest) east to (the uttermost) west the nine regions of the whole world bowed (before him).  
For such was the power which he wielded in the world.
- 35 Baba (Nanak) then proceeded to Baghdad and prepared (for himself) a resting-place outside the city.  
(There were two people) one Baba (Nanak), the image of the Timeless One, and the other Mardana

- the minstrel.  
 (Baba Nanak) uttered the (Muslim) call to prayer and the whole world fell silent.  
 The city also fell silent and observing this a (certain) pir (of Baghdad) was astounded.  
 When he looked carefully he perceived a faqir (absorbed) in a deep trance.  
 Dastgir (the pir) then asked, 'What faqir are you and to what order do you belong?'  
 (Mardana replied, 'He is) Nanak (and he) has entered the Dark Age. He is a faqir of God and he has attained to a knowledge of the One.  
 He is renowned on the earth, in heaven, in all places!'
- 36 The pir disputed with him, posing questions, (and having been answered he acknowledged), 'This faqir possesses great authority,  
 He has worked a mighty miracle here in Baghdad.  
 There are lakhs of nether worlds and heavens—this is wondrous news that he has declared!'  
 Dastgir then spoke again: 'Grant that we too may witness what you have discovered.'  
 (Baba Nanak) took the pir's son and closing his eyes he ascended (with him) into the air.  
 In the twinkling of an eye he revealed all of the lakhs of heavens and lakhs of underworlds.  
 Filling (his) begging-bowl with *prasad*<sup>23</sup> from a *karah*<sup>24</sup> he brought it from the nether regions.  
 A manifest authority is not hidden and cannot be hidden.
- 37 Having subdued the fortress of Baghdad he overcame all in Mecca and Medina.  
 He triumphed over the assembly of the eighty-four Siddhs and over the six systems (of Hindu philosophy).  
 Myriads of underworlds and heavens were conquered by him and on earth he overcame the whole world.  
 He triumphed over the nine regions of the earth and spread abroad (knowledge of) the True Name.  
 Gods and *danavas*, savages and *daityas*, Chitra and Gupta—all fell at his feet!  
 Before the throne of Indra *rags* and *raganis* (in the form of) *apasarasas* sang his praises.  
 Throughout the world this joyful message went forth that Guru Nanak has come for the salvation of the Dark Age.  
 Hindu and Muslim (both) bowed (before him).
- 38 Baba (Nanak) then proceeded to Kartarpur and put aside all the garments of renunciation.  
 He clad himself in ordinary clothes, ascended his *gaddi*<sup>25</sup> and thus appeared (before his people).  
 He shattered 'the old traditions and (before his death) appointed Angad as Guru,  
 (For) his sons did not obey him, (becoming instead) perfidious rebels and deserters.  
 He gave utterance to words (of divine wisdom), bringing light and driving away darkness.  
 (He imparted) understanding through discourses and conversation; the unstruck music (of devotional ecstasy)<sup>26</sup> resounded endlessly!  
*Sodar*<sup>27</sup> and *Arati*<sup>28</sup> were sung, and in the early morning the *Jappi* was recited.  
 Those who followed him cast off the burden of the Atharav Veda<sup>29</sup>.
- 39 Hearing of the Sivratni fair<sup>30</sup> Baba (Nanak) proceeded to Achal Vatala<sup>31</sup>.  
 In order to see him all the people turned away (from the yogis).  
 Money began to fall like rain; priceless offerings came in abundance.  
 Observing the spectacle the yogis became exceedingly jealous.  
 (A troupe of) dancers had come (to the fair) and were performing a dance; the yogis took their *lota*<sup>32</sup> and hid it.  
 Forgetting their performance the dancers were concerned only for their *lota*.  
 Baba (Nanak), being a person endowed with all knowledge, produced the *lotā* from where it was hidden.  
 Seeing this the yogis were filled with wrath.
- 40 Angrily the yogis all came and disputed with him.  
 The yogi Bhangarnath asked him, 'Why have you put *kanji*<sup>33</sup> in the milk?  
 The pot of milk has been spoilt and churning produces no butter.  
 Why have you put aside the ascetic's robe and adopted the ways of the world?'<sup>34</sup>  
 Nanak replied, 'Bhangarnath, your mother was a foolish woman.



- She did not know how to cleanse the container and through (her) foolishness the milk has been spoiled.  
 You become an ascetic, separating yourself from householders, and then you go and beg at their doors.  
 He who gives nothing receives nothing.’
- 41 Hearing these words the yogis rushed upon him, assuming many (fearsome) forms.  
 ‘Nanak Bedi has come into the Dark Age and denied the six systems!’ (they cried).  
 The Siddhs pronounced all their spells, uttering charms and incantations.  
 They transformed themselves into lions and wolves, and worked many wonders.  
 One yogi took wing and soared like a bird in flight.  
 Another became a snake and began to hiss; (yet) another caused fire to rain down..  
 Bhangarnath practised sleight of hand; another sat on a deerskin and floated on water.  
 The fire of the Siddhs’ (anger) did not diminish, but (instead) burnt (even more fiercely).
- 42 The Siddhs (then challenged him) saying, ‘Hear us, Nanak! What miracles have *you* displayed to the world?  
 Why have you been so dilatory? Show us something.’  
 Baba (Nanak) replied, ‘Nathji, I have nothing to show!  
 I have no refuge other than the Guru,<sup>35</sup> the congregation of believers (*sangat*), and the sacred utterance (*ban*).  
 He who is (both) Destroyer and Creator, the immutable One—He it is who directs (this) world.’  
 The Siddhs with their charms and incantations were defeated! The divine Word of the Guru overwhelmed their (magical) arts!  
 (The letter) *dada* (signifies) the Giver, (He who is) the Guru; (and the letter) *kaka* (signifies His) worth, which no one has ever comprehended.<sup>36</sup>  
 (The Siddhs) became humble and submitted to Nanak, the Satguru.
- 43 Baba (Nanak) said, ‘Nathji, listen to what I say, for I speak the truth.  
 Apart from (the miracle of) the True Name, I work no wonder.  
 Were I to array myself in clothes of fire, or build a dwelling of Himalayan snow;<sup>37</sup>  
 Were I to consume iron as my food or make myself master of the whole earth;  
 Were I to assume immense proportions and have the whole world move at my command;  
 Were I to weigh earth and heaven with but a tiny copper weight in the other scale;  
 Were I to possess within myself such power that I could command anyone as I chose;  
 Without the True Name (all would be but) the shadow of a cloud.’
- 44 (And so) Baba (Nanak) held his discourse with the Siddhs; through the divine Word the peace of fulfilment came upon them.  
 (Guru Nanak) triumphed over the Sivratri fair, (and followers of) the six systems came and did homage to him.  
 The Siddhs made this auspicious pronouncement: ‘Blessed is Nanak and great are his works!  
 An Exalted One has appeared and has caused light to shine in this Dark Age!’  
 Baba (Nanak) arose and journeyed from the fair to Multan.  
 As he approached (the city) the pirs of Multan came bringing a cup filled with milk.  
 Baba (Nanak) plucked a nearby jasmine flower and laid it on the milk;  
 Just as the Ganges flows into the ocean!<sup>38</sup>
- 45 After visiting Multan he returned to Kartarpur.  
 His glory daily increased; in the Dark Age Nanak inculcated meditation on the divine Name.  
 To ask for anything other than the divine Name is to bring suffering and calamity upon one’s head.  
 He caused his writ to run throughout the world and (so) inaugurated his holy *panth*.  
 Before he died he installed Lahina (as his successor) and set the Guru’s canopy<sup>39</sup> over his head.  
 Merging (his) light in (Guru Angad’s) light<sup>40</sup> the Satguru changed his form.  
 None could comprehend (this mystery); a wonder of wonders he revealed!  
 Changing his body he made (Guru Angad’s) body his own!

*Var XI*

- 13 (Baba Nanak) delivered Taru the Popat, a loyal follower of the Guru who had been an ascetic since childhood.  
He who is known as Mula the Kir (became) a slave of the Guru and performed wondrous deeds of love.  
Pirtha and Kheda, the Soiri (khatris), took refuge at (the Guru's) feet and so dwelt in joy and peace.  
Mardana the Mirasi played the rabab melodiously in (the Guru's) assemblies.  
Pirthi Mal the Sahgal was an upright (disciple). Rama the Didi worshipped with adoring love.  
Daulat Khan Lodi, (another) upright (disciple), became during his lifetime a (true) pir and so obtained immortality.<sup>41</sup>  
Malo and Manga were two Sikhs who found joy in their love of the Guru's words.  
Meeting (the Guru), Kalu put his trust (in him and by his singing) of the Guru's songs won praise in the court (of God).  
(All received) the Guru's instruction and radiated loving adoration.
- 14 Bhagat, an Ohari (khatir and himself) a *bhagat*, and Japuvamsi performed (devoted) service.  
The Uppal (khatir) known as Sihan, and Gajan, another Uppal, pleased the Guru.  
Bhagirath of Mailsihan (formerly) sang the praises of Kali.  
Jitta, a Randhava (Jat) and an upright (disciple), and Bura Budha were single-minded in their meditation.  
Phirana the Khahira, Jodh the Sikh, and Jivai served the Guru .<sup>42</sup>

1. *var* 24: 1-4. *Var* 26: 16, 26; 30-31.

2. For a brief discussion of Bhai Gurdas's first *var* see W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, pp. 14-15, 29-30 (hereinafter cited as GNSR).

3. Lit. "the Age of Strife". In the translation which follows it is rendered "the Dark Age".

4. Brackets indicate words which do not occur in Bhai Gurdas's text, but which have been inserted to give the translation continuity.

5. The water in which the feet of a guru or other person of acknowledged spiritual stature have been washed. The usage here is presumably intended to be metaphorical.

6. Lit. the plinths or bases of pillars.

7. He forbade all notions of caste privilege or exclusiveness.

8. Lit. "carried across (the dread Ocean of Existence)". The reference is to the conventional image of the world as a perilous ocean, and of salvation as a successful passage over it.

9. GNSR, pp. 195-96.

10. The "Realm of Truth", a term used by Guru Nanak in the *Japji Sahib*, stanza 37, to designate the climax of the soul's ascent to mystical union with God. See GNSR, pp. 223-24. Here it is used to designate the court of God.

11. *Kriayuga*, *Tretayuga*, and *Dvaparayuga*, the first three of the four cosmic ages

12. GNSR, pp. 181-84.

13. In its strict tense the title 'Nath' is applied to one of the nine semi-legendary Nath Masters, or to a yogi of the Nath or Kanphata sect. There has, however, been widespread confusion in the usage of the term and it has frequently been applied (as in this case) to a Siddh Master. The confusion in terminology reflects a corresponding confusion of identity. Gorakh nath and other Nath Masters are normally numbered amongst the eighty-four Siddh Masters. The later usage was well established by Bhai Gurdas's time and it was accordingly inevitable that he should follow it. See GNSR, pp. 11, 121, 243-44, 245.

14. Corruption and dishonesty are rampant.

15. Bhai Gurdas here alludes to an episode which other janam-sakhis describe in greater detail. According to the janam-sakhis of the *Puratan* tradition, when Baba Nanak attempted to fill the bowl with water it kept

filling instead with jewels. To exorcise the spell the Guru shattered the bowl, repaired it, uttered a *slok*, and then filled it with water. Vir Singh (ed.), *Puratan Janam-Sakhi*, (5th ed.), p. 94. GNSR, p. 49.

16. GNSR, 15th ed. pp. 191-94.
17. *banavari* (*vanamali*), an epithet of Visnu.
18. The niche in a mosque which indicates the *qibla* (the direction of the Kabah).
19. No indication is given concerning the identity of Jivan, except that the name is an Indian one.
20. Trust in external observances is a counterfeit devotion.
21. Hindu and Muslim names for God.
22. *kunali*, an earthenware pan or basin in which flour is kneaded.
23. Sacramental food.
24. A small, shallow, wide-mouthed iron pan in which sweets are boiled. The word may also be used to designate the sweets which are prepared in such a vessel, and may accordingly be interpreted here as a synonym for *prasad*. The distinctive sacramental food of the Sikhs is called *karah prasad*, a *karah* being a larger version of the *karahi* and like it applicable to the sweet which is prepared in it.
25. Cushion or throne. In a context such as this it designates a seat of spiritual authority.
26. *anabad sabad*. See GNSR, p. 191.
27. Jogendra Singh, *Sikh Ceremonies*, p. 69.
28. Ibid., p. 87,
29. The fourth and latest of the Vedas, consisting mainly of magical spells.
30. A Saivite festival held on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Phalgun (February-March).
31. Achal Batala, four miles east of Batala in Gurdaspur district.
32. A small metal or earthenware vessel.
33. An acidic liquid prepared by fermenting a mixture of mustard, salt and ginger in water or buttermilk. It is believed to be beneficial to the digestion and the liver.
34. You have mixed the *kanji* of wordly affections into the milk of detachment. As a result you have corrupted your *man* and no effort will produce the butter of *jnan*.
35. God.
36. For the Naths the letters *dada* (द) and *kaka* (क) possessed a mystical quality signifying *din* (or the path of yoga) and *karamat* (miracles, as proof of the adept's yogic excellence). Guru Nanak reinterpreted them, according to this account, to signify *data* (the Giver) and *kimat* (value, worth). Hazara Singh and Vir Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, pp. 37-38.
37. Lines 3—8 are a paraphrase of Guru Nanak's *Var Majh*, *slok* 1 of *pauri* 19, *Adi Granth*, p. 147
38. Without making any evident difference to its volume. The intention of the pirs' offering was to indicate that Multan was already brimfull of holy men and that accordingly there was no place in the city for Guru Nanak. The point of the Guru's response was that as a flower-petal could be laid on a brimming cup without causing it to overflow, so Multan could find room 'for one more holy man, and that the most sublime of them all.
39. A symbol of regnal authority.
40. His spirit left his own body and entered that of Guru Angad.
41. This tradition concerning Daulat Khan Lodi is at variance with the reputation for duplicity and treachery which his involvement with Babur earned him. The reputation owes its origin, however, to Babur's own account (A S. Beveridge, *The Babur-nama in English*, vol. 2, p. 459) and the issue is one where impartiality is hardly to be expected from the author. It is possible that the tradition recorded by Bhai Gurdas reflects a fairer estimate of Daulat Khan's character than the judgement of his enemy. See also GNSR. pp. 106-10.
42. The remainder of the stanza concerns disciples of Guru Angad. Hazara Singh and Vir Singh, op cit, p.194.



## GURU NANAK AND NANAK-PANTHIS

(MID-SEVENTEEN CENTURY)

From the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, translated by Ganda Singh

NANAK PANTHIS<sup>1</sup>, who are known as Guru-Sikhs<sup>2</sup> or disciples of the Gurus (Nanak and his successors), have no belief in idols and— idol-temples. Nanak is from the Bedis; and Bedis are a sub-caste of the Khattris.<sup>3</sup> In the reign of His Majesty, the late Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Babur—may God illumine his argument — he (Nanak) became famous. Before the victory of the late Emperor (Babur), he (Nanak) was a *Modi*<sup>4</sup> to Daulat Khan Lodhi who was one of the high officials of Ibrahim Khan Emperor of Delhi. And, *Modi* is an official in charge of the granary.

Once a saint came to him and captivated his heart so much so that Nanak, going to his shop, gave away (in charity to the poor) all his own and Daulat Khan's grain that he had in the shop and stores. He then severed his connection with his wife and children. Daulat Khan was astonished to hear this. As he saw signs of saintliness in Nanak, she refrained from molesting him. In short, Nanak underwent severe austerities. At first he reduced his food, and after some time, he depended upon drinking a little of cow's milk. After that he lived on *ghee* and then on water. Lastly he lived on air like those who, in Hindostan, are called *Pavanaharis* or consumers of air alone.<sup>5</sup>

Some people became his disciples. Nanak believed in (was convinced of) the unity of God as it is laid down in the tenets of Muhammad. He also believed in the doctrine of transmigration. Holding wine and pork unlawful, he abstained from animal food<sup>6</sup> and enjoined against cruelty to animals. After his death meat-eating became common among his disciples. And when Arjun Mal, who is one of the prophetic order of Nanak, found that evil, he prohibited people from meat-eating and said: "This practice is not in accordance with the wishes of Nanak."<sup>7</sup> Eventually Hargobind, son of Arjun Mal, ate Meat and hunted, and most of his disciples followed his practice.

Just as Nanak praised the Muhammadans, he also praised the incarnations and gods and goddesses of the Hindus. But he knew them all to be the creation and not the creator. He denied (the doctrines of) *Halool* (direct descent from or incarnation of God) and *Ittibad* (direct union of the All-pervading God with any particular body). They say that he had the rosary of the Muhammadans in his hand and the sacred Brahmanical thread round his neck.<sup>8</sup>

His disciples narrate many of his miracles which cannot find room in this brief sketch. One of these is that Nanak, having been displeased with the Afghans, deputed the Mughals over them. So in the year 932 (al-Hijri, 1526 A. D.) His Majesty the late Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur gained victory over the Afghan (Emperor) Ibrahim.

They also say that during one of his travels Baba Nanak spent a night in a fort and was absorbed in the vision of God. However much the children, who were playing there, touched his body with their hands, no motion appeared from him. They stitched up his eye-lids, nose and ears, and tied his hands tightly. When Nanak returned to himself from that state (of mental alienation, ecstasy) and found himself in that condition, he went to one of the houses". When he arrived at the threshold, he cried out: "Is there any one in the house who can open my stitched up eye-lids with hands?" A handsome woman, having conducted him into the house and, untying his hands, unstitched what was sewed up and cut the threads from the eyes of Baba Nanak with her teeth. Consequently the point of her *tilak* was impressed on the forehead of Nanak and the *tilak* of that woman became smothered. When Nanak came out of her house, the neighbours saw him in that condition (with the *tilak* mark on his forehead) and thought that he had copulated with that woman. Consequently the woman became infamous in the community. And, a dislike appeared towards her in the mind of her husband.

The woman one day came to Nanak and said: "I rendered you service in the name of God, and now

they blame me.” Nanak said: “To-morrow the gate of the fort shall get shut and it shall not open till your hand reaches (touches) it.” The next day, however they did try to open the gate of the fort, it did not open. The people remained- in that state of helplessness. The place was high and away from water. The quadrupeds also could not get out. The inhabitants of the fort approached all those persons whom they considered to be holy. The closed gate did not open by the prayers of that community until (the people of) that community came to Nanak and said: “Oh saint, what is the remedy for this thing?” He replied: “This door shall not open except by the hand of a woman who has not done what is unlawful with a stranger (that is, who has not co-habited with a person other than her husband)”. The people of the fort took the women, whom they considered to be virtuous and chaste, to the gate of the fort. But it was of no avail. At last every woman who was inside the fort rubbed her hand against the gate, but no good came out of it. Consequently they sat down in despair.

At the time of the evening prayer, the friend of Baba Nanak came. The people laughed on seeing her. Her husband and near relatives, being ashamed, rebuked her. The woman lent no ear to what the community said. Striking her hand into the gate-ring, she pulled it. And lo! the closed gate was opened. The people having been astonished fell at the woman’s feet<sup>9</sup>.

The *Bani* of Nanak, that is his hymns, comprise prayers, admonitions and counsels, and most of the sayings are on the greatness of God Most Holy. And all that is in the language of the Jats. A Jat, in the vocabulary of the Panjab, is a villager and a peasant. His (Nanak’s) disciples have no regard for the Sanskrit language. The rules and regulations which Nanak laid down will be described hereafter.

Nanak has said in his hymns

“Heavens and earths are numerous Prophets, saints, incarnations (*Avatars*) and *Sidhs* have attained perfection through devotion to God. And everyone who strives in the worship of God, by whatever path he wishes, becomes favourite of God. The means of (attaining) proximity of God is non-injury to (any) living being.

“Be righteous that you become freed (saved). Righteousness from you (shall bring to you) success from God.”<sup>10</sup>

The sons of Nanak are in the Panjab. They are called *Kartari* (that is, the worshippers of *Kartar*, the Creator). But according to the opinion of some, the spiritual office did not inherit to his sons. They say that by his order Guru Angad from the caste of the Trehan<sup>11</sup> Khattris sat in the place (succeeded to the spiritual office) of Nanak. After him Guru Amardas, from the *Bhalla Khattri* caste, became his successor, and after him sat Guru Ramdas who is from the *Sodhi Khattris* and whom they call *Sri Guru*, the Great Master, also.

After the death of Ramdas his son Arjun Mal sat in place of his father. In his time the Sikhs or disciples became numerous and made exaggerations in the beliefs. They said: “Baba Nanak is God and the world is of his creating.” But in (his) hymns Baba Nanak reckoned himself a slave (of God), and called God *Niranjan*, the Formless, *Parbrahm*, the Supreme Lord, who is not body and bodied and is not united with (material) body. The Sikhs say Baba Nanak was such and had no body, but he appeared to us through his power. And they go so far that when Nanak left his body, he absorbed (himself) in Guru Angad who was his nearest servant (most devoted disciple), and that Guru Angad is Nanak himself. After that, at the time of his death, Guru Angad entered into the body of Amardas in the above mentioned manner. He in the same manner occupied a place in the body of Ramdas, and Ramdas in the same way got united with Arjun Mal. They give everyone the name of a *Mahal*; first *Mahal* being Nanak, second *Mahal* Angad and so on till the fifth *Mahal* who is Arjun Mal. They said that whoever does not acknowledge (or believe in) Guru Arjan Mal to be the very self of Baba Nanak becomes *Manmukh*<sup>12</sup> or a non-believer.

They have [Numerous] stories. They say that in ancient time Baba Nanak was Raja Janak<sup>13</sup>. In the opinion of the disciples of Nanak, Guru Nanak, in a life from previous creations, having been Raja Janak, had accomplished spiritual works along with his temporal kingdom and called mankind to God.

The chronicler (the author himself) has heard from reliable Sikhs that when Baba Nanak appeared in the *Sat Jug*<sup>14</sup>, a crowd of disciples came round him. He sent a cow into the kitchen. When cooked, they brought it to the *Sangat*, that is, the congregation of the Sikhs. Some ate of it and the others ran away. The Guru prayed and the cow came to life. On seeing that condition (of the cow come to life), the crowd that had run away returned and submitted: "Now we shall eat whatever is ordered (in the kitchen)." The Guru, that is, Nanak, said, "Now it cannot be, and our promise to you is for the *Treta Jug*." So in the cycle of the Treta the Guru appeared. The disciples assembled, as I have said, killed a horse and brought it into the assembly. Some ate of it and a crowd disliked it. So he (Nanak) prayed and the horse became alive. The deserters made the same previous request. This time he said, "Now our promise to you is for the *Dwapar Jug*." And in the cycle of Dwapar they brought an elephant into the kitchen. At that time also it happened as I have said. The promise was made for the *Kal-Jug*. They say that in the *KalJug* they brought a man into the kitchen. Whoever are of it was liberated and he who refrained (from eating it), remained in suffering.<sup>15</sup>

I have also heard from a Sikh, who called Nanak a near Slave of God, that when Nanak severed his bodily connection, his soul reached a fork, where one road ran in the direction of heaven and the other in that of hell. Nanak chose the road to hell, and he brought the inhabitants of hell out of the internal region. And the Most High addressed him: "Those sinners cannot enter heaven. So you should go to the world and liberate this multitude." Nanak consequently came to the world. And now those inhabitants of hell are the multitude of his disciples. And the Guru comes to this world and returns back till all of that sect obtain salvation. Other than this man, no one is seen from among the Sikhs who hold Baba Nanak to be God.

In short, the disciples of Nanak condemn idol-worship. Their belief is that, all their Gurus are. Nanak, as has been said. They do not read the *Mantras*<sup>16</sup> of the Hindus. They do not venerate their temples of idols, nor do they esteem their *Antars*<sup>17</sup>. They have no regard for the Sanskrit language which, according to the Hindus, is the speech of the angels.<sup>18</sup>

In short, during the time of each *Mahal* (Guru), the Sikhs increased till in the reign of Guru Arjun Mal they became numerous, and there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found. There is no restriction among them that a Brahman may not become the disciple of a Khattri,<sup>19</sup> for Nanak was a Khattri, and no Guru amongst them was from the Brahmins, as has been described. Similarly they placed Khattris under the authority of the Jats, who belong to the low caste of the Vaishyas,<sup>20</sup> as the big *Masands*<sup>21</sup> of the Guru are mostly Jats. The Brahmins and Khattris are (become) *Meli*<sup>22</sup> and *Sablang*<sup>23</sup>, that is, pupils and disciples of the Guru, through the medium of a *Masnad*, and are accepted into the pupilage and discipline of the Guru.

It should be known that in the reign of the Afghan kings, the nobles were addressed in writing as *Masnad-i-Ali* or the high seat. Subsequently by frequent use the Indians have reduced it to *Masand*. And as the Sikhs consider the Gurus *Sacha Padshah*, that is, the Veritable King, they call their agents *Masand*. They call them Ram-das (or the servants of God) also.

In the time of the *Mahals* before the fifth *Mahal*, no *bhet*<sup>24</sup> (offering) or tribute was collected from the Sikhs. Whatever was presented by the Sikhs themselves was accepted (and deemed enough). During his time, Arjun Mal deputed one person to the Sikhs of every city so that he might collect tribute and offerings from them. [This deputy or agent was called *Masand*.]

People began to become Sikhs of the Guru through the medium of *Masands*. The chief Masands, through whom large numbers became Sikhs of the Guru, appointed deputies on their own behalf, so that in every place and *Mahal*,<sup>25</sup> people, having (at first) become *Meli* (associates or pupils) of the Masand through the

Masand's agent, become the Sikhs of the Guru.

They have so decided that an *Udasi*, that is a renouncer of the world, is not praise-worthy. Therefore, some Sikhs of the Guru do agricultural work and some trade, and a multitude takes up service. Every year according to the extent of the money earned by them, they send (their dues) to the Masands in the form of offerings. The Masands do not touch (that is, they do not appropriate it to their own use). Other than this, whatever they bring, during the year, for the Masand (himself) for conveying their *bhet* to the Court of the Guru, is spent for himself, if the Masand has no other means of livelihood. But if he himself is engaged in some business or profession, he never soils himself by (misappropriating to himself) the offerings (of the Sikhs). Collecting all (the offering), he conveys them to the Guru.

In the month of Baisakh (April), when the sun is in the sign of Taurus, the Masands assemble at the Court of the Guru. Whoever from among their Melis (Members of the Masands' congregations) wishes, and is able to undertake the journey, comes to Guru with the Masands. At the time of taking leave (from the Guru's presence), the Guru bestows a turban on each of the Masands.

1. *Panth* is a Sanskrit word meaning path, *Nanak-Panthi*, therefore, literally means a person following the path of Nanak, that is, a disciple of Nanak.
2. *Sikb* is a Panjabi word for the Sanskrit *Shishya*, meaning a disciple.
3. The second of the four castes of the Hindus.
4. A commissariat or supply officer.
5. There is nothing in the biographies of the Guru to substantiate this statement. It appears to have been based on the authority of some one who wished to represent the Guru as one of the old Hindu recluses who are generally respected for their austerities.
6. Here the author or his informant seems to have erred. There is nothing in the teachings of Guru Nanak to condemn the use of animal food. On the other hand we find him cooking a deer, which a disciple had presented to him at Kurukshetra during his visit to that place. When the Brahmins expressed their horror at his cooking of flesh on the occasion of a Solar eclipse, he replied:

Man is first conceived in flesh, he dwelleth in flesh.

When he quickeneth, he obtaineth a mouth of flesh; his bones skin", and body are made of flesh.,

When he is taken out of the womb, he seizeth teats of flesh.

His mouth is of flesh, his tongue is of flesh, his breath is in flesh.

When he groweth up, he marries and bringeth flesh home with him.

Flesh is produced from flesh; all man's relations are made from flesh.

[*Guru Granth Sahib, Var Malbar ki*, M.I., p. 1289; Macauliffe, i, 47-48.]

The following is also on the same subject;

Fools wrangle about flesh, but know not divine knowledge, or meditation of God.

They know not what is flesh, or what is vegetable, or in what sin consisteth.

They who forswear flesh and hold their noses when near it, devour men at night...

In flesh we are conceived, from flesh we are born, we are vessels of flesh..

Ibid. Mac. f. 48.]

7. There is no such sentence traceable in the sayings of Guru Arjun in the *Guru Granth Sahib*
8. "He seems to be confusing the black woollen string called *Sebli* which a class saints wear in India and which is found in the feathers round Guru Nanak's neck." [S. Umrao Singh Majithia in the *Khalsa Review*, June 1930, p. 5.] As for the Brahmanical thread. Guru Nanak had flatly refused to put it on when the family priest Hardial proceeded to perform the ceremony. No remonstrances and persuasion of the priest were of any avail with the young Guru who gave utterance to the following hymns:



(i) Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread, continence its knot, trust its twist  
 That would make a *janeu* for the soul; if thou have it, O Brahman, then put it on me.  
 It will not break, or become soiled or be burned or lost.  
 Blest the man, O Nanak, who goeth with such a thread on his neck.  
 Thou purchaseth a *janeu* for four *damris*, and seated in a square putteth it on;  
 Thou whisperest instruction that the Brahman is the *Guru* of the Hindus.  
 Man dieth, the *janeu* falleth, and the soul departeth without it.  
 [Guru Granth Sahib, Asa di Var, 471]

(ii) Though men commit countless theft?, countless adulteries utter countless falsehoods and  
 countless words of abuse;  
 Though they commit countless robberies and villainies night and day against their fellow creatures,  
 Yet the cotton thread is spun, and the Brahman commeth to twist it.  
 For the ceremony they kill a goat and cook and eat it, and everybody then saith 'Put on the *janeu*'.  
 When it cometh old, it is thrown away, and another is put on. Nanak, the string breaketh not if it  
 be strong. [Asa di Var, p. 472.]

(iii) By adoring and praising the Name, honour and a true thread are obtained,  
 In this way a sacred thread shall be put on, which will not break, and which will be fit for entrance  
 into God's Court.  
 There is no string for the sexual organs, there is no string for women;  
 There is no string for the impure acts which cause your beards to be daily spat upon;  
 There is no string for the feet, there is no string for the bands;  
 There is no string for the tongue, there is no string for the eyes;  
 Without such strings the Brahman wandereth astray,  
 Twisteth strings for the neck and putteth them on others.  
 He taketh hire for marrying;  
 He pulleth out a paper and showeth the fate of the wedded pair.  
 Hear and see, ye people, it is strange,  
 That, white mentally blind, man is named wise. [Asa di Var, p. 491.]

9. The story is not traceable in any of the biographies of the Guru.

10. *Guru Granth Sahib*.

11. The word *iqRhn* (*Trehan*, in Persian script) is wrongly transcribed as *sRIn*. (*Srin*) in the lithographed copies. Guru Angad was born in the *Trehan* sub-caste of the Khattris and not in the *Srin* sub-caste.

12. By an error in reading the persian *Shikastah* hand, the word *mnmuk* man-mukh is wrongly transcribed as *mnrnK* marnakh or maranakh. Man-mukh in Panjabi means a non-believer.

13. After this follows a long irrelevant account of Raja Janak, the father of Sita, the dutiful wife of King Rama of Ayodhia from, the *Yog Vashisth*. It has no bearing on the subject. I have, therefore, omitted it.

14. Hindu astronomers have divided time into *Kalpas*, *Mahayugas* and *Yugas*. A *Kalpa* is the greatest Indian division of time. It consists of 1000 *Mahayugas*. A *Mahayuga* is composed of four *yugas* of different lengths, the *Krit* or *Sat*, the *Dwapar*, *Treta* and *Kali*. The *Kaliyuga*, or the *Kaljug*, as it is called in Northern India, consists of 432,000 solar years. The *Dwapar-yuga* is double the length of the *Kali*, the *Treta-yuga* is triple and the *Sat-yuga* is quadruple. According to the *Surya Sidhanta*, the present *Kali-yuga* commenced at midnight on Thursday, the 17-18th February, 3102 B.C., while others have calculated it to have commenced on the following sunrise, 18th February.

[Sewell and Dikshit, *the Indian Calendar*, 6]

15. I have not seen this recorded anywhere in the sikh historical and religious works, nor have I heard of it from any one as an oral tradition. This is, apparently an adoption of some old story related by some one with the object of representing the Guru to be in no way inferior to any of the mythological Hindu deities.

16. The Vedic and Puranic hymns.

17. Incarnations of God, such as Rama and Krishna.
18. Gods like Brahma and Vishnu. Compare Swami Dayananda's *Satyarth Prakash*, Urdu, 4th edition, p.565.
19. According to old Hinduism, the duty of teaching is assigned exclusively to the Brahmans. There is a restriction, therefore, for a Kshatriya to become the teacher of a Brahman. But as caste distinction is not allowed by Sikhism, no such restriction exists among the Sikhs.
20. The second lowest class of the Hindus.
21. Agent or deputies. The word *Masand*, a corrupted form of Persian *Masnad* and synonym of Panjabi *manji* or cot was used for the Sikh missionaries. When preaching, these missionaries were usually seated on *Masnads* (high seats) or cots out of reverence for their religious learning and devotion, while the audience squatted on the ground, covered with carpets or otherwise. The word *Masnad*, corrupted as *Masand*, came to be used for them as mentioned in the text.
22. *Meli* in Panjabi means a companion, a brother-in-faith, or a member of a congregation.
23. This word is not legible in the lithographed text. S. Umrao Singh in his translation in the *Khalsa Review* has transliterated it as *Sabayak*. The word in the text, is nearer to *Satsang*.

There is, however, a word *Sablang* which occurs in the hymns of the third and fourth Gurus Amardas and Ramdas in the *Gauri* and *Subi* in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It means 'connected with' or 'combination of' (*Sri Guru Granth Kosh*, Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, 2nd ed., p. 164). But it does not appear to have been in common use and the word *Sabayak* is seldom met with in the Sikh literature, whereas *Satsang* is one of the commonest words and is very closely related to *meli*.

24. The word *bhet* means voluntary 'offering to a holy man or deity', and not tax or tribute.
25. Here the word Mahal means a *pargana*, a territorial division.

**THE LIGHT OF GLORY**  
from the *Mahima Prakas Vartak*  
translated with introduction by  
W. H. McLeod

**Introduction**

For the historian of the Panjab the eighteenth century constitutes a considerable problem. It was for the Panjab a turbulent century, a condition which is only too clearly reflected in a paucity of contemporary source materials relating to the period. This scarcity applies as much to the janam-sakhi literature as to other sources, and for this reason the janam-sakhi tradition referred to as the *Mahimā Prakāś*, 'the Light of Glory', occupies a position of some significance within the total corpus of janam-sakhi materials. The *Mahimā Prakāś* janam-sakhi tradition is too recent to be used as a primary source for the life of Guru Nanak, but it warrants attention as an important link in the janam-sakhi chain. Through the development of the janam-sakhis there can be traced a corresponding development in the Sikh understanding of the mission of Guru Nanak and of the Sikh self-understanding of the nature of the Sikh *panth*. Within this continuing process the *Mahimā Prakāś* tradition commands its own distinctively eighteenth century importance.

There are two works which belong to this tradition, namely the *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* and the *Mahimā Prakāś Kavītā*. The similarities of content and expression are sufficiently close to warrant bracketing them within a single tradition, but the *Vārtak* and *Kavītā* are nevertheless two distinct works, each distinguished from the other by fundamental differences. Both deal with all ten Gurus and both devote particular attention to Guru Nanak. The *Vārtak* is, however, appreciably shorter than the *Kavītā*. Moreover, as their respective names indicate, the *Vārtak* is in prose and the *Kavītā* in metre. Most significant of all, at certain points their disagreement goes beyond mere terminology to positive contradiction. Two notable instances of this latter feature are provided by the differing dates which are given for both the birth and the death of Guru Nanak.<sup>1</sup> Such radical divergence illustrates the looseness of the term 'tradition' when used to designate any particular group of janam-sakhis. Areas of correspondence permit such grouping into traditions, but this procedure should never suggest anything resembling total correspondence.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the *Mahimā Prakāś Kavītā* there are no serious problems of authorship or dating. The author gives his name as Sarup Das, he specifies S. 1833 (A.D. 1776) as the date of compilation, and he refers to Khadur as the place in which the work was written.<sup>3</sup> There appears to be no reason why this information should be questioned. The language of the work corresponds to the period, and the frequency with which Khadur is mentioned strongly supports the claim concerning location.

The *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak*, however, presents problems, for the available texts omit the details which are needed in order to place the work securely within its context. Unlike the *Kavītā* no reference is made to the author of the *Vārtak*. Modern authorities give the author's name as either Kirpal Singh Bhalla<sup>4</sup> or Kirpal Das Bhalla<sup>5</sup>, but in no case are we referred to an early source.<sup>6</sup> Either of these names may be correct and it is reasonable to claim that the convergence on two very similar names lends some support to this possibility. It must, however, remain at most a likelihood. We are not in a position to make a categorical statement.

The question of dating presents us with a similar problem. On the one hand we have an undated text and on the other a conflict between modern authorities without any early source being cited in support of any particular date. The two dates which are given are S. 1798 (A.D. 1741)<sup>7</sup> and S. 1830 (A.D. 1773)<sup>8</sup>. Of these the former bears the greater weight of authority, but like the later date it lacks satisfactory evidence. The most we can say is that the indications given in the text itself strongly support an indeterminate date within the middle or later years of the eighteenth century.

Three considerations point to this conclusion. First there is the language of the *Vārtak*. The nature of its language is in complete accord with an eighteenth century dating and earns for this work a place in the history of Panjabi prose comparable to that occupied by the *Purātan* janam-sakhis within the seventeenth century.

A second consideration is the relationship between the *Vārtak* and the *Kavitā*. It can be argued that a comparison of the two works lends limited support to a date prior to A.D. 1776. A date later than 1776 would almost certainly mean that the *Vārtak* was written as a prose summary of the *Kavitā*. This would have been an understandable procedure and in some places the style of the *Vārtak* unmistakably indicates that the author is in fact writing a summary of some other work which must have been in his possession.<sup>9</sup> It is, however, difficult to conceive that even the briefest of summaries would have overlooked such *Kavitā* episodes as the story of Sajjan *Thag* or Baba Nanak's meeting with Raja Sivanabh. No categorical statements can be made in this respect, but the strongest of several possibilities appears to be that the material for both the *Vārtak* and the *Kavitā* has been drawn from a common source. This may have been a written source or it may have been the oral tradition of a particular area. The area would, without doubt, be Khadur and even if a written source could be established some role would still have to be accorded to Khadur. Like the *Kavitā*, the *Vārtak* also pays considerable attention to incidents set in the village and shows a marked interest in a particular resident named *Mai Birai*.

The third consideration which indicates an eighteenth century origin is the relationship of the *Mahimā Prakāś* tradition to other janam-sakhi traditions. There is the usual overlap of episodes, but the selection differs from all others and in no case do we find the *Mahimā Prakāś* treatment of a common episode corresponding exactly to that of another tradition.<sup>10</sup> In many cases the *Mahimā Prakāś* version plainly bears the marks of a longer period of transmission than the versions produced by the seventeenth century janam-sakhis. One such mark is the addition of names and details, a process which we find continuing from the earliest janam-sakhis up to the present day. In the earlier janam-sakhis the child Nanak goes to sleep under 'a tree', whereas the *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* specifies a *māl* tree.<sup>11</sup> The earlier janam-sakhis note that Baba Nanak disappeared in 'a stream' near Sultanpur and the *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* adds that it was the Vein stream.<sup>12</sup> The *Purātan* Janam-sakhis state that the two finalists in the succession contest were Lahina and 'another Sikh'.<sup>13</sup> The *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* declares that this anonymous Sikh was Baba Budha.<sup>14</sup>

From one of the earlier janam-sakhi traditions the two versions of the *Mahimā Prakāś* stand in marked contrast. Their failure to accord any importance to Bhai Bala distinguishes them sharply from the janam-sakhis of the *Bālā* tradition.<sup>15</sup> This must not, however, suggest a close alignment with the *Purātan*, *Miharbān*, B40, or *Gyān-ratnāvalī* traditions, for such an alignment does not exist. A comparison of the different traditions brings out an abundant variety and the nature of the *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* variants indicates a date of compilation later than the seventeenth century.

One last problem to be noted in connection with the *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* is the notable scarcity of copies. In his *A Bibliography of the Panjab* Dr Ganda Singh lists three manuscripts. One of these is at the Languages Department in Patiala; a second is in the personal library of the late Bhai Vir Singh, now in the possession of his brother, Dr Balbir Singh of Dehra Dun; and a third is held by the Sikh History Research Department of Khalsa College, Amritsar.<sup>16</sup> It is the third of these manuscripts which is here reproduced and which has been used in preparing the translation which follows.<sup>17</sup> This third manuscript is a recent copy which was made from Bhai Vir Singh's copy in A.D. 1932.<sup>18</sup> Bhai Vir Singh's copy is only slightly older, having been made by Akali Kaur Singh Nihang in A.D. 1928.<sup>19</sup> From the copy held by Khalsa College it appears that Kaur Singh left no information concerning the location of the manuscript which he had used in preparing Vir Singh's copy.

In making this translation of the section dealing with Guru Nanak a certain freedom of expression has been permitted in an effort to capture English idiom. Every effort has, however, been made to adhere to the precise sense conveyed by the original. Bracketed portions indicate words which do not occur in the Panjabi original, but which have been inserted in an attempt to impart clarity or to give continuity to the translation. The following abbreviations have been used in the notes :

- AG *Adi Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*  
 BG The Vars of Bhai Gurdas  
 B40 Manuscript no. Panj'. B40 of the India Office Library, London. In citations from this manuscript the pagination given in Arabic numerals has been used, not the Gurmukhi.  
 PurJS Vir Singh (ed.), *Purātan janam-sākhī*, 5th ed., Amritsar, 1959.  
 MihJS *Janam-Sākhī Sirī Gurū Nānak Dev Jī (likhat Sirī Miharbān Jī Sodhī)* ed. Kirpal Singh and Shamsher Singh Ashok, Amritsar, 1962.  
 MPV *Mahimā Prakāś Varkāk*.  
 MK Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gursabad Ratanakar Mahankos* 2nd edition, Patiala, 1960.  
 GNSR W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford, 1968.

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W. H. McLeod

1. GNSR, pp. 94, 100.
2. For a discussion of the principle janam-sakhi traditions see GNSR, pp. 13 ff; and for a brief note on the two versions of the *Mahimā Prakās*, see *ibid.* p. 28
3. Kirpal Singh, *A Catalogue of Punjabi and Urdu Manuscripts in the Sikh History Research Department* (Amritsar, 1963), p. 19. For Khadur see *Translation Footnotes*, 114
4. MK, p. 701
6. Ganda Singh, *A Bibliography of the Panjab* (Patiala, 1666), p. 202. Dr Ganda Singh indicates an element of doubt by enclosing the name within brackets.
6. Kirpal Singh states: "According to Bhai Vir Singh its author was Bawa Kirpal Singh." *Op. cit.*, p. 18.
7. MK, Appx. p, 84. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
8. Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 18,
9. There has, for example, been considerable compression of the *sākhī* relating to Babur, and later we find that Baba Nanak's promise to restore the two sons of Guru Angad remains unfulfilled, Cf, also the greeting which, according to Sheikh Kamal, Baba Nanak had conveyed to Sheikh Ibrahim.
10. The nearest approach it makes to correspondence is in its treatment of the discourse with Sheikh Ibrahim. This is, however, an episode in which all of the principal janam-sakhis manifest an unusual measure of correspondence.
11. See below, *Translation, fn.*, 30.
12. *Translation, fn.* 44,
13. *PurJS*, p. 108.
14. *Translation, fn.* 103.
15. *Translation, fn.* 105,
16. *Loc. cit.*, p. 202. The translator has been informed by S, Shamsher Singh Ashok of Amritsar that another copy is held by the Punjab Public Library in Lahore.
17. Sikh History Research Department Ms. no. 2308, The portion of this Ms. which deals with Guru Nanak has been published in a limited private edition by Professor Kirpal Singh under the title *Jivan Kathā Sirī Gurū Nānak Dev Jī Mahimā Prakās (Vārtak) vichon* (Bedi Press, Debra Dun, 1H69).
18. Sikh History Research Department Ms, 2308, folio 129 a.
19. *Ibid.*

## THE LIGHT OF GLORY

### GURU BABA NANAK

#### Translation.

Almighty God, eternal, formless, and immaculate, lover of the devout and comfort of the fallen, observing the deep darkness which prevailed in the *Kaliyuga*, took pity upon the world and for its deliverance assumed a pure incarnation (*avtar*). Perfect in all attributes, (this divine *avtar*) was endowed with a blend of those qualities which are manifested in the *bhagat*, the ascetic, the yogi, and the man of understanding.

He was born (in the year) Samvat 1526, on the third (day) of the month of Vaisakh<sup>1</sup> and on a moonlit night during that delectable period (which is) the last watch before dawn. It was in (the village) Talvandi of Rai Bhoje the Bhatti (that the birth took place, and) in the house of Kalu Bedi. The entire (host of) gods and goddesses, Siddhs and holy immortals, came to behold his presence. Great was the rejoicing (as they proclaimed) : “For the deliverance of the world God has taken birth ! (Upon mankind) a shower of nectar has fallen !”

Cry : Praise to the Guru !<sup>2</sup> Another sakhi<sup>3</sup> follows.

Once when (Nanak's) mother Tipto<sup>4</sup> had taken him into the courtyard and gone to sleep Gorkhnath<sup>5</sup> came by. Approaching them he called, “Alms in the name of God.”<sup>6</sup> (The others) were all asleep, (but) Babaji<sup>7</sup> answered from (his mother's) lap, “Sleep not! Awake!”<sup>8</sup> Gorakh (nath) was delighted and bowing down he said, “I offer myself (to thee). I offer myself (to thee).”<sup>9</sup> Babaji replied, “(Even) once I am unable to offer myself (to Thee).”<sup>10</sup> Gorakh (nath) was delighted!

Meanwhile some members of the Bedi family had assembled (in the courtyard). “Before whom did you bow, yogi?” they asked Gorakh (nath), “and around whom did you so reverently walk?”<sup>11</sup> (Gorakh) the Nath replied, “Are you unaware that God has taken birth as a *bhagat* in your family (and that) through him many people will find fulfilment of their spiritual longing! It was for this reason that I bowed.” Saying this Gorakh (nath) went on his way.

Cry : Praise to the Guru !

Later Kalu summoned Hardial, the (family) priest, to have the child named. “Let a name be bestowed on the child according to the tradition of the Veda and the established customs of (our) family”, (he said). Following the traditions in all respects Hardial the priest cast a horoscope so that after due consideration a name might be given (to the child). And what should he discover ! The glory of the child was immeasurable ! “Such is the glory of his name,” he exclaimed, “that those who repeat it will derive immeasurable benefit ! Blessed is the family in which (this) *sādh*<sup>12</sup> has taken birth !”

“Then after due consideration decide what name to bestow,” said Kalu. The priest then bestowed (upon him) the name of Nanak chand.<sup>13</sup> “But no such name has ever been given in our family,” protested the Bedis. “In previous ages,” answered the priest, “(the names) Ram Chand (and) Krishan Chand (were bestowed upon divine *avtars*. Another *avtar*, has come and so) now we have the name ‘Nanak Chand’”. “All (men, both) Hindus and Muslims, will (reverently) repeat this name.”<sup>14</sup>

The Bedis (then ceased to object), satisfied that one day their family would receive veneration and glory.<sup>15</sup> Having said this the priest departed.

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another sakhi follows.

Later, when Babaji turned seven<sup>16</sup> Kalu held the the investiture of the sacred thread. (Preparations) were made according to the Vedic ritual and then the (family) priest was summoned. The entire family had

assembled. Babaji was bathed and robed, and (then the priest) invested (him) with the sacred thread. (As he did so) Babaji said (to him), “O Brahman, give me that indestructible sacred thread which never breaks and which retains its purity both in this world and the next.” Then Babaji recited a *Slok*:<sup>17</sup>

(From the) cotton (of) compassion (spin the) thread (of) tranquillity, knotting (it with) continence  
(and) twisting (it with) truth.

If this is the thread which you have, O pandit, then bestow it (upon me).

(Such a thread) neither breaks nor becomes soiled ; neither burns nor goes astray.

Blessed is the man, O Nanak, upon whose neck (this spiritual thread) is laid.

The priest was speechless with delight. “Kalu,” he cried, “your son is a mighty ascetic,<sup>18</sup> the solace of the afflicted !<sup>19</sup>

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākehi* follows.

Then Kalu took (Babaji) to a teacher (*pāndhā*) for instruction. After a lengthy invocation (the teacher) wrote out the vowels<sup>20</sup> for Babaji and began to explain (them). Babaji, (however), remained silent, and so the teacher said (to him), “Why are you not studying ?”

“Teacher”, asked Baba(ji); “what have you learnt that you can pass on to me ?”

“I have studied everything”, replied the teacher. “The Vedas, the Sastras, income and expenditure  
( — I have studied them all).”

“All your learning results in bondage,” declared Babaji (and) then recited a *sabad*.<sup>21</sup>

Burn your worldly affections, grind (them) and make ink; let (your) mind be as paper of excellent quality.

Let love be the pen and (your) reason the scribe; (then) ask the Guru and write as He directs.

Inscribe the divine Name; inscribe the praises (of God); inscribe His boundless infinity !

Learn, Baba, how to write an (acceptable) account, one which in the place where accounts are scrutinised will receive the stamp of divine approval. 1. *rahaui*.<sup>22</sup>

They who hold in remembrance the divine Name will receive in the hereafter renown, eternal joy,  
and the everlasting satisfaction of (all honourable) desires.

Upon their countenance will glisten the mark (of divine approval). (But all this) comes only if grace  
(is bestowed); without it (all utterance) is but futile wind. 2.

One comes (into this world), another departs; and some there be who are accorded the title of chief.

One is born to beg and another (to rule over) a mighty court,

(But when both the lowly and the exalted) have passed on it will be revealed (in the hereafter) that  
without the divine Name all is vain ! 3

In deep dread of Thy awesome majesty my body wastes away.

They who bore the (exalted) name of Sultan or Khan have (like all men) come to dust.

Nanak, when one arises and departs sundered are all the ties of false affections.

Hearing this *śabad* the teacher was struck dumb with amazement. “Glory ! Glory !” he exclaimed and  
bowed (before Babaji).

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākehi*, follows.

One day (Kalu) took (Babaji) to a mulla for instruction (in Persian). The mulla wrote *alif* and *be*,<sup>23</sup> and then began to explain them to Baba(ji). But Baba (ji) said (to him), “Sir,<sup>24</sup> there is no satisfaction to be derived from studying this *alif-be*. Teach me something which, when studied, will win salvation in both worlds.”<sup>25</sup>

“This education is of value in this world,” replied the mulla, “and in the hereafter it carries one to Paradise.”<sup>26</sup>

Babaji answered him, “Teach that which, when studied, will bring release from future<sup>27</sup> rebirth, and which will kindle love for God, (for) without God a man is worthless.”

The schoolmaster salaamed him and said, “What mysterious things you utter. They are beyond my understanding.” Babaji (then) returned (home).

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākehī* follows.

Babaji continued to do nothing but sit in silence, and Kalu, observing (this), was perplexed. “Son,” he said, “your attention is far removed (from the things around you). Take an interest in agriculture and (once again) you will heed (normal, everyday affairs.)” Then he added, “See to the grazing of the buffaloes.” And so Babaji took the buffaloes (out of the village) and grazed (them).

One day it so happened that he left the buffaloes grazing while he slept. The buffaloes (meanwhile) strayed into another (farmer’s) field and consumed (his crop). When the owner of the field discovered this he went crying for redress (to the landlord of the village), saying “Kalu’s son has ruined my crop! Not a thing remains !”

The (village) landlord<sup>28</sup> despatched a messenger (with instructions) to summon Babaji. (When he answered the summons the landlord) asked (him), “Why have you ruined this (man’s) crop?” Babaji replied, “It has suffered no harm, Rai ji. He is telling a lie.” The landlord sent a man to inspect the field and when he did so (the man discovered that) the buffaloes had not eaten a single blade of grass. The field was exactly as it had been previously. He returned and reported (this news) and the landlord, when he heard it, was greatly impressed. “Kalu,” he said, “your son is indeed close to God.” The landlord then respectfully dismissed Baba(ji).

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākehī* follows.

On another occasion Kalu said, “Son, I think you should go and sit on the ridge<sup>29</sup> beside our field. It will give you something to hold your attention and (at the same time) our field will be guarded (against birds and stray animals). And so Babaji went and sat on the ridge to watch over (the crop). He did not, (however), drive off any of the animals which came to feed (on the crop). All the birds and cattle from the entire area of the village flocked to Baba (ji’s) field and Babaji did nothing to prevent them from grazing or pecking up (whatever they wanted). Someone went to Kalu and reported, “Your son has ruined (your) standing crop.” Kalu went to see (what had happened) and found the field full of cattle and birds. “Son!” he cried, “Are you meant to be protecting the field or laying it waste?”

“I have protected the field, father,” Baba (ji) replied. “You will realise (this) when you gather in (the crop).”

After some days Kalu harvested the crop, winnowed the grain, and weighed it. When (he discovered that his field) had yielded twice as much as any other field he was astounded. The landlord summoned Kalu and said to him, “No one can (presume to) understand these curious things which your son is doing. (Obviously) he is one greatly beloved of God. You must treat him with respect.”

Cry : Praise to the Guru. Another *Sākehī* follows.

One day Babaji fell asleep under a mal tree,<sup>30</sup> and remained asleep throughout the afternoon.<sup>31</sup> The landlord, happening to pass that way, observed that although the shadows of all the (other) trees had shifted (with the declining sun) the shadow of that (particular) tree had remained stationary. “Who is this person sleeping (here)?” asked the landlord. (His servants) roused (the sleeper) and they discovered that it was Kalu’s son, Nanak. The landlord salaamed him, declaring, “He is a friend of God !”

Cry : Praise to the Guru. Another *Sākehī* follows.



After this Babaji remained silent and spoke to no one. When seated he did nothing but sit, and when lying down he did nothing but lie (in silence). This continued for many days until (eventually) the people (of the village) said to Kalu, “You are neglecting your son. You have only one son and just look at his condition. No one knows what state he is in. Call a good physician (*vaid*) and have the trouble diagnosed.”

Kalu summoned a physician and brought him (to where) Babaji was lying on a bed. When the physician took his wrist and felt his pulse Babaji recited (these Sloks) :

They called a physician (to practise his) art; to seize (my) wrist and feel (my) pulse.  
The ignorant physician was unaware that the pain (is) in my heart !<sup>32</sup>  
You can be accounted a master physician only if first you can diagnose the disease.  
Seek that medicine whereby all disease are driven away.<sup>33</sup>

The physician dropped (Babaji’s) wrist and said, “He is not ill, brother ! (On the contrary), he is one who cures the ills of others. His deeds surpass all telling !” The physician bowed (before him), arose, and returned to his home.

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākhī* follows.

Babaji continued to remain withdrawn and Kalu observed that he was (still) taking an interest in nothing. “If only he would get involved in some occupation !” (he thought. To him) he said, “Take up agriculture, son. You will find satisfaction (in it) and it will provide you with a livelihood.”

“Father,” answered Babaji, “I have already worked at agriculture.”  
“There is nothing to be seen for your agriculture,” said Kalu.

“Father,” replied Baba(ji), “I have engaged in the kind of agriculture which (each) day will produce more (and more). Brothers and relations, family and kindred, will (all) receive an abundance. There will be no shortage. My agriculture is (cultivation of) the divine Name !” . (Helpless), Kalu remained silent.

The family, (however), all said (to him), “Arrange a marriage for Nanak.” (Acting on their advice) Kalu had Nanak betrothed and made preparations for his marriage. (At the appointed time) he escorted Babaji’s marriage party to the home of Mula Chona.<sup>34</sup> When the marriage party reached (the house) they entered it and the wedding was celebrated amidst great rejoicing. All who were present on that occasion were enraptured. How can its glory be described ! After the marriage had been performed Baba(ji) returned home (and there) was felicitated on the joyous occasion.

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākhī* follows.

<sup>35</sup>(Even after his marriage, however,) Babaji’s spirit was still restless and Kalu, when he perceived this, was greatly disheartened. “Whatever can we do to calm Nanak’s (restless) spirit ?” (he asked himself. He tried another idea.) “Engage in some trading, son,” he said, and gave him a capital of twenty rupees, together with a servant, in order to procure (some) fine yarn. Baba (ji) set out to purchase the yarn. On the way he observed a large number of *sādhūs* sitting in a jungle,<sup>36</sup> and tarrying in their company he conversed with them about God. (Following this discourse) Babaji laid the twenty rupees before the *sādhūs* and returned home.

(When he arrived) Kalu said (to him), “Show us the merchandise which you have brought, son.”  
“Father”, replied Baba(ji). “I have returned after striking a most profitable bargain !”  
“He has returned after giving the money to faqirs !” said the servant.

When he heard this Kalu was greatly disheartened (and) lost his temper. Rai Bular, (the landlord), hearing (what had happened) summoned Kalu and said, “Do not trouble Nanak. He is the image of God”

(And so) Kalu pardoned him.

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākhī* follows.

Observing that Nanak still remained thoroughly withdrawn, Kalu (wondered) what to do (next). Then (someone) advised him to send Nanak to Jai Ram.<sup>37</sup> And so Kalu said to Baba(ji), “Son, your brother-in-law, Jai Ram, is the chief officer (*divān*) of the Khan in Sultanpur.<sup>38</sup> Go and find employment there. It will occupy your mind.” Babaji answered “Very well” and made preparations to depart.

When he was about to leave Mata (Choni)<sup>39</sup>, his wife, said, “My Lord<sup>40</sup>, although in this place you behaved like a *sādhu* and never spoke to me, yet (while you were here) I was a queen.” (What will happen to me now that you are going to another place ?)”

“I shall remain near you,” replied Baba(ji). “Do not fret. (You shall always be a queen and) your kingdom shall endure throughout all ages.” Having said this Babaji proceeded to Sultanpur.

When he reached Sultanpur Jai Ram was pleased to see him, and taking him to the Nawab he said, “Pray give Nanak wages and employment. He is a most industrious worker.” The Nawab put him in charge of the commissariat (*modikhānā*). Babaji took his seat in the commissariat and to all those Muslims<sup>42</sup> who asked for anything he gave complete satisfaction. Someone, (however), reported to the Khan that Nanak had misappropriated (stock and funds from) the commissariat. The Khan came and investigated (the situation in) the commissariat and discovered that everything had doubled in quantity ! “My steward is remarkably conscientious,” he declared and heaped praises upon Babaji.

When he returned home (after work) Babaji used to devote (his) nights to singing religious songs, and when it came to the last watch of the night<sup>43</sup> he would go to the river and bathe. One day, having gone to bathe, he entered the Vein (stream),<sup>44</sup> but did not emerge. (His) servant looked (for him) until mid-morning, (but) when he failed to emerge (the servant) took (his) clothes and returned home. To Jai Ram he said, “Nanak entered the stream to bathe during the last watch of the night, but he has not come out (of the water).” When he heard this Jai Ram was most upset and going to the Nawab he announced the (sad) news. The Nawab sent for nets and a thorough search was made, but to no avail.

Then, after three days and three nights had passed, Babaji emerged from the stream,<sup>45</sup> and having emerged he delivered this pronouncement : “There is neither Hindu nor Muslim.” When the Khan heard that Nanak had emerged from the river, and that he was speaking in this manner, he sent a man (to say), “Grant (me) an interview, for God’s sake.” Babaji went to the Khan and the Khan, delighted (to see him back again), treated him with much deference.

(While Baba Nanak was with the Khan) it came to the hour of prayer (*namāz*) and the Khan stood up to participate in the prayer. The qazi also stood up for the prayer, with Babaji standing near him. When, (however), the qazi began to recite the prayer Babaji laughed.

As soon as the prayer had been completed the (outraged) qazi said to the Khan, “You see ! The Hindu laughs at our prayer !”

“Nanakji”, said the Khan, “Why did you laugh during the recitation of the prayer ?”

“Because the qazi’s prayer was not accepted (by God),” answered Baba(ji). “A mare has foaled at the qazi’s house (and the qazi was worried, wondering whether) there would be anyone in the courtyard (to watch the filly). The qazi (had let his) attention wander there, hoping that the filly would not fall into the well. (That is why) qazi’s faith found no acceptance (before God). And the Nawab was (dreaming of) going to Qandahar to buy horses. That is why I laughed.” The Nawab said to the qazi, “Qazi, it was a sin to summon Nanak. He

is one close to God !”

Jai Ram then took Babaji home and admonished him at length. “Put on (your) clothes,” (he said). Babaji, (however), put on no clothes. (Jai Ram) strove (to convince him but in vain, for Babaji) had no affection for worldly things. Mardana the Minstrel<sup>46</sup> had come from Talvandi to see Babaji. Taking him (as a companion) Babaji assumed a renunciant way of life and left (Sultanpur).

(Babaji) travelled through many countries and even visited Mount Sumeru where a discourse was held with (a company of) Siddhas.<sup>47</sup> Returning from there he established Nanakmata (where previously there had been the Nath centre of Gorakhmata).<sup>48</sup> In the meantime twelve years had passed.<sup>49</sup> (Babaji) then returned to Sultanpur<sup>50</sup> and proceeded to Jai Ram’s house. Mistress<sup>51</sup> Nanaki asked Mardana, “From where have you and Baba Nanak come?”

We have come today from “Sumeru,” replied Mardana. “(There) a debate took place with some mighty Siddhs (and) Baba (ji) defeated them all. Of what other places shall I tell you? He is indeed a great bhagat. His glory is beyond comprehending!”

“Tell no one about this, Mardana,” said Mistress (Nanaki). “One should not disclose the activities of spiritual people to worldly people.”

Mardana then accompanied Babaji to Talvandi, and with Babaji returned to his own home. Going to (Baba Nanak’s) mother he greeted her. “Mardana!” she cried, “Have you seen my son anywhere?”

“I have returned after twelve years of travel in your son’s company,” replied Mardana. “He is outside (the village), sitting at the well.”

And so having enquired from Mardana (and received her answer) she went to Baba(ji). When she saw him she was overcome with happiness. Babaji fell at his mother’s feet and she said “I offer myself a sacrifice to this road along which you have come.”<sup>52</sup> Babaji wept compiously and when he began to do so (his) mother (pleaded with him) saying, “Come home, son.”

“Mother,” replied Babaji, “I came (only) to meet you. My spirit still finds no pleasure in worldly things.”

Meanwhile Baba Kalu had come bringing clothing, sweets, and a horse, (but; Babaji would accept none of them. “Eat some food, son,” said Baba Kalu. “Put on (these) clothes and come home. Everything (you need) is in my house. Without you nothing is pleasing.”

“I have no desire (for such things), father,” replied Babaji, and having said this he went on his way. Mardana followed and caught up with him.

Proceeding on (Babaji) reached Kabul and there met Mir Babur. Laying a *bhang* wallet in front (of him) Mir Babur said, “Take some *bhang*, faqir sahib.”

“Mirji,” replied Baba (ji), “I have (already) taken a kind of *bhang* which induces permanent intoxication.”

Babur clasped his hands together and put (this) request (to Baba ji): “Grant me kingship over Hindustan.”

“You shall receive kingship over Hindustan,” promised Babaji (and) then left that place.

<sup>53</sup>As they went on their way they came to a certain place (where) Mardana said, “My Lord, I am very hungry.”

“Mardana,” replied Babaji, “there is a youth named Hasan who grazes sheep<sup>54</sup> here. Go and get milk from him.”

Mardana asked Hasan for milk, but Hasan answered, “My ewes do not give milk.”

“At my word milk will come,” promised Babaji, (and to the sheep he said), “Give milk !” Hasan began to milk (them and when he had obtained sufficient) he gave Mardana a cup of milk. Then he fell at Baba (ji’s) feet. Delighted (to see his faith) Babaji declared: “Hasan Abdal is numbered amongst the great saints !” (Then) leaving him there Babaji proceeded (on his way).

(Next) he came to Pattan, (the town) of Sheikh Farid<sup>55</sup> and rested in an area of scrub-land three *kos*<sup>56</sup> from (the town). He told Mardana to play (his) *rabab* (and as he did so) sang this *sabad*:<sup>57</sup>

Thou art the slate. Thou the pen, and Thou the writing upon it.  
Nanak declares there is but One; what need is there of another?<sup>58</sup>  
Why meditate upon any save (the eternal One; all others are subject to) birth and death.  
Meditate upon the One, O Nanak; (upon Him) who dwells immanent in all creation.<sup>59</sup>

This *sabad* was heard by (a certain) Sheikh Kamal who was a disciple of Sheikh Ibrahim, the descendant<sup>60</sup> of Sheikh Farid. He was gathering wood there, and when he heard Babaji’s song (*bāni*) he went (at once) to his pir and announced : “A great and godly saint has come! He sends his greetings.” As soon as he heard what Baba (ji) had said the pir went to meet him. Great was his delight ! He went in his litter and when he met Baba (ji) he kissed his hand saying, “Nanak ji, I was puzzled when I heard what you had said :

One (is) Master, the other a guide.  
Which shall I follow and which reject ?”

Baba (ji) replied :

One (is) the Master, the other a (false) guide.  
Venerate the Truth and spurn what is False.<sup>61</sup>

(Sheikh Ibrahim then posed the following questions :)  
What is the password, what the virtue, and what the precious *mantra* ?  
What are the garments which I should wear in order to attract (my) Beloved ?<sup>62</sup>

Baba(ji) replied :  
Lowliness is the password, forbearance the virtue, and the tongue is (the vehicle of) the precious  
mantra.  
Let the Handmaid wear these three (as her garments), for thereby shall she win her Beloved.<sup>63</sup>

(Hearing this) Sheikh (Ibrahim) clasped his hands and fell at Babaji’s feet, saying, “For God’s sake. O Refuge of the Poor, ferry me across (the Ocean of Existence).”<sup>64</sup> Babaji, pleased (to observe his faith replied), “You shall be ferried across O Sheikh. You shall obtain the joy (of salvation.)”

The Sheikh then said, “Babaji, please visit my home.”

“Do you not regard this (place where we are sitting) as your home ?” asked Babaji.

“By your mercy, show me (my real) home,” said the Sheikh. Baba (ji, in reply), recited a *sabad*<sup>65</sup>

*Sloka Mahalā 1*

It is the True Guru, the all-Wise One, who reveals (to us) the home within (our) home;  
There where the five strains resound, where throbs the drum of the divine Word;  
Where in awe (one beholds the mystic universe, fabulous) continents, worlds, and underworlds,  
regions and realms;  
Where amidst a thunder of music there sits the Lord upon the throne of Truth.  
Within the abode of the *susumna* one hearkens to the (mystic) melody, and hearkening is gathered  
into ecstatic (union with the Lord).  
Upon the unutterable utterance one meditates, merging one's being in the Source (of one's being).  
The inverted lotus brims with amrit; the wayward spirit is stilled.  
Absorbed in speechless remembrance (of the divine Name) one dwells in mystical union with the  
Eternal One.  
Taking unto himself all five (virtues) the follower of the Guru makes his abode within his inner  
home.  
He who searching (the realm of) the divine Word discovers this home — to him is Nanak a slave.

The Sheikh fell at his feet and Baba(ji) declared, “You have found salvation !” Having said this, he took Mardana and proceeded on to Multan.

Cry : Praise to the Guru !                      Another *sākāī* follows.

When he reached Multan news (of his arrival) was conveyed to the pirs of Multan. (When they received this news) they filled a cup with milk and sent it (to him in order to signify) that Multan was (already) filled with pirs.' Babaji laid a flower upon (the contents of) the cup and sent it (back to them, with the message) that he had come to that place like a flower upon milk. Having said this Babaji went on his way.<sup>66</sup>

Proceeding on he came to a certain place,<sup>67</sup> at the foot of a hill. Mardana was thirsty and Babaji said (to him), “Dig at this spot, Mardana, and a spring will emerge.” At Baba (ji's) word water appeared and Mardana drank it. “Wondrous is thy power!” he declared with deep satisfaction.<sup>68</sup>

Then Sarvar Sultan<sup>69</sup> approached Babaji. Having kissed (Babaji's) hand he sat down (with him) and engaged in a spiritual discourse. (At the conclusion of their conversation) Sarvar said, “Pray visit my home.” (Babaji courteously declined.) “All places are thine,” he replied.<sup>70</sup> “(Then) I shall bring all that (we) require to this very place,” said Sarvar. “(I shall bring) quilt, mattress, and cooked food.” (In answer) Babaji recited (the following couplet):

Your love is for a quilt and mattress; your love is for food.  
Nanak finds (his) satisfaction in praising (God); come (join me) Sarvar Sultan!  
Sarvar was well pleased (and) Babaji went on his way.

Continuing (his travels) Babaji visited the district of Thar<sup>71</sup> and leaving Mardana (there) he proceeded on to Dvaraka.<sup>72</sup> From Dvaraka he returned to (where he had left) Mardana, and then taking Mardana with him he travelled to Mecca (where) he stayed (for a time). He made this journey and arriving before Mecca (lay down and) went to sleep. When it came to the last Watch of the night<sup>73</sup> Jivan<sup>74</sup> began to rouse the pilgrim(s) and coming to Babaji what should he find but Babaji (sleeping) with his feet towards Mecca !<sup>75</sup> “What is this ?”<sup>76</sup> he cried. “Why has (this) Indian pilgrim gone to sleep with his feet towards Mecca? It is the house of God!”

Babaji answered him, “Then lay my feet pointing in a direction where the House of God is not.” Jivan the pilgrim angrily seized Baba(ji's) feet and dragged them round to a different direction. (As he did so,

however), the *mihārāb*<sup>77</sup> of Mecca moved with (his) feet. (Jivan) was astounded. “The day of resurrection has come!” he exclaimed. “Some magician has come (amongst us) and made the gate of Mecca<sup>78</sup> move round.”

He returned with other Muslims and when they surrounded the magician they discovered that he was again sleeping with his feet in that same (blasphemous) direction. “Brother pilgrim from India,” said (Jivan), “sleep with your feet in the right direction.”

“Look (and see),” replied Babaji. “Where are my feet?”

Jivan the pilgrim groped for (Babaji’s) feet and, behold, (he felt) not (his) feet but (his) head! Then he felt where (his) head (had been) and there too (he discovered his) head! Astounded he went and assembled a large number of mullas whom he brought back saying, “A mighty magician has come. He should be shown the error of his ways.”

There then ensued a bitter argument — a debate concerning the *Qurān*. Nothing (which the mullas said) could prevail against Baba ji. (Finally) they all lost their tempers and picking up rocks they prepared to stone him. When Babaji looked at them (however), their hands all lost their power. They all fell at his feet, saying, “Forgive our mistake. Thou art a saint. Leave some relic here.” Babaji removed the wooden sandal from one of his feet and left it there.<sup>79</sup> Then he departed.

<sup>80</sup>Proceeding on his way (Babaji) returned to the Punjab and passing through Sultanpur he came to (the village of) Khadur where he visited the home of Mai Birai. Mai Birai was an ardent devotee of Babaji and used to spend the full twenty-four hours of the day worshipping him. As soon as she saw Babaji she fell at his feet and having washed them she drank the sanctified water.<sup>81</sup> She gave him a string-bed to sit on, reverently walked around him,<sup>82</sup> and then said, “My Lord, let me give you something to eat.”

“For twelve years I have taken neither food nor drink, Birai,” answered Baba(ji), “but now, because you want me to eat (something), I shall do so.” Then he said, “Bring whatever you have in your house.”

Mai Birai never took anything (as charity) from anyone, but (instead) earned her living by her own labours. The barley (which she had received) for her labours she had stored inside. This she placed on a tray and laid before Babaji. The Master ate one barley-corn and was satisfied. Twelve years of fasting were satiated (by that single grain of barley). He remained with Mai Birai for a period and then, resuming his ascetic way of life, he went on his way.

<sup>83</sup>Next he visited the house of Lalo where he remained for some days. (Meanwhile) news of his arrival spread throughout that area. (It so happened that at that time) a certain khatri was holding a *yagya*.<sup>84</sup> (To secure blessings for his deceased forbears) he had ordered one hundred thousand cows for presentation (to brahmins) and had invited one hundred thousand brahmins (to the feast). Formerly the name of the village (in which Lalo lived) had been Saidpur Saroha. Because of a sin committed by some Pathans Babaji had invoked a curse upon it and the Emperor Babur had massacred its inhabitants.<sup>85</sup> Subsequently the name was changed to Eminabad in accordance with Babaji’s command, and having bestowed this (new) name (upon it) he had caused (the devastated village) to be (re) occupied.

This foolish khatri *karori*<sup>86</sup> was (at that time) holding a *yagya* and when he heard of Babaji’s (arrival) he sent a man to the house of Lalo the carpenter (to say) that Nanak should dine at his house. Baba (ji), however, refused the invitation and so when the brahmins had taken their seats for the feast the karori came to Babaji and with insistent requests managed to persuade him to come to his (own) house. Setting a tray of food before (him) he said, “How can an exalted sadhu such as you dine at the house of a (mere) carpenter? Tell me please why you decline to eat with brahmins and khatri?”

“In Lalo’s house,” replied Babaji, “there lies my vegetable cake.<sup>87</sup> Bring it here.” The vegetable cake

was brought (and Babaji) took it in one hand. In the other hand he took one of the karori's fried pastries (*puri*) and with both hands he squeezed the two (articles). From the karori's (rich) food there oozed blood and from Lalo's (humble) vegetable (cake) there flowed milk ! Babaji then recited a slok :<sup>88</sup>

*slok mahala 1*

If a thief burgles a house, and having robbed it offers the proceeds (as an oblation for his departed) forbears,  
The (stolen) property will be recognised in the other: world and, (your) forefathers will be accused of theft.  
The broker's<sup>89</sup> hand will be cut off, for thus is (divine) retribution administered.  
Nanak, (only) that which is given from (honest) earnings can be received in the other world.

Then Babaji said, "Close your eyes, brother karori, and witness a spectacle." And what should he see but his own forefathers being beaten with shoes by the, forefathers of those whose cows he had taken. Awe-struck he fell at (Babaji's) feet, saying "O Master, let me become your disciple. You are the saviour of the fallen. Let (the purpose of) my *yagya* be fulfilled."

Babaji took mercy (upon him) and said, "Pay everyone whose cows you have taken and when you have satisfied them make (your) offering to the brahmans." The karori did as he was instructed and Babaji, having brought the karori's *yagya* to fulfilment, went on his way.

Proceeding on he reached the banks of the Ravi river, and word spread to all the people (of that area) that Baba Nanak ji had come and taken up residence (there). In that area there was an imperial karori. When he heard (of Babaji's popularity) he said, "Nanak is leading everyone astray. I shall riot permit him to remain (here)." He mounted his horse and set out to where Babaji (was living). On the way, (however, his) horse fell. The karori was unseated and the horse (itself) died. The people passed the word around that (he had) committed a grievous sin (and that) on the following day he would go to have (his) sin pardoned.

Next day, (however), he set out again (just as) haughtily. (This time) he was smitten blind on the way. The people then explained to him that Baba Nanak was an Exalted One (*mahāpurkh*). "You must go on foot with palms joined (in humble submission," they urged him.) "Fall (at his feet and say) 'May my sin be forgiven'."

The karori penitently (made his way to Babaji), fell at (his) feet (and) was forgiven. Then with eyes (respectfully) averted he came before (Babaji with a request. "Pray accept something which I (wish to present to you," he said. At first) Babaji refused to take anything, but because (the karori) pressed him so insistently he (finally) accepted, with much pleasure, an offering of one hundred *bigās*<sup>90</sup>(of land which the karori) donated to 'Nanak the Sadh'. A *dharmśālā* was erected there and cultivation begun.

Word was sent to his home in Talvandi, from where Balvand the Minstrel<sup>91</sup> came (in response to the message and) began to perform kirtan in place of Mardana who had passed away in a foreign land.<sup>92</sup> Babaji lived in Kartarpur<sup>93</sup> for some time and then summoned (his) mother from Talvandi. Baba Kalu (meanwhile) had also passed away. (His) mother brought his wife to Kartarpur and there they settled.' The hungry and thirsty were cared for and the people who flocked from all sides to behold him obtained the joy (of salvation). The glory of Baba (Nanak) ji spread throughout the three worlds!

(One day) there arrived from the Lakhi Jungle<sup>94</sup> a party of (pilgrims who were on their way to pay homage to) Durga. With them was Guru Angad whose name at that time was Lahina. He had set out on the pilgrimage from (the village of) Matte ki Sarai<sup>95</sup> and having heard on the way of the fame of Babaji he developed a desire to behold him. When they drew near to Kartarpur he left the party and came alone to meet (him).

Meanwhile Babaji, sitting in his house, (had perceived) through his power to read the minds of men (who it was that had come.) “My successor has arrived,” he declared. “Let me go and escort him.” Having said this he went out on to the track and stood (there waiting” for his visitor). Guru Angad approached from the other direction (and seeing) Babaji asked (him), “Sadh<sup>96</sup>, I am going to see Nanak the Ascetic.<sup>97</sup> Which road should I take ?”

“Follow me on (your) mare, (my) man,” replied Babaji. “I shall conduct you to Baba (Nanak’s) house.” When they reached the door of the *dharmśālā* Babaji said, “Tether (your) mare to the peg, (my) man, and come inside.” Angad entered and prostrated himself at Babaji’s feet. Babaji was delighted, (but) Guru Angad was inwardly anxious, (thinking), “What great disrespect I have shown by coming-on horseback (while he walked). I shall return home and come back from there (in a manner befitting) a devoted follower.”

He stayed the night and then taking leave set out for home. When he arrived there he settled all his household affairs with prompt efficiency and then bundling up his (sleeping-) mat and bed-covering he set off with them to meet Babaji again. (As he was setting out his) servant said, “Put (the bundle) on my head. (I shall carry it.)”

“Brother,” replied Guru Angad, “If one discovers treasure in the jungle one takes no companion. Go back. It is I who must go, (not you).” Having said this he departed.

When he reached Kartarpur he proceeded to the *dharmśālā*, prostrated himself before (Babaji’s) mother and put down his bedding-roll. “Where is Babaji ?” he asked. He is sitting out in the field,” she replied, (Guru Angad) went there and prostrated himself at Babaji’s feet. Babaji was delighted (to see him). Then with palms joined Guru Angad asked him, “True King, grant me a task also.” (In reply Babaji) commanded (him), “Everyone (here) performs tasks so you also should work.”

Guru Angad began to carry grass from the field (and) with the grass he also rooted out (some) paddy. Babaji then said, “Make a bundle of grass, (my) man, and take it to the house.” Guru Angad tied a bundle and went off with the Master. When they reached the house and he had put down the grass (Babaji’s) mother observed that Guru Angad’s clothes were stained with slime. “(My) son !” she cried. “What sort of Exalted One<sup>98</sup> are you ! A respectable man comes to meet you and you treat him like this !”

“It was not a bundle of grass which I laid on his head. Mother,” replied Babaji. “I laid (upon him) the insignia of (my) authority, both spiritual and temporal.<sup>99</sup> And it is saffron, not slime, which has fallen on his clothing. He is a most blessed person, Mother. He it is who will succeed to my authority.” (When she heard this his) mother was well satisfied.

Day and night Guru Angad remained in constant attendance upon Babaji, never leaving him for a moment; and Babaji loved Guru Angad like no other. When (Babaji’s) mother observed that he loved none more than Guru Angad she said to Guru Angad, “Son, ask Babaji to fulfil my wish, (for) he will listen to you. Try to persuade him to have sons so that I may see my grandsons with my own eyes and may play (with them). If you ask he will agree to what you say.”

With palms joined Guru Angad laid the petition before Babaji. “True King,” (he said, “your) mother<sup>100</sup> desires that there should be offspring in the Master’s house so that she may take them in her lap and play (with them). Pray grant this request.”

“(My good) man,” replied Babaji, “there is no need of this sort of thing. Nevertheless your request will not be refused.” Babaji then gave (him) two cloves, saying, “From these will come two boys.” Guru Angad gave the two cloves to Babaji’s mother to pass on to his wife. (His wife took) each (clove) in turn. (After) the first Sahib Lakhmi Das was born, and (after) the second Baba Sri Chand.<sup>101</sup> Now Babaji’s mother



was thoroughly content (and) in their home there was (great) rejoicing.

Cry : Praise to the Guru !     Another *Sākhī* follows

During the (last) watch of the night<sup>102</sup> Babaji regularly went to the river, and with him would go Budha,<sup>103</sup> Sadharan,<sup>104</sup> Bala<sup>105</sup> and Guru Angad. One morning Babaji went (as usual) to bathe. When he reached the river-bank he removed his clothing and waded out into the river for his bathe. While bathing he passed into an ecstatic trance.

(Meanwhile) a heavy rain swept down there and enormous hailstones began to fall. All who were there left Babaji (in the river) and fled for shelter to some trees. (Only) Sri Angad remained sitting there, buried in hail-stones. When Babaji emerged from the water he observed that no one remained except Guru Angad, sitting (there) in great discomfort.

“(My) dear man !” exclaimed Babaji. “Why are you sitting here? You should have taken shelter under a tree.”

“True King,” replied Guru Angad, “nothing in this world holds meaning for me (save only) to sit at the feet (of him whose mercy) I crave.”

“(My) man, it is for your sake that I perform austerities,” said Babaji. “It is not for you to endure misery.” Babaji then dressed and returned home.

<sup>106</sup>Once, during the hot season, Babaji was relaxing on a bed under a clump of ‘*bakāyin*’ trees.<sup>107</sup> Near at hand were all of his followers and his (two) sons. To (one of) his sons Babaji said, “It is very hot, (my) son. Climb this *bakāyin* tree and shake down (some) sweets<sup>108</sup> so that sherbert can be prepared.” (Hearing this) everyone began to laugh. “Sweets never fall from *bakāyin* trees !” they said. “Whatever is Baba(ji) saying ?” Babaji was silent (for some time and) then he said to Guru Angad, “You, shake down the sweets.” Guru Angad shook the *bakāyin* tree and down tumbled sweets, falling in front of Babaji. With much satisfaction (Babaji) declared. “Blessed are you, (my) man ! Such faithfulness is prodigious. It is beyond all describing, beyond recording !”

Cry : Praise to the Guru.<sup>109</sup>

One night Babaji asked (Baba) Budha, “How much of the night remains, Budha?”

“A watch and a quarter,<sup>110</sup> my Lord,” replied Budha.

“How do you know ?” asked Babaji.

“We who are rural folk<sup>111</sup> can tell by observing the stars,” answered Budha.

Babaji then asked Guru Angad. “How much of the night remains, (my) man?”

“My Lord,” he replied, “You know full well that whether it is night or whether it is day. I am yours. Night or day, it makes no difference.”

(Hearing this response) Babaji was greatly pleased.

Cry : Praise to the Guru !

On one occasion Babaji reflected on how many seekers after truth were coming to visit him (and

decided that all) should be tested (in order to determine the worthiest amongst them). Summoning all the enquirers he took them to a jungle where he contrived to make silver and gold coins appear before them. Many of the people (at once) picked up coins and returned home.

Babaji continued on (with those who remained) and what should they see (next) but pearls and diamonds. Everyone stayed there (picking up jewels while) Babaji proceeded on, accompanied only by Guru Angad and (Baba) Budha. (Continuing on) they observed in the jungle a funeral-pyre and on the pyre there lay a corpse, wrapped in a shroud and (covered) with wood. To Budha Babaji said, "We have come here so that you can eat this corpse."

"My Lord !" exclaimed Budha, "no man ever ate a corpse ! Why (then) should I eat (one) ?" And having said this Budha turned and fled home. Only Guru Angad (remained and) to him Babaji said, "You eat this corpse, (my) man."

"Shall I start with the head," asked Guru Angad, "or with the feet?"

"Start with the head," replied Babaji.

Guru Angad climbed onto the pyre and when he removed the wood, behold, there (he discovered) not a corpse but Babaji (himself) I Babaji stood up and embraced Guru Angad. "Blessed are you, (my) man !" he declared. "I have searched the entire world and it is you that I have found. Hitherto your name has been Lahina. Now your name is Angad, (for) from my body<sup>112</sup> you have taken birth. The Siddhs all told me that my Guru would come from my (own) body.<sup>113</sup> Now you have come from my body and so you are my Guru. You are my Guru, and I am your Guru."

Saying this he laid before Guru Angad (as a sign and token of his induction) five copper coins and a coconut. Then the eighty-four Siddhs and all the sages assembled to receive Guru Angad's blessing. "Glory ! Glory !" they cried, and great was the rejoicing. Babaji, immensely delighted, returned to Kartarpur with Guru Angad.

Cry : Praise to the Guru 1 Another *sākhī* follows.

When Guru Angad entered Kartarpur Babaji commanded his sons and all the brethren to come and prostrate themselves (before the new Guru). All came and prostrated themselves (except for Babaji's) sons (who) refused to obey the command. Babaji kept silent.

On a (later) occasion Babaji said to Guru Angad, "Summon your wife (from Matte ki Sarai). Your father-in-law is in Khadur.<sup>114</sup> Take her there so that you will be near(er) to me." Guru Angad sent a message that all of his family should come and live in Khadur, and when all had taken up residence there he informed the Master that this had been done. The Guru Babaji then instructed Guru Angad : "Go and live (with your family) in Khadur, (my) man. In Mai Birai's house is the string-bed on which I sat. Go and sit on it, (for) it is my throne. Go there and take your seat."

In obedience to this command Guru Angad proceeded to Khadur and went to Mai Birai's house. When she saw (him) Mai Birai prostrated herself and then arising she conducted him to Babaji's string-bed. She washed his feet, drank the consecrated water, walked reverently around him, laid before him five copper coins and a coconut and proclaimed her submission (to him), declaring, "On this blessed day I have offered myself in total surrender, for (today) the True Guru has visited my home !"

(And so) Sri Guru Angadji Sahib took up residence there.

Once Babaji visited Khadur. Sri Guru Angad came before him for his blessing and prostrated

himself, and Babaji said to him, “(My) dear man, let us sit at the other side of this pond.”

“All places are thine. True King,” replied Guru Angad (in assent). Babaji went and sat there, and from that day the pond was called Tapiana.<sup>115</sup>

When Mata Khivi, Guru Angad’s wife, heard that Babaji had arrived she went to offer her adoration and receive his blessing. Babaji was pleased (to see her) and proceeded to her house. (When he had entered the house) he asked (Guru Angad), “What children do you have, (my) dear man?”

“True King,” replied Guru Angad, “when I was in Matte di Sarai (I had) two sons, (one) called Datu (and the other) Dasa, but they were once carried away by flood-waters. They did not return and I have had no news (of their fate).”

“(You) should have children, (my) man,” said Babaji. “I have two (children and likewise) you shall have two.”

“You have said (that I will have two) Guru Angad. “Grant that Dasu (and) Data,<sup>116</sup> (the two whom I lost), my return.”

“Dasu (and) Data will return, (my) man,” answered Babaji. “When they return it will be in the same manner as when they departed.” Having said this he stood up (and went on his way).

When Babaji departed Guru Angad set out (with him. Babaji, however, stopped him.) “Stay here. (my) man; I shall return,” he said and proceeded on to Kartarpur. Guru Angad, (taking the command literally), remained at that very spot. For several years he remained sitting there while the ants heaped up soil around him and weeds began to grow (in it). When, on a (later) occasion, Babaji returned he stood on Sri Guru Angad’s head and called, “(Where are you, my) man?” Sri Guru Angad then arose and prostrated himself at (Babaji’s) feet. “(My) dear man !” exclaimed Babaji, “why were you sitting here and enduring such misery ?”

“I was commanded to stay here,” replied Guru Angad,

“Blessed are you, (my) man,” said Babaji, “but I do not approve of your suffering (in this manner). I do not like it. All the austerities which I (myself) performed were done for your sake. (There was no need for you to repeat them).”

Babaji stayed there for some time, (and then one day) he asked, “From where do you draw your drinking-water, (my) man ?”

“True King,” replied (Guru Angad), “the water(-supply) of this village is brackish, (but) that is what we drink.”

“There is an old well here, (my) man,” said Babaji, “(Its) water is sweet and (its flow) is constant. Search for it and (when you find it) drink its water.”

In obedience to the Master’s command the well was dug and when it was opened it yielded sweet water which (from that time on) was used (by the village). Babaji then bestowed (the blessing of) happiness upon Mat Birai and returned to Kartarpur.

Cry : Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākhī* follows.

Makhdum Bahaval Haq,<sup>117</sup> the Pir of Multan. held Babaji in deep affection and had earlier held a

discourse with him. One day there came to him a summons from the court (of God).<sup>118</sup> The Pir raised loud lamentation and hearing the wailing his disciples came (running to him). “Pir Sahib,” they cried, “why are you wailing in this manner?”

“It is something which I must keep to myself,” replied the Pir Sahib. “If I were to tell you your faith (in me) would be destroyed.”

“Pirji, please tell us,” insisted all the disciples.

“A command has come from God that in seven days’ time I must proceed to the (divine) court,” said the Pir, “and Baba Nanak, who is a *sādh* and a great saint, is to go in fourteen days’ time. What grieves me is that if only I too had received a fourteen-days’ notice I could have accompanied him, to my great delight and to the fulfilment of my (greatest) desire.”

Hearing this the disciples were astounded. “Hindus do not go to Paradise !” they said. “Pirji, It is not right to show so much devotion towards a Hindu.” The disciples conferred together (and decided) that (their) Pir must be out of his mind.

The Pir then said to them, “Just now I was telling you that your faith (in me) would not survive (this news). If you accept what I said as true then we should despatch a man to Baba Nanak so that your faith will revive. He understands what is in everyone’s heart.” Then summoning a disciple he commanded him : “Go to the dwelling-place of Baba Nanak, (but) stop three *kos* short of it. Proceed on when he calls you. Write down whatever he says.” The Pir then wrote a petition for him to take (to Baba Nanak) and the disciple set out.

Three *kos* short of Babaji’s dwelling in Kartarpur he stopped, whereupon Babaji instructed (his) servant Kamalia: “Kamalia, a messenger from the Pir of Multan is sitting out in the jungle three *kos* from here. Bring him to me.”

Kamalia went there and escorted (the disciple) back to Babaji. When they arrived, (the disciple) fell at Babaji’s feet, and Babaji greeted him cordially. “A message has come from our friend,” he said. (The disciple) then gave Babaji the Pir’s letter and taking it, Babaji read it. (When he had done so) he shed many tears and then cried out, “Praise 1 Praise be to Pir Bahaval ! Today a great lover of God has met (his) Master!” (And even) as he wept Babaji recited (the following *sabad*) in Siri Rag:<sup>119</sup>

Riches, youth, and flowers linger but briefly;  
Like the leaves of the *chaupatti* plant they wither and die.  
Pursue joy, O beloved, while your youth is yet in bloom,  
For as one’s days shorten (the body decays like) a worn-out garment.  
In the graveyard you must sleep, my beloved.  
And I too must go, I who in my uncertainty bemoan (the departed).  
Have you not heard with your own ears, O comely one, <sup>120</sup>  
That you must go to your Father-in-law; that you cannot forever remain in your parental home ?  
She who slumbers (heedlessly) in her father’s home will find herself robbed in broad daylight, O  
Nanak,  
The bouquet of virtue she has cast away; all she bears is the faggot of iniquity.

As Babaji recited this *sabad*, the disciple wrote it down and then set out for Multan. When he arrived there he learnt that the Pir had died. He went to the (other) disciples of the Pir and gave them the *sabad* (recited by) Babaji which he had recorded. “Blessed is Baba Nanak,” he declared. “I have (myself) witnessed what the Pir told us.” All read what he had written and then all gave glory to Baba (Nanak)ji.

Cry ; Praise to the Guru ! Another *sākhī* follows.

On day Kamalia the servant went to the jungle to cut grass.<sup>121</sup> While he was returning with the grass he encountered three Siddhs who said (to him), “Kamalia, take this leaf-packet<sup>122</sup> as an offering from us and give it to Baba Nanak.” Kamalia took the leaf-packet and brought it to Babaji. Laying it before him he said, “Three *sādhs* gave me this leaf-packet.” Babaji took it and when he opened it he observed ashes<sup>123</sup> trickling out. “Kamalia,” he said, “I have received God’s command.”

Babaji then summoned the congregation of (his) followers. Sri Guru Angadji also came and to them all Babaji the Master said, “If you have any request, brothers, make it (now, for) I have received the command to proceed to the court (of God).” All put forward requests concerning worldly matters. Babaji, having granted them all, smiled (and said), “No one asked about his life in the world to come, nor made any request relating to it.”

Then Sri Guru Angadji began to weep (over Baba Nanak’s imminent departure). “I am not leaving you, (my) dear man,” said Babaji. “Take Balvand, my minstrel, with you. He will sing the scriptural offices<sup>124</sup> for you. Care for him as (your) teeth protect (your) tongue.” To all his other followers (he said), “This is my command, that you should remain loyal (to your Guru).” Having spoken thus he sent Guru Angad (back) to Khadur.

After this the Master summoned his sons, Lakhmi Dass and Sri Chand, but they did not come.<sup>125</sup> When, however, Babaji had passed away and they received word of this they came running. Observing that he had (indeed) died they began to weep bitterly and to raise loud lamentation. “We could not have even a brief conversation with Babaji,” they wailed. “Babaji, speak a few words to us for God’s sake.”

Whereupon Babaji sat up and said, “Tell me what it is that you want to say. If you had asked for four aeons (*yuga*) then for your sake I should have remained (here) for four aeons.<sup>126</sup> Speak whatever it is that you want to say.”

“Whatever shall we do?” cried his sons. “The title of Guru has been bestowed upon Guru Angad.”

“In the households of pirs,” replied Babaji, “(even) the dogs are cared for. And you are my sons. You shall lack nothing.” Having said this Babaji passed away (a second time).

(His followers) then Carried his bier to the banks of the Ravi, singing hymns as they went, and there they cremated him amidst songs of rejoicing. When they searched in the funeral-pyre for the remnants of the body to be taken for immersion in the Ganges they found no portion of his body remaining. All were struck with awe. Chanting “Glory to Baba Nanak, the perfect Satguru” they all returned home.

Cry : Praise to the Guru !

Glory to the Supreme Guru (who died on) the tenth day of the dark half of the month of Asu, in the year Samvat 1596.<sup>127</sup>

1. The date corresponds to 15 April, A.D. 1469, GNSR. pp. 94-97.

2. bolo *vābi gurū*,

3. Episode, section of a janam-sakhi.
4. Tipto Tipra, or (more commonly) Tripta. GNSR, p. 103.
5. For Gorakhnath see GNSR, p. 152 n.
6. *alakh jāgai*, an expression used by yogis when begging.
7. Baba (Nanak) ji.
8. *soro na, jāgai*.
9. *bau vāriā, bau vāriā*.
10. *Vāriā na Jāvā ek vār*. The line is from the *Jappi Sahib*, stanzas 16, 17, 18 and 19, AG, pp. 3-4. Gorakhnath's declaration is addressed to the child Nanak, but Nanak's reply is addressed to God.
11. *pradakhanā (pradaksinā)* : reverential circumambulation, always with the right side towards the object of veneration.
12. *sādh, sādhū*. It is impossible to translate these words satisfactorily. In their strict sense they mean "one who has controlled his senses (*indriya*)", or one who has attained a total detachment from worldly concerns. They are terms which relate to distinctively Indian concepts of piety and salvation, and it is consequently inevitable that non-Indian languages should fail to provide exact equivalents. The noun "saint" and the adjective "holy" are inapplicable as they relate to a Semitic (and primarily Hebraic) concept of "otherness". In this translation "saint" and "saints" have been used to render *wali* and *auliyā* respectively.
13. Cf. *Savaie Mahale Chauthe ke, Nal Kavi* (4), AG, p. 1399.
- 14.. Repeat in the sense of *nām simaran*, GNSR, pp. 214-19.
15. *jap tap ar mahamā*.
16. The *Miharbān* and B 40 janam-sakhis give his age as nine at the time of the investiture. (*Mih* JS 1.20. B40, f. 6a.) The B40 version snakes only a passing reference to the incident, but the *Miharbān Janam-sākhi* devotes a *gost* to it. The MPV and the much longer *Miharbān* version both quote the same slok, but otherwise have nothing in common. Neither of the two main *Purātan* manuscripts makes any reference to the incident.
17. *Vār Asā, slok 1 of paurī 15* (first four lines only), AG, p.471.
18. *param hams*.
19. *dukh nivāran*.
20. *bairākharī*— *bārāh-akharī* (*bārāh-aksarī*), the twelve Gurmukhi or Deva-nagari vowels written in conjunction with a consonant (*sa, sā, ś, sī* etc.). According to the *purātan* version of this *sākhi* the teacher wrote the *akharān paintis kī muhārani*, "the thirty-five letters of the alphabet" (Pur JS. p. 1). The *Miharbān* version gives only *muhārani* (*Mih* JS 1.11). The B40 janam-sakhi merely relates -that the teacher wrote on a wooden slate (B40, i. 2b). All four versions relate the same story, but in different words and at varying length. All the hymn *Siri Rāg 6*, AG. p. 16.
21. *Siri Rāg 6*, AG. p. 16.
22. "Pause", refrain.
23. The first two letters of the Arabic alphabet.
- 21 *miā(n) jī*, title of respect accorded to schoolmasters.
- 25 In this life and the next.
26. *bisat (babishī)*
27. *bhisat*; from *bhavisya, bhavisyat, bhavikhat*,
28. *rāi* chief. At this point the other janam-sakhis add a personal name, Bular in the case of the *Purātan* and B40 janam-sakhis (Pur JS, p. 6; B40, f. 7a) and Bhoai (Bhoa) in the case of the *Miharbān Janam-sākhi* (*Mih* JS I 23). The MPV does not add the personal name until the *sākhi* which describes how Baba Nanak donated twenty rupees to a group of sadhus. There it gives Bular. See *infra* note 35, and also GNSR, p. 106.
29. The elevated strip of land separating one field from another.
30. *Salvador indica*.
31. The "third watch", the period from midday to 3 p.m.
32. Guru Nanak, *Vār Mālār, slok 1 of paurī 3*, AG. p. 1279.
33. *Vār Mālār, slok 2 of paurī 3*, AG p. 1279, This second slok is by Guru Angad, not by Guru Nanak, and is incomplete. The *Purātan* and *Miharbān* versions, both add quotations which are not in the AG. (Pur JS, p.

- 11; *Mih* JS 1.49.)
34. All janam-sakhis agree that Guru Nanak's father-in-law was Mula, a khatri of the Chona sub-caste and all either state that the marriage took place in Batala or are silent on the issue. GNSR, pp. 102-3, 106.
35. The *Purātan*, *Miharbān*, and B40 janam-sakhis do not contain this sakhi GNSR, pp. 83-84.
36. The word *jangal* is probably intended to designate an area of waste-land or scrub rather than a forest.
37. In the following sentence Jai Ram is described as the *bahanoī* of Baba Nanak i.e., husband of Baba Nanak's sister. Although the older janam-sakhis do not refer directly to any sister they all assume her existence by naming Jai Ram, a resident of Sultanpur, as the brother-in-law of Guru Nanak. (GNSR, pp. 102-3, 104.) His sister's name is later given as Nanaki. (See *Infra* P. 68)
38. The Khan of Sultanpur (also referred to as the Nawab) is named Daulat Khan by the *Purātan* janam-sakhis (Pur JS, p. 13) and explicitly identified as Daulat Khan Lodi by Bhai Gurdas and the *Miharbān Janam-sakhi* (BG 11.13; *Mih* JS 1.72). See GNSR, pp. 106-10,
39. *mātā*, the mother, Sulakhni, the wife of Baba Nanak, is commonly referred to in the janam-sakhis as Mata Choni, or simply as Mataji. GNSR, p. 104.
40. *mebar-vān* : benevolent one, merciful one.
41. *merī pātasābhi thī*, i.e., I was content.
42. *arabī*. lit, "Arabs"
43. 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.
44. The Vein stream flows past Sultanpur, The early janam-sakhis refer to "a river", but do not name it. GNSR, p. 107,
45. The *Purātan* and *Miharbān* versions both insert as the explanation for Baba Nanak's three-day absence an account of an interview with God in the divine court. (Pur JS pp. 14-16; *Mih* JS 1.88-89.) The B40 janam-sakhi, like the MPV omits this feature of the *sakhi*,
46. GNSR, pp. 37, 106.
47. Ibid, pp. 119-22.
48. Ibid, p. 85.
49. The conventional period for a tour of the important pilgrimage centres. The *Purātan*, *Miharbān*, *Bālā*, and *Gyān-ratanāvalī* versions all relate lengthy travel narratives before concluding the tour. The B40 janam-sakhi mentions only two incidents, both of them relating to Mardana [B40, folios 24b-27a.
50. The *Purātan* and B40 versions bring Baba Nanak back to Talvandi without any reference to Sultanpur (Pur JS, p. 48; B40 f. 27b). The *Miharbān Janam-sakhi* brings him back to Sultanpur after nine years (*Mih* JS 1.374; GNSR. pp. 59, 67) and eventually to Talvandi after a further three or four years *Mih* JS 1.470).
51. *bibi*; lady, wife.
52. Blessed, is this road, for it has brought you back to me.
53. The *Purātan*, *Miharbān*, and B40 janam-sakhis do not contain this *sakhi*,  
The B40 janam-sakhi does include a *sakhi* concerning an unnamed Kashmiri shepherd of *dumbā* sheep, but its content is altogether different from this MPV version. (B40, folios 154b-157b.) It is possible that this story concerning a shepherd named Hasan Abdal may be obscurely connected with the late *Panja Sahib* tradition which is set in the vicinity of Hasan Abdal town (GNSR, pp. 78-79). The *sakhi* concerning Saravar Sultan, or its prologue, may also be connected with this later development. See below pp. 72-3.
54. *dumbā*, fat-tailed sheep.
55. Pak Pattan in Multan District.
56. The length of a kos is variable, but in the Panjab it has generally been computed as the equivalent of approximately one and a half miles.
57. The quotation which, follows consists of two sloks, not of a sabad.
58. *Vār Malār*, *slok* 2 of *paurī* 28, AG p. 1291.
59. This couplet is not in the *Adi Granth*.
60. *potā*, normally 'grandson', but occasionally used to designate a more remote descendant in the direct male line. In this context it signifies a spiritual descendant. Sheikh Ibrahim (C. A.D. 1450-1675), whom the janam-sakhis also refer to as Sheikh Brahm, was the twelfth successor of Baba Farid-u-din Ganj-i-Shakar. (Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shīkh Farid-ud-dīn Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 123). See GNSR, p. 140,'

61. The B40 janam-sakhi gives the following version of this apocryphal couplet:  
 ieko swihbu iekw hie ]  
 ieksY nU syv dUjY kau rid ]

The *Purāṭan* and *Miharbān* readings correspond almost exactly to the B40 version (B40 f. 54b; Pur JS, p. 54; Mih JS 1, 489),

62. *Salok Shaikh Farid ke* 126, AG p. 1384.  
 63. Ibid, 127, AG p. 1384,  
 64. Teach me the way of salvation.  
 65. *Vār Mālār*, *slok* 1 of *paurī* 27, AG pp. 1290-91. In this composition Guru Nanak has made extensive use of Nath terminology and of the cryptic style of the Nath yogis.  
 66. See also BG 1. 44 and GNSR, pp. 35, 142,  
 67. *thande*. The scribe has evidently made a mistake in copying this word. The correct reading may be *thaur*, “a place”; or it may represent a misreading of *dāūdā*. Dauda is the location of a shrine commemorating Daud Khan the brother of Sakhi Saravar Sultan. I owe the latter suggestion to Dr. Ganda Singh.  
 68. See *supra*, note 53.  
 69. Sayyid Ahmad Sakhi Sarwar Sultan Lakhdatta, usually known as Sarwar, or Sakhi Sarwar, is the most popular modern Saint of the Panjab. He is a typical saint and belongs to that class of ascetics which came over and settled in the neighbourhood of Multan in the 11th and 12th centuries A. D. Sarwar himself probably flourished later, sometime in the 13th century. His shrine is at Nigaha at the foot of the Suliman mountains and at the entrance of the Sakhi Sarwar Pass in the Dera Ghazi Khan district, a spot eminently calculated to foster an austere life as it is “the last place that any one, who in the least regarded his personal comfort, would choose as an abode.”— R. C. Temple, *The Legends of the Panjab*, vol. 1, p. 66. See also *ibid*, pp. A 91-97. Sir Edward Maclagan gives the following account of Saravar :

First and foremost is the following of the great saint Sultan Sakhi Sarwar. No one knows exactly when Sultan lived. Sir Denzil Ibbetson places him in the 12th century and Major Temple in the 13th; while there are accounts in the Sakhis of the Sikhs which represent him as a contemporary of Guru Nanak, and as having presented a water-melon to him. Whatever the exact time of his birth and death, Sultan was practically one of the class of Musalman saints, such as Baha-ud-din and Shams Tabriz who settled down and practised austerities in the country round Multan. Sakhi Sarwar Sultan, also known as Lakhdatta or the Giver of Lakhs, Lalanwala, Or He of the Rubies, and Rohinwala or He of the Hills, was the son of one Zainu abidin and his real name was Sayyid Ahmad. Of his life there is little to tell but a mass of legends. —H.A. Rose (ed.), *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Vol.1, p. 666.

Maclagan adds that in addition to the tomb of Sarwar there is at Nigaha a shrine to Baba Nanak. Op. cit., p. 568. None of the older janam-sakhis make any reference to Sarwar.

70. What need is there of going to your house ?  
 71. The Thar or Indian Desert which extends through eastern Rajasthan into . Sindh, dividing the area of Multan from Kutch and Saurashtra.  
 72. Dvaraka, or Dvaravati, in Saurashtra; Krishna’s capital and one of the seven sacred cities of India.  
 73. 3. a.m.  
 74. The MPV is here following Bhai Gurdas (BG 1.32). See GNSR, p. 123.  
 75. The different janam-sakhis give diverse locations for this allegedly blasphemous act of Baba Nanak, and also a diversity of objects towards which his feet are said to have been pointing. See GNSR, pp. 123-4.  
 76. The exclamation re !  
 77. The term *mibrāb* normally denotes the niche in a mosque which indicates the qibla. Jivan’s response to the miracle suggests that the author of the MPV may have understood it to mean the gate of Mecca.  
 78. The *mibrāb*.  
 79. BG 1.34.  
 80. All other janam-sakhis lack this *sakhi*.



81. *charanāmrit*.
82. *pardakhanā*. See supra note 11.
83. The *Purāṇan*, *Miharbān*, and B40 janam sakhis lack this sakhi, but it is included in janam-sakhis, of the *Bālā* tradition. GNSR, pp. 76, 86-87.
84. *yajna*, *yagya*, *yag* or *jag* : a feast or ceremony in which oblations are offered.
85. GNSR, pp. 43-45, 61-62, 132-38.
86. A high-ranking revenue collector of the Mughal period,
87. *sag ki pinni* : a ball of cooked sag,
88. *Vār Asā*, *slok* 1 of *parūi* 17, AG p, 472
89. The brahman who, by his participation, enables such ceremonies to take place.
90. A square measure of land varying between a quarter and a third of an acre (*khackā bigha*),
91. The reference is presumably intended to be to Rai Balvand, co-author of *Tikke di Var*, AG pp. 966.68. See MK p. 632.
92. This refers to the *Bālā* tradition that Mardana died on the banks of the river Kurram in Afghanistan. (MK, p. 714.) Another tradition relates that he died in Kartarpur. (GNSR, pp. 91-92.) 93 , The village built on the land donated by the karori. GNSR, pp. 138-39.
94. In the vicinity of Kot Kapura.
95. The village, now known as Nage di Sarai, is located in the Muktsar tahsil of Firozpur District.
- 96 See *supra* note 12.
97. *nānak tapā*.
98. *mahāpurkh*
99. *din duniā dā chhatr*: lit. “the umbrella (a symbol of royal authority) of religion and of the world.”
100. *badi mātāji*. “the elder mother” not “the younger mother” which would designate Mata Choni, Guru Nanak’s wife.
101. All other janam-sakhi traditions relate that Lakhmi Das and Siri Chand were born prior to Baba Nanak’s travels. (GNSR, pp. 37,53,73.) The belief that their conception was induced by the consumption of cloves is also to be found in the *Gyān-ratanāvalī* See GNSR, p. 104, no 1.
102. *pabar rāt*: a watch of the night, normally the first. The word *rahandī*, “last”, has evidently been omitted by mistake from the text. All other janam-sakhis agree that the Guru took his daily bath during the last watch of the night.
103. Baba Budha, a Randhava Jat of Kathu Nangal village in Amritsar District and a famous disciple of the first six Gurus According to tradition, he was the first *granthī* (“reader”) appointed to Harimandir Sahib by Guru Arjan, following the compilation and installation of the *Adi Granth*. Tradition also relates that he was accorded the right of applying the *tilak* to the forehead of each new Guru at his succession. MK, p. 659. Today he possesses a growing popularity as a patron saint of truck drivers.
104. The B40 janam-sakhi describes Sadharan, or Sidharan, as the disciple who was responsible for Baba Nanak’s laundry and who was entrusted with the preparations for his cremation. B40, folios 217a-219a.
105. According to the janam-sakhis of the *Bālā* tradition Bhai Bala was a constant companion of Baba Nanak from the time he left Talvandi until after the conclusion of his travels. The claim is, however, limited to the janam-sakhis of the *Bālā* tradition and is conspicuously absent from the other important janam-sakhi traditions, including Bhai Gurdas The *Bālā* janam-sakhis all purport to represent an “original” janam-sakhi which was dictated by Bhai Bala Sandhu in the presence of Guru Angad. There are three possible theories concerning Bhai Bala: (1) That he was, in fact, a close companion of Guru Nanak. (2) That he was at some period an acquaintance of Guru Nanak, but not his travel companion. (3) That he never existed. See GNSR, pp. 23-24. The reference given here in the MPV evidently supports the second possibility, although the name may perhaps be an interpolation in which case the MPV would offer support to the third possibility. There can, however, be no doubt that the MPV, and likewise the *Mahimā Prakāś Kavitā*, reject the first possibility. This is important. The two versions of the *Mahimā Prakāś* represent an independent eighteenth century janam-sakhi tradition, and their failure to accord Bhai Bala any part in the travels of Baba Nanak must indicate that the Bala tradition was relatively weak during the mid-eighteenth century.
106. The *Purāṇan*, *Miharbān*, and B40 janam sakhis do not contain this Sakhi.

107. *Melias empervirens*.
108. *patāsā, batāsā* : a brittle sugar-cake, much of which consists of air-bubbles.
109. The customary formula *sākhī hor chālī*, “another *sākhī* follows”, has been omitted here and at the conclusion the following *sākhī*.
110. 2.15 a.m.
111. jat. The term in its strict usage designates a member of the jat caste-grouping, but has commonly been applied to any peasant or villager.
112. ang : body, limb.
113. GNSR, p. 50.
114. The village of Khadur on the right bank of the Beas river in Amritsar District, approximately fifty miles from Kartarpur.
115. *tapiānā* : “the place of *tapas*”, the place where austerities were performed.
116. In the previous reference the two children are referred to as “Datu (and) Dasa”: and in this second reference their names are given as “Dasu (and) Data”. Baba Nanak’s reply also refers to them as “Dasu (and) Data”. Other traditions bracket the names Dasu and Datu. MK, pp 469, 470.
117. The mention of Multan and the form of the name given in other janam-sakhis indicates that the *makhdūm* to whom reference is here made must be Sheikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya, the celebrated Suhrawardi pir who main tained a *khānqāh* in Multan during the mid-thirteenth century. (Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaiikh Farid-u’d-din Ganj-i-Shakar*, pp 54-65, 56n.) The form of the mm” which is given here in the MPV may be a result of confusion with the Qadiri pir Sayyid Bahawal Shah of Lahore. (J.A. Subhan, *Sufism : Its Saints and Shrines*, p. 269.)
118. He received a premonition of his imminent death.
119. *Siri Rāg* 24, AG, p. 23.
120. *gorie*: “O fair-complexioned one”, Guru Nanak is here using the conventional image of the bride to represent the devotee.
121. Cf. B40, folios 216 a ff.
122. *puri prasād dī*: a quantity of food in a leaf wrapping presented as an offering to an idol, a guru, etc.
123. *bhibut*: ashes of cow-dung, used by yogis for smearing on their bodies.
124. *sabad kī chaukī*. The *chār chaukīān*, or “four watches” are four selections of Sikh scripture appointed to be sung at specified hours of the day. These are: (1) the *chaukī of Asā di Vār*, to be sung in the early hours of the morning. (2) *Charan-kaval di chaukī*, (also called *Bilāval di chaukī*) to be sung at 8.45 a.m. (3) *Sodar di chaukī* in the evening. (4) *Kahyān di chaukī* (also called *Kānare di chaukī*) at 10 p.m. MK, p. 347 and Appendix.
125. Cf. B40, t. 222a.
126. His sons had merely asked for *chār galān*, or *chār bātān*, literally “four things” but idiomatically “a few words”, “a brief conversation”. According to the E40 version they asked for *chār gkarīān* “four *gharīs*” or ninety-six minutes. B40, I. 222a.
- 127, samat 1596 *Asū vadī* 10, corresponding to 7 September, A.D. 1539. See GNSR, p. 101.

## THE STORY OF GURU NANAK

( Written 1774 )

Mahipati<sup>1</sup>

9. In the land of the Punjab lived Nanak who was endowed with supreme knowledge, and when indifference to worldly things was aroused in him, a hindrance occurred. 10. You might ask what that was. Possessing a great fortune, he wondered in his mind how it should be spent. 11. For (said Nanak to himself) with money there are many calamities, life itself being in peril; even a person who is indifferent to worldly things, may be led to give himself up to sensual objects because he is in possession of a fortune. 12. Through the desire of a fortune, one's own brothers may become one's enemies; fortune may spoil friendship and create a scruple in one's mind. 13. Wealth begets evil intentions and destroys the good intentions of a seeker after spiritual riches; thieves destroy one's life on account of their desire for wealth. 14. Wealth is in peril of a foreign invasion; kings plunder a wealthy person; and if a rich man has a family, he is in danger of dacoity. 15. The desire for wealth is censured, if it is seen in a person considered to be free from a worldly spirit; money received in charity destroys one's possession of good deeds. 16. What is the need of describing at length the dangers arising from the possession of wealth ? Even pious and loving Vaishnavs forget God when they obtain wealth. 17. A wealthy person is worn by anxiety, for he always worries how he shall protect his wealth. A wealthy person is always unsatisfied; therefore, wealth is a powerful creator of hindrances. 18. So thinking to himself the wealthy Nanak was wondering how his money should be spent; so that after becoming free from hindrances he might worship Shri Hari.

### NANAK BUILDS A TEMPLE TO THE DISLIKE OF THE MUSLIMS

19. As the result of thus thinking in his mind, he started to build a temple, but when the Muslim king saw it, hatred arose in his mind. 20. *Kali* (evil age) and *Kāla* (death) are irresistible, for the Muslim king was an evil-minded rogue; he pulled down temples and no one could resist him. 21. So the Brahmans, the *bairagis*, and *bhaktas* of Vishnu were very much troubled when the rumour reached the ears of Nanak that the Muslim king had destroyed all the temples. 22. Hearing this, Nanak's mind was dejected and he began to think out what means he should adopt. Said Nanak to himself, 'Different kinds of men have different inclinations. 23. On the earth are innumerable creatures and they have different tendencies. Men feel disgust at the sight of dung, while animals relish it. 24. All know from experience that the eating of *bachanaga* (a poisonous herb) brings death; but how do the worms springing from it live happily ? 25. The food of some creatures is the wind, while others like ordinary food. Some live by eating grass, while others are born from water. 26. The evil-natured kill an animal and eat its flesh; one animal lives on another animal; there is no doubt about this. 27. The spirit of God is present in every form of creature; this is an established truth, though every creature has a different nature; this is mysterious. 28. In the same piece of land people sow mustard, onion and sugarcane; but the water becomes one with the seed and helps it to sprout. 29. Similarly the Lord of Life is seen to work in every one according to the nature he possesses; he lets one follow his inclination and does not oppose him. 30. We should adapt ourselves to people's temperaments.' With this line of thought in his mind Nanak asked the people, 31. 'The Muslim does not like temples, and hatred is thereby aroused in his mind; please tell me what he does like.' 32. The people replied, 'The Muslim likes mosques; why not therefore carry out his wish ? What is the good of obstinacy ?'

### NANAK BUILDS MOSQUES AND HINDUS HATE HIM

33. Nanak, therefore, reflected to himself, 'Hindus like images with qualities, and Muslims build mosques without qualities. Then which course should I adopt ? 34. If we build temples, then the villains destroy them; but mosques will remain intact for a long time; therefore; we must follow the inclination of the Muslims.' 35. Having thought out the matter thus, he sent for stone-cutters and other craftsman, and said, 'Now erect mosques.' Such was the order he gave. 36. Now while the mosques were being built the Muslims

were greatly delighted and said, 'After Nanak has spent all his wealth he will become a Muslim *fakir* (i.e., a Muslim mendicant). 37. Our way of religion is good, therefore he has started the building of mosques.' But it was the voice of the evil-minded; for they did not understand the inclination of Nanak's heart. 38. As for the people of his own caste, they began to censure him, saying, 'Nanak has fallen from the right path, for he destroys all temples, and builds mosques without number.' 39. Nanak was at this juncture between two fires, and he said, 'Let me now devise a plan which will be convenient to both, Hindus and Muslims.'

### NANAK BUILDS PRIVIES FOR ALL

40. So Nanak then destroyed both the temples and the mosques and began to build many privies. At this device all the people laughed. 41. Both the Hindus and the Muslims jointly asked Nanak, 'What is this you have done ?' He replied, 'I have devised a plan which will be useful to you both. 42. The seekers of supreme knowledge worship God without qualities, while some like a god with form and qualities. Both of them talk nonsense, and their discussion never comes to an end. 43. Some say, "Shankar (i.e., Shiva) is supreme and should be worshipped for ever." Others say, "That is false, for Brahm it was who created both the moveable and the immoveable world. 44. The *Purans* declare the fact that the whole creation is of the Creator ; and if that Creator is worshipped, one's longings are all fulfilled." 45. On the other hand the Vaishnavs say with love, "The Creator is the child of Vishnu, therefore, the God of gods, who is dark as a cloud, should always be worshipped." 46. Then the worshippers of the Sun say, "The Sun is supreme, for He throws His light on the whole world, and without the Sun there would be darkness for ever." 47. Performers of sacrifices hold the view, "Indra is supreme, for by his order clouds send showers on the earth; 48. from the clouds food is obtained, and it is from food that beings are born." In this way do performers of sacrifices and followers of the way of works discuss. 49. Brahmans have made three divisions of devotions, viz., work, worship, and knowledge. The great *Rishis* differentiate these three. 50. People consider as true only that which they have studied; they merely discuss between themselves and without proper enquiry of established truths. 51. Such are the ways of the various kinds of people and to talk of them fully, one whole life would be insufficient. So the Almighty God should be worshipped by relinquishing all the different religions. 52. I suffered the hindrance of money and my mind became engrossed in it; therefore, I thought of building temples; but the Muslims did not like that idea. 53. In order to satisfy their wish I started the building of mosques, and that action of mine angered my own caste who blame me for it. 54. In this dilemma I devised a different plan altogether, and therefore, for both of you I have built privies. 55. This is a plan which will be of use to all of you. So I have built very many privies to meet your daily needs.'<sup>1</sup> 56. As Nanak thus spoke, both the Hindus and the Muslims laughed outright and with astonished minds they went to their homes.

### NANAK DRESSES BOTH LIKE A MUSLIM AND A HINDU

57. Nanak had conquered all the six human foes<sup>2</sup> through his power of pure and righteous indifference to wordly things, so that his peace of mind and forgiveness were firm, and he changed his apparel immediately. 58. He also wore such ornaments that he could not be distinguished either as a Muslim *faqir* or as a Hindu *Bairagi*, as his garb was of a mixed kind. 59. He inspired in others an imperishable devotion to the *Nirgun* God (i.e., without attributes)<sup>3</sup> and he himself became absorbed in the form of God and forgot all bodily consciousness. 60. Men of all the eighteen castes made supplication to him with good devotion, and without hesitation he gave them the initiatory *mantra*. 61. Seeing that people began to censure him and said, 'He has abandoned his own religion and has accepted this strange garb and lives in happiness.' 62. Some said, 'He is bewitched, and so has become unconscious of body; he did not spend his money in a good cause; he liked privies. 63. Amongst the Hindus and the Muslims there have been many notable people, but apart from him no one has built privies in the town.' 64. Some said in reply, 'Why do you censure him for nothing ? There was truly great inconvenience in the absence privies and he devised a very good plan. 65. Women and other use them and no one drives them from there, and they bless Nanak.' So said an ironical person. 66. The thoughts of the saints are very strange, and others do not understand them; therefore, the fools, without knowing it, call them bad names. 67. But Nanak had neither joy nor pain, for his attention was ever directed to the unseen one, so though possessing the body he still lived as one without a body, he did not mind the public slander; 68. just as the elephant passes along the road and dogs bark at it; the elephant does not mind the barking of the dogs but steadily walks on; 69. and just as at the sight of the sage Agasti the sea loudly

roared, but he was silent and went on with his austerities; 70. in the same way, when public scandal was busy with his name, Nanak sipped the water of the ocean of peace ; for he had already broken down the path of lust and anger; such was his strange method of action. 71. Now all the people of his caste went to the Muslim king who was a great villain, 72. and requested him, 'Nanak has abandoned his own Hindu religion, and has founded a different path altogether, so you please advise him, and get him to follow his own religion.'

### NANAK'S LETTER TO THE MUSLIM KING

73. When the evil-minded thus requested the Muslim king, the latter trembled with rage and he sent a message to the *math* (monastery) of Nanak telling him to follow his own religion. 74. Nanak did not obey the king, but he composed verses in the *saki* metre which he sent to the king. Oh saints and good people, listen to them, for they contain a deep philosophical meaning :

*Verse 1.* 'No difference can be made among pots as good or bad, for they are made of the same earth. When did Kabir learn the *gayatri mantra*?<sup>5</sup> And when did Rohidas read the *Purans*? By which of the Vedas was Nama (i.e., Namdev) saved ? He had recognized *Atmaram* (i.e., the Rest of the soul). 2. Dhanapati and Dhanjata, and Sena the barber,<sup>6</sup> and the great sinner Ajamil<sup>7</sup> were all saved, the last mentioned simply by thinking of the name Narayana, 3. One who acts falsely is false, but he who remembers Hari is true. Nanak is the lowest of the low. - Only he who remembers God is true.'

75. (Nanak's letter continued by saying), 'From the same kind of earth small pitchers, large pitchers, and plates are made; if you use your eyes and look into these things there is nothing in them except earth. 76. Similarly, counting Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, there are eighteen castes; these are distinguished by different names, but among them there is the same all-pervading image of God, and (to a discerning mind) no duality is seen. 77. A crown, earrings, and bracelets may be different names, but to a discerning eye there is in them only the one element of gold. 78. The seed of the banyan tree is very tiny, but from it grow the branches and the leaves; and in the same way, if you notice carefully, you will come to understand that the whole universe is pervaded by Brahm (i.e., the one spiritual essence). 79. Thus the sentence of the Vedas, "The whole universe is composed of Vishnu," is true; I have experienced the truth of this; there is no idea of duality. 80. If you supplicate Shri Hari, this will include all religious ; for by merely repeating the name of God, innumerable beings have been saved.' 81. Now as Kabir was by caste a Muslim, he did not at all know the *gayatri mantra*; but by the worship of Shri Rama he perfectly became Brahm (i.e., the all pervading essence). 82. Rohidas was by caste a shoe-maker, and did not read the *Puranas* or *Shastras*; but this Vaishnav was saved by the mere singing of God's name. 83. Nama (i.e., Namdev) was by caste a tailor, and was therefore not authorized to study the Vedas; but he was saved by merely singing the praises of Hari ; for the maya<sup>8</sup> of Vishnu is unfathomable. 84. The field of Dhanjata gave crops without sowing the seed, and he practised no other methods except the remembrance of God. 85. Sena the barber was of low caste, but when he was in difficulty Hari assumed Sena's form and served the king. 86. The great sinner Ajamil was at the point of death; but when he remembered his child (which was named Narayan) he was saved. 87. One who practises bad actions is in truth the worst of all, and no one is higher than he who remembers Shri Hari, day and night.' 88. As the Muslim king saw the letter he was very pleased at heart, but in order to test Nanak he again pretended anger.

### NANAK DELIVERED, THE MUSLIM REPENTS

89. Said (the Muslim king) : 'I am the paramount king, and yet Nanak does not obey me.' So he sent a thousand 188 Pathans to arrest him. 90. By the orders of the king the royal army quickly arrived in the compound of the *math* (i.e., monastery) with their arms. 91. When the Pathans were deciding to enter, Nanak knew all about it, and he devised this plan. 92. He thought of the *maya Vishnu* and a very strange event took place; for there arrived an army of ten thousand men in arms, 93. who opened their battery and sent forth their arrows without numbers, with the result that the royal army was panic-stricken, and ran away pell-mell. 94. Going to the king, the Pathan soldiers told him, 'Suddenly there arrived an army of ten thousand soldiers in the *math*, of Nanak, 95. and coming outside the *math* they gave us a sound beating; and at such a wonderful

sight we at once ran away.’ 96. As the king heard this, he repented deeply in his heart and said, ‘This comes of my listening to the complaint of the evil-minded, and of my persecuting one who is adept in spiritual knowledge.’ 97. After saying this the Muslim king tied his hands with his handkerchief and going to Nanak’s *math* he made him a low bow in true devotion. 98. Said he, ‘I am completely in the wrong in that I have persecuted you. Now, oh chief of the *yogis*, pardon me and give me your assurance. 99. You may follow the third new path of religion which you have founded.’ When he had said this he returned to his place. 100. As Nanak showed the result of his spiritual accomplishment, his reputation spread widely among the people, and people of all castes went to him and received his *mantra* confidentially (i.e., they became Nanak’s disciples).

### NANAK’S FAVOURITE DISCIPLES : SUTRA AND MARDANA

101. There were some rich men among Nanak’s disciples and they built for Nanak a *math* (a monastery), where many persons were satisfied by the doles of food, for there was an abundance of provisions. 102. Nanak had a large number of disciples but they were given up to worldly thoughts, and amongst them only two were chosen as brave ; listen to their names. 103. One was by the name of Sutra and the other was Mardana, both of whom had repentance in their hearts and had abandoned their family lives. 104. Having offered to their *guru* their body, mind and wealth, they were not at all inclined to family life, and their resolve was firm. 105. Understanding the wishes of their *guru*, they were at his service day and night, and procured for him whatever he wished; in this way they acquired his favour. 106. After the lapse of some days Nanak became tired of that way of life, for his spiritual hindrances increased, and so he decided to abandon at once all worldly responsibilities; 107. for living in a *math* (or monastery) is more difficult than living in a family, and as one tries to lessen the hindrances, they grow and yield the inevitable results.

### NANAK GOES TO MECCA WITH MARDANA

108. with this thought in mind he at once left that place, leaving Sutra to manage the *math* and taking Mardana with him. 109. Nanak thought to himself, ‘In Mecca there is an image of Shri Vishnu, and people say that the Muslims have overturned it. 110. So I must go there in person and see the Lord of Vaikunth. Thus thinking in his mind he marched on quickly. 111. As the *guru* and his disciple were making their way, they came to a river, and when Mardana saw it was impassable because of the volume of water he felt anxious. 112. Then Nanak walked on the water, exclaiming, ‘*Alakh Niranjani*’ (Oh god :).\* The disciple being left far behind he joined his hands palm to palm and pleaded, 113. ‘Oh *swami*, please tell me some means of crossing the river; I am very much afraid; for I do not know how I should cross the water.’ 114. Hearing the earnest plea of his disciple, the *guru* stood in the middle of the stream and said, ‘Think in your kind of your *sadguru* and then the water will not drown you.’ 115. Beliving these words of Nanak, Mardana thought of his *sadguru*, and starting to wade through the water as the water became knee-deep, he reached the middle of the river. 116. Nanak again said, ‘*Alakh Niranjani*’ (Oh God !); and the water at once became only ankle-deep; and the disciple was astonished, at the sight. 117 Mardana said to himself, ‘He has given me an ordinary *mantra*, but he himself is repeating something else. Then he gave up thinking of his *Sadguru*, and cried ‘*Alakh Niranjani*.’ (Oh God !). 118. Just then the water rose as high as his throat, and with the cry, ‘I am drowning, I am drowning,’ he called out to his *sadguru*. 119. Nanak looking back, told him to think only of his *sadguru*, and he added, , ‘Whatever I do, is not possible for you’. 120. Then crying, ‘*guru guru*, ‘Mardana safely reached the other bank. This advice which the *swami* gave to his disciple was for the saving of the world. 121. For one should obey his *sadguru*; though one must not do as he does. If one follows the words of his *sadguru* with his heart and soul, the fruit of such behaviour is seen at once. 122. Well, both the *guru* and the disciple safely reached the other side of the river, and then the disciple said, ‘The *swami* has given me very good advice’. 123. By this same means they also crossed the sea and then they arrived on land; and there in Mecca they saw the image of Vishnu which the Muslims had overturned in the *kali Yuga* (the evil age). 124. In its place a mosque had been built, and Muslim worshippers had been appointed; and if a Hindu mendicant went there they at once killed him. 125. If in spite of the Muslim opposition a *bhakta* of Vishnu tried to go there, he was not permitted, for fear of the image of Shri Vishnu rising. 126. Going onwards from the district of the river Atak, the sale of uncooked food was not permitted, and wells were built by collecting the bones of beasts. 127. On the banks of brooks and rivers in those parts, bones are planted in the earth in various places at short distances; and no other food except cooked food could be had. 128. In all this could be seen the influence of

the Muslims; but in spite of that Nank went there. People may doubt this, but note, how he went. 129. The action of an expert in spiritual knowledge is beyond ordinary understanding; for he goes invisibly, without being noticed by the people; Nanak was therefore able to enter Mecca, and to appear there all unnoticed. 130. The *Mujavars* (i. e. worshippers) who were appointed at the mosque, when they saw Nanak there, were very much astonished and said, 'Tell us who you are, and where are you from?'

### NANAK'S MESSAGE AND PRAYER

131. Nanak replied, 'I am the cause of the creation and of its support and destruction, and I have come here as the spiritual light. 132. Please know that I am the one who is the Doer, and at the same time I am the Non-Doer, one beyond three qualities and beyond *maya*, hence I have suddenly come here. 133. The imperishable Spirit of God pervades everything and is beyond *maya*. I am the same spirit descended as an *avatar* in this mortal world for the benefit of the people. 134. God is without attributes and without form. but He descends as an *avatar*, for the sake of his *bhaktas*. Regard me therefore as that voluntary actor without any attribute.' 135. Hearing him the worshippers said, 'You talk very highly, but only if you give us some proof can we consider what you say as true. 136. Here there was an idol of the Hindus, the image of Vishnu; but the Muslim king turned it upside down and built a mosque in its place.' 137. 'You call yourself the cause of all things, then put this image right; only then can we consider what you say as true;' so the worshippers said. 138. As Nanak heard this he began to praise the image of Vishnu. 'Victory to Thee, dweller on the sea, the Husband of Shri Lakshmi; Thou alone dost pervade the three worlds. 139. Victory, Victory to thee. The Supreme God as Hari (Vishnu) and as Hara (Shiva), the father of the Creator, the Saviour of the lowly, without Thee the moveable and the immoveable have no place of refuge. 140. In every pore of Thy body there are universes without number; so extensive is Thy form, that in order to fulfil the wishes of Thy *bhaktas* Thou dost assume a *sagun* form. 141. Thy power alone is the cause of the creation, the support and destruction of the world; yet in regard to the *Kali* (evil age) and *Kala* (death) Thou hidest Thyself from fear of the Muslim. 142. Oh Thou Saviour of the lowly, when Thou seest the unbelievers Thou dost turn away from them. Now listen to my pleading, and give me a vision of Thee at once, oh Saviour of the lowly.' 143. At this praise of Nanak the image of Shri Vishnu raised itself and sat up. The dark-complexioned Shripati was beautiful and tender, and in his hands were the shell and disc. 144. Nanak then offered mental worship in all its points to Shri Hari and departed thence. 145. Seeing that wonderful sight the Muslims (or worshippers) fell themselves prostrate before Nanak and said, 'If the king knows of this he will kill us. 146. He will say, "Some Hindu came here and so the image is standing upright;" and he will then harass our very life.' After saying this they fell at his feet, adding, 147. 'You are God, existing in the soul of all, and you have descended on this earth as a human being; this we believe as true, but listen to our request. 148. Make the image just as it was before so that we may be saved from all trouble.' Having said this the Muslim worshippers fell at his feet. 149. Nanak did not oppose them, but stated, 'God's will is the true authority'. Then he prayed to God, 'Please be as before. 150. In future Thou hast to come as the *Kali avatar* to destroy the *Mlenchbas* (or the Muslims) and Thou hast to steady (the Hindu) religion and protect Thy *bhaktas*. 151. Now turn Thy back on the impious Muslims and be as before.' Hearing the request of Nanak, the image of Vishnu at once slept as hitherto. 152. After performing this wonder there, the chief of the *yogis* departed from there, and traversing the land he then crossed the sea.

### NANAK TAKES A KING ACROSS A RIVER IN A PAPER-BOAT

153. As he was journeying he came to a river in flood where a king was shut up with his army. 154. As the king saw Nanak *Swami*, he grasped his feet firmly and with true devotion. Nanak then made a ship of paper, and enabled him thereby to cross the water. 155. When the king arrived on the other side at once with his army, he requested Nanak to give him a vision of God. 156. The chief of the yogis addressing the king said, 'Know that He is without qualities, without form, and without the three gunas (satva, raja, and tama)<sup>10</sup> and that He is the Lord of All. 157. The supreme Brahm is neither white nor black, neither darkish nor yellow, neither red nor white. He is beyond the seven colours and beyond any hindrance. 158. He whose power enables the hands and feet to work, and who gives life to the lifeless, know Him as Shridhar. 159. Through His power the eyes see, and the ears hear. Recognize Him in your mind. Why do you feel

concerned ? 160. Through His power the nose detects odour, and the tongue knows what is palatable. Know in yourself the God of gods, the one dark as a cloud. 161. Aside from Him, no one has power either over the human body or over the universe. "Know yourself." there is no other *Mantra* better than that. 162 Hearing these words of Nanak, the king made him a low bow with true devotion and said, 'The words of the *swami* have made an impression on my mind.' 163. The king then went to his capital and Nanak in company with Mardana continued his Journey.

### NANAK AND GORAKSHANATH MEET

164. That crest-jewel of the *yogis*, who is supposed to be the *avatar* of Vishnu, Gorakshanath, was suddenly seen. 165. Nanak accosted him by crying 'Adesh' (i. e.. What is your command ?). Then the son of Matsyendra said to him, 'You have shown the power of your accomplishment in the world, now do as I request you. 166. At Hardwar four hundred thousand pilgrims have assembled; give them a dinner at once and then only will you be a true chief of the *yogis*.' 167. Hearing the words of Gorakshanath, Nanak said to him, 'By all means. You go ahead of me and give the invitations.' 168. So in order to test Nanak's power, Gorakshanath went to Hardwar and there Nanak performed a wonderful thing; listen to it, oh pious *bhaktas*. 169. At Hardwar there had assembled four hundred thousand pilgrims and Nanak went there invisibly and satisfied all of them. 170. All the accomplishments were favourable to him, therefore he gave them all the meal they desired. Gorakshanath then came behind him and gave the invitations. 171. The people told him, 'Oh Gorakshanath, Nanak came here quite recently, and gave to all of us the desired meal and he has now gone to visit the sacred places'. 172. As the son of Matsyendra heard these words, he wondered very much and at the same time Nanak appeared there and made a *namaskar* to Gorakshanath. 173. They embraced each other with love and Gorakshanath praised Nanak exceedingly, saying, I do not see any other expert in spiritual knowledge like you even in the three worlds. 174. The sign of your absorption into the deity, and the tokens of the chief of the *yogis*, are seen on you as so many ornaments; I know this for certain.' 175. Gorakshanath praised Nanak in this way, and then fled away into the sky; but Nanak returned with his disciple to his *math* (monastery). 176. Just as the *lila* (i. e., the creative acts) of God are unfathomable, so also the *yogi* possessed the same powers; he exhibited the power of his accomplishments, and punished the evil-minded. 177. Whoever shows some wonderful event, be he a *bhakta* of God or the chief of the *yogis*, his reputation spreads widely and others continue the history of his sect. 178. Hence in that country there are many *bairagis* belonging to the sect of Nanak, who give the *mantra* to the people and make the dull and ignorant remember God.

1. *Bhaktalilamrit*, Marathi, written in 1774 A.D., Chap, 1, translated by Justin E. Abbott, N. R. Godbole, and revised and edited by J. P. Edwards (included in *Nectar from Indian Saints*, ISO-196). Poona, 1935.
2. This verse is a very free paraphrase, not a translation,
3. See under *Shadripu*, p. 437 of *Stories of Indian Saints*, vol. 2.
4. See Appendix under *Nirgun*.
5. See Appendix,
6. See *Stories of Indian Saints*, II, vol. 10 this Series, chapter 34.
7. See *Stories of Indian Saints*, II, vol. 10, this Series, page 389.
8. See Appendix under this word.
9. A name of Brahm called out by *Gosayis* when they beg. The word is & corruption *Alakshya* (incomprehensible).
10. On these terms see the Appendix under *guna*.



## GURU NANAK

Q. Crauford<sup>1</sup>

On crossing the Attuck, we enter the territories of the Seiks,<sup>2</sup> a people who owe their religion to a Hindoo named Nanuck of the Khatry or Rajah cast. His father, Baba Caloo, possessed a small district in the province of Lahore, names Telvandi,<sup>3</sup> where Nanuck was born in the year of Christ 1470 [1469]. Many stories are told of wonderful indications given by him, in his infancy, of uncommon wisdom and sagacity. He seems to have possessed strong powers, but which received no further cultivation beyond the usual education of the young men of his cast, consisting in little more than learning, reading, writing, and arithmetic; and hearing the Shastras, or dissertations on the laws and religion of their country.

According to the custom of the Hindoos, he was married in his early years to one of his own tribe, by whom he had two sons.

It appears that he soon became an admirer of the Narganey [Niranjani]<sup>4</sup> worship, and used to declaim against the folly of idols, and the impiety of offering adoration to any but the Supreme Being.

Having often expressed a desire to travel, at the age of about twenty-five year, he quitted his family, and visited Bengal and most of the eastern provinces of Hindostan. In a second excursion he went to the south, it is said, as far as the island of Ceylon : and in a third, he went into Persia and Arabia. Those different journeys seem to have taken up about fifteen years. But on his return from the third, he declared his intention of not quitting his native country any more; and having expressed a wish of fixing his retreat on the border of some river, at a distance from any town, the Rajah of Calanore, who had become one of his disciples, granted him a piece of land on the banks of the Ravy, about eighty miles north eastward from the city of Lahore. Here Nanuck established his abode for the rest of his days, in a convenient dwelling that was erected by the Rajah's care : and as he chose to be free from the cares of this world, his wife and children went at Calanore, coming occasionally to visit him. Having acquired great reputation for knowledge, wisdom, and piety, persons of all persuasions went to see him, and the Seiks say that in his presence they forget that there was any religion but one. He died about the age of seventy. The place of his abode was called Kartarpour, but since his death it has been named *Dibru Daira*, or the place of worship.

His eldest son, Serik-[Sri] chund, was the founder of a set of devotees, named Nanuck Shoiy. The second, called Letchimidas, married and had several children. On account of the oppressions of the Mahomedan governors, he altogether forsook Telvandy, the estate (abode) of his ancestors, and settled at Kartarpour, which is still in the possession of his descendants. But though they are respected by the Seiks, as being the posterity of Nanuck, yet they are not held in any sacred veneration, nor considered as the heads of their religion or tribe.

Nanuck, when on his death-bed, passing by his children and relations, named as his successor to teach his doctrine a favourite disciple, named Lhina [Lehna] but whom he then called Angud, which is said to signify similar. Angud was like-wise of the Khatry cast, and of a respectable family in the same province where Nanuck was born. To him he entrusted the care of collecting his precepts, which he accordingly did, in a work called *Pothy*, or the book: and in another work, called *Jenum Sakey*, he gave a history of Nanuck's life. These are written in the Punjab dialect, but in a particular character called *Gour Mouckhy*, said to have been invented by Nanuck himself, for the purpose of writing his doctrines.<sup>5</sup>

1. Sketches of the Hindoos, London, 1790.

2. *Seik* is said to mean disciple.

3. He was a Patwari or village accountant, at Talvandi Kai Bhoi which was held as an estate by Rai Bular, a Bhatti Rajput, Muslim by faith - GS.

4. Worship of the One formless God. *Niranjan* literally means the Supreme Lord.

5. Colonel Polier.

## NANAK THE FOUNDER OF SIKH NATION

George Forster\*

Nanock<sup>1</sup> the founder of the Sicque nation, was born in the year of the Christian era, 1469, during the reign of “Sultan Beloul,<sup>2</sup> at the village of Tulwundy,<sup>3</sup> about sixty miles to the westward of Lahore. Nanock appears to have possessed qualities happily adapted to effect the institution of a new system of religion. He was inflexibly just; he enjoyed from nature a commanding elocution, and was endowed with a calm passive fortitude, which successfully supported him through the long course of a dangerous occupation. The tenets of Nanock forbid the worship of images, and ordain that the places of public prayer shall be of plain construction, and devoid of every exhibition of figure. A book entitled the *Grunth*, which contains the civil and religious institutes of Nanock, is the only typical object which the Sicques have admitted into their places of worship. Instead of the intermediation of subordinate deities, they are directed to address their prayer to one God, who, without the aid of any delegate, is to be considered the unassociated ruler of the universe.<sup>4</sup> Though many essential differences exist between the religious code of the Hindoos and that of the Sicques, a large space of their ground-work exhibits strong features of similarity. The article indeed of the admission of proselytes amongst the Sicques, has caused an essential deviation from the Hindoo system, and apparently levelled those barriers which were constructed by Brimha, for the arrangement of the different ranks and professions of his people. Yet this indiscriminate admission by the qualifications which have been adopted, do not widely infringe on the customs and prejudices of those Hindoos who have embraced the faith of the Sicques. They still preserve the distinctions which originally marked their sects, and perform many of the ancient ceremonies of their nation. They form matrimonial connections only in their own tribes, and adhere implicitly to the rules prescribed by the Hindoo law, in the choice and preparation of their food. The only aliment used in common, by the Sicques at this day is the *pursaud*,<sup>5</sup> or sacred bread, from the participation of which no tribe or class of their people is excluded,

Few events of historical importance are related of Nanock, the founder of this sect, who possessing neither territory nor wealth, nor aided by the force of arms, preached his doctrine in peace, and manifested, in the countries which he visited, an unaffected simplicity of manners. He journeyed through most of the kingdoms in India, from whence, according to the tradition of the Sicques, he went into Persia and Arabia. In his travels, which with short intervals continued for the space of fifteen years, he was attended by a Mahometan musician, named Murdana, who became his convert, and ever remained faithfully attached to his person. It is said that in one of the expeditions of Baber<sup>6</sup> into India, Nanock having been apprehended by some of the soldiers, was brought before that prince, who informed of the sanctity of his character, treated him with respect and indulgence. As no records of the Moghul Empire bear a testimony of the existence of this sect during the period in which Nanock lived, it cannot be supposed that his converts were numerous or powerful. Nanock, according to the Sicque records, died in the month of August, A. D. 1539,<sup>7</sup> aged seventy years, at Dayrah, a village on the banks of the Rawee, about forty miles to the northward of Lahore, where a vast concourse of people annually assemble, to perform certain ceremonies in commemoration of the day of his decease. Nanock, though he had two sons, devolved the charge of the mission to his favourite disciple Anghut,<sup>8</sup> a Hindoo of the Chittery tribe, to whom, he also entrusted the publication<sup>9</sup> of the laws and precepts of his doctrine.

...By a law of Nanock, widows are expressly forbidden to destroy themselves at the death of their husbands, and are permitted to renew the ceremonies of marriage.

\**A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, Vol. I.

1. He was of the *Chittery* or second cast of Hindoos, and according to secret belief of the Sicques, a species of secondary incarnation of the Supreme Deity.

2 A Patan king of Delhi, who reigned previous to Baber's conquest of Hindostan.

3 This village is now known by the name of Rhaypur [Rai Bhoi]. The terms given by the Sicques to their places of worship are *Sanghut*, *Durmsallah* and *Dairah*, words signifying, in the Hinduee, an assembly of the people, a charitable or pious foundation, and a house. This last appellation seems to be applied in an

eminent sense, as “the house.” The Sicques, in commemoration of the place of Nanock’s birth, have erected an edifice at Tulwundy, where a grand festival is annually celebrated.

4. When it is noticed that the worship of the Hindoos is loaded with a mass of puerile ceremony, and oftentimes conducted with a ridiculous grimace, it will not seem surprizing that a creed, founded on principles calculated to promote the establishment of a simple uniform religion, and promulgated by a man of distinguished tribe and exemplary manners, should draw to it proselytes even in the bigotted regions of India.
- 5 The *pursaud* is said to be composition of flour, butter, and certain spices; this bread after being consecrated by the Brahmins, is also used by some sects of Hindoos in the ceremony of administering an oath, particularly in that quarter on the Orissa province, contiguous to the temple of Juggud Nautt. [The Sikhs do not observe the Hindu prejudices in preparing, eating or distributing food. The Sikh *prasad* (cake of Grace) is a composition of equal quantities of wheat flour, clarified butter and sugar and is distributed on all ceremonial occasions to all present without any discrimination.]
- 6 *Baber* defeated the Patan king of Hindostan, in A.D. 1526.
7. Gum Nanak died on Assu Vadi 10, 1596 Bk., September 7, 1539 — G.S.
8. Nanock changed the original name of his successor, which was Lina [Lehna. He was given the new name of Angad].
9. The religious and historical writings of the Sicques, are written in a character called the *Gooroo Mookee*, or the language of the *Gooroos*, or priests. This letter, which is said to have been invented by Nanock, differs from the various character in use among the Hindoos.

## NANAC SHAH, FOUNDER OF SIKH RELIGION

Lt.-Col. Sir John Malcolm\*

### INTRODUCTION

When with the British army in the Penjab, in 1805, I endeavoured to collect materials that would throw light upon the history, manners, and religion of the Sikhs. Though this subject had been treated by several English writers, none of them had possessed opportunities of obtaining more than very general information regarding this extraordinary race; and their narratives therefore, though meriting regard, have served more to excite than to gratify curiosity.

In addition to the information I collected while the army continued within the territories of the Sikhs, and the personal observations I was able to make, during that period, upon the customs and manners of that nation, I succeeded with difficulty in obtaining a copy of the *Adi Granth*,\*\* and of some historical tracts, the most essential parts of which, when I returned to Calcutta, were explained to me by a Sikh priest of the Nirmala order whom I found equally intelligent and communicative, and who spoke of the religion and ceremonies of his sect with less restraint than any of his bretheren whom I had met with in the Penjab. This slender stock of materials was subsequently much enriched by my friend Dr. Leyden, who has favoured me with a translation of several tracts written by Sikh authors in the Penjabi and Duggar dialects, treating of their history and religion; which though full of that warm imagery which marks all oriental works, and particularly those whose authors enter on the boundless field of Hindu mythology, contain the most valuable verifications of the different religious institutions of the Sikh nation.

It was my first intention to have endeavoured to add to these materials, and to have written, when I had leisure, a history of the Sikhs; but the active nature of my public duties has made it impossible to carry this plan into early execution, and I have had the choice of deferring it to a distant and uncertain period; or of giving, from what I actually possessed, a short and hasty sketch of their history, customs, and religion. The latter alternative I have adopted : for, although the information I may convey in such a sketch may be very defective, it will be 'useful at a moment when every information regarding the Sikhs is of importance; and it may, perhaps, stimulate and aid some person, who has more leisure and better opportunities, to accomplish that task which I once contemplated.

In composing this rapid sketch of the Sikhs, I have still had to encounter various difficulties. There is no part of oriental biography in which it is more difficult to separate truth from falsehood, than that which relates to the history of religious impostors. The account of their lives is generally recorded, either by devoted disciples and warm adherents, or by violent enemies and bigotted persecutors. The former, from enthusiastic admiration, decorate them with every quality and accomplishment that can adorn men : the latter misrepresent their characters, and detract from all their merits and pretensions. This general remark I have found to apply with peculiar force to the varying accounts given, by Sikh and Muhammedan authors, of Nanac and his successors. As it would have been an endless and unprofitable task to have entered into a disquisition concerning all the points in which these authors differ, many considerations have induced me to give a preference, on almost all occasions, to the original Sikh writers. In every research into the general history of mankind, it is of the most essential importance to hear what a nation has to say of itself; and the knowledge obtained from such sources has a value, independent of its historical utility. It aids the promotion of social intercourse, and leads to the establishment of friendship between nations. The most savage states are those who have most prejudices and who are consequently most easily conciliated or offended : they are always pleased and flattered, when they find, that those whom they cannot but admit to possess superior intelligence, are acquainted with their history, and respect their belief and usages : and, on the contrary, they hardly ever pardon an outrage against their religion or customs, though committed by men who have every right to plead the most profound ignorance, as an excuse for the words or actions that have provoked resentment.

## NANAC SHAH

Nanac Shah, the founder of the sect, since distinguished by the name of the Sikhs,<sup>1</sup> was born in the year of Christ 1469, at a small village called Talwandi,<sup>2</sup> in the district of Bhatti [Shekhupura], in the province of Lahore. His father, whose name was Calu<sup>3</sup>, was of the Cshatriya cast, and Vedi tribe of Hindus, and he had no family except Nanac and his sister Nanaci, who married a Hindu of the name of Jayaram, that was employed as a grain-factor by Daulet Khan Lodi, a relation of the reigning emperor of Delhi. Nanac was agreeably to the usage of the tribe in which he was born, married to a woman of respectable family, at an early age<sup>4</sup> by whom he had two sons, named Srichand and Lacshmi Das. The former, who abandoned the vanities of the world, had a son called Dherm Chand; who founded the sect of Udasi; and his descendants are yet known by the name of Nanac Putrah, or the children of Nanac. Lacshmi Das addicted himself to the pleasures of this world, and left neither heirs nor reputation.<sup>5</sup>

Nanac is stated, by all Sikh writers, to have been, from his childhood, inclined to devotion and the indifference which this feeling created towards all worldly concerns, appears to have been a source of continual uneasiness to his father; who endeavoured, by every effort, to divert his mind from the religious turn which it had taken. With a view to effect this object, he one day gave Nanac a sum of money, to purchase salt at one village, in order to sell it at another; in the hope of enticing him to business, by allowing him to taste the sweets of commercial profit. Nanac was pleased with the scheme, took the money, and proceeded, accompanied by a servant of the name of Bala, of the tribe of Sand'hu, towards the village where he was to make his purchase. He happened, however, on the road, to fall in with some Fakirs (holy mendicants), with whom he wished to commence a conversation; but they were so weak, from want of victuals, which they had not tasted for three days, that they could only reply to the observations of Nanac by bending their heads, and other civil signs of acquiescence. Nanac, affected by their situation, said to his companion, with emotion: "My father has sent me to deal in salt, with a view to profit, but the gain of this world is unstable, and profitless; my wish is to relieve these poor men, and to obtain that gain which is permanent and eternal." His companion<sup>6</sup> replied: "The resolution is good: do not delay its execution." Nanac immediately distributed his money among the hungry Fakirs; who, after they had gained strength from the refreshment which it obtained them, entered into a long discourse with him on the unity of God, with which he was much delighted. He returned next day to his father, who demanded what profit he had made? "I have fed the poor," said Nanac, "and have obtained that gain for you which will endure for ever." As the father happened to have little value (or the species of wealth which the son had acquired, he was enraged at having his money so fruitlessly wasted, abused poor Nanac. and even struck him; nor could the mild representations of Nanaci save her brother from the violence of parental resentment. Fortune, however, according to the Sikh narrators of this anecdote of their teacher's early life, had raised him a powerful protector, who not only rescued him from punishment, but established his fame and respectability upon grounds that at once put him above all fear of future bad usage from his low-minded and sordid father. When Nanac was quite a youth and employed to tend cattle in the fields, he happened to repose himself one day under the shade of a tree; and, as the sun declined towards the west, its rays fell on his face, when a large black snake,<sup>7</sup> advancing to the spot where he lay, raised itself from the ground, and interposed its spread hood between Nanac and sun's rays. Ray Bolar,<sup>8</sup> the ruler of the district, was passing the road, near the place where Nanac slept, and marked, in silence, though not without reflection, this unequivocal sign of his future greatness. This chief overheard Calu punishing his son for his kindness to the Fakirs. He immediately entered, and demanded the cause of the uproar; and, when informed of the circumstance he severely chid Calu for his conduct, and interdicted him from ever again lifting his hand to Nanac, before whom, to the astonishment of all present, he humbled himself with every mark of the most profound veneration. Though Calu, from this event, was obliged to treat his son with more respect than formerly, he remained as solicitous as ever to detach him from his religious habits and to fix him in some worldly occupation; and he prevailed upon Jayram, his son-in-law, to admit him into partnership in his business. Nanac, obliged to acquiesce in these schemes attended at the granary of Daulet Khan Lodi, which was in charge of Jayram; but though his hands were employed in this work, and his kindness of manner made all the inhabitants of Sultanpur, where the granary was established, his friends, yet his heart never strayed for one moment from its object. It was

incessantly fixed on the Divinity; and one morning, as he sat in a contemplative posture, a holy Muhammedan Fakir approached, and exclaimed : “Oh Nanac ! upon what are thy thoughts now employed ? Quit such occupations, that thou mayest obtain the inheritance of eternal wealth.” Nanac is said to have started up at this exclamation, and after looking for a moment in the face of the Fakir, he fell into a trance; from which he had no sooner recovered, than he immediately distributed every thing in the granary among the poor<sup>9</sup> and, after this act, proceeded with loud shouts out of the gates of the city, and running into a pool of water, remained there three days; during which some writers assert he had an interview with the prophet Elias, termed by the Muhammedans, Khizzer, from whom he learnt all earthly sciences.

While Nanac remained in the pool, abstracted from all worldly considerations, holding converse with a prophet, poor Jayram was put in prison by Daulet Khan Lodi, on the charge of having dissipated his property. Nanac, however, returned, and told Daulet Khan that Jayram was faultless; that he was the object of punishment; and that, as such, he held himself ready to render the strictest account of all he had lost. The Khan accepted his proposal: Jayram’s accounts were settled; and, to the surprise of all, a balance was found in his favour; on which he was not only released, but reinstated in the employment and favour of his master. We are told, by the Sikh authors, that these wonderful actions increased the fame of Nanac in a very great degree; and that he began, from this period, to practise all the austerities of a holy man; and, by his frequent abstraction in the contemplation of the divine Being, and his abstinence and virtue, he soon acquired great celebrity through all the countries into which he travelled.

There are many extravagant accounts regarding the travels of Nanac. One author<sup>10</sup>, who treats of the great reform which he made in the worship of the true God, which he found degraded by the idolatry of the Hindus, and the ignorance of the Muhammedans, relates his journey to all the different Hindu places of pilgrimage, and to Mecca, the holy temple of the Muhammedans.

It would be tedious, and foreign to the purpose of this sketch, to accompany Nanac in his travels, of which the above-mentioned author, as well as others, has given the most circumstantial accounts. He was accompanied (agreeable to them) by a celebrated musician, of the name of Merdana, and a person named Bala Sandhu; and it is on the tradition of the latter of these disciples, that most of the miracles<sup>11</sup> and wonders of his journies are related. In Bengal, the travellers had to encounter all kinds of sorcerers and magicians. Poor Merdana, who had some of the propensities of Sancho, and preferred warm houses and good meals to deserts and starvation, was constantly in trouble, and more than once had his form changed into that of a sheep, and of several other animals. Nanac, however, always restored his humble friend to the human shape, and as constantly read him lectures on his imprudence. It is stated, in one of those accounts, that a Raja of Sivanab’hu endeavoured to tempt Nanac, by offering him all the luxuries of the world, to depart from his austere habits, but in vain. His presents of rich meats splendred clothes, and fair ladies, only afforded the Sikh teacher so many opportunities of decrying the vanities of this world, and preaching to the Raja the blessings of eternal life; and he at last succeeded in making him a convert, and resided at Sivanab’hu two years and five months; during which period he composed the *Pran Sancali*<sup>12</sup>, for the instruction of his followers. After Nanac had visited all the cities of India, and explained to all ranks the great doctrines of the unity and omnipresence of God, he went to Mecca and Medina, where his actions, his miracles, and his long disputations with the most celebrated Muhammedan saints and doctors, are most circumstantially recorded by his biographers. He is stated, on this occasion, to have maintained his own principles, without offending those of others; always professing himself the enemy of discord, and as having no object but to reconcile the two faiths of the Muhammedans and Hindus in one religion; which he endeavoured to do by recalling them to that great and original tenet, in which they both believed, the unity of God, and by reclaiming them from the numerous errors into which they had fallen. During his travels, Nanac was introduced to the emperor Baber<sup>13</sup>, before whom he is said to have defended his doctrine with great firmness and eloquence. Baber was pleased with him, and ordered an ample maintenance to be bestowed upon him; which the Sikh priest refused; observing, that he trusted in Him who provided for all men, and from whom alone a man of virtue and religion would consent to receive favour or reward. When Nanac returned from his travels, he cast off the garment of a Fakir, and wore plain clothes, but continued to give instructions to his numerous disciples; and he appears, at

this period, to have experienced the most violent opposition from the Hindu zealots who reproached him with having laid aside the habits of a Fakir, and with the impiety of the doctrines which he taught. These accusations he treated with great contempt; and an author, before cited, Bhai Guru Das Vali [Bhalla], states, that when he visited Vatala, he enraged the Yogiswaras<sup>14</sup> so much, that they tried all their powers of enchantment to terrify him. "Some", says this writer, "assumed the shape of lions and tigers, others hissed like snakes, one fell in a shower of fire, and another tore the stars from the firmanent;" but Nanac remained tranquil: and when required to exhibit some proof of his powers that would astonish them, he replied : "I have nothing to exhibit worthy of you to behold. A holy teacher has no defence but the purity of his doctrine : the world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable." These words, adds the author, caused the miracles and enchantments of the Yogiswaras to cease, and they all fell at the feet of the humble Nanac, who was protected by the all-perfect God.

Nanac, according to the same authority, went from Vatala to Multan, where he communed with the Pirs, or holy fathers of the Muhammedan religion of that country. "I am come," said he, when he entered that province, "into a country full of Pirs, "like the sacred Ganga, visiting the ocean." From Multan he went to Kirtipur<sup>15</sup>, where he threw off his earthly shape, and was hurried near the bank of the river Ravi, which has since overflowed his tomb. Kirtipur [Kartarpur, now in Pakistan] continues a place of religious resort and worship; and a small piece of Nanac's garment is exhibited to pilgrims, as a sacred relic, at his Dharmasala, or temple [at Dera Baba Nanak].

It would be difficult to give the character of Nanac<sup>17</sup> on the authority of any account we yet possess. His writings especially the first chapters of the Adi-Granth, will, if ever translated, be perhaps a criterion by which he may be fairly judged; but the great eminence which he obtained, and the success with which he combated the opposition which he met, afford ample reason to conclude that he was a man of more than common genius : and this favourable impression of his character will be confirmed by a consideration of the object of his life, and the means he took to accomplish it. Born in a province on the extreme verge of India, at the very point where the religion of Muhammed and the idolatrous worship of the Hindus appeared to touch, and at a moment when both these tribes cherished the most violent rancour and animosity towards each other, his great aim was to blend those jarring elements in peaceful union, and he only endeavoured to effect this purpose through the means of mild persuasion. His wish was to recall both Muhammedans and Hindus to an exclusive attention to that sublimest of all principles, which inculcates devotion to God, and peace towards man. He had to combat the furious bigotry of the one, and the deep-rooted superstition of the other; but he attempted to overcome all obstacles by the force of reason and humanity. And we cannot have a more convincing proof of the general character of that doctrine which he taught, and the inoffensive light in which it was viewed, than the knowledge that its success did not rouse the bigotry of the intolerant and tyrannical Muhammedan government under which he lived.

Nanac did not deem either of his sons, before mentioned, worthy of the succession to his spiritual functions, which he bequeathed to a Cshatriya of the Tehun tribe, called Lehana, who had long been attached to him, and whom he had initiated in the sacred mysteries of his sect, clothed in the holy mantle of a Fakir, and honoured with the name of Angad<sup>18</sup>, which, according to some commentators, means *own* body.

\* *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812.

\*\* The sacred volume of the Sikhs. The chief who gave me this copy, sent it at night, and with either a real or affected reluctance, after having obtained a promise that I would treat it with great respect. I understand, however, that the indefatigable research of Mr. Colebrooke has procured not only the *Adi Grant'h*, but also the *Dasima Padshah ka Grant'h*; and that, consequently, he is in possession of the two most sacred books of the Sikhs.

1. Sikh or Sicsha, is a Sanscrit word, which means a disciple, or devoted follower. In the Penjabi it is corrupted into Sikh : it is a genera} term, and applicable to any person that follows a particular teacher.

2. This village, or rather town, for such it has become, is now called Raypur [Talwandi Rai Bhoi, at present called Nankana Sahib]. It is situated on the banks of The Beyah, or Hyphasis [It is not situated on the bank of Bias or of any other river. It is situated to the south-west of Lahore, West Pakistan],
3. He is called, by some authors, Kalu Vedi; but Vedi is a name derived from his tribe or family.
4. Several Sikh authors have been very precise in establishing the date of the consummation of this marriage, which they fix in the month of Asarh, of the Hindu era of Vicramaditya, 1545 [1488 A.D.]
5. [It was, in fact, Sri Chand who became an ascetic and founded the Udasi order of the Sikhs. Dharam Chand was the son of Lachhmi Das whose descendants are known as Nanak — potras.]
6. Bala Sandhu, who gave this advice, continued, through Nanak's life, to be his favourite attendant and disciple.
7. The veneration which the Hindus have for the snake is well known; and this tradition, like many others, proves the attachment of the Sikh writers to that mythology, the errors of which they pretend to have wholly abandoned.
8. Ray, a title inferior to that of a Rajah, generally applied to the Hindu chief of a village, or small district.
9. This remarkable anecdote in Nanak's life is told very differently by different Sikh authors. I have followed the narrative of *Bhacta Mall* They all agree in Nanak's having, at this period, quitted the occupations of the world, and become Fakir.
10. Bhai Guru Vali [Gurdas Bhalla], author of the *Gyana Ratnavali* [*Bhagat Mal*, *Bhagat Ratnavali*, *Var xi*], a work written in the Sikh dialect of the Punjabi.
11. Though his biographers have ascribed miracles to Nanak, we never find that he pretended to work any : on the contrary, he derided those who did, as deriving power from evil spirits.



12. It is believed that this work of Nanac has been incorporated in the first part of the *Adi Granth* [In fact, the *Pran-sangli* was not included in the *Adi Granth* by Guru Arjan, its compiler and editor ]
- 13 This interview must have taken place in 1526 or 1527; as it is stated to have been immediately after Daulat Khan Lodi had visited Panipat, in 1526; where that prince had fought, and subdued Ibrahim, emperor of Hindustan,
14. Recluse penitents, who, by means of mental and corporeal mortifications, have acquired a command over the powers of nature.
- 15 Kiratipur Dehra, on the banks of Ravi, or Hydraots. [This place situated on the western bank is known as Kartarpur near Dera Baba Nanak. situated on the eastern bank ]
16. [This garment is a cloak, known as '*chola sahib*' and is at present in possession of the Bedi descendants of the Guru],
17. He is, throughout this sketch, called Nanac, Muhammadan historian generally term him Nanac Shah, to denote his being a Fakir, the name of Shah being frequently given to men of celebrity in that sect. The Sikhs, in speaking of him, call him Baba Nanac, father Nanac, or Nanac the teacher; and their writers term him Nanac Nirankari, which means Nanac the omnipresent. [Etymologically 'Nirankari' means 'of Nirankar' the devotee of the formless God.]
18. This fanciful etymology represents the word Angad as a compound of the Sanscrit Ang, which signifies *body*, and the Persian *kehud*, which signifies *own*. This mixture of language is quite common in the jargon of the Penjab.

## ACCOUNT OF THE SHIKHS<sup>1</sup> - NANUKU

W. Ward\*

The founder of this sect was *Nanuku*, a Hindoo of the Kshutriyu cast, born in the year 1469, at Rai-Bhoe-dee Tulu-wundee, a village in the district of Majha, in the Punjab.

Sir John Malcolm has related<sup>2</sup> a number of particulars respecting the life and travels of Nanuku, the substance of which is, that he discovered an early attachment to a devout life, which his father found it impossible to counteract; and at length became famous as a prophet: according to Bhaee-Gooroo-Vulee [Gurdas Bhalla], author of the *Gnanu-Rutnavulee*, [*Bhagat Mala Bhagat Ratānavali, Var xi*] a work in the Sikh dialect, he travelled to all the sacred places of the Hindoos and Musulmans, and even to Mecca. In these journies, as the author is informed by a learned Sikh employed in the Serampore printing-office, he obtained many disciples, and at the time of his death, which happened when he was advanced in years, left not less than 100,000 persons in different countries who were attached to him as their religious guide.

Nanuku appears to have resembled Choitunyu, and many other Hindoos who have been celebrated for their attachment to forms of devotion, in preference to barren speculations and religious shews.

He maintained the doctrine of the divine unity, which, it is probable, he learned from the Musulman mendicants, with whom he was very familiar; further, that God dwells in the devout, and that this divine inhabitation renders the ascetic an object of reverence and even of worship; and that hence it became a duty to seek the society of devout mendicants. The other two points most insisted upon by him were, devout attachment to the deity, and a harmless behaviour towards all creatures.—To promote the spirit of devotion, Nanuku composed a number of sacred hymns in praise of the Deity, which have a place in the *Adee-Grunthu*, in which work repeating the names of God is enjoined on the Shikhs.

This reformer dealt very mildly with the two systems which he rejected, those of the Hindoos and Musulmans, and in consequence he left many customs indifferent : he however dissuaded his disciples from expecting any benefit from the worship of idols, and other ceremonies connected with the Hindoo mythology.

Nanuku had two sons, Shree-chundru and Lukshmee-dasu. His family now resides at Dehura, by the river Ravee, where Nanuku died; and from whence, as the Shikhs say, he ascended to heaven in his bodily state, his garments only being found after his death. His disciples took these garments, and burnt them instead of the body; but Sir John Malcolm says, that a small piece of one of his garments is still exhibited at the temple dedicated to this mendicant at Dehura, where the objects of worship are the Shikh shastrus. Images of Nanuku are never made; though paintings of him are to be seen in many places.

Nanuku, before his death, passing by his own relations, appointed Ungudu [Angad], a favourite disciple, to succeed him.

\* *A View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos*, Serampore, Vol. II, 1816.

1. T. he followers of Nanuku are sometimes called Gooroo-mookhee, “from the mouth of the teacher,” but generally Shikhs, from Shishyu, a disciple. [It is, in fact, the script of their language which is called *Gurmukhi* and not the Sikh people themselves—GS.]
2. In his *Sketch of the Hindoos*, Asiatic Researches, Vol. xi. [Sir John Malcolm’s essay is entitled the *Sketch of the Sikhs* and not of the ‘Hindoos’—GS.]

## NANAK SHAHIS

H. H. Wilson\*

A sect of much greater importance is that which originated with Nanak Shah, and which, from bearing at first only a religious character came, in time, to be a political and national distinction, through the influence of Muhammadan persecution and individual ambition. The enterprising policy of Govind Sinh and the bigotry of Aurangzeb converted the peaceful tenets of Nanak into a military code, and his speculative disciples into the warlike nation of the Sikhs. It is not, however, in their political capacity that we are now to consider them, but as the professors of a peculiar form of faith, which branches into various sub-divisions, and is by no means restricted to the Punjab. At the same time it is unnecessary to detail the tenets and practices of the Sikhs, as that has been already performed in a full and satisfactory manner.

The Sikhs, or Nanak Shahis, are classed under seven distinctions, all recognising Nanak as their primitive instructor, and all professing to follow his doctrines, but separated from each other by variations of practice, or by a distinct and peculiar teacher. Of these the first is the sect of the Udasis.

### UDASIS

These may be regarded as the genuine disciples of Nanak, professing, as the name denotes, indifference to worldly vicissitudes. They are purely religious characters devoting themselves to prayer and meditation, and usually collected in *Sangats*, colleges or convents; they also travel about to places of pilgrimage, generally in parties of some strength. Individuals of them are to be met with in most of the chief cities of Hindustan, living under the patronage of some man of rank or property, although they never solicit alms; and although ascetics, they place no merit in wearing mean garments or dispensing altogether with clothes. On the contrary, they are, in general, well dressed, and allowing the whiskers and beard to grow, are not infrequently of a venerable and imposing appearance. Though usually practising celibacy, it does not appear to be a necessary condition amongst the Sikhs to be found in the Gangetic provinces : they are usually the ministrant priests ; but their office consists chiefly in reading and expounding the writings of Nanak and Govind Sinh, as collected in the *Adi Granth* and *Das Padshah ka Granth*. The perusal is enlivened by the chanting, occasionally, of Hindi *Padas* and *Rekhtas*, the compositions of Kabir, Mira Bai, Sur Das, and others. With that fondness for sensible objects of reverence which characterises the natives of India, the Book is also worshipped, and rupees, flowers, and fruits are presented by the votaries, which become, of course, the property of the officiating Udasi.<sup>1</sup> In return, the Udasi not uncommonly adopts the presentation of the *Prasada*, and at the close of the ceremony sweetmeats are distributed amongst the congregation. In some of the establishments at Banaras the service is held in the evening after sunset, and the singing and feasting continue through a great part of the night. Many of the Udasis are well read in Sanskrit, and are expounders of the Vedanta philosophy, on which the tenets of Nanak are mainly founded.<sup>2</sup>

The Udasi sect was established by Dharamchand, the grandson of Nanak<sup>3</sup>, through whom the line of the Sage was continued, and his descendants, known by the name of Nanak Putras, are still found in the Punjab, where they are treated by the Sikhs with especial veneration.

The doctrine taught by Nanak appears to have differed but little from that of Kabir, and to have deviated but inconsiderably from the Hindu faith in general. The whole body of poetical and mythological fiction was retained, whilst the liberation of the spirit from the delusive deceits of Maya, and its purification by acts of benevolence and self-denial, so as to make it identical even in life with its divine source, were the great objects of the devotee. Associated with these notions was great chariness of animal life, whilst with Nanak, as well as with Kabir, universal tolerance was a dogma of vital importance, and both laboured to persuade Hindus and Muhammadans that the only essential part of their respective creeds were common to both, and that they should discard the varieties of practical detail, or the corruptions of their teachers for the worship of One only Supreme, whether he was termed *Allah* or *Hari*. How far these doctrines are still professed by the Nanak Shahis, may be inferred from the translations in the eleventh volume of the Researches, to which the following may be added as part of the service solemnized at the Sikh Sangat<sup>4</sup> at

Banaras.

HYMN

Thou art the Lord—to thee be praise.

All life is with thee.

Thou art my parents, I am thy child -

All happiness is derived from thy clemency.

No one knows thy end.

Highest Lord amongst the highest—

Of all that exists Thou art the regulator.

And all that is from Thee obeys Thy will.

Thy movements—Thy pleasure—Thou only knowest.

Nanak, Thy slave, is free-will offering unto thee. The Priest then says—

Meditate on the *Sabeb* of the Book [*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*], and exclaim *Wab Guru*. The People accordingly repeat—

*Wab Guru — Wab Guru Ki Fateh.*

The Priest -

Meditating on Sri chandra, exclaim *Wab Guru*. The People—

*Wab Guru — Wab Guru Ki Fateh.*

HYMN

Love, and fix thy whole heart upon Him—

The world is bound to thee by Prosperity—

No one is another's.

Whilst prosperity endures many will come;

And sit with thee and surround thee;

But in adversity they will fly,

And not one will be near thee.

The woman of the house who loves thee,

And is ever in thy bosom,

When the spirit quits the body,

Will fly with alarm from the dead.

Such is the way of the world. With all on which we place affection;

Do thou, Nanak, at thy last hour,

Rely alone upon Hari. Priest as before—

Meditating on the Saheb of the Book [*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*], &c. People as before —

*Wab Guru &c.*

HYMN

My holy teacher is he who teaches clemency —

The heart is awake within ; who seeks may find.

Wonderful is that rosary, every bead of which is the breath.

Lying apart in its arbour, “it knows what cometh to pass.

The Sage is he who is merciful; the merciless is a butcher.

Thou wieldest the knife and regardlessly exclaimest :

What is a goat, what is cow, what are animals ?

But the *Sabeb* declared that the blood of all is the same.

Saints, Prophets, and Seers have all passed in death.

Nanak, destroy not life for the preservation of the body.

That desire of life which is in the heart do thou, brother, repress.

Nanak, calling aloud, says : take refuge with Hari. Priest as before —

Meditating on the [*Guru Granth*] Saheb, &c. People as before —

\* *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, Sushil Gupta, Calcutta, 1958 [first published in the *Asiatic Researches*, XVI, 1828, XVII 1882; Bishop's College Press, 1846; reprinted 1862].

1. [The *Guru Granth Sahib* is not worshipped as an image, but in view of its size, it is placed on a small cot, called *Manji*, for convenience of reading. The offerings are for the general fund of the temples and are not unoften put in locked boxes or pots kept there for the purpose.]
2. [The teachings of Guru Nanak are not founded on any particular school of Hindu philosophy. They are of his independent thinking.]
3. [The Udasi order was established by Sri Chand son of Guru Nanak and not by his grandson.]
4. Lit. Congregation; also a Sikh Gurdawra or temple.
5. For further specimens see *Journal of the As. Soc. of Bengal*, XIX, S21-33, and XX, 314-20, 487-502 : Translation of the *Vichitra Natak*, by Capt. G. Siddons.

Described by Sir John Malcolm, in the eleventh volume of the *Asiatic Researches*. The Sikh priest to whom he alludes (page 198) as one of his authorities, was afterwards well known to me, and was an individual in every way worthy of confidence. His name was Atma Ram, and although advanced in years, he was full of energy and intelligence, combining with them extreme simplicity and kindliness of disposition. The old man was a most favourable and interesting specimen of the Punjabi nation and disciples of Nanak. He died a few years ago in Calcutta.

## NANAC THE TEACHER

Lieut.-Colonel Steinbach\*

An enemy of discord, he [Guru Nanak] treated the convictions of others with great deference, though he firmly maintained that they were founded in error; and coupling this course of teaching with an extremely simple and devout manner of life, he neither created cabals among the people whom he visited, nor raised up personal enemies and persecutors. The result was a very extensive conversion of his countrymen from the Brahminical and Mahomedan religions to a belief in pure deism. The new disciples of Nanak called themselves Sikhs—a term derived from the Sanscrit, and applicable to the followers of any particular teacher. It has remained with the people to this moment. At length, after a few years spent in pilgrimages and peregrinations even to Mecca and Medinah, Nanak committed his views and opinions to paper, producing a book of instructions to his followers. Nanac's last journey was from Moolton to Kinterpore [Kartarpur] on the banks of Ravee, where he died, after giving proofs of Divine confidence by the performance of what the people supposed to be miracles. Nanac was succeeded in the office of teacher of the new doctrines by a low caste man, named Lehana, who had long been his most faithful and attached servant and disciple, and to whom he bequeathed his mantle and the title or name of Angad. Angad lived but a short time, and was in like manner succeeded by a menial of the name of Amera DOS. Both of these men advanced the interests of the Sikh religion by their piety and austerities, and were further aided in the work of proselytism by sundry fortunate accidents, which impressed the people with a confidence in *their enjoyment* of the immediate patronage of the Almighty. ...

... [According to Guru Nanak] There is no God but one God. "A hundred thousand of Mahomets, a million of Brahmas, Vishnus, and a hundred thousand Ramas stand at the gate of the Most High. These all perish. God alone is immortal."

God made all men alike. He created no distinctions of caste; therefore, all such divisions are offensive to the Most High.

The worship of idols is offensive to the Supreme Power; therefore, all ceremonies in which such false worship is encouraged are forbidden.

"Really good men," according to Nanac, "will enjoy paradise; those who have no claim to the name of good, and yet are not bad, shall undergo another probation by revisiting the world in the human form; and the bad will animate the bodies of animals."

Charity to the poor, and most especially to those who devote themselves to a holy life, is acceptable to the Most High.

It is lawful to bear arms in defence of the *Khalsa* or Sikh commonwealth, and neither to lament the loss of life nor of property in the maintenance of the cause of religion.

It is lawful to encourage proselytism and to admit as disciples of the Sikh religion those who sincerely abjure the errors of their ancient faith.

\* *The Punjab : Being a Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, London. 1846.

## HISTORY OF GOOROO NANUK

W. L. M'Gregor\*

The Sikhs, who inhabit the Punjab and hold possession of the country, had their origin, like other nations, in small beginnings: but unlike those of Europe, instead of making conquest their first object, the Sikhs began by uniting themselves into a distinct religious sect, or offset from the Hindoos, having religious tenets of their own, and obeying, as their head, a teacher, or *Gooroo*.

Some native historians explain the word *Gooroo* to be derived from *Giroh*, a crowd or assemblage of people of different castes. But the more general acceptation of the word '*Gooroo*' is that significant of teacher, and the followers of this teacher are named Sikhs or learners.

The first *Gooroo*, or teacher, among the Sikhs was Nanuk (Bedee) and the last was Govind Singh (Sodee).

Nanuk was born in the year of the Hijera 892, corresponding to the year of the Christian era 1468<sup>1</sup> and to 1525 of Bikermajeet, in the 32nd year of the reign of Belol (Lodi). Nanuk's father, whose name was Kalloo of the Chuttree caste, was a native of the village of Tilwundy, but Nanuk was not born there, though stated to be so by both Forster and Malcolm. Tilwundy is about sixty miles from Lahore (Forster), and twenty south of Wuzeerabad, on the route from thence to Umritsir in latitude 32° 4'—(Thornton). In the time of Forster (1782) the village was known by the name of Rhaypore.<sup>2</sup> In the account of the birth of Nanuk it is called 'Tilwundy-Rae-Malar [Rai Bular] meaning "wisdom and wealth," and the change to Raepore was probably given to indicate the "city of wisdom," from the circumstance of Nanuk having been supposed to have been born there, or at least of his father being an inhabitant of the village.<sup>3</sup>...

Nanuk's intellect was precocious. At the early age of four, he was sent to the village school, the master whereof "was a Deist, and wished to inculcate the same principle in his youthful scholar, but the boy, to his great astonishment, instead of yielding implicit credence, enquired of his teacher, "What proofs he could give him of the existence of a God?" Such a question naturally inspired the man with a wish to know more of his scholar. ...As Nanuk advanced in years, he became partial to fukeers, dividing his property amongst them; and though he wanted proof of the existence of a Deity in his boyhood, he soon became a firm believer in one.

His partiality to the fukeers led him often into serious scrapes with his father : one is related by Malcolm. Nanuk having received a sum of money from his father to purchase salt at one village, in order to sell it at another, happened on the road to fall in with some fukeers, with whom he wished to commence a conversation, but they were so weak from want of victuals, which they had not tasted for three days, that they could only reply to the observations of Nanuk by bending their heads, "and other civil signs of acquiescence.

Nanuk, affected by their situation, said to his companion, "My father has sent me to deal in salt with a view to profit; but the gain of this world is unstable and profitless; my wish is to relieve these poor men, and to obtain that gain which is permanent and eternal." His companion [Bala Sandhu] replied, "Thy resolution is good : do not delay its execution." Nanuk immediately distributed his money to the hungry fukeers, who, after they had gained strength from the refreshment which it obtained for them, entered into a long discourse with him on the unity of God, with which he was much delighted. His father did not at all approve of this mode of laying out his money, and though his sister, Nanukee, interceded, Nanuk, no doubt, was punished. His father used his utmost endeavours to turn the attention of his son to worldly matters, and with this view built a shop for him at Sultanpure, in the Bist Jalindhur, and furnished it with various articles of merchandise; but, instead of turning them to any account, he bestowed the whole on fukeers.<sup>4</sup> Failing in his object, by this means, his father insisted on his marrying; thinking, no doubt, that this step would cause him to renounce his Wandering life. He was accordingly married at Wittala; but he speedily left his home and went to the jungle in search of fukeers; and wherever he heard of them, there he proceeded. Nanuk had now

publicly become one of them; and his natural talents, though still a boy, soon won for him a high place among them. He became a teacher at the early age of eleven years, and had followers; among the rest, Murdana, a musician, who afterwards attended him in his travels, and from being a Mussulman, became a convert to the tenets of Nanuk. Two others of his followers are celebrated : the one named Boodha, and the other Lehna. To these Nanuk taught his doctrines, which were those of pure Deism.

Nanuk endeavoured to conciliate, or reconcile, both Hindoos and Mussulmans, by forbidding the former to worship images and idols; while he deprecated the intolerance of the Mussulmans to the Hindoos; and above all, forbade the slaughter of the cow,<sup>5</sup> an offence which is to this day visited by the severest punishment among the Sikhs—the loss of life being often the penalty incurred for killing the animal.

The precepts of Nanuk were those of peace with all mankind : and he inculcated an abhorrence of war among people believing in God, on whom his firm reliance was placed for everything; and acting on this principle, he was regardless of worldly matters, and divided every thing he had with his follow-creatures.

On the whole, Nanuk's tenets evince a zealous desire to remove all the abuses and idolatries of the Hindoos, and the intolerance of the Mussulmans.

Nanuk's time was spent in offering praises to God in poetical effusions; and he made no distinction between Hindoos and Mussulmans. The poems of Nanuk are celebrated. He traversed Hindostan and Scinde; and, according to some authors, visited Mecca. He appears to have been a match for the Moollahs, as the following anecdote, related by Malcolm, will show :—"How dardest thou, infidel," said the offended Mahomedan priest, "turn thy feet towards the House of God ?" "Turn them, if you can," said the pious but indignant Nanuk, "in a direction where the House of God is not."

Nanuk did not deny the mission of Mahomed, though he reprobated his oppressive cruelty and intolerance to the Hindoos, and, above all, the slaughter of the cow; for these crimes he believed the prophet had justly died. Nanuk considered himself a successor to Mahomed; and that he was destined to restore, by his example, precepts, and writings, the whole of mankind to the worship of God. He urged the Hindoos and Mussulmans to read their Scriptures, and obey the doctrines taught there. But while inculcating faith in one Supreme Deity, and offering their praises to Him alone, he did not forget that good works were equally incumbent; and that to these tenets of faith and works they should look for mercy, and it mattered little to what caste they belonged.

The following extract from Malcolm's work will give a sublime idea of Nanuk's notion of the Deity, and of the worthlessness of men :—"A hundred thousand of Mahomeds," said Nanuk, "a million of Brahmas, Vishnus, and a hundred thousand Ramas stand at the gate of the Most High; these all perish. God alone, is immortal. Yet men, who unite in the praise of God, are not ashamed of living in contention with each other, which proves that the evil spirit has subdued all. He alone is a true Hindoo whose heart is just, and he only is a good Mussulman whose life is pure."

Nanuk was believed by his followers to have had an interview with the Supreme God; which he thus describes:—"One day Nanuk heard a voice from above, exclaiming, 'Nanuk, approach !' He replied, 'Oh God ! what power have I to stand in thy presence ?' The voice said, 'Close thine eyes.' Nanuk shut his eyes and advanced; he was told to look up; he did so, and heard the word, '*Wa ! Guruji,*' or '*Well done ! Teacher.*' After this. God said, 'Nanuk ! I have sent thee into the world in the Kali-yug (or depraved age) — go and bear my name !' Nanuk said, 'Oh God ! how can I bear the mighty burthen ? If my age was extended to tens of millions of years, if I drank of immortality, and my eyes were formed of the sun and moon, and were never closed, still, oh God ! I could not presume to take charge of Thy wonderful name !' 'I will be thy Guru (teacher),' said God, and thou shalt be a Guru to all mankind, thy sect shall be great in the world, and thy word Puri Puri; the word of the Bairagi is Ram ! Ram ! ; that of the Sanyase, Om, Nama ! Narayen ! ; and the word of the Yogis. Ades ! Ades ! and of salutation of the Mahomedans is, Salam Alikam; and that of the



Hindoos, Ram ! Ram ! ; but the word of thy sect shall be Guru, and I will forgive the crimes of thy disciples. The place of worship of the Bairagis is called Ram Sala; that of the Yogis, Asan; that of the Sanyasis, Mat; but that of thy tribe shall be Dherma Sala. Thou must teach unto thy followers three lessons : the first, to worship my name; the second, charity; the third, ablution. They must not abandon the world, and they must do ill to no being; for into every being have I infused breath; and whatever I am, thou art, for between us there is no difference. It is a blessing that thou art sent into the Kali-yug. ‘After this, ‘*Wa ! Guru,*’ or ‘*Well done ! Teacher !*’ was pronounced from the mouth of the Most High Guru, or teacher, (God,) and Nanuk came to give light and freedom to the universe.” (Malcolm.)

The above passage, as Malcolm justly observed, “gives a sufficient view of the ideas which the Sikhs entertain of their faith,”

Nanuk believed in metempsychosis, and that really good men would enjoy paradise; while those who had no claim to the name of good, but yet were not bad, would undergo another probation, by revisiting the world in the human form; and that the bad would animate the bodies of animals, particularly dogs and cats : but it appears from the Punjabee authors, that Nanuk was acquainted with the Mahomedan doctrine regarding the fall of man and a future state, and that he represented it to his followers as a system in which God, by shewing a heaven and hell, had in his goodness, held out future reward and punishment to man, whose will he had left free, to invite him to good action and deter him from bad.”— *Malcolm*.

The peaceful tenets inculcated by Nanuk form a pleasing contrast to the present warlike and quarrelsome habits of the Sikhs;<sup>6</sup> but the cause of this change will be manifested in the sequel.

Towards the latter part of his life, - Nanuk dwelt on the banks of the Ravee, and established his family there. He had two sons : the one named Luchmee Dass, and the other Sree Chund; the former became a man of the world. He had two sons, whose descendants remain at the present day. Sree Chund was a fukeer, and from him are descended the Oodasee fukeers.

Some say that Nanuk had an uncle named Lalloo, whose son was called Luchmee Doss. Lalloo had a great esteem for Nanuk, calling him his son, and Luchmee Nanuk’s servant. Nanuk formed a very strong attachment to Luchmee, saying they had the same body and soul, and there was no difference betwixt them. On this account the descendants of Luchmee Doss were considered the same as those of Nanuk, and it is said that Nanuk had in reality, no descendants. Those of Sree Chund are named Nanuk Pootras, or children of Nanuk.<sup>7</sup>

Boodha, one of Nanuk’s followers, lived to a great age, Boodha his story is curious.

One day Baba Nanuk was sitting at the village of Toonga, and being thirsty he called on Boodha, who was feeding his cows near the place, to bring him some water in a vessel (lotah) : Boodha replied, that “the water was at a great distance;” but added, “if you will look after my cows, I will bring you some.” Nanuk said, “*There* is a tank; bring water from thence.” Boodha replied, “There is certainly a tank near at hand, but it is dried up.” Nanuk, rejoined, “Go and see.” Boodha went towards the tank, and to his surprise found it filled with water, though he had seen it dry in the morning. He filled the vessel and brought it to Nanuk: and from witnessing the miracle, Boodha became a follower or disciple of Nanuk, who bestowed his blessing on him. This man lived in the time of the Gooroos Urjan and Hur Govind. The former requested him to point out the tank from which he had taken the water, in order that he might construct a new one; which he did, and called it *Umritsir*, or the water of immortality. Boodha had two sons, and lived at the village of Ram Dass.

Another follower of Nanuk, and his successor, was named Lehna, of the Chuttree caste. This Lehna was on his way to Juwala Mookhee, a great place of worship among the Hindoos, near Kote Kangra. On the road he met Nanuk, and from his preaching became a convert and follower of the Gooroo.

Nanuk died at the age of 71, in the year 963 [946] of the Hijera, and A.D. 1539, in the first year of the reign of Akbar[’s father Humayun]. He reigned as Gooroo sixty years, five months, and seven days. His tomb (*summad*) is on the bank of the Ravee, five miles from Kulanoor. Vast crowds collect annually to perform certain ceremonies in commemoration of the day of his decease.— *Forster*. The place is named Keertipore [Kartarpur]; and according to Malcolm, “a small piece of Nanuk’s garment [called *chola sahib*] is exhibited to pilgrims, as a sacred relic, at his Dhurmasala, or temple.”

Nanuk, as the founder of the Sikhs, is greatly venerated by that nation, though they appear to have entirely forgotten his tenets of peace. In the time of Nanuk, his followers were probably few in number, and leading quiet and peaceable lives; no notice was taken of them by the Mussulman rulers of the Punjab, and there is no mention made of them in the history of the latter. It is stated by *Forster*, that “in one of Baber’s expeditions into India, Nanuk having been apprehended by some of his soldiers, was brought before that prince, who informed of the sanctity of his character, treated him with respect and indulgence”. Malcolm says, that “Baber was pleased with him, and ordered an ample maintenance to be bestowed on him, which the Sikh priest refused, observing ‘that he trusted in Him who provided for all men, and that a man of virtue and religion would consent to receive no favour or reward from men?’”

Nanuk must have commenced his ministry at eleven ....years of age, and thus spent a long life in propagating his doctrines. By the side of a well, and under the shade of the peepul tree, did Nanuk discourse to his followers; he required no costly building for this purpose, and the word *deyrah* or tent, is often alluded to as the place where he preached; with no other protection than that afforded by a tent, he travelled over the whole of Hindostan, and visited Persia and Arabia. After completing these travels, he put off the fukeer’s dress, though he continued to instruct his followers. This change in his dress drew upon him the violent opposition of the Hindoos, and according to Malcolm, “he enraged the yogiswaras<sup>8</sup> so much, that they tried all their powers of enchantment to terrify him. Some assumed the shape of lions and tigers, others hissed like snakes, one fell in a shower of fire and another tore the stars from the firmament.”

On Nanuk being required to astonish them by some miracle, he replied, “I have nothing to exhibit worthy of your regard. A holy teacher has no defence but the purity of his doctrine. The world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable.”

Nanuk is described by all authors as a man of great moral courage, and possessed of powers of eloquence which never failed to produce a great effect on his hearers. His object was to prove, by his precepts, example, and writings, that he was an inspired teacher. He harangued the people, who collected about him wherever he went; and he employed his leisure hours in composition. As an example of his unbending character it may be mentioned, that he was invited by a Rajah<sup>9</sup> to renounce his mode of life and austere habits, and to accept the enjoyment of all human luxuries. But all such offers were made in vain. By his powerful eloquence and arguments he even converted this Rajah, and resided with him during a considerable length of time, in the course of which he was employed in composing the *Pran Sunculee*, a sort of text book for the guidance of his followers. This was an early production; it was finished soon after he had assumed the life and habits of a fukeer, and was afterwards incorporated in the first part of the *Grunth*.<sup>10</sup> Miracles are attributed to Nanuk by his followers, but he never pretended to any himself. Filling the tank with water may be considered as one, and was the cause of Boodha becoming his follower. Malcolm relates, that “When Nanuk was quite a youth, and employed to tend cattle in the fields he happened to repose himself under the shade of a tree, and as the sun declined towards the west, its rays fell on his face, when a large black snake advancing to the spot where he lay, raised itself from the ground and interposed its spread hood between Nanuk and the sun’s rays. This was observed by the chief of the district, and from the great veneration in which the snake is held by the Hindoos, was no doubt received as a sure proof of the future greatness of Nanuk.

Nanuk’s precepts for the guidance of his followers are contained in the *Grunth*, or Holy Book of the Sikhs; it was begun, and the first part of it written, by Nanuk and his immediate successors. This part is

named *Adi-Grunth*, to distinguish it from the second portion, composed exclusively by the great reformer Gooroo Govind[Singh], Nanuk's successor. This second part is accordingly named the *Dasuma Padshah ka Grunth*, or "Book of the tenth king." The religious tenets of Nanuk, as contained in the *Adi-Grunth*, continued in force, with slight modifications, until the time of Gooroo Govind, who effected a total reform in the religion, manners, and habits of the Sikhs; and it is now in vain to look for the observance of any of his peaceful doctrines,<sup>11</sup> excepting among the descendants of Sree Chund, or the Nanuk Pootras.<sup>12</sup> Before the time of Govind, however, some of the Gooroos had armed their followers, but this was chiefly done for the purpose of defence; with this exception, all the tenets of Nanuk were religiously preserved until Govind Singh gave an entirely new character to the Sikhs, who from being quiet and peaceable, became at once a warlike tribe, spreading terror and desolation wherever they went.

The Grunth is written in the Goormoooki character, "a modified species of the Nagari." It is placed in the holy temple of Umritsir, and constantly referred to in all matters by the Sikhs. Though the followers of Nanuk were forbidden to worship, or pay homage to any object but the Supreme Deity, they have so far forgotten his precepts as to bestow adoration on his own name. He is considered a saint by them, and they pay him divine honours, addressing him in their prayers as their saviour and mediator, and until his tomb was washed away by the Ravee, the Sikhs made pilgrimages thereto.<sup>13</sup>

The simplicity and purity of the doctrines taught and inculcated by Nanuk, were the means of drawing towards him many who had troubled themselves but little with the complicated structure of the Hindoo religion, polluted, as it had become, by the worship of images and idols. Nanuk at once directed their attention to the One-existing Supreme Deity, who was endowed by him with the great attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. He it was who knew all their actions, and their innermost thoughts. He it was who was ever present through space and time; the only Immortal : all others perished and were lost ! Nothing was created without Him, and what men viewed with awe and wonder, emanated from His Omnipotent hand. All the events which occurred were regulated by His presence, and every gift bestowed on man was supplied by His bounty. No place was without His presence. "Turn my feet," said Nanuk, "to where the house of God is not,"— showing clearly that the mind of the teacher was deeply imbued with the great truth that all space was filled with Him. The most insignificant animal that crawled on the earth, the least complicated flower that decked the face of the desert, were alike the work of the same Divine hand that formed the elephant and wide-spreading banian tree ! Trusting to this bountiful Being, Nanuk despised all worldly riches, unless in so far as they served to relieve his fellow-creatures; and charity to all mankind was one of the precepts which he was induced to preach to his followers, next to devotion to the Deity. The life of a fellow-creature . was sacred in his eyes, for the same breath was breathed into them all by the Almighty, and was only to be taken away by Him. Murder, war, and discord, whereby, the lives of men were sacrificed, he deprecated; and cruelty and intolerance were held in abomination by him, as heinous sins.

The doctrine of the fall of man, by a first act of disobedience to the will of his Creator, was not admitted by Nanuk : he held that nothing was needed but a pure and holy life to insure happiness; grounded, as such must be, in a belief of the Deity ever present to watch man's actions.

\* *The History of the Sikhs*, London, 1846, Vol. I.

1. In Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs*, the year 1469 is given; but the year in the text is the correct one, since the calculation is made with both the era of the Hijera, and that of Bikermajeet. Malcolm most likely followed Forster, who also assumed 1469 as the year of Nanuk's birth, In Dow's history of Hindostan, Bikermajeet is said to have died in eighty-ninth year of the Christian era. The Mussulman authors of the history of the Sikhs preserve invariably a period of fifty-seven years between the Christian era and that of Bikermajeet, or Samvat. [Vikram Samvat 1S26, corresponding to 1469 A.D. is the correct date of the birth of Guru Nanak, as accepted by his followers.]
2. [It was then known by the name of 'Rai-Bhoi di Talwandi. 'Rhaypore' is only a misreading of Rai-Bhoi' written in Persian script. Guru Nanak was, in fact born at the village of Talwandi Rai Bhoi,' also at times called Talwandi Rai Bular, who was the Guru's contemporary and admirer.—GS]

3. [These are all conjectures of the author based on personal imagination. In the next two paragraphs also he has introduced an imaginary story which we have omitted.—GS]
4. [At Sultanpur, Nanak was employed as *modi*, a storekeeper, in the service of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodi. He did not at any stage have an independent shop there.—GS]
5. [There is nothing in the hymns of Guru Nanak to support this observation. The Sikhs abhorred the slaughter of cow on account of the usefulness of the animal in their profession of agriculture and also on account of their social regard for their Hindu neighbour and relatives.—GS]
6. [Published after the first Anglo-Sikh war as Mr Gregor's *History of the Sikhs* was, he was naturally influenced by his prejudices in his observations regarding the Sikhs.—GS]
7. [Lachhmi Das was, in fact, son of Guru Nanak himself, and had a family. It were the descendants of Lachhmi Das who were known as *Nanak-potras*.  
Sri Chand, Guru Nanak's elder son, turned an ascetic, and his followers are known as 'Udasis.'—GS]
8. Recluse penitents, who by means of mental and corporeal mortification, have acquired command over the powers of nature. —*Malcolm*.
9. [Shivnabha of a State in Ceylon.]
10. [*Pran sangli* was not considered the genuine composition of Guru Nanak and was, therefore, not accepted worthy of inclusion in the *Guru Granth Sahib* by its compiler and editor, Guru Arjun the fifth Guru. It does *not* form a part by the *Granth*.—GS]
11. [See footnote 6, p. 127.]
12. ['Nanak-Potras' are the descendants of Lachhmi Das and not of Sri Chand who was of ascetic nature and was the founder of the order of the 'Udasis'—GS]
13. [The Sikhs do not worship Guru Nanak like the Hindus worshipping their *avatars* as incarnations of God. They show the highest respect to him as due to a great saint.—GS]

## GURU NANUK\*

Wm. Murray, Henry T. Prinsep, etc.

Whilst the Punjab was during the sixteenth century, a scene of endless contentions for power amongst foreign races, a religious sect, humble in its origin, unpretending in its primitive character, silently arose amidst the tumult of arms, and in spite of persecution, laid the foundations of a great state, which might have exerted a permanent influence upon the political destinies of India.

Nanuk, a Hindu of the Cshatriya caste and. Vidi [Bedi] tribe, was born m A.D. 1469, at the small village of Talwandi (since become a town, and now called Rayapur) [Talwandi Rai Bhoi], on the banks of the Beas, in the district of Bhatti<sup>1</sup> and province of Lahore. His father, whose name was Calu, had one son, Nanuk, and one daughter, Nanaci, who married a Hindu named Jayram, employed as a grain-factor by Doulut Khan Lodi, afterwards governor of the Punjab.

Nanuk is represented to have been from his childhood inclined to devotion, and indifferent to worldly concerns. His father endeavoured to divert his mind from this religious tendency, and amongst other expedients, gave him money to purchase salt at one village to sell it at another, for profit. Nanuk undertook the commission, and accompanied by a servant, named Bala, of the tribe of Sandhu, proceeded towards the village where he was to buy the salt. On the road he fell in with some Fakirs (holy mendicants), who were suffering from want of food, which they had not tasted for three days. Nanuk, affected by their condition, observed to Bala, "The gain of this world is transient, I wish to relieve these poor men, and thus obtain gain which is eternal." His companion (who became afterwards the favourite disciple of Nanuk) commended his proposal, and the money given to purchase the salt was distributed by Nanak amongst the starving Fakirs, who, when refreshed, entered into a long discourse upon the unity of God, with which the young Hindu was much delighted.

Upon his return home, his father inquired what profit he had made. "I have fed the poor," replied Nanuk, "and have thereby secured for you a gain that will endure for ever". Calu, provoked at this thoughtless prodigality, abused Nanuk, and even struck him. Ray Bolar, the ruler of the district, overheard this transaction, and, severely reproving Calu for his treatment of his son, interdicted him from ever lifting his hand against Nanuk, before whom, to the astonishment of all present, he humbled himself with profound veneration. This conduct on the part of Ray Bolar was the result of a remarkable occurrence related by Sikh writers.

When Nanuk was a youth, and employed to tend cattle in the fields, he fell asleep under a tree; but as the sun declined, its rays fell upon his face, whereupon a large black snake raised itself from the ground, and interposed its extended hood to protect Nanuk from the sun. Ray Bolar happened to pass the spot, and witnessed this unequivocal sign, as he believed, of Nanuk's sanctity and future eminence.

Calu, though obliged to treat his son with more forbearance, still hoped to detach him from his unprofitable abstractions, and in order to plunge him in worldly occupations, prevailed upon Jayram to admit his brother-in-law into partnership with him. Nanuk accordingly attended the granary of Doulut Khan, at Sultanpur; but though employed in business, his thoughts were ever engaged in devotional subjects, and fixed upon the Deity. One morning, whilst he sat in a contemplative posture, a Mahomedan Fakir approached him and exclaimed, "Oh Nanuk, quit these occupations and obtain eternal wealth." Starting up, after a pause, he distributed the contents of the granary amongst the poor, renounced all worldly occupations, and remained for three days in a pool of water, in a kind of trance, during which he is supposed to have had communication with the Prophet Khizr as the Mahomedans call Elias<sup>2</sup>.

Doulut Khan, hearing that his granary had been emptied, ordered Jayram to be cast into prison for theft; but Nanuk, when he heard of this event, proceeded to the Khan, avowed the act, and offered to be responsible for all that was deficient in the granary. Jayram's accounts were accordingly examined, when a

balance was found in his favour.

From this period, Nanuk began to practise the austerities of a holy man, and by his abstractions in the contemplation of the Divine Being, his abstinence and virtue, he acquired great celebrity. He is said to have travelled into various countries—to the different places of Hindu pilgrimage, and the Mecca—in order to reform the worship of the True God, which he perceived was degraded by the idolatry of the Hindus and the ignorance of the Mahomedans. He was accompanied in his travels by Bala Sandhu, his disciple, from whom tradition has preserved various narratives of extravagant or miraculous occurrences. Wherever he journeyed, he preached and explained to all ranks the doctrines of the unity and omnipresence of God, defending his own opinions without offending those of others; always professing himself an enemy of discord, whose sole object was to reconcile the two faiths of the Hindus and Mahomedans, by recalling them to that great original truth, the basis of both their creeds, the unity of God.

During his travels, in the year 1526, Nanuk was introduced to the Emperor Baber, before whom he maintained his doctrine with firmness and eloquence. Baber is said to have been pleased with the interview, and to have offered him an ample maintenance, which Nanuk refused, observing, that he trusted for support to Him who provided for all, and from whom alone a man of religion and virtue should accept favour or reward.

When Nanuk returned from his travels he cast off the garments of a Fakir, but he continued to give instructions to his now numerous disciples. He appears at this time to have experienced violent opposition from the Hindu zealots, who charged his doctrine with impiety, and when he visited Batala, the Yogi-swaras (recluses, who, by means of corporeal mortifications, are supposed to acquire a command over the powers of nature) were so enraged, that they strove, though vainly, to terrify him by their feats in enchantment, assuming (says one author) the shapes of tigers and serpents. When Nanuk was asked to exhibit some proof of his supernatural powers, he replied : “A holy teacher has no defence but the purity of his doctrine; the world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable.”

Nanuk is said to have proceeded to Multan, where he communed with the Pirs, or Mahomedan saints, of that country.

Thence he went to Kirtipur [Kartarpur], on the Ravi, where he died<sup>3</sup>, and was buried near the bank of the river, which has since overflowed his tomb. Kirtipur [Kartarpur] continues to be a place of religious resort to his followers, and a small piece of Nanuk’s garment [known as *Chola Sahib*], is exhibited to pilgrims, as a sacred relic, at his dharmsala, or temple.

Nanuk is generally termed by Mahomedan historians, Nanuk Shah, to denote his having been a Fakir. The Sikhs call him Baba Nanuk, ‘Father Nanuk’, or Guru Nanuk, ‘Nanuk the Teacher;’ and their writers term him, Nanuk Nirankar [Nirankari], which means, ‘Nanuk the Omnipresent.’<sup>4</sup> His character is fairly drawn by Sir John Malcolm : “The great eminence he attained, and the success with which he combated the opposition he met with, afford ample reason to conclude that he was a man of more than common genius; and this favourable impression of his character will be confirmed by a consideration of the object of his life, and the means he took to accomplish it. Born in a province on the extreme verge of India, at the very point where the religion of Muhammed and the idolatrous worship of the Hindus appeared to touch, and at a moment when both these tribes cherished the most violent rancour and animosity towards each other, his great aim was to blend these jarring elements in peaceful union, and he only endeavoured to effect his purpose through the means of mild persuasion. His wish was to recall both Muhammedans and Hindus to an exclusive attention to that sublimest of all principles, which inculcates devotion to God and peace towards man. He had to combat the furious bigotry of the one, and the deep-rooted superstition of the other; but he attempted to overcome all obstacles by the force of reason and humanity; and we cannot have a more convincing proof of the general character of that doctrine which he taught, and the inoffensive light in which it was viewed, than the knowledge that its success did not rouse the bigotry of the intolerant and tyrannical Muhammedan

government under which he lived”<sup>5</sup>

Nanuk was indebted for his religious notions to the doctrines of the Kabir Pantis, or followers of Kabir,<sup>6</sup> one of the twelve disciples of the Hindu schismatic, Ramanand. Kabir assailed the whole system of idolatrous worship, ridiculed the learning of the pundits and doctrines of the Sastras, in a style peculiarly suited to the genius of his countrymen, whilst he also directed his compositions to the Musulman, as well as to the Hindu faith, and with equal severity attacked the Mullah and the *Koran*. The effect of his lessons, indirectly as well as directly, has been great, and Mr. Wilson has shown, that several of the popular sects in India are little more than ramifications from his stock. The Kabir Pantis admit of but one God, the Creator of the world,<sup>7</sup> and Nanuk taught that devotion was due but to one God; that forms were immaterial, and like the Bramin (probably a disciple of Kabir) who maintained before Secander Lodi, that all religions, if sincerely practised, were equally acceptable to God—for which he was put to death by that prince,—he held that Hindu and Mahomedan modes of worship were the same in the sight of the Deity.

The followers of Nanuk had now augmented in numbers (amounting, it is said, to 100,000) and become a distinct sect. Their present denomination is derived from the Sanscrit word *sissha*, which is a general term, meaning a disciple, or devoted follower, and has been corrupted in the Punjabi dialect into *Sikh*. He was married at an early age, and had two sons, named Srichand and Lacshmi Das. The former, who abandoned the world, had a son named Dherm Chand, who founded the sect of Udasi, and his descendants are still known as Nanukputra, ‘children of Nanuk.’ Lacshmi Das plunged into worldly pleasures, and left neither heirs nor reputation.<sup>8</sup> Nanuk did not deem either of his sons worthy to succeed to his spiritual office, which he bequeathed to a Cshatriya of the Tehan tribe, named Lehana (born at Khandur, on the bank of the Beas,<sup>9</sup> forty miles east of Lahore) whom he had initiated in the holy mantle of a Fakir, and endowed with the name or tile of Angad.

The doctrine taught by Nanuk differed little from that of Kabir, and deviated inconsiderably from the pure principles of the Hindu faith in general. “The whole body of poetical and mythological fiction was retained, whilst the liberation of the spirit from the delusive deceits of Maya, and its purification by acts of benevolence and self-denial, so as to make it identical even in life with its Divine source were the great objects of the devotee. Associated with these notions was great chariness of animal life, whilst, with Nanuk as with Kabir, universal tolerance was a dogma of vital importance, and both laboured to persuade Hindus and Mahomedans that the only essential parts of their respective creeds were common to both, and that they should discard the varieties of practical details, as the corruptions of their teachers, for the worship of one only Supreme, whether he was termed Allah or Hari.”<sup>10</sup> Nanuk’s object was to reform, not to destroy, the religion in which he was born, and he treats the Hindu creed, even its polytheism and its veneration for the cow, with respect, and lie speaks of Mahomed and his successors with moderation; condemning, however, their endeavours to propagate their faith by the sword. “That prophet,” he says, “was sent by God to do good, and to disseminate the knowledge of one God, through means of the *Koran*.” He seems to have blended, with a belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, the Hindu doctrine of the metempsychosis. In all his writings he borrowed indiscriminately from the *Koran* and the *Sastras*.

The most acceptable offerings to God, according to Nanuk, are morning praise, and the presentation of the body to him; he promised the person who did this, the Divine favour and future absorption into the Deity. “He who serves God, the fountain of all good,” says the *Adi-Granth*, “will obtain his blessing. God is served by listening to his excellencies, by meditating upon them, and by celebrating their praise : the method of which is to be obtained from a spiritual guide, who is above all the gods, and in fact. God himself.”<sup>12</sup> The following is one of the hymns sung by the Nanuk-Shahis :<sup>13</sup>

Thou art the Lord—to thee be praise.  
All life is with thee.  
Thou art my parents; I am thy child.  
All happiness is derived from thy clemency.

No one knows thy end.  
Highest Lord amongst the highest—  
Of all that exists. Thou art the Regulator,  
And all that is from thee obeys thy will.  
Thy movements, thy pleasure, thou only knowest.  
Nanuk, thy slave, is a free-will offering unto thee.

Nanuk declared that “hearing the praises of God is followed by every degree of exaltation (subject to future births), even to the dignity of the gods. Meditation upon God is followed by unspeakable gain, even by absorption in God. The Deity has created innumerable worlds; the period of creation is known only to himself.” In reply to a question from a disciple, respecting the value of outward ceremonies, Nanuk, without altogether denying the value of ceremonies, recommended mental worship as of greater importance. “The knowledge of God,” he says, “is more than all ceremonies.” He objected to separate religious societies, and persuaded his followers to unite themselves to the whole human race. “The earth, and all worlds,” he says, “are upheld by Religion, the mother of which is Compassion, who dwells with Contentment.” He commands obedience to “The Being who is unchangeable and eternal, who dwells in truth.” He compares the human body to a field, the mind to the husbandman, the praises of God to seed, and absorption into God to the fruit. Although Nanuk established his reputation for sanctity by the performance of severe ascetic penance,—living upon sand, and sleeping upon sharp pebbles,—Arjunmal declares that God is not compelled to grant blessings by any works of merit; devotion alone has this power over God.<sup>14</sup> His opinion, that the Deity is a pervading spirit, unconfined by space or locality,—

*Deus est quodcunque vides, ubicunque moveris,—*

is shewn by the remarkable answer Nanuk gave to a Mahomedan priest, who, when the former was lying on the ground, with his feet in the direction of Mecca, exclaimed, “How darest thou, infidel, turn thy feet towards the house of God ?” “Turn them, if you can,” replied Nanuk mildly “where the house of God is not.”

The pacific spirit of his doctrines is indicated by this injunction of Nanuk : “Put on armour that will harm no one; let thy coat of mail be that of understanding, and convert thy enemies to friends : fight with valour, but with no weapon but the word of God.”<sup>15</sup>

Both Nanuk and Guru Govind expressly forbid all worship of images.

Sir John Malcolm says there is no ground to conclude that caste was altogether abolished by Nanuk; though his writings had a tendency to equalize the Hindus. In the *Adi Grant'h*, he declares that vice and bad qualities are the only distinctions between men; that a person of wicked principles, however high his birth and rank, is on a level with one of the lowest. “Such a man, though he surround himself with a fence, lest he should be defiled,”—alluding to the practice of high-caste Hindus, who sometimes draw a circle round them, when they eat, to escape accidental pollution,— “deceives himself; he in fact eats with a chandala. Speaking truth is the best purifier of the body; good works the best ablution : excellence of character is confined to him who preserves himself from evil.”<sup>16</sup>

The *Adi Grant'h* is in verse, many of the chapters, written by Nanuk, are termed *Pidi* [*Pauri*], which means literally a ladder or flight of steps, and metaphorically, that by which a man ascends. Translations from this work have been given by Sir John Malcolm, Mr. Ward, and Professor Wilson.

The *Udasis* may be regarded as the genuine disciples of Nanuk, professing (as the name denotes) indifference to worldly vicissitudes. They are purely religious characters; devoting themselves to prayer and meditation, and are usually collected in sangats, colleges or convents; they also travel about to places of pilgrimage, generally in parties of some strength. They profess poverty, although they never solicit alms; and



although ascetics, they place no merit in wearing mean garments, or dispensing altogether with clothes; on the contrary they are in general well dressed, and allowing the whiskers and beard to grow, are not unfrequently of a venerable and imposing appearance. Though usually practising celibacy, it does not appear to be a necessary condition : they are usually the ministrant priests, but their office consists chiefly in reading and expounding the writings of Nanuk and Govind Singh, as collected in the *Adi Grant'h* and *Das Padshah ka Grant'h*. With that fondness for sensible objects of reverence which characterizes the natives of India, the book is also worshipped, and rupees, flowers, and fruits are presented by the votaries, which become, of course, the property of the officiating Udasi. In return, the Udasi not uncommonly adopts the presentation of the *Prasada*. Mr. Moorcroft says he had seldom met with persons of more simple, unaffected, and pious manners than the Udisis.

\* *History of the Punjab* (author not mentioned on the title page), Vol. 1, London, 1846.

1. Rayapur is a misreading of Rai Bhoi written in Persian script. It is not situated on the bank of any river. It lies to the South-West of Lahore. There was never any district by the name. It is now situated in the district of Sheikhpura (Pakistan).
2. [According to the *Purtāan Janam Sākhī* Guru Nanak is said to have been taken to *Dargah Parmeshar ki* or the Presence of the Lord.—GS]
3. His family still reside in this place. [The descendants of Guru Nanak known as Bedi Sahibzadas or Nanak-potras, continued to live at Dera Baba Nanak, a town in the district of Gurdaspur, on the eastern bank of the river, with Kartarpur on the western bank, now in Pakistan.—GS]
4. Nirankari literally means 'of Nirankar' or devoted to the Supreme Lord.
5. *Sketch of the Sikhs*—As. Res., vol. xi. p. 207.
6. Professor Wilson doubts whether such a person as Kabir ever existed, and whether his name (which signifies 'greatest') was not used as a mere cover to the innovations of some free-thinker amongst the Hindus.—As. Res., vol. xvi p. 53.

[That there is a great similarity in the teachings of Guru Nanak and Kabir, there is no doubt, and that is why Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru and the compiler of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture, included many of Kabir's hymns in the Sikh holy book. But in spite of it there is a pronounced difference between the two in respect of the outlook of life. For this the inquisitive reader is referred to the editor's introduction to this volume.]

7. The tenets of the Kabir Panthis are minutely developed by Professor Wilson, *ut ante*.
8. [The author is very much confused here. In fact, Sri Chand, the elder son of Guru Nanak, turned an ascetic, remained unmarried and left no sons. It was he who founded the Udasi order.

Lachhmi Dass the second son, was a householder and Dharm Chand was his son. The Nanak-potras or Bedi Sahibzadas are his descendants. —GS]

9. [Khadur lies between Tarn Taran and Goindwal, on the right northern bank of the river Beas, and is about five miles to the north of Goindwal.]
10. Wilson, As. Res. vol. xvii. p. 233.
11. [According to the Sikhs, Guru Nanuk was an original independent thinker on the lines indicated by him.—GS]
12. Ward, *View of the Hindus*, Vol. iii. p. 460.
13. Wilson, *ut ante*.
14. Ward, *ut ante*,
15. Malcolm, *ut ante*.
16. Ward, *ut ante*.

## NANAC SHAH\*

Nanac Shah, the founder of the sect, since distinguished by the name of Sikhs<sup>1</sup>, was born in the year of Christ 1469, at a small village called Talwandi<sup>2</sup>, in the district of Bhatti,<sup>3</sup> in the province of Lahore. His father, whose name was Calu<sup>4</sup> was of the Cshatriya cast, and Vedi tribe of Hindus, and had no family except Nanac, and his sister Nanaci, who married a Hindu of the name of Jayaram, that was employed as a grain-factor by Daulet Khan Lodi, a relation of the reigning emperor of Delhi. Nanac was, agreeably to the usage of the tribe in which he was born, married to a woman of respectable family, at an early age<sup>5</sup>, by whom he had two sons, named Srichand and Lacshmi Das. The former, who abandoned the vanities of the world, had a son called Dherm Chand, who founded the sect of Udasi; and his descendants are yet known by the name of Nanac Putrah or the children of Nanac. Lacshmi Das addicted himself to the pleasures of this world and left neither heirs nor reputation.<sup>6</sup>

Nanac is stated, by all Sikh writers, to have been, from his childhood, inclined to devotion; and the indifference which this feeling created towards all worldly concerns, appears to have been a source of continual uneasiness to his father; who endeavoured, by every effort, to divert his mind from the religious turn which it had taken. With a view to effect this object, he one day gave Nanac a sum of money, to purchase salt at one village, in order to sell it at another; in the hope of enticing him to business, by allowing him to taste the sweets of commercial profit. Nanac was pleased with the scheme, took the money, and proceeded, accompanied by a servant of the name of Bala, of the tribe of Sand'hu, towards the village where he was to make his purchase. He happened, however, on the road, to fall in with some Fakirs (holy mendicants), with whom he wished to commence a conversation; but they were so weak, from want of victuals, which they had not tasted for three days, that they could only reply to the observations of Nanac by bending their heads, and other civil signs of acquiescence. Nanac, affected by their situation, said to his companion, with emotion: "My father has sent me to deal in salt, with a view to profit; but the gain of this world is unstable, and profitless; my wish is to relieve these poor men, and to obtain that gain which is permanent and eternal." His companion<sup>7</sup> replied: "Thy resolution is good: do not delay its execution". Nanac immediately distributed his money among the hungry Fakirs; who, after they had gained strength from refreshment which it obtained them, entered into a long discourse with him on the unity of God, with which he was much delighted. He returned next day to his father, who demanded what profit he had made? "I have fed the poor," said Nanac, "and have obtained that gain for you which will endure for ever". As the father happened to have little value for the species of wealth which the son had acquired, he was enraged at having his money so fruitlessly wasted, abused poor Nanac and even struck him; nor could the mild representations of Nanaci save her brother from the violence of parental resentment. Fortune, however, according to the Sikh narrators of this anecdote of their teacher's early life, had raised him a powerful protector, who not only rescued him from punishment, but established his fame and respectability upon grounds that at once put him above all fear of future bad usage from his low-minded and sordid father. When Nanac was quite a youth, and employed to tend cattle in the fields, he happened to repose himself one day under the shade of a tree; and, as the sun declined towards the west, its rays fell on his face, when a large black snake,<sup>8</sup> advancing to the spot where he lay, raised itself from the ground, and interposed its spread hood between Nanac and the sun's rays. Ray Bolar,<sup>9</sup> the ruler of the district, was passing the road, near the place where Nanac slept, and marked, in silence, though not without reflection, this unequivocal sign of his future greatness. This chief overheard Calu punishing his son for his kindness to the Fakirs. He immediately entered, and demanded the cause of the uproar; and when informed of the circumstances, he severely chid Calu for his conduct and interdicted him from ever again lifting his hand to Nanac, before whom, to the astonishment of all present, he humbled himself with every mark of the most profound veneration. Though Calu, from this event, was obliged to treat his son with more respect than formerly, he remained as solicitous as ever to detach him from his religious habits, and to fix him in some wordly occupation; and he prevailed upon Jayram, his son-in-law, to admit him into partnership in his business. Nanac, obliged to acquiesce in these schemes, attended at the granary of Daulet Khan Lodi, which was in charge of Jayram; but though his hands were employed in this work, and his kindness of manner made all the inhabitants of Sultanpur, where the granary was established, his friends, yet his heart never strayed for one moment from its object. It was incessantly fixed on the Divinity; and one

morning, as he sat in a contemplative posture, a holy Muhammedan Fakir approached, and exclaimed : “Oh Nanac ! upon what are thy thoughts now employed ? Quit such occupations, that thou mayest obtain the inheritance of eternal wealth.” Nanak is said to have started up at this exclamation and after looking for a moment in the face of Fakir, he fell into a trance; from which he had no sooner recovered, than he immediately distributed every thing in the granary among the poor<sup>10</sup> : and, after this act, proceeded with loud shouts out of the gates of the city, and running into a pool of water, remained there three days; during which some writers assert he had an interview with the prophet Elias, termed by the Muhammedans, Khizzer<sup>11</sup>, from whom he learnt all earthly sciences.

While Nanac remained in the pool, abstracted from all worldly considerations, holding converse with a prophet, poor Jayram was put in prison by Daulet Khan Lodi, on the charge of having dissipated his property. Nanac, however, returned and told Daulet Khan that Jayram was faultless; that he was the object of punishment; and that, as such, he held himself ready to render the strictest account of all he had lost. The Khan accepted his proposal : Jayram’s accounts were settled; and, to the surprise of all, a balance was found in his favour; on which he was not only released, but reinstated in the employment and favour of his master. We are told, by the Sikh authors, that these wonderful actions increased the fame of Nanac in a very great degree; and that he began, from this period, to practise all the” austerities of a holy man; and, by his frequent abstraction in the contemplation of the divine Being, and his abstinence and virtue, he soon acquired great celebrity through all the countries into which he travelled.

There are many extravagant accounts regarding the travels of Nanac. One author,<sup>13</sup> who treats of the great reform which he made in the worship of the true God, which he found degraded by the idolatry of the Hindus, and the ignorance of the Muhammedans, relates his journey to all the different Hindu places of pilgrimage, and to Mecca, the holy temple of the Muhammedans.

It would be tedious, and foreign to the purpose of this sketch, to accompany Nanac in his travels, of which the above-mentioned author, has given the most circumstantial accounts. He was accompanied (agreeable to them) by a celebrated musician, of the name of Merdana, and a person named Bala Sand’hu; and it is on the tradition of the latter of these disciples, that most of the miracles<sup>13</sup> and wonders of his journies are related. In Bengal, the travellers had to encounter all kinds of sorcerers and magicians. Poor Merdana, who had some of the propensities of Sancho, and preferred warm houses and good meals to deserts and starvation, was constantly in trouble, and more than once had his form changed into that of a sheep, and of several other animals. Nanac, however, always restored his humble friend to the human shape, and as constantly read him lectures on his imprudence. It is stated, in one of these accounts, that a Raja of Sivanab’hu endeavoured to tempt Nanac, by offering him all the luxuries of the world, to depart from his austere habits, but in vain. His presents of rich meats, splendid clothes, and fair ladies, only afforded the Sikh teacher so many opportunities of decrying the vanities of this world, and preaching to the Raja the blessings of eternal life; and he at last succeeded in making him a convert, and resided at Sivanab’hu two years and five months; during which period he composed the Pran Sancali<sup>14</sup>, for the instruction of his followers. After Nanac had visited all the cities of India, and explained to all ranks the great doctrines of the unity and omnipresence of God, he went to Mecca and Medina, where his actions, his miracles, and his long disputations with the most celebrated Muhammedan saints and doctors, are most circumstantially recorded by his biographers. He is stated, on this occasion, to have maintained his Own principles, without offending those of others; always professing himself the enemy of discord; and as having no object but to reconcile the two faiths of the Muhammedans and Hindus in one religion; which he endeavoured to do by recalling them to that great and original tenet, in which they both believed, the unity of God, and by reclaiming them from the numerous errors into which they had fallen. During his travels, Nanac was introduced to the emperor Baber<sup>15</sup>, before whom he is said to have defended his doctrine with great firmness and eloquence. Baber was pleased with him, and ordered an ample maintenance to be bestowed upon him, which the Sikh priest refused; observing, that he trusted in him who provided for all men, and from whom alone a man of virtue and religion would consent to receive favour or reward. When Nanac returned from his travels, he cast off the garments of a Fakir, and wore plain clothes, but continued to give instructions to his numerous disciples;

and he appears, at this period, to have experienced the most violent opposition from the Hindu zealots, who reproached him with having laid aside the habits of a Fakir, and with the impiety of the doctrines which he taught. These accusations he treated with great contempt; and an author, before cited. Bhai Guru Das Vali [Bhalla], states, that when he visited Batala, he enraged the Yogiswaras<sup>16</sup> so much, that they tried all their powers of enchantment to terrify him. "Some," says this writer, "assumed the shape of lions and tigers, others hissed like snakes, one fell in a shower of fire, and another tore the stars from the firmament;" but Nanac remained tranquil : and when required to exhibit some proof of his powers that would astonish them, he replied : "I have nothing to exhibit worthy of you to behold. A holy teacher has no defence but the purity of his doctrine : the world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable." These words, adds the author, caused the miracles and enchantment of the Yogiswaras to cease, and they all fell at the feet of the humble Nanac, who was protected by the all perfect God.

Nanac, according to the same authority, went from Vatala to Multan, where he communed with the Pirs, or holy fathers of the Muhammedan religion of that country. "I am come," said he, when he entered that province, "into a country full of Pirs, like the sacred Ganga visiting the ocean." From Multan he went to Kirtipur<sup>17</sup>, where he threw off his earthly shape, and was buried near the bank of the river Ravee, which has since overflowed his tomb. Kirtipur continues a place of religious resort and worship; and a small piece of Nanac's garment is<sup>18</sup> exhibited to pilgrims, as a sacred relic, at his Dharmasala, or temple.

It would be difficult to give the character of Nanac<sup>19</sup> on the authority of any account we yet possess. His writings, especially the first chapters of the *Adi-Granth*, will, if ever translated, be perhaps a criterion by which he may be fairly judged; but the great eminence which he obtained, and the success with which he combated the opposition which he met, afford ample reason to conclude that he was a man of more than common genius : and this favourable impression of his character will be confirmed by a consideration of the object of his life, and the means he took to accomplish it. Born in a province on the extreme verge of India, at the very point where the religion of Muhammed and the idolatrous worship of the Hindus appeared to touch, and at a moment when both these tribes cherished the most violent rancour and animosity towards each other, his great aim was to blend those jarring elements in peaceful union, and he only endeavoured to effect this purpose through the means of mild persuasion. His wish was to recall both Muhammedans and Hindus to an exclusive attention to that sublimest of all principles, which inculcates devotion to God, and peace towards man. He had to combat the furious bigotry of the one, and the deep-rooted superstition of the other: but he attempted to overcome all obstacles by the force of reasons and humanity. And we cannot have a more convincing proof of the general character of that doctrine which he taught, and the inoffensive light in which it was viewed, than the knowledge that its success did not rouse the bigotry of the intolerant and tyrannical Muhammedan government under which he lived.

Nanac did not deem either of his sons, before mentioned, worthy of the succession to his spiritual functions, which he bequeathed to a Cshatriya of the Trehun tribe, called Lehna, who had long been attached to him, and whom he had initiated in the sacred mysteries of his sect, clothed in the holy mantle of a Fakir, and honoured with the name of Angad<sup>20</sup>, which, according to some commentators, means *own body*.

\* *The History of the Sikhs* (author, anonymous), Calcutta, 1846.

1. Sikh or Sicsha, is a Sanskrit word, which means a disciple, or devoted follower. In the Punjabi it is corrupted into Sikh : it is a general term, and applicable to any person that follows a particular teacher.
2. This village, or rather town, for such it has become, is now called Rayapur [Talwandi Rai Bhoi], It is situated on the banks of the Beyah, or Hyphasis. [Rayapur is a misreading of Rai Bhoi written in Persian Script. It is situated to the South-West of Lahore and not on the bank of Beyah or Beas.]
3. Bhatti is the name of the tribe to which Rai Bhoi, the founder of the village belonged, and not of the district.]
4. He is called, by some authors, Kalu Vedi [Bedi]; but Vedi is a name derived from his tribe or family.
5. Several Sikh authors have been very precise in establishing the date of the consummation of this marriage, which they fix in the month of Asarh, of the Hindu era of Vicramaditya, 1645 [1488 A. D.]

6. The author, here, is confused. Of the two sons of Guru Nanak, the elder Sri Chand turned an ascetic and became the founder of the Udasi order. Lachhmi Chand was a house holder and his descendants from Dharm Chand on wards are known as Nanak-potras.
7. Bala Sand'hu, who gave this advice, continued, through Nanac's life, to be his favourite attendant and disciple.
8. The veneration which the Hindus have for the snake is well known; and this tradition, like many others, proves the attachment of the Sikh writers to that mythology, the errors of which they pretend to have wholly abandoned.
9. Ray, a title inferior to that of a Rajah, generally applied to Hindu chief of a village, or small district,
10. This remarkable anecdote in Nanac's life is told very differently by different Sikh authors. I have followed the narrative of Bhacta Mall. They all agree in Nanac's having, at this period, quitted the occupations of the world, and become Fakir.
11. [According to the *Purātan Janam-Sakhi*, pp. 22-6, Guru Nanak is said to have been taken to the Divine Presence—*Dargāh Parmesar ki* where he had an audience of the Lord who bestowed upon him the gift of his Name.—GS]
12. Bhai Guru Vali [Gurdas Bhalla], author of the Gnyanan Ratnavali [Bhagat Mal Bhagat Ratnawali, Commentary on Var XI], a work written in the Sikh dialect of the Punjabi
13. Though his biographers have ascribed miracles to Nanac, we never find that he pretended to work any: on the contrary, he derided those who did, » deriving power from evil spirits;
14. It is believed that this work of Nanac has been incorporated in the first part of the *Adi-Grant'h*, [The *Pran Sangli* was not accepted by Guru Arjun, the compiler and editor of the *Adi-Granth*, as a genuine composition of Guru Nanak and was not, therefore, included in the Scripture.—GS]
15. The interview must have taken place in 1526 or 1527 ; as it is stated to have been immediately after Daulet Khan Lodi had visited Paniput. in 1526 ; where that prince had fought, and subdued Ibrahim, emperor of Hindustan.
16. Recluse penitents, who, by means of mental and corporeal mortifications, have acquired a command over the powers of nature.
17. Kiritipur Dehra, on the banks of the Ravee, er Hydraotes, [This place is known as Kartarpur, now in Pakistan. Opposite to it on the other side of the river is Dera Baba Nanak in the district of Gurdaspur, where the Bedi descendants of the Guru live up to the present day ]
18. [The garment referred to in the text is called *Chola Sahib* and is preserved at Dera Baba Nanak.]
19. He is, throughout this sketch, called Nanac, Muhammedan historians generally term him Nanac Shah to denote his being a Fakir, the name of Shah being frequently given to men of celebrity in that sect. The Sikhs, in speaking of him, call him Baba Nanac, o- Guru Nanac, father Nanac, or Nanac the teacher; and their writers term him Nanac Nirinkar which means Nanac the omnipresent. [The word *Nirankari* literally means 'of Nirankar' or devoted to the Supreme Lord.]
20. This fanciful etymology represents the word Angad as a compound of Ang, which signifies *body*, and the Persian *Khud*, which signifies *own*. This mixture of languages is quite common in the jargon of the Punjaub.

## GURU NANUK THE FOUNDER OF SIKH ISM\*

Joseph Davy Cunningham

[In the Punjab] The limits of Race and Religion are not the same, otherwise the two subjects might have been considered together with advantage. In Ludakh the people and the dependent rulers profess Lamaic Boodhism, which is so widely diffused throughout Central Asia, but the Tibetans of Iskardo, the Durdoos of Ghilghit, and the Kukkas and Bumbas of the rugged mountains, are Mahometans of the Sheea persuasion. The people of Cashmeer, of Kishtwar, of Bhimbur, of Pukhlee, and of the hills south and west to the salt range and the Indus, are mostly Soonee Mahometans, as are likewise the tribes of Peshawur and of the valley of the Indus southward, and also the inhabitants of Mooltan, and of the plains northward as far as Pind-Dadun-Khan, Chuneet, and Depalpoor. The People of the Himalayas, eastward of Kishtwar and Bhimbar, are Hindoos of the Brahminical faith, with some Boodhist colonies to the north, and some Mahometan families to the south west. The Juts of "Manjha" and "Malwa" are mostly Sikhs, but perhaps not one-third of the whole population between the Jhelum and Jumna has yet embraced the tenets of Nanuk and Govind, the other two-thirds being still equally divided between Islam and Brahminism. ...

In "Malwa" alone, that is, about Bhutinda and Soonam, can the Sikh population be found unmixed, and there it has passed into a saying, that the priest, the soldier, the mechanic, the shopkeeper, and the ploughman are all equally Sikh. ...

The observers of the ancient creeds quietly pursue the even tenor of their way, self-satisfied and almost indifferent about others; but the Sikhs are converts to a new religion, the seal of the double dispensation of Brumha and Mahomet ; *their* enthusiasm is still fresh, and *their* faith is still an active and a living principle. *They* are persuaded that God himself is present with them, that He supports them in all their endeavours, and that sooner or later He will confound *their* enemies for His own glory. The feeling of the Sikh people deserves the attention of the English, both as a civilized nation and as a paramount government. Those who have heard a follower of Goroo Govind [Singh] declaim., on the destinies of his race, his eye wild with enthusiasm and every muscle quivering with excitement, can understand *that* spirit which impelled the maked Arab against the mail clad troops of Rome and Persia, and which led our own chivalrous and believing forefathers through Europe to battle for the cross on the shores of Asia. The Sikhs do not form a numerous sect; yet their strength is not to be estimated by tens of thousands, but by the unity and energy of religious fervor and warlike temperament. They will dare much, and they will endure much, for the mystic "Khalsa" or common-wealth; they are not discouraged by defeat, and they ardently look forward to the day when Indians and Persians and Turks, shall all acknowledge the double mission of Nanuk and Govind Singh.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Hindoo mind was no longer stagnant or retrogressive; it had been leavened with Mahometanism, and changed and quickened for a new development. Ramanund and Gorukh had preached religious equality, and Cheitun had repeated that faith levelled caste. Kubeer had denounced images, and appealed to the people in their own tongue, and Vullubh had taught that effectual devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. But these good and able men appear to have been so impressed with nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man's social condition as unworthy of a thought. They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestcraft, or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They formed pious associations of contented Quietists or they gave themselves up to the contemplation of futurity in the hope of approaching bliss, rather than called upon their fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel, and to arise a new people freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their sects remain to this day as they left them. It was reserved for *Nanuk* to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor *Govind* to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.

Nanuk was born in the year 1469, in the neighbourhood of Lahore.<sup>1</sup> His father, Kaloo, was a Hindoo

of the Behdee subdivision of the once warlike Khutrees, and he was, perhaps, like most of his race, a petty trader in his native village. Nanuk appears to have been naturally of a pious disposition and of a reflecting mind, and there is reason to believe that in his youth he made himself familiar with the popular creeds both of the Mahometans and Hindoos, and that he gained a general knowledge of the Koran and of the Brahminical Shasters.<sup>2</sup> His good sense and fervid temper left him displeased with the corruptions of the vulgar faith, and dissatisfied with the indifference of the learned, or with the refuge which they sought in the specious abstractions of philosophy; nor is it improbable that the homilies of Kubeer and Gorukh had fallen upon his susceptible mind with a powerful and enduring effect. In a moment of enthusiasm the ardent inquirer abandoned his home, and strove to attain wisdom by penitent meditation, by study, and by an enlarged intercourse with mankind.<sup>3</sup> He travelled, perhaps, beyond the limits of India, he prayed in solitude, he reflected on the Vedas and on the mission of Mahomet, and he questioned with equal anxiety the learned priest and the simple devotee about the will of God and the path to happiness. Plato and Bacon, Des Cartes and Alghazali, examined the current philosophic systems of the world, without finding a sure basis of truth for the operations of the intellect; and, similarly, the heart of the pious Nanuk sought hopelessly for a resting-place amid the conga flicting creeds and practices of men. All was error, he said; he had read Korans and Poorans, but God he had nowhere found. He returned to his native land, he threw aside the habit of an ascetic, he became again the father of his family, and he passed the remainder of his long life in calling upon men to worship the One Invisible God, to live virtuously, and to be tolerant of the failings of others. The mild demeanor, the earnest piety, and persuasive eloquence of Nanuk, are ever themes of praise, and he died at the age of seventy, leaving behind him many zealous and admiring disciples<sup>4</sup>.

Nanuk combined the excellencies of preceding reformers, and he avoided the more grave errors into which they had fallen. Instead of the circumscribed divinity, the anthropomorphous God of Ramanund and Kubeer, he loftily invokes the Lord as the one, the sole, the timeless being; the creator, the self-existent, the incomprehensible, and the everlasting. He likens the Deity to Truth, which was before the world began, which is, and which shall endure for ever, as the ultimate idea or cause of all we know or behold. He addresses equally the Moolla and the Pundit, the Dervish and the Soonyassee, and tells them to remember *that* Lord of Lords who had seen come and go numberless Mahomets, and Vishnoos, and Sivas.<sup>5</sup> He tells them that virtues and charities, heroic acts and gathered wisdom, are nought of themselves, that the only knowledge which availeth is the knowledge of God; and then, as if to rebuke those vain men who saw eternal life in their own act of faith, he declares that they only can find the Lord of whom the Lord looks with favor. Yet the extension of grace is linked with the exercise of our will and the beneficent use of our faculties. God, said Nanuk, places salvation in good works and uprightness of conduct : the Lord will ask of man, "What has he done :?" and the teacher further required timely repentance of men, saying, "If not until the day of reckoning the sinner abaseth himself, punishment shall overtake him."

Nanuk adopted the philosophical system of his countrymen, and regarded bliss as the dwelling of the soul with God after its punitive transmigrations should have ceased. Life, he says, is as the shadow of the passing bird, but the soul of man is as the potter's wheel, ever circling on its pivot. He makes the same uses of the current language or notions of the time on other subjects, and thus says, he who remains bright amid darkness (*Unjun*), unmoved amid deceit (*Maya*), that is perfect amid temptation, should attain happiness. But it would be idle to suppose that he speculated upon being, or upon the material world, after the manner of Plato or Vyasa;<sup>6</sup> and it would be unreasonable to condemn him because he preferred the doctrine of a succession of habiliments, and the possible purification of the most sinful soul, to the resurrection of the same body, and the pains of everlasting fire. Nanuk also referred to the Arabian prophet, and to the Hindoo incarnations, not as impostors and the diffusers of evil, but as having truly been sent by God to instruct mankind, and he lamented that sin should nevertheless prevail. He asserted no special divinity, although he may possibly have considered himself, as he came to be 'considered by others, the successor of these inspired teachers of his belief, sent to reclaim fallen mortals of all creeds and countries within the limits of his knowledge. He rendered his mission applicable to all times and places, yet he declared himself to be but the slave, the humble messenger of the Almighty, making use of universal truth as his sole instrument.<sup>7</sup> He did not claim for his writings, replete as they were with wisdom and devotion, the merit of a direct transcription

of the words of God; nor did he say that his own preaching required or would be sanctioned by miracles.<sup>8</sup> “Fight with no weapon” said he, “save the word of God; a holy teacher hath no means save the purity of his doctrine.” He taught that asceticism or abandonment of the world was unnecessary, the pious hermit and the devout householder being equal in the eyes of the Almighty; but he did not, like his contemporary Vullubh, express any invidious preference for married teachers, although his own example showed that he considered every one should fulfil the functions of his nature.

In treating the two prominent external observances of Hindoos and Mahometans, veneration for the cow and abhorrence of the hog, he was equally wise and conciliatory, yielding perhaps something to the prejudices of his education as well as to the gentleness of his disposition. “The rights, ^of strangers,” said he, “are the one the ox, and the other the swine, but ‘Peers’ and ‘Gooroos’ will praise those who partake not of that which hath enjoyed life.”

Thus Nanuk extricated his followers from the accumulated errors of ages, and enjoined upon them devotion of thought and excellence of conduct as the first of duties. He left them, erect and free, unbiassed in mind and unfettered by rules, to become an increasing body of truthful worshippers. His reform was in its immediate effect religious and moral only ; believers were regarded as “Sikhs” or disciples, not as subjects ; and it is neither probable, nor is it necessary to suppose, that he possessed any clear and sagacious views of social amelioration or of political advancement. He left the progress of his people to the operation of time : for his congregation was too limited and the state of society too artificial, to render it either requisite or possible for him to become a municipal law-giver, to subvert the legislation of Munno, or to change the immemorial usages of tribes or races<sup>9</sup>. His care was rather to prevent his followers contracting into a sect, and his comprehensive principles narrowing into monastic distinctions. This he effected by excluding his son, a meditative and perhaps bigoted ascetic, from the ministry when he should himself be no more ; and, as his end approached, he is stated to have made a trial of the obedience or merits of his chosen disciples, and to have preferred the simple and sincere Lehna As they journeyed along, the body of a man was seen lying by the way side. Nanuk said, “Ye who trust in me, eat of this food.” All hesitated save Lehna ; he knelt and uncovered the dead, and touched without tasting the flesh of man ; but, behold ! the corpse had disappeared and Nanuk was in its place. The Gooroo embraced his faithful follower, saying he was as himself, and that his spirit would dwell within him. The name of Lehna was changed to *Ung-i-Khood*, or *Unggud*, or own body, and whatever may be the foundation of the story or the truth of the etymology, it is certain that the Sikhs fully believe the spirit of Nanuk to have been incarnate in each succeeding Gooroo. Unggud was acknowledged as the teacher of the Sikhs, and Sree Chund, the son of Nanuk, justified his father’s fears, and became the founder of the sect of “Oodassees,” a community indifferent to the concerns of this world<sup>10</sup>.

\* *A History of the Sikhs* London, 1849.

[Note :— We have retained only such of the footnotes as were found to be necessary to clarify or explain some points in the text, The others containing irrelevant or unnecessary discussions have been left out.— GS]

1. The accounts agree as to the year of Nanuk’s birth, but differ, while they affect precision, with regard to the day of the month on which he was born. Thus one narrative gives the 13th, and another the 18th, of the month Kartik. of the year 1526 of Vikramajeet, which corresponds with the latter end of 1469 of Christ.
2. The reader will remember that the apocryphal gospels state how Christ, before he was twelve years old, perplexed his instructors, and explained to them the mystical significance of the alphabetical characters, (Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, i, 272.)
3. The Sikh accounts represent Nanuk to have met the Emperor Baber, and to have greatly edified (he adventurous sovereign by his demeanour and conversation, while he perplexed him by saying that both were kings, and were about to found dynasties often, I have traced but two allusions to Baber by name, and one by obvious inference, in the *Adee Grant*’s viz., in the Assa Rag and *Teilung* portions, and these bear reference simply to the destruction of a village, and to his incursions as a conqueror. Mohsun Fancee (*Dabistan*, ii. 249) preserves an idle report that Nanuk being dissatisfied with the Afghans, called the



Moghuls into India.

4. The accounts mostly agree as to the date of Nanuk's death, and they place it in 1596 of Vikramajeeet, of 1539 of Christ. A Goor-mookhee abstract states precisely, that he was a teacher for seven years, five months and seven days, and that he died on the 10th of the Hindoo month Asowj. Porster (Travels, i. 295 ) represents that he travelled for fifteen years. Nanuk died at Kurtar-poor, on the Ravee, about forty miles above Lahore, where there is a place of worship sacred to him.
5. A passage of Nanuk's in the supplement to *Adee Grunt'h* after saying that there have been multitudes of prophets, teachers, and holy men .concludes thus :—  
"The Lord of Lords is the One God, the Almighty God himself ;  
Oh Nanuk ! his qualities are beyond comprehension,"
6. It is to be remembered that the Sikhs regard the mission of Nanuk and Govind as the consummation of other dispensations including that of Mahomet ; and their talk, therefore, of Brumha and Vishnoo and various heavenly powers, is no more unreasonable than the deference of Christians to Moses and Abraham, and to the archangels Michael and Gabriel, Such allusions are perhaps, indeed, more excusable in the Sikhs, than "the singular polytheism" of our mediaeval divines, which they "grafted on the language rather (indeed) than the principles of Christianity." —Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii, 346.

For an instance of the moral application which Nanuk was wont to give to mythological stories, see *Ward on the Hindoos* (iii. 465). Nanuk, indeed, refers continually to Hindoo notions, but he was not therefore an idolater, and it should further be borne in mind that, as St. John could draw illustrations from Greek philosophy, so could St. Paul make an advantageous use of the Greek poets.

7. The whole scope of Nanuk's teaching is that God is all in all, and that purity of mind is the first of objects, He urges all men to practise devotion, and he refers to past prophets and dispensations as being now of no avail, but he nowhere attributes to himself any superiority over others. He was a man among men, calling upon his fellow creatures to live a holy life. (Compare the *Dabistan*, ii 249, 250, 253; and see Wilson, *AS. Res.*, xvii. 234., for the expression, "Nanuk thy slave is a free-will offering unto thee.")
8. See particularly the *Sirree Rag* chapter of the *Adee Grant'h*. In the *Majh Var* portion, Nanuk says to a pretender to miracles, "Dwell thou in flame uninjured, remain unharmed amid eternal ice, make blocks of stone thy food, spurn the solid earth before thee with thy foot, weigh the heavens in a balance, and then ask thou that Nanuk perform wonders !"
9. Malcolm (*Sketch*, pp. 44. 147) says, Nanuk made little or no alteration in the civil institutions of the Hindoos, and Ward [*Hindoos* iii. 463 ) says, the Sikhs have no written civil or criminal laws. Similar observations of dispraise or applause might be made with regard to the code of the early Christians, and we know the difficulties under which the apostles labored, owing to the want of a new declaratory law; or owing to the scruples and prejudices of their disciples. Acts, xv. 20, 28, 29, and other passages.) The seventh of the articles of the Church of England, and the nineteenth chapter of the Scottish Confession of Faith, show the existing perplexity of modern divines, and, doubtless, it will long continue to be disputed how far Christians are amenable to some portions of the Jewish law, and whether Sikhs should wholly reject the institutions of Munno and the usages of race. There are Judaizing Christians and there are Brahminizing Sikhs ; the swine was a difficulty with one, the cow is a difficulty with the other: and yet the greatest obstacle, perhaps, to a complete obliteration of caste, is the rooted feeling that marriages should properly take place only between people of the same origin or nation, without much reference to faith. (Compare *Ward on the Hindoos*, iii. 459.; Malcolm, *Sketch*, p. 157, note ; and *Forster's Travels*, i 293, 295, 308).
10. For some account of the Oodasses, see Wilson, *Asiatic Researches*, xvii. 232. The sect is widely diffused ; its members are proud of their connection with the Sikhs, all reverence, and most possess and use, the *Grunt'h* of Nanuk.

Note :— For many stories regarding Nanuk himself, which it has not been thought necessary to introduce into the text or notes, the curious reader may refer with profit to Malcolm's *Sketch*, to second volume of the *Dabistan*, and to the first volume of Dr. Macgregor's recently published *History*.

## NANUK

Members of the SPCK\*

Since the death of Ranjeet Singh, the Seikhs had been growing every day more disorganized, in consequence of their domestic feuds and intestine divisions. This singular race, which first came into political existence during the sixteenth century, owed its religious constitution to Nanuk and Govind. The former was born in the year 1469, near Lahore. His father being only a small tradesman, inhabiting a remote northern village, his education could scarcely have extended beyond the first rudiments of knowledge. Yet he was well versed in the Koran and Shastars, and comprehended thoroughly the Hindoo and Mohammedan systems. At an early age strong religious emotions arose in his mind; he grew dissatisfied with his family creed, and wandered through India, seeking for truth. After a long pilgrimage, he returned home without feeling himself convinced either by the Mohammedan or the Hindoo. From that time he became desirous of effecting a species of compromise between the doctrines of both these systems. He rejected the manifold deities of the Brahmins, believing God to be one and invisible. The supreme Lord, he taught, would reward men according to their works of piety and virtue when the day of reckoning arrived, in which punishment should certainly overtake the sinner. Like the Brahmins, he admitted into his new creed the doctrine of transmigration, by which the soul, passing through different bodies, is thus gradually purified from its transgressions. Disclaiming the power of working miracles, he forbade his disciples to consider him as an inspired teacher, while he looked upon Mohammed and the founders of Brahminism as having been raised up by God to promulgate certain beneficial though diverse portions of divine truth. He inculcated the duty of universal toleration, and discountenanced, though he did not declare sinful, the favourite asceticism of his countrymen.

*\*The History of the British Settlement's in India, London, 1855.*

## GURU NANAK THE INDIAN REFORMER\*

Robert Needham Cust

The Life of a person, who by his actions and precepts has 194 influenced the ideas, and consciences, of a large number of number of his fellow-creatures, both during his life-time and for centuries after his death, can never be devoid of interest. When that influence has not been owing to his wealth, rank, or power, but simply to his own merits, that Man must be called truly Great; and, when we find that his motives were unselfish, that after a long life devoted to the instruction of others in the paths of Virtue, and Moral Purity, he died poor, delegated his office, not to his children, but to one of his disciples, whom he considered most virtuous, *that* Man must be considered truly Good, as well as truly Great.

Such was Baba Nanak, the first Teacher and founder of the Sikh tenets. However much we may differ with him in many of his doctrines, we cannot but admit, that he was one of those, to whom the Almighty has vouchsafed special blessings; for during long life of seventy years, he laboured unceasingly at one object, viz., to reform the lives and religion of his countrymen, to break through the tyranny of Priestcraft, Ritual, and Caste. He taught that purity of thought, word and deed, abstinence from Lust, Anger, and Avarice, were better than feeding Brahmans, or making offerings at Temples. He tried to amalgamate the Hindu and Mahometan Religions, and convince all, that they were really brothers, descended from one Father. He lived long enough to see the seed, which he had sown, bring forth fruit : that in after age the plant has been choked by the thorns of corruptions, is owing to the imperfection of all things human : that he made the noble attempt, that he set the example in his own life, and partially succeeded, is his greatest praise. There are some, who have tried to impose upon the ignorant by asserting that Nanak was an incarnation of the Deity, and that he worked miracles; those may believe this, who like, but they must remember, that he lived only three hundred and fifty years ago, at a period, when the facts of History are well ascertain--ed, and in a country, ruled over by people of another religion had Nanak had the power of flying through the air, walking over the sea, raising the dead to life, these facts would not have escaped mention, especially as he was not unknown to the great Emperor Baber. The same assertions are made in favour of every person, who in any country is renowned for sanctity, or virtue, and are believed by none, but the most credulous. In the same narrative we find stories most ridiculous, and untrue with regard to the Earth, the Stars, and other facts of positive knowledge, which furnish a good test of the degree of credibility of the writer. Those who like, may believe everything; we have selected those facts, which are worthy of the belief of all.

In that Province of British India, which from the circumstance of its being traversed by five rivers, is called the Panjab, in the District of Lahore, in the tract betwixt the Ravi and Chi-nab, called the Rechna Doab, near the banks of the Degh Nala, there was a village named Talwandi, the property, as it is still, of a tribe of Mahometan Rajputs, who had emigrated from the sandy regions between the Jamna and Satlaj, known as Bhattiana. The time of our narrative is the year 1469 of the Christian era. This part of India was then governed by the dynasty of Lodi Pathans, whose name still lives in Ludiana on the Satlaj. Four hundred years had elapsed since the first Mahometan had invaded India, and their power was firmly seated in Northren India: the great Timur the Lame had sacked Delhi, and his great grandson Baber, who was destined to be the founder of a line of Emperors, was still a child in the countries beyond the Oxus.

The country round Talwandi was wild, badly cultivated, and covered with brushwood. It is at the edge of the great jungle waste or *Bar*, which occupies the space betwixt the Ravi and Chinab, containing many million acres of uncultivated land. Two religions appeared to meet here also, for the industrious, and settled Jats, who were Hindu, here came into contact with the idle and migratory Bhatti, who had adopted the religion of Mahomet. In those days persecution on account of religion was very common, and many changed their faith from base motives; bitter 197 feelings existed between the Mahometan and Hindu there, as elsewhere. No roads traversed this savage region; it was then, as it is now, in a *corner*, and when many years after, this neighbourhood passed into the hands of independent Sikh Chiefs, they assumed the name of Nukya from this circumstance.

The Brahmans had for many centuries past re-established their Religion, and system of Castes throughout India; had expelled the followers of Buddha from the country, and tried to convince the ignorant people, that there was no other nation in the world but the Hindu, and no other religion than that of Vishnu and Siva; but unluckily for them, the arrival of Mahometans in vast numbers and great strength, from the countries west of the Indus, destroyed this idea; and moreover the Mahometans were always desirous of making converts, and succeeded in so doing by force, persuasion, and the offer of worldly advantages. But the new converts rarely abandoned their Hindu customs, or comprehended fully the simple tenets of Mahomet. Among them the system of Caste was partially introduced; the Saiud was considered as powerful as a Brahman; a Pir and Shahid were as much venerated as a Jogi and Fakir; pilgrimages to tombs and shrines were held to be meritorious. The true meaning of the Koran and Veda was unknown to the multitude; wild stories of miracles, and supernatural beings were believed, and if any one asked, where truth was to be found, or what was God, no answer could be given either by Hindu or Mahometan. Many abandoned the duties of life in the hopes of obtaining purity by escaping from 198 what they could not but admit to be deception; and in different parts of India different sects had been formed under Ramanand, Gorakhnath, Kabir, and the ascetic orders of Bairagi, Gosain, and Jogi had come into existence.

It was at this period, and at the place above mentioned, that a son was born to one Kalu, a Khatri, of the Bedi tribe, a poor but respectable man, who occupied the post of Village-Accountant. The father and mother of Kalu were named Siva Ram, and Bunasi; and he had one brother named Lalu, and his wife came from near the village of Kanakuchwa, half-way betwixt Lahore and Firozpur; her sister was the mother of Ram Taman, a person of great celebrity at Kasur. Kalu had one daughter, who was named Nanaki, and who was married to Jai Ram, a corn-dealer at Sultanpur, in the Doab. Kalu named his son Nanak; and when he afterwards became famous, he was called by Mahometans Nanak Shah, and by the Hindu, Guru. Nanak, Baba Nanak, and Nanak Nirankar.

Many wonderful stories are told about his birth, infancy, and childhood; we do not believe all, but, as his followers believe them, we give some. The Nurse, who assisted at the birth, stated that she heard at the moment of his entering the world, sounds as of a crowd welcoming with joy the arrival of a great man; the spot is shown and a temple built over it, called Nanakana; close by, is another place, where he used to play with other boys, called Balkarira, on the banks of a tank. Nanak acquired a knowledge of Persian, and accounts in a very short time; but he 199 was disinclined to any worldly pursuit, and one day, while in charge of cattle, he fell asleep, and by his carelessness the crops were destroyed, but, when complaint was made, the injury was miraculously restored. He was one day found sleeping exposed to the rays of the Sun, but a snake had spread its hood over his head to shade him. The place is called Kiara Sahib, and a handsome building has lately been erected there. Kalu then tried to employ him in mercantile pursuits, and sent him on a journey with Bala, a Jat of the Sindhu tribe, and gave him forty rupees to trade with. On his road he met a party of Fakirs, and entered into conversation with them, being surprised to find, that they had neither home, clothes, nor food. He learned from their mouths the vanity and uselessness of these things, and the danger of living in cities, and being engaged in worldly matters. As they refused his offer of money, and asked for food only, he went to the neighbouring village, and invested all his money in flour, and fed the whole party. He returned home, and was found by his father concealed under a tree. He told him what had happened, and justified himself by stating, that his father had directed him to do a good business, and he had done so by laying up treasures in Heaven, the fruit of works of charity. His father was very angry, and was proceeding to beat and ill use him, but Rai Bholar Bhatti, the Mahometan landowner, interfered. He had been struck by the wonderful stories current in the village with regard to Nanak; and by the purity of his character, and the nobility of this last action, he paid Kalu the money, and forbade him ever to ill use or constrain his son. The place where Nanak fed the Fakirs is called Khara Sauda or Real Profit, and the tree, where he lay concealed, is still shown; its branches sweep down to the ground on every side, and is known as Mal Sahib.

As he would not settle down to any trade, to the great sorrow of his father, though his mother always took his part, Kalu sent him to visit his sister Nanaki at Sultanpur, on the Bein *Nadi*, in the Jalandhar Doab. This was a city of some note, situated on the great Imperial road from Lahore to Delhi, as can still be traced

by the *Kos Minor*, and the Serai. At that time the Governor of the Province, Daulat Khan Lodi, a relation of the Emperor of Delhi, resided there. Jai Ram, the brother-in-law of Nanak, had sufficient interest with this Nawab to get him appointed to the charge of the supplies of the household. Nanak received a large advance, but he gave away so much to Fakirs that he was accused to the Nawab of having behaved dishonestly. When, however, accounts were taken, a large balance was miraculously found in his favour.

At this time Nanak was married to the daughter of Moola, whose name was Solakhni. By her he had two sons, Sri Chand and Lakshmi Das. From the latter descend the Bedi tribe, which pretends to the sanctity, though they do not adopt the virtues, of their great ancestors. The former founded the sect of the Udasi, who dwell in numerous convents all over the Panjab. He gave no authority to his descendants to practise the wicked custom of killing their daughters. Indeed, it is contrary to the mild and benevolent principles which he taught. He appears to have anticipated, that his descendants would make a bad use of the circumstance of his being their ancestor, for he was unwilling to marry, and had no wish to have children. In none of his travels did he take them with him, and he expressly excluded them from the succession to the position of spiritual teacher, which he had attained, and chose one of his disciples, as more worthy of that important office.

Soon after the birth of his children he ceased to care for worldly affairs : his mind was more and more occupied with a sense of the Vanity of Wealth, Rank, and even of Life. He went once to bathe in the Bein *Nadi*, and stayed three whole days in the water. The tree is still shown where he used to sit, and is known as Baba-ki-Ber, and the place where he bathed is called Sant Ghat. Even the shop, where he used to trade, is called Hatt Sahib, and weights are shown stated to be those which he had used in trade. He now abandoned his home, and took up his abode in the jungles. His friends tried in vain to dissuade him; many went out to talk him over, and among others, his father-in-law Moola, who was naturally very much annoyed at seeing his daughter and her children deserted without any provision. Nawab Daulat Khan was persuaded to send his commands to him to return, but in vain. Nanak replied that he was the servant of God alone, and knew no earthly master. It may be remarked, that all his replies are given by the narrator in the form of short pithy verses.

The tendency of all his remarks had been, that there was one God, one true faith, and that the divisions of Religion and Castes were but the work of man. This led the Nawab to persuade him one day to accompany him to the Mosque at the hour of prayer. When all the Mahometans knelt down to pray, Nanak alone stood up. When the Nawab remonstrated, he said, "O Nawab! you were not praying; your thoughts were occupied in the purchase of a horse at Kandahar." The Nawab, who was an honest truth-loving man, confessed, that his thoughts had wandered. "The Kazi was much enraged, and asked Nanak, why he did not pray with him ? He replied, "You, O Kazi, were not praying; you were thinking of your daughter's illness, and wondering, whether your colt had fallen into a well." The Kazi's countenance fell, and he was obliged to confess that the Guru had truly read his thoughts. There is deep wisdom in these remarks, for a formal repetition of words in a language not understood, cannot be considered to be praying, and the thoughts are too apt to wander, when they ought to be fixed upon God.

Nanak now finally abandoned the world, and adopted the life of a Fakir. His wife and children were sent to his father-in-law. He took leave of his sister Nanaki, who remained always warmly attached to him, and started on his travels from village to village and from country to country. His companions were Bala, who had accompanied him from the earliest days. and is thence called Bhai Bala, and Mardana, a Mahometan musician, who voluntarily joined him, and who used to play to his master on his harp while he was abstracted in thought and prayer. Bhai Mardana is described as a strange companion, who was always hungry, and getting into scrapes, from which Nanak had to extricate him. When he played on the harp it was always in the praise of the Creator.

*Tū hī Narāyan karkīrtār: Nānak bandā t'ērā.*

Nanak used to be whole days wrapped in meditation with closed eyes, and thoughts fixed on God,

and unconscious of what was going on, while Mardana suffered much from exposure, hunger, thirst, and a desire to return to his family.

One day he went to Aminabad, then as now an important city in the Rechna Doab, in the district of Gujranwala. He put up in the house of Lalu Tarkhan (carpenter), whom he knew to be virtuous and honest; and refused to eat the food of Wazir Malik Bhagu, because he was an oppressor of the poor, and had collected his wealth, as an unjust Ruler of the people. Here is a wise lesson for all readers of this story, for indeed there is no blessing in wealth wrung from the poor by oppression; the name of Nushirvan still lives on account of his Justice after the lapse of many centuries. The place, where Nanak slept at Aminabad, is still venerated under the name of Rori Sahib, from the circumstance of the Guru having spread gravel on the spot. While he was residing here, the great invasion of India took place under Baber, the founder of the Dynasty of the Emperors of Delhi, which has only lately passed away. Aminabad was taken by storm and plundered, and the Guru and his companions were compelled to carry burdens; he submitted, and was carried to the Emperor's tents, accompanied by Mardana playing on the *rabab*. The Emperor was struck by his appearance and still more by his words, and held a long conversation with him, and ordered his release. The Guru is said to have told the Emperor, that his descendants to the seventh generation would sit on the throne of Delhi, which prophecy came true. It is also narrated, that while the Guru was talking with the Emperor, the servants brought *bhang*, an intoxicating drug, in which the latter too freely indulged. Baber offered some to the Guru, who declined, stating that he had a supply which never failed him, and of which the effects were never exhausted. Upon being asked to explain, he replied that he alluded to the name of God, the consideration of which occupied all his faculties. At other times he made similar remarks, that he had no thought for food, that the name of God was his only food; and when urged by his relations to return home to Talwandi, he replied that he had no parents, brethren, or family, that God was all in all to him.

Among other places in the Panjab that he visited was Hasan Abdal, where they show the impression of a hand in marble, which the inhabitants are good enough to call *Panja Sahib*, as the hand of Nanak. How it came there, what good it does there, is not explained. The Guru also visited Sialkot, and the tree, under which he sat, is still shown as Baba ki Ber. He also visited Pak Patan and Chuhan Kana in the district of Gujranwala, at the last of which places is a building in his honour. Once or twice he returned to his native place to visit his parents, who soon after died, and his kind friend and protector, Rai Bholar. Although he lived to the age of seventy years, his uncle Lalu outlived him. After his return from his travels he settled down on the banks of the Ravi in the District of Gurdaspur. He built a *Dharamsala* there, and called the place Kartarpur. There he gathered his family and his disciples around him, and there eventually he died.

With regard to his travels it is difficult to speak with precision; that he visited all the chief cities and places of pilgrimage of Hindustan, is probable : mention of them all is made in the traditions, and wonderful stories connected with some. He appears generally to have entered into discussions of a hostile nature with every Brahman and *Pujari*, pointing out the uselessness of works and rituals, if there was no purity of mind or faith. At Hardwar, on the Ganges, he told the people to beware of the Pandits, who would infallibly lead them to perdition, and that until the mind of man became pure, all *pūjā pat*, or sacrifice, was vain. One day as the Brahmans stood looking to the East, and pouring out water as a funeral offering to their ancestors, Nanak stood up, and did the same, looking to the West. When asked the reason of his so doing, he said that he was watering his fields Kartarpur which lie to the West. They scornfully remarked, that his water could never reach so many hundred miles. "How, then," he replied, "do you expect that your water can reach your ancestors in the other world?" He accused another Bra-man of thinking of a woman, while he was apparently muttering his devotions.

With regard to his travels beyond the limits of Hindustan, nothing certain is known, as he left no account. Bhai Mardana died before him, and all, that is known was collected from the mouth of Bhai Bala, an ignorant Jat, who undertook to record many years after all what he had seen. The people, who drew up the narrative, were ignorant of geography, and of the distances of one city from the other. All that they could do was to enter at random the names of all the places, of which they had ever heard from travellers, or books.

We thus meet with the names of Lanka, the *Dwipa* of the Parana, Sind, Kabul, Khuram; and we find, that the Guru availed himself of the easy mode of transport of flying through the air, or wishing himself at any place, or directing the place to come to him. This entirely prevents us from following him, and describing what happened to him at each place on his travels. We can only conclude that he travelled, as Fakirs do now, putting up at night in road side hermitages, and at times in the large convents, and preaching and conversing with all ranks of men. He came back, as poor as he went; for he had no thought or care for wealth and luxury. The period of his travels, being less than three hundred and fifty years ago, and the state of the countries adjacent to India, chiefly inhabited by Mahometans and Buddhists, being well known, we may at once reject, as erroneous, all the wild stories about Magicians, Monsters, and dangers of a supernatural kind, which are said to have met him.

Two places of great note were no doubt visited by him, namely Mecca and Madina in Arabia. In those days, as now, there was a constant flow of pilgrims from India to Arabia, and the communication was easy. Nanak was described as having assumed the garb of a Mahometan Fakir, and with him was Mardana, an undoubted believer in Mahomet. At Mecca he entered into discussions with the Mahometans in charge of the Kaba; and when he was reproved for sleeping with his feet turned towards that building, which seemed disrespectful, he inquired in which direction he could turn his feet, where the same disrespect would not be offered, for God was everywhere. Many strangers, convinced by his words, asked what they should do to be saved. His answer was, "Worship God."

He died in the year of the Christian era 1539, at the advanced age of seventy years. He selected Lehna, a Khatri of the Tihan *Goth*, to be his spiritual successor, and named him Angad, which is fancifully derived from the word *Ang Khud* as if the Guru considered him to be his own body. He considered his own sons unworthy of the succession because they were undutiful; and when expostulated with on the subject by their mother, he tried their obedience in the following way. A cat had flung a half-dead mouse at his feet: the Guru ordered his sons to remove it; they drew back and refused. Lehna without a moment's hesitation obeyed the order. Nanak blessed him and said, that he was the real son, who obeyed his father. Another miraculous story is told to the same effect. One day they had found a dead body in the adjoining jungle. Nanak said to his followers, "Whoever is my disciple, let him eat of that dead body". They all drew back in horror, but Lehna at once stooped down to obey the order, and behold the body was gone, and a plate of excellent food was in its place. The real truth is, that Nanak in his wisdom foresaw the tendency of all hereditary appointments to become abuses; his object was, not to found a family, who under a false pretence to sanctity, might lord it over their country, while they practised abominable crimes. He wished to provide for a succession of wise and good teachers of the doctrines, which he had himself taught. His intentions have not been carried out, and his sect of the Hindu Religion will soon cease to exist. He had never abandoned the Hindu, nor adopted the Mahometan religion; but his disciples were of both faiths, and when he died, a discussion arose as to the mode, in which his body was to be disposed of: the Hindus desired to burn, and the Mahometans to bury it. They were commencing to fight, when happening to look under the sheet, they found, that the body was gone, having no doubt been removed by some of his disciples. The sheet was cut in half, and one portion was burned with the usual ceremony, and the other buried with the usual prayers. Both the tomb and the cenotaph have since been swept away by the waters of the Ravi; but the memory of the good man lives in the hearts of many thousands of his countrymen; and it is much to be regretted, that they have forgotten his precepts, and do not attend to his words.

Angad succeeded him, and lived and died at Khudur near Tarn Taran, of the Amritsar District. He elected as his successor his pupil Amar Das of the Khatri caste, who lived at Goindwal on the Beas, at the point where the Imperial road from Delhi to Lahore crosses that stream. This is marked by a Kos Minar on the high bank. To Amar Das succeeded his son-in-law Ram Das, of the Sodhi Tribe of the Khatri caste, in whose family the office of Guru became hereditary, till it finally ended in the person of Guru Govind Singh, who converted the peaceful Sikhs into warlike Singhs, and established a state of things, deadly hostile, instead of being conciliating towards the Mahometans. The descendants of Nanak are known as the Bedi, and when the Sikhs became powerful, this family became rich and arrogant: living in luxury on lands bestowed by the

Government, and the collections made from the Sikhs. This last item used to be very considerable, and members of the family travel long distances to collect their fees. They reside chiefly at Dera Baba Nanak, on the Ravi, near the spot where their great ancestor died, and have in later years taken very much to trade.

Lives of Baba Nanak, called *Janam Sakhi*, are very common, but they are so full of fable, and invention, displaying such intense ignorance, that they are more calculated to deceive than instruct. The whole life of the Guru has been depicted in a series of pictures, which are often found on the walls of shrines. Every act of his life, true or fabulous, is there narrated. He himself is generally represented as a white-haired, venerable old man, with Bhai Bala fanning him, and Bhai Mardana playing on the *Rabab*. From these pictures, and oral tradition, all the details of his life are well known to the people, but this is the first attempt to compose a narrative, from which all the marvellous has been excluded, and which Hindu, Mahometan, and Christian can credit.

His sayings, and his precepts, were collected by his successors, and written in the volume, called by the Sikhs the *Adi Granth*, or first volume, to distinguish it from the *Second Granth*, composed one hundred years later by Guru Govind Singh. This book is written in an archaic dialect and difficult to understand now, and in that variation of the Indian Character, which is common in the Panjab, but which having been used for these sacred books is called the *Gurmukhi*, the words having been uttered by the Guru: these sacred books have been translated into English, that the followers of Nanak may see how much they have deviated from the example and precepts of their great Teacher.

Amritsar, 1859.

\*Pictures of Indian Life, London, 1881.



## NANUK

Rt. Hon'ble Sir William Milbourn James\*

The original founder [of the Sikh fraternity] was Nanuk, who was, in the truest sense of the word, a religious reformer. His tenets breathed the spirit of the purest morality and self-denial, even to austerity ; and he endeavoured to establish the worship of the One God, purifying the religious belief of his countrymen alike from the debasing idolatries of the Brahmans and the intolerant bigotry of the Mohammedans. Universal brotherhood and equality were the basis of the new faith; the entire absence of caste distinction was the rule of the new church. Whoever was initiated into the body was received with a solemn rite, in which men of all castes participated, in token that between them for the future there was to be no caste. Originally the followers of Nanuk were by profession and by practice a peace society, but as their numbers multiplied they attracted the attention of the rulers, and they were, as all religious reformers have always been, persecuted, oppressed, and slandered. A new organization was given to them by their second founder, Govind [Singh], by which they were taught the right of self-defence against their oppressors; the exhibition of manly courage in resistance was made their great duty, the practice of military arts their paramount education.

For some generations there was a succession of pontiffs, first the successors of Nanuk the peaceful, next the successors of Govind the warlike, each of whom was acknowledged as the "Gooroo" or Spiritual Head, in whom was supposed to dwell the Divine Spirit. But ultimately, and long before the period of our narrative, all individual spiritual headship was abolished, and it was accepted as part of their creed that the Divine Spirit which had lodged in the individual Gooroos had now mystically entered in some ineffable manner into the whole congregation of the Faithful, and thus the *Khalsa*, or fraternity became itself a mystic and sacred body. In their new organization, as in their old, they were cruelly persecuted. Wholesale massacres, the most atrocious tortures, the burning of towns, the devastation of the country, were the modes resorted to by the Mohammedan sovereigns of convincing their heretical subjects. Orthodox Christians could not have behaved more rigorously towards their heterodox neighbours, nor shown more zeal in the cause of God, nor taken more vigorous measures for the extirpation of a soul-destroying heresy. The Sikhs were crushed, but, for the most part disdaining apostasy, took refuge in the wildest and most inaccessible mountains, in dreary and pestiferous jungles, where a few of them awls-succeeded in evading the destroying zeal of the true believers. ...

One is not surprised to find that the English, who first described these Sikhs, describe in terms of enthusiasm their material qualities, their independent bearing, and their marked superiority, physical and mental, to the people around them, and speak of them as of men whose very frames had grown and dilated from the effects of their religion and their manly independence. Perhaps to some extent the visible superiority of the race may be explained by the consideration, that the men who were ready to accept the simple dogmas of Nanuk, and to throw off alike the debasing subjection of caste and the superstitious veneration of the Mohammedan for his saints' tombs, and his fakirs and dervishes, must have been of superior mental mould to the mass, and that the men, who were ready to join the warlike association of Govind [Singh], to devote themselves to the profession of arms, and to cherish the project of achieving their independence by actual war against the sovereigns of Hindostan, must have been men of that physical mould and adventurous disposition to whom also the chances and danger of such a profession and such a project would have charms. From such men the tribe is descended, and by converts from such men its numbers were from time to time swollen; but making allowance for this, it is impossible not to believe that the men, whose sires had been brought up to look on themselves as free men, to love independence and equality amongst themselves, and superiority and rule over others, and to look down with contempt on the superstitions of the masses around them, should, even in their physical development, show the effects of such a training working through successive generations.

\* *The British in India*, London, 1882.

## GURU NANAK

Syad Muhammad Latif\*

Nanak<sup>1</sup> was born, at Talwandi, a village on the Ravi, above Lahore, in the Sharkpur Tahsil, in the Samvat year 1526 (1469 A.D.), at the time when the Emperor Bahlol Lodi ruled India. He was the son of Kalu, a shopkeeper<sup>2</sup> of Talwandi, and belonged to the Bedi sub-division of the *Khattris*. The tract between the Ravi and Chinab is called the Richna Doab. 1 his vast delta, during the period immediately preceding the establishment of the Sikh religion, was inhabited by the *Jats* and *Bhattis*. The latter were a nomadic tribe, but had settled down here, after having embraced the Mahomedan religion, at the time of the Mahomedan incursions from the districts north of the Oxus. With the exceptions of a few small fields cultivated by the Jats, the entire country was dreary and void. Great jealousy and hatred existed in those times between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and the whole non-Musalman population was subjected to persecution by the Mahomedan rulers. The tract between the two rivers was called the Bar, and is still known by that name. The village Talwandi was in those times held by one Rai Bular, of the Bhatti tribe. The house in which Nanak was born, is now a place of public worship, and is called Nankana [Sahib]. Close to it is a tank where Nanak used to play in his boyhood, known as Balkera [*Bal-karira* or *Bal-Lila* or children's play].

Nanak's father was a weighman,<sup>2</sup> or *dharmwai*, who also acted as *patwari* of the village. Though not wealthy, he was a respectable man, and was treated by the village people as their head. His father's name was Sewa [Shiv] Ram, and his mother's Binarsi.

Nanak founded the religious system of the Sikhs. He was a man of a philosophic turn of mind, adopted to the age in which he lived, and was destined to introduce, with singular success, those measures of reform, toleration and enlightenment which were the principal wants of his time. In his boyhood, he was of reserved habits, and seldom or never spoke to his associates, except on the occasion of some pressing necessity. He ate but little, and always seemed gloomy and thoughtful; he was endowed by nature with a pious disposition and a contemplative turn of mind. Kalu, who believed that the boy's birth was the result of the prayers of a certain faqir<sup>3</sup>, who had prophesied that his son would become a great man in the world, took him to a physician and asked him to prescribe medicine for him. The youth, however, said to the physician: "Certainly, nothing can cure one who suffers hum separation from the Great Being who has given him life, vigour and the power of speech, and who alone governs the universe." The physician was deeply affected by the speech and address of the little boy, and he commended them, giving his affectionate father to understand that the best remedy for the boy was to leave him to himself, to be the free agent of his own will.

While yet a boy of seven, Nanak was taken to the village school, and when the schoolmaster began to teach him the rudiments of his religion, the youthful scholar politely asked him what proofs could be given of the existence of God. The master was informed that his pupil was the gift of a faqir, and it is said that, renouncing the world, he became a faqir himself.

When his teacher laid before Nanak the alphabet to read, the scholar asked the teacher the hidden import of the first letter of the alphabet, which is a straight stroke denoting singleness, and regarded even by the vulgar as implying the unity of God. A firm and irrevocable belief in the unity of the Creator seems, thus, -to have been deeply implanted in the nature of the pious Nanak while he was yet a mere boy.

According to the author of *Serul Mutakbirin*, Nanak received his education from a Musalman Moulvie named Syad Hassan<sup>4</sup>, who resided close to his father's house in Talwandi, and was thoroughly versed in the Mahomedan law books.

The greater portion of his time was spent in seclusion a seclusion and religious contemplation. During the early part of his career, he used frequently to conceal himself in the woods for days together, away from the busy throng, and studiously avoided contact with his fellow-beings. His parents were on several occasions led to believe that he had been lost in the wilderness, or that he had been devoured by ferocious

beasts; but, on search being made, he was discovered in the garb of a faqir, indifferent alike to the concerns of his own person and to the cares of the outside world.

When Nanak reached his ninth year, his father, following the custom of the Hindus, convened an assembly of all cal thread his relations and friend- to invest him with the Brahminical thread. Nanak was purified in the usual way ; and, all the preliminary ceremonies having been gone through, the priests called upon him to wear the thread, preparatory to his being declared a Hindu; but Nanak contended that his status would not be improved by wearing the thread, and that he thought the ceremony was quite uncalled for. The guests were much disappointed at the attitude assumed by the young, but talented, Nanak, and the Brahmins were without an answer to his philosophical treatment of the matter, of which long accounts are given in the Sikhs books. He observed:—

“Man is dignified by repeating the name of God. His praise is the strongest thread. This thread once put on, a man can be admitted into the presence of God, and this cannot, my son, ever break down.”

When he was fifteen year of age, his father, with the view of training him in the art of trade and shop keeping, in trade sent him to a village to purchase salt to the amount of business another at a higher price. Bala, a servant of the family, was sent with the boy. On his way to the village Nanak met a party of faqirs who were so hungry that they had lost all power of speech, and could not make their wants known except by signs. Nanak's the hungry faqirs compassion was aroused for the destitute and hungry faqirs, and, having purchased provision worth Rs. 40, he fed the faqirs. The faqirs having satiated their hunger and refreshed themselves, Nanak held a long religious discourse with them and derived particular pleasure from seeing them relieved of their distress. Bala rebuked the youth for what he thought a waste of money; but Nanak observed:

“I have made a bargain the profit of which shall be reaped in the world to come. A bargain with God is much more profitable than any transaction with men.”

The place where Nanak fed the hungry faqirs is known as *Khara Souda* (or unalloyed bargain). The tree in which he is reputed to have concealed himself, exists to this day, with its branches bowed down to the ground on all sides, “and is called “Mal Sahib” by the people. Notwithstanding the chastisement he had received for his liberty with his father's money, he invariably made a practice of giving the needy whatever he could lay his hands upon in his father's house, and was punished as often as he was discovered in these acts. His father once provided him with a shop at Sultanpur<sup>6</sup>, furnishing it with articles of merchandise, but, instead of turning them to any account, he gradually bestowed all in charity upon faqirs to the great disappointment and disgust of his father. The spot where Nanak opened his shop is called “Hat Sahib”, and the weights and measures which he used exist to this day, and are objects of worship and veneration to his disciples.

When Nanak reached the sixteenth year of his age, his parents, thinking that a matrimonial alliance would have the effect of turning his mind to worldly affairs, got him married. He was married to Sulakhni, the daughter of one Mula, a Khkhatri, resident of Pakhoki, in Batala, *zilla*. Gurdaspur, but the marriage had not the desired effect, and Nanak did not renounce his wandering habit and his love for faqirs. Nanak had a sister named Nanaki, who M as married to Jay Ram, a Hindu in the service of Nawab Doulat Khan Lodi, a grandee and relation of the reigning emperor of Delhi, Sultan Bahlol. The nawab held extensive jagirs in Sultanpur near Kapurthala. Sultanpur lies on the old Grand Trunk Road between Lahore and Delhi, provided with minars and serais at short distances, and was a place of imprtrtance in Nanak's time. Nanak was sent to Jay Ram to find employment under the *nawab*. The nawab put the almshouse (*Modi Khana*) under the young man's charge, and it is said that Nanak distributed charity to the poor, with such a liberal hand that in a short time the funds and provisions of the establishment were completely exhausted. Nanak was charged with defalcations by the nawab's servants, but when the nawab inspected the *Modi Khana*, and examined the accounts and the articles, he found everything in its proper place, and the reports made to him merely trumped up. He, therefore, conferred new honours on Nanak; but, some days after, the young man was again

similarly charged and, on enquiry,,, the accusation being,, again proved groundless, he left the service of the nawab, notwithstanding his ardent entreaties that he would remain in his employ.

Nanak became a public preacher at an early age. His sister Nanaki, after repeated admonitions, persuaded him to live in his house, and, while he was in the service of Nawab Doulat Khan, and in the thirty-second year of his age, a son was born to him who was named Sri Chand. After four years and half, Nanak was blessed with another son, who was named Lakhmi Das.

Lakhmi Das was a babe when Nanak abandoned all his worldly connections, and, putting on the garb of a faqir, started on a tour. His companions in his travels were Mardana, the family *mirasi*, or musician, a skilful performer on the *rubab* or harp; Lahna, who afterwards became his successor; Bala, a Sindhu Jat, and Ram Das, surnamed Budha, or the ancient.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever verses Nanak composed in praise of the Divine Being, and the sayings which he uttered to his votaries by way of admonition, were played by Mardana on his *rubab*, a stringed musical instrument like a guitar.

He travelled over the whole of India; visited Persia, Kabul and other parts of Asia, and, it is said, even Mecca. A story is related by both Hindus and Mahomedans in connection with Nanak's visit to Mecca. It is said that, while at Mecca, Nanak was found sleeping with his feet to the *Kaaba*, before which the Mahomedans prostrate themselves when performing their devotions. The Kazi, Rukn-ud-din, who observed this, angrily remarked : "infidel, how dare you dishonour God's house by turning your feet towards it!" "Turn them, if you can," replied Nanak, "in a direction where the house of God is not."

Nanak was sometimes seen in the garb of a Mahomedan *deresh*. Meeting a party of Mahomedan faqirs at Multan, he told them that he was but as the stream of the Ganges, which had entered the ocean of holiness, referring, presumably, to the sanctity in which Multan is held by the Mahomedans, in consequence of the presence in it of numerous mausoleums of saints and devotees and of its being the resort of holy men.

Having devoted some years to travel, Nanak came to Emnabad in Gujranwala, and there lived .with one Lalu, a carpenter. Mardana, the *rubabi*, went home to visit his family. The chief of Talwandi, Rai Bular, who had already been impressed with Nanak's talents, hearing of his recent travels, became anxious to see him, and sent him a message to that effect through Mardana. Nanak resolved to visit the chief, and shortly afterwards started for Talwandi. Here his father, mother, father-in-law, uncle, and other relations assembled, and once more they tried to persuade him to renounce his wandering habits and the faqir's garb which he had adopted. They exhibited to him his little children, and begged of him, for their sake and that of the mother, to discontinue his itinerant habits. The sighs of his father and the tears of his mother and wife availed nothing with the inflexible and resolute Nanak, who answered the assembly in the following admonitory verses :—

"Forgiveness is my mother, patience my father, and truth my uncle : with these, as my companions, I have controlled the mind."

"Hear, O Lalu ! this admonition :—Can they be called happy who are bound with worldly ties ?"

"Affability, my brother, is my companion : true love is my own son : endurance is my daughter : in the company of these I am happy."

"Assuagement is my constant female friend, and chastity my slave girl; these you may call my kin and kith, who are my associates every moment."

"The only God who gave me existence is my master. He who forsakes him and seeks another, O Nanak, shall suffer."

Rai Bular was much pleased with all that he saw of Nanak and his vast learning and persuasive eloquence, and, with a view to induce him to remain at Talwandi offered him lands; but Nanak was quite indifferent to Such an offer. After a few days residence in Talwandi, he made preparation for another journey.

His uncle Lalu offered him money to enable him to trade in horses, but Nanak rejected the offer and addressed his uncle thus :—

“Hear the Shastras and deal in the horses of truth; have good deeds for your provisions; do not consider this vain story, and prepare your way to the country of God that you may have everlasting bliss “

Nanak this time visited Bengal and its hills. He suffered many hardships in this expedition, in consequence of his preaching to the Mahomedans and Hindus, the strange doctrines of his religion which were extremely distasteful to them, and which they opposed by every means in their power; but nothing could dissuade Nanak from prosecuting the task which he had imposed upon himself in the cause of truth. While travelling in the hills, he had an interview with the followers of the famous *jogi*, Gorakh Nath, whose homilies are well known throughout India, and whose followers have a long cut through the lobe of their ear. He had a long discourse with the *jogis*, full particulars of which appeared in an account of his travels. Nanak is also said to have visited certain islands.

While on his travels in Afghanistan, he lost his faithful servant Mardana, the harper, who has originally a Mahomedan, but who had become a convert to Nanak's new doctrines and was burnt, according to his own wish, in Khulm, [Khwarizm, according to some] where he died. He returned to Batala, and thence proceeded to Talwandi. By this time Kalu, his father, and Rai Bular, the chief of Talwandi, were dead. Taking with him Sajada, the son of Mardana, he went to Talamba, near Multan. Here Sajada, was imprisoned by a notorious thug, and Nanak, by the force of his eloquence, obtained his release, and made the thug a convert to his faith. He then marched to Kabul and Kandahar. On his way, he is said, by interposing his hand, to have prevented a landslide. The hill received the impression of Nanak's hand, which exists to this day, and the place is called “Panja Sahib.” On his return from Kabul, he again lived with his old friend, Lalu, the carpenter of Emnabad.

By this time the number of Nanak's followers had greatly increased, and he was now looked upon by the people as a saint and a patriarch. With the lapse of years his mode of life also changed, and he now no longer hated society or family. Having left Lalu the carpenter, he went with Bala to witness the famous Gurchatter fair, held in Multan. Here he preached openly to people of all denominations and creeds who had assembled at the fair. The *Kardars* of the Delhi Emperor, Ibrahim Lodi, the successor of Bahlol, informed his majesty that a faqir whose tenets were different both from the Koran and the Vedas, was openly preaching to the people, and the importance which he was assuming might, in the end, prove serious to the State. By an imperial order, Nanak was brought to the emperor, who admitted him to an interview, and, after hearing his ideas on religion, ordered him to be kept in close confinement. Nanak was kept in prison for seven months and had to grind corn the whole time. His distress came to an end in consequence of the victory gained by the Emperor Baber over Ibrahim, and the latter's death in the great battle at Panipat, in which the Moghal troops gained a decisive victory.

Nanak now went on his travels to Sindh, and, on his way to that province, visited the mausoleum of the Bawa Farid Shakarganj, at Pakpattan.

Here he had a religious discourse with a learned Mahomedan named Behram [Shaikh Ibrahim], a descendant of Bawa Farid, and composed his book known as “Asa.”

Nanak, in his travels, is said to have also visited Ceylon. Shiv Nabh, the raja of that place, became a convert to his faith, as also did a number of others. He remained in Ceylon for two years and five months, and composed there his book called *Pran Sangli*.<sup>7</sup> The raja tried to persuade Nanak to settle in Ceylon permanently, but to no purpose; for Nanak, shortly afterwards, returned to his native land.

A story is related of Nanak's visit to Stamboul, and his interview with the Sultan of Turkey, who was noted for his cupidity and his extreme oppression of his subjects. Nanak's admonitions had a great effect on

the Sultan, who is said to have bestowed his hoarded treasures on the faqirs and the needy, and to have discontinued his tyranny over his people.

Nanak settled on the banks of the Ravi towards the latter part of his life and built houses there. He lived as the head of his family, and his residence was a great resort of people of all nations. Though a faqir in name and— appearance, he exercised great influence over vast numbers, who looked upon him as their spiritual leader. His expenses were like those of a king, and he established an alms-house [popularly known as *Langar*, a free kitchen] where thousands of helpless and poor people were fed. The place of his residence still exists on the banks of Ravi and is known as Dera Baba Nanak. He built there houses which were given free to his disciples.

Of Nanak's two sons, Lakhmi Chand and Sri Chand, the former became a man of the world and had two sons whose descendants remain to this day. Sri Chand became faqir and was the founder of a sect called Udasis. These wear their hair long, binding it on the head like a turban. They do not use trousers, but wear a cloth, a yard long and a span broad, which they pass between their legs to conceal their nakedness, and give it the name of *langoti*. They rub ashes over the body and go unshaved, the application of a razor to any part of their body being strictly prohibited. The descendants of Sri Chand are called *Nanakpotras*, or descendants of Nanak, and also *Sahibzadas*, or sons of masters. Some call them *Kartaris*, or holy men devoted to the worship of God.

Nanak also founded the town of Kartarpur in the Jalandar [Gurdaspur] district, a place of great sanctity and veneration among the Sikhs, and built there a *dharmsala* which exists to this day.

Nanak lived a long and useful life, and died at the age of 71 years in 1539 A.D. He reigned as Guru for sixty years, five months, and seven days. He died at Kartarpur, a town founded by himself on the Ravi, about forty miles above Lahore. A tomb, or *samadh*, was erected to his memory, where large crowds used to assemble to commemorate the date of his death, and perform certain religious ceremonies; but it has since been washed away by the Ravi, though a piece of Nanak's garment and his other relics are still exhibited to the pilgrims at a dharmsala, or temple, erected in commemoration of his decease.

The doctrines of Nanak were those of pure deism. He believed in the unity of God, the one invisible God, and strictly prohibited idolatry, and the worship of images. He maintained that true and pure religion was one, and that men were all equal. The numerous religions and castes which had sprung up in the world, were, he said, the device of men. He said, he had read the *Quran* and the *Puranas*, but true religion he could find in neither. Yet he respected both, and advised his followers to pick out, and to act upon the truths, which each contained. His best endeavours during his long public career were directed towards removing, or reducing to a minimum, those religious and social differences which had sprung up between the two great sects of India, the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and to reconciling them both; and to a great extent he was successful. His tenets were misunderstood after his death by his zealous followers, who, from a host of faqirs, turned into warriors, though, as will be explained further on, they were driven to such a course by circumstances peculiar to the times they lived in. He viewed with disfavour the intolerance of the Musalmans towards the Hindus, and the precepts of his religion inculcated peace to all mankind, brotherly love to one another, and living virtuously and harmoniously.

Nanak believed in the holy mission of Mahomed and the Hindu incarnation. He admitted that Mahomed was the messenger of God sent to instruct mankind and to lead them to the path of righteousness. But, unlike the Arabian prophet, he never claimed that what he himself preached or addressed to the people was inspired or revealed to him from Heaven; nor did he ever boast of being gifted with supernatural powers, or attribute any of his acts to a power not at the command of other men. He said he was a man among men, mortal as they were, and sinful. "He was a faqir," said he, "before the threshold of God." "Thou art the incorporeal Creator, and Nanak is thy slave;" "*Tui bae Nirankar Kartar, Nanak banda tera*," was the theme of the good-hearted, pious Nanak. He took particular delight in causing this theme to be played on the *rubab* by

his favourite actor and the companion of his toils, Mardana. His doctrine was that God was in all, and he taught all to believe in the Creator, the Lord of Lords, the one God, self-existent, incomprehensible, omnipotent, without beginning and everlasting. Good deeds were nothing in themselves, but the knowledge of the true God was the only way to salvation. No prophet or holy teacher has the power to do good or to do evil to anybody. Everything comes from God, who alone must be depended upon for all our wants. Holy men can only tell and interpret His commands. They are nothing of themselves. He was a believer in the transmigration of souls, and maintained that, after undergoing the prescribed course of punishment for the sins committed by man, the soul shall find its blissful home with God. Although he was taken for an ascetic in his early life, in consequence of his absenting himself from his family, and his dislike for the society of men, yet that was in the ardent search for truth. Nanak laboured for years as an enquirer after truth, and passed a considerable portion of his life in travels in India, and beyond its limits; but after he had seen enough of the world and gained much by his great and varied intercourse with mankind, he became a worldly man himself, and lived in his family and with his people as a patriarch. He then taught his followers that abandonment of the world was tuiuq ennecessary, and that God treated all with equal favour, whether travellers or home dwellers and that, between the hermit in his cell and the king in his place, no difference was made in respect of the kingdom to come. The doctrines of this great Hindu reformer have been handed down in the famous book called the *Granth*, or holy book, written by himself [and some of his successors and other saints]. It is called the *Adi Granth*, to distinguish it from the second part, composed by Guru Govind Singh, a successor of Nanak, who greatly modified the tenets of his predecessor, and infused into his followers ideas of war and conquest, turning them from peaceable subjects into a contentious tribe.

As mentioned, before, Nanak never professed to possess miraculous powers, or pretended to do supernatural deeds, though his credulous followers attributed such powers to him. They think Nanak the incarnation of God, and repeat his name as their saviour, or lord, in their prayers. There are various stories current about his miracles, some of which may, with advantage, be cited here as showing the ideas and notions which his followers entertain of his character. A voice was one day heard by Nanak from above, calling upon him to approach. Nanak surprised at hearing the voice, said : “What power have I, O God, to stand in thy presence?” The voice directed Nanak to close his eyes. Nanak closed his eyes and advanced, He was then told to open his eyes and look. He did so, and heard the word “*Wah*” or “Well done” repeated five times, and then “Wah, Guruji,” or “Well done, teacher.” Nanak then entered into conversation with God, who informed him that he had been sent into the world as a teacher of mankind in the Kaliyug, or dark. age, and that he was to lead them into the paths of righteousness and virtue.

One day Nanak, becoming thirsty, asked Budha, who was attending his cattle near a village, to bring some water in a vessel from a tank close by. Budha said there was a tank, but it was dry. Nanak said, “Go and see; the tank is not dry.” Budha went, and to his astonishment saw that the tank was full of water, although it had not a drop in it in the morning. He brought water for Nanak, and became his disciple. At this place Guru *Arjan* constructed a new tank, and called it “Amritsar,” or the “Water of Immortality.”

While quite a youth and tending his cattle, the days being hot, Nanak went to sleep under the shade of tree. The sun, declining towards the west, threw its rays on Nanak’s face. A black serpent, seeing this, approached and spread its broad hood over Nanak’s face to protect it from the rays of the sun. Rai Bular, the chief of Talwandi, saw this, and gave Nanak’s parents the happy tidings that their son was to be a leader of men, and had a great future in store for him. Kalu contemptuously observed that “God’s matters were known only to God.” The place where this happened is called “*Kiara Sahib*,” and a large building has recently been constructed on it by the Sikhs to commemorate the event.

Nawab Doulat Khan once argued with Nanak, that, since he (Nanak) forbade idolatry, acknowledged the unity of God, and believed in the mission of Mahomed he was a Moslem, and, this being the case, there was nothing to prevent his professing the Moslem creed openly. He therefore took him to a mosque, and Nanak apparently expressed his readiness to join in the prayers. The Hindus were much alarmed at hearing that Nanak had resolved to embrace Mahomedanism, though they knew perfectly well that he was not a

Hindu himself in their sense of the word. When, however, the prayers were being read, Nanak kept aloof, and did not join the congregation. The nawab was disappointed, and asked Nanak the reason of his not joining in the prayers. Nanak said : “The prelate (*Imam*) was uneasy in his mind about the indisposition of his sons, and feared that his calf might fall into the well as it had not been properly tethered. The nawab was thinking of purchasing horses from Kandahar. These thoughts prevailing, how could I read prayers after such men.” The *Imam* admitted that what Nanak said was really true, and that his attention was divided while he was conducting the prayers. The nawab also admitted that he was thinking of making bargain for horses at Kandahar, while apparently engaged in prayers. This astonished the whole congregation; and the Hindus, whose minds were much perplexed, were glad that Nanak had not openly embraced the religion of Prophet. Yet an idea generally prevailed among the Mahomedans that Nanak was a true follower of the Prophet, as would seem to be the fact from the following account. At the time when Nanak breathed his last, a dispute arose between the Hindus and the Mahomedans regarding the disposal of his body, each party claiming the right to perform the funeral obsequies according to the form of their own religion. The Hindus said that, Nanak being a Hindu, his body should, after the fashion of that creed, be burnt, while the Mahomedans maintained that the deceased was a Musalman, and that his remains should therefore be buried according to the rites of the Mahomedans. A quarrel arose between the two parties, and swords were drawn, but through the mediation of more thinking men, it was resolved that the body should be neither burnt nor buried in the grave, but thrown into the river. When the people entered the room where the body was supposed to lie, they found, to their great astonishment, on raising the sheet with which it had been covered, that it was not there. In all probability, it had been secretly removed by one of the contending parties, but only the sheet was, as a matter of fact, found stretched on the ground, with some flowers underneath, instead of the body of the deceased. The Mahomedans took half of this sheet and buried it, with the ceremonies observed on the death of their co-religionists, while the Hindus burnt the other half which fell to their lot.

The place at Emnabad where Nanak slept for some time in the jungle, is called *Rori Sahib*, owing to its having been originally a heap of gravels and stones, which Nanak used as an altar, and before which he prayed. He stood in the waters of the Bias, near Sultanpur, for three successive days, neither eating nor drinking anything, and passing the whole time in prayer and meditation. The tree under which he stood is called *Baba ki Ber* the place where he used to perform his ablutions being known as *Sant Ghat*.

In one of Baber’s expeditions into the Panjab, Nanak, with a number of his followers, among whom was Mardana, was apprehended at Emnabad and brought before the emperor. Baber, who was himself a very good Arabic and Persian scholar, and also a poet, was much pleased with the conversation which he held with Nanak, and with the information given to him on many interesting topics.

The Emperor ordered rich presents to be bestowed on the faqir, but Nanak refused them, observing that his best reward was the inward pleasure derived from the worshipping of the Creator, and that as his aim in life was to please that Lord of Lords, he had no concern with the kings made by him. A drug, richly prepared, was brought to the emperor by his slave. His majesty partook of it, and ordered some to be given to the faqir, but Nanak requested to be excused, saying : “On a man who is ever intoxicated with the recollection of God, this drug can have no effect.” It is strange that Baber makes no mention of the founder of the Sikh religion in his memoirs; but this is probably due to the fact that Nanak was not at that time a man of sufficient note and importance to attract the attention of the emperor when engaged in drawing up an account of his own life and exploits.

On one occasion Nanak saw a party of Brahmans who were pantomimically going through the performance of baling out water from a river with their hands, as if to irrigate their fields, their faces being turned to the east. This ceremony was being performed in the superstitious belief that the thirst of their dead co-religionists would, by virtue of the act, be quenched. Nanak, who was standing on the opposite bank, saw this, and began to mimic their actions, but with his face turned to the west. The Brahmans evidently considered Nanak, whom they took for a faqir, to be out of his senses, and indignantly asked him the meaning of his insane performance, informing him that all his labours were in vain, and that he could not



hope to relieve the thirst of the departed by such heretical actions. Nanak replied : “I am not furnishing water to dead, but irrigating my fields in Kartarpur to prevent them drying up by the scorching heat of the sun.” “Watering your fields in Kartarpur ! Such a long distance ? How can this handful of water benefit your fields which are such a long way off ?” rejoined the Brahmans in an excited and indignant tone. “How can, then, your waters,” replied the pious, but vexed, Nanak, “reach the next world and quench the thirst of your dead ? If the water cannot benefit my crops, which are in this world, how can it benefit your dead in another ?”

Nanak never thought that the office which he had created would become hereditary. When he saw that his last end was approaching, he named Lehna, one of his faithful disciples, his successor. The sons and other disciples envied him, but he gave proofs of his faith and devotion. Seeing the dead body of a man lying on the roadside, Nanak said : “Ye who have confidence in me partake of this food.” All shrunk back, including the Guru’s son; but simple Lehna, Nanak’s most staunch ally and follower, jumped over the dead body, and was about to devour the dead, when he was embraced by Nanak, who declared that from that moment his own spirit had gone into Lehna’s body, and that he must be regarded as Nanak himself. His name he changed from Lehna to *Ang-i-khud* or “Angad,” meaning “my own-body.” The belief common among the Sikhs is that the spirit of Nanak is inherited by each successive Guru.

Lehna, on succeeding to the *Guruship*, assumed the title of ‘Angad,’ an epithet applied to him by his illustrious predecessor, in consideration of his proved loyalty and devotion. Angad was born in 1504 (1561 Samvat) in the village of Khadur, his residence on the river Bias near, Gowindwal, in the Tirhun subdivision of the *Khatri*s. The Sikh religion, would, in all probability, have gradually completely died out and sunk into oblivion, as has been the lot of many others, had it not been for the foresight and wisdom of its founder, in establishing an apostolic successor-ship, and thereby creating a spirit of aspiration and ambition in his followers which insured, to a great extent, its perpetuation.

Nanak devoted his life to the instruction of man in the path of virtue and righteousness. His motives were quite unselfish, and he had at his heart the good of the nation and the prosperity of the people among whom he lived. He, therefore, delegated his office neither to any of his sons, nor to any of his early followers, who were probably not with him at the close of his life, but to Angad, who had joined him not long before his death, and whom he considered the most fit. Angad gained his livelihood by the work of his own hands, twisting *van*, or coarse twine made of *munj*.

\* *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891.

1. The incidents of the life of Nanak, the founder of the religious system of the Sikhs, have been fully described in his *Janam-sakhi*s or narratives of his life, but these are so full of fictions and fabrications, as to render it almost impossible to distinguish between the imaginary and the real; hence the history of the Sikhs during this period is involved in a haze of mystery. The most authentic of these narratives was found in an ancient manuscript believed to belong to the latter part of the time of Guru Arjan, from the fact that its characters and the idioms in which it was composed were obviously ancient, and that the phraseology agreed with the known diction of the Guru. A copy of this manuscript was presented to the library of the East India House by the celebrated H. P. Colebrook, and it has been translated *verbatim* into English by Dr. Trumpp, and incorporated in his valuable translation of the *Adi Granth* of Baba Nanak. This *Janam-sakhi* is written in the most bombastic and hyperbolical language, picturing the preposterous performances attributed to Nanak in the highest colours; but it may nevertheless be considered a sober composition when compared with the works of the same kind of later origin. I have carefully compared the *Janam-sakhi* of the India Office library, translated by Dr. Trumpp, with the current *Janam-sakhi*s, and find much in the latter which is omitted in the former. This fact clearly proves. I think, that the additions are of a later date and deserving of little credit. On the other hand, as observed by Dr Trumpp, every point in the old *Janam-sakhi* which throws an unfavourable or doubtful light on Nanak, has been carefully passed over in the latter *Janam-sakhi*s. In my sketch of the life of Baba Nanak I have adopted what seemed to me the safest course, namely, that of mentioning all facts which are found both in the old *Janam-sakhi* alluded to above, and in the latter *Janam-sakhi*s, including those of which an epitome appears

under mark B. in Dr. Trumpp's compilation, since these facts receive corroboration from all available sources. Fabulous stories have been avoided as far as possible, and an attempt has been made to describe facts in their nakedness. Yet it should be remembered that the original writers were men who occupied a very low position in the scale of civilization, and whose education and mode of life were far inferior to those of the growing generation. If some accounts appear to be coloured, it is because they are so in the text; and, however, phantastic they may appear, there can be little room for doubt that some of them are, at least, in their substance true, while they present to the mind of the reader an exact idea of the veneration and awe in which the name of the great Sikh reformer is still held by thousands upon thousands of his zealous followers and admirers, and express the true notions which they to this day entertain of his genius and mental power.

The *Janam Patri* of Baba Nanak was written, at the instance of Guru Angad, by *Paira Mokha Khatri*, of Sultanpur, as orally dictated to him by Bala, a Sindhu Jat, the companion of Nanak in his travels. It was written in 1582 samvat.

2. According to most of the biographers of Guru Nanak, his father Kalu was a *Patwari*, a village accountant, and not a shopkeeper or a weighman. The two jobs cannot be combined.—GS.
3. There is nothing in the current biographies of Nanak to say that his birth was the result of some *faqir's* prayers.—GS.
4. The name of Sayed Hasan has been introduced by the author of the *Siyār-ul-Mutakherin* and is not to be found in earlier works on the Guru's life. The Sikh accounts give the Muslim tutor's name as Qutb-ud-Din.—GS.
5. At Sultanpur Lodhi Nanak did not have a shop of his own as mentioned above but was employed as a *Modi*, a storekeeper, to Daulat Khan, the Governor of the state, as mentioned in the next paragraph above.—GS.
6. Dr. Trumpp believes that Bala was not a companion of Nanak in his travels, because his name does not occur in the old *Janam-sakhi* believed to belong to Arjan's time. I do not consider this a sufficient reason for holding that the later accounts which associate Bala's name with the travels of Nanak, are untrustworthy, particularly since all authors, European or native, agree that Bala was a companion of Nanak from his youth,

[Lehna and Budha were at no time his travelling companions. Latif's guess on this point is not correct.—GS]

7. 'This was not accepted by Guru Arjun, the compiler and editor of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, as a genuine composition, worthy of inclusion in the Sikh scripture.—GS.

## NANUK THE FOUNDER OF SIKHISM

General Sir Charles Gough and Arthur D. Innes\*

Nanuk, the founder of the Sikh sect, was born in 1469, in the neighbourhood of Lahore. A seeker after truth from his earliest years, he tried study, solitary meditation, travel, and intercourse with his neighbours, but failed to find either in Islam or in the current Hinduism the satisfaction which his soul desired; but he penetrated beneath the crust of observances and conventions, and found the root of the matter in the Unity of God and the equality of men before Him. He made no attempt to formulate his religious teaching scientifically, nor did he attempt to frame a creed; but, if it is legitimate to apply an exceedingly modern terminology to what was in effect his doctrine, it might be said that he found salvation in good deeds as the fruit of a good will. He set himself to teach men the way of salvation, not as a ruler, but as a servant of God to whom the light had been shown, coming to bring not strife among men but peace.

Nanuk is remarkable as being not only a really great reformer but one who seems to have inspired singularly little animosity. He appears to have remained on excellent terms alike with Hindus and Mohammedans, insomuch that when he died a dispute arose as to whether his body should be buried as a Mussulman's or burned as a Hindu's, since he acknowledged Mohammed as well as the Hindu 'incarnations' as among the prophets of God. The secret of the personal favour in which he was held seems to have lain not merely in the gentleness of his disposition and the charm of his character, but also in the manner in which he put forth his claims, and the total absence of any pretensions for himself which could be interpreted as arrogant or impious. When he denied the religious importance of caste, he did not denounce the Brahmins, while to the Mohammedans he appeared as a Hindu who was almost persuaded to be a Mohammedan. The unostentatious virtue of his own life, the absence of austerity combined with the practice of the moral principles which he preached, appealed to the humanity of those with whom he came in contact. Since he preached no crusade against conventions, he did not excite the wrath of those who were attached to them; while the fundamental principles on which he laid vital stress were such as must always, in virtue of their "sweet reasonableness," appeal to every religious mind, and most of all to those large classes who found in orthodox Hinduism but little consolation in the next world for the sorrows of the present.

Thus did Nanuk found the religious sect or brotherhood who called themselves Sikhs, or 'disciples'; a sect entirely religious, without any political aim or organisation, based on two fundamental principles : the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Man, without distinction of race, caste or creed. His teaching is embodied in the book known as the *Granth*.

The torch of Nanuk was handed on through a series of successors bearing the title of *guru*, which is perhaps best rendered by the term prophet. The guru being recognised as the head of the sect, it was inevitable, under the pressure of quasi-feudal custom, that his followers should acquire something of the character of feudal retainers. The fifth guru, Arjun, is the first in whom the germ of a political leadership comes to be recognised; in the sixth, Har Govind, it develops. Har Govind, in addition to his office as the religious light of the Sikhs, was forced by circumstances to adopt a military training, and, being naturally fitted thereto, he gave his following a decidedly martial character.

\**The Sikh and the Sikh Wars*. London, 1897.

## THE SIKH ORDER OF UDASIS

John Campbell Oman\*

Of the mendicant orders which sprang out of Sikhism I have selected the *Udasis*, *Nirmalis*, and *Akalis* for notice here, more especially on account of the peculiar and picturesque circumstances to which the latter two owe their beginnings.

The *Udasis*.<sup>1</sup> This order of *Sadhus*, which is an extremely numerous one in the Punjab, was founded by Siri Chand, eldest son of Baba Nanak. Siri Chand lived to see the sixth *Sikh guru*, Har Govind, and, when he was over a hundred years old, he adopted Gurditta, a son of the last-named *guru*, to succeed him as abbot of the order of the *Udasis*. But Gurditta, being a sporting character and a married man, was disqualified from being a proper head of the brotherhood, He therefore made over the spiritual leadership of the order to four men who were to act as his *masands* or deputies, and these four became the founders of the four principal sub-orders, called *dhuanis*, or hearths, into which the *Udasis* are divided.

It is stated that, when Siri Chand's claims to succeed his father Baba Nanak in the *guruship* were passed over by his venerable parent in favour of Angad, one of his most devoted followers, the disappointed son threw ashes on his head and person, in token of his grief and abasement; and to this day *Udasis* hold ashes in great esteem in memory of this painful event, the ashes, for ceremonial purposes mixed with calcareous earth, being sometimes made into large balls several inches in diameter.

*Udasis* are usually decently clad in salmon-coloured clothes. They wear a pointed cap on the head and a black cord known as a *selee* round the neck. They carry a *jholi* or bag hanging from the shoulder, and a *toomba* or dried pumpkin which serves as a water-pot. A black *asan*, or small carpet, often forms a part of their travelling outfit. Some wear a mass of matted hair on their heads, others go almost clean-shaven, there being apparently no general rule on this matter. The use of flesh, spirits, and tobacco is denied to the *Udasis*. Many members of the order are good Sanskrit scholars. When a *chela* is admitted into the order he is adjured to avoid those two deadly temptations : *Gold* and *women*. The initiatory ceremony is brought to a conclusion by the *chela* drinking the water with which his *guru's* feet have been Washed.<sup>2</sup> He is then taught certain portions of a hymn known as the *jap-jī*, and dismissed with this final admonition—

“*Charan sādḥ ke dhoi dhoi piyo*  
*Arap sādḥ ko apnā jiyo.*”

(Drink the water with which the *sadhu* has washed his feet, and give up your soul and body to the *sadhu*, i. e. *guru*.)

\**The Mystics, Ascetics, Saints of India*, London, 1903.

1. *Udasi*=grief, dejection [also detachment],

2. [Actually clean fresh water is only touched by the thumb of the foot.—GS.]

## NANAK THE REFORMER

Sir John J. H. Gordon\*

The Sikh religion originated with the teaching of Nanak who from being a wandering Hindu devotee settled down about the year 1500 as a missionary preacher to his countrymen, proclaiming a deistic doctrine, embracing what was best in the two ancient faiths of Hindu and Buddhist—the personal God of the one and the spiritual equality of the other. He was born in 1469 in a village near Lahore in the Punjab, the son of a jat [? Khatri] farmer and small trader. As a boy he was thoughtful, reserved, and inclined to devotion. He early showed the bent of his mind by puzzling his teacher with question as to the existence of God. At the age of nine he shocked the family Brahman priest by refusing to be invested with the sacred thread at the Hindu ceremony of initiation, contending that it was a useless form. As a youth, to the distress of his father, he was antagonistic to the ways of the world, despising money-making. Later on marriage failed to divert his mind from the religious turn. He then at the age of thirty-two became a public preacher, and, garbed as a fakir, left his home to attain religious wisdom by travel and intercourse with others in the foreign lands, accompanied by four companions as disciples, one of them being the family bard. His sayings and the verses he composed in praise of God were sung by this minstrel to the sound of the *rabab*, or Eastern lute, as he said the ‘skill of the strings’ was necessary to attract listeners. His family now looked on him as mad. In his ardent desire to find a resting-place among the conflicting creeds of men he wandered over all India, and visited Ceylon, Mecca, Persia, and Kabul. The story is told of him that while at Mecca the Kazi observed him asleep with his feet towards the holy *Kaaba*, the object of Mahomedan devotion. He was angrily roused, abused as an infidel, and asked how he dared to dishonour God’s house by turning his feet towards it. “Turn then, if you can, in a direction where God’s house is not,” was his reply.

On returning to his home after his wanderings he threw aside the garb and habits of the fakir, saying that the numerous religions and castes which he had seen in the world were the devices of men; that he had read Mahomedan Korans and Hindu Purans, but God was nowhere found in them. All was error. He now taught his followers that abandonment of the world after the manner of ascetics was quite unnecessary; that true religion was interwoven in the daily affairs and occupations of life; that God treated all men with equal favour; and that between the hermit in his cell and the king in his palace no difference was made in respect of the kingdom to come. “God will not ask man of what caste or race he is. He will ask him what he has done.” As a man sows, that shall he reap. He contended against the furious bigotry of the Mahomedans and the deep-rooted superstition and caste thralldom of the Hindus, and aimed at reforming and reconciling the two creeds. He proclaimed the unity of God and the equality of all men before God; condemned idolatry and inculcated a righteous religious life with brotherly love to one another. He said he was but a man among men, mortal and sinful as they were; that God was all in all, and that belief in the Creator, self-existent, omnipresent and omnipotent, without beginning and everlasting, was the only way to salvation—the one thing needful being firm reliance on God, who was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; to have abiding companionship with Him, to let His name be continually in their hearts and on their lips, and to pray without ceasing. “The just shall live by faith.” This was the key-stone of his doctrine.

He now no longer avoided society, but lived as the head of his family and as a patriarch, preaching openly at all the country fairs in his neighbourhood. He met with violent opposition from the Hindu zealots, who reproached him for laying aside the habits of a fakir. “A holy teacher has no defence but the purity of his doctrine. The world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable,” Was his reply. No Brahman of any note now acknowledged him. The Jat peasantry formed the mass of his disciples. They resorted from all parts, attracted by his preaching, and he soon exercised great influence over vast numbers, who looked on him as their ‘Guru’ or spiritual guide. With their offerings he established almshouses where crowds of poor and helpless were fed. He died at his home in 1539, at the age of seventy-one.

He was a contemporary of Luther, and, like the German Reformer, he preached no new faith, but contended that religion had become obscured and transformed during the course of centuries. One of the stories told of him in his crusade against the superstitious ceremonies and forms of the priesthood is that on

one occasion seeing some Brahmans at their morning devotions by a stream baling out water with their hands facing the east, going through the ceremony of quenching the thirst of dead clients in another world, he, on the opposite bank, began to do the same facing the west. The Brahmans, thinking him a *fakir* out of his senses, remonstrated with him, saying that all his labours were in vain, and that he could not hope to relieve the thirst of the departed by such heretical actions. Nanak replied, "I am not giving water to my dead, but irrigating my fields in Kartarpur to prevent them drying up by the scorching heat of the sun." "Watering your fields in Kartarpur, such a long way off ! How can these handfuls of water benefit your fields at such a distance ?" the Brahmans scoffingly replied. "How can, then, your waters," rejoined Nanak, "reach the next world and quench the thirst of your dead ? If the water cannot benefit my crops, which are in this world, how can it benefit your dead in another ?"

Nanak's followers were called Sikhs, from *sicsha*, a Sanscrit word signifying disciple or devoted follower, corrupted into Sikh, pronounced Sick, and he was called by them Baba Nanak or Guru Nanak—Father Nanak or the Spiritual guide. When he felt that his end was approaching he appointed as his successor in the Guruship one of his most faithful followers, passing over his two sons despite their remonstrances, one of them being an ascetic and the other a man of the world. He selected whom he thought most fit by moral courage and devotion to the cause to carry on his ministry unimpaired. He did not consider the office he had created a hereditary one, but this was later on brought about by a father's strong affection for a devoted and ambitious daughter. The religion which Nanak founded would have sunk into oblivion, as befell that of other reformers in India before him, but his foresight in creating an apostleship and selecting a successor before his death saved it.

Sikhism had its root solely in religious aspirations. It was a revolt against the tyranny of Brahmanism. On throwing off the yoke, Nanak and his disciples reverted instinctively to the old theistic creed of their ancestors. The simple-minded Jat peasantry to whom he spoke were inclined to the reception of religious reform. Brahmanism was not so deeprooted in them as in the mass of Hindus in Hindostan; regard for caste was weak, that of tribe and race strong. Their old Getic faith had left a lasting impression on their independent character which profoundly modified their beliefs as Hindus, for the ancient Getes, according to Herodotus, were Theists, and held the tenets of the soul's immortality. With the spread and ascendancy of Hinduism idolatry and priestcraft reigned supreme, and caste exclusiveness, with its narrow restrictions, pressed heavily on the lower classes, who had little consolation to hope for in the next world for the hardships of the present.

As the period between the downfall of Buddhism and the advent of Islam was of comparatively short duration, the doctrine of the innate superiority of Brahmanism was rudely shaken by the success of the Mahomedan invaders, inspired with the religious zeal of their new faith, proclaiming the unity of God, denouncing idolatry, and disregarding the bonds of caste. Early in the fifteenth century Hindu reformers had risen in Hindostan who seized upon the doctrine of man's equality before God, assailed the worship of idols, the authority of Hindu Shasters and Mahomedan Koran, and the exclusive use of a learned language in religious books unintelligible to the lower orders. They strove to emancipate men's minds from priestcraft and polytheism, and advanced in some measure the cause of enlightenment. The people were appealed to in their own tongue and told that perfect devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. These reformers passed away and left no successors, but their writings were very popular among the people from being in a spoken language. Nanak's susceptible mind had been influenced by these writings, some of which were afterwards embodied in the sacred book of the Sikhs.

Nanak was the only Hindu reformer who established a national faith. He rose out of the dust as a great preacher with a great theme which he boldly proclaimed, waking up the people to a higher notion of religion. It is a strange coincidence that from being a Hindu devotee he did so at the very time when Luther, the German monk, nailed his famous theses to his church door at Wittenberg, starting the Reformation in the West, both intent on denouncing what they considered the errors in their religions. His preaching attracted the attention of the Mahomedan governors, who reported that a fakir preaching doctrines at variance with

Hindu Vedas and Mahomedan Koran was gaining much influence among the peasantry, which might prove serious to the Government. At that time Babar with his conquering Moghuls was entering the Punjab from north. He was summoned to Delhi to appear before the Emperor, who after hearing him ordered him to be confined in prison. There he remained for seven months, until Babar captured Delhi and established the Moghul power. Babar interviewed him, when he defended his doctrine with firmness and eloquence. He was released, returned to his home, and continued his ministry.

He extricated his disciples from the accumulated errors of ages. Regarding them merely as disciples, he had no views of political advancement. As a preacher of peace and goodwill to man he told them to “fight with valour, but with no weapon except the word of God,” an injunction to which his successors in the apostleship later on, when driven by persecution to defend themselves, added, “and with the sword of the Lord.” His care was to prevent his people from contracting into a sect or into monastic distinctions, proving this by excluding his son, a meditative ascetic, from the ministry after him—the son who justified his fears by becoming the founder of a sect called “Oodasses, indifferent to the world,” still existing in considerable numbers, proud of their origin, and using the ‘*Granth*,’ but not regarded as genuine Sikhs.

Nanak’s line of the Bedi clan through his younger son has been preserved to the present day. During these four hundred years they have been held in much veneration by all Sikhs, trusted and protected in the stormy times out of regard for their ancestor. An interesting personality at the recent Coronation celebration in London was Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi, K.C.I.E., one of the representatives sent from the Punjab, an old man of great influence and of proved loyalty, who has stood by the British Government from the day, as he expressed it, since the line of Ranjit Singh was ended—the lineal descendant in the fourteenth generation from the Sikh reformer, and the present head of the family. He spoke with decision for his co-religionists, of their fervid loyalty and of their readiness to prove it again and again in the future as they had done in the past, in defence of the King-Emperor and his kingdom. Recently in the columns of a Punjab newspaper he has expressed his conviction that the political object which led the Sikhs to adopt a military life—viz., the establishment of a perfectly peaceful Government and the maintenance of a rule of justice and religious toleration—has been completely realised under the benign reign of the British Government, and that the Sikhs, fully regarding that Government as a god-send, have accordingly placed themselves entirely at its service.

\**The Sikhs*, London, 1904.

## SPIRITUAL EMANCIPATION BY NANAK

Dr Sir Gokal Chand Narang\*

It is usual to say that Sikhism, as founded by Nanak, was a sect of peaceful disciples, and retained its original character until the ministry fell into the hands of Guru Govind Singh. He was, it is said, an ambitious man, and transformed this sect of peaceful devotees into a band of fanatical warriors. It is, undoubtedly, true that the political aspirations of the Sikhs became more pronounced under the leadership of the tenth Guru, but a careful study of the Sikh History must show that the process of transformation had begun long before the time of Guru Govind [Singh]. Govind [Singh] himself, in fact, as well as his work, was the natural product of the process of evolution that had been going on ever since the foundation of Sikhism. The harvest which ripened in time of Guru Govind Singh had been sown by Nanak and watered by his successors. The sword which carved the Khalsa's way to glory was, undoubtedly, forged by Govind [Singh], but the steel had been provided by Nanak, who had obtained it, as it were, by smelting the Hindu ore, and burning out the dross of indifference and superstition of the masses, and the hypocrisy and pharisaism of the priests.

"All religious movement," the German Emperor once said, "are in reality political movements." And this is true in so far as the inspiration for all public movements, comes from religion. Even the mild and tender religion of Buddha led to the establishment and consolidation of the most glorious and united empire that India had ever seen before the establishment of the British Empire. The untutored Arabs, when inspired by the teaching of the Prophet, became the teachers of the whole Western World, and carried the flag of victory to Bengal on the one hand and Spain on the other. Europe became what she is now only when Luther enfranchised her intellect, purified her religion, and, by breaking the chains which bound her to the Papal Chair, raised her from a cringing position to a position of liberty, self-respect and self-assertion. Puritanism led to the establishment of real liberty in England, Puritanism founded the new world, and it was Puritanism that waged and won the war of American Independence. All political progress requires high aspirations, an enterprising spirit, "The will to do, the soul to dare," and the purity and integrity of private and public life. And any movement which contributes to the growth of these virtues in a people qualifies them for making political effort and advancing on the path of political glory.

This impetus may come from literature, or from the peculiar circumstances of a people, e.g., from a natural re-action against the pressing environment of tyranny and injustice under which a nation might be smarting. But the more common source from which these virtues have flowed has been religion. And nowhere in the world has the relation of political movements to religion been so close as in India. The war of 1857 was chiefly the result of the religious susceptibilities of the Hindu and Muhammadan soldiers which were wounded by the greased cartridges. The Wahabi movement which, at one time, threatened to involve India in a severe frontier war, was professedly a religious movement, a crusade against the infidels. The Kooka riots which resulted in the deportation of Bhai Ram Singh and the blowing from guns of many of his followers were mainly caused by religious fanaticism. And, last but not least, the recent convulsion in Bengal reveals the same truth. The actors in this drama have all been religious men, and even those who carried the Bomb in one hand had *Bhagavad Gita* in the other. The same phenomenon meets our eyes if we glance at the India of more remote times. Sivaji did not found a new sect, but he had received his inspiration from Ram Das,\* the Nanak of Maharashtra, and it was by rousing the religious spirit of the people, and by proclaiming himself the champion of Hinduism and the protector of the Brahman and the cow that he succeeded in founding an empire. Political sense is wanting in the masses of India, and the privileges and responsibilities of a civic life have not been known to them. They have, since times immemorial, been an intensely religious people, and religion, therefore, has been the chief motive power in all their great undertakings and achievements.

Guru Nanak seems to have thoroughly diagnosed the case of the Hindu community of his time, and found out that a religious revival was the only remedy which could save it from impending destruction. Even if he had been inclined towards politics, he could not have succeeded in ameliorating the condition of the Hindus by either of the two methods of political work. Constitutional agitation would have failed, because



there was then no constitution in India, Active resistance of the ruling despotism was out of the question because the Hindus were too weak to make any effective resistance. The condition of the Hindus, in the Punjab, was, in fact, most deplorable. This province was the first to be conquered. It lay between two powerful Muhammadan capitals, Delhi and Cabul. The Moslem Government was most thoroughly established there. The wave of proselytism had there spread with an overwhelming force, and the Punjab contained the largest number of converts to Islam. Hindu temples had been levelled to the ground, Hindu Schools and Colleges had made room for the mosques. All vestige of Hindu greatness had been obliterated. During the four and a half centuries that intervened the overthrow of Anangpal<sup>2</sup> and the birth of Guru Nanak himself, history does not tell us the name of a single Hindu in the Punjab. Those who had escaped conversion had lost almost all that lends dignity and grace to life, and distinguishes religion from superstition or cant.

Hinduism had never been able to shake off the accretions it had received from Buddhism and Jainism. It had become idolatrous before the advent of Islam. It had adopted the doctrine of incarnation from Jainism. But the onrush of Islam spread such a confusion and consternation among the Hindu ranks that all chances of reconsideration and reform came to an end. The instinct of self-preservation, in any form, and at any sacrifice, became supreme and all-absorbing. The storm threatened to sweep everything before it, and the Hindus, evidently, thought it more politic to preserve chaff as well as wheat than to try to winnow and lose both. The priests, the hereditary guardians of Hinduism, lazy and lifeless like all hereditary incumbents of high positions, could not unite all Hindus together and by one united action hurl back the waves of invasion. Not being able to play the part of Charles Martel or Peter the Hermit and fight in the open field, they shut themselves up in the impregnable fortress of caste. All who were privileged were taken in, the rest were left to fight their own battle as best as they could.<sup>3</sup>

In this fortress the priestly class played the roll of commander and anyone in the least deviating from the rules of discipline was severely punished and not seldom driven out of the enclosure.<sup>4</sup>

The popular religion about the time of Nanak's birth, was confined to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, peculiar ways of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observances. The worship of idols wherever they were permitted to exist, pilgrimages to the Ganges and other sacred places (whenever they were allowed, the observance of certain ceremonies like the marital and funeral rites, the obedience to the mandates of the Brahmins and lavishing charitable gifts upon them constituted almost the whole of Hinduism as it was then current among the masses. The priests alone could study the scriptures, and to them alone were accessible the higher truths and consolations of Hindu philosophy. Even they, however, had fallen to the dead level of Scribes and Pharisees. Some of them still had the scriptures by heart but in their practical life they were just the opposite of what they were required to be by their scriptures. They were required to be good shepherds to their flocks, but the only function of shepherd they performed was to fleece their flocks. As for administering to their spiritual needs,

'The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.'

The springs of true religion had been choked up by weeds of unmeaning ceremonial, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and the indifference of the people. Form had supplanted the reality and the highly spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects. The centuries of invasion, foreign misrule and persecution had produced the greatest depression, and the spiritual subjection and stagnation had aggravated the demoralisation to an enormous degree.

This was the condition in which Guru Nanak found the Hindus of the Panjab. While quite a boy his indignation had been aroused by the hypocrisy and cant that stalked throughout the land. He at once made up his mind to devote his life to the service of his nation, and, by precept and by example, bring his people back to a religion of simplicity and sincerity, to wean them from the worship of stock and stone, restore them to the pure worship of their ancient forefathers and make them once more able to stand their ground as a

nation.

Efforts had already been made by some Hindu reformers who preceded Nanak to purify the belief and worship of the Hindus, but they failed to make any notable impression upon the masses owing to the following reasons :

(a) In the first place, most of the reform movements that preceded Nanak were fearfully sectarian, and in many cases only served to make confusion worse confounded. Ramanand, *e. g.*, whose movement gave a powerful stimulus to Hindu revival in Benares, could not shake off the theory of incarnation and instead of preaching, like Nanak, the worship of One God who is never born and never dies, he simply added to the number of existing sects by confining his homage to Rama. Nor were his followers freed from the bondage of external forms. They had to wear peculiar kinds of clothes, to have a particular kind of necklace, and were required to eat and drink apart from all other sects.

Gorakh Nath attempted to penetrate the crust of external forms and ceremonies by teaching the occult science of Yoga,<sup>5</sup> but even he could not escape the narrowing influences of sectarianism. The very nature of his system prevented it from becoming a popular system. On the other hand, the exalted position of Yogis and the great prestige possessed by professors of their esoteric science, combined with the imposing paraphernalia substituted by Gorakh for other sectarian marks, placed great temptations and facilities in the way of impostors. The result was that a new sect was added to the list. Hundreds of monks in ochre robes, with large glass rings in their ears, long winding horns under their arms, and a sharp burnished pair of tongs in their hands were seen infesting the roads and places of pilgrimage. The mass of the nation was as little moved by the blasts from their trumpets as they were themselves made holier by the white ashes on their bodies or the glass rings in their ears. The same may be said, more or less, of all the other religious movements that preceded Nanak. They were, more or less, all sectarian, ritualistic, narrow-minded and bigoted.

(b) The second reason why these movements did not “sufficiently contribute to the national progress is to be found in the other-worldly character of almost everyone of them. With the exception of Vallabhacharya,<sup>6</sup> every leader held up renunciation of the world as the highest virtue. The Bairagis of Ramanand, as their name shows, were expected to be the embodiment of renunciation. Gorakh’s Yogis were strictly enjoined to lead a life of celibacy. Kabir was a married man himself, but he surpassed everybody else in the genuine contempt with which he looked down upon the world and worldly belongings. “Wretched is the lot of Kabir,” says he, “that a son like Kamal was born to him, who would bring home money rather than the name of God.” Unlike others, Kabir had risen above sectarianism, but the other-worldly character of his teachings, combined with the fact that he came of a low caste, and that he was born in that strongest of all strongholds of orthodoxy and caste, the city of Benares, prevented his cause from achieving any considerable success. Ramanand, Gorakh, Kabir and even Chaitanya were all impressed with the nothingness of this life. “They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestcraft or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their sects remain to this day as they left them.” It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform and to lay those foundations on which Govind Singh built a new nationality and “gave practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.”<sup>7</sup>

The qualifications which Nanak possessed for the tremendous task of awakening a depressed, demoralised, superstitious and priest-ridden race were not those one would look for in a reformer of the present times. Nanak was sent to school but of education in the ordinary sense of the word he acquired little or nothing.

“There is reason to believe”, says Cuningham, “that in his youth he made himself familiar with the

popular creeds, both of the Muhammadans and Hindus, and that he gained a general knowledge of the *Koran* and of the Brahmanical Shastras.”<sup>8</sup> But the fitness of Nanak to work out the redemption of his race did not lie in the scraps of knowledge he might have picked up either in a *Pathshala* or a mosque. He was born great, and though almost illiterate, was, like Muhammad, richly endowed by nature with a powerful intellect and strong common sense. He did not teach anything new, but whatever he said bore the impress of originality, and, displayed the genius of a master mind. He did not write long theses and dissertations to establish his points or demolish his adversaries and did not quote Manu and Vyasa or the *Koran* and *Hadis*, but, whenever he argued a point, his practical wisdom and strong common sense always prevailed over the logic and theology of his opponents. The Nawab of Sultanpur,<sup>9</sup> the Qazis of Mecca,<sup>10</sup> the Pandits of Hardwar,<sup>11</sup> and the Pandas of Kurukshetra,<sup>12</sup> every one bowed before his manly courage and fearless logic of facts.

Naturally meditative and thoughtful, his wisdom and knowledge were immensely increased by his life-long travels and discussions with scholars and saints, both of his own community as well as those of the Muhammadan world.

The chief features of Guru Nanak’s work may be summed up in the following words :

- (a) He was, the first Hindu reformer of modern times who tried to emancipate the Hindu mind completely from the fetters of mythology. It was he who taught the Hindus after long, long ages of error that there was not only One God, but He was free from the bondage of birth and death, that he was above Vishnu, above Brahma, superior to Shiva, and the creator of Rama and Krishna.
- (b) He purified the worship, and declared that God alone was to be worshipped, and he was not to be degraded by making any images of Him and worshipping these images. He was to be worshipped in the spirit by constantly meditating over His Name, and feeling and realizing His presence in every place and at every time.
- (c) He declared that truth was greater than all sacrifices and all pilgrimages and the love of God better than all religious rites and ceremonies.
- (d) That the only way of salvation lay through devotion to God combined with good actions. That feeding the Brahmans, the giving of cows in charity, the reading of the Vedas or the Qoran; the mere performance of *Sandhya* or *Nimaz* were not the means of salvation.
- (e) He emphatically asserted that the Brahmans and the Mullahs who followed religion as a profession were not the true guides to truth, that they were like the blind, and that the way of salvation, the way of devoting yourself entirely to God, could only be shown by a true Guru, who has himself trodden that path.
- (f) He made a powerful attack upon the sacerdotal classes of both communities, and declared that all were equal in the eyes of God, who, he said, was the common father of all. Men are brothers, he said, and must live as brothers, guiding their actions by justice and love.
- (g) After centuries of subjection, Nanak was the first among the Hindus to raise his voice against tyranny and oppression.<sup>13</sup>
- (h) Nanak, on the one hand condemned selfishness, avarice ‘ and worldliness in general, and on the other denounced the practice of those who unwilling to fight the battle of life retired from the world under the pretence of cultivating spirituality. Some of his fiercest attacks are directed against those who put on the ochre robes of the Sadhu, and shirking the responsibilities of life sought refuge in renunciation and aimless wandering from one place to another. He had himself married and had children. He had been working as a man of business for a considerable part of his life, and had thus

shown, by example, how one could live in the world and yet not be of the world, acting upon the teaching of the *Gita* which says. “whosoever does his duties without attachment, consecrating his deeds to God, verily, sin does not touch him, just as a lotus leaf, though in water, is not affected by it.”<sup>14</sup>

The whole system of Nanak, thus, stands distinguished from other reform movements by two important peculiarities, its non-sectarian character, and, secondly, its reconciliation with secular life. It was, therefore, bound to produce the following two effects, viz :

(1) It leavened the whole Hindu thought in the Punjab and improved the moral and spiritual tone of the whole people. Here was, now, for the first time after ages of dissension and discord, a hero whom every Hindu<sup>15</sup> could call his own, and of whom every Hindu could feel justly proud. The appearance of Nanak was a great step towards arousing a consciousness of a common nationality. Since Hindu kings had fallen, Nanak was the first Hindu hero who could command the allegiance of all parties, because he did not identify himself with any party. Though he attacked all parties, tore their cherished beliefs into shreds, he became the popular hero because it was soon found that he had destroyed only that which was not genuine but a mere addition or an accretion to their religion.

(2) The second effect which Nanak’s teaching produced was to show to the Hindus that the highest worldly ambition was not incompatible with the purest and godliest life. Buddhism and Jainism and later Hinduism, as affected by both, have always held forth renunciation as the highest virtue, and have looked upon worldly power and prosperity as contemptible, and to be tolerated in certain cases as a mere necessary evil. Nanak changed all this. He put the seal of his sanction and approval on all worldly pursuits, provided that they were not indulged in at the cost of righteousness and truth.

This was evidently the seed which under the fostering care of Nanak’s successors grew into the gigantic tree of the Khalsa power.

\* *The Transformation of Sikhism*. Lahore. 1912.

1. His memory is adored throughout the Maratha country and his tomb in Parali, near Satara. attracts thousands of pilgrims.
2. King of the Punjab, 1001-21 A.D. Some historians spell the name as Anandpal.
3. The result was that whereas the majority of twice-born Hindus were saved, the majority of others fell an easy prey to the proselytizing zeal of Islam.
4. It is notorious that even now the least transgression of caste rules, in places where orthodoxy is strong, leads to excommunication which in many cases results in the transgressors’ being forced to embrace Islam or Christianity.
5. It is not certain when Gorakh lived, though Cunningham puts him in the fifteenth century. Earth, followed by Hopkins, assigns him Buddhist origin. His followers are found everywhere in India. In the Punjab they have an important centre in the Jhelum district called Tilla.
6. A Brahman who found a sect of Vaishnavas in the beginning of the sixteenth century. “He gave proof of no small intellectual strength and courage in daring openly to repudiate the theories of asceticism, etc. — *Religions of India* by Barth. p. 234.
7. Cunningham: *History of the Sikhs*, p. 38. Moreover, it should be remembered that no great reformer had been born in the Punjab and the activities of the others were more or less confined to other parts of India.
- 8 *History of the Sikhs*, p. 37. This knowledge cannot have been acquired by a regular study of books. For we find, in the *Adi Granth*, very few references to the contents of the scriptures of any religion, as we find in the tenth Guru’s *Granth*; and, besides this, Nanak’s criticism of other systems is not scholarly; practice, rather than doctrine, forming the subject of his attacks upon the existing creeds. Cunningham also says on the authority of a Persian manuscript that Nanak’s first teacher was a Muhammadan. This seems to be an effort on the part of a Moslem writer to give the credit of Nanak’s subsequent greatness to the

teachings of Islam. Nanak's father was a *Patwari* or village accountant, and naturally, Kaloo would have been anxious to teach his son the language which would have qualified him to take his place after his death. This language, as a matter of fact, was Hindi, for Persian as an official language had not been introduced until the time of Todar Mal, the great financial Minister of Akbar. The Author of *Panth Prakash* says that Nanak went to School with Gopal Pandit to learn accounts in Hindi when he was only seven years of age, and began Sanskrit when he was nine years old.

The author of *Seir-al-Mutaakhhirin* states that Nanak was educated by one Muhammad Hassan, a neighbour of his father's who was childless and loved Nanak.

While admitting the possibility of Nanak's having sat at the feet of Gopal as well as Muhammad Hassan, I cannot believe that he attained any degree of proficiency either in Sanskrit or Persian. His compositions in Hindi and his one or two stanzas in Persian would, I believe, bear out my statement.

9. The Nawab once called him and asked him to join him in saying *Nimaz*. Nanak assented, but as the Nawab engaged in prayers, Nanak stood aloof. On being questioned why he had not joined in the prayers, he promptly replied "How could I join you when you were wandering in Kabul buying horses and the Qazi was all the time thinking of his colt, lest it should have fallen into the well." Needless to say that the Nawab and the Qazi were both silenced by this frank and fearless answer.
10. It is given in all Lives of Guru Nanak that he visited Mecca and lay down there with his feet towards the Kaaba. Being scolded by the Qazi, he asked him what fault he had committed. "You sleep with your feet towards the house of God", said the Qazi, "and you ask what fault you have committed !" "Pardon me" said Nanak, "You may turn my feet in the direction where you think the house of God is not." Sohan Lal and Ms. Or. 187 say the incident occurred at Medina. It is not worth while going further into the matter, as the incidents of time and place are not so relevant to the present purpose.
11. Seeing some Brahmans offering water to the Sun, Nanak entered into the Ganges and began to throw water with his hands towards the west. The Pandits thought him a rustic and asked him what he meant by his foolish act. "I am watering", said Nanak, "a little farm I have at Kartarpur" (Punjab). "Fool," said the Pandit, "do you think the water will reach two hundred miles to water your farm ?" "If the water", retorted Nanak, "which I have been throwing with both hands will not reach the little distance of two hundred miles, how can you expect that your handful will get all the way to the Sun ?"
12. Nanak once attended the great fair which is usually held at Kurukshetra on the occasion of the Sun Eclipse. The orthodox Hindus look upon the phenomenon as the arrest of the Sun by his creditors Rahu and Ketu. Alms are given and a perfect fast is observed during the eclipse. Nanak lighted a fire and began to cook a pot of meat. The Pandas were soon upon him and he was subjected to a severe fire of abuse and reproach. He explained the whole thing to them and convinced them that the heavenly phenomenon had nothing to do with the affairs of man on the earth.
13. Nanak often expressed himself very strongly against the aggressive fanaticism of Islam, and regretted, in pathetic language, the sufferings of the Hindus. Says he, "The age is a dagger, the rulers are the butchers.- Dharma has taken wings to itself and has flown away. The *amavasya* or darkness of falsehood reigns supreme. No one can see the moon of truth." See also the stanzas addressed to Bhai Lallo at Eminabad. The author of the *Panth Prakash* says that Nanak was once imprisoned by Sikandar Lodhi for refusing to show a miracle. It stands more to reason that the real cause was Nanak's plain-spoken criticism which would be called treason or sedition in the language of the present times.
14. *Bhagwad Gita*, V. 10
15. Except the priestly class whose prestige and income were threatened by the popularity of the new Reformer.

**BABA NANAK**  
THE FIRST SIKH GURU  
Dorothy Field\*

The Sikhs<sup>1</sup> became a nation by reason of their faith,—and a fine nation of stalwart soldiers.

There is a tendency at the present day to reckon the Sikhs as a reformed sect of the Hindus; and this has become a matter for controversy among the Indians themselves. The word Hinduism is undoubtedly capable of a very wide application, but it is questionable whether it should be held to include the Sikhs in view of the fact that the pure teaching of the Gurus<sup>2</sup> assumed a critical attitude towards the three cardinal pillars of Hinduism, the priesthood, the caste system,<sup>3</sup> and the Vedas.<sup>4</sup> A reading of the *Granth* strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world-religion, rather than as a reformed sect of the Hindus. The founder of the religion, Nanak, was on the one hand the spiritual descendant of monotheistic reformers *within* Hinduism, but on the other, Muhammadan influences caused him to break away very much more from the older faith, and to admit much that might be directly traced to the followers of the Prophet. The subsequent enmity of the Muhammadans, and the consequent development of martial tendencies on the part of the Sikhs, can only be understood in the light of history, and for that reason we will consider briefly the lives of the Sikh Gurus, before going further into the question of doctrine.

Baba — or Father — Nanak, as he is usually called by pious Sikhs, was born in the year 1469 at Talwandi, in the present Lahore district of the Punjab [Pakistan]. It is said that his birth was attended by miracles, and that an astrologer predicted his future greatness. Very early the boy displayed a great interest in religious matters. At the village school to which he went he astonished his teacher by making an acrostic on the alphabet, in which he emphasised the need for true religion. After this Nanak took to private study, and spent much time in meditation and in association with religious men. He wandered in the dense forests around his home, and there doubtless met the religious teachers and reformers of his day, ascetics and wanderers of every kind. From them he must have learned the subtleties associated with religious controversy, and for the first time the principles of Muhammadan doctrine. Nanak's parents were strict Hindu of Khatri caste, and in due time the Brahman priest came to invest the boy with the sacred thread. Nanak was only nine years old, but he protested against the formality involved in such a ceremony by means of an improvised hymn :

“Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread, continence its knot, truth its twist.

“That would make a *janeu*<sup>6</sup> for the soul; if thou have it, O Brahman, then put it on me.

“It will not break, or become soiled, or be burned, or lost.

“Blest the man, O Nanak<sup>7</sup>, who goeth with such a thread on his neck.”

This hymn is typical of the manner in which Nanak afterwards conveyed most of his teaching. From that day onward he protested against the tyranny of caste, and the authority of the Brahman priesthood. He proceeded to learn Persian in which language he was able to read many of the great Muhammadan writings, whose influence is shown so clearly in these early years. An acrostic composed on the letters of the Persian alphabet is entirely Muhammadan in tone, as, for example, the following sentence, which shows how far Nanak's mind had travelled in this direction :

“Renounce heresy, and walk according to the *Shariat*” (Muhammadan law).

For a long while all attempts on the part of Nanak's parents to induce him to enter some trade in accordance with the tradition of his caste proved fruitless. The lad was continually engrossed in meditation, and had no care for the things of this world. Finally, however, he consented to enter the service of a Muhammadan governor, whom after a time he converted to his reformatory doctrine. On the occasion of this conversion Nanak showed a power of mind-reading, and such profound religious insight that, before he left the city, both Hindus and Mussulmans came to do him honour. After this it is said that Nanak went into the

wilderness, where he was severely tempted by Kaljug, the devil. He resisted every attack, however, and afterwards was granted a special vision of God, during which he held converse with Him, and received instruction for his mission. During this experience he composed an important part of the *Japji*<sup>8</sup> which has since become the key-note of Sikh doctrine. Nanak then donned a religious costume, and definitely set forth on his life-work as teacher, or *Guru*. He took with him his minstrel Mardana, who accompanied his hymns upon the rebeck.<sup>9</sup> The greater part of the new teaching was conveyed by means of these hymns, improvised and chanted to well-known musical measures.<sup>10</sup> In this way Nanak discoursed with men of every caste and creed, but mostly with Brahmans, among whom he made many converts. He pointed out the inefficacy of caste and of the priesthood, protesting against formalism, whether Muhammadan or Hindu. He taught the existence of an all-powerful and loving Creator; who must be approached with simplicity and sincerity and by the loving repetition of the Sacred Name. Any one, of whatever caste or creed, who followed the Guru's teaching, was held to have found salvation, even though he continued to live the ordinary life of the world. Much of Nanak's time was spent wandering and preaching in great simplicity of life—but he was married, as were all the Gurus after him. He discouraged ascetic practices and taught that true religion was in the heart, whatever might be the walk in life. Whereas the Brahmans forbade either women or Sudras<sup>11</sup> to read the Vedas, Nanak held that all human beings were on an equality in the sight of God. The Guru travelled all over India spreading his doctrines; to the Himalayas, to Ceylon, and it is said that he even went as far westward as Mecca, the pole-star of Muhammadan religion. A story told of him on this occasion is interesting, as showing the manner in which he conveyed his teaching. When outside the holy city an Arab priest reproached him for turning his feet in the direction Of God.

“Turn my feet,” answered, Nanak, “in a direction in which God is not.”

Upon this, it is said, the priest seized the Guru's feet and dragged them round, whereupon the temple turned, following the revolution of his body. This is usually understood in a spiritual sense, meaning that all Mecca turned to his teaching. During the Guru's wanderings he wore a strange mixture of Hindu and Mussulman costumes. This is supposed to show that he did not regard the two religions as essentially opposed in their pure forms, and that his own doctrines might be acceptable to both. Before Nanak died in 1539 he appointed his disciple, Angad, as his successor, whom he had previously subjected to severe tests.

An event which occurred at Nanak's death shows that his teaching had not been altogether unfavourably received. Hindus and Muhammadans disputed as to which should have the disposal of his body. He himself, before dying, commanded the Hindus to place flowers on his right and the Mussulmans on his left; they whose flowers were found fresh in the morning should have the disposal of the body. The next day the flowers on both sides were found fresh, but the body had disappeared.<sup>12</sup> The Sikhs erected a shrine, and the Muhammadans a tomb, in his honour, on the banks of the Ravi; but both buildings have been washed away by the river.

\* *The Religion of the Sikhs* (Wisdom of the East series), John- Murray, London, 1914.

1. Sikh, literally “disciple.”

2. Guru (literally *great*) signifies “teacher.”

3. The Hindus recognise four great castes: Brahmans, or priests; Kshatriyas, or warriors; Vaisyas, or traders; and Sudras, or serfs. These castes were mapped out in rigid demarcation, and were supposed to have been created separately, the Brahmans having sprung from the head of Brahma and the other castes from other parts of his body. It will be seen that this belief in a fundamental distinction between various human beings must have a strong effect on religious and social life.

4. Veda (lit. *knowledge*) is a term given to the ancient Indian Scriptures, of which there were four sections.

5. This ceremony initiates a boy into his caste.

6. The sacred thread.

7. In Oriental poetry it was the custom for the poet to address himself in the last line or lines. The subsequent Gurus of the Sikhs used ‘Nanak’ as their pseudonym, thereby emphasising their belief that the spirit of

Nanak entered successively into each of the teachers who followed him.

8. A collection of hymns.
9. The rebeck, or *rabab*, is an instrument of Arabian origin, having from four to six strings of goat-gut, with steel strings for resonance. It has fallen into disuse in Northern India.
10. Indian writers enumerate six principal *rags* or musical measures.  
To these are allotted “wives” and “sons”, which are modifications of the principal airs. and are often sung differently in different provinces of India. The hymns of the sacred book of the Sikhs were composed to thirty-one such musical measures.
11. Women and Sudras were held to be beyond the pale of religion. In the *Institutes of Gautam*, it is ordered that, if a Sudra hear the Vedas, his ears must be stopped with wax or molten lead; if he read the Vedas, his tongue must be cut out; if he possess the Vedas, the penalty is death.
12. A similar story is told of the renewed Indian saint, Kabir.



## LIFE OF NANAK AND THE SIKH ORDERS

Sir Denzil Ibbetson and Sir Edward D. MacLagan\*

Nanak, the founder of the Sikhs faith, was the son of Kalu Chand<sup>1</sup>, a Khatri of the Bedi section, and was born at Talwandi<sup>2</sup>, a village on the Ravi not far from Lahore, on the full moon day in Katak Sambat 1526, or 14 years earlier than Luther. His father was a simple peasant, employed by Rai Bhoe, a Muhammadan Rajput of the Bhatti tribe, the owner of the village, as an appraiser of produce. His mother's name was Tripta.

When only 5 years old the sister of Nanak's mother, Bibi Lakho came to see her sister and observing the boy's indifference to worldly things said to her: 'Thy son is soft headed' Nanak rejoined: 'Thine will be four times as soft headed'; thus predicting the birth of the famous saint *Baba* Ram Thamman whose shrine is at the place of that name near Kasur.<sup>3</sup>

Of Nanak's life few authentic details have come down to us, and these are contained in a *janamsakhi* or biography, assigned by Trump to the later years of Guru Arjan or his immediate successors. This work refers to hymns in the *Granth Sahib* and must therefore have been compiled after it. Mohsan-i-Fani appears to refer to separate stories which even in his time were not collected in one work. This biography contains few of the miracles and other incidents found in the later *janamsakhis*, and as it is an early record of Nanak's life and teaching it may be regarded as authentic in all material points.

As a child Nanak was devoted to meditation on God, and at the age of 7 he was sent to the Hindu village school, where he composed the 35 verses<sup>4</sup> of the *Patti* in the *Rag Asa* of the *Granth*. Here Nanak received all of his secular instruction, for he was early employed by his father as a buffalo-herd.

In due course he married and two sons were born to him, but this did not prevent his leading a life remote from thoughts of this world and his superhuman character was revealed to Rai Bular, the son of Rai Bhoe, who found him one day sleeping beneath a tree whose shadow had stood still to shelter him, while those of the other trees had moved, with the waning noon.<sup>5</sup>

Nanak showed no bent for any worldly vocation, but delighted in the society of saints and even wandering *faqirs*, and at last his father in despair sent him to Sultanpur, a town now in the Kapurthala State, where his brother-in-law Jairam, husband of his sister, Nanaki was employed as a factor to Nawab Daulat Khan the Lodi, who after his long governorship of the Punjab called in Babar to aid him against his master's injustice.

At Sultanpur Nanak devoted himself to his duties, but his wife and children were left or remained at Talwandi, sometimes regarded as an indication that his domestic life was not happy. His wife however rejoined him after his travels and lived with him till his death. There too he was joined by an old acquaintance, Mardana the *Dim*, an itinerant musician, who accompanied his improvised hymns on his *rabab* or harp.<sup>6</sup>

At Sultanpur too Nanak was destined to receive that definite call to the office of religious leader to which he owes his title of Guru. While bathing one day in the canal he was taken up by angels and transported into the presence of God who gave him a goblet of nectar with the command to spread the fame of God (Hari) through the world. Meanwhile his servant had carried home the news of his disappearance in the water, and the Khan had actually set fishermen to drag the canal for his body, when he re-appeared.

After this even Guru Nanak took the decisive step of distributing all that he had among the poor and accompanied by Mardana he left his house and began to preach. In popular phrase he turned *faqir*. His first pronouncement 'There is no Hindu and no Mussalman' led to his being cited, at the Qazi's instance, to appear before the Nawab, who invited him to accompany him to the mosque. Nanak did so — and while the Qazi led the prayers, he laughed. To the Qazi's remonstrances he replied that the latter had left a foal in his own

courtyard and had throughout the prayers been anxious lest it should fall into the well. Amazed at Nanak's power of reading his thoughts the Qazi fell at his feet and acknowledged his power.

After this incident Nanak set out on what are often called his five pilgrimages, thus beginning his mission to call the people to the right path. The first lay eastward,<sup>7</sup> to the shrine of Shaikh Sajan who had built a temple for Hindus and a mosque for Muhammadans — a proof of the religious toleration in fashion at this period of Indian history. But the Shaikh was given to murdering those who put up with him in his shop and stealing their property, until the Guru saw through him and made him become a repentant follower of his teaching. Tradition also takes Nanak to Delhi, where he restored a dead elephant to life and interviewed the Mughal emperor. Besides Shaikh Sajan he encountered many other *thags*, whom he converted. At the sack of Sayyidpur he was captured by Babar's troops and carried off, but coming under Babar's own notice he was honourably used and set at liberty.<sup>8</sup>

But he soon set out on his second or southward pilgrimage. That he ever reached Ceylon or formed there a *sangat* (congregation) of his disciples is hardly probable, and if he did so few authentic details of this journey have been preserved.

At Sialkot he heard that Hamza Ghaus was undergoing a 40 days' fast in order to acquire power to destroy the town, so he sat under a plum (*ber*) tree and called thrice to the *faqir*. Receiving no reply he stood up and gazed at the lofty tower in a vault of which the *faqir* had shut himself, and burst open its walls so that the sun fell on the face of the recluse. This saint had promised sons to a Khatri of the town in return for a promise that the first-born should become his disciple and as the vow was broken had condemned all the inhabitants to annihilation. The Guru impressed on him the injustice of punishing all for the faults of a few.<sup>9</sup> The Ber Baba Nanak still commemorates this incident.

On his 3rd tour the Guru who was returning from Russia and Turkistan reached Hasan Abdal in 1520. On the top of the hill was a spring of water. Its summit was occupied by Wali Qandhari, a Muhammadan saint, who grew jealous of the Guru and refused to let Mardana draw water from it, so the spring dried up and reappeared at the spot where the Guru had halted. The Wali cast a huge rock down from the hill upon it, but the Guru stopped the rock with his hand, leaving an impression of it on the hill-side.<sup>10</sup> Thence he continued his tour through Sialkot and witnessed the sack of Saidpur, near Eminabad, which he had foretold.<sup>11</sup>

Again Nanak returned to Talwandi, but only to make thence his third pilgrimage northward into Kashmir, where he climbed Mount Sumera and had a lengthy discussion with the chiefs of the Jogis and according to some accounts with Shiva himself.

His fourth pilgrimage was to the West to Mecca, where he lay down and by chance turned his feet towards the Ka'aba. When reproached for this by the *Qazi* Rukn-ud-Din, he challenged him to lay his feet in any direction where God's house did not lie, and wherever the Qazi turned Nanak's feet, there appeared the Ka'aba.<sup>12</sup>

Guru Nanak's fifth and last pilgrimage may be regarded as purely allegorical. He went to Gorakh-hatri where he discoursed with the 84 Sidhs, or disciples of Gorakh Nath. A temple exists at Nanakmata in the Kumaon or Naini Tal *Tarai*, about 10 miles from Khatima, a station on the Rohilkhand-Kumaon Railway. Not far from this place are still to be found several *maths of yogis*, from one of which sweet soap-nuts (*mitha rethā*) are obtained by the *mabant* at Nanakmata. Two such trees are known in the Almora district; one at the place called the *Gulia ritha* by the hillmen, the other on the road from Lahughat to Dhunnaghat. It appears that where new shoots spring from old decayed trunks, the fruit they bear loses its bitterness. Gorakh-hatri, may be the name of some *math* of *yogis* in these hills. 'It was also, observes S. Gurbakhsh Bakhsh, 'the name of a well-known *math* at the Indian end of the Khaibar Pass, about two stages from Peshawar. Babar, who went twice to visit the place, gives an account of it and describes it as a well-frequented place to which Hindus

came from distant places, and went through the ceremony of shaving themselves clean. Several low underground cells, entry to which was obtained by crawling along on all fours and immense heaps of hair marked the place.' This seems to be the well-known Gor-Khatri at Peshawar. Other authorities say that this the Guru's last pilgrimage was to the east and that it took him to Gorakhmata or Nanakmata.

Other accounts give more detailed and less ambitious accounts of the pilgrimages. On his first the Guru visited Eminabad where he meditated on a bed of pebbles (*ror*) where the Rori Sahib now stands.<sup>13</sup> Here he composed a hymn in which he reproached the Khatris for subsisting on alms wrung from the people and expounded the merits of earning a livelihood by honest labour.

Nanak went to several other places also. At Haridwar he pointed out to the Hindus the hollowness of sending water to their forefathers. At Kurukshetra he proved the uselessness of such vain beliefs as not eating meat at an eclipse. At Jagannath he pointed out the right way to worship God and said that it did not consist in lighting lamps and so on. Among the other countries that he visited were Kabul, Baghdad, etc. But this pilgrimage is rejected altogether by the reforming Sikhs.

Nanak died at Kartarpur on the banks of the Ravi in the Jullundur [? Gurdaspur] District in the house of his family, with whom he appears to have been reconciled. Before his death he transmitted his *Guruship* to Lahna, surnamed Angad, the second Guru, by a strikingly simple ceremony. Nanak laid five pice before Angad<sup>14</sup> and fell at his feet. This event occurred in 1537 A.D.

The successive Gurus transmitted their office by this rite, but later on a cocoanut<sup>15</sup> was also laid before the successor thus appointed: Guru Nanak also went four times round his successor and then said that his own spirit had gone into his body so that he was from that moment to be regarded as Nanak himself. It is now a common Sikh belief that each Guru inherited the spiritual light of Nanak and the doctrine is as old as Mohsin Fani.

Bhai Budha, a Jat, affixed the *tilak* or coronation mark on Angad's forehead and survived to witness the installation of no less than four of Angad's successors. Tradition says that while very young he came to Nanak and referring to the devastation of the unripe crops wrought by Babar's troops said that he was afraid of being untimely carried away by the angel of death. Nanak replied: 'Thou art old (Budha), not young' so he was named Bhai Budha and lived till 1627. The significance of the *tilak* is well known. It is often if not generally affixed by a dominant or autochthonous agricultural class and in this instance the choice of Bhai Budha represented the Jat recognition of the Guru's chiefship. To his sons' protests against their father's choice of Angad, Guru Nanak replied that not even the Guru's dogs suffered want, and that they should have clothes and food enough. In accord, probably, with this tradition, we find the Nanak-putra, or descendants of Nanak employed towards the close of the Sikh period in *banda-bhara*, a practice whereby traders entrusted goods to a Nanakputra who engaged to convey them for a stipulated sum from Jagadhri to Amritsar, then the emporium of the Sikh states, paying all duties. The Nanak-putras, from the sanctity which attaches to their persons, engaged enjoyed certain exemptions and were less subject to molestation from custom-officers' importunity than others.

Nanak's attitude to Islam is illustrated by several incidents in the above sketch of his life. To these the later *janamsakhis* make many additions, which at least record the traditional attitude of the earlier Sikhism to Islam. Thus immediately after Nanak's election for a spiritual life he is said to have been visited by Khwaja Khizr, the Muhammadan saint, who taught him all earthly knowledge,

The traditional account of Guru Nanak's funeral also records his attitude towards the two religions. When the Hindus and the Muhammadans both claimed his body he bade them lay flowers on either side of it, for Hindus on the right and for Muhammadans on the left, bidding them see whose flowers remained fresh till the following day. But next morning both lots of flowers were found fresh, while the body had vanished, signifying that it belonged to-neither, yet equally to both the creeds. Nanak expressed his religious thought in

verses, composed in Panjabi, which form no insignificant part of the *Granth*.

### NANAKPUTRA<sup>16</sup>

(1) A synonym for *Udasi* : (2) a 'descendant of Nanak.' This is the literal meaning of the term. The Nanakputra were employed in the later Sikh period as escorts of Caravans, their sacred character as descendants of Guru Nanak, ensuring their safety from attack.

### NANAK-SHAHI

Nanak-Shahi, a class of *faqirs*, said to be both Hindus and Sarbhangis who officiate at Chuhra weddings, when solemnised by the Hindu *phera*. These are said to have 12 *gaddis* or sees in Amritsar.

### SANWAL SHAHIS

In the Indus valley is found a Sikh sect called Sanwal, or Some Shahis, from a *guru* Sanwal Shah, a disciple whom Baba Nanak deputed in 1489 [?] to preach his doctrines in the south-west Punjab. The title Shah appears, however to have given rise to other stories according to one of which Sanwal Shah was an Arora of Amritsar whose father supplied Guru Ram Das with funds for the building of the Golden Temple. Under Guru Govind Singh, Sanwal Shah Singh preached Sikhism on the frontier, and Some Shah was his brother. The sect, or rather the followers of Sanwal Shah, Some Shah, and the former's descendant Bawa Shah, are found in Dera Ismail Khan, Multan and Muzaffargarh, and even beyond the frontier.

### UDASI

Udasi.—Syn. Nanakputra: the principal religious order of the Sikhs. The Udasis are almost certainly the oldest of the Sikh orders, and trace their foundation to Sri Chand,<sup>17</sup> the elder son of Guru Nanak. The term *Udasi* means 'sorrow' or sadness, from Sanskrit *udās*, 'sad' and their separation, which has sometimes been wrongly termed excommunication, by the 3rd Guru, Amar Das, is described in Vol. I under Sikhism. This separation is sometimes ascribed to Guru Arjan.

The Udasi tenets, though largely tintured with Hindu asceticism, found many proselytes among the descendants and followers of the orthodox Gurus, and Har Gobind, the 6th Guru, bestowed Gurditta,<sup>18</sup> his eldest son on Sri Chand. Gurditta had four disciples who founded as many chapters (*dhuan*) of the order. These were Baba Hasan [Baloo Hasna],<sup>19</sup> Phul, Gonda and Almast, whose followers constitute the *bara akhara*, or senior assembly. Pheru, a disciple of Har Rai, the 7th Guru, established another chapter, called the *chhota akhara*.<sup>20</sup>

The Udasis are celibate, at least in theory, and when so in practice are called Udasi *Nanga* or 'naked'. But MacLagan gives a different explanation of this term as will be seen from the following extract from his account of the order :— "The Udasis are recruited from all castes and will eat food from any Hindu. . They are almost always celibates, and are sometimes, though not usually, congregated in monasteries. They are generally found wandering to and from their sacred places, such as Amritsar, Dera [Baba] Nanak, Kartarpur, and the like. They are said to be numerous in Malwa and in Benares. In our Census returns they appear strongest in Jullundur, Rohtak, and Ferozepur. It is a mistake to say that they are not generally recognized as Sikhs; they pay special reverence to the *Adi-granth*, but also respect the *Granth* of Gobind Singh, and attend the same shrines as the Sikh generally. Their service consists of a ringing of bells and blare of instruments and chanting of hymns and waving of lights before the *Adi-granth* and the picture of Baba Nanak. They are, however, by no means uniform in their customs. Some wear long hair, some wear matted locks, and others cut their hair. Some - wear *tilaks* or caste-marks; others do not. Some burn the dead in the ordinary Hindu way; some after burning erect *samadhs* or monuments; others apparently bury the dead. They are for the most part ascetics, but some are said to be engaged in ordinary secular pursuits. The ordinary dress of the ascetics is of a red colour: but a large section of them go entirely naked, except for the waistcloth, and rub ashes over their bodies. These, like the naked sections of other orders, are known as *Nange* ; they pay special reverence to the ashes with which they smear their bodies, and which are said to protect them equally from either extreme of temperature. Their most binding oath is on a ball of ashes.

In Ludhiana the Udasis are described as mostly Jats by origin, the *chela*, or disciple and successor, being usually chosen from this tribe and are found to be in possession of the *dharmshalas* in Hindu villages, where they distribute food to such as come for it and read the *Granth* both of Baba Nanak and of Guru Gobind Singh, although they do not attach much importance to the latter. The head of the college is called a *mahant* and the disciples *chelas*. They live in Sikh as well as in Hindu villages, and it is probably on this account that they do not quite neglect Guru Gobind Singh. They rarely marry ; and if they do so, generally lose all influence, for the *dharmshala* soon becomes a private residence closed to strangers. But in some few families, such as that of Jaspal Bangar, which keeps a large *langar* or almshouse going, it has always been the custom to marry, the endowments being large enough to support the family and maintain the institution; but the eldest son does not in this case succeed as a matter of course. A *chela* is chosen by the *mahant*, or by the family. If a *mahant* whose predecessors have not married should do so, he would lose all his weight with the people.

The great shrine at Dera Baba Nanak, in the Gurdaspur district, is in the custody of a community of Udasi *sadhs*, whose *mahant* used to be appointed with the consent of the Bedis. Another shrine at the same place, known as Tahli Sahib, from a large *tahli* or shisham tree which grew close to it was founded by Sri Chand, and is also looked after by *mahants* of the Udasi order.”

Another chapter of the Udasi order, said sometimes to be one of the four *dhuan*, is called the Bhagat Bhagwan. Once Bhagatgir, a Sanniasi, was going on a pilgrimage to Hinglaj, with a band of disciples, and visited Baba Nanak’s *dera* on his way. Nanak’s grandson, Dharm Chand, poured food into the bowl of Bhagatgir, who had asked to be served first, but it was not filled. A pinch of *karah prasad*, however, given with the words, *Sri Wah Guru* filled the bowl at once. The visitors kept a vigil before the *dera* and the goddess Hinglaj appeared to them, so that the object of their pilgrimage was attained. Bhagatgir then became Dharm Chand’s convert, as did all his followers, under the name of Bhagat Bhagwan. The great *akbhar* of the sect is by the Bibeksar tank at Amritsar, but it also has *akbharas* at Ladda, Bareilly, Magla, Rajgiri, Patna and Bihar, with 370 *gaddis* in eastern India. The Bhagat Bhagwans wear the *jatta* or matted hair, with a chain round the waist, and smear themselves with ashes like Sannyasis. In their beliefs, and in their rules as to eating and the like, they follow Nanak’s precepts.

The Sangat Sahib also appears to be chapter of the Udasi order, though it is not one of the four *dhuan*s. In Sambat 1697 a son was born to Binna, an Uppal Khatri of Ambmari in the *pargana* of Miske Naur,<sup>21</sup> between Lahore and Multan. The boy was named Pheru, and in [Samvat] 1713 he became cook to Guru . Har Rai, who taught him and invested him with the *seli* and *topi* and sent him as a *masand* to the Lamma (his native country) and the Nakka<sup>22</sup> (towards Shahpur) where he made convert?. When Guru Govind Singh destroyed the *masands*, by pouring hot oil on their heads, Sikhs were sent to seize Pheru, but none dared do so, though he made no resistance. Seizing his own beard Pheru came of his own accord to the Guru who, seeing his righteousness gave him half his *pagri* and seated him by himself, promising that his sect should prosper. The Guru also gave him the title of Sangat Sahib or ‘companion of the Guru,’ and sent him back as *masand* to the Lamma and Nakka where he made more converts. In 1896<sup>23</sup> the Sangat Sahib made a travelling *akbhar* like the Udasis. One of their most noted disciples, Santokh Das worked many miracles, and became an ascetic. This order is also said to be called *Bakhshish* Sangat Sahib in Patiala, where it is said to pay special reverence to the *Adi Granth* and to have an *akbhar* of its own, separate from the four *dhuan*s. Other accounts say that the Sangat Sahibia sub-order was founded by one Bhai Bhalu who was a Jat ‘merchant’ of the Malwa or a carpenter of Amritsar. When unregenerate he was a follower of Sultan Sakhi Sarwar, but was persuaded by Guru Govind Singh to abandon that cult. A large number of Jats, carpenters and Lohars are said to belong to this sub-order. Besides a Gurudwara in Lahore it holds the Brahmboota *akbhar* at Amritsar.

Another Udasi sub-order is that of the Ramdas Udasis. Its foundation is ascribed to Gurditta (not the eldest son of Sri Chand but a grandson of Baba Bandha, one of Baba Nanak’s converts). Gurditta was established by Guru Amardeo on a *gaddi* at Ramdas, in the Ajnala tahsil of Amritsar, where there is a fine temple. The sub-order also has *deras* at Nawekot, Muradabad and elsewhere.

The Hiradasis of our Census returns appears to be either named after a Mochi who joined the order or after a Bairagi saint of the Muzaffargarh district.

Each subdivision of the Udasis has a complete organisation for collecting and spending money, and is presided over by a principal *mahant*, called *sri mahant* with subordinate *mahants* under him.

### SOME SIKH SHRINES<sup>24</sup>

The Principal Sikh shrines are at Amritsar and in the Gurdaspur district. A description of them here would require too much space, but a few notes on the lesser shrines in Gurdaspur and elsewhere may be of interest.

In Gurdaspur the *mandir* at Dehra Baba Nanak is visited by Sikhs on the Baisakhi, on the *puranmashi* in Katik, the Diwali, and from 21st to 23rd Phagan when the Chola Sahib ceremony is observed. Built in 1744 S. the *mandir* contains the tomb of Guru Nanak. Its affairs are managed by an Udasi *mahant* who is celibate and succession is governed by spiritual descent. A *bhog* of *karah parshad* is offered every morning and on fast days milk is offered as such.

At the Tahli Sahib *mandir* no fair is held. Baba Sri Chand is said to have cleaned his teeth here with a *datan* (toothbrush) and to have planted it in the ground. From it sprang the *tabli* tree, after which the temple is named. Portraits of Gun, Nanak and his son Baba Sri Chand are painted on its walls. Its affairs are managed by an Udasi *mahant* who is also celibate. Another Tahli Sahib has a similar origin. It also is in charge of an Udasi *Mahant*.

At the *mandir* of Sri Chola Sahib annual fairs are held on the *Puranmashi* in Katak, Baisakhi, Diwali and on 21st, 22nd and 23rd Phagan. It is called after the Chola Sahib or 'gown' preserved in it. Founded in 1941 S., it contains a *Granth* and its affairs are managed by Bawas, but its *pujari* is a Bedi who is not celibate and succession is governed by natural relationship.

Connected with this are some smaller temples in the town— all managed by the *mahant*. Another Sri Chola *mandir* is visited on 21st, 22nd and 23rd Phagan. Founded in 1947 S. it contains nothing but the *chola*. Its *Pujari* is a Bedi who is not celibate. A *bhog* of flowers is offered in the morning.

### NANAK-MATA

The Nanakmata near Naini Tal seems to have been called the 'Nanakmata of Almastraj.' B. Gurbakhsh Singh writes regarding the *sangat* at Sujatpur: 'The inscription on a stone in the well of this *sangat* commemorates the name of the original founder and his 'Mother Lodge' of Nanakmata. This new *sangat* was not named Nanakmata, but it was under the Lodge at Nanakmata in Naini Tal, and its priests were appointed or removed by the head at that place. [*Dacca Review*, 1916, p. 288, *Sikh Relics in Eastern Bengal*.]

\* *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.W.F.P.*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1919,

1. One account avers that Kalu or Kallu had no sons until one day a *faqir* visited his hut and was there fed, whereupon he sent some fragments of his meal to Kallu's wife promising her a famous son. She went, as is customary, for her confinement to Mari near Kot Kachwa (or Kana Kachha, 15 miles south of Lahore) where her parents lived. Here her son was born and he received the somewhat disparaging name of Nanak, because he was born in the house of his *nana* or *maternal* grandfather. See McGregor's *History of the Sikhs*, I, p. 32, and Cunningham's ditto, p. 40, and note. This account is rejected by the better-informed who say that Hardial, the family priest, drew up the boy's horoscope and divined for him the name of Nanak to which his parents objected as it was common to both Hindus and Muhammdans. The priest rejoined that his calculations disclosed that the boy was destined to be revered by both creeds : *Philosophic*

*Hist. of the Sikh Religion*, by Khazan Singh, Lahore, 1914, p. 58. B. Gurbakhsh Singh however writes: "Guru Nanak's sister was older than himself and she was named Nanaki. The brother was given her name, as it very often happens. This is a simpler and more natural explanation than the other two given. Perhaps the girl was born in her maternal grandfather's house and so named Nanaki."

2. Talwandi Rai-Bular or "of wit and wealth" is now called Raipur: McGregor. I, 32. [Raipur is only a misreading Rai Bhoi], The date of Nanak's birth is also given as the 3rd of light half of Baisakh

At Talwandi now stands the famous Nankana Sahib on the site of the house, in which Nanak was born; the Kiara Sahib, the sacred field into which Nanak when absorbed in contemplation let his father's cattle stray but in which no sign of damage done to the crop could be found; a temple on the site where a snake shaded his face with its hood while he lay sunk in contemplation and another where the shade of the tree stood still: Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, p 60

3. Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 66. Ram Thaman was Bairagi, and a cousin of Nanak : see vol. II, p. 87 *infra*. *Thaman-dhawan*, the *Grewia oppositi-folia* or *elastica*, or *dhamar*, a grass *Pennisetum cenchroides*, *Panjabi Dict.*, pp. 1123, 295, 294. But possibly *thaman* is derived from *thamm*, a post or pillar, Sanskrit *Sthamba* and may thus be connected with Stamb Nath a form of Shiva,
4. 35. not 34 as usually stated. Each verse began with a letter of the alphabet. The letters are exactly the same 85, as are now found in the Gurmukhi alphabet, even including the letter (ṛ) which is peculiar to Gurmukhi, thus proving that the Gurmukhi alphabet existed before his time and was not invented by the second Guru. Angad, though the name Gurmukhi may have replaced its original name, which was possibly Tankre, See the pamphlet: *The Origin of the Gurmukhi Characters*, Coronation Printing Works, Hall Bazar, Amritsar. Sir George Grierson holds that the alphabet is derived from the Sarada through the Takri of the Hills and the *landa* script of the plains : J. R. A. S., 1916, p. 877.
5. Subsequently the legend ran that a huge black snake had raised its hood over Nanak's head to shield him from the sun's rays while he slept.
6. Mardana was the founder of the Rababi group of the Dom-Mirasi. Cunningham calls him the harper, or rather a chanter, and player upon a stringed instrument like a guitar : *Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 42.
7. Khazan Singh locates Sajan at Tulamba and places the incident in the second tour. The Shaikh inveigled Mardana into his house and mal. treated him, hoping to secure the Guru's accumulated offerings in his possession. Tulamba had been in Taimur's time a considerable centre of religious learning for his biographies speak of its Saiyids, *ulmas* and *Shaikhs* : E.H.I., III, pp. 413, 484, cited in the Multan *Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 373 f. No mention of Sajan is traceable. But at Chawali Mashaikh in Mailsi tehsil is a Darbar Sahib of Baba Nanak: *ib.*, p. 123. So too at Nigaha there is a shrine to Baba Nanak north-west of the shrine of *Sakhi Sarwar* : Dera Ghazi Khan *Gazetteer*, 1898, p. 63.
8. This must have occurred in 1524, and though Nanak does not mention the occurrence in the *Granth*, it may well have happened. In this pilgrimage to the east Nanak supplemented his imperfect schooling by constant dialectics with Muhammadan Shaikhs and other *faqirs*. He then returned to Talwandi.
9. Khazan Singh, p. 76.
10. Khazan Singh, p. 101.
11. *Ib.*, p. 102. [The Sack of Saidpur, in fact took place in 1520-21 during the third invasion of Babur. cf. Dow's *Hist. of Hindustan* (1792), ii, 114.]
12. The *chola* or cloak, said to have been presented to him at Mecca, is preserved at Dera Baba Nanak. It is inscribed with thousands of words and figures : Gurdaspur *Gazetteer*, 1914, p. 30.
13. Khazan Singh, p. 70.
14. Angad is said to mean 'own body' (fr. ang, Sanskrit, 'body'), because Lahna obeyed Guru Nanak's order to eat of a corpse which vanished when he began to do so : McGreogr's *Hist. of the Sikhs*, I, p. 49, and Malcolm's *Sketch*, p. 208. But a more probable account is that he was blessed by the Guru and proclaimed as flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood; as the Guru's self, in fact,
15. *Als eine Art Reichsapfel* (Trumpp, *Die Religion der Sikh*, p. 11)—cf. Murray's *History of the Punjab*, I, p. 169. But Khazan Singh says that the cocoanut was used at Guru Angad's nomination.
16. Glossory, *vol. III*,
17. Malcolm says Dharm Chand, clearly an error.

18. On a hill near Kiratpur, district Hoshiarpur lived Budhan Shah, a Muhammadan *faqir*, to whom Baba Nanak had entrusted some milk till his successor should come to claim it. Seeing Gurditta approaching Budhan Shah begged him to assume Nanak's form. This Gurditta did and thereby earned the title and dignity of Baba ; Maclagan, 90. He lived mainly at Kartarpur [Kiratpur] but died at Kiratpur where he has a handsome shrine. From another shrine there, called the Manji Sahib, he is said to have shot an arrow which fell in the plain below at a place called Patalpuri, long used as a burning ground for the Sodhi Khatris
19.     1, Baba Hasna's shrine is at Charankaul near Anandpur.  
           2, Phul Sahib's shrines are at Bahadurpur and Chinighati in Hoshiarpur.  
           3, Gonda Sahib is represented at Shikarpur in Sind and at the Sangalwala Gurdwara [Akbara] in Amritsar,  
           4, Almast Sahib is represented at Jagannath and Naini Tal: Maclagan. 90.
20. This appears to be the Sangat Sahib.
21. A tract not mentioned elsewhere. Naur seems to be mistake for Maur near Phul in Nabha for one version makes Bhai Pheru a Tihun Khatri of that place.
22. See under Singh. Lamma means simply the West.
23. This must have been done before 1896 as in 1891 Maclagan speaks of this *akbara* as recently established.
24. A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces. Vol. I, *Labore*. 1919.



**NANAK**  
**THE FOUNDER OF SIKHISM**  
General Sir O'Moore Creagh\*

Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in A.D. 1469; he 47 was the son of a village shopkeeper of the Bedi sub-division of the Kshatris (bania). His father, though not wealthy, was a respectable man. He is said to have commenced preaching when a little over ten years of age and so to have reigned as Guru over sixty years. He died in A.D. 1538 [?1539], aged about seventy-one. As is the custom of Hindus, he married early and had two sons, whom, with his wife, he left in his father's house in the village of Talwandi on the Ravi while he was a wanderer.

He travelled for several years through India, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Persia and Arabia. He was accompanied in his travels by his village mirasi (musician), a Musalman named Mardana, whom he had converted to his views, and Lahna, a man of his own caste who subsequently became his successor, Bala, a Jat, and one Budha. These names are venerated among Sikhs. Nanak was devoted to music and poetry. His praise of the Divinity and his admonitions to his disciples he put into verses and sang them to his followers to the accompaniment of the rabab, a kind of guitar, played by Mardana, who was a skilful musician. In the Sikh worship to-day music is a necessity.

In his travels, in which he spent several years, returning home periodically, he mixed with people of all religions and studied their various beliefs. Many stories are told of him while on his wanderings. To relate them all would take volumes. I will mention two which are characteristic.

It is said that while at Mecca he was found sleeping with his feet to the Kaaba and brought before the Kazi (judge), who said, "Infidel! how dare you dishonour God's house by turning your feet to it?" Nanak replied: "Turn them, if you can, in a dissection where the house of God is not."

On his return home after a long absence on one of his journeys, his father, mother, father-in-law, uncle and other relatives entreated him to abandon his wandering habits for the sake of his wife and children. He refused, replying as follows: "Forgiveness is my mother, patience my father, truth my uncle; with these as my companions I have controlled the mind."

After many years of wandering and preaching he had converted a large number of people to his doctrines, especially in the Punjab. They were nearly all of Hindu castes, mostly Jats, Gujers and other aboriginal tribes; his faith was accepted by few Musalmans. All his converts regarded him as a saint and patriarch. About A.D. 1526 he changed his wandering habits and settled down on the banks of the Ravi at a place now known 48 as Dera Baba Nanak (the residence of the venerable Nanak), where he was joined by his family. He lived there in great state, which he was enabled to do by the large contributions brought to him by his disciples. He established almshouses in which thousands of poor people were fed; his example has made charity a religious duty to his followers; he was visited by immense numbers of persons of all creeds from every part of Central Asia who were drawn to him by his eloquence and learning.

He acquired much wealth and founded the town of Kartarpur (holy man's town) in the Jallandar [? Gurdaspur] District, where he built a Dharamsala (religious rest house) which exists to-day, and is a place of great sanctity.

The life of Nanak was devoted to endeavours to remove the religious and social differences between the warring sects of India, especially between Hindus and Musalmans, by inculcating peace and brotherly love to one another and to all mankind. He opposed the custom of Satti and all superstition.

He preached the unity of "God who is all in all, the Creator, the Lord of Hosts, the one God, self-existent, incomprehensible, omnipotent, without beginning and everlasting." Good deeds, he said, are

nothing in themselves, the knowledge of the true God is the only way to salvation. He strictly prohibited idolatry.

No prophet or holy man, he taught, has the power to do good or evil to anyone—everything comes from God, who alone must be depended on. Holy men could only interpret His commands. He said he had read the Koran, the Vedas and Puranas, but true religion he could find in none of them. Yet he respected all these books as containing some truth which he recommended his disciples to seek out and act on. He believed in the transmigration of souls and maintained that after undergoing the prescribed course of punishment for sins committed in this life, the soul will eventually find a blissful rest in God. He maintained that there was only the one true and pure religion, which he taught, and that all men were equal before God. He said that, excluding it, the numerous religions and castes which had sprung up in the world were the device of men. Although in his early life he had been a wanderer and had lived an ascetic life, he did so only the better to search for truth. After he had seen the world and gained much knowledge by his great experience of mankind he renounced asceticism and wandering, from which he had derived all the advantages he sought. He then lived with his family among his disciples as a patriarch. He taught them that abandonment of the world was quite unnecessary as God treated all with equal favour, that “between the fakir in his cell and the king in his palace no difference is made by him.” The doctrines of this great reformer, written by himself, are contained in *Granth Sahib*, or holy book of the Sikhs, and are included in the first part of it which is called the *Adi Granth*, subsequently compiled by one of his successors, the Guru Arjan, to distinguish it from the second part, composed by another of them, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, which is called the *Daswin Badshah Ka Granth* (the holy book of the Tenth King).

Nanak never professed to possess miraculous powers. Nevertheless his credulous followers ascribe various miracles to him;

One of these is supposed to be the origin of the national Sikh salutation, “Wah Guru Ji !” It is said that these words, meaning “well done, Guruji !” were imparted to him by a voice from heaven.

Another miracle is related as follows to account for the sanctity of Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs. It is said Nanak, becoming thirsty, asked a man attending cattle to bring him a drink of water from a tank close by. The man replied that he had just passed it and found it dry. Nanak said, “Go and see.” He went and found it full of water and at once became a disciple. How Nanak confounded some Brahmans shows him to have been a man of much humour. They were engaged in offering an oblation of water to the dead. With their faces to the East, as their ceremonial dictates, they threw handfuls of water towards the sun. Nanak was standing close by and, facing the West, began to imitate their actions. They indignantly asked him what he was doing. He replied: “I am irrigating my fields in Kartarpur.” They answered : “At such a distance how can a handful of water reach them ?” The reply was : “If the handful of water cannot reach my crops which are in this world, how can your handfuls reach the dead in the next ?”

Nanak called his followers Sikhs (disciples); he never contemplated that the Guruship should become hereditary, which it did subsequently. Some time before his death he had considered the question of his successor; he had devoted his life to the preaching of virtue and righteousness, he was quite unselfish and only had the good of his religion and the prosperity of his people at heart; he therefore selected the man whom he considered most fit. His choice fell on Lahna, a Kshatri, to which caste he himself belonged, who had not very long been a Sikh, but in whose devotion and sincerity he had complete reliance. The final test Nanak put to his devotion is thus recorded. “Seeing the dead body of a man lying on the roadside, Nanak said : ‘Ye who have confidence in me partake of this food.’ All, including the Guru’s sons, shrunk from such an act, except Lahna, who was about to carry out the order when Nanak stopped him. He then embraced him and decreed that from the moment he had done so his spirit had gone into Lahna’s body and he must be regarded as himself. He changed his name from Lahna to *Angi Khud*, shortened to Angad, meaning ‘my own body.’ “ From this incident the Sikhs consider the spirit of Nanak was inherited by his successors in the Guruship.

Nanak died aged seventy-one years in A. D. 1539 at Kartarpur. A *samadh* (memorial) was erected to his memory, but it has long since been washed away by a change in the bed of the Ravi. Many relics of him are shown in this town.

On his death it is said that there was a dispute between the Hindus and Musalmans as to who should perform his obsequies. The former burn their dead and the latter bury them, so to prevent trouble it was resolved the Guru should be neither buried nor burnt, but that his remains should be consigned to the river. When the funeral party arrived, on raising the sheet under which the body had rested, they found it had gone. It was then decided, to avoid a fracas, that the sheet should be divided and each sect should have a part and dispose of it according to their respective rites.

This story shows the great respect in which the Guru was held by both Hindus and Musalmans.

The Guru left two sons; his descendants are called Nanak-putras, or descendants of Nanak, and are treated with great respect to-day by all Sikhs, who give them the title of Sahibzada.

The religion of Nanak continued to spread peacefully. The Sikhs met every six months at Amritsar and, continuing to follow the pure and mild tenets of their religion, formed a religious commonwealth the object of which was to peacefully propagate their faith by preaching. The Guruship had now become hereditary. Persecution was, however, soon to drive them into other methods and force their religious commonwealth to become a military one.

\* *Indian Studies*, Hutchinson & Co., London.

## GURU NANAK

Dr Tara Chand\*

The Punjab was on the highway along which Muslim arms and culture passed into India. In the fifteenth century the province had longer been under Muslim rule than any other. Its towns and villages were honeycombed with Muslim saints and faqirs. Panipat, Sirhind, Pakpattan, Multan and Uch were places where famous Sufi Shaikhs had spent their lives, and the names of Baba Farid, 'Ala-ul-Haq, Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari, Makhdum Jahaniyan, Shaikh Isma'il Bukhari, had become household words for piety and devotion. The ferment in the minds of men set up by them prepared the intellectual *milieu* in which a synthesis of ideas could take place.

In the district of Gujranwala, in the Tahsil of Sharkpur, is the small village of Talwandi [now known as Nankana Sahib, in Pakistan] which is situated on the banks of the river Ravi. Rai Bular, a Bhatti Rajput, was the Lord of this village, and he had a Bedi Khatri as an accountant whose name was Mehta Kalu Chand. The accountant was held in respect by the villagers and also by the Rai. On the full-moon day of Kartik (November) 1469 A.D. the Mehta was blessed with a son. His family priest gave him the name of Nanak, a name common to both Hindus and Musalmans. At the age of seven he was sent to school to learn Hindi, two years later to study Sanskrit, and shortly after to Mulla Qutb-ud-Din to learn Persian. It is difficult to say how much he profitted by the teaching of the Pandit and the Mulla. Tradition relates the usual kind of miraculous story regarding the precocity and astonishing wisdom of the Child. It may, however, be presumed that the son of the accountant who was destined by his father for government service acquired some working knowledge of Hindi and Persian. It is also likely that he did not show any violent desire for learning, and therefore he was tried on many odd jobs like agriculture, cattle-tending and shop-keeping with equal fruitlessness. Nanak was a moody meditative child more given to reverie and day-dreams than energetic practical pursuits. He was unmindful of his personal needs and careless of his appointed tasks. Some thought he was possessed by an evil spirit, others that he had lost his senses. The efforts of the exorcist and the doctor failed to do any good or to render any harm. His father failed to understand him, but his sister, with the discerning sympathy and the sure instinct of a woman, perceived the true nature of her brother's ailment. She was married to one Jai Ram, a *Divan* in the service of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodi, a relation of Sultan Buhlul, the Emperor of Delhi. The Nawab held an extensive *jagir* in Sultanpur near Kapurthala. She sent for the young Nanak and obtained for him a post in the Nawab's service as the keeper of his storehouse of charities. Here he remained till 1499.

Nanak was married at the age of eighteen, to Sulakhni and had two sons—Srichand, who later founded the order of *Udasis*, and Lakhmi Das. When he was thirty, he renounced home and service and became a *faqir*. Mardana, the Muslim minstrel of Talwandi, and, later, Bhai Bala joined him and they commenced their wanderings over many lands, interviewing saints and gathering spiritual experience, and, if any credence can be placed upon the legends, Nanak visited all the holy places and towns of importance in India, Ceylon, Persia, and Arabia during four series of travels in the remaining forty years of his life. He is said to have had long intercourse with Shaikh Sharaf of Panipat, the *Pirs* of Multan, Shaikh Brahm (Ibrahim) the successor of Baba Farid at Pakpattan, and several others—He preached his own ideas wherever he went and never hesitated to uphold by action what he spoke by word of mouth. At last the wanderings were over, the message was delivered, and the day had arrived when the earthly journey was to end." The *Guru* drew a sheet over him, uttered *Wah Guru*, made obeisance to God, and blended his light with Guru Angad's. The *Guru* remained the same. There was only a change of body produced by a supreme miracle. The Hindu and Muslim disciples had a controversy over the disposal of the body, the *Guru* decided the difficulty, for when the sheet was lifted, the body had disappeared and there were only flowers there. They were divided, the Hindus erected a shrine and the Musalmans a tomb over them, but both were washed away by the flood of the Ravi River.

The Mission of Nanak was the unification of the Hindu and the Musalman. He realised that in order to heal the wounds of society it was essential to end the conflict of religions. He says : "When one remains

and one is removed then alone is it possible to live with ease; but as long as the two remain established, there is struggle and confusion. The two had failed, then God gave orders; for many had gone taking with them the *Furqan* (Qoran) in order to unite, but they had failed to unite. Thou art my son, go into the world, all have gone astray from the path, direct them upon the right path. Go thou into the world, and make them all repeat the one name : Nanak, go thou as the third over the head of both. Establish the religion of truth and remove evil, whoever comes to you from the two receive him, let not life be taken unnecessarily, protect the poor, remember that God pervades the eighty-four lakhs of species.”

He regarded himself as the prophet of God, who had come from the divine court, and “received from His door-step the signs (*āitan*), the chapters (*surāhs*), and the traditions (*hadīth*) of the prophet.” He taught that “there is one God in the world and no other, and that Nanak the Caliph (or son) of God speaks the truth.”

It is clear that Nanak took the prophet of Islam as his model, and his teaching was naturally deeply coloured by this fact. He was a mystic in the sense that he had a lively realisation of the presence of God, but he was not an enrapt visionary like Kabir. His spirit took occasional flights to the sorrowless and where the Divine palace is illumined by His light which exceeds the light of millions of moons, lamps, suns and torches, and where from behind the curtain of the Unknown (*ghaibi*) the sound of bells is heard, but he does not revel in the transcendent joys of that illumined abode. His spirit draws its inspiration from that vision, but it is far too deeply interested in the fate of his fellow-beings upon earth to linger long in the rare mystic regions.

Nanak’s conception of religion was severely practical and sternly ethical. His God is exalted above all. “He is inaccessible unfathomable, altogether distinct from His creation,” at “His threshold millions of *Muhammads*, *Brahmas*, *Visnus*, *Mahesas*, *Ramas* are lauding Him in millions of ways and millions of forms. “He is incomprehensible, endless, incalculable, independent, immortal, actionless. He has no caste. He is not born nor does He die. He is self-existent, He has no fear, and no doubts. He has no family. He has no illusion. He is beyond the beyond, the whole Light is Thine.” Yet he admits that He is immanent in all, “within each body the Absolute (*Brahma*) is concealed, and within each vessel the whole light is His, God is husband (*Khasam*) and bridegroom, and thus intimately related to the human soul. But in his more permanent mood Nanak looks upon God as the One Lord of all, the Commander (*Hakim*) according to whose pre-1700 ordained will man ought to walk, for obedience to Him brings wisdom, knowledge, security from punishment, freedom from *Yama*, and salvation.” Nanak has no use for any anthropomorphic Being, nor does he dwell much upon His personal humane qualities; to him He is the great and high, formless (*nirankar*), light (*niranjan*), and, from the viewpoint of personality, the true teacher (*Satguru*). But he is far too much impressed by His power and His irresistible will to develop greatly the latter aspect.

As Creator He brings the universe into existence out of darkness:

“In the beginning there was indescribable darkness;

There was not earth or heaven, naught but God’s unequalled order

There was not day or night, 01 moon, or sun : God was meditating on the void ...

The Imperceptible God was Himself the speaker and preacher

Himself unseen He saw everything.

When He pleased He created the world;

Without support He sustained the sky.

He created *Brahma*, *Visnu* and *Siva*, and extended the love of mammon.

He communicated the Guru’s words to some few persons.

He issued His orders and watched over all.

He began with the continents, the universe, and the nether regions, and brought forth what had been hidden.

His limit no one knoweth.

The universe is the domain of the Lord. The creation is His play, his motiveless activity; but

sometimes he speaks of it in other phrases, "Thou didst effect the expansion of the world"; again, "from its brilliance everything is brilliant" and "all is illuminated by the light of His appearance." Over the universe the Lord had established a system of government of His own.

"The Hindu and Muslim saints are the *dīvāns* in attendance upon the Preserver (*parvardigār*), the great *Pīrs* are magistrates (*siqdār*) and collectors (*Karorīs*), the angels are accountants and treasurers (*fotedār*). The gentleman trooper (*ahadī*) 'Izra'il binds, arrests, and degrades the ignorant and beastly men."

Such a conception of God and his relationship with creation lays greater emphasis upon the transformation of human will than upon his intellect or feeling. Nanak demands of his followers, like the Prophet of Islam, a complete surrender to the Lord.

"Nanak maketh one application,  
Soul and body are all in Thy power.  
Thou art near. Thou art distant, and Thou art midway,  
Thou seest and hearest; by Thy power didst Thou create the world,  
Whatever order pleaseth thee, saith Nanak, that is acceptable."

And again :

"Whatever the Lord does, consider it is for your good,  
Wisdom consists in obeying His order.  
Whatever the King commands obey with all your body and mind, such should be our reverence for Him,  
Lose yourself and then you will find the King, no other wisdom avails,"

Nanak is impressed with the utter worthlessness of man, and there is a deep note of contrition and humility in the consciousness of his own sin. Says he :

'My sins are numerous as the waters of the seas and the ocean.  
Bestow compassion, extend a little mercy, save me who am like a sinking stone."  
I utter calumny night and day;  
I am base and worthless, I covet my neighbours's house.  
Lust and anger which are *Pariāhs*, dwell in my heart.....  
I am a cheat in the country of cheats.  
I deem myself very clever, and bear a great load of sin.  
Ungrateful that I was, I did not appreciate what Thou didst for me.

How can I, wicked and dishonest, show my face ?" Such a person who dares to tear a rudely aside the curtain of self-complacency and egotism which hides the ugliness behind will hardly tolerate the shams and falsehoods which masquerade in the guise of religion, Nanak shows little mercy to himself and he is naturally not very tender when he deals with others. With a mind definite, clear cut and keenly alive to the sharp distinctions between good and evil he condemns with Semitic vehemence the superstition and formalism of Hinduism and Islam. He says :

"Cooking places of gold, vessels of gold,  
Lines of silver far extended,  
Ganges water, firewood of the *Karanta* tree,

Eating rice boiled in milk—  
O ! my soul, these things are of no account  
Until thou are saturated with the True name.  
Hadst thou the eighteen *Puranas* with thee,

Couldst thou recite the four *Vedas*,  
Didst thou bathe on holy days and give alms according to man's castes,  
Didst thou fast and perform religious ceremonies day and night,  
Wast thou a *Qassi*, a *Mulla*, or a *Shaikh*, a *Jogi* a *Jangam*, didst thou wear an ochre-coloured dress,  
Or didst thou perform the duties of a householder —  
Without knowing God, Death would bind and take all men away."

Also,

"He who worshippeth stones, visiteth places of pilgrimage, dwelleth in forests,  
And renounceth the world, wandereth and wavereth,  
How can his filthy mind become pure?"

He rejects the doctrine of incarnations,—

"Nanak, God is independent; Ram could not erase his destiny.

And the inequalities of caste,

I belong not to any of the four castes."

He says,

"Nanak is with those who are low-born among the lowly,  
Nay who are lowest of the low; how can he rival the great?"  
"Where Thou, O Lord, watchest over the lowly, Thy look of favour shall be their reward.

To the Musalman he says,—

"Make kindness thy mosque, sincerity thy prayer carpet; what is just and lawful thy *Qoran*,  
Modesty thy circumcision, civility thy fasting, so shalt thou be a Musalman;  
Make right conduct thy *Ka'bah*, truth thy spiritual guide, good works thy creed and thy prayer,  
The will of God thy rosary, and God will preserve thine honour, O Nanak."

What should a man do then to attain salvation, or to blend the light of soul with that of God? Four things are necessary. Fear God, do the right, trust in the mercy of His name, and take a guide to direct you upon the path which leads to the goal.

Regarding the first Nanak says,—

"Be in fear of that day when God will judge thee," and,  
"Put the fear of God into thy heart, then the fear of Death shall depart in fear."

Regarding the second, his works are so full that it is difficult to make a choice. He is never tired of harping upon two themes—praise of virtue and condemnation of vice. He is careful, however, to remember that a mere catalogue of commands and inhibitions is not enough and that essentially moral conduct is the proper attitude of the inward soul. He also knows that men and women have to live in the world and work in their professions and a religion which suits merely the *Faqir* and the *Sadhu*, who has renounced the world, cannot be the faith of an active community engaged in social pursuits. He, therefore, advocates a middle path between extreme asceticism and heedless satisfaction of sense, or rather he advocates an asceticism of the heart combined with the fulfilment of the worldly functions of body and mind. Here is one of the shorter catalogues of virtues—

"Practise humility, renounce pride, restrain the mind, remember God.  
Be honest; watch, restrain the five evil passions, be content."

Nanak loved to draw illustration for the virtues from the daily occupations of men, for example—

“Make continence the furnace, resignation the goldsmith,  
 Understanding thine anvil, divine knowledge thy tools.  
 The fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire,  
 Divine love thy crucible, and melt God’s name therein;  
 In such a true mint the Word shall be coined.  
 This is the practice of those on whom God looked with an eye of favour.  
 Nanak, the Kind One by a glance maketh them happy.”

Nanak was a believer in the transmigration of souls, and he taught that the doers of evil will continue to suffer from repeated births and deaths, till they turned their hearts towards Truth. Transmigration, however, did not apparently satisfy him as a sufficient deterrent from sin, and so he threatened those who would not walk along the path of virtue with the direst punishments.

“The sinners who have committed transgressions are bound and led away.  
 Their luggage of sins is so heavy that they cannot lift it.  
 The steep road ahead is dark, while the executioner walketh behind them.  
 In front is a sea of fire; how shall they cross it ?  
 Ravens stand upon men’s skulls; and peck at them fast as a shower of sparks.  
 Nanak, where shall man escape when the punishment is by God’s order ?”

And he goes on to describe the horrible fate that is in store for them. It is too gruesome to describe. From such a fate only the mercy of God can save man. Fortunately He is ever ready to help, “If for a moment thou restrain thy mind. God will appear before thee,” and “He bestoweth gifts on whom He looketh with favour and mercy,” and “the mere repetition of His name can confer salvation.” His gifts are priceless, and His marks priceless, priceless His mercy and priceless His ordinances. Good deeds, approved charities, penances and *Yoga*, study of scriptures and meditation, “Nanak, these devices would be of no avail; true is the mark of grace.”

Like all Sufis Nanak taught that in the soul’s journey towards God it was necessary to be guided by a *Guru*. In his system the preceptor occupies the same position as in that of Kabir. Muhsin Fani, who was an earnest student of the religions of India and a contemporary and friend of many Hindu saints of the seventeenth century, describes accurately the Sikh belief. Says he : “When Nanak expired his spirit became incarnate in the person of Angad, who attended him as his confidential servant. Angad, at his death, transmitted his soul into the body of Amardasa and this *Guru*, in the same manner, conveyed his spirit into the body of Ramadas, whose soul transmigrated into the person of Arjun Mal; in short, they (Sikhs) believe that with a mere change of name, Nanak the first became Nanak the Second, and so on, to the fifth in the person of Arjun Mal.” The *Guru* directed the disciple upon the path which has four stages-*Sram Khand*, *Jnan Khand*, *Karam Khand*, and *Sach Khand*, which, according to Gurmukh Singh, the author of *Nanak Prakas*, correspond with the Sufi *Shari’at*, *ma’rifat*, *Ufva* and *Lahut*. The path ultimately leads to the goal so dear to the soul of the devotee, where the fear of death is no more, the wheel of birth and death ceases to revolve, where man at last becomes united with the Light from which he emanated.

How deep Guru Nanak’s debt is to Islam, it is hardly necessary to state, for it is so evident in his words and thoughts. Manifestly he was steeped in Sufi lore and the fact of the matter is, that it is much harder to find how much exactly he drew from the Hindu scriptures. His rare references to them lead one to imagine that Nanak was only superficially acquainted with the *Vedic* and *Puranic* literature. Be that as it may, it is certain that in his own mind he was clear that he had come upon earth with one purpose which was to proclaim that :

There is only one path to the Devine Court which is presided over by the One Eternal Lord.”



The religious movement started by Nanak continued to gather momentum under his successors. Its stern ethical code and its definite puritanism were elements which distinguished it from similar movements in India. Its spirit of non-compromise carried within it possibilities of martyrdoms and the seeds of an organised Church. The unsettled political conditions of the later period of the Moghul Empire gave these possibilities their opportunity, and the seed bore fruit. The later *Gurus* were inevitably drawn into the whirl of politics and they transformed the Church into a militant society. But although the Sikhs changed their organisation their religion retained almost unaltered the impress of Guru Nanak's teaching.

\* *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Indian Press, Allahabad [1922]. 1946.

## BABA NANAK

C. H. Payne

1469 A.D. is the first date in Sikh history. It was in this year, half a century before Babar laid the foundations of the Moghul empire, and thirty years before Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut, that Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh community, was born. This event, so small in itself, yet fraught with such far-reaching consequences, took place at Talwandi, a little village near Lahore, on the banks of the Ravi.

The Ravi is one of the five branches of the river Indus, from which the Punjab (*panj*, five, and *ab*, water), the home of the Sikh people, derives its name. These five streams are the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravi, the Beas, and the Sutlej. The Punjab may be described as the triangular piece of land lying between the last-named tributary and the Indus proper, its base being a line drawn from Simla to the Khaibar Pass.

The Sikh kingdom, at the time of its greatest expansion under Ranjit Singh, included, besides this triangle, the states of Kashmir and Jammu, on the northern side of the above-mentioned base line; the districts of Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, and Bannu, which make up the present North-West Frontier Province; and the district of Derajat, lying between the Indus and the Sulaiman mountains. The Punjab is divided into five sections by the branches of the Indus. These sections are called doabs [*do* two, and *ab*, water,] and their names, taken in order from west to east, are the [Sindh] Sagar, the Jetch, the Rechna, the Ban, and the Jalandhar *doabs*.<sup>2</sup> The Bari Doab, between the Ravi and the Beas, is the real home of the Sikhs, and the history of their nation centres round its three chief cities, Lahore, Amritsar, and Multan.

South of the Himalayas, the Punjab consists of one vast alluvial plain, broken only by the wide and often shifting channels of its five rivers. These in winter are but insignificant streams, but when the mountain snows begin to melt, their waters rise and overflow the surrounding country for miles on either side, rendering the tracts thus inundated highly fertile. The central and higher portions of the doabs which, thanks to artificial irrigation, we now number amongst the great wheat-fields of the empire, were, in earlier days, little better than arid wastes, where grass and thorny bushes, struggling through the sand, afforded fuel for the inhabitants and a scanty pasture for their herds of camels, goats, and buffaloes. The climate of these regions is one of extremes. In winter the cold is more severe than in almost any other part of India, while in the hot weather the thermometer frequently rises to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

The upper belt of the doabs is the richest portion of the Punjab. The soil is fertile, and the rainfall abundant; vegetation is, in consequence, luxuriant, and cultivation of every kind flourishes. Valleys rich as that of Kangra slope down from the mountains, green in the spring with grass, and in summer with rice. On these terraces plants of all latitudes find a home, and wheat and barley grow with the mulberry, the tea plant, and the vine. Amongst the other products of this salubrious region may be mentioned barley, sugar, saffron, and indigo; the mountains themselves produce drugs, dyes, and many varieties of fruit, while they abound in copper and iron ore, and contain extensive deposits of rock salt.

The inhabitants of the Punjab consist mainly of three races —the Jats, the Rajputs, and the Pathans, each split up into many tribes and classes. All the Pathans are Muhammadans, and nearly all the Jats are either Hindus or Sikhs. Amongst the Rajputs of the Punjab there are both Hindus and Sikhs; but the majority profess the faith of Islam, and belong to the class which we now call Punjabi Muhammedans. Of the countless smaller races, those most closely connected with Sikh history are the Khatri, or traders, and the Dogras, a mixed race of Rajput descent occupying the hill country about Jammu. Other tribes whom from time to time we shall have occasion to mention may all be classed under one or other of the three principal divisions.

It is by no means easy for us to picture to ourselves the state of India at the close of the fifteenth century. To-day, the word 'India' signifies a single country controlled by a single government; a country inhabited by many races, differing from one another in religion, language, and manner of life; yet all of them owing allegiance to one great Chief. We think of them as a whole, and we call them 'the people of India.' But

when Baba Nanak first saw the light a very different state of things prevailed. Used in reference to his day, the word 'India' signifies nothing more than a geographical area; it is the name, not of a country, but of a collection of countries, each as distinct from, and as independent of, the others as are the countries of Europe or Asia to-day.

A glance at the map will afford some idea of the position and relative importance of the principal kingdoms which, at the time of the birth of Nanak, made up the continent of India.

The Afghan empire, which in the days of the first Tughlak kings<sup>3</sup> embraced nearly the whole of India, was greatly diminished both in size and strength. The terrible effects of Timur's invasion in 1398 had not passed away; and though the Lodi emperors, the last of the Afghan rulers, boasted that their territories extended from the Indus to Bengal, their authority was practically confined to the country between and immediately around the cities of Delhi and Agra. To the south of the Sutlej the Rajputs, though hemmed in on every side by Muhammadan powers, still maintained their ancient independence; indeed at this time their princes, under the leadership of Rana Sanga, the renowned chieftain of Chitor, constituted the most formidable power in the whole of India. To the south and south-west of Rajputana lay the Muhammadan kingdoms of Malwa and Gujerat. In the Deccan, the Bahmini kingdom, founded in 1347 by one of Muhammed Tughlak's Afghan generals, extended from the Tapti to the Kistna, and the remainder of the peninsula, from the Kistna to Cape Comorin, was occupied by the famous Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. Of the lesser states, Khandesh, Jaunpur, and Bengal were in the hands of Afghan sultans; Gondwana was tributary to the Bahmini sultan; Kashmir and Sind were under Moslem rule; while Orissa still maintained its independence as a Hindu state,

It will thus be seen that with the exception of Vijayanagar and Rajputana, practically the whole of India was under the control of Muhammadan kings. But though professing one faith, these alien rulers had little else in common. The offshoots of the various dynasties that had succeeded one another on the imperial throne, they came of different races and from different countries; and hence they regarded one another with as little goodwill as they displayed towards their Hindu subjects. The hand of each was against his neighbour, and that king reigned longest who could longest keep his enemies at bay. Confusion and bloodshed prevailed throughout India, and nowhere more so than in the Punjab. Lying in the very path of the invader, this unhappy land had been a stranger to peace since Mahmud of Ghazni first led his victorious armies across the Indus. Though nominally a part of the Delhi kingdom, it had long been at the mercy of its Afghan governors who, despising the authority of their weak masters, sought only to secure their own independence, and to enrich themselves at the expense of the unfortunate people over whom they held their tyrannical sway.

Turning from the political to the religious world, confusion and unrest again confront us. The Muhammadan invaders had brought with them their own methods of government, their own manners and customs, their own arts, crafts, and language, all of which were new to the peoples of India, and exercised a powerful influence on their political and social development. But nothing that the followers of the Prophet imported from the west was more alien to the land of their adoption than their religion. The doctrines of Islam were not only unlike those of the religions of India, but were in direct conflict with them. To the Muhammadan every Hindu was an idolater, and to the Hindu every Muhammadan was a barbarian.

Wide, however, as was the difference between Islam and Hinduism, it was impossible that these two faiths could exist side by side for centuries without acting and reacting the one upon the other; nor was it possible for two races living in close daily contact to be for ever wrangling and fighting. A certain degree of mutual toleration became essential if the ordinary business of life was to be carried on. Tolerance soon led to a closer intimacy; and, as time went on the followers of either faith began to find out that there were aspects of the other which deserved their consideration, if not their respect.

From the first, the lower orders of the Hindus were strongly attracted by a people who could despise the sanctity of the Brahmin, were as brave as Rajputs, and laughed at the restrictions of caste. Conversions to

the new faith soon began to take place, and their number increased year by year. Gradually, too, the doctrine of the unity of God and His abhorrence of images operated on the minds of all classes of Hindus, and recalled even to the learned the simple teaching of the Vedas.

At the same time, the reverence paid to Brahmins excited the envy and admiration of Sheikhs and Sayads, who began to claim a like sanctity and to exact a like homage; while Moghuls and Pathans imitated the exclusiveness of the Rajput, and arrogated to themselves all the privileges of a superior caste. Many Muhammadans attended at the great Hindu festivals, when the mirth and revelry inseparable from such occasions afforded a welcome contrast to the more austere ceremonial of their own faith. The feast of Muharram, at which the Mussalman is wont to relax somewhat the stern discipline of his creed, was attended by so many Hindus that it almost came to be regarded as a joint festival. The superstitions of one faith became the superstitions of the other. *Pirs* and *Shahids*, saints and martyrs, equalled Krishna and Bheiruv in the number of their miracles, and the Mahometans almost forgot the unity of God in the multitude of the intercessors whose aid they implored. Thus custom jarred with custom, and opinion with opinion, and while the few always fell back upon their revelations, the Koran and Vedas, the public mind was agitated, and found no sure resting-place with Brahmins or Mullas, with Muhadeo or Mahomet.”<sup>4</sup>

Baba Nanak was not the first religious reformer who sought to unite Hindus and Mussalmans in the bonds of a common faith. Early in the fourteenth century the teaching of Ramanand, and after him of Kabir, foreshadowed that of the founder of Sikhism. Both these reformers had proclaimed the unity of God, and the equality of men in the sight of God. They had condemned caste, and protested against the authority of the Brahmin priesthood. They had taught, as afterward Nanak taught, as the great Luther himself taught, that purity of life is of greater worth than the observance of outward ceremonial, and that the sinful desires of the flesh are only to be overcome by prayer and contemplation. In many parts of India their doctrines are still widely known and highly regarded. But both Ramanand and Kabir were too much imbued with the spirit of asceticism to be the founders of a popular religion. The seed which Nanak sowed produced a richer harvest than theirs, not because he expounded a nobler philosophy or preached a purer morality, but because he adapted his teaching to the needs of human life—because he realized, what they had failed to realize, that a religion, if it is to be a living force, must be a practical religion, one that teaches mankind, not how to escape from the world, but how to live worthily in it; not how evil is to be avoided, but how it is to be met and overcome.

All that we know for certain of the personal career of Baba Nanak could be told in a dozen sentences, though the legends and traditions that have grown up round his name would fill as many volumes. Legends, however legendary they may be, are seldom without historical value; for to know the anecdotes that were current about a man during or shortly after his lifetime is to know at least something of the man himself. For our present purpose, however, we must be content with a very brief summary of the more generally accepted story of the life of Nanak. Those who wish to study the picture more minutely will find all the details they require in Trumpp’s translation of the *Adi Granth* or in the more recent and comprehensive work of Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*.

Baba Nanak belonged to the Khatri or trading caste. He was the only son of his father, Kalu, who held in the village of Talwandi the respectable office of *patwari*, or village accountant. Even in his early childhood, Nanak appears to have been of a pious disposition, and much given to contemplation. His preternatural gravity and indifference to the life around him caused his parents, and his father in particular, no little concern. One day, with a view to turning his son’s thoughts into a more practical channel, Kalu entrusted him with twenty rupees, and bade him go forth and trade with it and make what profit he could. Obedient to his father’s instructions, Nanak, taking with him his servant Bala, set out for a neighbouring village where he thought to lay out his money to advantage. He had not proceeded far on his way when he fell in with a company of fakirs, with whom he entered into a discussion on the unity of God. The learning and pious demeanour of the fakirs so greatly pleased him that, on discovering that they had tasted no food for four days, and were without the means of procuring any, he took from his bag the money which his father

had given to him and distributed it amongst them.

Kalu was greatly enraged at the loss of his twenty rupees. He punished Nanak severely for his disobedience, and strove more than ever to break him of his religious habits. But Nanak paid little attention either to persuasion or to admonition. He displayed more and more disinclination to engage in any secular task, and passed more and more of his time in religious contemplation. At last, trusting that a fixed occupation and regular duties would restore his son's mind to a normal state, Kalu sent him away to Sultanpur, where he had obtained for him the post of storekeeper in one of the royal granaries.

For some years Nanak applied himself with zeal to his uncongenial duties. He married a wife and became the father of two sons, and Kalu congratulated himself on the success of his plan. But though Nanak made an efficient storekeeper, his thoughts were constantly directed towards spiritual things. He lived a life of severe abstinence, devoting only a small fraction of his earnings to his own wants, and giving the remainder to the poor. At night he retired to the forest, where he spent the hours in prayer and in singing hymns to the Creator.

Once, while resting in his accustomed retreat. God appeared to him in a vision, and bade him go forth and proclaim His name to the world. For three whole days Nanak remained in the forest, absorbed in the contemplation of his divine mission. The people of Sultanpur, to whom he had endeared himself by his charitable deeds, thought that he had been drowned in the neighbouring river; and on his reappearance amongst them they rejoiced greatly, and welcomed him as one returned from the dead. He seemed to them like one in a dream, and when questioned as to what had befallen him he uttered only these words, "There is no Hindu and no Muhammadan," and for two whole days no other sentence escaped his lips.

Nanak now resolved to devote his whole life to his mission. He abandoned his post at the granary, and, having distributed his earthly goods amongst the poor, took up his abode in the jungle, and assumed the garb and manner of life of a fakir. Here he practised all the austerities of his holy calling, and began to give utterance to those inspired songs afterwards collected and preserved in the *Adi Granth Sahib*, the Sacred Book of the Sikhs. His sole companion at this time was his faithful servant and disciple Mardana, who attended him in all his subsequent wanderings. Mardana was a skilled musician, and morning and evening sang his master's songs to the accompaniment of the rebec.

Kalu and his whole family were greatly distressed when they learnt that Nanak had become a fakir; and did all in their power to induce him to return to the world. They even went in person to remonstrate with him, and offered him land, a house to live in, horses, jewels, rich clothes—in short, everything that money could procure—if he would yield to their entreaties. But though he received them with every sign of affection, nothing could turn him from his holy purpose. Their prayers and their bribes were alike disregarded and they were constrained to accept a fakir's blessing, and to depart whence they had come.

Baba Nanak did not remain long in the neighbourhood of Sultanpur. His mission was not to sit still, but to spread the knowledge of the true God throughout the land. From this time forward till he reached old age he was a wanderer, journeying from country to country; and from city to city, preaching his gospel, making disciples, and disputing with holy men of every caste and creed. There appear to have been four principal 'wanderings'. The first was to the east, and included visits to Benares, Gaya, Panipat, Dharmasala, Delhi; and Sayadpur. He was at the last-named place when it was captured by Babar, and was himself seized and imprisoned by the imperial troops. His captivity, however, was not of long duration. His fame as a preacher reached the ears of Babar, who summoned him to his presence, and was so delighted at the eloquence with which he expounded and defended his doctrine that he ordered his immediate release, and directed that he should be shown every mark of respect. The second wandering was to the south, and is said to have included a lengthy sojourn in the island of Ceylon. The third was to the north, and was chiefly confined to the district of Kashmir. The fourth and last was to the west. This was the longest journey of all, and is believed by many to have extended even to Mecca and Medina. The story of this pilgrimage is a

favourite one with the Sikhs, though it rests on somewhat slender evidence.

Towards the close of his life, Nanak laid aside the habits and garb of a fakir, and settled down with his family at Kartarpur. He still continued to preach his gospel, and every day the *Jappi* and the *Sobila*, the morning and evening services of prayer which he himself had composed, were chanted in his presence. Before his death he named as his successor Baba Angad, whom by many tests he had proved to be the most faithful of all his disciples. When it became apparent that his end was near, a dispute arose between his Hindu and Mussalman followers as to the disposal of his remains. The former wished fire to consume them; the latter, to commit them to the earth. Neither side was willing to give way, and the question was referred to Nanak himself. In reply, he directed that after his death flowers should be strewn by his Hindu disciples on one side of his bier, and by his Mussalman disciples on the other, and that his body should be taken by those whose flowers remained fresh till the morning. When day dawned, it was found that the flowers on both sides were still fresh, and on the pall being lifted nothing was to be seen but the empty bier.

Baba Nanak did not claim to be the originator of a new faith. He was essentially a reformer. His desire was not to sweep away Hinduism, but to restore it to ancient purity. Like Luther, he came to protest-to protest against the idolatry, the blind superstitions, and the empty ritual which had so long estranged religion from morality, and the hearts of men from their Creator. But if Nanak did not regard himself as the maker of a new religion; still less did he profess to be the founder of a new nation. His purpose was ethical, not political; and though, as we shall see later, the Sikhs developed a political organization, and grew into a powerful kingdom, they were, and are, before all else, a religious people. The word *Sikh* signifies 'disciple,' and was the name given by Nanak to his followers, and the designation applies only to those who hold the faith of the Khalsa.<sup>5</sup> The theological and moral teaching of Nanak differed little from that of his successors, though many years elapsed before Sikhism was fully developed. His writings constitute the most authoritative portion of the *Granth Sahib*, and are looked upon by all Sikhs as the foundation of their faith.

"There is but one God, whose name is true, the Creator<sup>6</sup>." These are the first words of the *Granth Sahib*, and they epitomize the teaching of the whole book. This fundamental truth, the unity of the Supreme Spirit, Nanak made the basis of his doctrine. God is one. He is the God, not of the Hindu, not of the Musalman, not of the Christian, but of mankind. Under whatsoever name He is worshipped—Jehovah, Allah, or Ram—he is 'The one,' invisible, eternal, uncreated. And since there is but one God for all men, all men are equally His servants. Hence all distinctions of caste, by which one man claims superiority in the eyes of God over his fellows, are worthless and meaningless. Knowledge of God is the most important of all knowledge. It is not for the Brahmin alone, but for all, and all have a right to seek it for themselves. Similarly, the worship of God is not the exclusive privilege of a priesthood; it is a service in which every man has an equal right to participate, a duty which cannot be performed by one man on behalf of another. It must be conducted in the spirit of truth and simplicity, and needs neither incense, nor burnt-offering, nor sacrifice.

In the doctrines of Nanak morality holds a higher place than in those of any other Hindu reformer. Few, even of the world's greatest philosophers, have laid down a more exalted moral code than is to be found in the pages of the *Granth Sahib*. Purity of life is set forth as the highest object of human endeavour. Nothing to which man can attain is more acceptable to God. Without it even faith is unavailing. Loyalty, chastity, honesty, justice, mercy, charity, and temperance are among the virtues on which vital stress is laid; while evil-speaking, covetousness, anger, selfishness, extravagance, and cruelty are denounced with equal vigour. The daily practice of cleanliness, of almsgiving, and of abstinence from animal food is strictly enjoined,<sup>7</sup> and obedience to the guru is demanded of every Sikh as his first duty.

Though for many years Nanak led the life of an ascetic, he did not advocate this practice in others. He taught that the dress of a fakir and acts of penance were not in themselves evidence of a life of purity, and that men could practise virtue while engaged in the ordinary business of the world as well as, or even better than they could by withdrawing to the seclusion of the desert or the mountains. It was in this respect that Nanak taught a more enlightened doctrine than his predecessors; it was this practical element which gave to

his religious system the vitality which theirs had lacked.

In common with all Hindu teachers, Nanak held the doctrine of transmigration, and regarded the final liberation of the soul as the goal towards which mankind is ever struggling. But whereas the Hindu regards this goal as infinitely distant, Nanak proclaimed it to be within the reach, not indeed of all his followers, but of such of them as should attain to the highest merit; and he claimed the power to exempt from transmigration those among his disciples whom he counted as "the elect." The possibility of exemption, however remote, was one of the most attractive features of Sikhism in the days of the gurus, and brought it many adherents.

The writings of Nanak were collected together by Arjun, the fifth Guru, at the end of the sixteenth century. The *Granth*, or more reverently the *Adi Granth Sahib*<sup>9</sup> of which they form the principal part, contains, in addition, selections from the writings of the compiler, and of the three gurus who came before him, Baba Angad, Amar Das, and Ram Das, as well as various hymns composed by Kabir and other Hindu saints, and - by the Muhammadan saint Farid. The most sacred portion of the whole book is the *Japji*, with which it opens, and to which reference has already been made. The *Japji* is in itself a complete exposition of the Sikh faith. Every orthodox Sikh has it by heart, and repeats it each morning. The *Granth Sahib* is written for the most part in old Punjabi and Hindi, but Persian, Marathi, and Gujarati are also represented. The character employed is that known as Gurmukhi, the invention of which is attributed to Guru Angad. The hymns are not arranged in their natural order, but according to *rāgs*, or musical measures, and this, combined with the mixture of languages and dialects, and the fact that there is no separation of words, renders their correct interpretation by no means easy. The Sikhs are not as a rule highly educated, and there is little doubt that inability to read their scriptures has contributed to the decadence in recent times of their religious zeal. The original compilation is said to be preserved at Kartarpur [in Jullundur district]; but the oldest copy now in use is that which is enshrined in the Har Mandir, or Golden Temple, at Amritsar, where it is daily read aloud. The *Granth Sahib* is highly revered by the Sikh community, and a copy of it is still carried at the head of every Sikh regiment.<sup>9</sup>

\* *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London.

1. Derajat (the land of *deras* or camps) was the camping-ground of many of the early Afghan invaders of India. Their halting-places often developed into towns, some of which such as Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Fattah Khan - still bear the names of Afghan chiefs.
2. The positions of the *doabs* may be easily remembered, as the name of each is composed of letters taken from the names of the two rivers by which it is enclosed. Thus the Bari Doab is between the Beas and the Ravi; the Rechna is between the Ravi and the Chenab; the Jetch is between the Jhelum and the Chenab; and the Bist Jalandhar is between the Beas and the Sutlej. The names were invented by the Emperor Akbar.
3. The Tughlak dynasty, founded in 1320 by Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlak, and firmly established by his son and successor, Muhammad Tughlak, lasted till 1414. The Sayad ruled from 1414 to 1450, and were followed by the Lodis, the last of whom, Ibrahim Lodi, was defeated by Babar at the first battle of Panipat, 1526.
4. *A History of the Sikhs*, by J. D. Cunningham, p. 35.
5. Khalsa, literally 'pure', 'sincere', is the name of the Sikh commonwealth or brotherhood. 'Wah! Wah! Guruji ka Khalsa!' ("Victory! Victory to the Khalsa of the Guru!") is the formula pronounced by every Sikh at his baptism.
6. *The Sikh Religion*, by Max Arthur Macauliffe (vol. i. p. 195).
7. [Abstinence from animal food is *not* strictly enjoined upon. It is left to individual choice.]
8. *Adi* in Sanskrit signifies 'first', and *granth* a 'book' or 'written code'.
9. To each regiment of Ranjit Singh's army 'at least one *Grunthee*,' or reader of the scriptures, was attached,

who, when not paid by the government, was sure of being supported by the men. The *Grunth* was usually deposited near the 'Jhanda' or flag, which belonged to the regiment, and which represented its headquarters.' (See Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*, P. 185.)



## GURU NANAK

C. A. Kincaid\*

The first thing that strikes a visitor to Sind from the Deccan, after he had absorbed the difference in the physical geography, is the gulf between the Hindus of Sind and the Hindus of Maharashtra. There was an old Greek proverb that said, '*Sophias arche, kurio phobos*' or the fear of one's lord is the beginning of wisdom. 'That may have worked well in Hellas, but in India independent enquiries will prove more valuable. If my visitor then begins to probe the matter, he will find that the bulk of the so called Hindus are not orthodox worshippers of the Hindu Triad, but disciples of Nanak Shah. The next stage of enquiry is for the visitor to find one who was Nanak Shah; and in this chapter I propose to save him further trouble by giving a short sketch of that much-revered spiritual leader.

In the month of November, A.D. 1469, Nanak was born in Talwandi in the modern district of Lahore. His parents were Kalu the village accountant and Tripta his wife. Like Zoroaster, Nanak is said to have been born laughing or, to use his mother's phrase, his first cry was, 'as the laughing voice of a wise man joining a social gathering.' Many tales are told of his precocious intelligence, but although he was so quick to absorb knowledge, he soon abandoned worldly studies, telling his school-master: 'To your accomplishments I prefer tile study of divine knowledge.' He then, like many another religious reformer, betook himself to the woods and listened to the teachings of the sages and anchorites, who had sought shelter there from religious persecution, From them he learnt a great deal; and at fourteen his education was far wider than that of other boys of his age. It was, however, time for him to marry and he married Sulakhani, the daughter of one Mula, a resident of Batala in the Gurdaspur District. She bore him in due course two sons, Shri Chand and Lakshmidas.

His father Kalu was anxious to see his son settled in life and after great difficulty persuaded him to become a shopkeeper. He gave Nanak money with which to buy, at the neighbouring town of Chuharkana, stock for his shop. On the way Nanak met some starving anchorites and spent the money in feeding them. When he returned home without either money or purchases, his exasperated father boxed his ears. Nanak smarting at his father's treatment, left the family house.<sup>1</sup> For a short time he was storekeeper to the governor of Sultanpur; then he became a fakir and began his interminable wanderings. With him journeyed a disciple called Mardana, a Musulman *Dum* or hereditary minstrel. In the course of his travels Nanak met a notorious robber called Shaikh Sajjan. This ingenious person had built, to attract wayfarers, both a Hindu temple and a mosque; and he had the manners and tact of an ambassador. Unhappily his subsequent conduct belied his victims first impressions. Once his guests had gone to sleep, he murdered and robbed them and threw their bodies into a neighbouring well. But it was useless for Shaikh Sajjan to try to trick the divine intelligence of Nanak. With the speed of thought, his wickedness was unmasked and he himself converted. He was forced to distribute among the poor his stolen wealth and became a religious ascetic.

There is no doubt but that Nanak was deeply influenced by Islam.<sup>2</sup> He never, it is true, became a Musalman or anything approaching one; for he never accepted Mohomed as a prophet. But he preached monotheism. His doctrine is summarized in the preamble to the Japji.

"There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent great and bountiful. Repeat his name.

"The True one was in the beginning; the True one was in the primal age;

"The True one is, was, O Nanak; the True one also shall be."

He condemned the idols of orthodox Hinduism with great vigour especially at Vrindavan. Mathura and Puri; and after wandering through India, Afghanistan and Ceylon, he resolved to go to Mecca. This was a most daring thing to do, although not perhaps so dangerous then as now. He dressed adequately for the part in the blue garb of a Musulman pilgrim. He carried a staff, a cup for his ablutions and a praying carpet. The faithful Mardana shared the perils of the high adventure. On the way they passed a night pleasantly with a

Musulman fakir; but next day the fakir took fright, because a cloud just over Nanak's head kept pace with them. He bade Nanak and Mardana leave him and walked on alone.

In due course Nanak and Mardana reached Mecca. Their ignorance of local customs soon got them into trouble. Tired with the journey, Nanak went to sleep with his feet towards the holy Kaaba, for which he cared not at all. An Arab priest, deeply shocked, kicked him violently and asked him why he slept with his feet turned towards God; Nanak answered, 'Put my feet where God is not.' The priest seized Nanak by the legs and swung him round. As he swung in a circle, the holiest of all mosques followed his feet, until completing the circle, it returned to its starting place. This striking miracle attracted the priests from all Mecca. They questioned him concerning the nature of God. His reply shows how far removed he was both from Islam and Hinduism. I quote the following lines only :—

“How great shall I call God ? To whom shall I go regarding Him ?  
‘He is the greatest of the great and great is His world; men depart in their pride.  
I have consulted the four Vedas, but their writings find not God's limits.  
‘I have consulted the four books of the Musulmans, but God's work is not described in them.  
‘I, Nanak, say that man shall be true to his faith, if he fear God and do good works.’

From Mecca Nanak moved to Medina and from Medina to Baghdad. There he shouted the call to prayer with great vehemence, but substituted words of his own for the words *Mahomed al rasul Allah* (Mahomed is the prophet of God). Nanak's apparent fervour drew the attention of the high priest of Baghdad, who asked him to what sect he belonged. Nanak replied,

I have appeared in this age to indicate the way unto men.  
I reject all sects and only know one God, whom I recognize in the earth, the heavens and in all directions.’

The high priest was enraged at what he deemed heresy and would have laid hands on ‘the very impious fakir.’ Nanak however managed to escape and returned to India through the Persian Gulf. After a short stay in Multan, he and Mardana settled at Kartarpur.

There the faithful Mardana fell ill and died. He had been a Musulman, so the question arose as to the disposal of his body. Nanak held that as Mardana had become a Sikh (or one divinely learned) and knew God, he had become the equal of a Brahman; thus on Mardana's death his body was consigned to the River Ravi.

On the death of his old henchman, Nanak appointed his son Shahzada to act as minstrel in his father's place; but the shock of Mardana's death proved too much for Nanak. He did not long survive his friend and disciple. Among the more intimate associates of his later years was one Lahna, a converted priest of Durga. To him Nanak, on feeling his end come near, gave his spiritual succession, naming him Angad or ‘Produced from my body.’ He passed over his two sons, who had rebelled against him and placed the umbrella of spiritual sovereignty over the head of Angad and bowed down before him. Before Nanak's death a quarrel arose between His Hindu and Musulman followers (for he had attracted numerous disciples from Islam) as to the disposal of his corpse. The former wished to burn, the latter to bury it. Nanak was asked to decide. He said, ‘let the Hindus place flowers on my right and the Musulmans on my left. They whose flowers are found fresh to-morrow morning may have the disposal of my body.’ After the flowers had been put on each side of him, the prophet drew his sheet over the flowers as well as himself. Next morning the sheet was found unchanged. The disciples removed it, thinking to find the saint's dead body beneath it. The flowers would then guide them as to its disposal. Both sets of flowers they found equally fresh and blooming; but the body had wholly disappeared. The time of Nanak's departure from the earth was on some date in September, A.D., 1538 [Sept. 7, 1539] and it happened at Kartarpur [on the bank of the Ravi, opposite to Dera Baba Nanak].

The sayings of the great saint were the first to be recorded in the *Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. His verses were very numerous and are worthy of attention; I quote at random the following verses addressed to the all too bibulous Mardana.

‘The barmaid is misery, wine is lust; man is the drinker.  
The company is false and covetous and it is ruined by excess of drink.  
Instead of such wine make good conduct thy yeast, truth thy molasses. God’s name thy wine.  
‘Make merits thy cakes, good conduct thy clarified butter and modesty thy meat to eat.  
Such things, O Nanak, are obtained by the guru’s favour; by partaking of them sins depart.’

*\*Teachers of India*, London 1927,

1. [In fact he was sent by his father to Sultanpur where his sister’s husband Jai Ram was employed.]
2. [There is nothing in the available biographies to substantiate this statement. Guru Nanak was an independent thinker on monotheistic line and was as much critical of the Musalman ways of life as of the Hindus.]

## FOUNDER OF SIKHISM : BABA NANAK

Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis\*

Whilst the British were resting on their laurels and turning the sword of the soldier into the measuring rod and chain of the Settlement Officer; whilst the sepoy army was degenerating under Generals who reviewed their troops in buggies, and Colonels who held parades in pyjamas from the tops of bungalows, a formidable military power had arisen on the banks of the Sutlej. The vitality of this power lay in a new religion, which had its basis in one of the inevitable revolts of the human soul against the tenets of Brahminism. Many of these revolts were strangled at birth, but Sikhism, like Buddhism, came to fruition. Founded by Baba Nanak, a Khatri born near Lahore<sup>1</sup> in 1469, in its origin Sikhism had much in common with Buddhism. "Nanak and Buddha alike revolted against a religion overladen with ceremonial and social restrictions; both rebelled against the sore burdens which the priests would have them bear. But the form which the doctrines of each assumed was largely influenced by his surroundings. Buddha lived in the centre of Hindu India, and among the many gods of the Brahmins; these he rejected; he knew of nought else; and he preached that there was no God. Nanak was born in the Province which then formed the border land between Hinduism and Islam; he was brought up under the shadow of the monotheism of Muhammad, and he taught that there was one God." But that God was neither the God of the Muhammadan<sup>2</sup> nor of the Hindu,<sup>3</sup> but the God of the Universe, of all mankind, and of all religions. The burthen of his teaching was, "there is no Hindu and no Muhammadan." He rejected -the wisdom of the Scribes and the mint and anise and cummin of the Pharisees, and taught that salvation lay in repentance and in pure and righteous conduct. He believed in transmigration, but held that the successive stages were but purifications, and that at last the soul cleansed from its sin went to dwell with its Maker. He did not despise or attack the Hindu and Muhammadan teachers; he held, indeed, that they too had been sent from God; but he preached a higher and purer religion, embracing all that was best in both, but purged from much of evil that had been allowed in either, because of the hardness of men's hearts. He declared himself a prophet, but he claimed neither direct inspiration nor miraculous powers. He prescribed no caste rules or ceremonial observances, and indeed condemned them as unnecessary and even harmful; but he made no violent attack on them, he insisted on no alteration in existing civil and social institutions; and was content to leave the doctrine of the equality of all men in the sight of God to work in the minds of his followers. He respected the Hindu veneration of the cow and the Muhammadan abhorrence of the hog, but recommended as a higher rule than either total abstinence from flesh. In short he attacked nothing, he condemned nobody; but he sought to draw men's minds from the shadow to the substance, to glorify what was highest and best in the religion of each; and was content to leave to all men, at least for a while, the outward and visible signs to which each was accustomed, if only he might bring home to their hearts the inward and spiritual grace which the empty form might perhaps conceal and obstruct but could not wholly destroy.<sup>4</sup>

\**The Land of the Five Rivers*, London. 1928.

1. At Nankana Sahib, the scene of the massacre of Akalis in 1921.

2 *Allah*.

3. *Parmesbar*.

4. Ibbetson. 260; *Donie*, 174-5; Festing, 387.

## FOUNDER OF SIKHISM—GURU NANAK

Sir Muhammad Iqbal

**SIKHS.** The term “Sikh” literally means a “learner”, a “disciple”. The name was for the first time given to the followers of Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith in the Punjab in the xvth century.

### HISTORY

Sikhism was founded, like Buddhism, as protest against the spiritual despotism of the Brahmans and as a revolt against the restrictions of the caste system and the exaggeration of Hindu ritual. It aimed at teaching social equality and universal brotherhood, abolishing sectarianism and denouncing superstition. Nanak, the founder of the creed, was born of Khatri parentage in 1469 at Talwandi (now called after him Nankana), a small town not far from Lahore. He did not receive much school education, yet he was from his early youth given to meditation and original thinking, and was, like the Arabian prophet, gifted by nature with strong common sense. He showed an aversion to all sorts of worldly pursuits and it was with some difficulty that he was persuaded by his father to go to Sultanpur (at present in the Kapurthala state) to enter the private service of Nawab Dawlat Khan Lodhi, the governor of the province. The Nawab appointed him storekeeper to his household, and he performed his official duties for several years to the satisfaction of his employer. In his leisure hours he retired to the jungles for meditation, and tradition says that in one of these devotional excursions he was taken in a vision to the Divine Presence and there received his mission to preach to the world that “there is but one God whose name is True, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and bountiful”. Nanak now left the service of the Nawab and became (at the age of 30) a public preacher. He began a series of tours in the course of which he visited all parts of India, particularly the sacred places of the Hindus and shrines of Muslim saints. Wherever he went he held controversies with priests and shaikhs, demonstrated the futility of their belief in dogmas and rituals, and taught the necessity of self-denial, morality and truth. He is also said to have travelled through Persia and to have visited Mecca and Baghdad. In Persia and Afghanistan he gained converts and even established dioceses (*Mandjis*), notably at Bushahr and Kabul (Sewaram Singh, *Life of Guru Nanak*, p. 73). It is not stated, however, whether he knew enough Persian or Arabic to be able to preach to the people of these Islamic countries. The statement of the *Siyar al-Mutaakibihin* that Nanak studied Persian and Muslim theology with one Saiyid Hasan have been rejected by the modern Hindu and Sikh critics. “This”, says one of them, “seems to be an effort on the part of a Muslim writer to give the credit of Nanak’s subsequent greatness to the teachings of Islam” (G. C. Narang, *The Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 9). Macauliffe, however, is inclined to accept that Nanak was a fair Persian Scholar” (*The Sikh Religion*, i. 15), but does not mention the source whence he received his instruction in that language.

For the last ten years of his life Nanak settled at Kartarpur, a village founded in his honour by a millionaire on the bank of the Ravi, where he continued to preach his new religion to the numerous visitors whom his piety attracted from far and wide. . He died at the age of 70 in 1539, leaving behind him a fairly large number of disciples (*Sikhs*) and two sons, one of whom named Sri Chand founded the Udasi sect.

Shortly before his death, Nanak nominated one of his devoted followers named Angad (a *Khatri* like himself) to succeed him as *guru* (apostle) of the Sikhs. After performing the ceremony of nomination he declared that Angad was as himself and that his own spirit would dwell in him. Nanak had already preached the doctrine of metempsychosis, but this particular declaration gave rise to the belief among the Sikhs that the spirit of Nanak was transmitted to each succeeding *guru* in turn, and this is why all of them adopted *Nanak* as their *nom de plume* in their compositions. Guru Angad occupied the office of apostle for 13 years until his death in 1552. Tradition ascribes to him the invention of the Gurmukhi characters in which the sacred writings of the Sikhs have been preserved, but it has been pointed out, notably by Grierson and Rose, that the Gurmukhi script is of a different and earlier origin (*J.R.A.S.*, 1916, p. 677; *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab*, i. 677). The tradition may have arisen from the fact that Guru Angad *adopted* the script in recording the life and compositions of Nanak.

## RELIGION

Sikhism aimed at purifying the religious beliefs of the Hindus. He strongly protested against caste restrictions and superstitious beliefs. He preached absolute equality of mankind; he taught that mechanical worship and pilgrimages do not elevate the human soul; that spirit and not the form of devotion was the real thing. No salvation is possible without a true love of God and good deeds in this world. Sikhism, like Islam, condemns idolatory and teaches strict monotheism. Its God is the God of all mankind and of all religions, “whose name is true, the Creator, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and beneficent” (*Japji of Guru Nanak*).

Reverence for the Guru is much emphasized, for although “God is with man, but can only be seen by means of the Guru” (Macauliffe, ii. 347). Sikhism also believes in the doctrine of Karma and Metempsychosis.

The theology of Nanak was not formal; his sole object was to bring about a social and moral reform. Sikhism remained a pacific and tolerant cult until the social tyranny of the Hindus and political friction with Muhammadans transformed it into a militant creed. Govind Singh made Sikh theology more formal and prescribed rules for guidance in private and social affairs. He forbade the use of tobacco and wine. ...

The sacred book of the Sikhs is the *Granth*, which is held by them in great reverence. The first portion of it, called the *Adi Granth*, was compiled, as mentioned above, by the fifth Guru Arjan. It includes the hymns of the first five Gurus together with selections from the compositions of saints and reformers anterior to Nank, notably Kabir, Namdev, Djai Dev, Ramanand and Sheikh Farid. The *Granth* is composed wholly in verse with different meters.

*\*Encyclopaedia of the Islam*, London, vol. IV, 1934.

## GURU NANAK

Dr. Kurt F. Leidecker\*

It is my belief that only India could have produced the Sikh, and only *Bharata* could have given birth to Guru Nanak.

What other country provided conditions such as permitted this great leader to be what he was and the Sikh community to practise what they believe ? Could the west have played host to either?

Let us scan the cultural and political history of Europe at the time of the first Guru, revered Guru Nanak, whose birthday we are celebrating today. That is, let us briefly survey the Europe of the period A. D. 1469 to 1539, or, better, Saka 1391 to 1461. We can leave America out of this for the moment because it was only being discovered in 1492.

The Portuguese were establishing under Albuquerque the Portuguese motherland in Goa and Emanuel the Great was flourishing in splendour because of the onerous white man's burden he so magnanimously took upon his shoulders.

Spain was reeling under Tomas de Torquemada, Inquisitor General. Slave ships plied the ocean. Machiavelli wrote his *II Principe*. Martin Luther was declared an outlaw. The Anabaptists were inhumanly tortured. Tobacco found its way into Europe which began a gruesome series of wars between Protestants and Catholics.

Let us be fair, however. Great things, too, were happening in Europe. Universities were founded, Thomas a Kempis left us his *de imitatione Christi*, the Postal system was introduced, Kopernikus searched the heavens, Leonardo da Vinci, Rafael, Durer, Michel Angelo and Titian achieved the ultimate, in the arts.

India's history, likewise, was edging forward from crisis to crisis owing to greedy hands stretching out towards her riches. But one of the brightest spots in that age which gave us a Kabir, was doubtless the birth of Guru Nanak at Nankana Sahib in the Punjab.

Far be it from me to separate fact and legend in his life or even attempt a eulogy of Nanak *Nirankari*. I can but humbly refer to the highlights of his spiritual career in the world for I consider them to be significant beyonds the bounds of India and for us in America as well.

Europe may have painted well, printed well, translated well, sailed the seas well, and conquered and colonized well, but it was Guru Nanak who dreamed of universal brotherhood and sang his song of unity of all faiths to the accompaniment of his minstrel Mardana. His garments, too, betrayed his universal outlook, as A. Christina Albers, put it in verse:

But why that motley dress the master weareth,  
Half of the Hindu, half of Muslim type?  
It was to show that he was both or neither.  
The Truth eternal does not rest on dress.

No Goan adventure was needed to introduce into India the concept of the fatherhood of God: *ek pita ekas ke ham barak, tu mera gurbai*, 'there is only one Father of us all, and we are all his children,' said the first Guru and proclaimed it far and wide till it became the basic principle guiding your conduct to this day and wherever you are, in your homeland, in Singapore, Hong Kong or America.

Gandhiji, in a precious quizzical mood once asked how can the God you are praying to be different from the one I am praying to if there is only one God in the Universe? This view was Guru Nanak's also, and

it is on the recognition of the One-only God idea that the Sikh community, whether you wear the turban, cut your hair or call yourselves pure, are firmly established. That is not only your stand; that you recognize as your obligation. And it is well so in a world in which all values, even primary ones, are being assailed.

Guru Nanak called God in true Hindu fashion, 'The Indweller of Nature.' As *sat nām* the Guru introduced into your minds the realization, so often forgotten among us, that if God exists. He must be the Only One, and whatever name you give him as true a name as any other—El-Allah, Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, Hari. And, furthermore, if naming God and repeating his true Name is worship and oneness with the divine, then why should not every other activity equally proclaim God and inspire in us divine presence and sustain us in divinity, as breathing does ? *akhaṇ jivān, visre mar jāon*. These are insights into depths of metaphysics which were always better understood in India than in the West. Hold to them, for we will once again return to them after the materialistic prattle has died down.

It should be easy for Christians to embrace Christians and Christians even to embrace Jews, because they all believe in the one, personal God, Creator of heaven and earth. Yet they have fought to the death amongst themselves, most bitterly at the time of Guru Nanak. Whoever knows the connotations which Allah has for Muslims and is aware of the impersonalism and pantheism inherent in the Hindu concepts of deity, must surely regard it as a singular feat that the founder of Sikhism was able to make Muslim embrace Hindu and Hindu embrace Muslim. Again, only in this wonderful land of Bharata was all this possible. If it was possible once it is possible again and again, not on doctrinal grounds but on mystical grounds, or shall we say, when man remembers his humanity. The man who accomplished this during a period of Hindu-Muslim strife and altercation must have had far greater powers of persuasion and, I might add, courage, than was met with in the West, or else India possessed, despite incessant internecine struggles, qualities of a high order of spirituality which Europe aspired to only intellectually, if at all. As a leader in matter of tolerance, therefore, Guru Nanak surpassed all others. We in America are aspiring to such broadness of vision and practice since the days of Thomas Jefferson who, in 1777, drew up the most extensive charter or religious liberty, unparalleled in the West.

It is of interest to Americans particularly, that Sikh is derived from *Sikṣā* or instruction. Our Sikh friends, thus, acknowledge by their name their share in an immense respect for education and learning which they take, perhaps, in an even higher sense than mere scholarship, as a search for that which is the ultimate Reality or Being, in fact Truth, *satya*. Their desire for instruction and knowledge also in the temporal sphere has placed them in a position of leadership in modern India, in Government and other branches of public life and endeavour.

Freedom-loving America also is glad that Guru Nanak and you, his followers, recognize the true value and worth of man not merely in the abolition of slavery and untouchability, and in extolling the virtues of the good Samaritan, but in independence of thinking. The contribution of Sikhism to the elimination of caste so vigorously pursued by India today, can never be forgotten by your countrymen nor by the world.

One saying by Guru Nanak to which hearts in East and West are surely attuned is that, "Nobody is without some worth. How can you call woman inferior when it is she who gives birth to great men ?" Each human being, even the lowliest, has some worth, and you Sikhs have demonstrated that in innumerable instances in the past. In this you anticipated the great German philosopher Kant in his ethical code based upon the famous categorical imperative to treat all human beings in thine own person as in all others as an end with all, never as a means.

'To earn one's livelihood honestly', said Guru Nanak, is the source of happiness, and the right way consists in practising non-injury and sharing with others'. Democracy, thus, is natural to you Sikhs. Your wealthy eat with the poor, you wait on him who may work for you. In humility and chivalry you are demonstrating in your quiet way the finest characteristics of man. In the new world that is shaping, you, therefore, will be contributing the valuable, ancient heritage of Guru Nanak. It would, thus, seem impossible



that a Sikh, grounded deeply in the spiritual nature of his creed, would not be an ardent defender of democracy and the values which a free world cherishes. With your battle cry *Sat Sri Akal* you will never be found on the side of the godless. Our hope for a better future is made brighter by virtue of Guru Nanak whose birth you have given me the privilege to celebrate with you.

Other secrets of the spiritual life were known to Guru Nanak and the refulgence of his spirit in other nine Gurus. Take, for example, just one more, that of fearlessness. By it man proves the divinity of his own nature which is affirmed in all of Hinduism. We in America often speak of freedom from fear, but expect that freedom to come to us from without, from improvements in the social order or favourable economic conditions. The Sikh Gurus, inspired by and in the spirit of the first one. Guru Nanak, looked within for stamina, and have prompted you to do the utmost in heroic deeds of valour and even more heroic sufferings of martyrdom which are inscribed in gold on the glorious pages of India's history, from Guru Arjan's tortures to Amritsar.

"Death is the privilege of the brave, provided they die for a worthy cause," said Guru Nanak. Indeed, a country is well off that can boast of men who for the sake of their fellow-men, not necessarily their co-religionists or compatriots, will fight and lay down their lives because they espouse a worthy cause. As Guru Tegh Bahadur, or was it Guru Gobind Singh, said: *sir dadam magar sar-e-khuda na dadam*, 'he gave his own head, yet did not relinquish what *Khuda* (i. e., God) entrusted him with.' Hence, Rabendranath Tagore in his *jana-gana-mana-adbinayaka*, did not forget among those gathered round the throne of the Dispenser of India's destiny, you Sikhs.

Vijaya Guru Nanak !

\* The *Sikh Review*, Calcutta, December, 1961.

## NANAK

Bankey Behari\*

A strange pilgrim entered the holy shrine at Mecca, where sat the faithful ones rapt in meditation. Tired, he stayed over in the place while the others had left. Unmindful, in his sleep, he turned his feet towards Kaaba (shrine). The Arab priest saw it, came and kicked him for that sacrilegious act, and questioned, "who art thou sleeping infidel? Why hast thou, O sinner, turned thy feet towards God?" Perfectly calm, answered the strange pilgrim, "Turn, O, faithful one, these feet in the direction in which He is not." Tradition assigns a miracle on the occasion. As the priest in a rage dragged his feet in the opposite direction, the shrine followed the revolutions of his body.

This same strange pilgrim had some years earlier surprised the Brahmins of Hardwar by a similar and queer act. As the pilgrims at Hardwar were offering oblations to the manes with the Ganges water, their faces being turned towards the East, he approached them and inquired as to what they were doing. They replied that they were satisfying the thirst of their ancestors who were dead and were in the other world. He took up the advice and turning his face towards the West began to offer his oblations. The priests enraged asked what he meant by that unholy act, inasmuch as he had his face turned in the opposite direction. He replied, "My fields are situated in the Punjab in that direction, and it is hot season, my fields must be parched, I am trying to water them." The priests said "Fool! how can the fields situated so far off be watered by sprinkling water here." At once he retorted, "greater fools, are you, who think that by offering water oblations here the dead ancestors in the other world can be satisfied!"

This strange pilgrim was born in 1469, by the side of the Ravi in the Punjab adjoining a forest, in the small village of Talwandi; situated some twenty-four miles from Lahore. His birth had been heralded by many ominous signs, and the astrologers of Rai Bular, the landlord of the village, had predicted a great future for this young brother of Nanaki, the son of Kalu; the village accountant, by caste a Khatri. After the sister he was named Nanak.

Nanak was born at a period of great mental and political upheaval both in the East and West. Both in Europe and in India men shook off the torpor of ages, and their minds had awakened to a consciousness of intellectualism. It was a period when flourished great exponents of Adwaitism, Vedantism and Pantheism. Nanak added to the galaxy of spiritual leaders by "soaring to the loftiest heights of divine emotionalism and exulting in Divine Vision." He dared to propound a religion that contained the best that existed in other religions and gave it out in an entirely new light.

At the age of 5, the child began to surprise everybody by his conversations on divine subjects and at 7, his teacher looked aghast, when in reply to his reprimand to Nanak to read and not waste time on sitting silently, he said "I prefer to thy knowledge, the knowledge of God" and advised his teacher to "Await His Grace, and burn all his attachments and his passions and sing the Name of the Lord." The teacher was the first convert to Nanak's creed for he left the school and passed the rest of his days in contemplation in solitude.

Luckily for Nanak, Talwandi was situated in the neighbourhood of a forest and he had on many occasions to retire into solitude, avail himself of the company of holy men, and in his leisure to meditate on the mysteries of creation and the beauties of nature. He was seen at all hours singing the Name of the Formless Creator. Contact with the Yogis was also responsible for his insight into the teaching of the various schools of Indian Philosophies and Yogas.

His parents and relations, however, did not like this weaving of unpractical dreams on the part of their son, and soon sought out means to make him realise his "duties". They therefore married him at the age of fourteen and a little later secured for him the post of a storekeeper in the Government of Daulat Khan, the Muslim Governor, through the good offices of Jai Ram, the husband of Nanaki, Here Nanak worked very

assiduously and was praised by everybody. He, however, passed his time in meditation whenever he got leisure, and spent his savings in feeding the “Sanyasins”, Here also he contracted the friendship of Mardana, his lifelong companion, a Muslim wandering minstrel. Mardana used to sing to Nanak divine songs, generally the composition of Nanak himself, to the accompaniment of a rebeck. Very soon Nanak found he had no taste left for secular affairs resigned the post.

### HIS FIRST PILGRIMAGE

Accompanied by Mardana he took the route to the East and next he went to the South of India. He visited Delhi, Banaras, Gaya, Gorakhnath, Puri, neighbourhood of Madras and then Ceylon, It was the call of his restless spirit to’ proclaim a religion that led him on his first pilgrimage. To the crowd as to the priest and the layman he preached the gospel of the One-ness of Soul and God, and pointed out the pathway of realisation through the Name. Time and again he would insist on directing their attention to God. His appeals were remarkable for the simplicity of expression and the exquisiteness of the illustration that drew his point home. Here was the same simplicity in a more developed form that had made him stop the Brahmin, when he was 9, on the occasion of the sacred thread ceremony, with the remark:

“Man dieth, *janen* (sacred thread) falleth and the soul departeth without it”- that now made him proclaim with emphasis :

“You have come naked into the world and naked you will depart, therefore ponder, O ignorant one, on the One who hath created thee and seek Him and meditate upon Him”.

And as he moved about proclaiming his gospel, and giving instructions, he had to face many opponents also and they at many times maltreated him a lot. But he was fearless in the advocacy Of Truth and he knew no compromise in spiritual matters.

### THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

After twelve years of wandering Nanak returned to Punjab, but refused to go back home. His mother came to entreat him, but all her persuasions were futile. All the more so as he was experiencing as the Christian mystic would call it passage through “The Dark Night of the Soul” at the time. This stage is a natural step in the spiritual climb of the soul. To Nanak it appeared as a tragic experience. It was this same experience that had made Christ cry out, “Father, why hast thou forsaken me ?” and it was this benumbing state in which the French mystic Madame Guyon, uttered her plaintive note; “Alas, is it possible that this heart formerly all on fire should now become like ice?” Nanak, therefore, went to Srinagar in Kashmir and thence he proceeded to the solitudes of the Himalayas to meet the realised souls, the Sidhas and find peace. Luckily he met them as he had contemplated and to them he related his feelings thus:

“I have become perplexed in my search,  
In the darkness I find no way,  
Devoted to pride I weep in sorrow.  
Alas, how shall peace be obtained?”

This experience was not new in the case of Nanak. Even in the recent times was observable in the lives of Shri Vivekananda and Shri Ram Tirth on their return from foreign lecturing tours. This stage which precedes the final enlightenment may in his case partly be accounted for by the exhaustion caused by discussions on spiritual matters indulged in, on his first pilgrimage.

The retirement, however, to the Himalayan solitudes was not without its bracing effect, and the sylvan surroundings went a long way towards helping him. It was here that through meeting of the holy people, he was able to get his introduction to the “True One.” Of course, he had the first flashes of the light and trances much earlier, but now it was some thing permanent that he attained to. And after his enlightenment, he returned to his native place and thence proceeded to Kartarpur, and then decided to start on his second pilgrimage, this time to the West.

## HIS FIRST PILGRIMAGE

Nanak first went to Pak Patan where he was again able to meet the beloved disciple of Baba Farid, by name Sheikh Bahram [Ibrahim]. The latter was very happy at the meeting and was soon convinced of the attainments of Nanak, whom he complimented by remarking, "of a certainty thou hast seen God." Nanak proceeded further, passed through Baghdad, reached Mecca and then Medina. At these shrines and mosques he fearlessly proclaimed to the assembled crowds :

"I have appeared in this world to indicate the way unto men.

I have rejected all sects and only know One God, whom I recognise in the earth, the heavens and all directions."

Vehemently did he decry and denounce mere formal worship in the various sects and religions, and condemned mere rituals and ceremonials as the gateway to Heaven: While to the Hindu he said:

"Bramha who came into the world repeating the Vedas cannot describe Him ... Shiva and countless gods and goddesses standing at thy gate praise Theft." (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*. Vol. I. p. 128) and to the Muslim he said:

"Merely reading the scriptures does not free the mind from anxiety. If for a moment thou restrainest thy mind. God will appear before thee" (*Ibid*, p. 177)

## HIS RELIGION

On his return from the Western pilgrimage, Nanak gave up the dress of the anchorite and settled down at Kartarpur, where he gave religious instructions, and passed his time in hearing religious songs and practising meditation. He adopted the habit of the householder. This however did not please the religious mendicants. Sheikh Bahram once told him that for religious merit tattered garments were a necessity. He replied, what matters is merely the fixing of heart on Him. The external costume is of no consideration at all. And when the great *Yogi* Bhagarnath of Achal Batala told him in cryptic language to the same effect, "When the milk becometh sour, no butter is produced by churning ; why dost thou doff the hermit's dress and don the ordinary clothes ?" He replied, "O Bhagarnath, thy mother was an unskilful woman. She knew not how to wash the churn, and so spoilt the butter in producing thee. Thou hast "become an anchorite after abandoning thy family life and yet thou goest to beg to the houses of family men. When thou dost nothing here, what canst thou obtain hereafter ?"...

While pointing to the element of grace as necessary for dawn of enlightenment, he insisted on saying, "Salvation is here and nowhere else". To the erring world he taught, "Take thought on the vital problems of life." He said no miracles were necessary to convert you to the creed of thinking. Look round and see "Wealth, youth and flowers are guests only for four days. They wither and fade like the leaves of the water-lily".

The world is no resting-place. Why build houses when you know that not a needle shall accompany you on the final pilgrimage to the next world ? Wake up, "Therefore ye sleepers, lo, the soul in despair departeth." Understand it full well that the world is a perishable abode. Remember that everything round about you is false."

"False are kings, false are subjects, false the whole world.

False are mansions, false palaces, false those who dwell there in.

False is gold, false silver, false he who weareth them ;

False the body, false the raiment, false peerless beauty ;

False husbands, false wives, they pine away and became dust."

(*Ibid*, 130)

He uttered such reminders tuned to melodious music. To the literate and the illiterate he appealed

equally. He refused to accept that the Way Home was through logic or through vain discussions. Arguments had no place. The motive-power was faith and fear of God, His grace and the Teacher's hand.

But it is a moot point what Nanak meant by Teacher. He himself was not initiated by a teacher, and he always looked up to God as his teacher. He insisted on that point in the case of other aspirants also :

“He who looketh for human support Loseth both this world and the next. There is but one giver, the whole world are beggars.”

But at another place says he, “Through the Guru man obtaineth real life, and through Guru man, departeth to God's home.” Be that as it may, the point does not arise when you see his insistence on deliberate determination as the first step towards realisation. During his trials did he not say, “I will cut off my head and lay it before Him, I will place before Him my soul and body:”

He points out again that the Name is the Teacher, and the Name is the only pathway. There is no other “road but the Name and that is the only door in this Kaliyug.” Here was a gospel that had many points in common with what the earlier saints and those who followed him had said. And while praising the Name, he emphasised on the gospel of devotion with which the Name is to be remembered. To Him the Name and the Lord were one and he made no distinction between the two. He approached the Lord in the attitude of a true Bhakta. This is apparent in his lines which to some extent are near to Mira Bai in our own country and to the wailings of St. Teresa and other mystics of the West. There is the same agony and the pang of separation.

#### THE ICONOCLAST

He deprecated all forms and formalities and gave new definitions to words. When asked to what religion he belonged, he said in his cryptic way :

Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in yogi's staff or in smearing ashes over the body.

Religion consisteth not in the ear-rings worn, or in a shaven head, or in the blowing of the horns,

Religion consisteth not in mere words :

Religion consisteth not in visiting the tombs or places of cremation or sitting in attitudes of contemplation,

Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimages.

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world: thou shalt then find the way to religion.”

On another occasion he defined a ‘Muslim’ as one who hath effaced his ego completely. This was the creed of Nanak. To him there was no Muslim, no Hindu. In a sense, he breathed pantheism of the Sufi minus his austerities and life of a celibate anchorite.

His charity knew no bounds and as the robbers and the murderers were claimed by Christ, by Buddha and by Chaitanya, we have the incident of the robber, Sheikh Sajjan, in the case of Nanak which goes the whole length of comparing his deeds of forgiveness with the earlier saints. In simple words he gave out in essence his gospel similar to the eightfold path of the Buddha :

Recall the wandering mind from the distraction of the senses and then employ it in pious discourses and in devoutly singing and listening to the songs of the praise of the Almighty—know these are the meritorious acts which may be easily performed. They involve but little labour and bring great reward.

He was especially emphatic on one's doing one's duty disinterestedly and honestly. He was a fearless advocate of the law of Karma. He preached its inexorability' with all the emphasis at his command. It was his firm belief. Although he felt the grace of the Guru went a long way in allaying the misery and modifying the course of working out of our past Karmas.

## THE END

On a brilliant star-lit night in the month of October in the year 1538 [ ? 1539 ], lay a pilgrim under a withered acacia tree bubbling in spirit, but wearing a decayed garment over the body. It was Nanak. And today was the last day of his pilgrimage on the earth. The disciples, both Muslims and Hindus, had assembled. Some wanted to cremate the body; some others to entomb the holy body of their Guru. The Guru set the dispute at rest saying, "Let the Hindus put flowers on my right and the Muslims on my left underneath my sheet. Whose flowers were found fresh in the morning, may dispose of the body." When the sheet was removed the next morning the body had disappeared and both sets of flowers were smiling, and the withered acacia tree had blossomed forth to offer its last homage to the great saint — the Founder of Sikhism — whose swan (soul), had all along aspired to fly to the heavens, flew today into the laps of the Beloved in His Abode of Bliss : Sing therefore :

*"Wah Guru" !*

\* *Sufis, Mystics and Yogis of India*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1962.

## GURU NANAK AND HIS RELIGION IN HIS OWN WORDS

*Prof. Teja Singh\**

Guru Nanak's sympathetic way of dealing with the existing religions of the world is often misinterpreted by those superficial observers of Sikhism who see in our great Guru nothing more than a reformer, who carried a message of peace for everybody, and who found here nothing to quarrel with. His largeness of view, in holding all men equal before God, is brought forward to witness that he recognised no defects in the prevailing systems of belief. The popular opinion about him is that he was a great *Faqir*, like so many others who from time to time have been appearing in India to enrich its sacred literature and reawaken for a time the love of God in the minds of its people. It is said that if his own work was creative in any way it was only on the social side, i.e., it was only corruptions in society that he attacked, not the doctrines on which that social system was based.

Yet, if he had nothing constructive, his powers—let them have been as transcendent as they would—must have passed away unproductive and blighted, as has happened in so many cases, as Swami Ram Tirath, Tolstoy, etc. If he had brought with him no new truth, no new support for the tottering humanity, we, his followers, would have lived our little day among the ignoble sects of an effete civilisation and would have passed off and been heard of no more. If, then, Sikhism has made a mark among the religions of the world and if it is destined to hold its ground loftily in future, it must have had, in spite of what it appears now, a substantial originality given to it by its founder.

Guru Nanak, upon his advent, found religion a seething mass of moral putrefaction. He detected among its elements a certain superstition, which would make out an end of everything which was first intended only as a means. He saw living spirit dried up into formulae, and formulae, whether of mechanical worship, or meritorious readings, or contracts of reward and punishment, were ever so contrived as to escape making any over-high demands upon conscience. He struck at the root of this superstition by demanding truth in faith and spirit in work-ship. He cleared away everything that encumbered the relation between God and man. He recognised no incarnation, no direct revelation, no human intercession on behalf of man in the court of heaven. He preached Purity, Justice, Goodness. He held out no promises in this world except those of suffering, as his successors and followers were to suffer, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His sake. He held out no promises even in the next world, of the "Houris of retiring glances," or the "Kama Dhenu," or the "Kalpa Tree," but the meeting of the Loved One Himself. It was to be with God—to lose one's self in Him. The ideal of life, the measure of salvation, he taught, is not happiness or peace of mind. To serve God and be able to love Him is in itself better than happiness, though it be with wounded feet, and bleeding brows, and hearts laden with sorrow.

There were many other ways in which he brought true knowledge to bear upon the problems of life. He separated pedantic philosophy from religion, and declared it to be a mere gymnastics of the mind. Religion was thus to be less a matter of intellect than of spirit. The practice of Yoga many do very well for emptying the mind of desires, but it gives only a negative result. Man remains removed from the love of God as much in this stupid nothingness as when he is troubled by various desires. Therefore, he substituted music, the singing of God's praise, for Yoga is a means of linking the soul of man with God.

He gave another lesson in positive virtue which was a great improvement upon the established rules of conduct. There are always two sorts of duties : what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. The world had very early recognised the latter, and many very beautiful sets of commandments, like the Jewish decalogue, have come down to us. But by concentrating all their attention on one side of the matter the people had contrived to forget that any other side existed at all. Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not do this or that—this was all that was understood by Dharma or Duty. This emphasis on the negative side of virtue led to the adoption in the east of asceticism as the highest ideal of life, which ultimately meant the negation of all manly duty. Guru Nanak preached a more positive truth. He substituted Love for all the

intricate doctrines of faith. And this love meant service :

Only service done within this world shall win us a place in heaven. -*Sri Rag*.

His followers soon profited by this teaching. One can see no higher record of service in the annals of nations than that shown by the Sikhs, who were taught to annihilate the thought of self and to utilize all their energies in the service of God and humanity.

Then take the relation of man with God, as preached by Guru Nanak. Man and woman are equal before one another and before God. Woman became more sacred, her dignity even higher than that of man, so much so that our Guru could not adore God but in her disguise. Christ could not think of a better relation between God and men than of a father and son. With Guru Nanak, however, a wife's constancy to her husband represented more befittingly the relation between a faithful man and God. A son may not be the constant companion of his father after his marriage; but the wife is always wife, always constant, always seeking support of her Lord and Love. During the foreign tyranny the effect of oppression was the worst on Indian females. What was sadder still, they had lost respect even in the eyes of their own kinsmen. But, with the advent of Sikhism, where man became more precious in the sight of man, woman too gained a dignity and respect, which though not amounting to that exaggerated worship so conspicuous in the West, was yet an unprecedented improvement on the relation existing between the sexes in India. The result was a kind of chivalry unlike anything that had appeared in Europe or in Rajasthan. The Sikh became a knight, who had no personal motive, no passion of worldly love, to inspire him in the performance of his duty. The sight of wronged innocence or oppressed weakness was itself sufficient to move him to action. The Arthurian legends and the Carolingian romances may be likened to the adventures of Raja Rasalu and the Amadis romances to the tales of Rajasthan, but for the Sikh chivalry we can find no parallel. The knights of all other chivalries belong to the court of gallant Indra, but the Sikh knights belong to the court of - whom else but Guru Nanak.

Woman also gained her religious rights. She had been denied practically all share in immortality. She had no personal religion, no spiritual responsibility, no claim, no part in the law of God. She was denied all access to holy scriptures. She was to remain content with the mere performance of domestic, social and individual duties, never to vivify or heighten them by the rays of God's eternal love. Poor Indian woman ! Even in her happiest lot there is always left a void in her heart, which an ever-active piety alone can fill; and she whose portion is to suffer, whose lot is lonely, Oh ! what misery must be hers, unless she can lean upon her God, and draw from His word the blessed conviction that she is not forgotten, that His love. His tenderness, are hers, far beyond the feeble conceptions of earth. Guru Nanak felt for the suffering of womankind and gave them their full share in the goodness of God. Religious congregations were thrown open to them. They were to partake freely in all the religious and secular observances, and no social custom was to hinder them in doing so. Sikh women are to this day seen attending all occasions of public worship, all conferences, along with members of the other sex; and their conjoint as well as alternate singing, in which they often lead the chorus, must move the heart of any man who wants to see what Guru Nanak did for womankind.

Man, who was told before that the body, being the source of sin, was to be condemned, that his continuing to live in the world was a crime, now was taught by the Guru to believe that his body was the temple of the Supreme Being, and that, as such, instead of being mortified, it deserved to be cherished as a precious gift of God.

Guru Nanak's conception of God was also a great improvement. He avoided the pitfalls into which the people of both East and West had fallen. The Aryans in the East who believed in the immanence of God were not true monotheists. They were either pantheistic or polytheistic. Sometimes, when their thoughts in their highest flights transcended these sensualizing tendencies, they reached a kind of monism which was too abstract for human nature's daily use. And the Semitic people in the West, who believed in one God, conceived of Him as outside and above Nature. With them God was not an immanent but a transcendental Being : not an abstract idea or a moral force, but a personal Being, capable of being loved and honoured. This



belief, when acted upon by the Hellenistic influences which were surcharged with the idea of immanence, came to acquire the same polytheistic tendency as was prevalent among the Aryans in the East. The God of Christians came to figure as a Trinity, including a human being on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The Semitic instinct, however, restricted the incarnation of the Deity to one occasion only, and saved the Christians from becoming polytheists.

The Sikh Gurus combined the ideas of immanence and transcendence, without taking away anything from the unity and the personal character of God ;

O ! give me, give me some intelligence of my Beloved.  
I am bewildered at the different accounts I hear of Him.  
Some say that he is altogether outside the world; others that He is altogether contained in it.  
His colour is not seen; His features cannot be made out : O happy wives, tell me truly :-  
He lives in everything : He dwells in every heart: yet He is not blended with anything; He is separate.

Guru Nanak's moral laws are written on the tablets of eternity. They are not made up of human ideas and notions about things, which the mere increase of knowledge makes incredible. They are not mixed up with absurd miracles, revelations and miscalculations about the creation of the world. The world may change its theories of life, it may overhaul the whole relations of science, history and what is received as religion, but Sikhism will not have to undergo any the least change in its creed.

(ii)

#### GURU NANAK'S RELIGION IN HIS OWN WORDS

##### ONLY ONE WAY FOR ALL

The way of Yogis is the way of philosophy, and that of Brahmins to read the Vedas;  
The way of Kshatriyas is the way of bravery, and that of Sudras is to serve others;  
But to one who understands the matter, there is one and the same way for all. — *Asa-di-Var*.

##### WHAT IS THAT WAY ?

Religion does not consist in mere words :  
He who looks on all men as equals is religious.  
Religion does not consist in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in different postures of contemplation;  
Religion does not consist in wandering from country to country, or in bathing at sacred places ;  
Abide pure amid the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way of religion.—*Subi*.

##### THE IDEA OF PURITY

The heart gets impure with greed, and the tongue with lying ;  
The eyes get impure by staring at another's wealth, his wife or her beauty;  
The ears get impure by devouring the slander of others.  
Nanak, these impurities lead the soul of man bound to hell.  
All other impurity supposed to be contracted from touch is superstitious.  
Birth and death are ordained; we come and go by His will.  
All eating and drinking, which God gave as sustenance, is pure.  
Nanak, those who have realised this through the Guru do not believe in that impurity. — *Asa-di-Var*.  
They are not to be called pure who only wash their bodies;  
Rather are they pure, Nanak, who enshrine the Lord in their hearts.—*Asa-di-Var*.  
He who worships stones, visits places of pilgrimage, dwells in forests,  
Renounces the world, only wanders and wavers.  
How can his filthy mind become pure ?  
He who meets the True One shall obtain honour.—*Dhanasri Ashtpadi*.

## GOD AND HIS RELATION WITH THE CREATION

The one Supreme Being, of the true Name, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent and the Enlightener; by His grace.—*Jappi*.

He created the Avatars by His will.—*Maru Solhe*.

He Himself is the creative agencies, like the Maya, the Word and Brahma;

He Himself is Truth, Beauty and the eternal yearning of the heart after Goodness.—*Jappi*.

God is self-existent; so is His Name.

Beside Himself He made Nature, wherein He has His seat and looks on with fondness.—*Asa-di-Var*.

He who fashioned the body of the Real is also the creator of the five elements and their master, the Mind.—*Subi Chbant*.

In the beginning came Air from God; then from Air, Water;

From Water was created the Universe, with individualized life inspired by Spirit.—*Sri Rāg*.

Real are Thy universes, regions,

Countries and created objects.

Real are Thy works and Thy purposes,

Thy rule and Thy administration,

Thy orders and Thy edicts,

Thy mercy and the mark of Thy acceptance.

Hundreds of thousands, millions upon millions call upon Thee as the true Reality.

All forces and energies are from that Reality.

Thy praise and glorification is of real worth.

Thy laws of Nature, O true King, are real.

Those who worship the true Reality are real;

Only those who worship what is born and dies are most unreal.—*Asa-di-Var*.

Whatever is seen or heard is in the order of Nature; so is the consciousness of fear and comfort.

The nether regions, the heavens, and all the forms in creation came in the course of Nature;

So did the Vedas, the Puranas, the Western Books, and all the ways of thought,

And all the ways of eating, drinking, dressing, and all the ways of love.

Nature prevails in the animal kingdom, its species, genera and colours.

Nature works in the virtues and evils of men, in their feelings of honour and dishonour.

Nature works in the air, the water, the fire and the dust of the earth.

Thy Nature works everywhere; Thou art the Master of Nature; Thou the Creator: Thy Name is the holiest of the holy.

Nanak, God looks to everything with His will, and works most intelligently.—*Asa-di-Var*.

Bless Thee, O Thou indweller of Nature !

Thy ways are inscrutable.

In all orders of beings is Thy light, and all orders are in Thy light : Thou fillest all things by an art that is artless.—*Asa-di-Var*.

The body is the palace, the temple, the house of God; into it He puts His Eternal light.—*Malar*.

The body is the earth; the wind speaks therein.

Consider, O wise man, what it is that dies.—

It is the contentious and proud Understanding;

The conscious Soul dies not.—*Gauri*.

We earn our body from our parents,

And get it inscribed with the gilts of Spirit and the tendency to rise;

But by coming in contact with worldliness we lose the higher consciousness.—*Māru*.

## HIGHEST OBJECT OF LIFE IS TO LOVE GOD

He alone lives who enshrines the Lord in his heart.—*Vār Majh*.

If a man loves to see God, what cares he for Salvation or Paradise !—*Asa*.

O my soul, how can you be saved without Love ?—*Sri Rag*.

Those who are attached to the three qualities, of Peace, Desire and Passion, have to be born and die again and again.

All the four Vedas talk of the phenomenal nature and describe the three conditions.

But the fourth unconditioned state is known from the true Guru alone.

By loving God and serving the Guru man is saved, and does not have again and again to be born and to die.

Everybody talks of the four objectives, and the *Smritis* and the *Shastras*, together with the Pundits who read them, do the same.

But without the Guru the meaning of the true objective is not found.

The object of salvation is obtained from the love of God.— *Gauri*.

## HOW TO LOVE GOD

What shall we offer to Him that we may behold His council-chamber ?

What shall we utter with our lips, which may move Him to give us His love ?

In the ambrosial hours of the morn meditate on the grace of the True Name.

For, your good actions may procure for you a better birth, but salvation is from Grace alone.—*Jappi*.

We should worship the Name, believe in the Name, which is ever and ever the same and true.

— *Sri Rag*.

By praising God we get established a bond with Him.— *Var Majh*.

## LOVE MEANS SERVICE

Those who love the Lord, love everybody.-- *Wadhans*.

There can be no love of God without active service.—*Jappi*.

We should do active service within the world, if we want a place in Heaven.—*Sri Rag*.

We cannot get to Heaven by mere talk; we must practise righteousness, if we want salvation.—*Majh*.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S SERVANT

True service can be rendered only by those who, free of all personal ambition and in perfect contentment, pay homage to truth alone.

They refrain from treading in the path of evil, and doing good practise honesty.

They have broken the bonds of worldliness, and eat and drink moderately.—*Asa-di-Var*.

Nanak, life is most fruitful, when we meet with those who practise humility and gentleness even while they are strong.— *Sri Rag*.

Sweetness and Humility are the essence of all virtue.— *Asa-di-Var*.

Faith and Resignation are the characteristics of the holy;

Patience is the virtue of angels.—*Sri Rag*.

By conquering the mind, we conquer the world.—*Jappi*.

Without the fear of God non shall be saved.

His fear keeps the love for Him in good trim.—*Gauri Guāreri*.

All men are liable to err; it is only God or the Guru who is above error.—*Sri Rag*.

## EGO RESPONSIBLE FOR ERROR—ALSO FOR VIRTUE

Governed by his free will man laughs or weeps;

Of his free will he begrimes or washes himself;

Of his free will he degrades himself from the human order;

Of his free will he befools himself or become wise.

Self-assertion gives man his individuality and leads him to action;

It also ties him down to the world and sends him on a round of births and deaths.

Wherefrom comes this assertion of self? How shall it leave us ?

It comes to man from the will of God, and determines his conduct according to his antecedents.

It is a great disease, but its remedy also lies within itself.

When God sends grace to man, he begins to obey the call of the Guru.

Nanak says: Hear ye all, this is the way to cure the disease. —*Asa-di-Var*.

#### GIVE UP EGOISM

There are lowest men among the low.

Nanak shall go with them; what has he got to do with the great ?

God's eye of mercy falls on those who take care of the lowly. —*Sri Rag*.

Nonsense is caste, and nonsense the titled fame.—*far Sri Rag*.

What power has caste ? It is work that is tested.—*Majh*.

Nanak, nobody is without some worth.—*Ramkali*.

How can you call woman inferior, when it is she who gives birth to great men?—*Asa-di-Var*.

#### GIVE UP ALL ERROR OF CUSTOM AND THOUGHT

Put away the custom which makes you forget the Loved One.—*Var Wadhans*.

Falsehood exhausts itself; only Truth prevails in the end. —*Ramkali*.

My friend, the enjoyment of that food is evil which gives pain to the body and evil thought to the mind.

My friend, the wearing of that dress is evil which gives pain to the body and evil thoughts to the mind.—*Sri Rag*.

#### FOLLOW TRUTH

Truth is the remedy of all; only Truth can wash away our sins.—*Ramkali*.

Falsehood exhausts itself; only Truth prevails in the end. —*Ramkali*

Truth never gets *old*.—*Var Ramkali*.

Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is tue living.—*Sri Rag*.

That is being true, when the True One is in the heart;

When the filth of falsehood departs, and life is made clean.

That is being true, when man fixes his love on Truth,

And finds pleasure in hearing of the Name; thus is it that he finds himself liberated.

That is being true, when man knows how to live,

And preparing the field of life puts the seed of God into it.

That is being True, when one receives true instruction,

Understands mercy to living things, and performs some acts of charity.

Man is true, when man resides at the sacred font of spirit,

Where, ever consttuing the true Guru, he abides in peace.— *Asa-di-Var*.

#### DO HONEST LABOUR

Touch not at all the feet of those

Who call themselves *gurus* and *pirs*, and go about begging.

They who eat the fruit of their own labour and share it with others, are the people, Nanak. who have found the right way. —*Var Sarang*.

#### DEATH THE PRIVILEGE OF BRAVE MEN

Death is the privilege of brave men, provided they die in an approved cause.—*Wadhans*.

\* *Essays in Sikhism*, Sikh University Press, Nisbet Road, Lahore. 1944.

## GURU NANAK I

Duncan Greenlees\*

In the simple village of Talwandi, about forty miles from Lahore, were living a Kshattriya farmer and village official named Mehta Kalu and his wife Tripta. Kalu was the son of one Sivaram and Banarasi, and the family had come to that village from the Amritsar district some years before. They were worthy people, honest and hard-working, with the normal share of religious piety. Early on the morning of Saturday 15th April, 1469, their hearts were gladdened by the birth of a son, whose glory was destined to shine out through the centuries. They called him NANAK, and the astrologer who attended his birth foretold he would rule both Muslims and Hindus and would worship one only God.

At the age of five little Nanak began to talk of God, and his prattling words were admired by all. At seven he was sent to the village primary school under one *Pāndhā'* and learned what his teacher knew, but he is said to have often embarrassed the poor man by penetrating questions into the reality behind all things.<sup>2</sup> When he was just eight his elder sister, Nanaki, was married to Bhai Jairam, revenue collector for the Nawab Daulat Khan of Sultanpur, and left him alone with his parents. Next year, 1478, they insisted on investing him with the sacred thread to which his caste in Hindu society entitled him, though for a long time he rejected it and asked for a real thread, spun from mercy and contentment, which the pundit could not promise him. At school he learned to read and write, and acquired some sound knowledge of the current Hindi dialect; in order to succeed his father some day as village accountant he learned Persian also, and we have acrostic in Persian said to have been written in his childhood.

In those days he spent much time in the fields grazing buffaloes, and we are told the shade of a tree under which he rested used to move round against the sun so as to give him always of its coolness.<sup>3</sup> His heart was already seeking God. He found no interest in the secular works his father put him to — digging in the fields, working in a little shop, and the like. He sought every chance of slipping away into lonely places where he could feel the unity and beauty of nature and reach out towards that great God, who of His own Love has woven this infinite pattern of loveliness. At times he gathered together a few friends round him, and they sang hymns to the glory of that Creator whom he had begun to love with fiery yearning.

All this piety in their son did not please his parents, for he was their only son and they looked for one to carry on their worldly avocations and to support them when old age drew near. They thought him ill, they sent for the village doctor; he in vain prescribed his remedies, for none could cure the boy's feverish thirst for God.<sup>4</sup> Then they got him married, on 1st April 1485, to divert his mind from such unworldly thoughts; the girl chosen was Sulakhni or Kulamai, the daughter of Baba Mulaji of Batala, near Gurdaspur of today. But this ruse too was unsuccessful; when his mother, in understandable exasperation, bade him leave his endless meditations, he lay down for four days unmoving, and said he would die if the Name were taken from him.<sup>5</sup> His poor little wife could do nothing to turn his mind. He now took to meeting sadhus and yogis in the dense forests, giving them food from his father's fields, and talking with them of everything they knew about God and the spiritual path. Seeking their company more and more, he must have gained from them much encouragement in his own search for the one Truth, and it is probable that in this way he confirmed those ideas he shared with Kabir and the great Vaishnava devotees of his age.

In 1497 was born his elder son, Srichand,<sup>6</sup> and three years later came Lakhmidas, but Nanak paid little heed to his family, meditated much, became more withdrawn from the world, and found his greatest creative joy in singing hymns he had composed to God. In contact with the sadhus he also learned how to speak so as to convince others, expressing his views persuasively; though it seems certain that those views welled up from the depths of inspiration in his own heart and owed little or nothing to what he received from others, either through books or through their words. The family had enough land to support them, so they were never in want, but Kalu again and again tried to induce his son to till the fields steadily and give up his useless dreaming and poetry. He even tried, in vain, to send him for business at Saiyidpur and Lahore; while he was working at Chuharkana, his father sent the lad twenty rupees to buy goods for trading, but he gave it

all away to some wandering ascetics.

Next year, it was in 1504, Bhai Jairam visited his relatives at Talwandi and agreed with Rai Bular, the village Zamindar, that Nanak could well be employed at Sultanpur with him. The idea of his son getting Government employ delighted Kalu, and he sent him off gladly with his brother-in-law. Jairam introduced Nanak to Daulat Khan, who appointed him a storekeeper; at last the young man devoted himself to his duties with honesty, zeal and efficiency, delighting everyone. Unlike most petty officials of the time he was totally free from corruption and would not even improperly hold a pie of another's money for a day. He also gave away most of his own salary to the poor.

At this time Mardana, a minstrel, came from Talwandi and joined Nanak as personal attendant. They loved each other from the start, and used to delight each other at night singing sweet hymns to God, Mardana playing the *rebec* to accompany his friend. One Bhai Bhagirathi also came from Mailasi, near Multan, and stayed for a while with Nanak as a sort of disciple; his teaching life was beginning.

## 2. *The Call of Nanak (1507)*

On 20th August, 1507, came the day of destiny. After his morning bath in the river, Nanak sat for meditation and heard God's call to give his life for world-uplift, guiding men on the right path to Him.<sup>7</sup> He at once resolved to obey the call; after three days he returned to the office, resigned his post, gave away all he had to the poor, and prepared to set out on foot. The Nawab did all he could to persuade him to stay, being deeply distressed to lose so good and so winning an employee, but others thought he had gone mad. One day, towards the beginning of September, he spoke to the local Muslims, beginning, "There is no

Hindu, no Mussalman !" This was after he first put on Hindu *kashaya* robes as a sannyasi.<sup>8</sup> Then he attended the mosque. prayers with the Nawab and the local Qazi; when all prostrated at the call, he remained standing on his feet. This gave some offence and he had to explain to the Qazi, in whose face he had laughed direct, that there was no prayer as yet, for the Qazi's mind had gone off to a baby filly of his, while the Nawab was thinking of buying horses in Kabul. They had both humbly to confess the fact. When Nanak again spoke in public to the Muslims, he taught them what is a true Muslim,<sup>9</sup> and they declared that he spoke as a real Prophet. The Nawab's storehouses were found to be full, so Nanak got the good man to give away everything in them freely to the poor.

## 3. *The First Missionary Journey*<sup>10</sup> (1507-1515)

After a brief and apparently uneventful visit to his parents at *Talwandi* Guru Nanak went with his companion Mardana, dressed as faqirs or sannyasis, to *Aimanabad*. Here he was welcomed by a rich fellow caste man, Malak Bhago, and invited to a feast; but he began his public ministry by deliberately breaking caste, going to the house of Lalo, a poor carpenter and Sudra, and spending the night with him in *bhajana*. When Bhago next morning protested at this, the Guru told him the bread of the rich was full of the blood of the exploited poor. He then took a loaf from Bhago's house and one from Lalo's; when he squeezed both, from the one came blood, from the other the milk of human kindness. Thus he showed how the coarse food of the poor offered with love is purer than the finest the rich can give in their pride. Bhai Lalo later became a distinguished Sikh.

They went together on their way to *Hardwar* for Vaisakh full moon. Seeing the Hindus there throwing water to the east "for their ancestors", he turned round and began to throw water in handfuls to the west. When asked what he was doing, he replied, "I am watering my dry fields at Talwandi." They mocked at him as a fool, till he pointed out that if their water could reach their ancestors, his could certainly reach his fields, which were much nearer. Thus he made fun of certain superstitious rites, but he told others who were chanting God's Name together, "It is true that if you take the Name with love you will not be damned." He took fire from where a Brahmin was cooking food, and when they protested this had defiled the meal he replied, "It is already defiled by the evil thoughts in the Brahmin's heart." Some of the Brahmins there tried in vain to win him back to the Hindu fold.

On the road to the south-east, the two travellers met a party of yogis, whom Nanak taught what is true religion,<sup>11</sup> and they acclaimed him as a knower of the Real. Near *Pilibhit* he sat under a withered pipul tree, and it was restored to greenness. They visited *Ayodhya* and *Prayag*, and so came to *Kasi* (Banaras), where the Guru argued with various sectaries against idolatry and induced Pandit Chaturdas to give up worshipping the *salagram*, making him too a Sikh. At *Gaya* he showed the foolishness of rejoicing at the birth of a child when in a few days the laughter turned to tears at the infant's death. The Brahmins asked him to offer the usual *pinda* to his ancestors, but he refused to do any such thing, telling them what the real *Pinda* ought to be. He stayed for four months at *Patna* with Salas Rai Jauhari, and then visited *Gorakhpur*, where Kabir was perhaps at the time—he died at Maghar very near by. After this they moved off into Assam, the far north-eastern corner of India.

Somewhere in this region, at *Kamarup*, Queen Nurshah made several attempts to entice him into worldliness by her wiles, but was herself converted for her pains. We are told that in a lonely spot 'Kaljug', i.e., the evil spirit of worldly desire, tempted him to give up his mission: "I possess everything," said he; "say but the word and I will build you a palace of pearls, inlay it with gems, and confer upon you the sovereignty of the East and West. Take whatever pleases you !" (M.I: 79) But what could the Guru do with wealth but give it away ? It might only lead him to forget God's Name, and that would be death for him ! These two incidents seem to be connected, and both may well be allegorised versions of some temptation of the heart, like those which came to Jesus and Zarathushtra.<sup>12</sup>

At one village in Bengal the wanderers were welcomed with insults and driven away; on departure. Guru Nanak blessed that village with all prosperity. Another village welcomed them with loving hospitality, and Mardana was amazed when his Master said the village would be broken up. When asked to explain Nanak said, "When these people are scattered abroad they will save hundreds besides themselves by their piety."

They travelled down the Brahmaputra, and then took ship for Puri, whither Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had not yet come.<sup>13</sup> When all stood for the evening *arati* in the great temple, Nanak remained seated and sang his own hymn telling how God is fitly adored by the whole of Nature (GGS. 18). A certain Brahmin was boasting of his clairvoyant powers, so Nanak playfully hid the man's waterpot, and all laughed while he vainly sought it everywhere.

They went on by sea or land to *Rameswaram*; he was wearing wooden sandals and a rope twisted on his head for a turban, a patch and streak as castemark, and carrying a staff in hand. He defended himself from the criticisms of the Jains of the South and then satirised them mercilessly, and by a short poem now in the *Asa di Var* converted the brutal ruler of some island on the way. From Rameswaram he crossed the sea to *Ceylon* : he made the garden of Raja Sivanabha here blossom miraculously<sup>14</sup> and wrote his mystical treatise *Pransangali*, leaving it with the Raja who vainly tried to detain this mysterious yogi at his court. Returning to India, the two wended their way along the west coast to the banks of the Narbada, where the Guru composed the *Dakhani Oamkar* at Siva's temple and converted a party of thugs. They moved further west, visited *Somnath* and *Dawarka*, where Krishna once reigned as King, and returned homewards through *Bikaner*. Probably it was on this desert journey that Mardana was distressed by thirst. The Guru said, "We must refresh ourselves with God's Name. Take your *rebec* and let us sing some hymns." But Bhai Mardana protested he was far too thirsty-to sing or play. Nanak produced some fruits for him, but told him not to eat them yet; he disobeyed, eating some while on the way behind his Master, and at once fell down unconscious, so that Gurudev had to cure him by a miracle. Then Mardana made two conditions for travel with his Master thereafter : he should 'feed him as he fed himself, and he should never notice what he was doing. Nanak agreed.

They came to *Ajmer*, and then visited the great Vaishnava devotee Bhakta Dhannaji at *Pushkara*; after this they came to *Mathura*, and so to *Brindavan*. Here they watched the 'Krishna-lila', with its actors dancing

wildly with simulated emotion, and the Guru satirised the hypocrisy of such a show got up as a means of collecting money from the devout.<sup>15</sup>

At *Delhi* he raised a dead elephant to life, but when Emperor Sikandar Lodi bade him repeat the miracle for his amusement he let it die again, saying, "It is God alone who destroys and brings to life." At the tomb of a Muslim saint in *Panipat* he was greeted with the usual "*Assalam 'aleikum !*" (The peace upon you !) but at once replied "*Salam Alekh !* (Homage to the Unseen !); 'the Sheikh there at the tomb at once went to meet this unusual kind of visitor and heard with great respect all he had to say.

He came to *Kurukshetra* in time for a great fair, he shocked the orthodox pilgrims by solemnly cooking venison in their very midst. When they expostulated, he pointed out the absurdity of such superstitious regard for the food of the belly<sup>16</sup> and added that those who preached *ahimsa* often drank human blood in their rapacious greed. He taught them that hermit or householder would reach God through the Name if he followed one of the four paths; company of a saint, honesty and truth, humility and contentment, or self-control.

On the homeward way he just visited his sister and her husband at *Sultanpur*, and then drew near his native village of *Tahvandi*. First he sent Bhai Mardana to ask if his father were still alive, telling him not to speak of his own return. But Tripta at once guessed the truth and asked Mardana for her son, weeping; she followed him back to where the Guru was waiting. Once more she begged him to please her old age by living at home with her and taking to some trade, but he even refused the food and clothes she brought him in her motherliness, saying, "God's word is food, and brooding on Him is raiment !" Then Kalu arrived with a horse to take the wanderer in order to show him the new house, but Nanak would not do this; for it is not right for a sannyasi to re-enter his family house having once gone out. His father tried even to tempt him with a new wife, but he replied that God's choice of Sulakhni was best and that tie would endure till death. Then Tripta tried to order him to come home and earn a respectable living, while Kalu reproached him for neglecting them for twelve years past; he sent his parents home alone, telling them they would soon be consoled.<sup>17</sup> And so they were, -when they saw what their son had become, the Guru of thousands of men and women of every class.

Nanak then went to *Lahore* as the guest of the rich Duni Chand for his father's *sraddha* ceremony, and took the occasion to discourage all such rites and to convert the ruler to Sikh ways of life. At *Pathandi* he converted many Pathans, and then he visited his wife and sons at *Batala* on the Beas River; to his uncle [? Lalo of Eminabad] he foretold that Babar would shortly conquer the Pathan kingdoms in India. At last, after eight years constant wanderings and at the age of 46, he settled on the site of *Kartarpur* in January 1516, and consoled his old parents by bringing them to live with him there quietly for nearly two years.

#### 4. The Second Missionary Journey (1517-1518)

The travellers resumed their wanderings late in 1517 by crossing over to *UttarKhand*; where the Guru argued with a group of *siddhas* and *yogis*, again describing for these what true *yoga* means. Then they paid a short visit to *Kartarpur*, to console the Guru's parents, and after visits to *Pasrur* and *Eminabad* they went up to *Sialkot*.

Here one Pandit Brahmdas visited the Guru, with a pile of Sanskrit books in hand and an idol hanging on his breast, and twitted the Guru for wearing leather and a rope and for eating meat. Nanak made no direct reply, but burst into an ecstatic hymn on God and the Guru and the wonders of creation. The Pandit was pleased, but his pride kept him from surrendering so soon. The Guru sent him to four faqirs who would show him a guru to his taste; the faqirs sent Brahmdas to a temple, where a woman gave him a sound shoe-beating. This, the faqirs told him, was his real guru, and her name was Maya, worldliness ! Cured of his pride, the Pandit hastened back to Nanak and made a full surrender at his feet.

The Guru then visited *Srinagar* and crossed the mountains to Mt. *Sumeru*, where he had a certain



mystical experience among the great siddhas of that remote Himalayan summit.<sup>18</sup> They welcomed him among them as one of their own. Returning to *Sialkot*, he sent Mardana to purchase a farthing of truth, and a farthing of falsehood. He found there an old friend, Mula Khatri, who said, "Life is a lie and Death is the truth." When the Guru came to Mula's house his wife hid him away lest he be converted and join the pilgrims, lying that he was not at home. As he lay hidden there in the house, a snake bit him and he died. Death was indeed the truth for him !

At *Mithankot* they visited Sheikh Mian Mitha, a noted Muslim saint, and the Guru had with him a verse contest convincing him that God alone is true and no prophet or saint can be named along with Him. As the Sheikh fell at his feet in reverent delight, Nanak fell into a trance of ecstatic love and uttered one of his divine hymns. From here they returned home to *Kartarpur*.

#### 5. *The Third Missionary Journey (1518-1521)*

Wearing blue robes, the Guru set out for his last long journey with Mardana once again, and went straight to *Pakpattan*, the abode of Sheikh Ibrahim, the heir to Sheikh Farid and himself also a great Sufi saint. The Sheikh scolded Nanak for wearing secular clothes even while he lived as a faqir, to which he replied, "God is all I have, and he is everywhere, even in these clothes !" The two then competed in verse, gradually leading each other up to the sublimest heights of philosophic beauty, and so they passed the whole night in delightful spiritual companionship. In the morning a peasant brought them milk, and when he took away the bowl it had turned to gold and was full of golden coins. Nanak was pleased with this holy man, and as he went his way punned on his name, saying, "Sheikh Ibrahim, God (Brahm) is in you !" Before he left Pakpattan, however the Guru made a copy of Sheikh Farid's slokas, many of which are now included in the *Granth Sahib*.

By way of *Tulamba*, the pair moved on through south Punjab towards the *Bahawalpur* State. Perhaps this was when the Guru visited a notorious robber who thought he would be an easy victim. But by a few verses Nanak showed that he knew the murderous intention, and he begged for pardon. The Guru replied, "Forgiveness in God's Court is gained only after an open confession and full amends done for the wrong." The robber at once confessed all his many murders and dacoities, gave away all his illegal gains to the poor, and under the name of Sajjan became a famous Sikh missionary in all those parts.

They went to *Surat*, and from there took pilgrim ship to *Jeddah*, and thence went up to *Mecca*, the holy city of all Muslims. He was roughly awakened from sleep here with his feet pointing towards the holy Ka'ba and was well scolded; he apologised quietly and asked the man to turn his feet anywhere he could where God was not.<sup>19</sup> He often gave the Call to Prayer here, and used to play with the children in the street, being followed about by them much as the Prophet Hazrat Muhammed was in his time. People noticed that there was always a cloud shading his head during the heat of the day.

From Mecca, the two went on to *Medina*, where the Guru vanquished the Qazis in argument, though we must remark that the Muslims of these parts seem to have been surprisingly tolerant to him; such a miracle could hardly occur in our own days, for travellers like these would barely escape with their lives. They proceeded to *Baghdad*, where Guru Nanak gave a new Call to prayer, changing the words of the Creed while acting as *muezzin*. The people asked him to what sect he belonged; his answer was : "I reject all sects, and only know the One God, whom I recognise everywhere. I have appeared in this age to show men the way to Him." Then he repeated the *Japji* to them, so we are told, and when the son of their 'high priest' challenged the reference to "many heavens and under-worlds" he gave him a vision of some of these.

Crossing the Iran plateau, they next went to *Balkh*, for many years the home of the Prophet Zarathushtra, and then on to Bukhara in Central Asia. So they worked their way round by *Kabul* to *Peshāwar*, where the Guru argued with yogis at the temple of Gorakhnath. Descending to the plains at *Hassan Abdal*, a noted Muslim centre, he was forced to dig a small well for himself, and this drew away the water from a rather selfish 'saint', one Bawa Wali, living higher up. Wali threw a hill at Nanak, who protected himself with

his right arm and left the mark of his hand *Panja Sahib* on the hill.<sup>20</sup>

By way of *Bherā Shahu* and *Dinga*, he came to Eminabad<sup>21</sup>, immediately after Babar's invasion of the Punjab. All was in confusion; Pathan and Hindu houses alike were robbed and burned to the ground, women were driven along shrieking and weeping. Nanak made a pathetic poem about their sufferings. The pair were imprisoned under Babar's officer, Mir Khan, and made slaves. Nanak had to carry loads on his head, Mardana to sweep with a broom or lead a horse. The officer saw the load floating a cubit above the Guru's head, while Mardana played the *rebec* and the horse meekly followed him. He reported the wonderful sight to Babar, who came to see it for himself. He found Nanak feeding corn to a hand mill and singing some hymn while the mill turned itself. He prostrated before the Guru and offered him a boon; Nanak asked only for the release of all Saiyidpur captives, but these would not go free unless he too joined them. Then when they all got home they found everyone there had been massacred; Nanak sang a doleful lament in a trance, being deeply moved by the sufferings of the poor people. He went back boldly to Babar's camp and boldly sang to the prisoners held there; Babar offered him a drink of *bhang*, often used by 'yogis', but he again fell into ecstasy and the whole body began to shine. On his request Babar set all his prisoners free and even clothed them in robes of honour, in return for which generous act the Guru promised, "Your empire shall remain for a long time." He stayed three days with the Emperor, but refused to accept anything for himself and firmly refused even to think of embracing Islam. When Babar asked him for advice, Nanak told him to rule the people with justice and mercy, and this in fact during his short reign he did. Thus Guru Nanak saved India at that time from much misery which the invasion must have otherwise caused to her.

After this long journey in foreign lands and his useful contact with the Moghul conqueror. Guru Nanak settled down quietly to live in peace at *Kartarpur*, almost for the whole of the rest of his days.

#### 6. *Ashram Life at Kartarpur (1521-1539)*

He occupied himself largely with vigorous work in the fields, a rich convert having founded there a new village with a Sikh 'temple', to which disciples gradually began to gravitate from wherever he had preached his message. He also wrote down many of the hymns he had already sung elsewhere and which no doubt Mardana had committed to memory. Thus the *Malar* and *Majh Vars* were written out while Mardana still lived, and the *Japji* and *Asa di Var* soon after them; when Mardana died, in 1522, he was succeeded as chief minstrel by his son Shahzada.

The Guru now put off his weird costumes and dressed himself as an ordinary householder of the day. He regularly preached to the great crowd who came out daily to see him, teaching all to live in the world and work, while at the same time thinking of God always and praying for nothing but His grace. His strong personal attractiveness, his lovable ways and playful sense of humour, his persuasive words and simplicity which came out of the heart of his own all-embracing love went straight to the heart of all his hearers; he seemed to draw the poor and sorrowing especially to his arms. He taught all to drop meaningless outer forms and complications, to cling to the very simple essential Truth, to abandon caste and all other forms of egoistic pride, and to seek refuge only in the Name. His great courage in so boldly speaking out open criticism of Islam and Hinduism wherever he went shows us that he was no milk-and-water moon-baby but a true predecessor of that great hero Guru Gobind Singh. Yet his lively speech "radiated love and faith and attracted men as light gathers moths"; says Puran Singh(p. 131) : 'Wherever he went the hearts of the people were gladdened and they began singing his Song of Silence, which is not written on paper but on the hearts of his disciples, and there it still sings as of old,'<sup>22</sup> Yet in his own person he was the very essence of humility, though always so quietly firm for the truth. He never claimed any extraordinary greatness for himself in spite of his vast influence, deeming himself a mere man among men, mortal and sinful as they were, though conscious of his union with the almighty Lover of all souls. Nor would he hold anything for himself even after settling down to worldly life again; whatever came to him he at once spent away on building almshouses or providing food for the poor.

A shopkeeper convert lived three years with him in those days, and then sold his goods away, took

his Guru's blessing, and went to Ceylon, where he converted that same Raja Sivanabha who had been the Guru's host -long before. To this man, as he left, Guru Nanak promised : "Whoever bathes in cold water and for three hours before dawn repeats God's Name with love and devotion shall receive nectar at God's door and be blended with Him who is unborn and self-existent" (M.I: 46).

One morning the Guru noticed a little boy of seven who came daily for the dawn prayers and quietly slipped away immediately afterwards. Nanak asked the lad why he came and was delighted by his wise and pious answer. This was Bhai Budha, who until his death installed the first five of the Guru's successors. In those days early each morning the Sikhs repeated the *Japji* and *Asa-di-Var* in the Guru's presence, following these with more hymns, the Guru freely explaining and answering questions on points in them until about 9.30. Then followed the *arati*-prayer taught at Puri, and after that came breakfast, all the Sikhs taking food together as one family. More singing and preaching followed, with manual labours, and after the *Rahiras* at sunset they had dinner together, followed by more songs; at about 10 they sang the *Sobila* and then all slept, though a few rose for prayer also in the night.

Somewhere about the end of 1531 the Guru wrote his exquisite mystic poem on the Twelve Months, its theme being the loving union of the soul with God. One day in 1532 Lehna, the priest of Durga in Khadur, was led to the Guru, and he saw the goddess whom he worshipped adoring Nanak's feet. He surrendered to Nanak at once and became his favourite and most faithful disciple. One day when his friends congratulated the Guru on having so many converts he replied that he had in fact few real disciples; he then assumed a terrible form and many ran away from him at once, others only stopped to pick up some money and run; only one yogi, two other Sikhs and Lehna remained. The Guru asked these to eat of a stinking corpse, and only Lehna was ready for this; he found himself chosen as the Guru's eventual successor and the carrion turned to sweetest *prasād*; Nanak's own two sons had already proved themselves to be not perfectly obedient. On Lehna's intercession all the deserters were forgiven and recalled to their guru's side.

Early in 1539 the Guru attended the Sivaratri festival at *Achal Batala*, where he wrote the *Sidha Goshiti*, which is believed to be a report of a discussion held there with certain yogis who followed Gorakhnath; huge crowds saluted him with deep reverence. He proceeded further to *Pakpattan* and called again on Sheikh Ibrahim; the old man rose to receive his great visitor with deepest reverence, the two embraced, and spoke of God to each other in verse all that night; they were most loving to each other and each was thrilled by the sayings of the other. He visited *Dipalpur* and went as far as *Multan* on this his last journey, and then returned home through *Lahore*. He did not again leave his Ashram while in that body.

On 2nd September he had Bhai Budha formally install Lehna, later Guru Angad, as his successor, laying before him five pice and a coconut as offerings; the crowds there began to sing and for five days festival, a sweet feast of song, was maintained. Nanak fell into an ecstatic trance; his *gaddi* he had given to Lehna, the Name as heritage to his two sons. They sang the *Sobila* and the last sloka of the *Japji*; the Guru covered himself with a sheet, uttered the Divine Name of *Wahiguru* once, and passed into the Being of the Beloved Lord, his light being transferred to Guru Angad (Lehna). It was the 7th September, 1539, and next day when the Hindus and Muslims disputed the right to dispose of the holy body they found only flowers beneath the sheet.<sup>23</sup> The two *samadhis*, Hindu and Muslim, were later washed away by the River Ravi, so that men could not make them into idols and so betray the teacher they adored.

*\*The Gospel of the Guru-Growth Sahib*, Madras, 1960; 2nd edition.

1. Gopal Pandha is said to have taught him Hindi; Pandit Brijnath to have taught him Sanskrit, and Sayyid Hasan other things.
2. He is said to have demanded the esoteric meaning of the first letter of the alphabet, just as Jesus did in GMC 15:3. Such children are very difficult pupils !

3. There is no need for the usual crass incredulity of today in the matter of such incidents narrated in the lives of God's chosen ones. They are one with Nature, and she exists to serve the devotees of her Lord.
4. cf. GGS 6 : 2-3
5. cf. GGS 32 : 5.
6. Afterwards founder of the 'sect' of Udasis or mendicant Sikhs.
7. cf GGS 2.
8. From the start his dress was peculiar and did not conform to that of any sect then existing,
9. cf GGS 28 : 1-2
10. I have used these words to translate the Punjabi *Udasi*. in order to stress the fact that the Guru's journeys were not in search of truth but to propagate the truth he already knew. Macauliffe has entirely altered the life of Guru Nanak I think without justification, in pursuit of an idea that the recorded itineraries are at least unlikely. In my own reconstruction I have used the outline given by Sahib Singh. filling in details from Macauliffe and other writers as seemed most probable, I see no reason to reject the early evidence on the Guru's three great journeys.
11. cf. GGS 30.
12. cf. GMC 22 and GZ 29.
13. [On the authority of Ishwar Das's *Chaitannya-Bhagavat* (ch. 61, 64) Dr. B. B. Majumdar tells us *m* his *Chaitannya-Chariter Upādān* that Chaitannya Mahaprabhu and Guru Nanak met at Puri.]
- 14 The miracles ascribed to the Guru form a difficult problem, for it is 'not the claim of Sikhs that he based his teaching on such childish things. Indeed many say with Kamla Akali : "Guru Nanak has no miracles. If he has, it *is* not his own, it is that of the True Name." Guru Har Gobind was sternly opposed to such acts as appear to transgress the laws of the ordinary nature, and Guru Gobind Singh definitely denies that his father ever stooped to such. Yet the lives all include stories like this; so we are free to give them some metaphorical sense if we prefer, even those of the raising of the dead by several Guru-forms.
- 15 cf. Asa di Var'. pauri 5, sloka 2.
16. cf GGS 37 : 4.
17. The Guru's mingled firmness and sweetness with his parents may be well compared with Chaitannya Mahaprabhu's attitude to his mother and the Buddha's to his family after his Enlightenment.
18. This seems to have been something like the great Initiations which we are told take place beyond the Himalayas on inner planes from time to time. See C.W.L. : *The Masters and the Path*.
19. . The same story is told of one of the Mahratta saints.
20. Here we surely have a piece of folk-lore; it reminds one of the legend of St. Michael on the Tor at Glastonbury. The print of five fingers on the hill was long shown as a relic of Guru Nanak here.
21. Also known as Saiyidpur
22. Much of the spiritual strength of Sikhism comes from this certain conviction that Guru Nanak still lives in every true disciple, and the fragrance of his presence seems to flow round them when at prayer.
23. The same story is told of Kabir, who died at Maghar near Gorakhpur, and of several other saints. Sai Baba also united in his own person the two great Faiths.

## GURU NANAK

### The Mirror of Mediaeval India

Guru Nanak sowed the seed of spiritual democracy. The process of its germination and growth is still in progress and will continue to flourish for his message is for the world at large.

As a true mirror of mediaeval India, we find in him the following hymns which are surcharged with rare pathos and tell what has been well described as *Babarvani*, i.e., Babar's carrying of fire and sword in the conquered India.

The hymns that describe the lurid condition of India at the time of Babar's invasion are some of the choicest gems of poetry to be found in the *Guru Granth Sahib* and their historical value is unquestioned. They may be considered leaves from Mother India's autobiography written by herself or dictated to her truest son which he recorded in his very life's blood : *Khun ké sohile gāre Nānak ...*

The master relates the following heart-bleeding tale of India and its destiny under the Mughals to brother Lalo, the first disciple of Guru Nanak who lived in Eminabad :

As the word of the Master cometh to me so I reveal it unto thee, O Lalo.  
With his fiendish forces Babar presses on from Kabul and demands forced gifts from the people, O Lalo.  
Decency and righteousness have taken wings and vanished, falsehood stalks abroad, O Lalo.  
The *qazis* and the *brahmins* have now been supplanted by the devil who reads the marriage services, O Lalo.  
Even the Muslim-conquered ladies are suffering, and they read the holy books to call "upon the Supreme One, O Lalo.  
The high-caste Hindu ladies, as also the low ones, also groan under the yoke of tyranny, O Lalo.  
Dirges of murder gush out from the sore hearts, Nanak, and blood is being shed in place of saffron, O Lalo.  
In this city of corpses, Eminabad, I sing elegies of woe and sound notes of warning, O Lalo.  
He that made the universe seeth it all, although He doeth it sitting apart;  
He is just, His decisions are just and exemplary;  
Bodies will be cut like shreds of cloth and Mother India will remember my prophecy, viz  
Having come in 78 (1578 *sambat*, A.C. 1521);  
They will clear out first in '97 (*sambat* A.C. 1540, i.e., Humayun was then ousted by Sher Shah).  
Thereafter shall be born my disciple, another brave man (Guru Gobind Singh);  
Nanak tells the truth, utters it publicly for the occasion demands it. *Tilang Rag*

In this the Guru tells how Babar carried fire and sword into the town of Eminabad which he entered and massacred. No distinction was made between Hindu and Muslim women, although the latter were of his own faith.

This indiscriminate slaughter made the heart of Nanak bleed and he foretold how Humayun would first be vanquished by Sher Shah; this would be a temporary eclipse of the Mughal rule in India, the permanent eclipse being brought about by another son, man, namely. Guru Gobind Singh, who would be the spiritual descendant of the Guru himself (*mard-kā-cēla*).

So much about Babar's sweeping invasion, and now about its deadening effect. The Master is uneasy and calls the Supreme One Himself to account:

Thou, O Lord, befriendest indeed Khurasan and hasteneth to spread terror in India.  
The Creator takes no blame on Himself; death disguised as Mughal came and swept over the plains

of India.

There was much beating, wringing of hands, gnashing of teeth; O Lords, did that not pain Thee ? O Lord Thou art common to all!

If a powerful party beateth another powerful party, then there is certainly no occasion for grief or complaint; but if a ravening lion falleth upon a defenceless herd, then the Master of the herd must needs show His mettle [*Rag Asa*].

This is no idle jeremiad but it shows what way the wind blew in the mind of Nanak. He saw the depth to which India had sunk and he would invoke no one else but the Supreme One Himself to set right the supreme equilibrium.

Guru Nanak said that how both the rulers and the ruled were sunk in luxury; they had untold wealth which was a curtain between them and the Supreme One. This is why miseries followed. The Master recites finally the tale of Indian misery and its real cause, Indian impotence and faith in magic :

Where are the prancing steeds in the stables and in the tournaments and where the sounds of horns and bugles ?

Where are the costly belts and red liveries ?

Where are the looking glasses and enchanting faces ?

O Lord, this is thy handiwork. Thou mayest do and undo anything in the twinkling of an eye; all hoarded wealth may be distributed among all brethren, shouldst Thou so wilt.

Where are the gates, mansions and palaces and where the stately inns ?

Where are the beds of roses and charming damsels, seeing whom one could not sleep ?

Where are the betel leaves and the sellers thereof and damsels with lips parted like rubies ? They have all vanished.

It is this wealth which kept them deeply infatuated and which has brought about their ruin.

Without sins it accumulath not and at the time of death it parts company;

When the Lord takes away virtues, misery follows of itself,

Countless *pirs* endeavoured to stop Mir Babar's advance (by incantation) when they heard of his triumphant march;

Private mansions and public buildings were set ablaze and children cried when they were flayed alive;

Yet no Moghul became blind by the incantations of the *pirs*, and the magic of Indians prevailed not;

In the contest between the Moghuls and the Pathans, there was fierce hand-to-hand fighting with swords; the Moghuls also used matchlock guns and the latter brought unwieldy elephants;

But the Indians had forfeited the Lord's sympathy owing to their impotence and they had to expiate their sins by dying as they did.

The Hindu, Turk, Bhatti and Thakur wives veiled from head to foot are either carried off or find rest in the burial ground;

How can they pass their nights in peace who are lovelorn ?

The Lord doth all this according to law : why bewail in vain ? Sorrow and joy come accordingly as we obey the law or we do not : why to disobey and yet cry ?

The Lord-is pleased when His law is obeyed, or else one reapeth what one soweth.

This, the last hymn, shows clearly that even the Muslim *pirs* had lost all vitality and, having lost all confidence in themselves, resorted to the outworn device of magic. This shows the pathos to which the pre-Moghul rulers, whether Hindu or Muslim, had sunk and the obvious result was that when Babar came to India he found little or no resistance so that his empire was assured, with the single exception of Rana Sanga of Mewar who was a hard nut even for Babar to crack.

These hymns of Guru Nanak show that this seer, who was born in mediaeval India, was certainly not like the seers of the Vedic times who considered this world an illusion and life an empty mirage. Nor was he like other devotees who lived contemporaneously in other parts of India.

Guru Nanak was first and foremost a realist, and this work-a-day world was to him as important as the ideal world of which this is an image. It is, therefore, that unlike other saints, contemporary or ancient, the Guru indulged at great length on the political condition of India. This was necessary, if Guru Nanak came not merely to condemn the existing order but to cure it of its malady. Hence it was that when the question of his succession arose on his deathbed, the Guru rejected his sons in favour of Angad who was, like Nanak, as much a man of this world as of the world beyond.

The whole of Sikh history is thus a carefully laid and carefully executed design of Guru Nanak in which the day-to-day conditions of India received effective treatment.

Looking forward, we can now say that it was Nanak who undermined the foundations of Moghul rule, and thereby paved the way for Indian *swaraj*. If only the latter day India could have followed in the footsteps of the Master, India would not have lost what it wrenched from the hands of the Moghuls after such a bitter struggle.

Here it must also be mentioned that the Guru rightly stressed that the salvation of India lies not in devotion to illusory sciences, such as magic or astrology, but in the cultivation of self-confidence and knowledge which are the backbone of a nation. The Guru also had his eyes on the matchlocks of Babar which, Babar himself states, were the key to his success.

In other words, what is wanted and was emphasized by the Master is scientific equipment side by side with self-sacrifice. It was the lesson which Nanak rubbed home into us when he condemned the Saidpur massacre, the prototype of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy.

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## GURU NANAK'S MISSION TO THE MUSLIMS

Mohan Singh Kalra\*

It is an admitted fact that Muslims in general, all over the world, are greatly influenced by the dictates of their priests, commonly known as *pirs*, *faqirs*, and *valis*. There is a firm belief amongst the ordinary Muslims that *pirs* exercise super-natural powers, and can change the course of Divine will and destiny by certain occult knowledge which they have attained and enjoy. The literate and the ignorant are all alike so far as the *pirs*' mystic spell is concerned. Thousands of them approach the *pirs* to obtain charms and blessings for securing worldly gifts of wealth, children, promotions, and victories over their enemies. The implicit faith of the Muslims in the spiritual powers of the *pirs* at times reaches the limits of obsession and may even detract from the absolute Muslim faith that God is the sole bestower of all blessings. One may even be tempted to consider the idea of duality by looking at the undisputed authority by the *pirs* over the mass of the faithful.

Such a circumstance in the belief of the simple Muslim was much stronger in the past, especially in the times of the Muslim rulers. In India, in fact, the Muslim rulers led the masses in seeking all kinds of heavenly favours from the *Rirs* who, from time to time, exercised political domination over the rulers. Akbar the Great travelled barefoot a long distance to Fatehpur Sikri to beg for the gift of a son from a renowned Muslim divine. Jehangir used to visit Hazrat Mian Mir near Lahore to obtain divine blessings for the fulfilment of his cherished desires. *Dargahs* at Nizamuddin near New Delhi and Ajmer used to be the frequent objective of pilgrimages by Muslim kings and powerful administrators. Last moment dictations from the *pirs* have changed the course of some very important events of history. In fact, contrary to the tenets of religion and the strict dictates of the Holy Book, the *pirs* were, in practice, sanctified and even deified. No earthly being could challenge their sway or gainsay their rulings.

Such was the condition of Muslim priesthood when Guru Nanak was commissioned through divine inspiration to bring about a true spiritual awakening amongst the *pirs*. Guru Nanak found that the unrestricted powers obtained by the *pirs* had made them absolutely oblivious to the faithful. Uninhibited powers acquired by them merely helped the growth of egoism and conceit. Loosing sight of divine dispensation they became highly enamoured of miracles, which they thought they were capable of working. They thus became slaves of their own folly and diverted their attentions from the One Source of all blessings to the petty, mechanical devices of charms and other practices. It was a complete negation of the true faith which they were expected to preach. It was left to Guru Nanak to dispel the forces of ignorance amongst the worldly-wise *pirs*, and to restore divine light to the dark empty shells of their souls.

In his various encounters with the *pirs* he decried the vain quest for miracles, and explained to them the real objectives of this precious human life, the impediments in the way of the achievement of such objectives, and the right and only path to achieve the Supreme End. The Muslim divines, though misguided by the spell of self-imposed conceit and vanity, were none the less gifted with receptive minds softened by prayers. In all his discourses with the highly esteemed Muslim divines the Guru never gave offence, but won them over with true love and affection expressed in plain terms easily understandable by them. Guru Nanak's objective was not the conversion of the *pirs* to his own faith, but to reveal to them the Light of God as experienced by him. In certain cases something like a miracle did happen but that was not in any way due to Guru Nanak's desire, it was, rather, the result of the spontaneous flow of Divine will.

### AT SULTANPUR

The Nawab of Sultanpur, by whom Guru Nanak was employed as a storekeeper in charge of the ration shop, was thoroughly convinced of the high morality and spiritual advancement of Guru Nanak. After passing through various trials brought about by interested persons, Guru Nanak's stock stood very high with the Nawab. His fidelity and truthfulness were above suspicion. The Nawab took great interest in the personal life of the Guru, and was never tired of showering open and public praises on him. The all-powerful and



fanatic *Imam* (a religious leader) could not tolerate such lavish admiration of an infidel. Somehow he prevailed upon the Nawab to induce Guru Nanak to join the congregational *namaṡ* (prayer) one Friday in the mosque. Guru Nanak, the *Imam* argued, was not expected to decline the offer as he claimed to be a human being without any communal bias. Guru Nanak accepted the invitation and actually went to the mosque but did not join the drill of the *namaṡ* with the congregation. The *Imam* was furious over such a public demonstration of disrespect to himself and the Nawab. Guru Nanak's explanation, however, stunned the *Imam*, the Nawab, and the public like. "How could I follow the prayers," he said, "after the *Imam* whose body was in prayer but whose mind was anxiously looking after the newly-born filly in his house ?" Guru Nanak further explained to the *Imam* that mind was wayward like mercury and could not be controlled by the mere pressure of a finger. Mercury had to be chemically treated to be made useful. Similarly the human mind, which was at any time more unstable than mercury could yet be trained and stabilised by one who was highly disciplined in the meditation of God's name. The *Imam* and the Nawab returned from the mosque made wiser and gentler by the visit of Guru Nanak. This was the first contact of the Guru with a Muslim religious head. He left the mosque singing the following *sabd* :

*amal kar dharti bij sabdo kari*

Make actions thy land and sow the seeds of His Word therein.

#### PIRS OF MECCA

After visiting most of the important holy places in India and abroad, Guru Nanak visited Mecca, the principal place of pilgrimage for the Muslims. One, Jiwan Shah, a devotee from India, had settled in Mecca. While on his nightly round to cleanse the precincts of holy place, he came across an elderly man of eastern origin lying asleep with his feet towards Mecca. He was enraged to see anybody showing disrespect to the House of God by committing such an unpardonable sin.

Jiwan Shah rebuked the Guru for such a grossly sinful act. Guru Nanak humbly requested him to place his legs in the direction which was not pointing to the abode of God. Jiwan Shah pulled the Guru's feet toward another direction. To his utter bewilderment, Jiwan Shah saw a vision of Mecca moving towards the direction in which he had placed Guru Nanak's feet. The *hajis* and the priests who had assembled there in thousands were shocked to see the miraculous movement of Mecca, but Guru Nanak's humility and sweet-tempered appeal convinced them that God could not be confined to one place howsoever holy it might be; God was everywhere and not imprisoned in a temple or a mosque. In the *Purātan Janam Sākhī*, the name of the devotee who threatened and man-handled the Guru is given as Rukan Din.

During his short stay in Mecca the Guru met the following Muslim divines of renown: *Pir Makhdum* Rukan Din of Uch (Bahawalpur State), Abul Fateh Jalali second of the line of Hazrat Ali Naqi Syed (Pakistan), Pir Sahib Patalia (Patania) of Pattan, Pir Bahawal Din and Pir Laal Jati of Multan, and others. The discourse which took place between the Guru and the divines is worth presenting.

Pir Rukan Din ; In your sacred Book who is recorded as superior, the Hindu or the Muslim ?

Guru Nanak : The superiority lies only in actions, and not in the divisions of religions. Either of them or both of them can be superior through good actions only. Neither of them shall be allowed God's grace and blessings without noble deeds. *Ram* and *Rahim* are just two different names for God. Indulging in useless discourses and causing ill will in God's creation by stressing unnatural divisions are the ways of Satan. Without pure and good actions both shall weep—

*Baba akhe hajian subh amlan bajhon downen roi.*

Guru Nanak told the pilgrims that without good actions both will repent.

Pir Rukan Din: Are fasting, reciting *namaṣ* (the five prayers), meditation, and charity virtuous deeds ?

Guru Nanak : All the above named actions are acceptable if one has control over one's self. One must be free from the pollution of egoism, conceit, fanaticism and ill will, to achieve some measure of success in such actions. One must rise above the sins of lust and cruelty, and must have complete faith in Divine grace.

Sheikh Ibrahim of Pak Patan, who arrived at this point, joined the congregation and asked :

Guruji, you have just told us that action is superior, and that it is essential to have control over the mind, and love for God, without which neither Hindu nor Muslim is superior, but is it any good reading the Vedas of the Hindus and the Quran of the Muslims ? .

Guru Nanak : If by recitation of the Vedas and study of the Quran the mind is not tamed, what is the use of such readings? Hear what the Muslim *faqir*, Kabir, has said in this context :

*Bed kateb iftrā bhāi dil ka fikar nā jāi  
tuk dam karari jau karoh bāi jir hajur khudāi*

Recitations of Vedas or Quran are useless if the mind is wayward.  
Concentrate your mind on Him to gain His presence.

Pirs : Whether' we are *pirs* or *faqirs*, being in the world we are all worldly and under the severe influences of the world. So how to achieve divine bliss while living in this false and sinful world ?

Guru Nanak :

*yak araz guftam fesh-i-to dar gosh kun kartar  
bakka kabir karim tu be-aib parvardigār*

Hear my supplications, O Lord,  
Thou art truly great, generous and pure...

In this composition which Guru Nanak recited to the congregation, he explained to them that the world is, no doubt, unreal and temporary, but true prayers with humility purify the self and bring about an everlasting bliss. The *pirs* bowed down in respect and Guru Nanak left the holy shrine in peace with everybody.

#### WALI KANDHARI OF HASAN ABDAL

After his missionary tour of Tibet and Kashmir, Guru Nanak, accompanied by Mardana, the musician, reached a lonely place now known as Hasan Abdal in Pakistan. Mardana felt thirsty but could not get water anywhere to quench his thirst. He approached a *faqir* named Wali Kandahari living at a hill-top and begged him for a few draughts of water. Wali Kandahari declined to give his own Muslim brother God's free gift of water simply due to his association with an infidel, as he called Guru Nanak, whom Mardana had praised before the *faqir*. The *faqir* told him point-blank that there was no water for a non-believer or his companion, and no amount of begging and appeals would move him to part with water. Drowned in conceit and fanaticism, the *faqir* finally taunted Mardana with the suggestion to request his 'most powerful' Guru to obtain for him the direly needed water. Why come to him for help ? When all persuasion, appeals, and most humble requests for a few draughts of water failed to move the stone-hearted *faqir*. Guru Nanak prayed to God, and lo ! the water controlled by Wali Kandahari flowed into the foot of the hillock like streams from heaven. Mardana quenched his thirst and drank the heavenly gift of water to his fill. Enraged and bewildered

at the strange phenomenon, the proud but shaken *faqir* rolled down a heavy stone towards Guru Nanak. But whom God protects nobody can injure. The stone came to a stand-still by the holy touch of Guru Nanak's palm, and till this day the stone can be seen resting on the slope of the hill with the mark of Guru Nanak's palm on it. Wali Kandahari was rudely shaken and awakened from his slumber of pride and conceit. He begged Guru Nanak for forgiveness and listened to him explaining the true functions of a *darvesh* (holy man). If meditation and renunciation do not induce one to serve humanity, then those actions are mere pretension and are absolutely futile. The essence of true *bandgi* (prayer) is humility and the service of mankind.

## SHAHO SOHAGAN

Guru Nanak, accompanied on his missionary tour by Mardana and Mula of Sialkot, reached a place which was *en fete* due to a very important occasion. This was the abode of a famous *faqir* named Shaho Sohagan (God's bride) and was profusely decorated with buntings and flags. This was the fair of the full moon when the *faqir* claimed to converse with God. The place was thickly crowded and had assumed the shape of a regular fair where men and women from far and wide had assembled to receive the blessings of the holy *faqir*. Most of them had brought costly presents and all of them bowed at Shaho Sohagan's shrine in *zariat* (humble homage), and distributed sweets in token of the successful pilgrimage. Sweet music on *Shehnais* accompanied with *qawalis* inspired the faithful with a keen sense of divine presence, and none amongst the thousands present doubted for a moment the veracity of the *faqir's* claim to be a spiritual spouse of God. Nobody, however, was allowed admission to the interior of the holy place.

Guru Nanak accompanied by Mardana and Mula reached Shaho Sohagan's shrine and requested an interview with the celebrated 'Spouse of God.' The request was turned down on the pretext that this was the night of Union with his Master and no human being was allowed to interrupt. Guru Nanak, turning his back on the hypocrite, left the fair to wait for the end at some distance. In the afternoon when the fair was at its height and the crowd was immense, a fight broke *out* in one section which rapidly spread to the whole fair. Within a short time the happy festival turned into a regular battle where weapons and *lathis* were freely used and countless heads broken. In the turmoil and chaos that ensued none was spared and the miscreants amongst the crowd plundered and looted to their heart's content. In an orgy of uncontrolled mass-clashes even the *faqir's* shrine was not spared as it contained vast accumulated wealth of offerings by the faithful. In the affray the mob broke the massive gates of the shrine and rushed into the interior where, to their horror, they discovered the *faqir*, the celebrated Shaho Sohagan, indulging in the most degenerate form of sex enjoyment with pretty girls. The veil of secrecy was torn asunder and the *faqir*, who was an object of worship and *zariat* a few moments earlier, was now presented to the world in his true colours as the worst type of criminal. Such was the occupation of *faqirs* who claimed and received the most dedicated submission from the masses, only to deceive them in the name of God. It was given to Guru Nanak to expose such people and reform them.

## UCH DE PIR

Uch Sharif, situated in Bahawalpur State in the West Pakistan, is famous for a well known Muslim shrine which dates back to the time of Syed Jalal Sani Makhdum Rukan Din Abul Fateh, a decendent of Hazrat Syed Ali Naki of Mecca. Although the former had migrated to India and taken up his abode at Uch Sharif, on his various visits to Mecca he was treated with great reverence and addressed as *Sharif*. As stated before, Mukhdum Rukan Din was present in Mecca at the time of Guru Nanak's visit and acted as an interpreter for the assembly. He was extremely pleased with the discourses with Guru Nanak, and received the present of a *kans* sandal from Guru Nanak at the time of his departure. This sandal is still retained in the shrine by the followers of the Pir of Uch, as a sacred legacy and reminder of Guru Nanak's gift to the *Pir*. The sacred sandal is exhibited to the public on rare occasions only, and is held in great reverence. Guru Nanak's memory is still cherished in Uch. Probably that is why Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru Nanak, was addressed as *Uch-da-Pir* and blessed *the gaddi*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also showed great regard for this shrine. This was personally verified by late Sant Sangat Singh of Kamalia. The following incident relates to Makhdum Rukan Din Sahib of Uch Sharif.

One fine morning one of the Pir's disciples rushed to tell him that he had just seen a great *faqir* sitting

in an isolated place accompanied with two others and reciting divine music, which he had been attentively listening to, memorized it but could not understand the meaning of the verse :

*gurmukh nadang gurmukh vedang gurmukh riba samai*

Guru's Word is my *nad* (*sabd*) and

Guru's Word is my *gyan* (knowledge).

The Primal Being, God is revealed by the Guru's Word.

The Pir hastened to see the *faqir* and was delighted to find Guru Nanak with whom he renewed his discourses about the life eternal and the means of achieving abiding peace. He then asked for the exposition of the above verse which Guru Nanak promised to give him after the Pir's proposed visit to Mecca.

On his way to Mecca the Pir's ship was stranded near an island where he witnessed two strange scenes. Firstly a ship carrying many people was quickly sinking; the Pir hearing the lament and cries called the sight 'a cruel divine will', and through his miraculous power saved the ship. Secondly, the Pir saw rain falling in the ocean; he questioned its utility and doubted divine wisdom. On landing on the island the Pir saw a congregation of holy men engaged in prayers and divine songs and was glad to participate. At the end of the worship everybody received *prasad*, a token of God's grace, but the Pir was denied that heavenly gift. He felt highly distressed, and prayed to be enlightened about the cause of such an omission. A blessed soul at the head of the congregation assured the Pir that the Bestower of favours could not err and there must be some strong reason for withholding the gift of *prasad* from the Pir. On his giving a detailed account of what happened near the sea-shore, the holy man explained to the celebrated Pir that he need not look beyond his own actions for the cause of his disappointment. He had tried to change the course of divine will and had doubted His wisdom, which were both heinous crimes in His sight. How could human beings with limited wisdom probe into His secrets and challenge the will of the Infinite ? It is only the *manmukh* (anti-God) who would do it. A *gurmukh* (Godlike) must not, under any circumstances, doubt the wisdom of God and must never try to interfere with His will.

The Pir immediately returned to his shrine and bowed before Guru Nanak for the practical demonstration of the exposition of the verse recited by him. He now clearly understood the meaning of *gurmukh* and *manmukh* and was grateful to Guru Nanak for giving him a timely warning regarding the consequences of challenging His *hukam* (ways).

#### SHEIKH BRAHM OF PAKPATTAN

Pakpattan, a place famous for the shrine of Sheikh Farid and his descendants, situated in Montgomery District of West Pakistan, was visited thrice by Guru Nanak who had developed a close friendship and regard for the Muslim divine. Sheikh Brahm [Ibrahim]. The latter was the eleventh *gaddi-nashin* (pontiff) of the shrine. This shrine was established by Sheikh Farid, the founder of the line, in the twelfth century at Ajodhan in the Punjab, a place well-known for the presence of many Hindu priests and learned men. Due to the association with Sheikh Farid this place was subsequently called Pakpattan. Sheikh Brahm was well known for his piety, holy deeds and divine love. Unlike other *pirs* and *faqirs* he was free from the poison of malice and fanaticism and welcomed every opportunity of contacts with holy men.

At the first meeting Sheikh Brahm asked the oft-repeated questions, whether Guru Nanak was a Muslim or a Hindu ? Whether he was in favour of renunciation of the world and of becoming a *faqir* ? Or, did he prefer the life of a married, worldly person ? Sheikh Brahm could not at first reconcile to the fact explained by Guru Nanak that he was neither a Muslim nor a Hindu, but only a man of God. The Sheikh was further intrigued to learn from Guru Nanak that renunciation does not necessarily help the achievement of divine Light, and married life need not be an impediment to that goal. Sheikh Brahm who was conscious of his sleepless nights in quest of God, expressed that it is only those who keep awake the whole night obtain favour from the Almighty and are accepted by Him as His true devotees. Guru Nanak in reply convinced him

that divine grace is not the monopoly of those who undergo certain physical austerities. It falls to the lot of the deserving only, whether they are awake or asleep :

*dāti sāhib sandia kiā calai tis nāl  
ik jagande na lahn iknā sutiā de utbāl*

The divine gifts are disbursed at the sweet will of the Master,  
May be, the clever may miss these and the simple folk may obtain them.

In his second visit to Sheikh Brahm the Guru opened the discourse with his verse :

*āpe pati kalam ap upar lekḥ bhī tu  
eko kahiye Nanakā dujā kābe ku*

Thou art the pen and the slate and thou art the writer,  
There is none other but One Master.

But who is more devoted and faithful in His sight, the Hindu or the Muslim ?' was the pertinent question raised by the Pir again. Guru Nanak once more reminded him that all these barriers of caste and creed are artificial and unnatural. Only good actions are helpful in one's approach to Him.

Sheikh Brahm then asked the Guru if humble and tattered clothes could help to obtain divine grace ;

*Faridā pad patolā dhaj kari kambldi pāibreo  
jini vesī saho milai sei ves kareo*

Tear thy coat in tatters and wear a blanket instead, adopt the dress by which thou mayest obtain the Lord.

To this the Guru replied :

*ghar hī mundh vides pīr nit jhura samāle  
mildīā dhill na hovae je niyat rās kare*

The master is at home yet the spouse is searching for her Lord abroad.  
The union, however, will not be delayed if she is really sincere.

Guru Amar Das, the third Guru Nanak, makes the following reflection on this couplet;

Why tear thy coat and put on a torn blanket ?  
Nanak if thy intentions be good, residing at home thou shalt find the Lord.

Greatly impressed with the spiritual knowledge of the Guru, Sheikh Brahm lamented the fact that his youth had given place to old age; the shadow of death was getting darker and darker; time was fleeting fast and yet he was still groping in the dark and was nowhere nearer the divine Light. What then was the magic word, the virtuous action, the devotional recitation for the rosary, and the particular dress that he should don to please the Master ?

*kavan so akbar kavan gun kavan so manā mant  
kavan so veso haun kari jīt vas āvai kant*

Guru Nanak replied:

*nivan so akhar khavan gun jebbā manī mant  
ēh trai bhainē ves kar tār vas āvī kant*

The mind should first be cleansed of pride, conceit and egoism. Humility is that magic word, toleration the virtuous deed and your tongue the rosary to sing the , Lord's praises; these are the secrets of pleasing the Master.

Continuing the discourse, Guru Nanak explained to the celebrated Sheikh the essence of 'eternal Truth, love, holy fear, restraint and harmony. He was so impressed with the sincerity of the Sheikh that he remained at a small *gurdwara* called Nanaksar, at a distance of three miles from Pakpattan and composed nine *slokas* of the *Asa di Var* which is sung daily in Sikh *gurdwara* every morning.

Sheikh Brahm was a very distinguished successor of Sheikh Farid and wielded great influence with the Muslim aristocracy and the masses. He is said to have possessed vast occult powers, and was well known for working miracles. He became a devout admirer of Guru Nanak and detained *him* in Pakpattan for a long time.

#### PIR DASTGIR OF BAGHDAD

In his missionary tour of the Middle East, Guru Nanak visited Baghdad, once the capital of Khalifa Harun Rashid and a very important trade, and cultural centre of the Muslim world. An Indian disciple of Pir Dastgir of Baghdad, with a companion of his, heard Guru Nanak singing with melodious notes his divine compositions near the famous shrine. He was shocked to see a non-Muslim singing near the shrine, and took great exception to the following verse which was clearly contradictory to the *Quranic* declarations :

*patāls patāl lakh agāsā agās  
odak odak bhāl thakē ved kahan ik vāt  
sahas atbareh kohan katebā aslu ik dhāt  
lekhā hoi ta likhiai lekhai hoi vinās  
Nanak vadā akhiai āpe jānai āp.*

There are hundreds of thousands of nether and upper regions.  
Men have grown weary at last of searching for God's limits :  
The *Vedas* say one thing, that God has no limit.  
The thousands of Puranas and Mohammedan books tell that in reality there is but one principle.  
If God can be described by writing, then describe Him; but such description is impossible,  
O Nanak, call Him great : only He Himself knoweth how great He is.

(Translation by Macauliffe)

Guru Nanak was immediately reported against to Pir Dastgir for the following three unpardonable crimes : first, for asserting that there are countless regions whereas the *Qoran* limits these to fourteen; second, singing near the shrine, and, third, disobedience to the laws of Baghdad in not stopping the music when told to do so.

For defying the dictates of *shariyat* (Muslim law) Guru Nanak was awarded the sentence to be stoned to death. When the infuriated crowd approached him to execute the sentence, he loudly recited the following verses :

*Gur bar Akal, Sat Sri Akal  
cit caran nam, ghar ghar pranam  
prabhu kirpal jo sarab jival*

God is eternal,  
God is truth and immortal.  
I supplicate my mind on His feet  
And meditate on His name.  
God is generous and source of all life.

Hearing such proclamations of God's supremacy and the Lord's praises, the crowd was sobered as if under an hypnotic spell, and the stones fell off their hands. Pir Dastgir was amazed at the miraculous turn of events and he respectfully asked Guru Nanak for enlightenment :

Pir Dastgir : You appear to be a highly blessed *faqir*, then why do you not submit to *shariyat* ? To which line of *faqirs* do you belong, and what is your name ?

Guru Nanak : I do not belong to any particular line of *faqirs* and I have absolutely no worldly alignments. In fact being in this world I do not belong to it. I recognise only one authority and that is God who has deputed me on a mission of worship. I owe allegiance to no other. I have come to release the *faqirs* from their self-inflicted limitations of pride and egoism. I am known as Nanak *Nirankari*.

Pir Dastgir : Music is a highly condemnable faculty as it tempts the listeners to evil actions and is generally practised by the fallen. Why do you then sing the Lord's praises in music ?

Guru Nanak : Music, in itself does not corrupt the mind. On the other hand, it softens the soul and inspires it to soar to the highest stages of inner visions, and ultimately helps in achieving perfect harmony and peace. One must discriminate in the use of proper themes and compositions. It is a rare and divine gift. Even the blowing wind and the flowing streams emit a kind of music. The birds, even, are endowed with this heavenly gift.

Pir Dastgir : You have described in your compositions that God has created countless regions, whereas it is written in the Qoran that God created only fourteen regions, seven higher and seven nether regions. How do you reconcile such contradictory statements.

Guru Nanak : This is purely a question of opinion and experience. I am not prepared to question the statement of someone who has experienced only fourteen regions, but there is no manner of doubt in my mind as to the infinite number of worlds, planets and regions in this universe created by God. If you like, you can try to achieve this realization and gain a vision of this.

It is recorded that the Guru helped the Pir's son to have a clear vision of millions of regions without ever reaching the limit and as a matter of proof procured for him the divine gift—*prasad*— from one of the heavenly regions. The Pir bowed in prayers and admired Guru Nanak for his highly enlightened mind and mission of Truth.

There exists still a raised platform dedicated to the sacred memory of Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad situated near the grave of Faqir Bahlol. The following inscription translated from Arabic, appears on the monument :

Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Fakir Bahlol, and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Masters' word, like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey-rose.

From the above mentioned accounts of Guru Nanak's contacts with his contemporary Muslim *Pirs* and *faqirs*, we find that the Muslim divines had extravagant ideas of their spiritual and temporal powers. No

doubt, they exercised very great influence over the Muslim kings, administrators, and masses, but such undiluted submissions only created egoistic convictions in their minds, giving rise to the claim of having supernatural powers. Guru Nanak was successful in winning these holy men over to his objective by preaching in humility and sincerity. Guru Nanak is still worshipped with genuine reverence by many non-Sikhs and Muslims who offer him true worship in the shrines of their hearts,

[References from : *Shri Guru Nanak Parkash* by Kavi Bhai Santokh Singh; *Shri Guru Nanak Chamatkar* by Dr. Bhai Vir Singh; *The Sikh Religion* by Mr. M.A. Macauliffe.]

*\*The Sikh Review*. Calcutta, November. 1960.



## NANKANA SAHIB

Sir Michael O'Dwyer\*

Clark, as Deputy-Commissioner, chaperoned us for the first part of the tour. That included a halt at the famous shrine of Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, the revered founder of the Sikh religion. It was then in the heart of the jungles, thirty miles from the nearest railway station and on the anniversary of the Guru's birth was visited by a few hundred pious pilgrims.

The Mahunt, or abbot in charge, and his disciples were maintained by the pilgrims' offerings and by a precarious income from the thousands of acres of dry and waste land surrounding the shrine, which the British Government, following the example of previous rulers, had assigned for its maintenance. We got a hearty welcome from the priests, presented our offerings of a few rupees at the shrine, and received customary *parshad* or sweetmeats. That was Nanakana in 1886.

When I next visited it as Lieutenant-Governor in 1917, the barren jungles had been transformed by the Lower Chenab Canal into a fertile plain of rich cultivation; the railway ran through it and brought in tens of thousands of Sikh pilgrims from all parts of the Punjab; a prosperous town and market had sprung up; the humble little shrine had become one of the largest and richest foundations in Northern India; the offerings of the faithful and the income of the revenue-free lands had risen from a few hundreds of pounds to tens of thousands annually. Sometime before my visit the old abbot had died and his successor, whom I think he nominated, had to be approved by me as Head of the Government from whom he held the lands revenue-free. The approval was only a formality; but the new incumbent made a favourable impression on me, and out of regard for the shrine and the valiant Sikh worshippers I stretched a point to present him with some 30,000 rupees which were in dispute between the shrine and the Government. He undertook to spend it on improving the pilgrims' quarters and fulfilled his promise. I little foresaw then the appalling tragedy which was impending.

The agitation for the reform of the Sikh shrines became serious in 1919 after I had left the Punjab. Like the similar movement for the confiscation of the monasteries in England at the Reformation, it was based originally on genuine religious feeling, but later was strongly reinforced by self-seeking cupidity. 'If abuses did not exist to justify interference, they could and were easily invented in a form to excite the credulous and tempt the greedy: religious zeal cloaking their unworthy motives. The Sikh reformers soon turned their eyes on Nankana, alleging that the abbot was an evil-liver and kept a Mohammedan mistress. Instead of appealing to the Courts for redress, they decided to take the law into their own hands, and encouraged by the supine attitude of the authorities in allowing them to seize other shrines, they planned to take forcible possession of Nanakana; its lands, treasures, and endowments. The Mahunt appealed to the authorities for special police to protect his legal rights. His appeal was in vain, and he decided to take his own measures of defence. He laid in a supply of arms and ammunition, strengthened the outer walls of the Monastery, loop holed the inner, and added to his tenants and retainers certain Pathan bravados and retired Sikh soldiers. Then, when one fine morning in February, 1921, the expected band of "Akali reformers" arrived on the scene under pretext of worshipping at the shrine, they were readily admitted. The great gates were closed, a murderous fire was opened upon them from all sides, and in half an hour the place was a shambles with 131 corpses. When the British District Magistrate arrived in hot haste an hour or two later, some of the bodies were already being cremated in lime. He was a man of fine physique and great courage, but the appalling spectacle of carnage gave him a nervous shock from which he took long to recover. The ghastly outrage inflamed all the fanatical frenzy of the Akalis and their sympathisers. Bands of lawless Sikhs started from all sides to march on Nankana and avenge their murdered brethren. They terrorised the countryside, and even the Governor of the Province and his colleagues were menaced on their visit to Nankana. Finally, some semblance of order was restored by drafting large bodies of police and troops into the disturbed area. The Mahunt and his chief accomplices in the crime were sentenced to death; but on appeal to the High Court the sentence on the Mahunt was reduced to transportation for life on the ground, I believe, that he was to some extent acting in self-defence.

\*India As I knew It. *London, 1925*

## GURU NANAK'S SHRINES IN WEST PAKISTAN

Khan Muhammad Waliullah Khan  
former Superintendent, Archaeology, Western Pakistan Circle. Lahore

### ATTOCK DISTRICT

#### 1. *Gurdwara Panja Sahib at Hasan Abdal*

The story of 'Panja Sahib' is told variously, but the gist is as follows :—

Once Baba Guru Nanak happened to visit Hasan Abdal. Here on the top of a hill lived Baba Wali Qandahari, a Muslim Saint (according to others, Yar Ali). Baba Wali Qandahari, also known as Baba Hasan Abdal, a descendant of the Sayyids of Sabzwar, visited Punjab with Mirza Shah Rukh son of Taimur, sometimes between 1408 to 1447 A.D. Even today, there is a small whitewashed shrine (*baithak*) attributed to this Muslim Saint. Guru Nanak coming to the place asked one of his disciples to fetch water from the spring. The water was, however, refused by the saint. Thereupon Baba Nanak miraculously made the spring to abandon that place and to flow from the spot where he was standing. The Muslim Saint was much annoyed with the intruder and rolled down a rock to crush him. Guru Nanak, however, gently stopped the missile by the push of his open hand. The hand left an impression on the rock (Pl. No. 2). Subsequently this rock became an object of great reverence for the followers of the Guru who started calling it Panja Sahib.

During the reign of Ranjit Singh the trans-Indus territory was annexed by Hari Singh Nalwa who constructed a temple with a tank on this spot. Later on the temple was replaced by a two storied building with beautiful frescoes in the interior depicting life stories of Guru Nanak and other gurus. In 1928 the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee took over the management of the shrine and built a new and magnificent three storied temple (Pl. No. 3) in grey sandstone in place of the old shrine. The tank was also enlarged and rebuilt in marble. Around the temple there is an open space paved with marble. On the four sides of this open quadrangle are brick built double storey buildings, which provide accommodation to the pilgrims and the establishment. In the middle of the southern side there is a two storied spacious hall.

The new temple building is designed after the style of the samadh of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore, a mixture of Hindu and Muslim architectural features culminating in a distinctive character, which may, for its individual effect, be named as Sikh style.

The site of Panja Sahib is a sacred spot from the Buddhist times. During the early part of 7th century A.D. when Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese Traveller visited this place, here stood a tank of limpid water sacred to Naga King, Elapatra and also a Buddhist monastery, the remains of which still exist, and as in the case of all ancient places imbued with sanctity, this site continued to be sacred although the creeds went on changing.

Since after independence, the Department of Archaeology have considerably improved the surroundings of the holy shrine by converting the area lying between the Panja Sahib and the so-called Lala Rukh's Tomb into a blossoming garden,

### GUJRANWALA DISTRICT

#### 2. *Chaki Sahib*

During his campaign against the Lodhi dynasty of India, Babar assaulted and destroyed Saidpur, now known as Eminabad, in the Gujranwala district. There was a general massacre of Pathan as well as Hindu inhabitants. Guru Nanak's life was spared but he was taken a prisoner and was condemned to grind corn for which purpose a hand mill was supplied to him. The mill, however miraculously revolved by itself and Guru Nanak had only to put the corn in it. The miracle was reported to the Emperor who after a discourse with the Guru set him as well as all captives of Saidpur free. Babar is said to have remarked that he would not have destroyed the city had he known that such holy men were to be found there.

The mill is venerated by the Sikhs and is placed in a gurdwara known as Chaki Sahib.

### *3. Gurdwara Rori Sahib at Eminabad*

Guru Nanak, during his stay at Eminabad, is said to have made his bed on a platform of rori (pebbles or broken stones). This platform became a place of veneration and later on when Sikhs came to power a gurdwara was built over it. This gurdwara, an imposing building of cut brick work, is a place of great sanctity. Some of the roris (stones) preserved in the gurdwara are still, shown to the faithful on the occasion of Baisakhi and Diwali fairs held in-April and October every year.

### *4. Khoi Bhai Lalu at Eminabad'*

Guru Nanak, while at Eminabad, stayed with a carpenter named Lalu and used the water of a well situated in his house. The well-or Khoi is held sacred and is known as Khoi Bhai Lalu.

## GUJRAT DISTRICT

### *5. Gurdwara Kir Bawa Sahib at Jai Sukh, Tahsil Phalia*

This place was visited by Baba Guru Nanak and is therefore held sacred. The gurdwara was originally built by Bawa Bhag, an Udasi saint.

## JHELUM DISTRICT

### *6. Gurdwara Ohoa Sahib at Rohtas*

A spring used to flow close to the fortification wall of Rohtas Fort. Guru Nanak is said to have ordered the spring to emerge and flow for the public use. A gurdwara was built close to the spring during the Sikh period. The gurdwara was extended and renovated recently.

## LAHORE DISTRICT

### *7. Dera at Chahal, Police Station Barki*

Dera Chahal is known to have been the residence of the parents of Guru Nanak's mother. Moreover Nanaki his elder sister, is also said to have died at this place. The Guru visited this place very often. This gurdwara-was built to commemorate the association of the Guru with the town.

### *8. Dharamsala Chhota Nanakiana at Alpa, Tahsil Lahore*

This Dharamsala situated at village. Alpa, Tahsil Lahore, is called Chhota (smaller) Nanakiana, and is associated with Guru Nanak.

### *9. Dharamsala Chhota Nanakiana at Manga*

This Dharamsala was built in memory of Guru Nanak, who by his preaching, enlightened a Hindu ascetic at this place. Guru Har Gobind is also said to have visited this place on his way to Amritsar after visiting Nankana Sahib.

### *10. Dharamsala Sat Guru Nanak, Lahore*

While describing Chaki Sahib at Eminabad in district Gujranwala, it has been mentioned that Baba Nanak was detained and later set free by Babar when he captured Saidpur. This event seems to have taken place in 1526 A.D. [? 1520-21 A.D.] and soon after his release at Saidpur, Baba Nanak came to Lahore.

When Babar captured Lahore, Guru Nanak had already reached the town and was staying at this place, which is situated in Mohalla Kakezaian near Chaurhatta Mufti Baqir. During the Sikh rule a Dharamsala was built here. Inside the building there is a L shaped hall with a platform. On the farther end of this hall is a marble-paved gallery. The carved-wood beam of this gallery bears a Gurmukhi inscription in bold relief. A marble slab in the centre, surrounded by the sacred emblem of the Sikhs is also inscribed with a Gurmukhi inscription. The dharamsala is built in brick and lime mortar.

### *11. Gurdwara and Tank at Village Jahman, Police Station Barki*

Guru Nanak while on his way to Chahal and back, used to halt at the pond of this village. This pond

is now converted into a tank and the gurdwara built near the village is known as Rori Sahib. A famous devotee of Baba Sahib named Surya and some Bhabras, i.e., Jainis, who had accepted Sikhism, lived here.

*12. Gurdwara at Ghawindi, Police Station Barki*

Once Guru Nanak came from village Jahman to Ghawindi. During his stay there a child was born to a Banjara. Congratulations were offered to the parents who entertained the neighbours. The son died after a few days. The Banjara and his relatives were then seen weeping and wailing. The Guru seeing the parents of the child Overwhelmed first with Joy and then with grief composed a verse in Sri Rag under the title '*Phre Chand Shabd*' depicting the vicissitudes of life. Later on, a gurdwara was built in memory of Guru's stay.

*13. Gurdwara, at Kanganpur, Tahsil Chuniyan*

Guru Nanak during the course of his first journey came to Kanganpur where the villagers did not allow him to halt and also played practical jokes on him. This treatment did not annoy Guru Nanak who instead prayed for the welfare of the village saying '*wasde rabo*' (May you remain here). On being subsequently questioned, why he blessed the village in which he was not allowed to stay, he replied that if the people of this village were disturbed and moved to other place, they would ruin it by their inhuman conduct, so it was in the interest of others that they might stay where they were. The tree under which he reposed for a while is known as Mal Sahib.

#### MONTGOMERY DISTRICT

*14. Gurdwara at Dipalpur*

Enroute to Multan, Baba Nanak stayed at Dipalpur under a withered pipal tree which, however, turned green, produced leaves and blossoms to provide shade to Baba Sahib. At this very place a leper named Nuri was also cured. The pipal tree is still green and Nuri's grave can also be seen nearby.

The gurdwara built here during later Sikh Period is known as 'Nanakiana\*'. An annual fair used to be held here.

*J5. Gurdwara Nanak Jagir, Tahsil Okara*

This place is said to have been visited by Guru Nanak. The present gurdwara was later built to commemorate the event. Repairs to gurdwara had been carried out by the Rehabilitation Department, Government of Pakistan.

*16. Gurdwara Nanaksar at Harappa*

Guru Nanak during one of his journeys went to Harappa. The ruler of this place was a tyrant and injustice prevailed in the country. Guru Nanak advised him to be merciful and kind to his subjects. During this visit the Guru stayed under a Jand tree and distributed water among those present there. A gurdwara and a tank were constructed here to commemorate the event.

*17. Gurdwara Tibba Baba Nanak Sahib at Chak I/EB, Tahsil Okara.*

Guru Nanak is said to have visited and stayed at this place. A fair used to be held here annually.

#### MULTAN DISTRICT

*18. Gurdwara Diwan Chawali Mashaykh at Chak 317, Tahsil Vehari*

Baba Guru Nanak, during his stay at Multan, visited this place where then lived the Diwan of Chawali Mashaykh. He is said to have meditated and stayed with the famous Muslim Saint Hazrat Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar at this place. Later this gurdwara was built. A fair also used to be held here annually.

#### SHEIKHUPURA DISTRICT

*19. Gurdwara Bal Lila at Nankana*

It is said that Guru Nanak during his childhood used to recite '*Sat Kartar*' while playing with children of his own age. On the spot, where he first played and subsequently spent nights in meditations, Rai Bular,

the landlord of the village, built a small tank in the affectionate remembrance of the childhood of the Guru at a time when his fame had spread far and wide. The tank was enlarged by Kaura Mal, Diwan of Zakaria Khan, viceroy of Lahore, in the middle of 18th century A.D. The present imposing Gurdwara was, however, added at a later date.

#### 20. *Gurdwara Janam Asthan at Nankana*

Guru Nanak is generally believed to have been born here. A large gurdwara was built in his memory during the Sikh Period which has been modified and enlarged several times. The gurdwara, is held in great veneration by the Sikh community. In this gurdwara, one of the many invaluable Sikh relics kept is the sacred cloak (Chugha) known as *Chola Sahib*. The cloak embroidered with Quranic verses is said to have been presented to the Guru by the ruler of Baghdad when he visited him. The gurdwara was thoroughly repaired by the Government of Pakistan in October 1959.

#### 21. *Gurdwara Kiara, Sahib at Nankana*

Once Mehta Kalu sent Guru to herd the buffaloes in nearby forest. All worked well for the first day. On the second day he fell asleep and the unattended cattle trespassed on the adjoining field and damaged its standing crop. The owners remonstrated Guru Nanak and lodged a complaint to Rai Bular, who summoned Guru Nanak and his father and inquired about the matter. Guru Nanak said that no damage had been done to the crop and that it has rather been blessed by God. Rai Bular is said to have either sent his men to the spot or himself visited the field and to his astonishment found that not a single blade was trampled or eaten by the herd and field was green and fresh.

The field where the miracle took place is venerated by the Sikhs and a gurdwara stands there encircling the area once under cultivation.

#### 22. *Gurdwara Mal Ji Sahib*

While herding the cattle Guru Nanak used to take rest under the shade of a tree. Once Rai Bular happened to pass that way and observed that the protecting shadow of the tree had remained stationary over the Guru and did not change like the shadows of other trees with the sun's progress. On another occasion he found a cobra protecting the saint with its hood.

The tree which is known as Mal Ji Sahib is held sacred by the Sikhs. A gurdwara was built after its name with a view to enclose the sacred tree. The tree under which the Guru stayed in Kanganpur, Tahsil Chuniyan, is also called Mal Ji Sahib.

#### 23. *Gurdwara Maulvi Patti, Nankana Sahib*

It is said that Mehta Kalu sent Guru Nanak to a Maulvi to learn Persian in the feign hope that if he knew the court language he might be able to earn his livelihood. He astonished his teacher by copying the alphabet from memory after one day, and while answering the questions of Maulvi Sahib, he himself assumed the role of a teacher and composed an acrostic in the letters of the Persian alphabet. The present gurdwara marks the place of his discourse with the Maulvi Sahib.

#### 24. *Gurdwara Sachcha Sauda (Real Bargain) At Chuharkana*

Once Mehta Kalu, father of Guru Nanak, gave fifty rupees to Nanak and asked him to purchase profitable merchandise. While passing near Chuharkana forest, he noticed a party of mystics who were starving for three days. Guru Nanak purchased edibles for the whole amount and distributed the food among the starving mystics.

On his arrival at home, his servant Bhai Bala who had accompanied him, related the story to Mehta Kalu who was much annoyed and asked for Nanak's explanation. Guru Nanak told him that he was asked to purchase profitable merchandise and that he had purchased the best merchandise for the life to come. This incidence is known as '*Sachcha Sauda*' or the Real Bargain. Later on Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in order to

commemorate this event of Nanak's life, built a gurdwara at the present site.

*25. Gurdwara Tamboo Sāhib Nankana*

On his return from Chuharkana (Ref. S. No. 24 above) Guru Nanak was censured by his servant for his recklessness with his father's money. He realised how wrongly the nature of his act would be understood and instead of going home direct sat under a tree outside the village of Talwandi. He was found by his father at this place and was cuffed for disobedience. The old tree under which he sat is still preserved and is known as Tamboo Sahib, a corruption from Thamb meaning trunk and support. Later a gurdwara was built in the commemoration of this event.

(Note) All the Gurdwaras at Nankana Sahib are maintained by the Rehabilitation Department, Government of Pakistan.

SIALKOT DISTRICT

*26. Gurdwara Bairi Sahib at Sialkot*

Baba Nanak, during his visit to Sialkot gave spiritual guidance Hamza Ghaus, a Muslim saint. Here, Baba Nanak is said to have stayed under a Bairi (plum) tree. This present gurdwara built at the site of the Bairi tree is situated at a distance of about two miles of the eastern outskirts of the town on Sialkot-Pasrur Road. It was rebuilt by Raja Ranjit Singh who also endowed a large estate for its maintenance. This gurdwara, which has a beautiful gilded dome, also contains the Samadh of Natha Singh Shahid.

The gurdwara is in an excellent state of preservation and a caretaker has been appointed to look after it by the Government of Pakistan.

*27. Gurdwara Baoli Sahib, at Sialkot*

This gurdwara lies in the western skirts of Sialkot city at a distance of about one furlong from the Sialkot-Daska Road. The Baoli Sahib (a large well with a flight of steps descending down to the water level) was built in memory of Guru Nanak who visited this place on his return from Afghanistan.

*28. Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur*

This gurdwara is situated on the western bank of River Ravi near Jassar in the Narowal Tahsil Baba Nanak, after return from his wanderings in quest of truth, settled down at Kartarpur where he died in 1539 A. D. In the year 1911-12 Lala Shyam Das built the present gurdwara and residential quarters.

(N. B.) Annual repairs to the monument are carried out by the Rehabilitation Department and the Government of Pakistan have also appointed a caretaker to look after this important Sikh Shrine.

*\*Sikh Shrines in Pakistan* (Memoir of the Department of Archaeology in Pakistan. No 3) published by Ministry of Education and Information, Government of Pakistan, 1962.

## GURU NANAK'S VISIT TO UCH

According to a local tradition at Uch, popularly known as Uch-sharif. Guru Nanak visited that place on his way back from Multan after his sojourn with the *peers*, particularly with *Peer Baha-ud-Din*. The Guru is said to have stayed at Uch for some time and in memory thereof the Muslim saints of this place, the chief of whom is known as *Gaddi-nishin Mukhdum Sahib*, have preserved in their *Tosbakhana* five relics of the Guru. These relics are wrapped in a yellow cloth and are kept in an aluminium box. Any devotee of Guru Nanak who wishes to see them can do so with the permission of the *Kardar* or manager of the Makhdum Sahib.

These relics are :

- (i) A pair of wooden sandals (*kharāimān*),
- (ii) A T-shaped wooden stick, called *Bairagan*,
- (iii) A stone *gurj*,
- (iv) Two stone bangles, and
- v) A wooden boat, about 1½ foot long and one foot wide.

According to the Makhdums, the river Panjnad, as it is called after the junction at this place of the five rivers of the Panjab—also called Chenab by the local people—used to flow in olden days near the town of Uch, now five miles away. Guru Nanak, *Peer Baha-ud-Din* of Multan, Mast Qalandar and the Makhdum of Uch crossed it together in a small boat sitting on its four -corners,

Uch is an old town situated on a high ground on the 14th mile of the 20-mile long canal railway which takes off from Dera Nawab Sahib, a tehsil of the erstwhile State of Bahawalpur, and links Panjnad with the Lahore-Karachi main railway line.

The population of Uch before the partition of the country in 1947 was between two to three thousand. The *Peers* or *Makhdums* of Uch-sharif are held in great religious reverence by the Muslims of West Pakistan and they hold the *gaddi* in primogenitary inheritance along with a big tax-free *jagir* or landed property. The annual *Urs* or fair is held there in the month of august and devotees from all over the country, some even from foreign lands, come to this holy shrine to pay their homage. The procession on this occasion is led by the Makhdum Sahib and His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bahawalpur sitting on separate elephants.

The *Peers* of Uch-sharif wear long hair, beards and turbans. Their hair, however, are let loose on their back and are not rolled up like the Sikhs.

[The above information is based on article written by Sardar Balwant Singh Kalra, President, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bangkok, and published in the *Spokesman*, Delhi, and the *Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, of January 6, 1969. Having passed the Overseer's examination from the Engineering School, Rasul (West Pakistan), he had joined the Irrigation Department of the Panjab and was posted at Panjnad where he spent about nine years from 1927 to 1935. During this period he visited Uch a number of times and accompanied his wife, relatives and friends to the shrine of the *Makhdums* and had the privilege of closely seeing the relics of Guru Nanak in their *tosbakhana*.—Editor]



## THE HISTORICAL GURDWARA AT DACCA

“During past days, there has been a considerable amount of vocal concern expressed by the Sikhs over the destruction of the 17th century *gurdwara* building, in the Rayer bazar of Dacca and the sacred site being passed over to a Muslim citizen for constructing a residential house over it, during the recent eruption of Muslim fanaticism in East Pakistan.

This historical *gurdwara* commemorates the visit of Guru Nanak to Dacca in the first decade of the sixteenth century, and the baked brick well within the enclosure of a complex of sacred halls and buildings, in chaste Bengal-Sarcenic architectural style was already there when Nanak the Ninth, Guru Tegh Bahadur, hallowed the spot in the year, 1667. At that time, the place was the headquarters of a flourishing episcopal Sikh basilica called, *Hazuri Sangat*, and it was under the direct management and control of the Sikh Headquarters at Anandpur Sahib.

Besides being a monastery and college of Sikh missionaries, it contained a library, housing valuable and original Sikh sacred writings and manuscripts.

During the Mughal period, this sacred Sikh centre enjoyed peace and even protection from the Mughal sataraps, and during the British period, throughout, it remained recognised as a ‘protected monument’ under the famous statute of Lord Curzon and till 1949, it was managed and tended by Sikh priests and revered by the devout.

In March 1964, the disturbing news percolated into India and to the Sikhs that this great Sikh Centre of worship had been razed to the ground by Pakistan Muslims and that its site is being occupied by a newly erected private residence.

In discharge of my parliamentary duties, I took this matter up last March, and the facts, so far ascertained at Government level reveal that the sacred structures were destroyed, the well was polluted in the traditional style with cow’s blood, and then gutted, in the year 1950, and the Sikh priests were driven away the same year. The East Pakistan authorities, apparently, condoned this sarcenic vandalism. Now, in February 1964, the site has been passed over for erection of a private residence by a Pakistan Muslim citizen.

*\*The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, June, 1964, p. 54 - 55.

## GURU NANAK IN LADAKH

Lt. Kirpal Singh

I have had the privilege of getting the back issues of your highly informative Magazine *The Sikh Review* from one of your life members. I must say they have given me food for thought and a broader angle of vision so as far Sikh religion and history are concerned. With particular interest I have read the account of Guru Nanak having gone to unexplored Tibet. In that very connection I have something to bring to your notice.

There is a legend coming down to this day that Guru Nanak also went to Ladakh. There are a few landmarks in Ladakh which are ascribed to the visit of Guru Nanak. One particular spot is about 24 KM from Leh on Leh-Kargil Road. There is an unevenly round rock lying by the side of the road. It is about 8 to 9 feet high and 7 to 8 feet diameter. It had got a cavity in its mass which shows the head, shoulders and body up to waist of a human being as if somebody had been thrust into it. The story goes as under:

Guru Nanak and Bala (people say Bala but I think he might be Mardana) were on their way from North West towards Leh. Bala started getting afraid of some *rakshasa* (demon) following them. That *rakshasa* started troubling Bala because Guru Nanak was beyond the reach of these evil bodies. Bala got frightened and requested the Guru for protection. When they reached that particular spot where the stone is lying, they say. Guru Nanak pushed that *rakshasa* against the stone into which his body was imbedded as if a hard substance is pushed into soft earth and gets stuck into it. The body of *rakshasa* having been firmly struck into the rock degenerated into a stone figure clearly marking out shape of its head, shoulders and body up to waist, 1 to 1½ foot deep in the cavity of the rock. From there Guru, as story goes, moved on to the present township of Leh. He sat under a tree which is still standing firm on its roots. The age of tree surely tells of being quite old and might have got blessing of the Guru to stand as a token of memory. People treat that tree as sacred and say that Guru Nanak sat under it.

The stone was first seen and story was known by the Army Border Road Organisation workers through some local Buddhist

*Bhikshus*. They have planted a *Nishān Sāhib* there and have sent information to the S.G.P.C. at Amritsar. But no notice seems to have been taken so far by the S.G.P.C. to establish the authenticity of the legend.

*\*The Sikh Review*, Calcutta. August, 1966, p. 17-18

## GURU NANAK IN TIBET

Tarungpa Tulku\*

It gave me great pleasure when I was asked to write this article as I have wanted for a long time to say something about my impressions of the Religion of the Sikhs in India, and of my connections with it. After my escape from Tibet, I live as a refugee in India for several years, alongside so many of my countrymen. There I had the great good fortune to be looked after by a Sikh family, by Baba Bedi, his English wife, and their three children. While I was with them, I was able to visit many of the Sikh holy places and I was given hospitality there.

My interest in Sikhism is not only a personal one, however. In Tibet, Guru Nanak is revered as an emanation of Guru Padmasambhava. Many of our pilgrims visited Amritsar and other holy places which they looked upon as equal in importance to Buddha-Gaya. They always said that the Sikhs treated them with great respect and were very hospitable: 'as our expression goes, they bowed down to their feet.' It seems that Sikhs really practice the doctrine of their religion; perhaps they are the only ones who give such wonderful dana to travellers.

Most Tibetans know that Guru Nanak visited Tibet, and the mystical ideas of our two religions are very similar. I have noticed that Sikhs never worship images in their shrines, but that there is in the centre the book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. In our tradition, one of the last things that the Buddha said was that in the dark age after his death he would return in the form of books. "At that time," he said, "look up to me and respect me." Just as we do not believe in mystifying rituals, so in the Sikh ceremonies, it seems that the people simply read and contemplate the words of their text, so that no misunderstandings arise.

I was very interested in the Sikh symbolism of the three daggers: in Buddhism, a knife often appears as the cutting off of the roots of the three poisons, greed, hatred, and illusion. I was also very interested in the Sikh practice never to cut one's hair, as this is also the practice among Tibetan hermits and contemplatives. The most famous of these was Milarepa, who said that there were three things that should be left in their natural state; one should not cut one's hair, dye one's clothes, nor change one's mind. It is true that most Tibetan monks wear yellow, and shave their heads; these are practices that come from India, and symbolise humility and detachment from worldly things. Outside the more organised monastic tradition, however, the emphasis is that the natural goodness and power of growth within should be allowed to develop freely without interference from outside.

Both Guru Nanak and the Buddha said to their followers that the real nature of the universe should never be limited by the idea of personal god or gods. Those who made offerings at their shrines should remember that the whole universe was the proper offering offered before and to itself. Although Guru Nanak did not think of himself as the founder of a new school of thought, it seems that there is very much in common between our philosophies.

When I return to India, I hope to increase understanding of the Sikh religion among Tibetan people, and it is my wish one day to translate the *Guru Granth Sahib* into Tibetan. Now I am living in England, and I can see that much good might be accomplished by Sikhism in England, and Europe and America, and I wish success to everyone whose concern this is.

\* *Indian Times*, Delhi, March 6, 1966. p. 3.

## **GURU NANAK'S VISIT TO TIBET**

Rimpoche Nanak Guru

Major N. S. Issar\*

After de-training at Siliguri in West Bengal, nearly 70 miles of rather tiring and nerve-breaking twists and turns landed us at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim State. Here the road bifurcates. The eastern section heads for the majestic and once most treaded pass between India and Tibet — Natu La. The other track continued in northerly direction for many days journey till we hit Pegong. After a night's rest we were fresh to resume our journey to the unknown. We climbed the Pegong feature in the welcome rays of winter morning sun which had turned the countryside into a golden landscape. From the forward ledge of this feature we had the first glimpse of Lachen Chu and Lachung Chu marrying up and resulting into the mighty restless Tista river. The scenic beauty of the valley of river tri-junction is one that it shall probably ever remain beyond the descriptive power of any pen. It is a flat stretch about one mile long and nearly half a mile wide accommodating the small hamlet of Chunthang dotted with fluttering prayer flags and colourful lively people. We were now at the gates of greater Himalayas.

The winter of North Sikkim is long and rigorous. Snow covers the ground for over half the year. The loneliness of its vast solitudes appals the heart and naught living meet the eye. The rocky wastes of the elevated regions with its scanty acres, where the stars can be discerned at mid-day and the thin air scarcely bears the sound of thunder to the ear, yields unequalled crops of simplicity and truth through the ages old influence of Lord Buddha's ancient Word. Chunthang too has its heritage and richness, being in this part of the world. We had seen abundance of maize and potato crop in the surrounding areas. At places bailey and millet were also grown. The fruit trees were loaded with peaches, plums, pears, apricots and other hill fruits. About half a century ago some Christian missionary had penetrated this virgin soil and introduced apples and cross. Only apple survived the rigours of climate, and it was also blossoming.

We descended to the river bed and crossed Lachen Chu over a shaky cane bridge, swinging and bumping at each step. Village Chunthang had not seen any strangers in the recent past, hence the whole population welcomed us by beating of drums and chanting prayers. The throngs appeared jubilant and bubbling with gaiety and high spirits. We entered the village with a trail of ever increasing multitudes. At one time there seemed to be no end to the stream of humanity. Was this influx for courtesy of custom or curiosity? The language barrier barred the discovery. Here only, for the first time I saw a Khampa, towering over crowds, [nearly six and half feet tall, solidly built, tough and hardy with thick plaits of long hair. Although homeless and destitute but patient and resigned to fate. They are victims of Mao's elder-brotherly admonish of Tibet about a decade ago and now are a wandering tribe as we were in 1947 days.

At last we were lucky to discover a local volunteer guide who spoke five languages, Gorkhali, Lapcha, Bhutia, Tibetan and Hindi. The irony was that he spoke all of them simultaneously. Although we never agreed about the ratio of mixture but we were unanimous about Hindi, the only language we understood, being only 10 percent or less. However, he worked with zeal and utmost devotion and kept on giving running commentary without carrying whether we understood or not. We did not care either.

We were looking for some spot to open our pack lunch for a quick early munch before setting on the rest of day's journey. As if in answer to this demand we saw the accent appear. Around a glittering Chorten a red robed Lama came out briskly into the sun shine. He had a bell in his hand and he rang it with a wide sweep of vigour. The sound went up the surrounding hills, clear and full and echoes resounding much after he had retired from the scene. Can it be noon already? If it was mid-day, then we had let the morning pass without any work done. I looked up through the leafy green above me. The sun was poised at the zenith above the top of the trees, and moreover, we were hungry. The morning was over. Behind the Chorten where Lama had appeared was a mound of solid black rocks about 30 feet high and over 100 yards in diameter located in the centre of the meadow at the back of the village. Surprisingly it supported two huge trees at the top to give a deep cool shade and a trickling spring at its base was oozing cold refreshing drink. Was not it a

traveller's abode ? Is the nature not strange considerate ? The mound was littered with hundreds of strands of multi-coloured flags fluttering in the unceasing gush of northly wind, conveying the gospel of Truth preached by Lord Buddha in the sultry and humid Gangetic delta over 25 centuries ago. From the top of this mound, where we had settled down for our lunch we could see over the village roofs and tree tops the panoramic beauty of tri-river embrace. The flow of Tista's molten silver between the lush green mountains took the eye beyond the limits of perception.

During his apostolic sermons the guide uttered 'Nanak' which pricked our ears. We were now alert and all composed to de-cipher each word. He told us that a great personality called 'Rimpoche Nanak Guru' while on his way to Tibet had rested on that mound. The Guru had brought his rice-meal packed in banana leaves, as is the custom even today in banana growing areas. The two commodities were unknown to hill folks. Guru having noticed their inquisitiveness bestowed them with a share of this strange cereal. They displayed fore-thought and instead of eating it away sprinkled the rice all over the meadow and hurried the banana packing in a corner. Today the village harvests a rich crop of rice and bunches of delicious banana. As it was crop season, we had the unique opportunity and privilege of seeing Nanak's gift to the inhabitants of that unknown and Godforsaken part of the world, sprouting golden yellow paddy. We also saw clusters of banana trees but no fruits, probably we were off banana season. We were wonder-struck to see this strange phenomenon of rice and banana in the land of maize and apple. Is it not a miracle ?

Nearly a year prior to this I was confronted with an identical issue. I had gone to Jelap La, a historic pass to the south-east of Natu La, which connects Tibet with West Bengal, skirting around eastern boundary of Sikkim and through Kalimpong. This was the pass traversed by Young husband's Tibet expedition, and it is through this pass that the first telegraph link with Tibet was established. I was basking in the October sun right in the mouth of the pass, taking cover under a rock from a perpetual 30 miles-an-hour gale. I was lost in my imaginations of Jelap La's ocean of history. How many millions from times immemorial must have trodden this pass each one adding a pebble to its glory and enchanting *Om mani, padma e hum*. Will the day ever revive itself ? My thoughts were broken when startled by the soft steps of an approaching Lama. He had defied all artificial barriers and in the quest of his solace had trespassed into India to unite with Buddha through the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His interrogation was not possible as we did not understand each other, however a search produced few idols of certain deities which always formed part of every Lama's prayer kit. As customary with all religious devotees and more so with Mahayana Buddhist monks, without any provocation, this intruder got into a fit of exhortation explaining in his own lingua about the images he carried. He was unconcerned about my ignorance and blank looks. What he said I shall never know, but his devotion to his religion and sincerity of purpose was such that even from a communist with least conscience, he would have earned admiration and appreciation. One of the statue was miniature of 'Guru Nanak of Amritsar'. This was the only part of his lengthy speech which I had understood. I had ruled it out as a trained agent's good deception plan. A year later at Chunthang this fact was taking shape. A new light had dawned casting off the shadows of doubt which I had entertained against innocent refugee.

I was eager to find out the facts about Nanak's visit to Chun-thang hence after lunch we climbed to a monastery located at the top of hill behind the village. We wanted to contact the in-mates of this Gumpa on the subject. We found that the Lamas there were on a 6-months praying spell with '*Mon Varat*' and no one was allowed to see them. In utter disappointment we walked back to Chunthang and spent the night dog-tired but full of suspense and speculation.

Next morning we left for Lachung. Though the distance was not much but it turned out to be a real tough march. The altitude was telling on us and carriage of one's own limbs looked heavy and exhausting. The village Lachung is situated on the eastern bank of the river. The western bank is a precipice hundreds of feet towering above the water surface. Numerous streamlets converge on to this cliff and nearly half a dozen falls are formed vomiting milky streaks of vapourised discharge against the background of sky high black rock walls. Up hill and away from the village is an attractive Gumpa, which maintains record of all visitors. I saw an entry in the name of a French couple who visited the place in year 1910. Is this venture on part of

these foreigners not as striking as the surroundings ?

I was rather impatient. The moment Head Lama Shri Gelong Chang Chube at Lachung Gumpa finished with his introductory talk about the monastery, I dragged him on to the subject of 'mound in Chunthang village'. He spoke fairly good Hindi, hence there was no room for conjectures. He gave the name of the saint who visited that area as 'Rimpoche Nanak Guru of Punjab'. He also confirmed the legend of rice and banana plantation. He confessed that he was unaware of any written record of Nanak's visit, but he confirmed that this myth was a firm belief amongst the locals. He gave further details of Guru's journey. According to him Guru went to Tibet by that route. From there a track leads to Khora La which connects North Sikkim with Pahari in Chumbi Valley of Tibet. He also told us that on the out-skirts of Payako Chin village, which is at the base of Khora La ridge, there is a stone with inscriptions in a non-local language, probably in Hindi or Gurmukhi and it is a common notion that it is an allegory giving details of Guru's journey through that point. This '*udasi*' of Guru Nanak has not appeared in any history so far as it yet remains to be discovered. Therefore, the very idea of visiting the spot where this rock was indicated was exciting. I was wanting to photograph the inscription and approach the archaeological department for its interpretation if in an unintelligible script. The village Payako Chin was another 3 to 4 days march, and with our will and determination the objective seemed to be well within our reach, but unfortunately the weather betrayed us and for the next 4 days we had a literal cloud-burst. Movement became impossible for quite some time to come due to the rivers being in spate. We were dwindling on our provisions, hence very reluctantly we had to take most unwelcome decision to abandon the proposed venture and retire.

Many a time the fascinating idea of another attempt intoxicates me, but it seems that for the time being it shall remain only a question with me, "Did Nanak visit Tibet?"

[Will some adventurous explorer undertake the journey to this part of the country and find out if there is any document or inscriptional record of the visit of Guru Nanak to Tibet ? Traditions and legends are seldom without historical truth and are, therefore, worth collecting. Who knows some one may get at some tradition based on unalloyed truth on the subject.—GS]

*\*The Sikh Review*, January, 1966, p. 21-26.

# GURU NANAK AT PURI

with  
Sri Chaitanya and his followers  
Ganda Singh

According to the Sikh accounts Guru Nanak visited Puri in the year 1566 Bikrami, corresponding to April 1509-March 1510 [*Gursabdaratnākar Mahāṅkosh*, new edition, p. 375]. The shrine of Jagannath here is of particular attraction for the Vaishnavite Hindus who gather here in large numbers for the *Rath-Yatra*, or Chariot festival, held on Asarh Sudi 2, in June or July. At the time of the after-dusk *avai*, performed in the temple with a large number of lamps lighted for the purpose, and flowers and censers placed on salvers, the Guru was invited to participate in it. He was, however, not interested in this type of artificial worship, “while the expanse of the firmament, the sun and the moon, the procession of stars, the natural incense of the sandal, the winds and forests, were the fitting accessories of Nanak’s purer worship of the God of creation.” He then recited there his well known hymn on the real *ārati* of God beginning with ‘*Gagan mai thāl*’ [*Dhanasri, Arati*]. This bewildered both the priests and the worshippers present there.

Here he also exposed a Brahman who used to tell the people that with his eyes closed he could see the secrets of the world with his mental eyes. And, when he had closed his eyes, the Guru quietly hid his water-jug which he was unable to find [Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, i. 81-83].

Dr Bimanbehari Majumdar tells us in his *Chaitanya-chariter Upādān*, on the authority of Ishwardas’s Uriya *Chaitanya Bhāgavat*, that at Puri Guru Nanak also met the great Vaishnava saint Krishna-Chaitanya, popularly known as Chaitanya *Prabhu*. The two saints seem to have spent some time together and enjoyed the divine music, *Kīrtan*, in which both of them found special pleasure.

The *Chaitanya Chariter Upadan* [Calcutta University, 1939, 1959] has quoted, on page 500, the following two passages wherein Guru Nanak is mentioned as participating in *Kīrtan* with Chaitanya *Prabhu* and his disciples and devotees. These passages have been transliterated into Devnagri, Gurmukhi and Roman scripts, and translated into English for the benefit of our readers.

<sup>a</sup>I invws Xy iv<sup>a</sup>vmBr    kIĀĀn mĪXy ivhwr [  
nwnk swrēō E due    }p snwqn due Bwe [  
jgwe mwDwe EkZ    kIĀĀn kriñq E nfæX ] - 61 AĪXwX  
nwgr pu}ĀoĀm dws    jēōlI niñdnI Xw pwS [  
nwnk sihqy ghn    goNpwl gu} sēō qyn [  
sNgyq mĀ blrwm    ibhwr nIligrI Dwm ] - 64 AĪXwX

## Gurmukhi Transliteration

sRI invws Xy ivSMĪBr    kIrqn mDXy ivhwr  
nwnk swrMg ey due    rUp snwqn due Bwie  
jgwie mwDwie eykqR    kIrqn krMiq ey inRqĪ ]    (AiDAwie 61)  
nwgr puruSoqm dws    jMglI nMidnI qw pwS  
nwnk sihqy ghn    gopwl gurU sMg qyn  
sMgyq m`q blrwm    ivhwr nIligrI Dwm ]    (AiDAwie 64)

## Transliteration in Roman

Srīnivāsa ye Vishvambhara	Kirtana madhye Bihāra,
Nānak Sāranga ē dui	Rupa Sanātana dui bhāi,
Jagāi Mādhāi ekatra	Kirtana Karanti e nritya, ( <i>Chapter 61</i> )
Nāgar Purushottama Dāsa	Jangalī Nandinī tā pāsh

Nānak sahitē gahana  
Sangeta matta Balarāma

Gopāla gurū Sanga tena  
Bihara Nīlagiri Dhāma (Chapter 64)

### Translation in English

Visvambhara (Chaitanya), the resort of the world, takes delight in the *Kirtan* song with Nanak and Saranga, the two brothers Rupa and Sanatana, Jagai and Madhai. All of them dance while participating in the *kirtan*.

At Puri Chaitanya roams about with Nagara Purushottam Dasa, who was accompanied by Jangali and Nandini on his side. He also took along with him Nanak, Gopala guru and *Matta* Balarama.

There is a difference of opinion about the date of the *Chaitanya Bhagavat* from which the above quotations have been taken. There is no mention of the date in the manuscripts preserved in the Prachi Sammiti at Cuttock. There are two of them there. According to Dr Prabhat Mukhopadhyay, Reader in History, Utkal University, in his article in Bengali in the *Sahitya Parisat Patrika* (Calcutta), in 1343 B. S. /1936 A. D., part II, page 76), the book was written towards the end of the sixteenth century. Dr Bimanbehari Majumdar, the greatest living authority on Chaitanya studies, and the author of the *Chaitanya-Chariter Upādān*, however, is of the opinion that “it could not have been written before the seventeenth century.” Even in the latter case, the *Chaitanya Bhāgavat* is a very reliable source of the life the great saint and may be said to have been based on contemporary or semi-contemporary material which would then have been readily available to its author, Ishwardas.

The two references quoted from *Chaitanya Bhagavat* leave us in no doubt about Guru Nanak having met Chaitanya *Prabhu* and most of his disciples and admirers at Puri and participating in *Kirtan* with them. For Guru Nanak, *Kirtan* was, in fact, the most effective method of preaching and spreading his message. On the other hand, Chaitanya was also enamoured of the divine music and dance in praise and honour of Radha and Krishna.

The other persons, who, according to Ishwardas joined the *kirtan* of the two saints were Sarang, the companion of Guru Nanak, the two brothers Rup and Sanatan and Jagai and Madhai, as also Nagar Purushottam Das, accompanied by Jangali and Nandini and Gopal Guru and *Matta* Balram.

About Sarang, the companion of Guru Nanak at Puri, I have no doubt about his being the Guru’s *Sārangi-wālā* or *Sārangiā*—*Sārangi* or rebeck-player—Bhai Mardana, who might have been called so by those who did not know his real name. Mardana *Sārangiā* or *Rubābī*, as we know, was an inseparable companion of the Guru during his travels.

The two brothers Rup and Sanatan were high class Brahmans, having descended from a prince of Karnat, Rupesvara, who had settled in Bengal and whose descendants Padamnabha, Mukand and Kumar had become completely Bengalized. Kumar’s sons Rup and Sanatan were ministers of Allauddin Husain Shah (1483-1519). They left the royal service and became followers of Chaitanya.

Rup met Chaitanya at Prayag (Allahabad) and received his lessons in *Krishna-bhakti* and was sent to Vrindaban to revive there the places sacred to the memory of Lord Krishna. Sanatan Goswami followed Chaitanya to Varanasi where he was initiated into the Vaishnavite cult. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, the author of the *Chaitanya Charitāmrit*, gives us the details of Chaitanya’s teachings to the two brothers, with particular reference to Sanatan. Both of them, according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, died in 1554. They were both poets and philosophers. Rup wrote three dramas and numerous hymns, lyrics and theological works.

Their nephew Jiva Goswami (1511-1596), like his uncles, was a scholar of considerable merit and his invaluable work the *Sat-Sandharbha* contains the essence of the philosophy of the Bengal School of Vaisnavism, known as *Achintya-Cheda bheda vāda* (Inexplicable Monism in Dualism). He was also a poet and a



grammarian.

Jagai and Madhai were two drunken ruffians of Navadvip who had been reclaimed by Chaitanya, and thenceforward they 'lived in Nadia as very pious men.' They occasionally visited their teacher at Puri.

In the second quotation from the *Chaitanya Bhāgavat* (chapter 64), there are the names of Jangali and Nandini, two male Vaishnavites who went about dressed as women or Lord Krishna's *Gopis* to worship their deity. In *An Account of the District of Purnea in 1809-10* by Francis Buchanan, edited from the Buchanan MSS. by V. H. Jackson, published at Patna in 1928, it is mentioned under 'Sects of Mithila Hindus', on page 273, that :

In the territory of Gaur, at a place called Janggalitola, mentioned in my account of the topography of Kaliyachak, is the chief seat of the Sakhibhav Vaishnavas, who dress like girls, assume female names, dance in honour of God, and act as religious guides for some of the impure tribes. The order is said to have been established by Sita Thakurani, wife of Adwaita, but so far as I can learn has not spread to any distance, nor to any considerable number of people. The two first persons who assumed the order of Sakhibhav were Janggal, a Brahman, and Nandini, a Kayastha. Janggal, was never married, and it is only his pupils that remain in this district, and these are all Vaishnavas who reject marriage. Nandini was married, but deserted his wife to live with the pious Sita. He settled in Nator, where his disciples still remain,

Nagar Purushottam-das, whom Janggal and Nandini accompanied to Puri, was the son of Sadasiva Kaviraja and an intimate disciple of Nityananda.

Gopal Guru was a prominent disciple of Chaitanya. He prescribed rules of meditation for the followers of the Prabhu. He is a different person from Gopal Bhatta, the nephew of the celebrated Vedantist Prakashananda, who was latterly converted to Bhakti by Chaitanya and changed his name to Prabodhananda.

Matta (or *Mast*, God-intoxicated) Balaram was the popular name of Nityananda who was one of the earliest disciples and companions of Chaitanya Prabhu and was like a brother to him as was Balaram to Lord Krishna. He was verily Chaitanya's twin-self. It was he who was mishandled by the drunken *badmash* Madhai and was rescued from his hands by Jagai. And this incident was responsible for their reclamation by Chaitanya. There was also a famous Uriya poet by the name of Balaram, one of the renowned 'Pancha Sakhas'. But *Matta* Balaram, mentioned as a close partner of Chaitanya Prabhu in music and dance, could not be other than Nityananda. Vrindaban-das, the author of the Bengali *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, was a disciple of Nityananda.

Now about the date of the historic meeting of Guru Nanak and Chaitanya Prabhu at Puri. According to Kahan Singh's *Gursabdaratnākār Mahān-kosh*, second edition, p. 375, Guru Nanak visited Jagannath Puri in Sambat 1566 Bikrami, corresponding to March 27, 1509, to March 27, 1510 A.D.

In his introductory chapter on 'A Short Life of Chaitanya' of *Chaitanya's Life and Teachings* (third edition, 1932, p. 10), Sir Jadunath Sarkar tells us that Vishwambhar—that was the original name of Chaitanya—son of Jagannath Mishra, a Brahman of the Vaidik sub-caste, was initiated as a *Sanyāsī*, with the name of Krishna-Chaitanya, in January 1510 by Keshav Bharati of the village of Katwa. Born at Navdwip on February 4, 1486, Chaitanya was then 24 years of age, with the 25th year beginning on February 4, 1510. Having taken to the life of *Sanyās*, he set out on a pilgrimage in the month of June 1510.

The distance from Navdwip to Calcutta is 75 miles, and from Calcutta to Puri is 250 miles, making the total distance from Navdwip to Puri, which was Chaitanya's main destination in the first instance, to about 325 miles. There was then no other place of any great religious importance, from Chaitanya's point of view, to have detained him unnecessarily on the way. He must have, therefore, arrived at Puri in about three

weeks, towards the end of June or in the beginning of July 1510. This can coincide with Guru Nanak's visit to Puri in the Bikrami year 1566 (mentioned in the *Mahān-kosh*), which ended on March 27, 1510. Presumably, the Guru was already there, having arrived at Puri in March 1510, and had been either staying on there or visiting the surrounding areas.

All things considered, therefore, it may be reasonably inferred that Guru Nanak arrived at Puri towards the end of 1566 Bikrami (March 1510) and met Chaitanya Prabhu and his followers there in July 1510.

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## GURU NANAK AT BAGHDAD

Sewaram Singh\*

At Baghdad, the Master (Guru Nanak) stayed at the graveyard outside the town, and Mardana as usual was with him. Early in the morning before dawn, Mardana, as usual, played upon the *Rabab*, and the Master sang his song about the infinite-ness of God and His Creation wherein occurred the expression : “There are numerous *pātals*, earths, and innumerable *ākāshs*, skies,” when some Muhammadan who was listening to it and understood its purport went and reported the blasphemy of the utterance, inasmuch as the Koran had mentioned seven earths and seven skies only, to the *Sajjadanashin* of the shrine of Peer Dastgir Abdul Qadir Jilani. The Dastgir Pir directed the offender to be stoned to death, and numerous people of the town immediately armed themselves with stones and rushed out. In the meanwhile the Master’s morning prayers had concluded, and at the end the Master shouted out his greetings of *Sat Kartar*, in a voice full of Divin Electricity, which immediately disarmed the people. On this, one of the Peers, Bahlol by name, came forward and had a discourse with the Master on the subject of the Morning Song. The Peer was accompanied by his son, and such was the effect of the Master’s answers, which it may be mentioned were never argumentative, that first the son and then the father confessed their conversion and admitted the truth of the maxim that Almighty God’s creation was not confined to seven earths and seven skies, but was composed of millions and millions of planets and universes. The Master stayed in Baghdad for four months and held many conversations with the Peers and other holy men of the place. Before his departure from there he was presented with a robe as a token of respect and submission, on which some verses in Arabic characters were inscribed. This *Chola* or Robe is still preserved at Dera Baba Nanak. Bhai Santokh Singh mentions a similar Robe, with inscription on it in five different characters, having descended on the Master from the Heavens in Abbysinia.

Swami Anandacharya, now said to be settled in Norway, in his work, entitled *Snow Birds*, records that, during his travels, he found an inscription, dated the year 912 *hejri*, in the outskirts of Baghdad, in the Arabic language, which, translated, read thus :

Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Faqir Bahlol; and for these sixty winters, since the Guru left Iran, the soul of 154 Bahlol has rested on the Master’s word, like a bee poised on a dawnlit honey-rose.

It has been suggested that Bahlol, referred to in it, was 155 probably the *sajjadanashin* of Bahlol *Dānā*, who was a Faqir of considerable renown. The matter certainly is worthy of further investigation.

During the recent Great War, when the British and Indian armies conquered Baghdad, they discovered this place where the Master had his Discourse with Bahlol. It lies to the west of the town and between the old graveyard to the north and the present Baghdad-Samara railway line to the south. The present writer’s brother, Dr. Kirpal Singh, then a Captain in the Indian Medical Service, also saw it during the War, and he, in his letter to the present writer, dated the 15th October, 1918, described it as follows :—

It is really a very humble looking building and known to very few people except the local Sikhs, To some Arabs it is known as well by the name of tomb of Bahlol. You enter the building by a small door, on which something is Written in Arabic, not visible to a casual visitor. Even with attention it is difficult to read. I could not read it and hence could not copy it. I have taken a photograph of the outside which I shall forward to you in due course. Entering the building, you come to a brick paved passage going to your right straight into the room. (with a *verandah*) wherein 156 you find the tomb and the Raised Platform. In the courtyard there are a few trees, mostly pomegranates. The room in which there are the platform and the tomb, has two doors, one of which is open whilst the other is barred. As you enter the room, you come face to face with the platform which roughly is about 2 to 2½ ft. high, and about 3’ by 4’ in dimensions. It is now covered with handkerchiefs of various colours presented by the Sikhs. In the centre close to the wall you find a picture of Sri Guru Nanak,

presented by some energetic Sikh, above which you find the slab with the writing which I reproduced in this letter for you. The name of the man in charge is Sayad Yusuf.”

The site plan of the Memorial is given below :—

*Note.*—No. 1 is the Master’s platform. No. 2 is Bahlol’s tomb and No. 3 is the tomb said to be of Muhammad Pasha Arnaoot.

A free translation of this inscription, which is in the Turkish language, is as follows :

Murad saw the demolished building of Hazrat Rab-i-Majid, Baba Nanak, Fakir Aulia, and rebuilt it with his own hands, so that historic memorial may continue from generation to generation, and His *Murid-i-sa’eed* (the blessed disciple) may obtain heavenly bliss.—Year 917 H.

It is obvious that this inscription is not the same which Swami Anand Acharya saw and translated in his *Snow Birds*, and it is possible that the inscription deciphered by the Swami is the old and ancient Arabic inscription which the writer’s brother noticed outside the outer door of the building, but which he found no longer decipherable. The inscription of which the photograph is reproduced seems to be a later one which some descendant in faith of Bahlol seems to have put up on reconstructing the building, but he has not mentioned the year of the reconstruction.

The year under this inscription may be P 17, or it may, it is said by one who is competent to read it and has given the above translation, be also read as 927. The latter reading seems to coincide with the chronology adopted in this biography. In, this light, the Master visited Baghdad in the year 1520-21 of the Christian era. The reading of the year by Swami Anandacharya, in the old inscription, which is either now lost or become undecipherable, seems erroneous.

From Baghdad, the Master seems to have returned, through Baku (where some Gurmukhi inscriptions on old delapidated temples, obviously giving the pedigrees of certain *Udasi* Sikh priests of the Temples, have been discovered, and formed the subject of a paper by Lala Parma Nand before the Punjab Historical Society, some years ago), Persia, Turkestan, Kabul and Peshawar. A Gurdwara in Kabul, and another at the Water Springs at Askara, nine miles from Kabul, towards Jallalabad, are still associated with the Master’s name.

\* *The Devine Master*, Lahore 1930.

II  
**On Reading an Arabic Inscription**  
**In a Shrine Outside the Town of Baghdad**  
**Dated 912 Hejira**  
Shri Ananda Acharya\*

Upon this simple slab of granite didst thou sit, discoursing of fraternal love and holy light, O Guru Nanak,  
Prince among India's holy sons !  
What song from the source of the Seven Waters thou didst sing to charm the soul of Iran !  
What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests thou didst carry to the vine-groves and rose-gardens of  
Baghdad !  
What light from Badarinath's snowy peak thou didst bear to illumine the heart of Bahlol, thy saintly Persian  
disciple!  
Eight fortnights Bahlol hearkened to thy words on Life and the Path and Spring Eternal, while the moon  
waxed and waned in the pomegranate grove beside the grassy desert of the dead.  
And after thou hadst left him to return to thy beloved Bharata's land, the fakir, it is, said, would speak to  
none nor listen to the voice of man or angel;  
His fame spread far and wide and the Shah came to pay him homage—but the holy man would take no  
earthly treasures nor hear the praise of kings and courtiers.  
Thus lived he—lonely, devoted, thoughtful—for sixty winters, sitting before the stone whereon thy sacred  
feet had rested;  
And ere he left this house of Ignorance he wrote these words upon the stone : “Here spake the Hindu Guru  
Nanak to Fakir Bahlol, and for these sixty winters, since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has  
rested on the Master's word—like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey-rose.”

\**Snow Birds*, Macmillan and Co., London, 1919.

# HOROSCOPE OF GURU NANAK

## A Study

*B. V. Raman\**

Birth Details:— Born on 8th November 1470 (O.S.)<sup>1</sup> at midnight (L.M.T.). (Lat. 31° 39' N., Long. 74° 47' E.)

Planetary Positions : - The Sun 220° 30' ; the Moon 38° 18' ; Mars 211° 24' ; Mercury 232° 24' ; Jupiter 164° 30' ; Venus 186° ; Saturn 39° 6' ; Rahu 263° 48' ; and Lagna 136° 28'. Ayanamsa 15°.

		Moon Saturn	Kethu	Moon Saturn		Jupiter Kethu	
							Mars
		RASI		Lagna		NAVAMSA	
Rahu	Sun Mars Mer	Venus	Jupiter		Venus Rahu	Sun Mer.	

Balance of Sun's dasa at birth : Year 0-9-23.

Special Features. — Simha Lagna rises unaspected by or unassociated with any malefics or benefics. The lagna is Vargottama and even in the navamsa, the lagna is unafflicted. This gives an exalted nature and a strong will, and renders the horoscope fortified. The Sun, lord of lagna, is in the 4th in association with Mercury and Mars and aspected by the Moon and Saturn. The Sun's position in a kendra in the sign of yogakaraka Mars, is highly favourable as it confers a frank and noble spirit and diverse capabilities. The Moon-Saturn association gives mental conflicts and a spirit of inquiry. Born in a Ksatriya family to Kalu and Tripta, Nanak appears even in his childhood to have been of a mystic disposition and much given to contemplation—blessings mainly due to the Moon's disposition with Saturn and the Sun's occupation of the secret sign of Scorpio. Lord of the 2nd Mercury, the planet of intelligence, is involved in Budha Aditya Yoga with the lord of lagna in the 4th house, while the 2nd or house of speech is occupied by Jupiter, Lord of the 5th. These explain Nanak's deep and versatile learning and persuasive eloquence. It will be seen that the 4th and 10th houses—two important kendras—are largely influenced by five planets—all natural malefics, except the Full Moon. Out of these five, the Sun happening to be Lagnadhipathi, Saturn happening to be a Kendradhipathi and Mars, a yogakaraka—have become benefics by ownership. The martial planet Mars, the intellectual and emotional planet Mercury, the royal planet Sun (also Atmakaraka) and the mental and the philosophical planets Moon and Saturn— all involved in influencing two of the most important houses of the horoscope, *viz.* the 4th indicating happiness and achievement and the 10th (Karma) or the house of action, filled the Guru with those great spiritual ideas and intuitions which led him to found a great sect. Rahu's

position in the 5th does not favour happiness from children, but it does confer a certain spiritual outlook and the spirit of renunciation and detachment. The 75 Moon happens to be Mokshasthanadhipathi and he occupies the 10th with Saturn, the planet of renunciation. In the navamsa, again, the divine planet Jupiter with Mokshakaraka Kethu is in the 10th (Karmasthana) aspected by Saturn. These are formidable combinations capable of conferring real spiritual attainments after intense mental struggle, a conviction that he was born for achieving something unique in the world by spreading the gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man and sweet resignation to the will of God. Mark the fact that Saturn is also lord of the 6th. His association with the Moon indicates that Nanak had to overcome considerable opposition from hostile relatives and co-religionists.

**Important Events.**—Nanak was put to school in his 7th or 8th year when he was undergoing Chandra dasa. The Moon has favourable aspects from planets situated in the 4th house. Consistent with the lordship of the Moon (he owns the 12th or Mokshasthana) Nanak often surprised his school master and parents by his queer acts and utterances, and occasional sallies of free thought. His spiritual prepossessions and mystic brooding spirit became clearly visible in the course of the Moon's dasa. In Mars dasa, Nanak was put to various secular tasks by his parents; but he became more and more absorbed in religious practices. Guru Nanak's marriage took place in Mars dasa. Mark the fact that Mars is aspected by Saturn Lord of the 7th and is in the 2nd from Kalatrakaraka Venus. Under the same directional influences Nanak was appointed in the service of Daulat Khan. However, as Rahu dasa advanced, he abandoned his service and became an ascetic for all practical purposes. Note the fact that Rahu is in the constellation of Venus lord of the 10th. Throughout Guru dasa he wandered all over the country preaching his gospel of love and faith in God. It will be seen that Sani as lord of the 6th in the 10th, is aspected by Jupiter, as lord of the 8th (we shall here, for the moment, ignore the other benefic ownership of these two planets). Consequently during Sani dasa, Nanak and his pet disciple Mardana were imprisoned by Babar's men. Subsequently, under the same dasa influences, Nanak came in personal contact with Babar and exercised considerable influence on the life and conduct of this emperor. Towards the close of his life, the Guru laying aside the garb of Fakir settled down with his family at Katarpur and continued to teach the new faith to the large number of, his followers. In Sani dasa Guru bhukthi, he appointed one of his most sincere disciples as his spiritual heir ignoring his own son whom he thought unfit for the task and died at the fag end of Guru bhukthi. The major lord Saturn owns the 7th, a maraka place while the sub-lord Jupiter as owning the 8th is in the 2nd another maraka place.

**Remarks.**—The horoscope is significant inasmuch as the powerful Rajayogas caused in the 4th house involving the 4th, 10th, 1st and 2nd houses, have found expression in spiritual channels, conferring on the native fame, influence and extraordinary greatness. Owing to the glorified position of lagna and the sobering influence of Saturn on Lagnadhipathi, in spite of all his greatness, he was simple and unassuming. Five planets involved in mutual aspects and associations may be construed as some sort of a Parivraja Yoga. Nanak's faith was monotheistic. His life and doctrines did not expose him to persecution for he declared that all men had a right to search for knowledge of God. The Sun is free from the effects of Rahu and Kethu. Hence the Guru played a patriotic part by ably influencing Babar and turning him into a kind ruler.

*\*Notable Horoscopes.* Bangalore. 1956.

1. I am indebted to Mr. Nahar Singh Gyani of Gujjarwal, Ludhiana District, for the birth details of Guru Nanak. According to most reliable sources, the Guru was born on the full Moon day of Karthika, Samvat 1526, Thursday at midnight, in the nakshatra of Krittika, Simha Lagna. The English date corresponds to 20th October 1469, but the week day is Friday and nakshatra will no doubt be Krittika but the week day would be Saturday. According to the custom prevalent in certain parts of N. India, the year mentioned always refers to the past year (gata) and not to the current year. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the Guru was born in Karthika Sukla Pournimasi after 1526 Samvat, which actually means he was born in 1527th Samvat corresponding to 9th November 1470, on which date Krittika nakshatra and Thursday coincide. I am

therefore inclined to feel that the correct date of birth is 8-11-1470.



We will send this file through e-mail within few days.

## CONTEMPORARIES OF GURU NANAK

Ganda Singh

### GURU NANAK

Born at Talwandi Rai Bhoi, now called Nankana Sahib, Panjab, West Pakistan.

Baisakh (Lunar) Sudi 3, 1526 Bikrami

Baisakh (Solar, Mesh) 20, 1526 Bikrami, 1391 Saka

Shawwal 3, 873 Hijri

April 15, 1469 A.D.

According to Bhai Bala Janam-Sakhi tradition Guru Nanak was born on Katik Sudi 15, 1526 Bk., corresponding to October 20, 1469 A.D.

Died at Kartarpur (near Dera Baba Nanak) on the western bank of the river Ravi, West Pakistan.

Assuj Vadi 10, 1596 Bikrami

Assuj 7, 1596 Bikrami 1461 Shaka

Rabbi-ul-Akhir 23, 946 Hijri

September 7, 1539 A.D.

### GURU ANGAD (Bhai Lehna)

Born at Nange di Serai, succeeded Guru Nanak June 14, 1539

Died at Khadur March 29, 1552

### GURU AMAR DAS

Born at Basarke, May 5, 1479

Died at Goindwal September 1, 1574

## *CONTEMPORARY RULERS OF INDIA*

### BAHLOL KHAN LODHI

Crowned 1450 A.D.

Died 1488 A.D.

### SIKANDAR LODHI, son of Bahlol Lodhi

Crowned 1488 A.D.,

Died 1517 A.D.

### IBRAHIM LODHI, son of Sikandar Lodhi

Crowned 1517 A.D.

Died Rajjab 7, 932 Hijri  
April 19, 1526 A.D.

### ZAHIR UD-DIN MUHAMMAD BABUR BADSHAH

Born 1483 A.D.

Became Emperor of India 1526 A.D. April

Died 1530 A.D.

### NASIR-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD HUMAYUN BADSHAH

Born	Kabul	
	Zi-qada	24, 913 Hijri
	March	26, 1508 A.D.
	Crowned	1530 A.D.
	Died	1556 A.D.

### ***GOVERNORS OF LAHORE***

DAULAT KHAN  
1500/04-1524 A.D.

MIR ABDUL AZIZ (Dipalpur)	}	1524 - 25 A.D.
MUHAMMAD ALI TAJIK (Kalanaur)		
DILAWAR KHAN son of Daulat Khan (Sultanpur)		
MIR YUNIS ALI 1527-30 A.D.		
MIRZA KAMRAN 1530-1540 A.D.		

### ***GOVERNORS OF MULTAN***

HUSSAIN KHAN LANGAH  
1469-1498 (?)

SULTAN MAHMOOD (grandson of Hussain Khan)  
1498-1525

SULTAN HUSSAIN LANGAH (younger son of Mahmood Langah)  
1525-1527

LANGAH KHAN (on behalf of Mirza Askari son of Emperor Babur)  
1528-1530

### ***PIRS OF MULTAN***

Shaikh SHAHAR ALLAH son of Shaikh Muhammad Yusuf Qureishi  
Died 23 Zil-Hajj 920 A.H.  
February 8, 1515 A.D.

Makhdum BAHA-ud-DIN SANI (Second)  
s/o Shaikh Shahar Allah became Sajjada 23 Zil-Hajj, 920 A.H., February 8, 1515 A.D.

### ***SAJJADA-NASHINS OF PAK PATTAN*** (Khanqah of Baba Farid)

8th SAJJADA NASHIN  
SHAIKH MAHUMMAD (Hazrat Yunis)  
Died 856-877 Hijri

(1452-1472/73 A.D.)

9th SHAIKH AHMAD

877-895 Hijri

(1472/73-1489/90 A.D.)

10th SHAIKH ATA-ULLAH

895-917 Hijri

(1489/90-1511/12 A.D.)

11th SHAIKH MUHAMMAD

917- Hijri-

(1511-12/ A.D.-)

12th SHAIKH IBRAHIM (Farid Sani II) also known as Shah Brahim or Shaikh Brahem.

### ***SOME SAINTS AND SCHOLARS***

KABIR

1456-1575 Bk. (1399-1518 A.D. ?)

disciple of Ramanad

According; to Duncan Greenlees, his dates are 1440-1518 A.D.

CHAITANYA

(1486-1533 A.D.)

RUP

SANATAN



brothers, Vaishnava monks,

disciples of Chaitanya, both died 1554

JIV GOSWAMI, Nephew of Rup and Sanatan

1511-1596

VALLABHACHARYA, Pushti-marga Vaishnava

1479-1530

SHANKARDEV (Bengal Tirhut. Orissa and Assam)

1490-1569

RAVI (Rayee) DAS, contemporary of saint Kabir

Born Varanasi

disciple of Ramanad

DHANI DHARM DAS

1490-1600 Bk. (1433-1543 A.D.)

Disciple of Kabir

SAIN DAS

Born Baddo-ki Gosain, near Gujranwala-West Pakistan

1525 Bk. (1468 A.D.)

RATAN CHANDRA UPADHYAYA (Received the title of Upadhyay)

1515-1521 Bikrami, 1458-1464 A.D.

JIN CHANDRA SURI  
died 1530 Bk., 1473 A.D.

JIN SAMUNDRA SURI  
died 1555 Bk., 1498 A.D.

JIN HANS SURI  
died 1572 Bk., 1515 A.D.

JIN MANIKYA SURI  
died 1612 Bk., 1555 A.D.

TULSI DAS  
1511-1637 A.D.

SUR DASS  
1479-1585 A.D.

VIDYAPATI of the Maithili Court,  
1400-1507 A.D.

### ***CHRISTIANS***

MARTIN LUTHER	
Born at Eisleben, Saxony	1483
Issued his 95 theses against orthodox Christianity	1517
Died at Eisleben	1546

SAINT IGANTIUS OP LOYOLA	
Born in Guipuzcoa, Spain	1419
Died	1556

JEAN CALVIN	
Born at Noyon	1509
Died	May 27, 1564

## EXTRACTS FROM PERSIAN WORKS

Translated into English

JOT BIGAS  
Bhai Nand Lal 'Goya'

gurU nwnk Awmd nrwien srUp ]  
hmwnw inrMjn inrMkwr rUp ]1]

Guru Nanak came into the world as an image of God—Verily the image of the All-Light and the Formless.

h`kS Aw&rIdw iz nUir krm  
Azo Awlmy rw &XUiz Aqm ]2]

God created him out of the light of His benevolence; the whole universe is benefitted from his great generosity.

h`kS br-guzIdw iz hr br-guzIN  
nSWdS iz hr br-qrIN br-qrIN ]3]

God raised him above every selected one, and has seated him above His every chosen one.

h`kS gu&q ^ud murSdul-AwlmIn  
njwqulvrw rihmqul muznbIn ]4]

God himself called him the guide of the two worlds—a source of salvation to the mankind and of mercy to the sinners.

SihnSwih dwrYn krdS i^qwb  
Azo qwilbW rw krwmq nswb ]5]

God addressed him as the king of kings of the two worlds. From him the seekers receive generously.

h`kS Awrwsq ^ud q^qgwhS bulMd  
iz hr &`ru^y sw^qS ArjmMd ]6]

God Himself decorated his high place of throne, and made him worthy of every excellence.

hmU nwnk Asqo hmU AMgd Asq  
hmU Amrdws APzlo Amjd Asq ]23]

Nanak is also the same, and Angad also; the virtuous and glorious Amardas is also the same.

hmU rwmdwso hmU Arjun Asq  
hmU hrgoibMd AkrmO Aihsn Asq ]24]

Ramdas is also the same, and Arjan also; the noble and excellent Hargobind is also the same.

hmU hsq hirrwie krqw gurU  
bdU AwSkwrw hmw puSgo r ]25]

Har Rai (known as Karta Guru), the man of action, is also the same —  
He has the knowledge, of this and the other world.

hmU hirikSn Awmdw sr-bulMd  
Azo hwisl aumIid hr musqmMd ]26]

The same also is the most exalted Har Krishan, who fulfills the desire of very unfortunate one.

hmU hsq qyiz bhwdr gurU  
ik goibMd isMG Awmd Az nUir aU ]27]

The same is also Guru Tegh Bahadur;  
Guru Gobind Singh is from his light.

hmU gurU goibMd isMG hmU nwnk Asq  
hmw Sbid aU jOhro mwnk Asq ]28]

Guru Gobind Singh is also the same as Nanak is also the same. All his words are gems and rubies.

—Trans. Ganda Singh

*\*Kulliyāt-i-Bhāi Nandlāl Goyā*, edited by Ganda Singh (1968), 159-60; *Bhai Nandlāl Granthāvalī*, 161-64.

## KHULASAT-U-TAWARIKH

*Sujan Rai Bhandari*

### GURU NANAK

Forty kos to the north of the capital (Delhi) is the old city of Sambhal and therein is Harimandir which is an old place of worship. It is said that the last person to manifest divine light will appear there. Attached to it is a place called Nanak-Matta where the disciples and devotees of Baba Nanak gather together for worship and benediction. To the north of it is a mountain called Kamayun.

In Chak Guru Hargobind, in the jurisdiction of Patti Haibatpur, there is a beautiful tank and a garden where people collect in large numbers on the day of Baisakhi. Two or three kos from it is the sacred shrine of Ram Tirath. A few kos from it is the town of Batala.

Twelve kos from Batala on the bank of the river Ravi is the place of Baba Nanak whose descendants live there up to the present day. During his time, he (Baba Nanak) was the leader of the caravan on the Path of Truth, a torch-bearer on the Way to real religion (or unquestioning obedience to the Lord), a manifestor of the splendour of Divine light and a spectator of the dawn of Divine mysteries. In his verses in the Indian vernacular, he has inculcated in explicit language, and with brilliant similes, the Reality of God, His omnipotence and absolute Unity.

It is said that this chosen man of the world was born during the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi at Talwandi Rai Bhoi in the Bikrami year one thousand five hundred and twenty-six, corresponding to eight hundred and seventy-three Hijri (1469 A.D.) and lived there in the house of his ancestors. As from the very beginning he was the recipient of divine favours, there appeared in him in young age signs of revelation of mysteries, miracles and superhuman things. Many people became his faithful disciples. Having visited many parts of the world, he came to Batala, where he was married, and he settled down in the jurisdiction of Batala in a village on the bank of the river Ravi. His fame as one who had realized God and had inspirational effect in his utterances spread far and wide. A world of people from the neighbouring countries came to him and became his disciples (Sikhs).

Amongst the companions of His Holiness was Mardana, a minstrel, who sang the hymns of this honoured saint of the Court of the Lord in such melodious and attractive tunes as drew many men to his faith. This leader of the God-knowing saints left the transitory world at an age between seventy and eighty years during the reign of Salim Shah Afghan. [In fact, Guru Nanak died on September 7, 1539 A.D., during the reign of Humayun, the second Mughal.]

He (Nanak) had a son by the name of Lakhmi Das [in addition to Sri Chand who had turned a recluse], but he was not endowed with spiritual wealth. Before his death, he, therefore, appointed in his place one of his companions and confidants, Lehna, a Trehan Khatri, and called him *Guru Angad*. He acted as his (Baba Nanak's) representative for thirteen years and died. As he had no son [Guru Angad had two sons but they were by passed in favour of Amar Das who was considered to be more suitable for spiritual position of Guru], he nominated his son-in-law [in fact, a devoted disciple] Amar Das, who led the people for twenty two years and left his physical body. Although he had sons, at the time of his death he appointed in his place his son-in-law Ramdas Sodhi. He remained the Guru of the Sikhs for seven years and was followed by his son Guru Arjun who died after twenty-five years. After him his brave son Guru Hargobind adorned the seat of Guruship. After his death Guru Har Rai sat in place of his grandfather as his father Gurditta had died during the life time of Guru Hargobind. For seventeen years he guided the faithful. After him his younger son Har Kishan occupied the seat of Guruship for three years. He was followed as Guru for eleven years by Tegh Bahadur, the youngest son of Hargobind. At last having been imprisoned by the nobles of the Emperor, he was executed at Shahjahanabad by the orders of Emperor Alamgir in 1081 Hijri corresponding to the seventeenth Alamgiri regnal year [the correct date being November 11, 1675 A.D., 1086 Hijri, 19th Alamgiri]. Now that this book is being written, Guru Gobind son of Guru Tegh Bahadur is Guru for twenty-two years.



In short, most of the disciples and devotees of Baba Nanak are men of real attainments, of God-fearing saintliness, advanced in meditation and of accepted prayer in the Court of the Lord. The worship of these people consists of the study of the hymns of their Guru which they read in soft and sweet singing tones and sing in concert in heart-alluring and charming tunes. Having removed all hatred from their hearts and lifting the curtain of doubt, darkness and narrowness from their minds, they look upon their relatives and others alike; friends and foes are equal to them, and they are very faithful to their friends, and with foes they live without any quarrel with them. The faith that they have in their Guru is very rarely to be found in any other group of people. The service of strangers and travellers in the name of their Guru, which they always keep on repeating, they regard as the greatest devotion. Even if a person were to come at midnight and mentions the name of Baba Nanak, however stranger and unknown he may be, nay, even if he were a thief, a robber or an evil-doer, they look upon him as a brother and a friend and serve him to the best of their ability.

Coming out of the mountain this river (Sutlej) is divided into two branches and passing by Makhawal, where Guru Gobind Rai resides, and Kiratpur, where Guru Hargobind and Har Rai had their residence, it again becomes one in the neighbourhood of Rupar.

When the royal camp left Lahore and arrived in the neighbourhood of the town of Batala, it was reported to His Majesty (Emperor Akbar) that at Achal Muslim faqirs and a body of Sannyasis had fought with one another. The Muslim faqirs having had the upper hand had unjustly destroyed their idol-temple. The Emperor of the day came to know of the excesses of that group (of Muslim faqirs and in administering justice sent most of them to prison and ordered that the idol-temple which had been unjustly demolished, should be rebuilt. On his departure from there, he crossed the river Beas and visited the residence of Guru Arjun, a successor of Baba Nanak, who was well known for his knowledge and realization of God. His Majesty was very much pleased to meet him (Guru Arjun) and to hear from his mouth the vernacular compositions of Baba Nanak regarding the knowledge of God. Guru Arjun considered it (the royal visit) an honour done to him and made a suitable present (to His Majesty) and represented that with the arrival of the royal armies in the Panjab the prices of grain had gone up with consequent increase in the taxes of the pargannahs but, then, with the departure of the victorious armies the food grains had become cheap and the ryots were unable to pay the taxes. On hearing this representation, the chief *divans* were ordered to allow to the people a reduction of ten to twelve per cent in the taxes,\* with instructions to the *amils* to give this concession to the people and not to demand anything more.

—Trans. Ganda Singh

Ed. Zafar Hasan, pub. G. and Sons, Delhi, 1918—compared with the manuscript in the collection of Dr. Ganda Singh.

\*According to the *Akbar-Namah*, Emperor Akbar met Guru Arjun at Goindwal on 13th Azar, 43 Akbari regnal year, corresponding to November 24, 1598, and it was on his arrival at Sirhind, on his way to the capital, that the orders for the reduction in the tax were issued. (Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, second edition, 1883, p. 514.)

## CHAHAR GULSHAN

(1759-60)

*Rai Chatarman*

### GURU NANAK AND OTHER GURUS

Nanak-matta is a place contiguous to Sambhal and devotees of Nanak collect there in large numbers on a fixed day.

Nanak-Panthis are the followers of their (Sikh) prophets. Nanak was an excellent person. His followers have declared against the Vedas and have set up a separate way of life, probably innovated by his successors. During the time of Nanak the number of his followers was relatively small. They are now so numerous that in every country and in every city they are in thousands. In some places, which are especially theirs, they gather together in lakhs (hundreds of thousands).

Guru Nanak was absorbed in divine devotion and was lost in Him. The ways and practices of his followers, and their *tilak* and dress, are different [from the Hindus],

Up to Guru Gobind [Singh], all the ten (Gurus) live in accordance with the authority of (ways authorized by) Guru Nanak. These ten prophets are called *Mahal* (Mahala). After them the others, who occupied their position, are not recognized [as Gurus by the community]. Some accept them.

—Trans. Ganda Singh

\*From the manuscript preserved in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, Patna, Persian Mss No. 92.

*IMAD-U-SA'ADAT\**  
(1223 A.H., 1808 A.D.)  
Sayyed Ghulam Ali Khan

RISE OF THE SIKHS

During the time of the Dweller of Heaven Zahir-ud-Din- Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi, there was a Saint by the name of Nanak from amongst a tribe of the Khattris known as the Bedis. As he had for a long time detached himself from the world and its entanglements, and as in the Court of God no man's labour is lost, he attained to the position of a pious divine. As it appears from his sweet sayings, he had realized God. His utterances were like those of sages, full of mysteries. He did not divert his attention to the world.

His disciples are of two kinds—some shave their heads while others leave all the hair of their heads unshaven. In their armies barber is not to be found. Out of ten thousand there are hardly to be found one or two persons who shave their hair. In the terminology of the faithful the army of the hair-keepers is called the *Khalsa* and the shaven ones are known as *Khulasa*. In their lives the disciples have no fear of death and they all had one and the same belief.

—Trans. Ganda Singh

\*Published by Nawal Kishor Press, Kanpur, 1864.

***KHALSA NAMA***  
**(1810 A.D.)**  
Bakht Mall

**GURU NANAK**

There lived, during the reign of Sultan Babar, Kalu, a Bedi Khatri by caste, in the village of Talwandi attached to parganah of Rai Bhoi in the *talluqa* of Lahore. He had a son and a daughter, named Nanak and Nanaki. Nanak was married to Jai Ram, who was a *modi*, a storekeeper, to Daulat Khan Lodhi, a near relative of the (Lodhi) Sultan. When Nanak grew up to be a young man, his father arranged for his marriage in a respectable family. He had two sons named Sri Chand and Lakhmi Dass. Sri Chand turned an ascetic, and Lakhmi Das became a wordly man. His son Dharam Chand at first founded the order of the Udasis [In fact the Udasi (ascetic) order was established by Sri Chand who had himself taken to the life of asceticism and not by Dharam Chand]. His descendants and followers are known as *Nanak Potras* or grandsons of Nanak. Nanak was devoted to the worship of God from his very childhood and remained unaffected by worldly affairs. Seeing him not doing anything, his father felt disappointed. Un-mindful of this, Nanak led a free life. It is said that one day Nanak went to look after the sown fields. Having eaten some thing at noon, he went to sleep in the shade of a tree. As the sun inclined towards the west and its hot rays fell on the face of Nanak, a black snake raised its hood from the ground and interposed its spread hood between the sun and his face so that he might not be disturbed by the severity of the heat. Rai Bular, the master of the place, then happened to return from hunting and came upon Nanak all alone. Realizing his greatness, he (Rai Bolar) covered his (Nanak's) face and went home. Nanak also woke up in due course of time and went his way.

After some time, his father told him to take some money, buy salt from a certain village and sell it at another so that he might have the benefit of profit and do some work. Nanak agreed to it. His father sent a peasant, named Bala Sandhu, to accompany him. Nanak proceeded to the village from where salt was to be purchased. Bala accompanied him. On the way they stopped on the bank of a pond where they saw a group of *faqirs* sitting. Nanak turned towards them and made some enquiries. On account of weakness, for they had not eaten anything for three days, not one of them could speak beyond acknowledging his greetings. Nanak said to his attendant, "Father has sent me for profitable bargain in salt. As the worldly profit is only transitory, I wish to present the money to the holy mendicants [to relieve them of their hunger and misery] and to gain thereby the eternal profit." The attendant said, "It is a good act of kindness. Delay it not." Immediately he presented the money to the mendicants and sat at a distance. Three young *faqirs* from amongst them went to a village nearby, purchased and brought the necessary eatables, cooked them and ate them together. Nanak spent the night with them discoursing on religious matters and, having spent his money in helping them, returned home. His father asked him about the profit he had made. Nanak replied, "I have done service to the *faqirs* and have earned for you the everlasting profit." His father was grieved to hear this and struck him. His kindly sister could not help him. Rai Bular, riding on a horse, passed through the street where Nanak was being beaten. He enquired from the people the reason of the noise. Rai had realized the greatness of Nanak. On knowing the truth, he dismounted from his horse, went inside the house and forbade Kalu from ill-treating Nanak. He then bowed down at the feet of Nanak and departed. With the Rai's public expression of his faith, the fame of Nanak's saintliness and detachment spread far and wide.

His father had no further chance of displeasure. He, however, wished that his son should abandon the life of idle wandering. One day he told his son-in-law Jai Ram to take Nanak along and impart to him the necessary training [in business]. Jai Ram accepted the suggestion and put him to respectable work in shop. With his mind fixed on God and his hands on his work, he passed his days. One morning when he was sitting in his shop in a contemplative posture, absorbed in his thoughts, an ascetic saint appeared there and said to him, "Nanak, quit this all. I have provided you with eternal wealth." As Nanak raised his head to see [the person addressing him], the saint had disappeared. After he had returned to himself, he gave away to the hungry and the naked all that was there in the store belonging to Daulat Khan and went out of the town shouting.

He then went into the stream known as Vein and did not come out of it for three days. Having heard that his stores had been wasted away by Nanak, Daulat Khan put Jai Ram in chains. They say that whilst in the Vein, he had an interview with Khizr and Elias and received their blessings. At last, after three days, he came out of the stream in full sense, presented himself before Daulat Khan and said. "Jai Ram did not deserve to be fettered. Set him free and you may take the account of the shop from me." Daulat Khan did the same, with the result that there was a credit balance in favour of Jai Ram against Daulat Khan. At this Daulat Khan was surprised. He set Jai Ram free and restored him to his former employment. The people, who saw in Nanak [these signs of] greatness, became his faithful disciples. By virtue of his frequent meditations on God the Most High, he acquired great celebrity and adopted peace-with-all attitude. He undertook great travels, and wherever he went he stayed for some days and [with his teachings] added lustre to [the lives of] the people of that place.

At last, he settled down at a place [called Kartarpur (in West Pakistan) near Dera Baba Nanak] and wrote books on the Unity of God. He died at the village of Dera belonging to the area of Kalanaur in the *ta'lluqa* of Lahore. There was a dispute between the Hindus and the Musalmans over the disposal of his dead body. His shroud was divided into two: the Hindus cremated it and the Musalmans buried it. His mausoleum has since been washed away by the river [Ravi].

—Trans. Ganda Singh

\* This manuscript was written for and at the instance of Col. Sir John Malcolm, the author of *Sketch of the Sikhs*, published by John Murray in London, 1812.

## ***TAWARIKH-I-SIKHAN\****

***(1811 A.D.)***

*Khushwaqt Rai*

### **GURU NANAK**

Nanak Shah was born with a brilliant face and a shining forehead in the house of Kalu Bedi Khatri in the Panjab in the village of Talwandi Rai Bhoi in the province of Lahore in the year 1526 Bikrami [corresponding to A.D. 1469]. His father was a *mutasaddi* (a *Patwari*, a revenue clerk). At the age of five he was sent to school for reading and writing. As one who had received his education from the day of eternity and had studied at the court of the Timeless, Nanak learnt no word other than *Alif* which represents the Oneness of God. And on whatever the teacher said, he read out a divine verse for each letter and told him that he wished to have knowledge that would lead him to salvation, while whatever he was being taught would cause him to be entangled [in worldly affairs]. His father did not know the spiritual height to which Nanak had attained, and, in ignorance, set him to the grazing of cattle. Faithful and resigned to His will, Nanak was externally engaged in that occupation but internally he was absorbed in his meditations. One day his cows ate up the green corn of a poor man, leaving not a blade standing. The peasant complained to Rai Bular, the ruler of the place, who called him for enquiry. Nanak said that the peasant had made a wrong complaint. The servants of the ruler found the field to be more fresh and green than ever. Divine power had supplied the remedy on behalf of Nanak and had made it green. All were wonder-struck at this.

Nanak was one day sleeping in the shade of a tree. The ruler during his rambles passed by that way and when he returned in the evening the shade of the tree had not moved away from his head. On another day Nanak was sleeping in the hot sun. A huge snake spread his hood to shade him. The ruler was (happened to be) there and, seeing these wonderful things, was convinced that Nanak was endowed with spiritual powers and was, in fact, one of the divine saints and prophets. He —the Rai—advised his father not to look upon him with contempt as he was one of the accepted ones at the divine court and had shown signs of his spiritual greatness. After some time he was much more absorbed in the love of God in which he was altogether lost. For three months he ate nothing. Under the impression that he was taken ill, his father sent for a physician. Nanak did not allow him to feel his pulse and told him that he (the physician) had no medicine for him. He was himself relieved of his ailment. He continued to be engaged in divine worship and grew to manhood,

After great insistence his father arranged for his marriage. Nanak avoided association with his wife. He gave two cloves to his wife saying that she would give birth to two sons. They were named Sri Chand and Lachhmi Chand. After that he took to asceticism and travelling. He went to his sister at Sultanpur. Seeing him without work his brother-in-law got him appointed in Nawab Daulat Khan's Modi Khana (storehouse) with which he was himself connected. Although he had no wish to be so engaged, Nanak accepted to work for his sake. He liberally served faqirs and poor people with food and clothing. Some people spoke ill of him to the Nawab saying that he was spending uneconomically. But when the account was audited, there was in his favour a credit balance due from the Government.

But the mind of Nanak was absorbed in True God. One day he went to the stream known as Bein. Having washed his hands and teeth, he planted the end of the tooth-stick on the bank of the stream and entered it for bathing. As he had a dip therein, angel Gabriel came and took him on to heaven to the court of the True Lord. He paid his respects to God, who from his divine throne said to Nanak: "I had sent you for the guidance of humanity. Why are you engaged in worldly affairs? Go and guide the world." After three days and nights, Nanak reappeared from the stream in a state of God-intoxication and took his abode in a graveyard and remained silent. People took him for a mad man, breathed incantations on him, and to bring him back to normal state burnt aloe and wild rue which, according to his slanderers, would remove the rust from his mind. With great pressure they asked him whether he was a Hindu or a Musalman. "None of the two", replied he, "I am a slave of the Lord and all are my creeds." The Mussalmans argued that if everything were the same to him, he should recite the *Namaz* (Muslim prayer) with them. By force they took him to the

mosque. Nawab Daulat Khan was also there. Nanak did not salute anyone —neither the Nawab nor the Qazi. This the Nawab did not like, and he asked him why he had not observed the custom of saluting. “It was desire or expectation that had been saluting. The head of the desireless is held high,” said he. With all their zeal, the Muslims went for the prayer. Nanak also came and stood with them. While the Muslims regularly sat for the prayer, stood up and prostrated, Nanak did not bow down. After the prayer they (Muslims) became very furious with Nanak enquiring why he had not offered the prayer. “The mind of the Nawab had gone to purchase horses in Qandahar”, replied Nanak, “and the mind of the Qazi was thinking lest the colt [at his house] should fall into the well [nearby]. Similarly the minds of other people were detracted towards their own affairs. As such, your prayer was not acceptable. I did not, therefore, recite it. “As this appeared to all of them to be the correct reading of their minds, they felt small and desisted from molesting him saying that he was the most perfect of the Servants of God, and allowed him to go wherever he liked.

He then threw away all his attachments, put on a faqir's dress and took to travelling. His father had sent Mardana, a minstrel, to bring news about him. He was a devotee of his and he accompanied him on his journeys. As he rose high in spiritualism, he was called Nanak *Shah* from that time. The tooth-stick that he had planted on the bank of the [Bein] stream grew into a green and smiling lote tree and is still there and its fruits are carried to the Sikh Sardars as sacred gifts.

At first he went to Eminabad to the house of a godly person, Lalo, a carpenter. [Malik] Bhago the government official of that place had invited all persons to a feast. Nanak did not go to his feast. Bhago was surprised. He sent for him urgently and enquired why he did not eat his food. He (Nanak) sent for it and also sent for a loaf from the house of the carpenter. Taking the two separately in each hand he squeezed them both. Blood oozed out of the bread of Bhago and milk from that of the carpenter. Nanak told him (Bhago), “Look, your bread is from unlawful gains (*až̤ baram ast*) and is not fit to be eaten by *faqirs* and God-loving people. Nanak then returned to his native place and his father and mother were pleased to see him.

He then went to the country of Bengal. Wherever he stopped on the way, he guided the people to [the path” of] God and they called him *Guru Nanak Shah*. By stages they (Guru Nanak and Mardana) came to an uncultivated country. For two or three days they found no population. Mardana felt as if he was dying of hunger. Guru Nanak told him to eat a bunch of soap-nuts. Although it was very bitter (like poison), he ate it as desired by the great Master and found it delicious and sweet. Afterwards they arrived in Bengal and Kamrup where men and women practise witchcraft. Mardana went into a town. The enchanting women bewitched him into a ram. It is absolutely wrong to say that they turn men into rams; [in fact] they allure them into complete servility. The women of that place have no chastity. On the other hand they take it in writing from their ruler that he would not object to the behaviour of women. As Mardana did not return to the master up to the evening, Guru Nanak went into the town himself and had Mardana treed. Most of the people of the country became his disciples.

Nanak Shah then went to Singladeep. Having heard of his (Nanak's) praises. Raja Shivrabh of that place was anxious to see him. He had vowed that he would believe the arrival of Nanak only if his dry garden were to become green. This came to happen. With the touch of Nanak's feet the dry garden .became green and fruitful. The raja still had some doubt. The raja's wife had given birth to a daughter but she had told him that a son had been born. She went to Nanak Shah and prayed in all humility that if, with his blessings, the daughter could become a boy, she would be saved from the wrath of the raja. Nanak told her that her wish would be fulfilled. The female child become a boy. Seeing this the Raja and the Rani became his disciples with heart and soul.

After two years Nanak Shah left that place and came to Mecca by sea, made a pilgrimage to that holy place and had spiritual discourses with learned scholars there. He then arrived at Medina. About its truth and falsehood. God knows the best, but, according to his disciples, it is related that at night Nanak Shah went to sleep with his feet towards the tomb of (Prophet) Muhammad. A Musalman rebuked him and turned his feet

to another side. The dome of the tomb also moved to the direction of his feet. An hour later he returned and saw his feet again in the direction of the tomb. A second time he turned them. The tomb also turned in the same direction. The *mujawir* or the care-taker was wonderstruck to see this and knelt down to him in respect. The other Musalmans and scholars of the place questioned him on the secrets of spiritual knowledge and argued with him on the subject. Nanak, however, vanquished them all.

He then came to the Sumer (Meru) mountain and saw many ascetics of old. Then he went to mount Kailash and saw the polar star from near and met Raja Janak absorbed in meditation on a mountain. He then met god-loving people at the bridge of Rameshwar and had spiritual discussions with them. All of the faqirs or ascetics came from there for the fair of Achal, near Batala and Kalanaur, where a fair is held annually in the month of Katik. By his miraculous power Nanak arrived there in a day and discussed with the *yogis* (*ārifān*) matters relating to spiritualism. He then went to the neighbourhood of Pilibhit where *yogis* came together, held spiritual discussions and displayed their miraculous powers by making their wooden sandals fly. Then came the turn of making trees fly. The Yogis wished to try it with the Pipal tree under which Baba Nanak was sitting. Nanak Shah put his hand on the tree saying, "stay where you are". The said tree did not fly and remained stationary. From that day up to the present the impression of the hand of that Defender of Truth (*Gurū Baba Nanak Shah*) is visible on every leaf of that tree. That place is known as Nanak-mata. Now devoted Sikhs go there to see that tree.

From that place he went to Qandahar and had discourses on spiritual subjects with some scholars. Mughals like Alt Beg and a number of Hindus became his disciples. It is said that the impression of Guru Nanak's hand still appears on the halwa (or *Karak prasad*) brought as offerings to Nanak so that it may be distributed.

One day Baba Nanak and Mardana were standing in the bazaar of a town in the district of Qandahar. A poor man begged for money in the name of God saying that he needed it very badly. Nanak Shah told him, "You may sell me in the name of God and spend the proceeds of the sale to meet your needs." He sold them in the market for two hundred and fifty rupees and spent the amount for his urgent needs. His purchaser employed him in grazing sheep and bringing firewood. Some time was spent in this way till some one protested against it. One night Guru Nanak sang some spiritual hymns in such an impassioned style that would melt the stoniest of hearts. On hearing this sweet and melodious voice, truth dawned upon his purchaser who then apologized for his temerity and set them (both) free.

He then came to Kurukshetra. Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi was then the king of Delhi. Having been informed of Nanak's high position in the field of spiritual knowledge, he called upon him to show a miracle. Nanak went there accompanied by many faqirs. The miracle, seeking king placed mill-stone and a maund of wheat before each one of them to grind it into flour. While the other faqirs did the grinding with their own hands, the stone of Nanak moved of itself. At that time an elephant specially reserved for the Sultan died. The keeper of the elephant was a devotee of Nanak. In all humility and distress he went to Baba (Nanak) and said, "My livelihood is gone." Baba felt pity for him and brought the elephant to life. The king asked Nanak Shah to kill it again. Nanak replied, "the God-accepted ones reverse the doings of God but God does not reverse the doings of His Beloved ones." The king then allowed him to go wherever he wished. Baba said, "You have caused me pain, you will be uprooted."

Seven months after this, Babur Shah came to India and fought against Sultan Ibrahim at Panipat. Sultan Ibrahim was killed and Babur became victorious and occupied the throne of Delhi. According to a saying current among the Sikhs, Babur in his days of poverty had served Baba Nanak and Baba Nanak had blessed him with sovereignty for ten generations, saying, "there shall be ten generations of mine. I have given you kingdom with a blessing. It shall be taken by sacrifices of heads." As Babur Shah had received the kingdom through the kind attention of Baba Nanak, he paid him highest respect.

Guru Nanak Shah lived for seventy years, five months and seven days. During this period he visited



the four corners of the world. During his travels in every land and in every clime, he was loudly acclaimed and rightly praised by the God-accepted ones. He had friendly relations with godly saints [of the line of] Shaikh Farid *Shakarganj* and the divines of his day like Shah Abdur Rahman and others. He had private interviews and discourses with seekers of truth and acquired highest attainments, and, unmindful of public praise or dispraise, he freely mixed with Muslim and Hindu learned men and, in spite of the opposition of a host of people, he was free from attachment and enmity.

Having travelled over the world, he settled down on the bank of the river Ravi at a place now known as Dera (Baba) Nanak. In his terminology God is called *Wahiguru*. Often words of divine wisdom fell from his lips.

He showered his benediction on one of his sincere and devoted disciples, Lehna, a *Khatiri* called him Angad and, having bestowed upon him his capital of divine knowledge and spiritual doctrine, he nominated him (as *Guru*) in his place.

Having heard this, the wife of Baba Nanak took both of her sons, Sri Chand and Lachhmi Chand, to his presence and said, "Father's heritage has gone to a servant. What shall become of the sons?" He replied, "It is proper to put a thing in a vessel that is suitable and worthy of it."

"He who served became a master, and  
He who became proud was debarred and excluded.  
But in whatever condition, they shall not remain in want of anything.  
He who showers rain from heaven  
Can as well bestow bread from His Divine mercy."

Once, when Nanak was staying near a village, a peasant boy, Boora by name, was attracted with sincere devotion and honest faith towards the Enlightened and the Detached Baba (Nanak) and presented to him as offering whatever he then had with him and took to serving him. Pleased with his manner of speech and good behaviour, he (Guru Baba Nanak) looked upon him with kindly favour and honoured him with the title of *Bhāi Budha*, and raised him from the rank of a servant to the position of a venerable abbot. Knowing him to be worthy of honour in every way, he, in his kindness, blessed him saying, "whosoever shall become my successor, shall do so with your advice." His residence is in the village of Ramdas.

After these occurrences Baba Nanak left this transitory world and moved on to the world eternal in the Bikrami year one thousand five hundred and ninety-six (15S6 Bikrami, A.D. 1599).

Water in the streets reached the river,  
The part of light joined the source of all lights.

Sri Chand was a *faqir* who had given himself entirely to contemplation and lived like an ascetic with dust (ashes) besmeared over his body and wore ochre or red-earth coloured dress. His followers also adopted his ways. Now a world is full of the *Udasi* faqirs who all belong to his following. The *Udasi* order came into existence from that day.

—Trans. Ganda Singh

\* This manuscript was originally written in 1811 for Col. David Ochterloney of the East India Company's service. The portion dealing with Guru Nanak is translated from the manuscript in the collection of Dr. Ganda Singh.

## ***TARIKH-I-PANJAB***

Ghulam Muhay-ud-Din *alias* Bute Shah

### **GURU NANAK**

Information about the Sikh community recorded in this Daftar is based on Baba Nanak's *Janamsakhi* and Persian books from the library of Jawahar Singh Sodhi, works of Shankar Joshi and books compiled by Munshi Sohan Lal and Mufti Khair-ud-Din and the history of India written by Ahmad Shah of Batala. And I have also taken the facts of these events from the oral evidence of some Granthis (Sikh priests) and old Sikhs. A lot of difference of opinion regarding the dates of birth and death of Guru Nanak and other Gurus has crept in. But the events regarding which most of the authorities agree have been recorded in this book and the responsibility of accuracy or inaccuracy rests with the original authors. It is said that during the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi a son was born to Kalu Khatri, of Bedi clan, of village Talwandi Rai Bhoi situated in the Doaba Rachna between the Ravi and the Chanab in the province of Lahore. When he reached the age of maturity he was attracted by the feelings of divine benevolence, and a desire of getting godly light and living in seclusion occupied his mind and consequently he withdrew himself from the affairs of the world. To have better understanding of divine knowledge he passed his days and nights in the company of the mendicants. Whatever in cash or kind he got from his father was given away in charity to Fakirs. His father studied his behaviour and inclinations and out of paternal affection advised him to engage himself in some business but nothing had any effect on him. Kalu was a businessman and he desired that his son should also practise the same profession efficiently.

His (Nanak's) sister Nanaki was married at Sultanpur situated in Doaba Bist Jullundur. They were running a shop there. Nanak was given some capital in the form of cash and kind and was asked to sell commodities on profit at their shop. - Guru Nanak had no interest in the affairs of the world. A keen desire of collecting spiritual capital for the next world had possessed his heart. And in a few days' time by distributing all that was there in the shop to the poor and the needy, he achieved the divine dividends. That shop called *Hatti* in which Guru Nanak used to sit is there at Sultanpur even up to the present day and is the place of pilgrimage for his devotees. After this Kalu took Nanak away from Sultanpur and married him to Sulakhani, daughter of Mula Chona Khatri of Batala, with the hope that in this manner his mind might be diverted to the worldly affairs. But to the heart that was free from the bondage of worldly affairs and was steeped in the divine love, none of the plans and methods that Kalu Shah employed proved useful and effective. After getting married Nanak remained at home for some time and then went out into the wilderness.

Kalu, getting disappointed from his side, did not interfere with his programmes and allowed him to go wherever he liked. He launched upon tours and whenever he got any information about a *Darvesh* or godly person he visited him and availed himself of the virtues of that person. He met (the descendant of) Baba Farid Shakarganj, the Sultan of the Spiritual masters, and Shah Abdur Rehman, the chief of the spiritual persons and Hazrat Baha-ul-Huq, the God-accepted one. He benefitted by their association which influenced his mind, and got acquainted with the stages of spirituality. His soul brightened and got cleaned through external qualities and internal purity. In external appearance he often looked like a Muslim and lived in peace with everybody and was visited by devotees of different communities. He treated both the Hindus and Muslims equally well and talked about mysticism and the Oneness of God. This is apparent from his Hindi and Persian compositions. Some of the places associated with his visits may be mentioned here. The home of his father-in-law is in the town of Batala and for the Hindus that house is a place of pilgrimage. Another place is situated on the banks of a stream near Sultanpur where he soaked in water and planted his tooth-stick. A Kanar tree appeared at that place and his disciples consider it to be a sacred one. A Dera or a pucca building has been constructed at that place and the *Granth* is also installed there. Other famous places are a tank and a Dera of Nanak Shah in Eminabad. Yet another place is adjacent to Hasan Abdal from where a stream flows. This place is known by the name of Panja Sahib. It is said that Guru Nanak happened to pass through that place. A Faqir named Wali Qandhari was living on the hillock and there was a fountain of water at the top. Nanak Shah requested him for water but the Faqir treated him rudely. Nanak Shah put his hand imprint on

one of the stones there and from that stone five streams of sweat water issued forth and the water of that fountain was drained down. Seeing all this the Fakir threw a stone on Nanak Shah. This he halted with his hand and, up to the present day, a lamp is lighted in the house of that Faqir, in the name of Nanak Shah. People go on pilgrimage to that hillock on Thursdays. I have written this incident on the authority of the narrators.

After touring the near and far off districts and countries he settled down on the banks of river. Ravi as a householder towards the last days of his life. At present there exists a village named Dera Baba Nanak.

Two sons were born to Nanak, one of them was Sri Chand born in 1551 Bikrami on the 5th of the month of Sawan and the second was Lakhmi Dass who became a householder and children were born to him. Even today there are many of his descendants who are in possession of wealth and property. Their description would come in the account of the Bedis. From the humble followers of Nanak the prominent were Budha, Mardana and Lehna. In connection with Budha it is said that one day Nanak Shah was sitting near a village Tungan [Tung] which is situated at a distance of one kos from Amritsar. Budha who was yet a boy was grazing cows and buffaloes at that place. Nanak asked him for water. Budha told Guru Nanak that there was no water anywhere in the vicinity. He requested Guru Nanak to look after his cattle so that he could go and bring water from somewhere else. Guru Nanak gave him a clue about the situation of a pond now known as the tank of Amritsar and asked him to go and bring water from there. Budha went to that place and found the pond full of water. As he had earlier seen that place dry he took Nanak Shah as a spiritual man and he became his devotee. He left his home and permanently went into the service and company of the Guru. Guru Nanak bestowed a part of his dignity on him. He remained alive till the days of Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind. Guru Arjan excavated the tank of Taran Tarn on his suggestion. He had children and two of them remained in the village of Ramdas on the banks of river Ravi. They remained in possession of the village one after another. Now no one is alive from amongst his descendants. Mardana was a musician who accompanied Guru Nanak often on his tours. Lehna was a Trehan Khatri. Events of his life will be narrated in his account. Because of Lehna's deep faith and respectful services to Guru Nanak the latter was much pleased with him and appointed him his successor in apostleship.

As a result of the prayers of the sons of Guru Nanak, Lehna was involved in an illness. This led to Guru Nanak's displeasure with his sons and he told them that they would not inherit apostleship at all till they served Angad and felt fealty to him. As is said Nanak called Angad to his presence, uttered something and massaged his body with his hand and it gave him instantaneous relief. But his feet were not cured as, due to great respect for Guru Nanak, Angad did not allow him to touch his feet. Thereafter, Guru Nanak passed away from this transitory world. The Hindus and the Muslims disputed over his dead body. Some wanted to cremate him while others wanted to give him a burial. In the meantime Syed Mittha Shah who lived in Batala on the banks of a well known stream named Harkaran, which issued from the canal of Kalanaur five miles away from the Dera, came on the scene and studied the situation. On his suggestion the shroud-cloth was torn into two halves. Some of them pleased themselves by burning the cloth, while the others by burying it. This is how the popular story goes but the reality is that because of the dispute between the parties, Nanak's dead body was thrown into the river. Nanak lived up to the age of seventy years, one month and twenty-seven days. Some say he lived for sixty years two months and ten days but the correct period is seventy-one years, five months and five days. According to the majority of the people his death took place in 1596 Bikrami, corresponding to 946 Hijri, and a hemistich has been composed to describe very accurately the date of Nanak's death which is a proof of the correctness of the above mentioned in Hijra and Bikrami Sammat.

Nanak departed from the world— The flower disappeared from the garden.

If the values of these words are added up it comes to 946 (Hijra), corresponding to 1596 Bikrami. As the birth of Nanak Shah took place in Sammat 1526 and his death in Samat 1596, therefore, according to Solar system he lived for seventy years and, according to Hijra era, he was born in 873 and died in 946 (A.H.) In this way according to lunar years Nanak Shah lived up to the age of seventy-three. This difference of two

years in Guru Nanak's age, according to Hijra and Bikrami Sammat is due to the difference in solar and lunar years. In the course of one century the Hijra increases by three years.

—Trans. Bhagat Singh

## IBARAT NAMAHI

Mufti Ali-ud-Din

### BABA NANAK

Based on the research of the old news writers and modern historians it has been narrated that in 874 A.H. corresponding to 1468 A.D. or 1525 Bikrami [873 A.H., 1469 A.D., or 1526 Bk.] two children were born to Kalu Khatri of Bedi clan as a divine gift. At that time India was under the rule of Lodhi Sultan ... Kalu hailed from the village of Talwandi Rai Bhoi Bhatti which was attached to the province of Lahore and was situated in the west of the capital at a distance of 25 kos in the Bar of Doaba Rachna, of Dula Bhatti, opposite Nabi Par Qureshian. The boy was named Nanak and the girl, Nanaki. After Nanak attained the age of twelve years (?), he was engaged to the daughter of Mula Khatri of Batala which was a part of Lahore province and was situated at a distance of 40 kos in the north. The girl (Nanaki) was given away in marriage to Jai Ram Khatri of Sultanpur, situated in the Doaba Bist Jullundur (Lahore Province).

After these arrangements, Baba Nanak started taking delight in the company and friendship of saints and in retiring into seclusion. Kalu asked him to take up some vocation that should bring them necessities of life but it is said that Baba Nanak did not pay willing attention to his father and confined himself exclusively to matters close to his heart, and he continuously meditated on God. The foolish people said that Baba Nanak had turned mad and they advised his father to arrange for his treatment. Accordingly his father called for a physician to cure him. When the physician put his hand on Nanak's pulse, the latter spoke thus : “(O Physician) you are not aware of my internal malady, it is no good treating me externally.”

After hearing these words, the physician told Kalu that his son was not ill but was passionately in love with God and had his mind focussed on the Absolute. After hearing this, Kalu desisted from giving medical treatment to his son. Thereafter, his mother admonished him in various ways and exhorted him to take up some work for sustenance, but it was all in vain. In utter helplessness Nanak's parents left him entirely to himself. When his sister's husband Jai Ram came to know that Nanak had adopted an attitude contrary to the wishes of his parents and was observing utmost indifference, he called him to his place hoping that the change of place might prove helpful in mending his ways. As Jai Ram was serving as a depot-holder under Daulat Khan, Baba Nanak was also put on the same job. But he did not at all observe the necessary care in the affairs of *Modikhana* (state granary). At the time of weighing the flour when the Baba came to *terah* (thirteen), he continued saying *terah, terah* and weighed away maunds of flour to the customers without keeping the count. In fact when Baba uttered *terah* (thirteen), which also means 'I am yours', he got in communion with the Lord. This sort of things gave annoyance to Jai Ram. When Nanak noticed Jai Ram's mind diverted away from him he took a firm decision to leave that place. But he was in search of a person who should accompany him on his tours. At this stage Mardana, the musician, came from Nanak's parents to know about his mental attitude and his job. Baba Nanak felt happy over Mardana's coming and he left that place in his company. For a period of twenty-four years he remained on tours—Mardana accompanying him—and wherever he reached he elicited information about religious matters. At last on Mardana's request, Nanak turned homeward but did not enter his village. Mardana was allowed to go home and meet his people there but was told not to disclose to Baba's parents that he had also come back. Mardana agreed but on his entering the village it was noised about that Mardana had returned home after so many years. Nanak's mother also came to enquire about her son. When Mardana was asked as to where and how Nanak was, he could not tell a lie but kept quiet. They guessed that Nanak had also come. When Mardana returned to Nanak, his mother also followed him and traversing a distance of one or two kos she found Nanak sitting under a tree. As a mother she reproached him and persuaded him strongly to accompany her home; his father also reached that place. Through admonitions and advice, they made all possible efforts to take him back but to no avail. Not submitting to the commands and wishes of his parents, Nanak left that place. The parents also returned home helplessly. Baba Nanak reached Pakpattan and met Shaikh Ibrahim, the (twelfth) descendant of Hazrat Baba Shaikh Farid and had a dialogue with him on matters spiritual.

After attaining his desired object, he took leave of the Shaikh and took to touring again. He spent a

lot of his time to know the real form of religion and spirituality.

When Zahir-ud-Din Babur *Badshah* invaded India, Baba Nanak fell into the hands of his troopers. It was a practice with Baba Nanak to describe things in verse and then to recite them. The sayings and deeds of a person who is advanced in spirituality and religious understanding are liked by everybody and this led people to liking Nanak. So much so that the news about Nanak reached Babur *Badshah*. When the rulers are confronted with campaigns, they are generally inclined towards saintly people. In this Way Baba Nanak met the Badshah who requested him for a blessing. Nanak blessed him conditionally saying: "So long as the descendants of the ruler would not perpetrate oppression and cruelty on his (Nanak's) saintly followers, his sovereignty would exist in magnificence. The Padshah (Babur) consented and did not consider it proper to oppose Nanak. By virtue of this, whatever commands or deeds transpired in his army, nobody made any objection to that. At last he took leave of the Badshah and decided to settle down at some place and mix with the people. In response to this decision he settled down in the wilderness on the bank of river Ravi. Within a few days whispers went round in the surrounding area that an ascetic had settled there and that his prayers were granted. People came to him with offerings. In that area there was an official working as a Karor-bandi. Hearing of the reputation of Nanak, he got angry and said that a strange Fakir had come there who had disturbed Hinduism and Islam, and that he should be ousted from that place. With this plan in mind, he started on horse-back. As ill luck would have it, his horse got restless on the way; he fell down and was wounded. People started saying that he fell as a result of the miracle of Baba Nanak. People talked of him as a perfect saint, saying that no one should think ill of him. The person referred to above deferred his plan and next day again decided to execute the previous night's decision. By divine decree the incident of the previous day was repeated. The people remembered the words he used the previous day. He felt frightened and on the advice of the people, he, walking on foot, presented himself to the Baba and expressed great regards and humility. Nanak accepted his regrets. He made a request that if the Baba agreed, a village might be set up in his name. Nanak consented and a village, named Kartarpur was founded and a *Dharamsala* was built for the Baba's residence. Nanak took up his residence there and some people say that the same Khatri built a *Dera* for him. This is correct. The Baba lived there till his death. Even today his descendants and the *Dera* exist. Anyway, after this, Nanak's parents, wife and relatives were also called to that place and they adopted his religion of the Unity of God.

—Trans. Bhagat Singh

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## CHAHAR BAGH-I-PANJAB\*

Ganesh Das Badehra

### GURU NANAK

As students of history know, *Khalsā* is an interpretation of Guru Gobind Singh put on the nation of the Sikhs whose origin may be traced back to Baba Nanak *Shah*, a saint. The account of Baba Nanak and his followers in brief is that up to the time this book is being compiled, three hundred and eighty one years ago, Baba Nanak was born, in the house of Kalu, a Bedi Khattri, at Talwandi Rai Bhoi Bhatti, during the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi in 880 (? 873) Hijri, corresponding to 1526 Bikrami, Baisakh Sudi 4. Having taken to a life of detachment and meditation at the age of fifteen, he had many disciples and devotees from amongst Hindus and Muslims. He was free from religious fanaticism and had happy relations with both. He visited several countries and his fame for his knowledge of God and his persuasive power of speech spread in every place. After some time he was married in the town of Batala and settled down at Kartarpur on the bank of the river Ravi in Batala area. At that very place he died. The place of his mausoleum is called Dera. During this time his descendants founded a town there known by the name of Dera Baba Nanak.

The fame of the excellence and supernatural powers of the celebrated Baba greatly increased during the reign of Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur *Badshah*, and many a noble and mendicant benefitted from his saintly company and impressive discourses.

From amongst his companions his attendant named Bala, and a minstrel named Mardana, received the blessings of his presence, night and day.

The Gurumakhi Script is an invention of Guru Nanak. His verses on the Unity of God and other counsels are called *Bānī* and the book, wherein the *bānī* of the Guru and his successors is compiled, is known as the *Granth Sāhib*. His disciples, who in the Panjabi language are called Sikhs, show great reverence and respect to it and the person appointed to read it is called *Bhai*. The hearers sitting around the reader hear it with great humility and respect and bow down to it. The reading and hearing of the Great Book is considered worthy of blissful reward. The place where the Sikhs worship and read the *Granth Sāhib* is called *Dharamsāl*, the place of religion.

In every Solar month (on the first day), they (gather for hearing the *Granth Sāhib* at the *Dharamsāl*) place *halwā*, prepared with equal quantities of ghee, sugar and flour, near the *Granth Sāhib* and call that *halwā* (sweet-cake) '*Karāh Prasād*' (the sweet-cake of grace). The *Bhai* then reads the hymns of the Guru and distributes the *karāh-prasād*.

As the Sikhs have intense faith in Baba Nanak, they meditate on God according to his instructions and repeat his hymns orally. In short, Baba Nanak lived for seventy years and died on Assuj *Vadi* 10, 1596 Bikrami, in the beginning of the reign of Salim Shah son of Sher Shah Afghan, [in fact, towards the end of the first reign of Humayun, the second Mughal].

The date of his death is thus described according to the Hijri year in a Persian chronogram :

*Nanak zī jāhān raft*  
*Gul az bāgh birūn shud*

Nanak went away from the world,  
The flower departed from the garden.

Guru Nanak had two sons. One was named Lakhmi Chand and the other Sri Chand. All the Bedi Babas are the descendants of Lakhmi Chand. Sri Chand turned an ascetic and did not marry. Those who became his disciples are ascetics like him and call themselves *Udāsī*. All the Udasi mendicants trace their

descent from him (Sri Chand).

At the time of his death. Guru Nanak addressed his closest disciple as *Guru* Angad, blessed him with his own knowledge and appointed him to be his successor.

—Trans. Ganda Singh

\* The author's autograph copy is in possession of Dr Ganda Singh, Patiala, The one edited by Kirpal Singh and Dewan Singh is published by Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1965.



## KHALIS NAMAH\*

Ratan Chand Bal

### GURU NANAK

A Fakir named Nanak was born on the 4th of Baisakh, 1526 Bikrami [April 15, 1469 A.D.], in the house of Baba Kalu to Mata Tipran (Tripta) in the town of Talwandi Rai Bhoi during the reign of Bahlol Lodhi. Nanak's birth took place in his mother's ancestral house. From his very infancy signs of the manifestations of miracles and divine lustre began to appear in him. And the news of his secret revelations and the realisation of the True One spread in the whole world. His variegated Hindi poetry composed about the reality of the Absolute shows his concept regarding the Oneness of God in bright and shining verses. A musician named Mardana, who was a distinguished devotee amongst the Guru's close followers, remained in his company day and night. The holy verses that related to the divine secrets and spiritual matters and that had been uttered by the holy Nanak through his godly tongue, were sung by Mardana in melodious and marvellous tunes enthralling the hearts of the listeners and attracting them to the Guru's religious tenets and devotion. And many of the seekers of the purity of heart made their souls clean of hypocrisy and deceit by meeting the Guru and hearing his preachings and verses of admonition. And this distinguished community (of his disciples, the Sikhs) worships and meditates on the verses of their Guru. The faith that this community enshrines in their hearts for their Guru is rarely to be found in any other community.

In India the knowledge of Sanskrit is in vogue through the Hindus. But this language is very difficult to learn and understand as it is like a deep and fathomless ocean with shores unknown. Even a close examiner and scrutinizer of this language is able to have just a superficial knowledge of it. Nanak who had enjoyed the presence of the Most High, through the strength and dint of the revelations of his heart and divine blessings, introduced new knowledge through easy words. He selected the easy letters from Sanskrit, and the new script was named Gurmukhi. The contents of all the Vedas and Shastras have been rendered into Hindi language and written in Gurmukhi script. Gurmukhi is such an easy script that a person with a real interest in learning it is able to read it and achieve his object in a short period.

To have his auspicious *darshan*, the Hindus very frequently came to the Guru in large numbers from different parts of the country. They got divine light from him that took them closer to their goal of union with God. In order to get the felicity of both the worlds, they joined Nanak's religion and purified their souls through communion with the Most High.

After some time he came to the town of Batala and stayed there and gave the needed guidance to the worldly people against the wicked and crooked ones. In accordance with the injunctions of the creator the creation takes place through the union of males and the females. Guru Nanak who was the follower of the principle of unity and concord and whose lustrous light brightened up the world, got himself married according to the prevalent customs and ceremonies. He then established himself opposite to the town of Batala on the bank of river Ravi and absorbed himself completely in meditation of the Absolute. From the treasure of the divine secrets, God bestowed upon him two pearls (sons). One of them was named Lakhmi Dass and the other Sri Chand. Lakhmi Dass was blessed with an auspicious Bedi progeny who are noted for their gentleness, virtue, piety and meditation. Sri Chand engaged himself exclusively in the worship of the Absolute creator, and through his blessings and meditation he started a distinguishing order that came to be known as the Udasis. The Udasis recite the sweet verses of Baba Nanak and meditate on the name of their Guru (Sri Chand).

The earthen body of every human being is liable to dissolution. The Divine Master in his life time reposed great trust in Lehna a Khatri of the Trehan family, because of his sincerity, faith and unique service. As service is held in high esteem, Guru Nanak at the time of his departure from this world bestowed the apostleship upon Lehna. He was given the name of Guru Angad and was appointed as the successor of Guru Nanak in the reign of Salim Shah Afghan [in fact, during the first reign of Humayun (1530—1539)]. Guru Nanak passed away the Bikrami year one thousand five hundred and nintysix [correspond to 1539 A.D.].

—Trans. Bhagat Singh

\* Manuscript in the collection of Dr. Ganda Singh, Patiala; also Panjab University Library, Lahore(Pakistan), No. 167.

## SELECTIONS FROM THE HYMNS of GURU NANAK

The selection has been made with the help of the following works :

- Macauliffe, Max Arthur. *The Sikh Religion. Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*. Oxford, 1909.  
Daljit Singh, Raja Sir. *The Voice of the Gurus* : Selection rendered into English by Sir Jogendra Singh. Lahore, 1934.  
Kahan Singh Bhai. *Gurmat Martand*. Amritsar, 1962. 2 vols.

In addition to these, a number of hymns have been selected by the editor from the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* for the Panjabi Section of the present issue of the *Panjab Past and Present* and have been rendered into English by him for this Section.

For the convenience of the readers, the hymns have been arranged under the following sub-headings:

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|--|---|
| 1. God, Conception of                                  | 20. Live a Virtuous Life                                  |
| 2. Limitless is God's Nature                           | 21. Practise Truth and Honesty                            |
| 3. Universe, Creation of                               | 22. Real Religion   |
| 4. The Right Path                                      | 23. Real Hermit   |
| 5. Devotion  | 24. A Truly Learned Man                                   |
| 6. Idol Worship  | 25. A Real Muslim   |
| 7. Salvation   | 26. Castes are a Folly                                    |
| 8. Human Body is the Temple of God                     | 27. Good Deeds  |
| 9. Discipline  | 28. True Men  |
| 10. Real Happiness                                     | 29. Desirelessness  |
| 11. Remember Him to be Happy                           | 30. Humility  |
| 12. Love and Service                                   | 31. The Age of Tyranny                                    |
| 13. Mind Impure, Body Impure                           | 32. Invasion of India by Babur                            |
| 14. Food and Dress                                     | 33. After the Sack of Saidpur (Eminabad)                  |
| 15. Base Acts  | 34. After the Defeat of the <i>Lodhis</i>                 |
| 16. Hypocrisy  | 35. Change in Circumstances                               |
| 17. Abandon Vice and Falsehood Pursue Virtue and Truth | 36. After Seeing People Dispose of their Dead at Saidpur. |
| 18. Effect of Company                                  |   |
| 19. As you Sow, so shall you Reap                      |   |



## THE HYMNS

### 1. *Conception of God*

There is but one God whose name is True, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal,  
unborn, self-existent, enlightener and bountiful.

The True One was in the beginning; the True One was in the primal age.

The True One is now also, O Nanak; The True One also shall be.

—*Japji, Mulmantra*

The Unseen, Infinite, Inaccessible, Inapprehensible God is not subject to death or destiny.

He is of no caste, unborn, self-existent, without fear or doubt.

I am a sacrifice to the Truest of the true.

He hath no form or colour or outline; He becometh manifest by the true Word.

He hath no mother, father, son, or kinsman, He feeleth not lust, and hath no wife, or family;

He is pure, endless, and infinite; all light is Thine, O Lord.

God liveth in every heart; His light is in every heart.

—*Sorath*

He is not established, nor is He created.

The Pure one existeth by Himself.

They who worshipped Him have obtained honour.

—*Japji*

Himself Mother, Himself Father.

Himself smallest atom,

Himself the largest.

Himself the Creator,

Himself established in His own *Maya*.

Says Nanak, His play is beyond comprehension.

Bow to that One God, the Great Truth, which pervades for all time.

—*Bāwan Akhri*

There is but one Lord and one way;

Adopt one and reject the other.

Why should we worship a second who is born and dieth?

Remember the one God, Nanak who is contained in Sea and Land.

He is the one and He is the many.

Nanak says he should be discerned as one.

—*Bāwan Akhri*

He himself pervades the universe,

No other is, nor shall ever be.

He himself is the doer.

—*Bāwan Akhri*

There is but one Giver, the whole world are beggars.

They who forsake Him and attach themselves to others lose all their honour.

Kings and Emperors are all made by Him.

There is none equal to Him.

Saith Nanak, hear, Emperor Babar,

He who beggeth of thee is a fool.

My Lord is one, O brother. He is one—

He is One.

—*Asa*

### 2. *Limitless is God's Nature*

Thou dwellest in Thy Nature, O Lord.

Thou art limitless — Thy end no one knoweth.

In Thy creatures is Thy Light.

Through Thy Light art Thou known. ...  
Wonderful are Thy Ways, sayeth Nanak.  
Whatever Thou hath to do. Thou doest it (in Thy Own Way).

—*Asa, Var, xii-2*

There are Hundreds of thousands of nether and upper regions.  
Men have grown weary at last of searching/or *God's* limits;  
The Vedas say one thing, *that God has no limit.*

—*Japji, 22*

There is no limit to His mercy, and to His gifts there is no limit.  
The limit of His creation cannot be known; Neither His near nor His far side can be discovered.  
His limits cannot be ascertained.  
Nobody knoweth His limits.  
Nanak, God bestoweth gifts *on whom He looketh* with favour and mercy.

—*Japji, 24*

Nanak, only the True One Himself knoweth how great He is.  
If any one were to speak improperly of God,  
write him down as the most ignorant of men.

—*Japji, 26*

In the realm of knowledge the light of divine knowledge, is resplendent.  
There are heard songs from which millions of Joys and pleasures proceed.

—*Japji, 36*

There are continents, worlds, and universes.  
Whoever trieth to describe them shall never arrive at the end

—*Japji, 37*

In all the three worlds is his light shining.  
He is the greatest world protector.

—*Dakbni Omkār*

The soul dieth not, neither is it drowned; it is saved *through fear of God.*  
Thy worlds and Thy under-worlds are innumerable. I cannot count them.

—*Vār Malār*

Thou hast a thousand eyes and yet not one eye;  
Thou hast a thousand forms and yet not one form,  
Thou hast a thousand stainless feet and yet not one foot;  
Thou hast a thousand organs of smell and yet not one organ.  
I am fascinated by this play of Thine.  
The light which is in everything is Thine, O Lord of light.

—*Dhanāsri*

### 3. *Universe, Creation of*

No one knows the date, the day, the month or the season when this world came into being.  
The Creator who created the universe. He Himself only knows.

—*Japji*

The Lord of millions of worlds is one God.  
He is the giver of life to all that lives.  
His treasures are spread in the world, whatever we get comes from Him.  
The Creator creates and surveys His universe.  
Nanak, true are the actions of the True One.

—*Japji*

He pervades the Universe and  
His command reigns.

—*Sorath*

By Thy power were made heavens and the nether regions.  
By Thy power all creation.

Thou art the Omnipotent Creator.  
All things are subject to thy command :  
Thou art altogether unrivalled.

—*Asa di Vār*

He consulteth no one when He createth;  
He consulteth no one when he destroyeth;  
He consulteth no one when He giveth or taketh;  
He knoweth His own might.  
He acteth and causeth others to act.

*Ashtpadian*

#### 4. *The Right Path*

Let thy feet walk in the path of God.  
The feet become pure and sacred, walking in the right path.  
The hand is blessed that writest the praise of God.  
He who lives on the fruit of his labour, and gives part of it in charity,  
Such a person knows the path of salvation.  
Uttering falsehood amounts to eating carrion.

—*Mājh*

Let the tongue never utter an untruth.

—*Ratan Mal*

Why start fresh quarrels by speaking evil of others.

—*Vadhans*

Never speak evil of any—  
Having read, grasp the truth.  
Never quarrel with a fool, nor speak evil of others.

—*Var Asa*

By talking evil of others, the body and mind become soiled.

—*Var Asa*

Speak so that your word is respected, such a speech is agreeable.  
Listen, O unknowing ignorant mind, To speak evil is to court sorrow.

—*Sri Rag*

Come together and unite my brothers in devotion. Remove duality,  
Bear enmity to no one, in every heart God dwells.

—*Bāwan Akhri*

#### 5. *Devotion*

Read of God, think of God,  
Recite God's name, contemplate God;  
Let God's name be thy support,  
Concentrate your love on God.

—*Dakhni Omkār*

Devotion to God's name removes egoism.  
Devotion to God's name is the way to true unity.  
Devotion to God's name leads to perfect union.  
Devotion to God's name is the door to emancipation.  
Devotion to God's name is the means of the knowledge of the three worlds.  
Says Nanak, devotion to God's name gives eternal bliss.

—*Sidh Gosht*

With the birth of true understanding comes right contemplation of God.  
The inner light flames up and subdues the mind, and by God's grace Samadhi is attained.

—*Sarang*

#### 6. *Idol Worship*

My brethren, you worship goddesses and gods; what can you ask them ? and what can they give you ?

Even if a stone be washed with water, it will again sink in it.

—*Sorath Asht. vi-6*

They worship according to the instruction of Narad.

They are blind and dumb, the blindest of the blind.

The ignorant fools take stones and worship them.

O Hindus, how shall the stone, which itself sinketh, carry you across ?

— *Bihāgarā, Var xx-2*

He who worships stones, visits places of pilgrimage, dwells in forests,

Renounces the world, only wavers and wavers.

How can this filthy mind become pure ?

He who meets the True One shall obtain honour.

—*Dhānasri Asht.*

### 7. *Salvation*

To give a feast, make a, burnt offering, offer alms, perform penance and worship, and endure bodily pain for ever are all of no avail.

Without God's name salvation is not obtained; the holy man obtaineth it by the Name. —*Bhairo*

Nanak, the following handfuls of water are pure if any one know how to fill them —

Divine knowledge for the Pandit, continence for the Jogi,

Contentment for the Brahman, alms out of what he hath himself earned for the family man;

Justice for the king, meditation on the True One for the learned.

—*Sarang hi Var*

In the Kal age men have faces like dogs, and eat carrion.

They bark as they utter falsehood, and have no regard for honesty.

They who have no honour while alive, shall have an evil reputation after death.

What is destined taketh place, Nanak; What the Creator doeth cometh to pass.

—*Sarang ki Var*

Accursed the lives of those who write God's name to sell it.

They whose crop is spoiled require no place for a harvest-heap.

They who are devoid of truth and modesty will receive no assistance hereafter.

—*Sarang ki Var*

Call not by the name of wisdom the wisdom which is spent in wrangling.

By wisdom the Lord is worshipped; by wisdom honour is obtained.

It is by wisdom what is read is understood, it is by wisdom alms are properly bestowed.

Nanak saith, these are the ways of wisdom, all else are ways of wickedness.

—*Sarang ki Var*

They who make truth their fasting, contentment their place of pilgrimage, divine knowledge and meditation their ablutions,

Mercy their idol, and forgiveness their rosary, are foremost *in God's favour*.

Nanak, few there are who make the right way their loin-cloths, meditation on God their cooking squares.

Good deeds their frontal marks, and God's love their food.

—*Sarang ki Var*

They who eat the fruit of their labour and bestow something, O Nanak, recognize the right way.

—*Sarang ki Var*

The whole world is impermanent, in it no abiding friendship can be found.

Why love that which is not permanent ?

—*Sri Rag*

Clear thy mind from delusion.

This world is like a dream.

Men, angels, gods and goddesses,



The ascetics and the saints and wise Brahmans, are all under its glamour.  
Under its delusion men chase shadows.  
It weaves deep and dangerous spells.  
Destroy its illusion from the mind, with it depart attachment and fear.  
And man attains supreme peace.

—*Bāwan Akhri*

We cannot get to Heaven by mere talk;  
We must practise righteousness, if we want salvation.

—*Majb*

Your good actions may procure for you a better birth, but Salvation is from Grace.

—*Japji*

#### 8. *Human Body is the Temple of God.*

The body is the temple in which God dwells. It is full of rare rubies.  
Remember God's name.  
Meditating on the Guru's instruction, purify this mind and body.  
There is the treasure of God's name in this body, to be found with the assistance of the Guru.

—*Rāmkalī Vār*

Body is the mansion, the temple, the house of the Lord;  
In it is placed eternal light.

—*Malār*

So nourish the body that you may serve the Lord.

—*Sūbi*

#### 9. *Discipline*

Make mind the farmer—this body the earth,  
Good deeds the seed, and irrigate it with the rain of devotion.  
Produce God in your heart and gain imperishable merit.

—*Sri Rag*

Know the one God to be inside and outside,  
By the grace of the Guru, the fire will die out.

—*Sidh Gosht*

Burn egoism, individuality and avarice, remove impurity with the help of God's word.

—*Bilawal*

Wicked slander is evil. The follower of the promptings of the mind is blind, and a stupid fool.

—*Dakhni Omkar*

Be a true warrior and fight and subdue the self.  
Destroy ego, the enemy, and thus attain fame.  
Let the self die in the fight, under the teaching of the true Guru.  
He who conquers the mind finds God; he indeed is a hero.  
Regarding nothing as his own, depending on one God alone, Considering himself the humblest and  
always engaged in search, night and day remembering Him, such a person is great.  
One who obeys God's command is ever happy, he will gain what God has ordained, says Nanak.

—*Bāwan Akhri*

As long as the mind does not die, success is not attained.  
Duality and evil thoughts rule the mind.  
It is calmed according to the Guru's instruction, then Unity is gained.

—*M.1.*

The world is conquered by conquering the mind.

—*Japji*

O my mind, the treasure is in thy heart, do not search outside.

—*Wadhans*

Who knows Him becomes like Him, pure within and pure without,  
The one who repeats inwardly the Name with devotion, in him God will dwell. —*Dakhni Omkār*

Hold the five passions in subjection.  
The sensualist gets disease and pain. —*Rattan Māl*

Whosoever thinks evil of others, will never prosper. —*Var Gauri*

10. *Real Happiness*

By restraining his mental desires man shall assuredly cross the terrible ocean.  
Thou, O Lord, wast in the beginning and in the primal age; Thou art the Merciful; I have entered  
Thine asylum.  
Thou art the Giver; we are Thy beggars; O God, grant us a sight of Thee.  
*O man*, meditate on the Name under the Guru's instruction, and thou shalt be happy in the temple of  
thy heart.  
Renounce falsehood and avarice; and then shalt thou recognize the True One.  
Renounce avarice, ye blind; it bringeth great unhappiness.  
If the True Lord dwell in the heart, the poison of pride shall be removed.  
Forsake the evil way of mammon, my brethren, or ye shall be plundered.  
Day and night praise the Name under the protection of the true Guru.  
*The mind of* the perverse is a stone or a rock; accursed and vain is his life.  
However much a stone be put into the water, it is dry at the core.  
God's name is wealth, the true Guru hath given it.  
Nanak, he who forgeteth not God's name drinketh distilled nectar.  
He whose mind is imbued with God's name discourseth of the True One.  
What care I for men if I please Thee ?  
As long as there are life and soul, meditate on the True One.  
The profit of singing God's praises is that man obtaineth happiness.  
They who consider happiness and misery the same, and *know* the secret of the Word shall be happy.  
*Asā, Asht*

11. *Remember Him to be Happy*

By hearing the Name, the mind is composed and fixed on God.  
Nanak, the saints are ever happy.  
By hearing the Name, sorrow and sin are no more. —*Jappi 10*

So pure is His name—  
Whoever obeyeth God knoweth *the pleasure of it* in his own heart. —*Jappi 12*

By obeying Him wisdom and understanding *enter* the mind ;  
By obeying Him man shall not depart with Yama— —*Jappi 13*

There is no place without Thy name.  
What power have I to describe Thee ? —*Jappi 19*

So when the mind is defiled by sin, it is cleansed by the love of the Name.  
Men do not become saints or sinners by merely calling themselves so.  
He himself soweth, and he himself eateth.  
Nanak, man suffereth transmigration by God's order. —*Jappi 20*

When egoism is destroyed, happiness is gained, the mind and body become healthy,

Then One worthy of praise is seen, says Nanak. —*Bāwan Akhri*

He lives, in whose heart God dwells, none other lives. —*Mājh Var, x-1*

Says Nanak, he has found happiness, in whose heart the one God dwells. — *Bāwan Akhri*

Those who recognise the truth are happy, in all four ages.  
Having destroyed desires, they live in truth which pervades their hearts. —*Asa*

Whoever has tested himself, he can test others.  
Says Nanak whoever knows the self, he is the greatest of the great. —*Gauri Maru*

#### 12. Love and Service

God maketh Himself manifest and beholdeth men.  
He is not pleased by obstinate penance, nor by many religious garbs.  
He who fashioned the vessel *of the body* and poured into it His ambrosial *gifts*,  
Will only be satisfied with man's love and service.  
He who worshippeth stones, visiteth places of pilgrimage, dwelleth in forests, and renounceth the  
world, wandereth and wavereth.  
How can his filthy mind become pure ?  
He who meeteth the True One shall obtain honour. —*Dhānāsri Asht.*

He who performeth service is a servant of Him, who pervadeth the water, the dry land, the nether  
regions, and the firmament.  
I am not good; there is nobody bad.  
The representation of Nanak is—*he who thinketh* so is saved.—*Subi*  
We men live but for a moment; we know not *if we shall live* the space of two gharis.  
Nanak representeth, serve Him to whom belong our souls and bodies.  
O fool, consider how many days thy life shall last. —*Dhānāsri*

We should worship the Name, believe in the Name, which is ever and ever the same and true.  
—*Sri Rag*

Those who love the Lord, love every body. —*Wadhans*  
If thou desire to play at love with me,  
Come my way with thy head in the palm of thy hand.  
If thou put thy feet on this road;  
Give thy head and regard not human opinion. —*Slok Vārān ton Wadhrik*

There can be no love of God, without active service, —*Japji*

Let us serve in the world, then shall we find a place in the court of the Lord. —*Sri Rag*

True service can be rendered only by those who, free from all personal ambition and in perfect  
contentment, pay homage to Truth alone.  
They refrain from trading in the path of evil, and, doing good, practise honesty.  
They have broken the bonds of worldliness, and eat and drink moderately. —*Asa-di-Var*

#### 13. Mind Impure, Body Impure

When the mind is impure the body is impure, and the tongue impure. :  
The mouth is impure by uttering impurity; how shall it be made pure ?  
The heart cannot be cleansed without the (God's) Word; from the True One truth is obtained.

—*Ashtapadi*

Impurity of the heart is greed. Impurity of the tongue is falsehood.  
Impurity of the eyes is gazing on another's wealth, his wife or her beauty.  
Impurity of the ears is listening to slander.  
Nanak, such men are found out, and go to the abode of death.  
The worst impurity is doubt, which leads one astray.  
Eating and drinking is pure, it is given by God as sustenance.

—*Var Asa*

False within and fair outside, making an external show,  
Such people, even if they bathe in the sixty-eight places of worship, cannot wash off their impurity.  
—*Var Asa*

Those are not really pure, who sit with their bodies washed.  
They alone are pure in whose heart God dwells.  
—*Var Asa*

#### 14. *Food and Dress*

Eating and drinking is pure, it is given by God for sustenance.  
—*Var Asa*

The enjoyment of that food is evil, my friend, which gives pain to the body and evil thoughts to the mind.  
The wearing of that dress is evil, my friend, which gives pains to the body and evil thoughts to the mind.  
—*Sri Rag*

#### 15. *Base Acts*

Covetousness is a dog, falsehood a sweeper, food obtained by deceit carrion;  
Slander of others is merely others' filth in our mouths; the fire of anger is a sweeper.  
Pleasures and self-praise—these are mine acts, O Creator.  
My friends, doth any one obtain honour by mere words ?  
Call them the best, who are the best at the gate of the Lord; they who do base acts sit and weep.

#### 16. *Hypocrisy*

Men of evil minds and thievish bodies go to bathe at places of pilgrimage.  
One part of their filth departeth by bathing, but they contract double more.  
A gourd may be externally washed, but, it containeth undiluted poison within.  
Holy men are good without bathing; a thief is always a thief *whether he baths or not*.  
—*Subi Vār*

If sandal be rubbed on a donkey, he will still roll in the dust.  
Nanak, by spinning falsehood, the web of falsehood is woven.  
—*Subi Var*

Some read the Veds, some the Purans :  
Some repeat names on their rosaries and meditate on them.  
I know not and never knew anything else; I recognize only Thy name.  
—*Rāmkali*

The perverse, having through avarice abandoned their own homes, ruin themselves by casting  
covetous eyes on the houses of others.  
They have ruined their state as householders; they have not met the True Guru, and through their  
stupidity are involved in a whirlpool.  
Of wandering in foreign countries and reading texts they grow weary, and their covetousness  
increaseth.  
Of weak intellect, they know not the Word; they fill their bellies like cattle.  
The Kapari, with a bowl in his hand and excessive greed in his heart, abandoneth his own wife, and

filled with lust coveteth his neighbour's.

—*Māru Asht.*

What *religious* acts can he perform who hath greed in his heart ? He uttereth falsehood and eateth poison.

O Pandit, if thou churn coagulated milk, butter shall be produced,

If thou churn water, thou shalt obtain but water; this is the way of the world.

The unseen God dwelleth in every heart, yet without the Guru man is ruined by wandering.

—*Sorath, Asht.*

If thou put a bad coin with others,

It will be found counterfeit on being assayed.

As a man acteth, so shall be his reward:

He himself soweth and he himself eateth the fruit.

Even though man praiseth himself, yet will he act according to his understanding.

If he tell hundreds of lies *to conceal the truth*, *He shall still be false* even though the whole world call him good.

—*Dhanāsri*

So the body which is empty within and possesseth no love, shall fall and become a heap of dust.

O my brethren, your bodies and wealth shall not accompany you.

—*Ashtapadi*

#### 17. *Abandon Vice and Falsehood, Pursue Virtue and Truth*

Abandon covetousness and slander, for swear falsehood and thou shalt obtain the true fruit through the Guru's instruction.

Abandon falsehood, pursue truth, and thou shalt obtain the fruit thy heart desireth.

Few are they who traffic in true merchandise; they who do so obtain profit, but the holy who wear the armour of mildness are unaffected by them.

Good are they who deal in truth;

By the Guru's wisdom they obtain the true merchandise.

—*Māru Solbe*

Put away from you lust, wrath, and slander;

Abandon avarice, and covetousness, and you shall be free from care.

He who breaketh the chain of superstition shall be free, and feel divine pleasure in his heart.

The happy and incomparable perfect .Guru showeth man day and night the light within him, and he beholdeth it like a bright flash of lightning at night.

—*Māru Solbe*

Cease to covet another's wife and another's goods; shun the deadly sins of pride, evil inclinations, slander, lust and wrath, the executioners.

The inaccessible and illimitable God dwelleth in man's heart.

He shall obtain nectar in his own heart, whose conduct is according to the Guru's precious instruction, and who considereth woe and weal and the blame and praise of the world as the same.

—*Malar*

He who heareth and obeyeth and loveth *God* in his heart, shall wash off his *impurity* in the place of pilgrimage within him.

All virtues are Thine, O Lord; none are mine.

There is no devotion without virtue.

—*Japji, xxi*

The saints are few, not many; deceit and wrangling *prevail* in the world.

Nanak, those men are the real donkeys who are proud without merit.

—*Addl. Sloks*

#### 18. *Effect of Company*

Whatever company one keeps, he gathers its fruit.

- *Vār Gauri*

Shun evil company, like poison it destroys life.

- *Parbhāṭi*

Those who keep bad company, suffer eternal pain.  
The cultivation of evil breeds evil.  
Trading in evil, mind and body become evil.

- Sri Rag

19. *As you Sow, So shall you Reap*

The words man speaketh shall be taken into account; the food he eateth shall be taken into account;  
Man's movements shall be taken into account; what he heareth and seeth shall be taken into account;  
Every breath he draweth shall be taken into account; why should I go and ask the learned ?  
O father, attachment to *Maya* is deceitful.  
He who being *spiritually* blind forgeteth God's name, shall gain neither this world nor the next.  
Life and death are for everything that is born; death devoureth everything here. —*Mac. i*, 186

He who filleth the sack shall load it on *himself*; the will of God is, over all;  
Nanak, they who have acted honestly shall depart with bright faces. —*To Baba-ud-Din, Mac. i*, 187

Hail to the Creator, the True King, who allotted to the world its *various* duties;  
When the measure is full, the duration *of life* is at an end; the soul is led away;  
When the destined hour arriveth, the soul is led away and all one's relations weep.  
The body and soul are separated, O, my mother, when one's days are at an end.  
Thou hast obtained what was allotted thee, and reaped the fruit of thy former acts.  
Hail to the Creator, the True King, who allotted to the world its *various* duties.  
Remember the Lord, O my brethren; all must depart.  
The affairs of this world are transitory, only for four days; we must assuredly proceed onwards;  
We must assuredly proceed onwards like a guest; why should we be proud ?  
Repeat the name of Him "by whose worship thou shalt obtain happiness in His court.  
In the next world thou canst in no wise enforce thine authority; *every one shall fare according to his acts.*  
—*Mac. i. 188-89*

Whether near or far, our deeds bear the fruit.

—*Japji*

20. *Live a Virtuous Life*

If our friends possess virtues, let us go and become partners with them.  
Let us form a partnership with virtue and abandon vice.  
Let us wear silk, go in state, and take possession of our arena.  
Wherever we go, let us sit down, speak civilly, and skim and drink nectar.  
If one have a casket of virtues, let him extract odour therefrom. —*Subi chhant, ghar IV*

Renounce evil, cultivate virtue—evil brings suffering and remorse,  
Those who do not discriminate between a clear reservoir and a dirty pool, sink in the morass.  
Soiled within by the dirt of greed and falsehood, why wash the outside?  
Clean thyself of greed, falsehood and evil speaking.  
By repeating His name as the Guru directs, thou shall attain the truth.  
Praise God, praise the Word, and let His will be done. —*Sorath*

Whatever you sow that you reap; without virtue life remains barren.  
O Man, be afraid of unconscious sin.

—*Sri Asa*

21. *Practise Truth and Honesty*

Practise truth, contentment, and love; and then the worship of God's name shall be thy viaticum.  
Banish sin from thy mind, and the True One will bestow truth :  
The True One bestoweth true love on the true.  
What pleaseth Thee, O God, is the real justice.

True are the gifts which the true and merciful One granteth.  
Serve Him day and night whose Name is priceless. —*Asa Asht.*

When thou embracest virtue thou shalt know God; Virtue shall abide with thee and vice be put to flight. —*Asa Chhant*

Why wash the body defiled by falsehood?  
The practice of truth is the acceptable ablution.  
When there is truth in the heart, then man becometh true and obtaineth the True One. —*Wadbans Chhant*

What rightfully belongs to others, is unlawful; to the Muslim like the pig, to the Hindu like the cow.  
The Guru and the Pir will only support those who do not eat *carrion*. —*Var Majh*

Truth is the remedy of all evils.  
Only truth can wash away our sins. —*Asa-di-Var*

Truth never gets old. —*Ramkali Var*

Falsehood exhausts itself;  
Truth prevails in the end. —*Ramkali*

Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is Truthful living. —*Sri Rag*

## 22. *Real Religion*

Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a Jogi's staff, or in ashes smeared over the body.  
Religion consisteth not in ear-rings worn, or a shaven head, or in the blowing of horns.  
Abide pure amid the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way of religion.  
Religion consisteth not in mere words;  
He who looketh on all men as equal is religious.  
Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitude of contemplation.  
Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimages.  
Abide pure amid the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way of religion.  
Make God the well, string *His name* for the necklace of water-pots, and yoke thy mind as an ox thereto;  
Irrigate with nectar and fill the parterres therewith, thus shalt thou belong to the Gardener.  
Beat both thy lust and anger into a spade, with which dig up the earth, O brother;  
The more thou diggest, the happier shalt thou be: such work shall not be effaced in vain —*Subi*

## 23. *A Real Hermit*

He who taketh the sword of knowledge and wrestleth with his heart;  
Who knoweth the secrets of the ten organs of action and perception and of the five evil passions;  
Who can knot divine knowledge to his mind;  
Who maketh pilgrimage on each of the three hundred and sixty days of the year;  
Who washeth the filth of *pride* from his heart—  
Nanak saith, he is a hermit. —*Mac. i 159*

He who effaceth wrath, avarice, and greed;  
Who quencheth the fire of five evil passions within his heart;  
Who day and night flieth the kite by which divine knowledge is produced and evil inclinations depart;  
Who cherisheth holiness, restraineth his evil passions  
And repeateth no spell but the Guru's—

The habits of that good man are the best—  
Nanak saith, these are the marks of a *Jogi*.

—Mac. i 161

Know him to be meek whose heart is meek,  
And whose instruction is the profitable Word,  
Nanak saith, he is an *Audhut*.

—Mac. i 160

24. *A Truly Learned Man*

Keep watch over thy heart, so shalt thou be a really learned man;  
Abandon delights, ease, evil speaking, mental anxiety, and vexation;  
Treasure kindness in thy heart, and renounce the devices of infidelity;  
Extinguish the fire of lust in thy heart, and thus become cool.  
Saith Nanak, *thus* practise fasting, and thy faith shall be perfect.

—Mac. i, 176

25. *A Real Muslim*

To be a Musalman is difficult; if one be really so, then one may be called a Musalman,  
Let one first love the religion of saints, and put aside pride and self as the file *removeth rust*,  
Let him accept the religion of his pilots, and dismiss anxiety regarding death or life;  
Let him heartily obey the will of God, worship the Creator, and efface himself—  
When he is kind to all men, then Nanak, shall he be indeed a Musalman.

*Mājḥ Var, viii*

Make kindness thy mosque, sincerity thy prayer-carpet, what is Just and lawful thy Quran,  
Modesty thy circumcision, civility thy fasting, so shalt thou be a Musalman.  
Make right conduct thy Kaaba, truth thy spiritual guide, good works thy creed and thy prayer,  
The will of God thy rosary, and God will preserve thine honour, O Nanak.  
Thou shalt not go to heaven by lip service; it is by the practice of truth thou shalt be delivered.  
Unlawful food will not become lawful by putting spices therein.  
Nanak, from false words only falsehood can be obtained.  
There are five prayers, five times for prayer, and five names for them—  
The first should be truth, the second what is right, the third charity in God's name,  
The fourth good intentions, the fifth the praise and glory of God.  
If thou make good works the creed thou repeatest, thou shalt be a Musalman.  
They who are false, O Nanak, shall only obtain what is altogether false.

—*Mājḥ Var. vii*

26. *Castes are a Folly*

Faith and resignation are the characteristics of the holy; patience is the viaticum of angels.  
Castes are folly, names are folly :  
All creatures have one shelter, *that of God*.

—*Sri Rag, Var*

He who serveth the One God knoweth not others ;  
He layeth aside the bitter things, deceit and evil.  
By love and truth shalt thou meet the Truest of the True.

—*Gauri Asht.*

What power has caste ? It is work that is tested,

—*Mājḥ*

Nanak, no body is without some worth,

—*Rāmkali*

Recognize divine light in every one;  
Do not inquire about caste.  
There is no caste in the next world.

—*Asa*

There are the lowest men among the low classes;



Nanak, I am with them, what have I got to do with the great ?  
God's eye's of mercy falls on those who take care of the lowly. —Sri Rag

The whole world is made of the same clay, as a potter makes vessels of different shapes.  
So the blending of five elements makes up the body—  
Who can think of more or less.  
Says Nanak, this being is tied down by its own deeds.  
Without meeting a true guide, emancipation cannot be gained. —Bhairon

The mud wall must tumble down—why apply much plaster to it ? —Basant

### 27. Good Deeds

Good deeds bring good results,  
Bad deeds bad results.  
The true lover is not he who keepeth an account.  
What love is that which attacheth itself to other things ?  
Nanak, he is a true lover who is ever absorbed in God. —Asa Var  
Make the body the field, the mind the ploughman, good deeds, the husbandry;  
God's name the seed, contentment the roller; then irrigate with modesty.  
Bear thyself in humility and simplicity.  
The seed of devotion will germinate, and thy home will be blessed. —Sorath

Without good deeds you cannot be a devotee. —Japji

Knowledge is obtained through virtue.  
In virtue knowledge is born. —Dakhni Omkar

And I, Nanak, say man shall be true to his faith if he fear God and do good works. —Mac. i, 179

### 28. True Men

They who have heart-felt love for God are the true;  
But they who have one thing in their hearts and utter another are accounted false.  
They who are imbued with the love of God and a longing to behold him are also true.  
Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are obtained from God's name; the love of God is obtained  
by association with the saints.  
Day and night profit is obtained from God's name given by the beneficent Guru,  
He on whom the Creator looketh with favour obtaineth instruction from the Guru's words.  
The body is the palace, the temple, and the house of God; into it He putteth His eternal light.  
Nanak, the pious are invited to God's palace; He will blend them with Himself —Malar

### 29. Desirelessness

When the secret of implicit obedience to the Divine Will is known, self-assertion goes. —Japji

Home and forest are equal to one who realises the self. —Asa

Difficult is the river of life. By casting off the load of desire it can be crossed.  
By the Guru's grace, the self is known and the ego dies. —Dakhni Omkar

### 30. Humility

Nanak, life is most fruitful, when we meet with those who practise humility and gentleness even  
while they are strong. —Sri Rag

Sweetness and Humility are the essence of all virtue.

—*Asa-di-Var*

Faith and Resignation are the characteristics of the holy, Patience is the virtue of angels. —*Sri Rag*

All men are liable to err; it is only God or the Guru who is above *error*. —*Sri Rag*

31. *The Age of Tyranny*

The Kal age is a knife, kings are butchers; justice hath taken wings and fled.  
In this completely dark night of falsehood the moon of truth is never seen to rise.  
I have become perplexed in my search; in the darkness I find no way.  
Devoted to pride, I weep in sorrow:  
Saith Nanak, how shall deliverance be obtained ?

—*Majh, Var xvi*

32. *Invasion of India by Babar*

As the word of the Lord cometh to me, so I make known, O Lalo—  
Bringing a bridal procession of sin, *Babar* hath hasted from Kabul and with force demanded the I  
hand of the bride [India], O Lalo.  
Modesty and religion have vanished; falsehood marcheth in the van, O Lalo.  
The occupation of the Qazis and the Brahmans is gone; the devil readeth the marriage service, O  
Lalo,  
Musalman women read the Quran, and in suffering call upon God, O Lalo.  
Hindu women whether of high or low caste, meet the same fate *as they*, O Lalo.  
They sing the paean of murder, O Nanak, and smear themselves with the saffron of blood.  
Nanak singeth the praises of the Lord in the city of corpses, and uttereth this commonplace—  
He who made men assigned them different positions; He sitteth apart alone and regardeth them.  
True is the Lord, true His decision, true the justice He meteth out as an example.  
Bodies shall be cut like shreds of cloth; Hindustan will remember what I say.  
They shall come in '78, depart in '97, and then shall rise another disciple of a hero.  
Nanak uttereth the word of the True One, and will proclaim the truth at the True One's *appointed* me.

—*Tilang, ghar Hi, 5*

God can cause lions, hawks, kestrels, and falcons to eat grass;  
And the animals which eat grass He can cause to eat meat—such a custom can He establish.  
He can cause hills to appear in rivers, and unfathomable rivers in sandy deserts.  
He can appoint a worm to sovereignty, and reduce an army to ashes.  
What *wonder* would it be if God caused to live without breath all the animals which live by breathing ?  
Nanak, as it pleaseth the True One, so He giveth us sustenance. —*Majh Var. xiv*

The Lord took Khurasan under His protection and terrified India (Hindustan).  
He taketh no blame to Himself. He deputed the angel of death (Yama) in the guise of Mughal to  
invade (India).  
When there was so much slaughter and groaning (from the people), didn't Thou feel pain (O Lord) ?  
O creator. Thou art the same to all.  
If a powerful person were to beat another powerful person, then  
there is no (cause for) grievance in mind.  
(But) if a ferocious lion were to pounce upon a herd of cattle, the Master (the protector of the herd)  
should be answerable for it.  
The dogs (the Lodhi rulers) have thrown away the precious gem (the country of Hindustan) in a  
ravaged condition.  
When they are dead and gone, no one would care for them (remember them with regard).  
Thou Thyself, O Lord, joinest and Thou Thyself separatest. Lo! This is Thy greatness.  
If anyone were to assume a big name and were to behave in a self-willed manner,

In the eyes of God he is (nothing but) a worm that nibbleth some grain.  
If one liveth by dying to one's self (or lives a selfless life), then alone he gaineth some thing (as real profit of life) in His Name, sayeth Nanak. —Asa. 39

33. *After the Sack of Saidpur (Eminabad)*

They who wore beautiful tresses and the partings of whose hair were dyed with vermillion,  
Have their locks now shorn with the scissors, and dust is thrown upon their heads.  
They dwelt in their private chambers; now they cannot find a seat in public—  
Hail, Father ! hail!  
O Primal Being, Thy limit is not known; Thou makest and beholdest the different phases of  
*existence*—  
When they were married, they appeared beautiful near their spouses;  
They came in their sedans adorned with ivory;  
Water was waved round their heads, and glittering fans over them.  
They had hundreds of thousands waiting on them sitting, and hundreds of thousands waiting on  
them standing.  
Eating coco-nuts and dates they sported on their couches;  
But now chains are on their necks, and broken are their strings of pearls.  
The wealth and beauty which afforded them pleasure have now become their bane.  
The order was given to the soldiers to take and dishonour them.  
If it please God, He giveth greatness; and if it please Him, He giveth punishment.  
If they had thought of Him before, why should they have received punishment ?  
But they had lost *all* thought of God in joys, in spectacles, and in pleasures.  
When Babar's rule was proclaimed no prince ate his food.  
Some lost their *five* times of prayer, others their *hours* of worship.  
How shall Hindu women now bathe and apply frontal marks without their sacred squares ?  
They who never thought of *Ram* are not now allowed even to mention *Khuda*.  
One may return to her home; another may meet and inquire after the safety of a relation;  
But others are destined to sit and weep in pain —Asa, *Asht.ghar iii*

34. *After the Defeat of the Lodhis,*

Where are those sports, those stables, and those horses ? Where those bugles and clarions ?  
Where are those who buckled on their swords and were mighty in battle ? Where are those scarlet  
uniforms ?  
Where those mirrors and fair faces ? We see them no longer here.  
This world is Thine, O Lord of the earth.  
In one ghari Thou establishes! and disestablishes!; Thou distributes! wealth as Thou pleasest.  
Where are those houses, those mansions, and those palaces ? where those beautiful seraglios ?  
Where are those easy couches and those women a sight of whom banished sleep ?  
Where is that betel, those betel-sellers, and those fair ones ? They have all vanished.  
For wealth many are ruined; this wealth hath disgraced many.  
It is not amassed without sin, and it departeth not with the dead.  
Him whom the Creator destroyeth. *He first* depriveth of virtue.  
Millions of priests tried *by their miraculous power* to restrain *the emperor* when they heard of his approach.  
He burned houses, mansions, and palaces, he cut princes to pieces, and had them rolled in the dust.  
No Mughal hath become blind; no *priest* hath wrought a miracle.  
There was a contest between the Mughals and the Pathans; the sword was wielded in the battle.  
One side aimed and discharged their guns, the other also handled their *weapons*:  
They whose letter hath been torn in God's court must die, my brethren.  
*There were* the wives of Hindus, of Turks, of Bhattis, and of Rajputs.  
The robes of some were torn from head to foot; the dwellings of others were their places of  
cremation.

How did they whose husbands came not home pass the night ?  
 The Creator acteth and causeth others to act; to whom shall man complain ?  
 Misery and happiness are according to Thy pleasure; to whom shall we go to cry ?  
 The Commander is pleased issuing His orders; Nanak, "man  
 obtaineth what is allotted him.

—Asa, *Asht. ghar iii*, 12

35. *Change in Circumstances*

God hath given fixed time *for all events*, and fully established the nine regions, the seven seas, the fourteen worlds, the three qualities, and the four ages,  
 He put four lamps one by one into the hands of the four *ages*.  
 O kind God, such is Thy power.  
 The dwellers at every hearth are Thy slaves, and religion is their ruler.  
 The earth is Thy cooking-pot, Thou gavest once for all; destiny is Thy storekeeper.  
 Instigated by their hearts, men lose patience and beg again and again to their ruin.  
 Covetousness is a black dungeon, demerits the fetters on the feet.  
 Wealth ever beateth *the soul* with its mallet, while sin sitteth as judge.  
 Man shall be either good or bad, O Lord, as Thou lookest on him.  
 The Primal Being is *now* called Allah; the turn of the Shaikhs hath come.  
 There is a tax on the shrines of the gods; such is the practice established.  
 There are ablution-posts, calls to prayer, five daily prayers, prayer-carpet, and God appeareth dressed in blue.  
 In every house all say 'Mian'; your language hath been changed.  
 Since Thou, who art Lord of the earth, *hast appointed Babar a Mir*, what power have we ?  
 In the four directions men make Thee obeisance, and Thy praises are uttered in every house.  
 The profit which is obtained from pilgrimages, repeating the Simritis, and bestowing alms all day long,  
 Is, O Nanak, obtained in one ghari by remembering the Name which conferreth greatness.

36. *On Seeing People Dispose of their Dead at Saidpur*

As herdsmen *stay for a short time* in the pasture-ground, *do men stay in this world*.  
 Men by the exercise of falsehood build houses *for themselves*.  
 Awake, awake, ye sleepers; *lo! the soul* the dealer departeth.  
 If ye are to remain here for ever, then build houses.  
 The body shall fall and the soul depart. If any one *desire* to know *the truth*.  
 Why criest thou 'Alas ! alas!' God is and shall be.  
 Ye weep for others, *but* who will weep for you ?  
 Ye worry with worldly occupations, my brethren, and practise falsehood.  
 The dead hear not at all; ye only cry to be heard of others.  
 He who laid them to sleep, Nanak, will awake them.  
 If man know his own home *in God*, then shall he not sleep.  
 If *any one know of any one* at his departure taking anything with him, Then let him with open eyes amass wealth - know and consider this.  
 Do thy dealing; gain thine object; be not sorry hereafter.  
 Thou shalt be known as a *true* dealer if thou take profit *with thee*.  
 Sow the seed of truth in the soil of honesty; in that way practise tillage.  
 Forsake vice, practise virtue, so shalt thou obtain the Real Thing.  
 If it be God's favour, man shall meet the true Guru, understand his instruction, repeat the Name, hear the Name, and deal in the Name.  
 As is the profit so the loss; that is the way of the world.  
 What pleaseth Him, O Nanak, is my glory.

—Asa, *Kafi, ghar viii, Asht.*

## GURU NANAK'S IMPACT ON HISTORY

Ganda Singh

Over six millions Sikhs playing a conspicuous role in the social and political life, not only of India, their homeland, but also of all the countries in the east and west wherever they have domiciled as permanent immigrants or as temporary residents, are a living practical example of the impact of the life and teachings of Guru Nanak on history. Like the Guru himself they are a practical people, always up and doing, bubbling with energy ready to be yoked to solve the problems of life. They are never afraid to put their hand to any type of work that comes their way and they would strive every nerve to make it a success. And it is by sheer dint of hard work that they have won a place for themselves in their occupations and professions. The world knows them as one of its bravest of soldiers, both of peace and war. With his hand at the handle of the plough or at the steer of the tractor, the Sikh is the hardiest peasant who becomes one with the land for raising his crops. But he is at his best in the field of battle when he is called upon to fight in defence of his motherland or for the protection of the weak and helpless, at home or abroad. Guru Nanak's belief in the Unity of God and selfless service of mankind has given to the Sikhs their character of unswerving faith in God and Guru, and in patriotism and sacrifice with which they not only freed the Panjab from under the yoke of the oppressors and usurpers in the eighteenth century but also carved for it, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in the first half of the 19th century, a place of strength and honour on the international map and made a gift of it to India to stand as a sentinel on its north-western frontier to defend it against all future invasions from that quarter.

The teachings of Guru Nanak related most to the spiritual uplift of mankind and social goodwill and understanding among people of different creeds and classes based on the common fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. According to him, there is but One God who is All-Truth, Immortal, Unborn and Self-existing Creator, Fearless and without hate. He is neither the Allah of the Muhammadans nor Rama or Krishna of the Hindus, but God of the universe, of all mankind and of all religions. For the promotion and advancement of human goodwill and happy relations, Guru Nanak refused to recognize the man-made distinctions of castes and classes, of high and low and of rich and poor. And he condemned, with all the force at his command, the aggression of one over the other, of the rulers over their subjects, both in the field of politics and of religion. He stood for the freedom of conscience and expression. He was the strongest advocate of the cause of women. He would attach no impurity to them because of their sex, nor would he hold them in compulsory subjection to men. He gave them the fullest responsibility in all matters, spiritual and social, and regarded them in every way equal in the sight of God.

But Guru Nanak was not a visionary idealist or a speculative theorist. He preached no complicated philosophy couched in unintelligible language of the other-worldly people. He was a practical man—one with the men of this world. He spoke to the people in the language of the people and explained his ideas to them with examples drawn from the everyday common life. Guru Nanak's laboratories, both for the demonstration and practice of his teachings, were the institutions of *Sangat*, or congregations, and *Pangat* or sitting of all people together in rows for community dining. Both at home and outside, wherever he went, he established *Sangats* or congregations of his followers and admirers. Therein they met daily, generally in the evenings, to hear the Guru's teachings and sing his hymns, and to pray to God, and to discuss and solve their common problems. The forums of the *Sangats* were known as *dharamsalas*. These later on developed into Sikh missionary centres where Guru's work of reformation and transformation was continued by subsequent Gurus and their leading representatives, popularly known as *Masands*. It was in these *Sangats* and *dharamsalas* that Guru's Sikhs learnt practical lessons in Sikhism, freed themselves from the worship of gods and goddesses, and idols and images, and recited the hymns of the master and his successors as the only way of the worship of the One Supreme formless God. It was here that the Sikhs, as the followers of the Gurus were known, shook off their old prejudices and rubbed off their angularities. Here they came closer to one another as brothers-in-faith and understood their real relationship as sons of the one common Creator. This popularised among them the use of the word of *Bhai* or brother, by which Guru Nanak addressed his companions and disciples like *Bhai* Mardana, of Muslim origin, and *Bhai* Bala, *Bhai* Buddha, *Bhai* Lehna (his

successor) coming from amongst the Hindus. The Sikhs ignored the monopoly of the Brahmans in matters religious and social as they did not subscribe to the Brahmanical faith. Maubid Zulfiqar Ardistani (Azur Sasaki), the Parsi author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazāhib*, who had seen Sikhism in practice at Kiratpur under the direct guidance of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai in the forties of the seventeenth century, tells us :

There is no restriction among them that a Brahman may not become the disciple of a Khatri, for Nanak was a Khatri, and no Guru among them was from the Brahmans as has been described. Similarly they placed Khatri under the authority of the Jats who belong to the low caste of the *Vaishyas*, as the big *Masands* of the Guru are mostly Jats. The Brahmans and Khatri become pupils and disciples of the Guru through the medium of *Masands* and are accepted into the pupilage and discipline of the Guru (p,233).

Not only this. Some of the popular saints whose hymns the fifth Guru incorporated in the Sikh holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, were not only Muslim by birth but also came from the lowest of the low Hindu and Muslim classes. For example there are Sadhna, a Muslim butcher, Kabir, a weaver, Ravidas, an untouchable cobbler, and Sain, a low caste barber, in addition to Muslim *Mirasi* rebeck players.

Thus, with the Fatherhood of God preached by Guru Nanak, was the real brotherhood of man recognized and established in practice by the religion of the Sikhs. The tenth and the last Guru Gobind Singh in his time went a step further. On the introduction of the baptismal ceremony for the order of the *Khalsa*, he made the initiates drink the baptismal water, the *Amrita*, one after another, from one and the same vessel in a double round—the first man becoming the last to drink it in the second round. This practice abolishes for the Sikhs the distinctions of high and low for all time to come and places them on a plain of absolute equality. And we have practical examples of this levelling in the subsequent history of the Sikhs. Within two years of the death of Guru Gobind Singh, when the Khalsa under the leadership of Banda Singh freed the eastern Panjab from under the galling yoke of the Mughals and established therein the rule of the sons of the soil, no distinction was made in the appointment of ruling officials, and distribution of other offices. William Irvine tells us in his *Later Mughals* :

In all the parganas occupied by the Sikhs, the reversal of previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather-dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru, when in a short, space of time he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home [Vol. I, 98-99].

This was a thing unimaginable in traditional Hinduism and had a revolutionary effect upon the history of northern India. It created among the Sikhs a much stronger bond of unity and made a new people of them with a separate nationality which, within half a century of untold sacrifices at the altar of national freedom, developed into a group of republican states, growing ultimately into a full fledged sovereign state of the Panjab. The ruler of this Panjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was a Sikh, no doubt, but the kingdom was not a theocratic Sikh state. It was a state of the people of the Panjab, whatever their religion. Its capital was at Lahore and not Amritsar, the religious headquarters of the Sikhs, and its administration, both civil and military, was shared by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike, nay, a number of European and American Christians were as well employed in high offices. The Prime Minister of the then Panjab was a Hindu. The minister for foreign affairs, which included political transactions with the neighbouring Muslim states, hostile at times, was a Muslim. The army was commanded by officers drawn from all classes, the artillery being manned predominantly by Muslims. .

On the religious side, there is no priestly class among the Sikhs. Anyone, man or woman, competent to recite and explain the hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, may conduct the religious services in the Sikh, temples and lead the congregations in prayer. Men of all castes and creeds have free access to the *Gurdwaras* or *dharmshalas*, as the Sikh temples are called, and they can, without any let or hinderance, join the

congregations there and partake of the sacred *prasad* and of the meals served in the community kitchen or *Guru ka langar*.

In the matter of eating, the Sikhs have greatly contributed to the freedom of the people and have removed all old taboos. The *Dabistan* tells us the story of a Hindu boy, who, for freedom of eating the food of his choice, wished to become a Muslim. One Partap Mall Gyani told him : “Why do you become a Muhammadan ? If you have an inclination to eat everything, you may become a Sikh of the Guru and eat whatever you like” [p. 2391.

The teachings of Guru Nanak were not individualistic in their outlook and attitude of life. They had a socialistic embrace with the result that not only the priest-oppressed Hindus, particularly of the third and fourth castes, the exploited Vaishya peasants and the suppressed Sudras, were drawn to his new faith but a number of Muslims were as well attracted by the teachings, and ways and manners, of the successors and followers of Guru Nanak. This became a cause of complaints to the Mughal Emperors, Akbar and Jahangir, by the closed-minded Brahmans and fanatical Muslim *mullas* against the fifth Guru Arjun. The liberal-minded Akbar found no fault with the Guru and his compilation of the Sikh scripture. On the other hand, he appreciated his efforts for the spiritual and social well-being of the people and favourably considered his suggestion for reduction in the increased taxes that had become oppressive for the ryots [*Akbar-nama*, vol. iii 514-15; Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khulāsāt-u-Tawākih*, 425].

Emperor Jahangir, however, for political expediency, succumbed to the pressure of the Muslim revivalists, evidently of the Naqshbandi Shaikhs and ordered the arrest and execution of Guru Arjun. The Emperor himself records it in his memoirs, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngiri*, p. 35, saying :

There lived at Goindwal on the bank of the river Beas a Hindu named Arjun in the garb of a *pir* and *Shaikh*, so much so that he had by his ways and manners captivated the hearts of many simple minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims...who called him *Guru*. From all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had this shop warm. For years the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam. When this news (of the Guru having shown special favour to Prince Khusrau) reached the ears of our Majesty, and I fully knew his heresies, I ordered him to be brought into my presence and, having made over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan (Shaikh Farid Bukhari) and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures.

Very significant indeed, in this context, is a letter of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi *Mujaddid-i-Ali-i-Sani* to Shaikh Farid Bukhari, entitled Murtaza Khan, the governor of Lahore, referred to above. The Mujaddid writes :

The execution at this time of the accursed *Kafir* of Goindwal... with whatever motive...is an act of highest grace for the followers of Islam [*Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani*, Vol. I, Part iii, letter No. 193].

The execution of Guru Arjun for his religious activities was an act of high-handed tyranny aimed at the suppression of the Sikh movement and was a repetition of the oppressive policy of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century Sultans of India which the great Guru Nanak had fearlessly criticised and condemned in the strongest terms saying :

The kings are butchers, and cruelty their knife. Sense of duty and responsibility has taken wings and fled [*Majh Var* 1,16-1]. Again.

Kings are like leopards and their revenue collectors (behave like) dogs; they go and awaken people at all odd times; their servants wound the people with their claws and lick their blood like curs [*Malhar Var* I, 22-2].

The Guru felt shocked and outraged at the sack of Saidpur (Eminabad) during the third invasion of Babur in 1521 and burst out shedding tears of blood :

Babur rushed down from Kabul with the bridal procession of sin and by force demanded the hand of the bride (of India) ... . People sing the paean of murder and smear themselves with, saffron of blood [*Tilang* I, *ghar* i, 5-1].

Guru Nanak was greatly moved to see the pitiable sufferings of Indian women at the hands of Mughal soldiers. "The women who wore beautiful tresses ... have their locks shorn with scissors and dust is thrown upon their heads; ... dishonoured and with ropes round their necks, they are carried by soldiers" [*Asa* I, *Asht* xi].

"If a powerful person were to attack another powerful person", said the Guru, 'there shall be no (ground for grievance), but if a ferocious lion were to fall upon a herd of cattle, the master (the protector) of the herd has to answer for it" [*Asa* I, 39-42].

In equally strong language Guru Nanak upbraided the so-called 'masters of the herd', the Lodhi Sultans of India, for not standing up manfully for the defence of their subjects and allowing the precious gem of the country to be easily snatched away by the foreigner. To quote his own words : "The dogs (the Lodhi rulers) have thrown away the invaluable gem; when they are dead and gone, no one will remember them with regard" [*Asa* I, 39-2].

These sayings and other admonitions of the great Guru had come down as a heritage to Guru Hargobind who succeeded Guru Arjun after the latter's execution under the orders of Emperor Jahangir. Guru Hargobind then felt that a stage had come in the development of the Sikh people when they should be able to demonstrate their will to resist the evil of tyranny. As human history knows it, the tyrants are generally power-mad autocrats. No philosophies and religious teachings, however sublime and heart-touching, appeal to their conscience hardened by repeated acts of oppression. They are dead to all sense of humanity and are a curse to society and country at large. Bowing down to them is cowardice, and is an encouragement to and prolongation of *zulm*—injustice and cruelty—over the weak and helpless. This is what Guru Nanak had protested against and condemned. Guru Hargobind, therefore, decided to sanctify the use of arms like the operation-knife of a surgeon who uses it, as a last resort, to separate and save the healthy part of the body from a spreading ulcer. To initiate the community into martial ways, he himself wore two swords at the Akal Takht at Amritsar as emblems of spiritual and temporal authority—*Piri* and *Miri*—the combination of *bhakti* and *shakti*, of *deg*, and *tegh*—the kettle to feed the needy and hungry and the sword to protect the weak and helpless. This was the first step towards the transformation of Sikhism into a militant church and its followers into saint-soldiers and soldier-saints. According to the *Dabistan*, 'the Guru had seven hundred horses in his stables; and three hundred cavaliers and sixty artillerymen were always in his service.' This was the first corps of Sikh volunteers raised by the Guru at Amritsar for service.

But Guru Hargobind was not a mere soldier. He was primarily a saint, a *Guru*, sixth in the line of spiritual inheritance from Guru Nanak who had permitted no aggressive designs against any one. Guru Hargobind's martialization, therefore, was purely for self-defence and for the defence of the defenceless. When the great Maratha saint *Samarth* Ramdas, during his North-Indian rambles, met Guru Hargobind at Srinagar in Garhwal in about 1634 and questioned him on this change, he replied : "Internally a hermit, and externally a prince. Arms mean protection to the weak and destruction to the tyrant. Guru Nanak had not renounced the world, he had renounced *maya* (the sense of attachment and possession)". This explained the Guru's meaning of the change, hearing which Ramdas said, "*yeh hamārē man bhāvē hai*—this appeals to my mind" [*Panjab Sākhān*, No. 39].

Although Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh had to fight as many as eighteen battles, either



against local chiefs or against the Mughal government, they were all defensive. Never, in any one of them, was the initiative taken by the Gurus, nor, as a result of their victories, was an inch of the enemy's territories occupied or towns and treasures plundered or a single captive carried. Nay, when approached, Guru Gobind Singh was ever ready for peace-negotiations. Not only this. When Bahadur Shah, after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, who had been responsible for the execution of the Guru's father (Guru Tegh Bahadur), approached the Guru, he readily agreed to help him with a detachment of Sikhs in the battle of succession at Jajau, June 8, 1707, in support of his rightful claim to the throne. This was the real Guru Gobind Singh, true, in word and deed, to the teachings of Guru Nanak.

“He who is imbued with the fear of the Lord becometh fearless,. for one becometh like the one, one serveth” was said by Guru Nanak in *Rag Gauri, Asht. vii-4*. And in his definition of God he says in the *Mūl-mantar* that the True. Creator is Fearless and Without Enmity. And truly these two qualities have become an integral part of the Sikh character as has been demonstrated time and again. Once convinced of the righteousness of their cause, the Sikhs will, in all fearlessness, be prepared to make every sacrifice—even the supreme sacrifice—to uphold it and would smilingly walk into the jaws of death so that the survivors in the community at large might enjoy the fruit of its success.

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh when the Khalsa, under the command of Banda Singh, was engaged in life-and-death struggle against the Mughal empire for the liberation of the Panjab from under its yoke, they never reduced it to a communal strife against the Muslims whose co-religionists the Mughals were. The struggle of the Khalsa was purely a political one against the tyranny of the ruling people and not against the religion of the Mughals, although under the Emperor's orders of December 10, 1710, the Sikhs, on the other hand, were “killed at sight wherever found”. In April 1711, within four and a half months of the issue of this royal edict, the Sikh commander, Banda Singh, had proclaimed ; “I am not opposed to Muslims” as such. The Mughal news-letter of April 29, 1711, tells us that “for any Muslim who approaches him (Banda Singh), he fixes a daily allowance and wages and looks after him. He has permitted them to read *khutbā* and *namāz*, with the result that five thousand Muslims have gathered round him. Having entered into his friendship, they are free to shout their call (*azān*) and recite their prayers in the army of the wretched” (Sikhs) [*Akhbarāt-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (Jaipur); *Ruqat-i-Amin-ud-Daulā*, No. 3; *Dastur-ul-Inshā*, 6a].

And when Banda Singh and his 794 Sikh companions were brought as captives to Delhi and were being executed at the rate of a hundred a day (March 5-13, 1716), they, with the name of God on their lips—*Wahiguru, Wahiguru goyan*—fearlessly welcomed the executioner's sword and called him *mukta*, a deliverer. In the words of the British ambassadors, John Surman and Edward Stephenson, who were eyewitnesses to this ghastly massacre, “It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatised from this new formed religion” to save his muddy vesture of decay [Letter No. XII, to the President and Governor of Fort William and Council in Bengal, dated Dilly, March 10, 1916].

Now about Banda Singh. On June 9, 1716, when the flesh of his body was being torn with red hot pincers, the Mughal Prime Minister Muhammad Amin Khan questioned him on the fierceness of his struggle against the Empire. “I will tell you,” said Banda Singh, “whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the path of equity and abandon themselves to all kinds of excesses, the Providence never fails to raise a scourge like me to chastise a race so depraved, but when the measure of punishment is full, then He raises men like you to bring him to punishment.” What fearless composure of mind and a peaceable calmness and stoic self-control, brought about by Guru Nanak's teachings i [*Sīyar-ul-Mutākeherin*, 404; Raymond, i, 91; Briggs, 79-80].

The institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat* (mixed congregations) and *Gurū ka Langar* (mixed community dining) established by Guru Nanak, as mentioned earlier, had not only the levelling and equalising effect upon the Sikhs, but they had also strengthened their cohesion as a separate nationality and democratized their social, religious and political organizations. The organization of the Dal Khalsa and the republican nature of

the Sikh Misals during the eighteenth century also had their birth in the *Sangats*. Sir George Campbell, who had seen this system in actual practice in the cis-Sutlej areas in the eighteen-forties before the annexation of the Panjab, tells us :

The Sikh system is very much like that out of which the German system sprang. They formed Misals or military confederacies ... Each misal elected its own supreme chief and sub-chiefs, and every horseman had his rights and his share in the common conquests. The combined misals formed the 'Khalsa' or Sikh Commonwealth [*Memoirs of My Indian Career*, i. 46].

Speaking of the republic of Mehraj, which he knew intimately, he says:

Mehraj remained an independent republic till, with the rest of the country, it came under British protection. ... It was really a very complete, fully equipped republic. ... It was diplomatically recognised as a state ... There were no chiefs or hereditary rulers; the state was governed by its *punches* or representative elders. There was nothing of any feudal system, or any division into conquerors and conquered ... Unhappily, as I think, this interesting republic was soon after wiped out, when all the smaller Sikh states were mediatised and reduced to the position of British subjects [*Ibid.*, i. 42-43].

Even when Maharaja Ranjit Singh integrated and consolidated the territories of some of the misals into the kingdom of the Panjab, he said that the kingdom, in reality, belonged to the Guru and that he was only his *raptia*, a *chankidār* (watchman). And, always remembering the words of Guru Nanak "*bhullan andar sabh ko, abhull Gurm Kartār*—every one is fallible, the Supreme Creator alone is infallible"—Maharaja Ranjit Singh never behaved like an infallible autocrat. We have on record, reproduced in facsimile in *The Real Ranjit Singh* by Fakir Syed Waheedudin, two of the Maharaja's *farmans*—and there might be many more which have not come to light as yet—wherein he had authorized Syed Faqir Nurudin and Sardar Amir Singh of Lahore to withhold and bring to his notice for amendment any order of the Maharaja himself, or of the princes royal, the Prime Minister or of the chief Sardars, if, in the opinion of the Syed or the Sardar, it was inappropriate. To quote, in English translation, one of them addressed to the Syed [p. 31-32]:

Sincere Well-wisher, Fakir Nuruddinji, May you be happy ! It is hereby decreed by His Highness with the utmost emphasis that no person in the city should practise high-handedness and oppression on the people. Indeed, if even His Highness himself should issue an inappropriate order against any resident of Lahore, it should be clearly brought to the notice of His Highness so that it may be amended. Protector of Bravery, Malwa Singh, should always be advised to dispense justice in accordance with legitimate right and without the slightest oppression and, further more, he should be advised to pass orders in consultations with the *Punches* and Judges of the city and in accordance with the *shastras* and Quran, as pertinent to the faith of the parties, for such is our pleasure. And should any person fail to act in accordance with your advice or instructions, you should send him a formal letter so that it may serve as a proof on the strength of which His Highness may punish him for disobedience...

Despatched from the court of His Highness, 31st Bhadon, 1882 Sambat (September 13, 1825 A.D.)

This was, perhaps, the only order of its kind in the history of the world issued by a king authorizing a subordinate officer of the state to withhold any order issued by the king himself which in the opinion of that officer appeared to him to be inappropriate and oppressive. The credit for this extreme humility in the interests of the people goes to the follower of Guru Nanak who had enjoined upon the kings to take a vow of dedication to impartial justice. [*Sarang Var* I, vii-2].

The Sikhs have also proved themselves to be no less formidable in non-violent moral warfare. In 1922, in the Guru ka Bagh struggle, they took a solemn vow at the holy Akal Takht at Amritsar to offer *satyagraha* and under all circumstances to remain non-violent in word and deed. On the refusal of their

volunteers to disperse under the orders of the police interfering with their religious liberty, their parties of 100 each were mercilessly beaten day by day and thrown into road-side ditches to be picked by medical relief parties. These non-violent soldiers included among them many a veteran of the Frontier campaigns and of the First Great War. But not one of them raised his little finger against the police or uttered a word of complaint. The reports of eye-witnesses sent to the press from the place of occurrence stirred the conscience of the world. In the words of the Rev. C.F. Andrews, “a new heroism, learnt through suffering, has risen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world” by the followers of Guru Nanak.

At Jaito on February 21, 1924, the Sikh *Satyagrahis* literally ran into the jaws of death in the face of machine-gun fire and, ultimately, came out successful in their twenty-two week long struggle against the Government.

In January 1922, after the success of the Sikhs in their non-violent struggle in the Golden Temple Keys affair, Mahatma Gandhi congratulated Baba Kharak Singh, the then President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, saying “*First Decisive Battle For India's Freedom Won. Congratulations*” [*Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, 11].

“As regards non-violence, with its attendant conception of self-sacrifice,” wrote Lala Lajpat Rai, “They have given the most amazing proofs at Nankana Sahib...and later at Ajnala and Amritsar. They proved themselves worthy descendants of their Gurus and the examples they have set of self-sacrifice and courage, devoid of swagger, in the face of provocation, will be hard to beat.”

The above is a brief account of how the life of the people came to be transformed under the impact of the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. They had, in fact, stirred the inner soul of the people and had freed them from the thralldom of the priestly classes. Freed from the worship of idols and images, they came to their own, and introduced into the country a monotheistic casteless and classless society of manly servants of the people—an order of fearless saint-soldiers, the *Khalsa*—who, in their turn, made innumerable sacrifices to free their land from its tyrannous rulers and foreign usurpers. And, they ultimately succeeded in creating on the north-west an independent sovereign state of the Panjab and made a gift of it to India to serve as the guardian of its honour and independence.

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Ganda Singh

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ALP	Archives Department Library, Patiala
ASB	Asiatic Society (of Bengal) Library, Calcutta
BLC	Buhar Library (National Library), Calcutta
BM	British Museum, London
CPL	Central Public Library, Patiala
GS	Dr Ganda Singh, Patiala
HSL	Hyderabad State Library, Hyderabad A.P.
IO	India Office, London
JIH	Journal of Indian History, Trivandrum
KCA	Khalsa College, Amritsar
MUL	Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
OPB	Oriental (Khuda Bakhsh) Public Library, Bankipore, Patna
OUP	Oxford University, London
PPL	The Panjab Public Library, Lahore, Pakistan
PPP	Panjab Past and Present, Patiala
PUL	Panjab University Library, Lahore, Pakistan
RAS	Royal Asiatic Society, London
SGPC	Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar

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