

**DEMOCRATIC IDEALS & INSTITUTIONS  
IN SIKH RELIGION**

**A THESIS**  
submitted to  
**The Punjab University**  
**CHANDIGARH**  
for the Degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**IN ARTS**  
September, 1971



*By*  
**SUDARSHAN SINGH**  
Senior Lecturer in History  
Government College  
Sangrur

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	1
I. INTRODUCTION .....	5
Definition and Scope of Democracy.....	5
Picture of Indian Society During the Middle Ages.....	9
II. THE CASTE SYSTEM AND THE SIKH GURUS.....	23
Origin and Development of Caste-System in India.....	23
Basis of Caste System.....	24
Ferment of Social Reformation.....	27
Contentions of the Gurus.....	28
Principles of the Guru in Practice.....	37
III. SANGAT.....	53
Background.....	53
Contentions of the Gurus.....	57
Development of the Institution of Sangat under the Gurus.....	67
IV. LANGAR.....	94
Background.....	94
Contentions of the Gurus	96
Development of Langar Under the Gurus.....	103
V. WOMAN AND THE SIKH GURUS.....	126
Background.....	126
Contentions of the Gurus.....	138
Importance of Woman in the Times of the Gurus	147
VI. THE KHALSA BROTHERHOOD.....	153

CHAPTER	PAGE
Picture of Indian Society.....	153
Creation of the Khalsa.....	161
Norms and Form of the Khalsa.....	162
Significance of the Creation of the Khalsa.....	179
VII. CONCLUSION.....	182
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	188
GLOSSARY.....	199

**PREFACE**

This thesis, "DEMOCRATIC IDEALS AND INSTITUTIONS IN SIKH RELIGION" attempts a subject which has not so far been dealt with in a seriously academic fashion. Some aspects of it may have been covered in some stray articles, but the present one is the first sustained study of a theme which would strike <sup>(</sup>as obviously significant <sup>)</sup> to any student of Sikh religion and history. The inspiration to cover this uncharted ground came from my revered teacher Dr Hari Ram Gupta, an eminent historian.

The Sikh Gurus expounded a religion based primarily on democratic concepts and institutions. The essence of the teachings of the Gurus was the unity of God and the brotherhood of man. We find in them an unbroken thread of the ideals of selfless service, love for mankind, humility, equality, fraternity and honest endeavour. The equality of man is their sheet-anchor. To give a practical shape to these ideals, the Gurus established and developed the institutions of 'Sangat' and 'Pangat'. The process of development of these institutions continued gradually until Guru Hargobind brought about a transformation by giving a militant turn to the movement. The most dramatic development was Guru Gobind Singh's creation of the Khalsa brotherhood through a novel system of baptism. Another feature of this transformation was the bridging of the gulf between the guru and the disciple. What impressed the masses was not only the Guru's complete identification with the common man but also his condescending to kneel down before

his disciples to receive baptism from them — a unique and unheard of incident in the history of mankind!.

The period under study is that of the Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh (1469-1708 A.D.).

The first chapter of this thesis is an introduction to the subject. In it, the idea of the growth and development of democracy has been traced briefly. A brief survey of the conditions prevailing in the Indian society during the Middle Ages, with special reference to the Punjab has been made. A clear picture of the society which existed at the time of the origin of the Sikh Religion emerges from it.

The second chapter deals with the caste-system and the Sikh Gurus. The genesis of the caste-system, its functioning through the ages, the ills incidental to it, its reorientation by the Buddha and Mahavira, its denunciation by Islam and the reformers of the Bhakti Movement have been brought out in this chapter. The views of the Gurus regarding the caste-system and how they tried to put into practice the ideals of equality and brotherhood of man born of the concept of monotheism have been shown in broad relief.

The third chapter treats of the institution of 'Sangat' in its historical perspective and how the Sikh Gurus added new dimensions to it with a view to levelling down the social barriers and initiating their followers into a corporate living.

The fourth chapter discusses the institution of 'Pangat'

(langar). Its background with special reference to the Indian society has been traced. The Sikh Gurus laid special emphasis on this institution for the propagation of the ideals of love and service of fellow-beings, humility, earning one's livelihood with honest means and sharing the fruits of one's labour with others. The disciples were thus schooled in community-living which instilled democratic ideals and institutions into their minds.

The Gurus' enunciation of equality of man and woman is given in the fifth chapter. The position of Indian women in society has been traced from the earliest times to the period of the Gurus. The views of the Gurus regarding the rights and the status of woman have been quoted. The denunciation of the ills like 'purdah', 'Sati' and infanticide has been emphasized.

The sixth chapter highlights the Khalsa brotherhood. The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh, its deep ideological impact, its tremendous after-effects, its epoch-making consequences have been discussed in detail. Special attention has been focussed on the new method of baptism with 'khanda' (the double-edged sword), the complete identification of the Guru with the Five Beloved Ones and the mighty social and spiritual objective that he achieved through this novel method of baptism and the common code of conduct laid down for all the members of the Khalsa brotherhood.

The subject has been projected from philosophical and

historical angles. The enunciation of the ideals laid down by the Gurus has a philosophical postulate and the working out of these ideals in the institutions shaped by the Gurus is put in the historical frame of reference.

So far as the philosophical aspect of this thesis is concerned, the prime sources of information are the Guru Granth, the Dasam Granth and the Vars of Bhai Gurdas. I have drawn on them liberally in substantiating my views. The verses have been quoted in original along with their translations made by recognized authorities such as Dr Bhai Jodh Singh, Dr Gopal Singh and Max Arthur Macauliffe. For the historical aspect of this thesis, I have chiefly depended on manuscripts, classified documents, and modern works published in English, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi relevant to the theme of this thesis.

Dr Ganda Singh, the distinguished historian has been an unflinching source of inspiration and guidance to me. I have received valuable suggestions from Dr Bhai Jodh Singh, Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Dr Fauja Singh, Professor Harbans Singh and Dr Taran Singh in the completion of this work.

In the end, I register my deep debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr R.R.Sethi, formerly Head of the Department of History, Panjab University, Chandigarh. But for his guidance, help and inspiration, I would not have been able to complete my research project.

Sudarshan Singh  
(Sudarshan Singh)



**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF DEMOCRACY

The concept of democracy has undergone a tremendous change through the ages. According to Seligman, no definition of democracy can adequately sum up the vast history which the concept connotes. To some it is a form of government; to others it is a way of life. Men have found its essence in the character of the electorate, in the relation between a government and its people, in the absence of wide economic differences among the members of different sections of society, in the refusal to recognize privileges based on colour, caste and creed. Consequently, it has changed its substance in terms of time and space.<sup>1</sup>

Democracy is the political expression of the ethical principles which maintain that the true end of man is freedom within the framework of his responsibilities and duties towards the State. This is in conformity with Immanuel Kant's celebrated moral principle, "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never only as a means".<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Seligman, Edwin R.A., Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol.V, p.76.

2. Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy, p.245.

In principle, democracy is ethical and, therefore, universal. It knows no bounds but those of life itself.

Vyasa says: "May all beings be happy, may all attain bliss, may all see happy days, may no man be subject to sufferings".<sup>3</sup>

Democracy aims at the interests of society as a whole, not of any particular class or community. All individuals, whatsoever be their faith, should be received into political society solely on the basis of humanity. When we say all men are equal, we mean that all men are centres of absolute values. So far as the materialistic values are concerned, we are unequal. Mahatma Gandhi also holds the same opinion: "My idea of society is", says he, "that while we are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all do not have the same capacity. It is in the nature of the things impossible. ... The controversy about the equality of all men is due to a failure to make the distinction between moral and materialistic values".<sup>4</sup>

Democracy has its distinctive characteristics in every sphere of life and in each of these spheres, it poses special problems which do not admit of satisfactory or universal generalization.

In the political sphere, democracy remained a negative

3. Radha Krishnan, S. Dr, Religion and Society, p.91.

4. Readings in Democracy, Aligarh Muslim University, p.93.

concept till the seventeenth century. Men protested against systems which, on one ground or another, deprived them of a legitimate share in power. The aim of political democracy is to recognize the rights of man in regard to political power. Democracy is the government of the people in the sense that the term 'people' includes all members of the society. It is opposed to monarchy which is the rule of one, and to oligarchy, which is the rule of the few, i.e. of a class privileged either by birth or by property. It is entirely opposed to the suppression of minorities and the minority opinion. If minorities are suppressed or silenced, democracy degenerates into tyranny of the ruling class. Thus democracy denotes that form of government, in which the poor class always, the more numerous, does, in fact, rule.<sup>5</sup>

In the economic sphere, the idea of economic equality emerged clearly in the wake of the French Revolution. Economic power came to be regarded as the fount of political power. Hence economic equality became the base upon which the edifice of democracy could be raised.

In its social aspect, the urge for social equality is older than political or economic equality. Protests against the usurpation of privileges on the basis of birth dates back to the earliest period of history. Reluctance to accept slavery or inferior status is probably as old as slavery itself. But

---

5. James Bryce, Modern Democracies, Vol.I, pp.23-26.

the claims to religious equality, educational equality and equal participation in the fruits of social endeavour have been raised only in a subtle manner.

The basis of democratic development is, therefore, the demand for equality. For the development of ethical and spiritual democracy, there is need to educate men to realize the nature of human brotherhood. There is also a need for the cultivation of democracy as a state of mind, a way of life to help the human spirit to expand, develop and blossom in accordance with the inherent law of its own nature. Religion is probably the way out.

But religion appears to have failed humanity in most of the cases, because the spiritual leaders were in league with the temporal despots all over the world during the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> Religion had degenerated into a hoax, an organized fraud in the name of which, the innocent and gullible masses were duped with false hopes and promises of the other world. Instead of becoming an elevating, purifying and ennobling force, religion, rather became an instrument of social exploitation, political bargaining and spiritual hypocrisy. It strengthened the hands of political despots who rode roughshod over the civil and political rights of the people.<sup>7</sup>

---

6. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.I, p.xl.

7. Khazan Singh, The History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion, Vol.I, pp.45-46.

PICTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

India, like the rest of the world, presented a gloomy picture in the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century. The country was under the worst type of theocratic rule of the Delhi Sultans.<sup>8</sup> The Hindus were subjected to all sorts of severities and privations. A reign of terror and devastation, backed up by religious intolerance and fanaticism, was let loose.

The Taj-ul-Ma'asir of Hasan Nizami Nishapuri,<sup>9</sup> Tabqat-i-Nasiri of Minhaj-ul-Saraj,<sup>10</sup> Tawarikh-i-Alai or Khazaima-ul-Futuh of Amir Khusrau,<sup>11</sup> Tazjiyat-ul-Amsar-wa Tazjiyat-ul-Asar of Abdullah Wassaf,<sup>12</sup> are full of the accounts of destruction of Hindu temples, and of the wholesale massacre, and forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam by the Delhi Sultans. According to Amir Khusrau and Farishta, the Hindus were subjected to all sorts of excesses and atrocities. Their temples were destroyed and their idols broken.<sup>13</sup>

- 
8. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, p.xi-xli.  
 9. Bute Shah (Ghulam Mahi-ud-Din), Tawarikh-i-Panjab, MS.f.120.  
 10. Raverty, Major. H.G., Tabqat-i-Nasiri (Trans.), p.552.  
 11. Elliot and Dowson, History of India as told by its own Historian, Vol.3, p.144.  
 12. Lal, K.S., History of the Khiljis, pp.67-70.  
 13. Mulla Mohd. Qasim, Tarikh-i-Farishta, pp.116-120.

Such a confused state of affairs continued to prevail even under the Lodhi rulers. At the time of Guru Nanak's birth (A.D. 1469), Bahlol Lodhi was the ruler of the country. At the time of his succession, disintegration stalked the land. According to Erskine, "The monarchy was a congeries of nearly independent principalities, Jagirs and provinces, each ruled by a hereditary chief, or by a zamindar or delegate from Delhi, and the inhabitants looked more to their immediate Governors, who had absolute power in the province, and in whose hands, consequently, lay their happiness or misery, than to a distant and little-known sovereign. It was the individual, not the law, that reigned".<sup>14</sup>

Bahlol Lodhi was succeeded by Sikandar Lodhi (A.D. 1488). He was a strong man but he could not control his nobles. The Tarikh-i-Daudi tells us that Sikandar Lodhi was famous for his liberal-mindedness, dignity and politeness. He was a lover of justice, but in a theocratic State, his justice had its limitations. For Hindus he was only a narrow-minded bigot and they could get no justice at his hands.<sup>15</sup>

Farishta relates the story of one Bodhan Brahmin who lived at Kayathan near Lakhnau (Lucknow). He was put to death by Sikandar Lodhi for stating that Hindu religion was as true as Islam. The Sultan ordered him either to embrace Islam or to

---

14. Erskine, William, History of India under the two first sovereigns of the House of Taimur, p.406.

15. Bhandari, Sujjan Rai, Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, MS. f.168-83.

face death. The Brahmin chose the latter course.<sup>16</sup>

Ibrahim Lodhi succeeded to the throne of Delhi A.D. 1517. He was much worse than Sikandar Lodhi, and his nobles began to conspire to replace him and instal his brother, Jalal Khan, on the throne, but the conspiracy was somehow crushed. It was out of distrust that the Governor of Lahore, Daulat Khan Lodhi, invited Babar to invade India. A triangular contest between the Mughals, the Sultan and the Pathans of Delhi ensued.

Daulat Khan Lodhi, the Governor of the Punjab, remained loyal to Sikandar Lodhi so long as the latter lived. But after the death of the Sultan, he decided to establish a separate kingdom of his own in the Punjab. Alam Khan Lodhi, the uncle of Ibrahim Lodhi, was also then hatching a conspiracy to overthrow the Sultan and to occupy the throne. He often visited the Punjab and discussed his plans with Daulat Khan, thus making a common cause with him. The intelligence of these intrigues reached Ibrahim Lodhi and he summoned him. Instead of going himself, Daulat Khan sent his son, Dilawar Khan, to Delhi. Dilawar Khan was arrested, but he escaped imprisonment and related to his father the treatment meted out to him. This precipitated the matter. Daulat Khan invited Babar to invade in a spirit of retaliation. He promised to give him every assistance against the Delhi Sultan. Babar accepted the

16. Farishta, Mohammed Qasim, Tarikh-i-Farishta, MS.f.534-536.



invitation and invaded India, bringing in his train havoc and destruction. Thousands of Punjabi women were captured and put to all sorts of ignominy. Guru Nanak has made a touching reference in Asa Mehala I to the havoc wrought by Babar.

"Where are the stables now,  
 where the horses, where are the drums,  
 where the flutes?  
 Where are the sword belts, where the chariots,  
 where the red dresses (of the soldiers),  
 pray?  
 Where are the looking-glasses, where the beauteous faces?  
 No, I see them not before me". ... 17

At Saidpur Babar indulged in mass killings of the innocent population in cold blood. Many were carried away as slaves. Wealth and beauty of women proved to be their bane. They were forcibly taken away and molested. Guru Nanak further dwells on the situation prevailing at that time in Asa Mehala I

"Those whose lustrous hair shone in plaits and  
 was filled with vermillion in the parting,  
 Their hair was sheared with scissors and  
 they were choked by the dust (of Babar's hordes)  
 Yea, they who revelled in their palaces,  
 now find not a seat even in the common". 18

17. ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਖੋਲ ਤਥੇਲਾ ਖੋੜੇ ਕਹਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਰਨਾਈ  
 ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਤੇਰਬੰਦ ਕਾਡੇਰੜਿ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਲਾਨ ਕਵਾਈ  
 ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਖਾਰਸੀਆ ਮੁਹ ਬੰਨੇ ਖੋਏ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਨਾਰੀ...

ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ, ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ:417

18. ਜਿਠ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਗੀ ਖਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ  
 ਸੋ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁਠੀਆਨਿ ਕਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਖਾਵੈ ਧੁਕਿ  
 ਮਹਲਾ ਖਦਿਰਿ ਹੋਦੀਆ ਹੁਣਿ ਬਗਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲਨਿ ਹਦੁਰਿ

ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ, ਗੁਰੂ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ:417

This period in the history of the Punjab was characterized by mass destruction and bloodshed. Tears of blood welled up in the eyes of Guru Nanak who saw havoc wrought by Babar as described in Rag-Tilang Mehla I:

"O Lalo, as I receive the word of the Lord, so do I utter;  
 (Babar, the Mughal) hath come from Kabul with  
 sin as his wedding-party, and asketh us by  
 force to part with (our motherland, our daughter).  
 Righteousness and sense of shame have hidden themselves,  
 and falsehood walks abroad with abandon.  
 The days of the Qazis and the Brahmins are over,  
 Yea, the devil himself playeth the priest.  
 The Muslim women read the Quran, and in  
 misery pray to their God;  
 And also pray thus to Him the Hindu women of all castes,  
 Yea, the wedding song speaketh of blood,  
 And with blood, not saffron, are the wedded ones anointed".<sup>19</sup>

In the Var Asa Mehala I, Guru Nanak has complained that people were so cowed down in spirit that they would pay homage to whosoever came to rule them:

Within, they worship (the idols);  
 outside they read the Quran,  
 and observe the code of the Turks.<sup>20</sup>

19. ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ  
 ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੈਵ ਨੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੇਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ  
 ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੇਇ ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੂੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ  
 ਕਾਜੀਆ ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਕਲ ਥਕੀ ਅਰਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਸੰਤਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ  
 ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀਆ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕਸਟ ਮਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ  
 ਜਾਤਿ ਸਠਾਤੀ ਹੋਰ ਹਿਦਵਾਣੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਭੀ ਲੇਖੈ ਲਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ  
 ਖੂਨ ਕੇ ਸੋਹਿਲੇ ਗਾਵੀਅਹਿ ਨਾਠਕ ਰਤੁ ਕਾ ਕੁੰਬੁ ਪਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ

ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ, ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 722

20. ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ

ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ, ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 471

Besides religious persecutions, the administration in the province was at the lowest ebb. The rulers were frolicking in wanton pleasures and romance and had lost all sense of duty towards the masses. Corruption was rife and there was degradation all around. "Corruption, degradation and teachery", according to Mohammed Latif, stalked through the land. Confusion and disorder of every kind ran riot over the length and breadth of the Empire. Murders of the most horrible type, robberies of the most outrageous and shocking character were the order of the day. Honour, justice and position were bought and sold. The rulers of the land were sunk in voluptuousness and pollution of the most revolting kind and were immersed in the abyss of enfeebling debauchery".<sup>21</sup>

In the words of Bhai Gurdas, "Those who posed as benefactors were busy in amassing wealth by all sinful means. Love between men and women was based on money and they met at pleasure and departed at will. The Qazis who occupied the seat of justice committed all types of crimes and administered justice only when bribed".<sup>22</sup>

---

21. Latif, Syed Mohammed, History of the Punjab, p.xi.

22. ਕਠ ਖਾਈ ਕੁੰਡੇ ਮੁਹੀ ਖਾਜ ਰੁਆ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ ਰੁਸਾਈ  
 ਰਾਜੇ ਪਾਪ ਕਮਾਵਦੇ ਉਲਟੀ ਵਾੜ ਖੇਤ ਕਉ ਖਾਈ  
 ਪਰਜਾ ਖੀਠੀ ਰਯਾਠ ਬਿਠ ਕੂੜ ਰੁਸਤ ਮੁਖਰੁ ਖਾਲਾਈ  
 ਚੇਠੇ ਸਾਜ ਵਜਾਇਦੇ ਠਚਠ ਰੁਰੁ ਬਰੁਤ ਬਿਧ ਭਾਈ  
 ਸੇਵਕ ਬੈਠਠ ਖਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਰ ਉਠ ਖਰੀ ਤਿਠਾੜੇ ਜਾਈ  
 ਕਾਜੀ ਹੋਇ ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤੀ ਵਢੀ ਠਕੈ ਹੱਕ ਰਵਾਈ  
 ਇਸੜੀ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਦਾਮ ਰਿਤ ਭਾਵੈ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਥਾਉ ਜਾਈ  
 ਵਰਤਿਆ ਪਾਪ ਸਭਸ ਜਰ ਮਾਗੀ

Guru Nanak has described the woeful conditions of this period in the following poignant lines in Majh-ki-Var:

Kings are butchers, cruelty their knife,  
justice has taken wing and fled,  
Falsehood prevails and the moon of truth  
is visible nowhere.  
I have tired myself in searching about, but  
in the darkness no path is visible.  
The world is suffering an endless pain in egoism.  
How shall it be saved? 23.

Guru Nanak, further, tells us in Var Malhar Ki:

The Kings are like leopards,  
the courtiers like dogs,  
For they awaken those that sleep in God's peace.  
The king's servants tear (the docile subjects)  
with their nails,  
And, like curs, lick up all the blood  
that they spill. 24

The Indian society at that time was divided into two major sections, the Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslims were the favoured children of the State, whereas the Hindus were treated as 'pariahs'. The Hindus paid various taxes, such as 'jaziya' and pilgrimage tax. Their internal state was the most deplorable. The worst thing among the Hindus was their factions.

23. ਕਠਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ  
ਕੁੜੁ ਖਮਾਵਸ ਸਰੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਠਾਗੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ  
ਹਉ ਭਾਨਿ ਫਿਕੁੰਨੀ ਹੋਈ ਖਾਧਾਰੈ ਰਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ  
ਵਿਚਿ ਰਉਮੈ ਕਰਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਹੋਈ  
ਕਹੁ ਠਾਠਕ ਕਿਠਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਈ

ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ, ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਕੀ, ਮ 1, ਪੰ: 145

24. ਰਾਜੇ ਸ੍ਰੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁੰਤੇ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਠ ਬੰਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ  
ਚਾਕਰ ਨਹਦਾ ਪਾਇਠ ਖਾਉ ਰਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਹੇ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਕੀ, ਮ 1, ਪੰ: 1288

They were in the clutches of a rigid caste-system. The Brahmins, though quite submissive to their Muslim neighbours, were tyrannical to the Sudras. The discriminating treatment meted out by the higher classes is best depicted by Namdev, who being pushed out from a temple, where only high castes could worship, cried out, "This Brahmin calls me a low-caste, and calling me a Sudra, he beats me out".<sup>25</sup> Kabir also said, "How art thou a Brahmin? How am I a Sudra? How am I of blood and how art thou of milk?"<sup>26</sup> ✓

The position occupied by women in the society at that time was very degrading. They had no individuality of their own. They were domestic slaves and were confined to their homes and hearths. The birth of a girl was considered inauspicious. Female infanticide was quite common. The girls were generally married at a very young age and polygamy was in vogue among the rich. Prostitution was rampant and the institution of dancing-girls was lucrative enough and was patronized by those who were, paradoxically, the custodians of the public morals. Widow remarriage was tabooed and the custom of 'Sati' was in vogue.

---

25. ਸੁਦ ਸੁਦ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਰਿ ਉਠਾਇਓ ਕਹਾ ਕਰਉ ਬਾਪ ਬੀਠਲਾ  
ਏ ਪੰਡੀਆ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਢੇਢ ਕਹਤ ਤੇਰੀ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਉਰੀ ਹੋਇਲਾ

ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ, ਰਾਗ ਮਨਾਰ, ਪੰ: 1292

26. ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੁਦ  
ਹਮ ਕਤ ਨੇਹੁ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੁਧ

ਰਉੜੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਕੀ, ਪੰ: 324

The purdah-system, which had been brought into India by Mohammedans, was prevalent.

The Muslims were in no way better than the Hindus. They were divided into three classes, the upper, the lower and the slaves. The upper class such as the 'Amirs' and the 'Maulanas' were united in times of war, but in times of peace they gave themselves up to sensual pleasures. The lower classes comprised the peasantry and the minor officials. They were not equal in status to the upper classes, but were still better than the Hindus. At the lowest rung of the Muslim society were the slaves. But even to them, sometimes, a better treatment was given than to the Hindus. Whereas character and restraint were at the lowest ebb among the upper classes, religious fanaticism prevailed among all the three classes.

In the sphere of religion, the social standards had fallen to the lowest depths, as pointed out by Bhai Gurdas in his Var 1. "Apart from unsurmountable barriers existing between the Hindus and the Muslims, there were inner dissensions in their ranks. They were torn apart by mutual jealousies and false sense of religious pride. Forgetting the basic tenets of their respective religions, the Hindus of the Vedas and the Muslims of the Quran, they were bogged down in empty rituals. Frequent clashes between the Pandits

and the Mullahs were recurrent".<sup>27</sup> The Qazi occupied the seat of justice, but he retained only an outward show of religion and would not desist from passing unjust orders. The Brahmin was a hypocrite. He pretended to be pure and catholic but in real life he was impure and intolerant. The 'Vairagis' and the 'Sanyasis' had not actually renounced the world. While keeping up only the exterior semblance of Yogis, they, in fact, exploited and misguided the innocent people. According to Namdev, "The Hindus are blind, the Muslims purblind... the Hindus worship their temples and the Muslims their mosques".

According to Dr Gokal Chand Narang, "The popular religion at 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".<sup>28</sup> The religious literature of the Hindus written in Sanskrit was naturally beyond the comprehension of the common man. The

27. ਚਾਰ ਵਰਨ ਚਾਰ ਮਜ਼ਹਬਾਂ ਜਗ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੇ  
 ਖੁਦੀ ਬਖੀਨੀ ਡਬਰੀ ਖਿੱਚੋਤਨ ਕਰੀਨਿ ਧਿਛਾਣੇ  
 ਕਰ ਬਨਾਰਸ ਹਿੰਦੂਆ ਮਕਾ ਕਾਬਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੇ  
 ਸੁੰਨਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੋਭਾਣੇ  
 ਰਾਮ ਰਗੀਮ ਕਹਾਇੰਦੇ ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਦੁਹਿ ਰਾਹ ਭੁਲਾਣੇ  
 ਬੇਦ ਕਤੋਬ ਭੁਲਾਇਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲਚ ਦੁਨੀ ਸੁੰਤਨੇ  
 ਸਚ ਕਿਠਾਰੇ ਰਹਿ ਕਯਾ ਖਹਿ ਖਹਿ ਮਰਦੇ ਬਹਮਣ ਮਉਲਾਣੇ  
 ਸਿਰੋਂ ਨ ਮਿਟੇ ਘਾਵਣ ਜਾਣੇ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ 1, ਪਉੜੀ: 21

28. Narang, Gokal Chand, Dr, Transformation of Sikhism, pp.19-20

evil of casteism had rendered the majority of Indian population untouchables. The complicated rituals and ceremonies entailed heavy expense, which a common man could not afford. Islam, as opposed to it, was comparatively simple and preached faith in one God, one brotherhood within the community and no faith in caste-system. On the social side, its most impressive feature was the assertion of the equality and brotherhood of Muslims and, hence, the absence of a priestly class. The doctrine of unity of God implied the complete rejection of the worship of deities or the adoration of idols. Thus Islam made itself attractive to the low-caste Hindus, as it was within the reach of the common man. Originally, it was a pure and simple religion, but with the passage of time, it imbibed some of the unhealthy Hindu influences and consequently the holy classes of 'Shaikhs' and the 'Sayyids' were created in Islam. 'Pirs', 'Faqirs' and Quran began to be worshipped.<sup>29</sup>

The socio-political, economic and religious conditions in the fifteenth century and in the early part of the sixteenth century prepared the ground for the revival of the Bhakti Movement and ultimately for the rise of the Sikh religion in India. There is a fascinating analogy between the spiritual, economic cum political conditions of Europe and India during the Dark Ages. A great cycling wave of reformation overspread

---

29. Tara Chand, Dr, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p.51.



both the continents. Both in Europe and India, men shook off the dust of complacency and awoke to the challenging realities.<sup>30</sup> When Martin Luther and Calvin in Europe were propagating against the abuses and irregularities of the Church, several Indian saints, such as Kabir, Chaitanya, Vallabhacharya, Shankar Dev, Ravi Das, Sain Das, and Sur Das were denouncing priestcraft, hypocrisy and idolatry. Starting from the South, the movement travelled to the North and ultimately reached the Punjab. The essentials of the Bhakti Movement were monotheism, brotherhood of man, meditation, adoration of the guru or guru-bhakti, self-surrender, and castelessness. Dr Ishwari Prasad writes, "The Bhakti Movement first made its appearance in the shape of religious reform, like Buddhism and Jainism as a reaction against the ritualistic religion of the Vedas... and it was based upon the teachings of the Bhagwat-Gita. Vasudeva Krishna, like the Buddha and the Mahavira in the Buddhist and Jain systems, was the originator of this reform".<sup>31</sup> The early name of this movement, however, says Dr Bhandarkar, was 'Ekanti Ka Dharma', i.e. religion of single-mindedness.

But these reformers appeared to have been so much impressed with the nothingness of this life that they deemed the amelioration of man's social conditions as unworthy of

---

30. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.I, p.xi.

31. Ishwari Prasad, Dr, History of Medieval India, p.559.

contemplation. Ramanand, whose movement gave a powerful stimulus to Hindu revival in Benaras, could not shake off the theory of incarnation and added to the number of existing sects by confirming his homage to Rama. Nor were his followers freed from the bondage of external forms. Gorakhnath attempted to penetrate the crust of external forms and ceremonies by teaching the occult science of Yoga, but even he could not escape the narrowing influence of sectarianism. The second reason for these movements not sufficiently contributing to the national progress is to be found in the other-worldly character of almost everyone of them. With the exception of Vallabhacharya, every leader held renunciation of the world as the highest virtue. Ramanand, Gorakh, Kabir and Chaitanya were all impressed with the nothingness of this life. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planting the germs of a nation and their sects have remained to this day, as they left them.<sup>32</sup>

It was Nanak, who for the first time introduced a true principle of reform and laid the foundations on which Guru Gobind Singh raised a new nation.

According to Sir Charles Gough, "Guru Nanak penetrated beneath the crust of observances and conventions and found the root of the matter in the unity of God and equality of man before him".<sup>33</sup> Pincott says, "These two ideas, the unity of God and

32. Narang, Gokal Chand, Dr, Transformation of Sikhism, p.21.

33. Sewaram Singh, The Divine Master, pp.230-31.

the brotherhood of man, while uniting all classes on a common basis, at the same time separated those who accepted them from the rest of their countrymen as an association of God-fearing republicans, for what Nanak claimed was liberty from prescribed trammels, equality before God and the fraternity of mankind. The practical application of the doctrines thus taught led to the formation of a new nation. The disciples of the great teacher became a republican fraternity which gradually consolidated into a separate nation".<sup>34</sup>

---

34. Macauliffe, Wilson, Pincott Malcolm and Kahan Singh,  
The Sikh Religion, p.74.

CHAPTER II

THE CASTE-SYSTEM AND THE SIKH GURUS

CHAPTER II

## THE CASTE-SYSTEM AND THE SIKH GURUS

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CASTE-SYSTEM IN INDIA

India is generally known as the classic land of castes and creeds. The institution of caste, which has come to stay as a permanent feature of the social life of the Hindus, dates back to the remote past.

The Vedic Aryans, who were a branch of the Indo-European people, had early developed the exclusive spirit of social behaviour and had cultivated a partiality for ideas of ceremonial purity. They refused to mix with the conquered who were dark-complexioned. Their first regulation was to exclude the Sudras (a class largely formed by the aborigines) from their religious worship. Very early in the Indian history, the Aryans enjoined that the Sudra would not practise the religious worship which they had evolved. They even forbade their presence in the sacrificial hall. A Sudra male's attempt at marrying a Brahmin female was considered an act of the greatest sacrilege against society.<sup>1</sup> The Aryans excluded them even from other religious and social functions. Hence we can conclude that caste in India is a Brahmanic child of the Indo-Aryan culture, cradled in the land of the Ganga and the Yamuna and then transplanted into other parts of the country.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Majumdar, R.C., Pusalkar, A.D. Dr, The Vedic Age, p.385.

2. Majumdar, D.N., Races and Cultures of India, pp.289-318.

However, in the Rig-Vedic period there were no rigid divisions among the Aryans. In the Brahmanic period, the four classes got regimented into rigid groups based on birth. As arts and crafts grew in number and complexity, castes based on occupation came into being.

#### BASIS OF CASTE-SYSTEM

There is a twofold basis of group division among the Hindus, the 'varna' and the 'jati'. The former is God-ordained, primeval and eternal, whereas the latter is a system of groups within the 'varna'. The basic principle of varna is that the division of the Hindu society into four classes is innate and cannot be challenged.<sup>3</sup> The Rig-Veda in the ninetieth hymn of the tenth book authenticates this classification as follows: "When they divided man, how many did they make him? What was his mouth? What his arms? What are called his thighs and feet?" And the answers to these questions follow: "The Brahmana was His mouth, the Rajanya was made from His arms, the Vaisaya became His thighs, and the Sudra was born from His feet".<sup>4</sup>

While the varna is based on innate and predestined differences, the jati is primarily functional and stands for certain civil and religious duties to be performed in the social group in which one is born. This is implied by the term

---

3. Kapur Singh, Parasharprasma Or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, p.391.

4. Rig-Veda, X, 90- 2.

Varanashramdharma. Its implication is that 'dharma' is not the same for all, though, indeed, there is a common 'dharma' valid for everybody. But there is also a 'dharma' for each class, each group and each stage of the life of a person. The 'dharma' of the man of high birth is different from that of a common man. This principle of Varanashramdharma which inspires and validates the social stratification of 'jati' is laid down by Manu. "He, the Resplendent, for the sake of protecting all the creatures, assigned separate duties to those born of his mouth, arms, thighs and feet. Teaching and studying the Vedas, making sacrifices and assisting others in so doing, making gifts and receiving the gifts; these he assigned to the Brahmanas. The protection of the people, giving gifts, the study of the Vedas, non-attachment to sensual pleasures, these he prescribed for the Kshatriyas. The protection of the cattle, sacrificing, trade, banking and agriculture to the Vaishyas. The God allotted only one duty to the Sudras; to serve without demur the members of all the classes mentioned above".<sup>5</sup> Manu warns that if this social and economic apartheid is not respected, the dogs and the crows would swallow up the sacred materials of the sacrifices, the gods would withdraw their favours and the human society would disintegrate.

The Bhagvat-Gita stresses that "one's own avocation is better, howsoever defective, for in performing that which is

---

5. Manu, Manu Smriti, I, 31.

his preordained obligation, one incurs no sin".<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the intentions, the caste-system infused a false sense of pride in the 'twice-born' people and led to the humiliation and persecution of the lower classes. When inordinate formalism vitiated and distorted the early scheme, protests were voiced by Jainism and Buddhism. They repudiated the superiority of the Brahmans. The Buddhist order was open to men, irrespective of their classes and castes. But this does not imply that the Buddha was averse to <sup>the</sup> caste-system or did not believe that men were divided into categories determined by their deeds in previous births. Though Buddhism denied the superiority of the Brahmans, yet it was not critical of the caste-system.<sup>7</sup> The essence of caste is that inequality of birth has a divine sanction and the Hindu social organization has a religious basis, which was never challenged by the Buddha.<sup>8</sup>

It is sometimes alleged that the Lingayats and the Vaishnavas assailed the Hindu caste-system, but this is far from true. According to Ramanuja, all souls are of the same nature in so far as they are of the same substance as God, nevertheless some men are entitled to read the Vedas and others are not. All fire, he added, is of the same nature, but the

---

7. Munshi, K.M., Majumdar, R.C., Pusalkar, A.D.,  
The Age of Imperial Unity, p.547.

8. Ghurya, G.S., Caste, Class and Occupation, p.65.



fire taken from the house of a Brahman is pure, whereas that taken from the cremation ground is impure. The soul is defiled by being associated with a low caste.<sup>9</sup>

#### FERMENT OF SOCIAL REFORMATION

The movement for social reformation in medieval India brought in its train a galaxy of reformers and saints, such as Ramanand, Chaitanya, Kabir, Dadu, Namdev, Tuka Ram, Ram Dass, Vallabhacharya, Pipa and Tulsi Dass. These saints along with many Muslim Sufi saints from the North fought vigorously against the entrenched caste-system and promoted the uplift of the downtrodden. They imparted the message of brotherhood and equality of mankind and proclaimed that all religions and men were alike.<sup>10</sup>

Ramanand's views on the subject of caste-system are embodied in a hymn in the Guru Granth that "in the final reckoning the caste has no relevance; God owns all those who love Him".<sup>11</sup> This is precisely the teaching of the Bhagvat-Gita and it does not repudiate the caste-system. Kabir, Pipa and Ravi Dass (the cobbler), whose hymns also find place in the Guru Granth are among the top twelve followers of Ramanand. Vallabhacharya and Chaitanya gave their own

9. Kapur Singh, Parasharprasana, p.394.

10. Narang, K.S., History of the Punjab, pp.33-34.

11. Kapur Singh, Parasharprasana, p.407.

definitions of the essence of religious activity open to all castes without distinction, but nowhere did they challenge the caste-system.<sup>12</sup> Thus the caste-system arrested the growth of homogeneity among the Hindus and retarded the further advance of the people on the road to democratic ideals and led to socio-political stagnation.

#### CONTENTIONS OF THE GURUS

The Sikh Gurus denounced the religious sanction behind birth distinctions and refused to admit that there were any divinely ordained classes and castes among mankind. They denied that social gradation could determine social ethics and emphatically declared that class and caste distinctions were meaningless. Men were not created from the different parts of the Primeval Being, as stated by Manu. The Gurus contended that all had their origin in one source, the Divine Radiance and, as such, were equal in the eyes of the Supreme Being and the caste barriers were man-made.

The Sikh religion is very simple and can be conveniently summed up in four words, i.e., unity, equality, faith and service. It is a religion of humanity, aiming at uniting the whole world into one common brotherhood, without distinctions of caste, creed or colour. Sikhism lays emphasis on the unity of God-head. Bhai Jodh Singh says "brotherhood of man is the

---

12. Ishwari Prasad, Dr, A Short History of Muslim Rule In India, pp.198-202.

necessary outcome of the unity of the Godhead".<sup>13</sup>

The Gurus' contention that all men have descended from the same Being and, hence, there is none high or low, is borne out by the following hymns of the Gurus:

O Lord, Thou art the True Master,  
the entire Universe overflows with  
thy creation.

The lowest of the lowly, the lowest of  
the low-born, Nanak seeks their company.  
The friendship of the great is vain.

For, where the weak are cared for,  
there doth thy mercy rain. 14

Sri Rag, M.I

As light permeates the rays of the sun,  
so doth God permeate every being,  
warp and woof. 15

Rag Basant, M.IV

As fire is contained in all timber,  
and butter in all milk,  
So the light of God is contained in  
everything, high and low; He is  
in the hearts of all living things.<sup>16</sup>

Sorath, M.V, Dapade, I

13. Jodh Singh, Bhai, Some Studies in Sikhism, pp.10-14.

14. ਨੀਚਾ ਖੰਦਰ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਰੂ ਖਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ  
ਠਾਠਕ ਤਿਨ ਕੰ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ  
ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਨੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਠਦਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ, ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 15

15. ਜਿਉ ਪਸਰੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਰਣਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਤਿਉ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਰਮਈਆ ਓਤਿ ਪੋਤਿ  
ਏਕੋ ਹਰਿ ਰਵਿਆ ਸੁਬ ਬਾਇ ਕੁਰਸੁਬਦੀ ਮਿਨੀਯੈ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਇ

ਰਾਗ ਬਸੰਤ, ਮ 4, ਪੰ: 1177

16. ਸਕਲ ਬਨਸਪਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਬੀਮੰਤਰੁ ਸਕਲ ਦੁਧ ਮਹਿ ਖੀਆ  
ਉਚ ਨੀਚ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਮਾਧਉ ਜੀਆ

ਸੋਰਠ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 617

First, God Created His Light:  
 and from His Power were all men made:  
 Yea, from God's light came the whole Universe:  
 So, whom shall we call good, whom bad?  
 O men, be not strayed by doubt, for,  
 the Creator is in the created, and the created  
 in the Creator, who filleth all, all over.  
 The clay is the same, but fashioned  
 in a myriad shapes:  
 So, it availeth not to find fault either  
 with the clay-vessels, or with the potter,  
 who mouldeth them, each in a different way. 17

Prabhati, Kabir

By the union of the father and the mother  
 two persons are born and they propagate two  
 different ways of life.  
 The Hindus call him 'Ram' and the Muslims  
 call him 'Allah'.  
 The Hindus make obeisance to the east  
 and the Muslims bows to the west.  
 They have their four Vedas.  
 The other have their four books.  
 They have the four varnas,  
 whereas the others have the four sects.  
 Both were born of the five elements.  
 Coming from one place they call themselves  
 by different names. 18

Bhai Gurdas, Var, 33

17. ਅਵਲਿ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ  
 ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੇ ਮੰਦੇ  
 ਨੇਕਾ ਭਰਮਿ ਨ ਭੁਲਹੁ ਭਾਈ  
 ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਨਕ ਖਨਕ ਖਾਲਕੁ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸ੍ਰਬਠਾਈ  
 ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ, ਕਬੀਰ , ਪੰ:1349
18. ਦੁਹਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਜਮੇ ਦੁਇ ਜਣੇ ਦੁਹਿ ਜਣਿਆ ਦੁਇ ਰਾਹ ਚਲਾਏ  
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਆਖਣ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਖੁਦਾਏ  
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਪੁਰਬ ਨਿਉਂਦਿਆ ਪੰਛਿਮ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣ ਨਿਵਾਏ  
 ਕੰਗ ਬਠਾਰਸ ਹਿੰਦੂਆ ਮੰਕਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣ ਮਨਾਏ  
 ਵੇਦ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਚਾਰ ਚਾਰ ਚਾਰ ਵਰਨ ਚਾਰ ਮਜਹਬ ਚਲਾਏ  
 ਪੰਜ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਵੇਂ ਜਣੇ ਪੈਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੀਸੰਤਰ ਛਾਏ  
 ਇਕ ਥਾਉ ਦੁਇ ਨਾਉ ਧਰਾਏ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ, 33, ਪਉੜੀ 2

Some become cleanshaven 'Sanyasis', others 'Yogis'. Some 'Brahmcharis' and some consider themselves 'Jatis'. Some Hindus, some Mohammedans, Rafzis or Shias, but understand, the race of the man is the same. 'Karta' and 'Karim' are the same. He is 'Razak' and 'Rahim'. Don't believe even by mistake that there is any difference between them. The Gurdeva of all is one. All have the same form and the light in them is also the same. 19

Akal-Ustat, Guru 10

The Hindu temple and the mosque are the same. 'Pooja' and 'Namaz' are the same. All men are the same but they look different. The distinctions among the gods, the demons, the Yakshas, the Gandharvas are all due to their residence in different regions. They have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body and the same build. All are composed of earth, air, fire, water and ether. 'Allah' and 'Abbekh' are the same. The Purans and the Quran are the same. All have got

19. ਕੇਉ ਭਯੇ ਮੁੰਡੀਆ ਸੰਨਯਾਸੀ ਕੇਉ ਜੋਗੀ ਭਯੇ  
 ਕੇਉ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ ਕੇਉ ਯਤੀ ਅਨੁਮਾਨਥੇ  
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੇਉ ਰਾਫਜੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਡੀ  
 ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਭੇ ਏਕੇ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਥੇ  
 ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਿਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ  
 ਦੁਸਰੇ ਠ ਦੇਵ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਥੇ  
 ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਤੁਰੁ ਦੇਵ ਏਕ  
 ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੇ ਏਕੇ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਾਨਥੇ

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤ, ਪ:10, ਪੰ: 82

the same form and the same constitution.<sup>20</sup>

Akal-Ustat, Guru 10

Sparks of the same fire, millions of sparks fly from one fire, they become separate and again merge in it. From dust millions of particles fly, but these particles again unite with dust. In one river millions of waves arise. All waves of water are called water. All forms, all living beings, come out of Him and they return to Him again.<sup>21</sup>

Akal-Ustat, Guru 10

20. ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਮਾਜ ਓਈ  
ਮਾਨਸ ਸਭੇ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੇ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਓ ਹੈ।  
ਦੇਵਤ ਅਦੇਵ ਜੱਛ ਰੀਧੁਬ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ  
ਠਯਾਰੇ ਠਯਾਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ  
ਏਕੇ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੇ ਕਾਠ ਏਕੇ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੇ ਬਾਨ  
ਖਾਕਬਾਦ ਆਤਿਸੁ ਐ ਆਬ ਕੇ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ  
ਅਲਹ ਅਤੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਐ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ  
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੇ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਓ ਹੈ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤ, ਪ:10, ਪੰ: 83

21. ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਆਗ ਤੇ ਕਨਕਾ ਕੋਟਿ ਆਗ ਉਠੇ  
ਠਯਾਰੇ ਠਯਾਰੇ ਹੈ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਆਗ ਮੰ ਮਿਲਾਹਿਰੇ  
ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਧਰਿ ਤੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਧਰਿ ਪੁਰਤਿ ਹੈ  
ਧਰਿ ਕੇ ਕਨਕਾ ਫੇਰ ਧੁਰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਹਿਰੇ  
ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਨਦ ਤੇ ਤਰੀਕ ਕੋਟਿ ਉਪਜਤ ਹੈ  
ਪਾਨਿ ਕੇ ਤਰੀਕ ਸਭਪਾਨਿ ਹੀ ਕਹਾਹਿਰੇ  
ਤੈਸੇ ਵਿਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਭੂਤ ਭੂਤ ਪ੍ਰਕਟ ਹੈ  
ਤਾ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਜ ਸਭੇ ਤਾ ਹੀ ਮੰ ਸਮਾਹਿਰੇ

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤ ਪਾ: 10, ਪੰ: 84

The religious belief as enunciated by Manu entitled only the 'twice-born' to meditate and reap the fruits of meditation. In a way, they and they alone were entitled to attain salvation. The low-born were debarred from meditating on His Name and the right to salvation was denied to them. The Sikh Gurus made a palpable departure from this beaten track and broke fresh ground. Their trumpet call was that Dharma was one for all. The following hymns illustrate this truth:

Contemplating the Lord, men of low caste  
attained a high station.<sup>22</sup>

Rag Suhi, M.IV

Let any of the four castes repeat His Name.  
And he who utters it, is saved.<sup>23</sup>

Gauri Sukhmani, M.V

Whether one is a Kshatriya, a Brahmin,  
a Shudra, or a Vaishya, all these  
but swim across through the Lord's Name.<sup>24</sup>

Rag Maru, M.V

22. ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਤਿਆ ਉਤਮ ਪਦਵੀ ਪਾਇ

ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 733

23. ਬੀਜ ਮੰਤਰ ਸਰਬ ਕੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਮਹਿ ਜਪੇ ਕੇਉ ਨਾਮੁ

ਜੇ ਜੇ ਜਪੇ ਤਿਸਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਸਾਧ ਸੀਰਿ ਪਾਵੈ ਜਨੁ ਕੋਇ।

ਫਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 274

24. ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਸੁਦ ਵੈਸ ਸਭ ਏਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਤਰਾਨਥ

ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਕਹਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਸੁਨੈ ਸੇ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਨਥ

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 1001

Whether he be a Brahmin or a Vaishya,  
 a Kshatriya or a Shudra-yea, even  
 if he be a chandal of an unclean mind.  
 He becometh immaculate and pure,  
 contemplating his God, he saveth  
 him-self, and all who belong to him. 25

Rag Bilawal, Bani Ravidas

The Sikh Gurus demolished the very superstructure of the  
 caste-system. They waged a relentless war against the  
 superstitions relating to 'varan,' 'Jati' and other caste  
 classifications.

Vain is the pride of caste,  
 vain the pride of glory,  
 the Lord alone giveth shade to all. 26

Var Sri Rag, M.I

Appreciate the light, do not ask the caste,  
 there is no caste hereafter. 27

Rag Asa, M.I

Some wear skins, others take to the begging bowl,  
 others to the yogi's staff, others to a deer's skin, (deer)  
 while some but raise the tuft of hair,  
 and wear the sacred thread,  
 and tuck up the lion cloth (the Brahmin way),  
 O Lord, thou art my Master, I am a  
 player of many parts prayeth Nanak:  
 O Lord, how can (my garb) determine my caste. 28

Rag Asa, M.I

25. ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਵੈਸ ਅਰ ਖੜੀ ਡੇਮ ਚੰਡਾਰ ਮਲੇਛ ਮਠ ਸੋਇ  
 ਹੋਇ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਭਗਵੰਤ ਭਜਨ ਤੇ ਆਪੁ ਤਰਿ ਤਰੇ ਕੁਲ ਸੋਇ  
 ਰਾਗ ਬਿਲਾਵਲ, ਬਾਣੀ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਭਰਤ, ਪੰ: 858
26. ਫਕੜੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ ਠਾਉ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ  
 ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰ: 83
27. ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ, ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਰੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ  
 ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ, ਮ 1, ਪੰ: 349
28. ਖਨੜੀ ਖਪਰੀ ਲਕੜੀ ਚਮੜੀ ਸਿਖਾ ਸੁਤੁ ਧੋਤੀ ਕੀਨੀ  
 ਤੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਹਉ ਸਾਗੀ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁਣਵੈ ਠਾਠਕੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਕੀਸੀ  
 ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ, ਮ 1, ਪੰ: 358



Hereafter goeth neither caste nor colour with thee,  
And thou comest as are they deeds. 29

Rag Asa, M.III

Bhai Gurdas has given in his own way a vivid description of the working out of these principles by which all the four 'varnas' were merged into the Sikh religion.

All the four varnas were merged into one,  
Guru Nanak came to save the world. 30

Bhai Gurdas, Var, I

Hinduism and Islam were the two dominant religions at that time. Their followers were hostile to each other. The Sikh Gurus, who believed in the unity of the Godhead and brotherhood of man, preached the gospel of fraternity and love. They tried to remove mutual enmity, doubts and superstitions of the people and asked them to live like brothers.

He to whom the two ways are revealed as one, is blessed;  
But he who believes not (in it)  
burns in his own inner fire.  
Blessed is the whole world (if it) abideth in the truth. 31

Var Mairh, M.I

29. ਆਰੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ,  
ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇਹੈ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ

ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ, ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 363

30. ਚਾਰੇ ਪੈਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਚਾਰ ਵਰਣ ਇਕ ਵਰਣ ਕਰਾਯਾ  
ਕਨਿ ਤਾਰਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਯਾ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ 1, ਪਉੜੀ 23

31. ਰਾਹ ਦੇਵੈ ਇਨ੍ਹ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਝਸੀ  
ਕੁਫਰ ਕੋਯ ਕੁਫਰਾਣੇ ਪਇਆ ਦਝਸੀ  
ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੁਬਰਾਨੁ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਈਆ

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ, ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 142

The ways are two, but the Lord(of both) is one:  
Yea, realize it through His will, through the word. 32

Gauri, M.I

Some but call Thee 'Rama', while by others  
Thou art known as 'Khuda'.  
Yea, some serve Thee as 'Gosain', others as 'Allah'.  
But, O Beneficent Lord, Thou art only the one Doer and Cause.  
So bless me Thou with Thy mercy. 33

Ram Kali, M.V

He abides in all hearts all over, and His wonders  
are unanalysable and make one wonder.  
O Creator-Lord, be merciful to me,  
And bless me with Thy devotion.  
Sayeth Nanak: "The Guru hath rid me of my doubt:  
And now I see Allah and the Transcendent Brahma as one. 34

Ram Kali, M.V

I've turned my mind away(from maya) and  
abandoned the profession of my caste and family  
And, now I weave (nothing but God)in the void of poise.  
Yea, I've abandoned all my strife,  
For, abandoned have I both the Pandit and the Mullah. 35

Bhairo, Kabir

32. ਰਾਹ ਦੇਵੈ ਖਸਮੁ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੁ ਭੁਰ ਕੇ ਸਬਦਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ  
ਸਕਲ ਰੂਪ ਵਰਨ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ ਕਹੁ ਠਾਠਕ ਏਕੋ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ।  
ਰਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 223
33. ਕੋਈ ਬੋਲੈ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਕੋਈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਕੋਈ ਸੇਵੈ ਰੁਸਈਆ ਕੋਈ ਖਲਾਹਿ  
ਕਾਰਣ ਕਰਮ ਕਰੀਮ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਰਹੀਮ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਵੈ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਕੋਈ ਹਜ ਜਾਇ  
ਰਾਮ ਕਲੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 885
34. ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਨਰਹਰ ਦਇਆਨ ਰਮਤ ਰਾਮ ਘਟ ਘਟ ਆਧਾਰ  
ਬਸੁਦੇਵ ਬਸਤ ਸਭ ਠਾਇ ਨੀਲਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਖੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ  
ਮਿਹਰ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਿ, ਕਰਨੇਹਾਰ ਭਗਤਿ ਬੰਦਗੀ ਦੇਹਿ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ  
ਕਹੁ ਠਾਠਕ ਭੁਰਿ ਖੇਏ ਭਰਮ ਏਕੋ ਅਨਹ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ  
ਰਾਮ ਕਲੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 897
35. ਹਮਰਾ ਝਗਰਾ ਰਹਾ ਨ ਕੋਉ ਪੀਡਤ ਮੁਨਾ ਛਾਡੇ ਦੇਉ  
ਪੀਡਤ ਮੁਨਾ ਜੇ ਨਿਖਿ ਦੀਆ ਛਾਡਿ ਚਨੇ ਹਮ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਨੀਆ  
ਭੈਰਉ ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰ: 1158

The idea of race and family has been responsible for preventing mankind from mixing together. Racial or family pride brought about great havoc on mankind. The Sikh Gurus who aimed at levelling down these distinctions spoke openly about the futility of these distinctions, and condemned social inequalities, caste and creed distinctions and untouchability.

#### PRINCIPLES OF THE GURUS IN PRACTICE

This message of all-embracing brotherhood and equality was not limited to thought alone. The Sikh Gurus translated these principles into action and there was no gulf left between practice and precept. The pages of ~~the~~ Sikh History are replete with such examples.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was an apostle of love, equality and brotherhood. He was born when the times were out of joint. Social injustice and caste prejudices were the order of the day. The corrupt rulers were drunk with power and there existed a yawning gulf between them and the subjects. In such a world, Guru Nanak preached the gospel of universal love and brotherhood to create a casteless society. God-intoxicated Nanak moved from place to place to propagate the divine message. Repudiating the caste-system, the Guru refused to receive the 'janeu', the sacred thread, from Hardial, the family priest. The Guru asked him the significance of wearing the 'janeu'. Hardial told him that it was the totem of Hindu religion. Guru Nanak rejected the views put forward by the Pandit and thus spoke :

Make me/rcy thy cotton, contentmen/t thy  
thread, continence its knot, truth  
its twist.

That would make a 'janeu' for the soul;  
in case thou hast it, O Brahman,  
then put it on me.

It will not break, or become soiled,  
or be burnt, or lost. Blest is the man,  
O Nanak, who goeth with such a thread  
on his neck.

Thou purchasest a 'janeu' for four 'damris',  
and seated in a square puttest it on. 36

Var Asa, M.I

Guru Nanak told the Qazi at Sultanpur that there was no Hindu and no Musalman.<sup>37</sup> The Qazi represented against his statement to the Governor Daulat Khan, who summoned Guru Nanak and asked him what his utterances implied? The Guru said:

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 pelf 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.

---

36. ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸਤਿਕੁ ਸੁਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਕੰਠੀ ਸੁਤੁ ਵਟੁ  
ਏਹ ਜਨੇਉ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ  
ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਭੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਨਕੈ ਨਾ ਇਹ ਜਨੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ  
ਧੰਨ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਕਨਿ ਚਲੇ ਪਾਇ।

ਆਸ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ, ਮ 1, ਪੰ: 471

37. Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan, MS.f.4.

When he is kind to all men,  
then Nanak, shall he be indeed a Muslaman.<sup>38</sup>

Maikh ki Var, M.I

His mission was not aimed at the reformation of a particular class or sect. Nor were his travels confined to Punjab, the Land of the Five Rivers. Despite hardships, he practically travelled across the whole of the Indian Subcontinent and even visited places beyond its frontiers. His visits were limited not only to the Hindu places of worship, like Hardwar and Benaras, but he went to famous places of Muslim pilgrimage like the holy Mecca, Madina and Baghdad also.

In his odysseys or wanderings, he mixed with the poor and the untouchable as readily as with the kings and the priests. He gave preference to the lowly and the downtrodden. Bhai Mardana, the life-long companion of Guru Nanak was a 'Mirasi', a low-caste bard. Mardana was of the tribe of 'Dums', who are traditional minstrels.<sup>40</sup>

38. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ,  
ਘਵਨਿ ਘਉਨਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰ ਮਿਠਾ ਮੁਸਕਲਮਾਣਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ  
ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਮ ਦੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੇ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ  
ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੈ ਸਿਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੈ ਆਪ ਰਵਾਵੈ  
ਤਉ ਠਾਠਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੀਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣ ਕਹਾਵੈ।

ਮਾਝ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ, ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 141

39. Bhai Gurdas, Var, I, 34, 37.

40. Vir Singh, Bhai, (ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi, 12.

Guru Nanak rejected the invitation to a sumptuous feast given by Malik Bhago and chose to stay with Bhai Lalo, a humble carpenter of Saidpur. This act of the Guru brought into focus his sympathy and love for the poor and the downtrodden and is symbolic of the denunciation of the caste-system.<sup>41</sup>

While at Hardwar, the Guru required fire to cook his meal. He sent Mardana to a Brahmin. Mardana stepped into a Brahmin's cooking-square. The Brahmin charged Mardana with the defiling of his food. Exposing the caste-system, the Guru made the utterance: "Evil conscience is the 'dumni', want of mercy, the 'kasain', backbiting, the sweepress and anger the 'chandal' (out-caste). These are ever-abiding with thee, O Brahmin, what use is there to draw boundary lines around thy purified cooking-floor"?

Once a fanatical Brahmin came to the Guru and begged for alms. The Guru was having his meal and he invited the Brahmin to join him. The Brahmin told him that he would not partake of the food cooked by others and added that he would eat only what he had cooked himself. The Guru was against such futile formalities, but he gave uncooked articles to the Brahmin to cook for himself. The Brahmin went away and started digging the earth to make a cooking-square. But wherever he dug, he

41. Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan, MS.F.5.

42. Meharban, Sodhi, Janam Sakhi (Pothi Sach-khand) Gost, 41-42.

found only bones. Tired and overcome by hunger, the Brahmin went to the Guru and asked for the cooked food which he had previously rejected. The Guru brought home to the Brahmin the futility of his beliefs and made him realize the importance of uttering, and meditating on God's Name.<sup>43</sup>

During his visit to Ceylon, Raja Sivanabh asked him his name as well as his caste.<sup>44</sup> The Guru dispelled his doubts and repudiated these distinctions by saying that a real Brahmin was he who had the knowledge of God's pervading spirit. By concentrating on one God, one could overcome the waverings of one's mind. The Guru was accompanied by Saiddo and Gheho, of the Jat caste, in his journey to the South, and Hassu, a blacksmith, and Sihan, a Calico-printer, in his journey to the North.<sup>45</sup>

When Guru Nanak visited Mecca, the 'Qazis' and the 'Mullahs' enquired of him as to which of the two religions was superior — Hinduism or Islam. The Guru replied that the professors of both the religions would suffer if their deeds were not virtuous. Both sects are jealous of each other. The Hindus insist on saying 'Ram' and the Muslims, 'Rahim', but they know not God. The priest further asked him who would realize God, the Hindus who read the Vedas or the Muslims who read the Quran?

43. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi, 38.

44. Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan, MS.f.5.

45. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi, 49.

The Guru told Qazi Rukun-ud-Din and Maulvi Abdul Rehman that the Vedas and the Quran were false and God only was the purest of the pure. At Baghdad, the high priest, Pir Dastgir, asked him who he was and to what sect he belonged. The Guru told him that he had rejected all sects and knew only one God.<sup>46</sup>

The Hindus and the Muslims both loved the Guru alike. When the Guru's end was drawing near, his Hindu followers declared that they would cremate his body whereas his Muslim friends declared to bury it. The Guru decided by asking the Hindus to place some flowers on the right of his dead body and the Muslims on the left of it, and said that they who found their flowers fresh the next morning could dispose of his body as they liked. When the sheet was removed, his body was not there. It had etherealized to merge into the Universal Soul from which it had first emanated. The flowers were found fresh the next morning on both the sides, reaffirming the brotherhood of man which was so dear to the Guru.<sup>47</sup>

The torch of love for humanity was kept burning by the successive Gurus who were the embodiment of Nanak's spirit. Guru Angad, like Guru Nanak, also repudiated distinction of caste and creed. During his visit to Harika, his Sikhs came to pay him homage. The owner of the village who had known the Guru

46. Bhai Gurdas, Var, I, pp.35-36.

47. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi, 57.



earlier and was proud of his high caste, refused to pay respects to the Guru. The Sikhs read out to him slokas from the Asa-di-Var. This made his pride vanish.<sup>48</sup>

Balwand and Satta, the two famous minstrels of Guru Angad, used to entertain the Sikhs with their vocal and instrumental music. They grew haughty and capricious with the passage of time and started boasting that it was because of their music that the Guru had become renowned. They refused to sing the hymns when asked by the Sikhs to do so. They argued that they would not sing the hymns to ordinary peasants. At their refusal, the Guru was annoyed and turned his back on the haughty minstrels, who eventually had to regret their foolish and haughty behaviour.

Guru Amar Dass enjoined upon his followers, irrespective of their position, caste or creed, to eat in the community kitchen, known as 'Guru ka Langar'. During his visit to the village of Dalla, Prithi Mal and Talsa, of the Bhalla caste, went to see him. They tried to show that they were intimate with the Guru as he belonged to their caste. The Guru told them that caste did not matter at all in the next world, and only good actions could pave the way for salvation.<sup>49</sup> Only they were honoured in His Court who were humble and who had given up falsehood, fraud, slander, deceit, hypocrisy and ingratitude.

48. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, pp.29-30.

49. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.V, pp.1486-87.

Bhai Mallan, Ramu, Gobind and Dipa requested the Guru to enlighten them on the things that mattered in life. The Guru advised them not to recognize caste, not to hurt anybody's feelings, to abandon pride, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to sing the Guru's hymns, to be humble and to recognize the Creator only.<sup>50</sup>

The rising prestige and the growing popularity of Guru Amar Dass was an eyesore to the Khattris and the Brahmins who were extremely proud of their caste. They lodged a complaint against the Guru with the Emperor that he had abandoned the religion and social customs of the Hindus and had abolished all caste distinctions. His followers sat together in a line in his kitchen, whether they were Jats or of any other caste, such as the strolling minstrels, Mohammedans, Brahmins, Khattris, sweepers, barbers, washermen, fishermen or carpenters.

The Emperor sent for the Guru who sent Bhai Jetha, his son-in-law, to represent him. Bhai Jetha was able to satisfy the Emperor that the Guru was not hostile to the Hindus. The Emperor, however, asked Bhai Jetha to request Guru Amar Dass on his behalf to make a pilgrimage to the Ganges to satisfy the Hindus and promised that no tax would be levied on the Guru's party. The Guru went to Pahoa, a place of pilgrimage near Thanesar or Kurkhetar, and the Brahmins were pleased to see him. He removed the doubts of the Pandits and brushed aside their

---

50. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, p.85.

views that religious instructions were forbidden to women and the Sudras.<sup>51</sup>

Murari, who was previously known as Prema and whom the Guru had blessed and cured of leprosy, became an ardent Sikh of the Guru. The Guru one day in the open 'durbar' asked his Sikhs whether any one of them was ready to give his daughter in marriage to Murari. A Sikh, called Sinha, stood up and offered his daughter Matho in marriage to him. The marriage was duly solemnized. When Sinha's wife heard of it, she came wailing to the Guru that the antecedents or caste or parentage of Murari were not known. The Guru said, "I am his father and mother and my caste is his caste".

Beni, a great scholar of the Vedas and Shastras vanquished the Pandits of all the great cities of India in polemics. In the course of his country-wide tours, he went to Goindwal and carried along with him his huge library. Guru Amar Dass received him warmly. The Pandit asked the Guru how the Sikhs who had abandoned the religious duties of the Hindus would be saved. The Guru told him that all rituals devoid of devotion were futile and asked him to shed his false pride and his notion of high caste and learning and to absorb his mind in devotion to God.

---

51. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, pp.102-109.

The fourth Guru, Ram Dass, was also cast in the mould of his illustrious predecessors. He also condemned empty rituals and false ceremonies. He worked for the brotherhood of mankind and upheld the ideals espoused by Guru Nanak. Sri Chand, the elder son of Baba Nanak, came to see Guru Ram Dass. When he reached the suburbs of Goindwal, the Guru went to receive him with reverence and offered him sweets and five hundred rupees. In the course of conversation, Baba Sri Chand asked the Guru why he had grown a long beard. The Guru replied that he had grown it to wipe off the dust of his (Sri Chand's) feet with it and bent down to do so. Sri Chand felt abashed and drew back his feet.<sup>53</sup>

The teachings of Guru Ram Dass were so effective that people of every class and religion flocked to him to hear his discourses. Several persons, including the Tapa (a contemporary ascetic of the Guru) became jealous of his fame. The Tapa said that it was a terrible age, the 'Kalyug', for he, who bore cold and heat, was not respected by the people in preference to the Guru who, a married man, was leading a life of comfort. One day, he went in a very agitated mood to the Guru and remonstrated with him about his Sikhs being so conceited that they did not accept the Vedas and the Quran, observed no fasts, went on no pilgrimages, observed no caste rules and other religious

---

53. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.VI, p.1701.

duties. They only uttered 'Wahguru' and were misguided and thus wasted their lives. The Guru convinced him that it was his own mind that was completely befogged with pride.

Seven Sikhs, named Dharam Dass, Dugar Dass, Dipa, Jetha, Sansari, Bula and Tirath sought the Guru's grace to get salvation. The Guru initiated them into new mode of thought and exposed the hollowness of the caste-system.<sup>54</sup>

Guru Ram Dass had undertaken the digging of tanks at Santokhsar and Amritsar. He also founded the City of Amritsar. This work was completed with the help of his dedicated Sikhs, who worked day and night, and collected funds for their completion in the lifetime of Guru Arjan Dev. The foundation-stone of the Golden Temple at Amritsar was laid by the great Muslim saint Mian Mir. It was a gesture of immense good-will and of far-reaching implications. It reveals the Guru's large-heartedness and catholicity of vision. When the tank was dug, the Sikhs requested the Guru that the 'Harimandar' (the Golden Temple) be built in the middle of the tank and it should be higher than all other buildings in the neighbourhood. The Guru, who was an embodiment of humility, told his Sikhs: 'What is humble shall be exalted' and said that the Harimandar should be the lowest edifice of all. The Hindu temples are closed on three sides and are open only towards the east. The Guru ordered that the

---

54. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, p.275.



Pipa, a Raja, Bhikham and Beni of unknown castes, Dhanna, a Jat, and the other four, namely Namdev, a calico-printer; Sain, a barber; Sadna, a butcher; and Ravidas a cobbler, were of the Sudra class.<sup>57</sup> According to the Hindu Religion, it was considered a great sin to listen to the teachings of Muslims and Sudras. Guru Arjan repudiated this belief and showed that every good man was worthy of honour irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

It is recorded in Dabistan-i-Mazahib that a youth was unhappy at caste restrictions imposed by Hinduism and wanted to embrace Islam. One Partap Mall Giani advised him to embrace Sikhism, if he wanted to be above distinctions of untouchability and if he was inclined to eat everything.<sup>58</sup> This episode speaks volumes and reveals that Guru Nanak's mission was free from all distinctions of caste and creed. Fascinated by Guru Hargobind's teachings, the members of different castes and creeds flocked to him, Mian Meer, a Muslim divine of the period; Kaulan, a daughter of the Qazi of Lahore; Wazir Khan, Budhan Shah, Babek (a rebeck-player) and many others were the Muslim admirers of Guru Hargobind, in addition to many Muslims who joined the Guru in his wars against the imperial forces.<sup>59</sup>

57. Kohli, Surinder Singh, Dr, A Critical Study of the Adi Granth, pp. 2-5.

58. Mohsan Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.239.

59. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.IV, pp.280-81.

Guru Har Rai, like his predecessors, was also against distinctions of caste, creed and colour. A devoted Sikh lady, Bridhan, prepared with her own hands loaves of bread for the Guru and stood at a place from where the Guru passed daily. One day, the Guru came and asked for the loaves which she had cooked. The Guru ate them while on horseback. The woman was very happy and paid compliments to the Guru for his humility in accepting her humble fare. The Sikhs were surprised to see the Guru partaking of food offered by an unknown low-caste woman. The next day, they took sweet cakes and offered them to the Guru. The Guru told them that he ate food from the hands of that old lady, because she was a pious and devoted lady and had prepared the food with love and devotion.<sup>60</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh gave a grand feast at Anandpur to celebrate the Baisakhi festival. He invited all the people who had assembled there, but Kesho Brahmin was somehow <sup>forgot</sup> left. He, however, sent for him when everybody had taken food. Kesho angrily refused his invitation and said that he would not eat the food which was left after the low-caste people had been fed. The Guru smiled and in a beautiful quatrain, full of sweet irony, told the Brahmin that one would get whatsoever was ordained by God. Therefore he should not worry. He further told him not to call these people low-caste but should see them

---

60. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.IX, pp.3551-55.



through his eyes. "Through the favour of them I won all my battles. Through the favour of them, a host of sins could not overpower me. Through their favour, I got my education. I owe my present position to them, otherwise there are millions of poor people like me. The service of these people delights me as it will bear fruit hereafter. In my house, my body, and my wealth are all theirs".<sup>61</sup>

When Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa on the first of Baisakh, Samvat 1756 (A.D.1699), he exhorted his disciples to embrace one creed and obliterate differences among all religions, "let the four Hindu castes which have different rules for their guidance be abandoned. Adopt the one form of adoration and become brothers. Let none deem himself superior to another. Let none pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are spoken with reverence in the Shastras, or adore incarnations such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga, but believe in one God. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish and feel no disgust or contempt for one another".<sup>62</sup>

In his wars against the hill Rajas, and against the imperial forces, the Guru was helped by a number of Muslim devotees, such as Sayid Buddhu Shah, who with his sons and five

---

61. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, pp.65-66.

62. Bhandari, Sujan Rai, Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, MS.f.49.

hundred followers, fought against the Rajput confederacy. Alaf Khan, Maimum Khan and other faithful Muslims fought for the Guru against the Imperial forces. Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan helped and escorted the Guru as 'Uch-ka-Pir', when he was hotly pursued by the Imperial forces in the Machhiwara jungle. Kalha, a Chaudhri of Jagraon and Raikot entertained the Guru at Jatpura and helped him in inquiring from Sirhind about the fate of his mother and two youngest sons. Sayid Bhiken Shah, a Muslim saint, paid homage to the Guru at the time of his birth at Patna. Nawab Rahim Baksh and Nawab Karim Baksh were also among the Guru's admirers. This bears ample testimony to the fact that the Guru was held in love and esteem by the Muslims as well. He was not against any particular religion.<sup>63</sup>

In the battle of Anandpur, which the Guru fought against the combined forces of the Rajput Rajas and the Imperial forces, the Sikhs complained to him that a man, called Bhai Kanhaiya, was distributing water indiscriminately to the thirsty Hindu and Muslim wounded soldiers. The Guru sent for Bhai Kanhaiya and asked him to explain whether the complaint against him was true. Bhai Kanhaiya said that he was working according to the instructions of the Guru and considered friend and foe as equal. The Guru was pleased with his reply, embraced him and gave him a suitable robe of honour.<sup>64</sup>

63. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas, pp.399-401.

64. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, pp.173-74.

CHAPTER III

SANGAT

CHAPTER III

## SANGAT

BACKGROUND

One of the greatest achievements in the field of politics today is that almost every civilized nation is committed to a democratic form of government. The evolution of this system has a long and a varied history. It has passed through various phases, starting from the early period when men first learnt to live together in a family, obeying the orders of the head of the family, down to the present stage of an elected form of government, in which the power to rule is not vested in one man but in the whole nation. Centralization, which was the keynote of the politics in ancient times, has given place to decentralization which has gradually developed in modern times.

The world forces in the field of religion have moved quite parallel to the forces in the field of politics. In the ancient times, the priestly functions were monopolized by specially qualified men who had a strong hold over the religious feelings of the people. Gradually, they became tribal gods and prophets and their word became the law for the common man in religious matters. It is only in recent times that we find great prophets, like the Buddha, Christ, Confucius and Guru Nanak rising above the parochial level of the tribe and thinking and striving for the welfare of mankind as a whole.

The development of democratic institutions in religion had a very slow growth. A careful study of the Vedas shows that national life and activities in the earliest times in India were expressed through popular assemblies and institutions, like 'Samiti' and 'Sabha'.<sup>1</sup> The 'Samiti' was the national assembly of the whole people having both political and non-political functions. It had its 'Pati', the president, who was insuperable in his powers. Samiti was regarded as eternal 'a daughter of Prajapati', the Creator.<sup>2</sup> The 'Samiti' had a history extending from <sup>the</sup> later half of the millennium of the Rig-Veda down to about 700 B.C. In the Imperial epoch, this institution disappeared. Another important institution of the Vedic Age was the 'Sabha', known as the sister of the 'Samiti', one of the two daughters of 'Prajapati'. The 'Sabha' had its president as 'Sabha Pati'. The Sabha and Samiti both worked on the principles of co-operation.

The religious life of the people was organized through the Vidatha assembly, the parent folk-assembly which existed even earlier than the 'Samiti'. Limited Monarchy existed in the Vedic Age and in the post Vedic period. Kingship was dissolved and democratic government were set up in various places known as the 'Gunas', 'Sanghas' or Republics. Panini has given ~~a~~ very useful and valuable information about the existence

---

1. Jayaswal, K.P., Hindu Polity, pp. 13-15.

2. Ibid, pp. 16-20.

of the Hindu republic in India in about 500 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

The Buddha founded the religious Sangha known as Bhikkhu Sangha or the republic of the Bhikkhus, the constitution of which was a copy of the political Sangha.<sup>4</sup> The Buddha adopted a democratic constitution for his own Church (Sangha). Besides the election of 'Sanghatthera', there was also the formal system of moving of resolutions. Definite rules were laid down regarding the method of moving resolutions in the assembly. Generally, the proposal was repeated twice, and if no objections were raised, it was taken as passed. In case of any objection, the consensus of the assembly was determined by the votes of the majority. Definite rules were laid down for the counting of the votes and there was a special officer for the purpose of ballot-voting by means of wooden sticks(salaka). For different kinds of ecclesiastical acts, like the inflicting of punishment for an offence, the restoration of the privileges of a monk, the admission or readmission of a monk into the Sangha, the minimum number of members required to form the panels was fixed. In certain cases, even the absence of a single member made an act invalid, and the resolution had to be passed unanimously. In every Sangha, office-bearers were elected by unanimous consent for carrying on various functions,

---

3. Agrawala, V.S., India as Known to Panini, p.424.

4. Munshi, K.M., Majumdar, R.C., Pusalkar, A.D.,  
The Age of Imperial Unity, p.376.

for example, the distribution of food and dresses, the provision of beds, the erection of monasteries, etc.<sup>5</sup>

The Buddha, in a meeting of the Sangha, told his 'Bhikkhus' the seven principles for the welfare of a community, such as to meet together in full and frequent assemblies, to carry out the duties of the order in concord, to act in accordance with the rules of the Sangha laid down to honour, revere and support the elders, not to succumb to cravings and to feel delighted in a life of solitude, and to train their minds. These conditions were laid down as a keynote to the prosperity of the Bhikkhus.<sup>6</sup>

The community of the monks (Sangha) and of laymen also form the chief disciplinary regulation in Jainism, with specific moral and spiritual codes prescribed.

Originally, the unity of God and the important rituals, such as daily prayers, fasts, alms, pilgrimage and belief in Mohammed as the Prophet of God were the main pillars of Islam. On the social side, it preached equality and brotherhood of Muslims, and, hence, the absence of a priestly class. But with the passage of time, this simple faith was divided into various sects and systems under the pressure of life and logic, such as 'Kharijia', and 'Shiah', 'Murjia' and 'Qadiriya'. The

5. Munshi, K.M., Majumdar, R.C., Pusalkar, A.D.,  
The Age of Imperial Unity, p.362.

6. Ambedkar, B.R., Dr, The Buddha and His Dharma, p.415.

rise of Sufism in Islam developed metaphysical systems and the organization of monastic orders. The Sufi order provided the companionship of saints which was necessary for spiritual welfare. The Sheikh regulated the conduct of the companions and watched their spiritual progress.<sup>7</sup>

#### CONTENTIONS OF THE SIKH GURUS

The organization of the Sangat system by the Sikh Gurus was a revolutionary step. It practically helped in levelling down distinctions of caste, creed and colour in the society. Removing the barriers of tribe and station, it worked for equality and brotherhood of mankind and elevated the spiritual life of the people.

Guru Nanak felt that the real cause of the people's misery was their disunity born out of the diversity of beliefs. Therefore, wherever he went, he left behind a Sangat, an association of followers with the instructions that they should build a gurdwara (Sikh temple) of their own, where they should meet regularly and sing the Guru's hymns. The forums of the Sangats were known as 'dharamsalas'. As a result of Guru Nanak's travels and the activities of the successor Gurus, there sprang up all over the country a network of temples and centres of Sikh missionary activities known as Sangats. Each of these Sangats was placed under the charge of a leader, known as Bhai ji, the revered brother, who presided over the

---

7. Tara Chand, Dr, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, pp.51-81.



congregations and instructed them in their spiritual, religious, social and moral duties. The Bhai ji, performed his duties in all humility, regarding it as a service entrusted to him by the Master.

The Sikh Gurus enjoined upon the Sikhs to join 'Satsang' or 'Sadhsangat', as the company of the holy people had manifold advantages. They believed that the influence of 'Satsang' was great on one's personality and even bad and wicked people could be reformed in the company of good people. They repudiated distinctions of caste and birth and advocated the worship of only one God. The society of truth-seekers and worshippers of God and 'Nam' was encouraged by them.

The 'Nam' (God's Name) is a symbol in Sikhism to denote the all-pervading and omnipresent spirit that sustains the Universe. The constant meditation on the 'Nam' destroys one's ego altogether. One can attain perfect 'Sanyoga' (union) through 'Satsang', where one takes to 'kirtan' and the 'Nam'. His is a life of active service to all.

How is Satsangat, the society of the holy known?  
The Name of the one God is mentioned there.<sup>8</sup>

Rag Asa, M.I

8. ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੈਸੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਿਥੈ ਏਕੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ, ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 72

In the society of the Holy, one becometh holy,  
And one runneth after virtue, forsaking his sins.<sup>9</sup>

Rag Asa, M.I

One sitteth in the saint's holy society, and,  
through the True Nam, cometh the mind's peace.<sup>10</sup>

Sri Rag, M.III

Associating with the Truth, one attaineth  
truth, and loveth the True Nam. 11

Var Vadhans, M.III

By good fortune doth one meet the saints,  
And then in association with them  
one singeth the praise of the Lord.<sup>12</sup>

Gauri Guareri, M.III

The Priceless Nam in in the society  
of the saints; and it is by great,  
good fortune that one attains to it.<sup>13</sup>

Ram Kali, M.III, Ashtpadian

Without the true Guru, one(truly) associates not,  
And, without the Word, one is ferried not across:  
If one uttereth even the Lord's praise all too spontaneously,  
One's soul mergeth in the eversoul.<sup>14</sup>

Rag Maru, M.III

9. ਉਤਮ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਉਤਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਕੁਣ ਕਉ ਧਾਵੈ ਅਵਕੁਣ ਧੋਵੈ  
ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ, ਅਸਟਪਦੀਆ? ਮ:1, ਪੰ:414
10. ਸਚੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਬੈਸਣਾ ਸਚਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਮਨੁ ਧੀਰ  
ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ, ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 69
11. ਸਚੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਚਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੈ ਨਾਇ ਪਿਆਰੁ  
ਵਾਰ ਵਡਹੰਸ, ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 586
12. ਕਰਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਤ ਸੰਗਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ  
ਹਰਿ ਕੁਣ ਗਾਵੈ ਬੰਸੁ ਸੁਖਾਏ  
ਕਉੜੀ ਕੁਆਰੇਰੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ:158
13. ਸਤ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰਮੋਲਕੁ ਵਡਭਾਗਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪਾਈ  
ਰਾਮ ਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 909
14. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਝੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦ ਪਾਰੁ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਕੋਈ  
ਸਹਜੇ ਕੁਣ ਰਵਹਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ  
ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 1068

There are four castes and four stages of life.  
 But he, who contemplates the Lord, is supreme among men.  
 As the bitter 'arinda' (castor) plant,  
 near the sweet-smelling 'chandan' tree,  
 becometh as fragrant as its neighbour,  
 So doth the sinner, associating with  
 the saints, becomes a saint. 15

Gond, M. IV

The society of the saints is the school  
 where one is instructed in the merits of God. 16

Var Kanra, M. IV

He who sheds his lust, wrath,  
 envy and the conceit of 'maya'  
 Bringeth into his self virtue,  
 contentment, compassion and righteousness.  
 And the load of birth and death is off his head,  
 And joining the society (of the holy),  
 his mind becometh pure,  
 And the perfect Guru ferries him across.  
 And then one's mind becometh the dust for others  
 to tread upon, <sup>see with</sup>  
 And all creation <sup>to</sup> him of no  
 others but of loved friends. 17

Asa, M. V.

15. ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਖੜੀ ਸੁਦ ਵੈਸ

ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਣ ਚਾਰਿ ਆਸਮ ਹਰਿ ਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ਸੇ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ  
 ਜਿਉ ਚੰਦਨ ਠਿਕਟਿ ਵਸੇ ਹਿਰਭ ਬਖੁੜਾ  
 ਤਿਉ ਸਤ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਪਤਿਤ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ  
 ਉਹ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਸੁਚਾ  
 ਜਾ ਕੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਸਿਆ ਭਗਵਾਣੁ

ਗੋਡ, ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 861

16. ਸਤਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਚਟਸਾਨ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਭੁਣ ਸਿਖਾ

ਵਾਰ ਕਾਨੜਾ, ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 1316

17. ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਦ ਮਤਸਰ ਏ ਖੇਨਤ ਸੰਭ ਜੁਆਂ ਹਾਰੇ

ਸਤੁ ਸਤਿਗੁ ਦਇਆ ਧਰਮੁ ਸਚੁ ਇਹ ਅਪੁਨੈ ਕ੍ਰਿਹ ਭੀਤਰਿ  
 ਵਾਰੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਚੁਕੈ ਸਭਿ ਭਾਰੇ  
 ਮਿਲਤ ਸੰਗ ਭਇਓ ਮਨ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਭੁਰਿ ਪੂਰੈ ਠੈ ਖਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਤਾਰੇ  
 ਸਭ ਕੀ ਰੇਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਰਹੈ ਮਨੁਆ ਸਕਲੇ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਮੀਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ  
 ਸਭ ਮਧੇ ਰਵਿਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਦੇਤ ਸਭਿ ਜੀਅ ਸਮਾਰੇ

ਆਸਾ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 379

Eternally blessed is the society of saints,  
meeting whom one is imbued with the Lord.  
By the Guru's Grace, getteth he eternal joy,  
Yea, he who contemplates God, his mind is  
in bloom, and indescribable is his state.<sup>18</sup>

Asa, M.V

Gather together, O brothers, and  
attuning yourselves to God, dispel your duality.<sup>19</sup>

Basant, M.V

Kabir, blessed is the 'chandan' tree,  
girdled by useless growth:  
But, this too becometh fragrant like the  
'chandan', for it, in its nearness, liveth.<sup>20</sup>

Slok, Kabir

Kabir: associate only with the saint,  
which lasteth with thee like a friend:  
Yea, associate not with the worshippers of  
maya, for, they destroy thee in the end.<sup>21</sup>

Slok, Kabir

Kabir: even if one discoursed with the saints for a  
brief moment, it yieldeth fruit: for, the time one  
passeth with the saint is never lost. <sup>22</sup>

Slok, Kabir

18. ਮਹਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਸਾਧ ਕਾ ਸੰਗੁ ਜਿਸੁ ਭੇਟਤ ਨਾਕੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰੰਗੁ  
ਭੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਓਇ ਆਨੰਦ ਪਾਵੈ ਜਿਸ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸਾ  
ਤਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਕਹਨੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਵੈ  
ਆਸਾ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 392-93
19. ਹੋਇ ਇਕਤੁ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ, ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਦਰ ਕਰਹੁ ਨਿਵਲਾਇ  
ਰਾਗ ਬਸੰਤ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 1185
- 20- ਕਬੀਰ ਚੰਦਨ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਵਾ ਭਲਾ ਬੌੜ੍ਹਆ ਢਾਕ ਪਲਾਸ  
ਓਇ ਭੀ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਰਹੈ ਬਸੇ ਜੁ ਚੰਦਨ ਪਾਸਿ  
ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰ: 1365
21. ਜੇ ਜੀਸੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਸੇ ਤੈਸੇ ਫਲੁ ਖਾਇ  
ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰ: 1369
22. ਕਬੀਰ ਏਕ ਘੜੀ ਆਧੀ ਘੜੀ ਆਧੀ ਹੁੰ ਤੇ ਆਧ  
ਭਗਤ ਸੇਤੀ ਰੋਸਟੇ ਜੇ ਕੀਨੇ ਸੇ ਨਾਭ  
ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰ: 1377

Without holy company man is caught  
in the web of transmigration of the  
soul and cannot get peace of mind.23

Bhai Gurdas, Var, 38

The Sikh Gurus laid great stress on 'Satsang', as, in their view, only Satsang could initiate one in the worship of the Nam. Satsang could remove all the evils of one's mind and, thus, help one in developing the power of control over one's emotions and so effect the purification of one's soul. The Gurus attached so much sanctity to 'Satsangat' that they considered that in it lay the true dwelling of 'Hari'. In their opinion, it wielded great influence in transforming even the lives of wicked people. A touch of the good company could change the course of their lives. While laying stress on the importance and value of 'Satsangat' they also made it clear that the company of bad people could ruin their lives and they would be lost for ever in the cycle of transmigration.

The Gurus also enjoined upon the Sikhs that they must love and respect the 'Gurmukhs' (the God-orientated), who were constantly busy in meditating on the God and had understood the secret of true living. They laid stress on the service of saints as a part of their sacred duty. The Gurus believed that

23. ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਭੈ ਭਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਮਰਣੇ  
ਕੁਰਮੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਫਲ ਸਾਧੁ ਸੰਗ ਮਿਲਿ ਦੁੱਤਰ ਤਰਣੇ

ਭਾਈ ਕੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ 38, ਪਉੜੀ 12



252763

Satsangat helped in the cultivation of virtues, like self-control and the concentration of mind. They regarded the 'Gurmukhs', as the viceregents of Hari on earth.

In quest of Him, I have come to realize that without 'Sadh-Sangat' one cannot achieve salvation.<sup>24</sup>

Asa, M.V

I am but the dust of the saints' feet;  
yea, I seek ever their refuge.  
The saints are my only powerful support;  
the saints are my only embellishment.  
I am now pleased with the saints,  
for such was the writ of my past deeds:  
And I surrendered my mind to the saints. 25

Sorath, M.V

Such is the glory of the saints,  
That, associating with them, one is  
rid of all one's dirt, and myriads  
of one's sins being dispelled,<sup>26</sup>  
one's mind becometh immaculate.

Bilawal, M.V

24. ਖੇਜਤ ਖੇਜਤ ਸੁਨੀ ਇਹ ਸੋਇ  
ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਬਿਨ ਤਰਿਓ ਨ ਕੋਇ

ਆਸਾ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 373

25. ਹਮ ਸੰਤ ਕੀ ਰੇਨੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਹਮ ਸੰਤ ਕੀ ਸਰਣ  
ਸੰਤ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਓਟ ਸਤਾਈ ਸੰਤ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਭਰਣ  
ਹਮ ਸੰਤ ਸਿਉ ਬਣਿ ਆਈ  
ਪੁਰਬਿ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਪਾਈ ਇਹ ਮਨੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਭਾਈ

ਸੋਰਠ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 614

26. ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਬਾਸਬੇ ਕਲਮਨ ਸਭਿ ਨਸਨਾ

ਬਿਲਾਵਲ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 809

By associating with the saints the face becometh bright.  
 By associating with the saints all filth is removed,  
 By associating with the saints divine knowledge is revealed.  
 By associating with the saints everything is decided,  
 By associating with the saints God is known to be near.  
 By associating with the saints the jewel of the 'Nam' is obtain  
 By associating with the saints we should strive for the one God—  
 what mortal can express a saint's praises?  
 Nanak, the glory of saints is merged into that of God.<sup>27</sup>

Sukhmani

By associating with the saints all enemies become friends.  
 By associating with the saints man becometh very pure  
 By associating with the saints man's feet walk not away—  
 A man cannot be evil who associateth with the saints—  
 By associating with the saints man knoweth the supreme joy,  
 By associating with the saints, man abandoneth all self conceit.  
 Only God knoweth His saints' greatness—  
 Nanak, there is an understanding between God and His saints.<sup>28</sup>

Sukhmani

27. ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਸੁਖ ਉਜਲ ਹੋਤ ਸਾਧ ਸੀਰਿ ਮਨੁ ਸਕਲੀ ਖੋਤ  
 ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਕਟੈ ਸੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ  
 ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਬੁਝੈ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਨੇਰਾ ਸਾਧ ਸੀਰਿ ਸਤੁ ਹੋਤ ਨਿਬੇਰਾ  
 ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਪਾਏ ਨਾਮ ਰਤਨੁ ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਏਕ ਉਪਰਿ ਜਤਨੁ  
 ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਬਰਨੈ ਕਉਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਸੇਭਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਨੀ

ਭਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 271

28. ਸਾਧ ਸੀਰਿ ਦੁਸਮਨ ਸਭਿ ਮੀਤ ਸਾਧੁ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਨੀਤ  
 ਸਾਧ ਸੀਰਿ ਕਿਸ ਸਿਉ ਠਹੀ ਬੈਰੁ ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਨ ਬਾਂਗਾ ਪੈਰੁ  
 ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਨਾਗ ਕੇ ਮੰਦ ਸਾਧ ਸੀਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਪਰਮਾਣੰਦ  
 ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਨਾਗੀ ਹਉ ਤਪੁ ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਸੀਰਿ ਤਜੈ ਸਤੁ ਆਪੁ  
 ਆਪੇ ਜਾਨੈ ਸਾਧ ਬਡਾਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਾਨਿਆਈ

ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰ: 271

In the dwelling of the saints God's name is found —  
 The merchandise thou comest into the world to obtain.  
 Renounce pride, weigh God's Name in thy heart.  
 And purchase it with thy life.  
 Load thy merchandise, set out with the saints.  
 And, having freed thyself from the entanglements  
 of the deadly sins,  
 Everyone will congratulate thee;  
 Thy countenance shall be bright and  
 thou shalt obtain honour in God's Court. 29

Sukhmani

In the society of the saints man fixeth his  
 attention on the one God.  
 They who sing the excellences and praises of God,  
 shall, Nanak, by the favour of Guru obtain  
 their reward. 30

Sukhmani

The Gurus laid stress on the company and service of  
 the saints. They looked upon those persons as the real Sikhs  
 who yearned for the company of such saints and revered them  
 whole-heartedly. This idea has been elaborated by the Gurus  
 in the following slokas included in the Guru Granth:

29. ਜਿਸੁ ਵਖਰ ਕਉ ਲੀਨ ਤੁ ਆਇਆ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਤਨ ਘਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ  
 ਤਜਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਮਨ ਮੋਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਲਿ  
 ਨਾਦਿ ਖੇਪ ਸੰਤ ਸੰਗਿ ਚਾਨੁ ਅਵਰ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਜੰਜਾਨ  
 ਧੀਨ ਧੀਨ ਕਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲ ਰਹਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਸੋਇ  
 ਇਹ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਤ ਕੈ ਸਦਿ ਬਨਿਹਾਰੈ

ਸੁਖਮਨੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ:283

30. ਜਨ ਕਾ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਸੇ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਜਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਏਕ ਨਿਵ ਨਾਗੀ  
 ਭੁਨ ਭੋਬੰਦ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਜਨੁ ਕਾਵੈ ਰੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਛੁ ਪਾਵੈ

ਸੁਖਮਨੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ:285



The saint is he, with whom the Lord is pleased,  
Yea, the saint doeth only what the Lord doeth.  
The Lord shieldeth the saint with His mighty hands.  
And abideth He with the saint, night and day.<sup>31</sup>

Gond, M.V

The saints occupy themselves with the Nam alone,  
And in the blissful song of the Lord  
they have their peace.  
To them alike are friends and foes,  
and other than God they know not another.<sup>32</sup>

Asa, M.V

I hear Thy Gospel, O Lord, from Thy saints,  
For, Thy saints ever echo Thy praise and  
are filled with Thy song-divine and bliss.<sup>33</sup>

Bilawal, M.V

The poisonous dirt(of sins) of ages sticks to us:  
Lead us on to the society of the saints  
that we are rid of it.  
As gold, heated by fire, is rid of its impurities.<sup>34</sup>

Dhanasri, M.IV

31. ਸੋਈ ਸੰਤ ਜਿ ਭਾਵੇ ਰਾਮ ਸੰਤ ਕੋਇਦ ਕੇ ਏਕੇ ਕਾਮ  
ਕੋਠ ਮਹਲਾ ੪, ਪੰ: 867
32. ਸੰਤ ਰਹਤ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ਉਆ ਕੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਕਥਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ  
ਵਰਤਣਿ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮ ਅਨਦ ਰੂਪ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਬਿਸਰਾਮ  
ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਸਤ੍ਰ ਜਾਕੈ ਏਕ ਸਮਾਨੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ  
ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 392
33. ਸੰਤ ਕੇ ਸੁਨੀਅਤ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਬਾਤ  
ਕਥਾ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਅਨੰਦ ਮੰਗਲ  
ਛੁਨਿ ਪੁਰਿ ਰਹੀ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਅਰੁ ਰਾਤਿ  
ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 820
34. ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਬਿਖੁ ਮੋਰਚਾ ਲਗਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਾਧ ਸਵਾਰੀ  
ਜਿਉ ਕੰਚਨੁ ਬੈਸੰਤਰਿ ਤਇਓ ਮਨੁ ਕਾਟੀ ਕਟਿਤ ਉਤਾਰੀ  
ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 666

We shed our ego of I-am-ness, end our desires,  
when, we seek the society of the holy.35

Bihagra, M.V

The Sikh Gurus had an abiding faith in the company of the saints, holy men and the 'Gurmukhs'. They considered that the influence of their company could purify the mind and free it from egoism and preoccupation with the worldly pursuits and lead to emancipation from bondage.

Now, I am jealous of no one:  
Now that I have attained unto the  
society of the saints.  
Yea, I am estranged with no one:  
nor is anyone a stranger unto me.  
Indeed I am the friend of all.36

Kanra, M.V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTION  
OF SANGAT UNDER THE GURUS

The importance given by the Sikh Gurus to 'Sangat', 'Satsang', 'Sadh Sangat' in promoting spiritual life was not limited only to the purifying of one's thought. The Sikh Gurus believed in the miraculous effects of the Sangat in changing and transforming the very lives of the people, and they raised this institution everywhere they went and highlighted its importance to whosoever they met.

35. ਹਉਮੈ ਮਮਤ ਮੋਹੁ ਛੁਟਾ ਜਾ ਸੀਗਿ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸਾਧ ਬਿਹਾਗੜਾ ਛੇਤ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ:542
36. ਬਿਸਰਿ ਕਈ ਸਭ ਤਾਤਿ ਪਰਾਈ, ਜਬ ਤੇ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮੋਹਿ ਪਾਈ  
ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ, ਸਕਲ ਸੀਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਠਿਆਈ  
ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 1299

The foundation of this institution was laid by Guru Nanak who started Sangat and got 'dharamsalas' built during the course of his travels for the congregation of his followers.<sup>37</sup> He dispelled darkness and ignorance of the people and condemned the useless religious ceremonies of the Hindus and the Muslims in a very tactful and convincing manner.

Guru Nanak, while at Sultanpur, started doing 'kirtan' (the singing of the holy hymns) with Bhai Mardana and converted many people to his faith, of which Bhai Bhagirath and Bhai Mansukh are well known. During his lifetime, Guru Nanak undertook four great tours. During these tours, which extended far and wide, he converted people to his beliefs and started Sangat wherever he went, enjoined upon the people to sing praises of God.

During the course of his first eight-year-long tour, he visited several sacred places in the country. He visited Saidpur, the present City of Eminabad in the Gujranwala District (now in West Pakistan) and stayed with Lalo, a carpenter and enlightened him. He refused to partake of the feast of Malik Bhago, who was the steward of the Pathan owner of Saidpur and revealed to him and the Brahmins the futility of caste, colour and creed.<sup>38</sup> He then visited the notorious

---

37. Ganda Singh, Dr, A Brief Account of the Sikh people, pp.10-11

38. Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan, MS.f.5,6.

robber Shaikh Sajjan and converted him to his views.<sup>39</sup> It is said that the first Sikh Temple was constructed on the spot where this conversion took place. He then visited Kurukhetar and made many converts there.<sup>40</sup> He enjoined upon his Sikhs to live in harmony, always remember God's Name and to acknowledge the greetings of others by saying 'Sat Kartar'. The Guru told them that for the repetition of God's Name, the companionship of holy men was necessary and along with that, truth, contentment and restraint of the senses should be practised daily.

During his tour towards the east, the Guru with an earnest desire to find a religion acceptable to all people went to Gorakhmata, a temple of Gorakhnath in Uttar Pradesh, Benaras, Gaya, Kamrup, Puri, Ajodhan, Baisiar and Talwandi. In the course of his travels he had discussions with the Jogis at Gorakhmata, converted Chatur Dass, the Brahmin, and Krishan Lal and Har Lal, two eminent young Pandits of Benaras; converted Queen Nurshah of Kamrup and instructed her to give up occultism and repeat God's Name; met Shaikh Brahm(Ibrahim) during his visit to the shrine of Shaikh Farid, brought Jhanda, a carpenter at Baisiar into his fold. Thereafter, he visited his parents at Talwandi.

---

39. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi, 13.

40. Meharban, Sodhi, Janam Sakhi, Gost, 112.

In his travels towards the west, the Guru again visited Pakpattan and met Shaikh Kamal and Shaikh Brahm and proceeded to Bopalpur, Kanganpur, Kasur and Patti in the Lahore District.<sup>41</sup> He then visited Windpur near Chola Sahib, Goindwal, Sultanpur, his old headquarters, where he had worked as a government official, Vairoval, Jalalabad, Kari Pathan-di in the Amritsar District, and Batala. He again visited Saidpur and met Bhai Lalo. He then visited Pasrur, Sialkot and reached Mithankot where he met Mian Mitha.<sup>42</sup>

The practice of singing the hymns was initiated by the Guru for both morning and evening assemblies. As a result of these activities of the Guru, Sikh societies sprang up wherever he went. An important Sangat of this kind was established at Kartarpur,<sup>43</sup> where in the early hours of the morning the 'Japji' and 'Asa-di-Var' were sung, followed by the reading of the Guru's hymns, which continued through the forenoon. After this, the breakfast used to be served. Then again in the afternoon, the reading and singing of the Guru's hymns were resumed. In the evening, Sodar was read. Then the Sikhs dined together. The repast ended with further singing. After the nightfall, the Sohala was read. During the day, when

41. Meharban, Sodhi, Janam Sakhi, Gost, 147.

42. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhian, 32-36.

43. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.IV, pp.1022-23.

not busy in prayers, the Guru gave instructions to all. He cleared the doubts of Malo and Bhago as regards the Hindu penances, which he described as acts of ignorance and expressed his views that devout singing and listening to the holy songs and praises of the Almighty were meritorious acts. When one Kalu asked him to define a holy man, he said that the holy person cherished the welfare of others and shunned the company of the wicked.<sup>44</sup>

In his journey to southern India, he reached the Dravidian country, now named Tamil Nadu. He went to Saravaji, and met Narbhi the Jain Priest and brought them round to his views. He then proceeded to Ceylon, and met Raja Sivanabh and his countrymen. They became his admirers. Back from the journey he went to Achal Batala on the fair of Shivratt, where he met Jogis and their leader, Bhangarnath, and dragged them out of the grooves of thoughts that led to the renunciation of the world.<sup>45</sup>

In his journey to the North, he went as far as Srinagar in Kashmir and made many followers including Brahm Dass, an eminent Kashmiri Pandit. He penetrated into the Himalayas and scaled lofty peaks and arrived at Mount Sumer, where he had

44. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.I, pp.136-37.

45. Gian Singh, Giani, Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, p.53.

discussions with the Sidhs and composed the 'Sidh Gost'.<sup>46</sup> He returned to the Punjab and travelled in the north-western direction and reached Hasan Abdal and humbled <sup>the</sup> Wali of Kandhar, a bigoted and selfish priest and then proceeded to Mecca, the holiest place of Mohammedan worship. He brought round the Qazis and Mullas to his views, and then went to Madina and Baghdad, from where he returned to the Punjab and, after a brief stay at Multan, went to Kartarpur where he gave up the pilgrim's dress and started preaching his doctrines to the people. He discoursed on religious subjects and diffused spiritual light and dispelled mental darkness. The Sohila was chanted in the evening and the Japji in the early hours of the morning in the religious assemblies or Sangats started by him at Kartarpur.

The holding of religious assemblies or congregations of the Sikhs was continued by Guru Angad at Khadur.<sup>47</sup> The musicians sang the 'Ase-di-Var' in the morning. The Sikhs, particularly the lepers, who came from great distances returned to their respective homes after being healed, singing the Guru's praise. The Guru preached and expounded Guru Nanak's hymns. At about 9'0 clock in the forenoon, the whole Sangat sat in a line and received sacred food from the Guru-ka-langar. The Guru was

46. Vir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sakhi; 49-50

47. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, p.15.

particularly fond of children and their sports. He used to witness sometimes wrestling-matches in the early afternoon and would often take the opportunity of instructing people assembled there to overcome anger and other deadly sins. After that, he would sit with the Sangat where Balwand and Satta, the two famous minstrels of the durbar entertained the congregation with vocal and instrumental music. The sodar was then sung and food distributed. It was followed by further singing of Guru's hymns and then the Guru and his disciples retired for the night. Guru Angad during his visits to various places removed the doubts of Jogis of different sects, such as Harinath Jogi, Gujjar, (a blacksmith); Dzinga, (a barbar), and Paro, of the Julka tribe; Malu Shah (a Mughal soldier); and Kidaru, Mana and Khiwa, of the village of Bhairo, and made them his followers.<sup>48</sup>

In the times of Guru Amar Dass, the Sangat used to assemble at Goindwal where the Sikhs met and treated one another affectionately, as if they were brothers. All men were allowed to have free access to the Guru. They sat in a line and ate together, followed by the singing of the sacred hymns by the Sangat. He exhorted them to do good to all and not to get conceited, not to look at the wives of other persons with an evil eye, to shun evil company, to give up <sup>a</sup>columnny, falsehood

---

48. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.V, pp.1345-1362.



and hypocrisy, to meditate on the Guru's instructions and to associate only with the virtuous. The Sikhs once asked the Guru who were the greatest saints and worshippers of God. The Guru replied that they who repeated the Lord's Name, renounced pride and restrained their desires were the greatest saints.<sup>49</sup>

The Guru, because of the enmity of Dattu, left Goindwal for Basarke where a Jat built a residence for him. The Guru got its door bricked and on it had these words written: "whosoever openeth this door is no Sikh of mine, nor am I his Guru". The Guru's Sangat was much distressed at losing their Guru and they sought the help of Bhai Budha and eventually went to the Guru's house at Basarke. They made an opening in the wall and all entered through it. The Guru demanded their explanation but eventually could not resist the love and devotion of his Sikhs and returned to Goindwal and resumed spiritual and ethical instructions to them.<sup>50</sup>

Guru Amar Dass, during his visits to various places, removed the doubts of many people and converted them to his faith. Notable among them were Bhai Paru, Bhai Lalo, Mahesha of Sultanpur, Kingurinath (head of a band of Jogis), and Alayar (a rich Mohammedan householder of Delhi whom he sent

49. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, pp.70-71.

50. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.V, pp.1461-71.

as a missionary to Devantal to organize (Sangat). He asked Gopi, Mohan Mal, Ram and Amru, Bhai Malhan, Ramu Mehta, Gobind and Dipa, Gango, Ughar, Taru and Jhanda to associate with saints, avoid evil company, meditate on the Holy Word and sing the Guru's hymns. He converted Bhikha, a bard of Sultanpur. He visited Hardwar in compliance with Akbar's suggestion, crossed the Sutlej and went up to Pehoa, a place of pilgrimage near Thanesar or Kurkhetar, and converted many Brahmins. He then proceeded to Thanesar, Kankhal and Hardwar where he was received by the Jogis, Bairagis, Sanyasis, Brahmacharis and Pandits. He converted Gango, (a Khatri of<sup>the</sup> Basi tribe), Phiria and Katra<sup>in the</sup> of places in the neighbourhood of Delhi, and asked them to go among the people to preach the true Nam. Crowds of people gathered round them when they heard them singing hymns of the Guru and embraced<sup>the</sup> Sikh religion. The monasteries of the Jogis were converted into Sikh temples, Bhai Dipa, Bhai Khanur, Bhai Lalu, and Bhai Kidara were the important Sikhs of the Dalla Sangat.<sup>51</sup>

As a result of the increasing influence of the Sikh Gurus on the people, the number of their followers increased and thus the Sikh Sangats were formed in every part of the country. Several Muslims, too, were converted to the Sikh faith, As the number of followers increased, it became difficult to control them effectively. Guru Amar Dass took a great

---

51. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Parkash, Vol.V, pp.1477-78.

administrative step to solve this problem and divided his spiritual empire into twenty-two provinces, each known as 'Manji', which was further divided into 'Piris'. The charge of each 'Manji' was given to a devoted and pious Sikh whose duty was to preach the Guru's teachings in his locality and to act as a leader for the Sangat of that locality.<sup>52</sup> The charge of such 'Manjis' was given to men of merit without consideration of caste, creed or sex. A Muslim of Kapurthala was given the charge of a 'Manji' and several 'Manjis' were placed in the charge of women. According to Dr G.C. Narang "the organization of the Manji system must have gone a long way in strengthening the foundations of the church and carrying on the propaganda in all parts of the country. Besides carrying <sup>the</sup> Sikh message far and wide it gave the Sikhs an organization which was later converted into a revenue-producing agency."<sup>53</sup>

Guru Ram Dass, in obedience to the orders of Guru Amar Dass, visited Amritsar to preach God's Name and to build a place of pilgrimage at Amritsar.<sup>54</sup> He spent many months at Amritsar, supervising the execution of the holy tank. He induced the Sangat to join <sup>in</sup> the excavation work of the tank under Bhai Budha's supervision. Sikh Sangats from far and wide

52. Narang, K.S., History of the Punjab, p.89.

53. Narang, G.C., Dr, Transformation of Sikhism, p.33.

54. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.V, pp.1691-1700.

came and participated in this sacred task.

The Guru visited Lahore and turned his parents' house into a temple and built a well for the performance of ablutions by the Sikhs and, thus, created a Sangat there. As a result of the Guru's teachings, men of all classes and religions flocked around the Guru to hear his sacred hymns and a large number of them became converted to form Sangats. The Guru converted Handal of Jandiala at Goindwal, blessed him and asked him to return to his native town, repeat the Holy Nam and initiate others into the faith of Baba Nanak. Handal formed the Sikh Sangat at Jandiala.<sup>55</sup>

The Guru converted Tiratha, Bishan Dass, Nanak Chand, Paru, Maiya, Japa, Kanhaiya, Tulsaa, Dharam Dass, Dugar Dass, Dipa, Jetha, Sansari, Bula and Tirath. They asked the Guru how they could be saved. The Guru told them to go away morning and evening to the congregation of the holy and to meditate on God's Name, to serve the holy, to build a temple of God and feed the wayfarers.<sup>56</sup>

Guru Arjan Dev undertook the construction of the sacred tank and 'Harimandar' or Temple of God at Amritsar with the help of the Sikh Sangat. He appointed his most trusted Sikhs like Bhai Budha, Bhai Salo, Bhai Bhagtu, Bhai Piara, Bhai Bahlo

---

55. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.V, pp.1699-1700.

56. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, pp.274-75.

and Bhai Kaliana to supervise the construction which was eventually completed with the service and contribution of the Sikh Sangats under the supervision of Bhai Budha, Bhai Bhagtu and Bhai Bahlo. The Guru told the Sikh Sangat that as the tank was built through the sincere efforts of the devout Sikhs, all sins would be removed and all desires would be fulfilled by bathing in it and by reciting the Nam.<sup>57</sup> The construction of the tank and the Harimandar and the sanctity attached to it by Guru Arjan, gave a rallying place to the Sikhs and, thus, led to the development of a mighty Sikh Sangat at Amritsar. Guru Arjan Dev visited Khem Karan, Chunian and other villages where he preached and started Sikh Sangats.<sup>58</sup> He went to Jabar where he remained for sometime and converted Kidara, Kheda, Mukanda, Talsa, Lahu and others. The Guru visited Lahore and rested in 'Dabi Bazar' where a 'bowli' (a stepped well) was constructed. People of all classes, hearing the Guru's fame, flocked to see him. Jogi Sambhunath, the Hindu saints Kahna and Chhajju, the Muslim saints Shah Hussain, Wali Shah, Shah Sulaiman, Shah Anayat, Qadari, Shaikh Wali Shah and others came to see him and got their doubts removed. The Guru visited the shrine of Guru Nanak at Dera Baba Nanak in the Gurdaspur District and proceeded to Barath to see Baba Sri Chand. Thereafter, he

---

57. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, p.13.

58. Gian Singh, Giani, Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, p.82.

returned to Amritsar. The Guru, apprehending a raid from Sulahikhan, left Amritsar and returned to Wadali.

Guru Arjan sent Madho to instruct the Kashmiris when a deputation of the Kashmiris waited upon him. He told Madho to instruct them to rise early, repeat and sing the Guru's hymns, associate with holy people, and share their food with others and live in humility.

The Guru accepted the advice of the Sikhs of Delhi who requested him to reject his son's matrimonial alliance with Diwan Chandu Shah's daughter. The Emperor's Diwan was a very haughty person and had used unbecoming language for the Guru.<sup>59</sup> The Guru, in spite of his knowledge that it would sow the seeds of strife, rejected the marriage presents of Chandu Shah and accepted the betrothal presents of Narain Dass of the village of Dalla who had offered the hand of his daughter to the Guru's son, Hargobind.<sup>60</sup> The Guru had so much love and respect for his Sikhs that even in the parting words, while leaving for Lahore under the orders of Jehangir, he instructed Hargobind, to treat his Sikhs with utmost courtesy.

Guru Arjan organized the Masand system which was a very revolutionary step in the organization and development of the Sangat. The activities of the Sikh Gurus had gradually increa

59. Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan, MS.f.15-16.

60. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vo.VI, pp.2240-43.

Besides the institution of langar, a lot of money was required for the constructions of tanks, temples and for founding new cities which were undertaken by the successive Gurus. The 'Manji' system which was organized in the time of Guru Amar Dass worked merely for the propagation of the Sikh faith. The Sikh faith had spread to all parts of India. All this necessitated reform and the Guru exhorted his Sikhs that every true Sikh should contribute 'daswandh' or one-tenth of his income,<sup>61</sup> towards the Guru's funds and appointed special representatives in each locality. The representatives were called 'Masands' and their duty was to collect funds and spread the teachings of the Sikh faith. They were asked to bring the collections to the Guru annually on the Baisakhi Day, when a grand durbar was held. In the times of the Afghan Kings, the nobles were styled as 'Mashad-i-Ala' or His Excellency. Because of the frequent use of the term, it was changed into Masand by the Sikhs. The Guru was called 'Saccha-Padshah' the 'True King' and his agents were styled Masands.<sup>62</sup> The Masands of the Guru were mostly Jats. These Masands sent for some time the offerings of the Sikhs to the Guru, but afterwards they became greedy and dishonest. The Masands propagated the Sikh faith and collected the contributions which were willingly made by

---

61. Narang, K.S., History of the Punjab, p.105.

62. Mohsan Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.233.

the Sikhs. The Guru never made it obligatory on the Sikhs to make contributions. The Sikhs gave due respect to the Masands, as they were the representatives of the Guru, and in their mutual disputes, the Sikhs went to them in preference to approaching the State. This resulted in an overall improvement of the financial resources of the Guru and it became easier for him to undertake the construction of tanks and temples for the propagation and consolidation of the Sikh faith.

Guru Hargobind laid the foundation of the 'Takht Akal Bunga' 1663 A.D., and took his seat on it.<sup>64</sup> The Guru accepted in his array several warriors and wrestlers. Five hundred youths came for enlistment from 'Majha'. He enrolled fifty-two heroes as his body-guards apart from several unemployed men who flocked around him. The Guru used to sit there in the afternoon and give audience to his visitors and followers. The Guru's hymns were sung by the minstrels, and Sodar was read in the evening when everybody stood up and offered prayer to the Almighty with folded hands. Musical instruments were played. The Sangat then bowed to the Guru and the assembly was adjourned. A sacred concert was held later on and hymns were sung in 'Kalian' and 'Kanra' ragas (musical measures). After that, Abdulla gave martial songs to the Sikh assembly to inspire the Sikhs with heroic deeds and then the Sohila

---

63. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol. IV, p.3.



was read and the Guru retired for the night. The Guru mainly recited Guru Nanak's composition to his Sikhs.

Guru Hargobind and his mother went to Guru Nanak's shrine to see Baba Sri Chand. The Guru also visited Daroli and Pilibhit to uphold the cause of Almast with whom the Jogis had picked up a quarrel. He also wanted to pay a visit to Sain Dass, one of the Guru's devotees at Daroli in the present District of Ferozepur. Sain Dass had built a mansion for the Guru and had vowed that no one would be allowed to live in it unless the Guru first stayed there. When the Guru arrived with his retinue in Nanak Mata, near Pilibhit, the Jogis ran away. He met Almast and blessed him and the temple was restored to him. The Guru preached in the neighbourhood to his Sikhs and started regular Sikh 'Sangats' there under the guidance of Almast.<sup>64</sup> The Sikh Sangats at Amritsar prayed for the early return of the Guru to Amritsar and sent a letter to him to return quickly to be among his Sikhs and to grace <sup>the</sup> temple of his forefathers. The Guru returned to Amritsar and started preaching to the congregations and occasionally went on shooting excursions. Whenever the Guru was free, he would generally sit in the open air and receive his Sikhs. The places which he frequented are now known as Pipli, Lohgarh, and Charasti Atari in Amritsar.

64. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.VII, pp.2623-42.

A band of Sikh followers from localities in the west came to see the Guru late in the night. The Guru wanted to give them dinner, as they were hungry, but the 'Sewadars' of the 'langar' told him that it was too late. They told him that the fire had died out and the cooked food had been distributed. The Guru was reminded of a room full of sweets prepared for the marriage of his daughter. The Guru sent for the keys which were with his wife, Damodari. She refused to part with the keys until the bridegroom's party had partaken of the sweets. The Guru felt unhappy and gave vent to his sentiments, saying that his Sikhs were even dearer to him than his own life.<sup>65</sup>

The Guru laid the foundation of a new city called Shri Hargobindpur. It was completed with the labour rendered by the Sikh Sangat. The Guru dug the first shovelful himself. He constructed a temple as well as a mosque at Shri Hargobindpur both for his Sikhs followers and for his Mohammedan troops and labourers.<sup>66</sup>

The Guru was invited by Sain Dass to attend the Baisakhi fair at Daroli. He left Amritsar and told his Sikhs to take care of the temple in his absence. The Guru and his party were accorded a warm welcome at Daroli by Sain Dass.<sup>67</sup> The Guru

65. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.IV, pp.78-79.

66. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.VIII, pp.2983-2992.

67. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.IV, p.147.

then visited the village of Tuklani to see his devoted Sikhs, Sadhu and Rup Chand. He laid the foundation in Samvat 1688 of a village known as Bhai Rupa and then returned to Daroli. The Guru asked his Sikhs whether they should stay there or proceed to spread the faith. After getting the approval of the Sangat the Guru stayed with Sadhu and Rup Chand whom he exhorted to practise charity and humility and always to remember God.

Once the Sikhs asked the Guru as to whom they should turn for spiritual guidance in his absence. He advised them to consider any Sikh who came to them invoking the name of the Guru as their guide. The author of the Dabistan-i-Mazahib says that anyone with the Guru's name on his lips could enter the house of a Sikh at midnight and be given due respect and warm welcome without any consideration of his being a wicked person or a de<sup>v</sup>coit.<sup>68</sup> Every person who approached the Sangat was whole-heartedly welcomed as a friend or brother and prayers were offered to invoke the blessings of Sat-Guru. This system was adopted by the Guru himself. Guru Hargobind was, thus, able to gain a huge following of the Sikhs at Kiratpur.

Considering that his end was drawing near, the Guru ordered his masands to bring all the Sikhs on the first day of the moon in Chet (mid-March to mid-April). The Sikh Sangats thronged from all quarters to Kiratpur to see the Guru on the

---

68. Mohsan Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.240.

appointed day. He gave instructions to the Sangat and fixed a day for a great assembly to select his successor. On the said day, when all had assembled, the Guru rose and uttered prayers to the Almighty for the success of the proceedings and put Har Rai on the Guru's Gaddi. He instructed him to have the company of the holy Sikhs twice a day. Apart from other instructions, he asked the Sangat to love, recite and listen to the Guru's hymns in Satsang and remember the True one with devotion.<sup>69</sup>

During the period of his Guruship, Guru Har Rai used to hold his Court at Kiratpur, which was attended by the Sikh Sangats. There the Guru listened to the sacred hymns and gave instructions to the Sikhs. He gave suitable passages from the Guru Granth to recite to the Sangat daily. He impressed upon them to have faith in the words of Guru Nanak and to worship God, to do honest labour, to serve the saints, to read the Guru Granth, to distribute food after Sohila and to have faith in the Almighty alone. He asked them not to use the offerings for personal use, not to worship any idol or other inanimate object, not to mourn<sup>the</sup> death of anyone, not to have faith in gods and goddesses, and to feed the guests and not to send them away disappointed. He further asked them not to hurt anybody's feelings.

69. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.IV, pp.235-37.

Guru Har Krishan at a tender age used to resolve the doubts of his Sikhs, and gave them religious instructions at Kiratpur.<sup>70</sup> Sikhs came from all quarters to see him and he sent them in all directions to preach the true faith among the people.

When the Guru was called to Delhi, he met crowds of Sikhs on the way who came to see him from distant lands. He gave them instructions in the true faith and removed their doubts. He removed the doubts of a Brahman at the Village of Panjokhara near Ambala. In Delhi, he gave suitable replies to the Emperor's queries. He also blessed the people of Delhi who were suffering from plague. The Guru fell ill seriously in Delhi and instructed his Sikhs to remember God's Name constantly. He impressed upon them the fact that the world was transitory and, as such, they should resign themselves to the will of God.<sup>71</sup>

Guru Teg Bahadur went in Samvat 1722 (1665 A.D.) to Amritsar in response to the invitation of Dwarka Dass and Bhai Garhia to bathe in the sacred tank. The Masands closed the door of the Harimandar and refused him entry. The Guru, however, accepted the invitation of the Sangat of the village of Walla. Mata Hariyan begged the Guru to spend the night there and the women of the City of Amritsar accompanied him. The Guru blessed

---

70. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.IV, p.315.

71. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.X, pp.3953-60.

them and gave religious instructions to the Sangat at Walla and returned to Bakala.<sup>72</sup> He crossed the Beas and reached the village of Hazara near Kartarpur, where a temple was built to commemorate his visit. The Guru next visited the village of Durga near Nawanshahar and then proceeded to Kiratpur. The jealousy of the Sodhis did not allow him to take rest. He purchased land from the Raja of Kahlur and laid the foundation of the town of Anandpur.

The Guru left Anandpur to spread the Sikh faith and consolidate the Sangats. He halted at Mullohwal in the Patiala State and formed the Sangat there. He asked the Sikhs to constantly remember and repeat God's Name, and then proceeded to Handiaya, where a severe epidemic of fever had taken a heavy toll of human lives. The people of the village went to see the Guru and received his blessings. The Guru saved them from the epidemic and gave them religious instructions and proceeded to Dhilwan, from where he went to the villages of Khiwa and Bhiki and then to Maur. The Guru preached God's true Name to the people and formed Sangats. He proceeded to Maisar-Khana and then to Talwandi Sabo, presently known as Dandama, and then to Kot Dharmuwala, Dhandhan in the Bangar Tract, to Tekpur known as Bahar-Jakh, and to Kaithal and Barna, where he preached the true faith to the people and asked them to give up the use of

---

72. Tarlochan Singh, Dr, Guru Teg Bahadur, pp.162-67.

tabacco. The Guru then proceeded to Kurkhetar on the occasion of a solar eclipse where he was very well received by the people. The Guru preached the true Name of God to the people and formed a Sangat. He proceeded to Bani-Badrapur, crossed the Jamuna and went to Karamanak and met Maluk Dass, the eminent saint. He gave him religious instructions and removed his doubts. The Guru visited Agra, Itawa, Priyag and Benaras, where a platform was raised later in the memory of his visit. At Benaras he rested in a house known as 'Shabad ka Kotha'. The place is known as 'Bari Sangat' or the Great Society.<sup>73</sup> The Guru proceeded to the River Karamansha, and removed the doubts of the people residing near by. From there, he proceeded to village Sarasawan, where he met a devoted Sikh, Chacha Phaggo, who had built a beautiful building for the Guru and had kept it locked, vowing that until the Guru blessed that building he would not live in it. The Guru then proceeded to Gaya where he dispelled the doubts of a Brahman and asked him to meditate on one God alone. The Guru then visited Patna where he was visited by a large crowd of Muslims who bowed before him. He gave them religious instructions and stayed with Bhai Jetha, a devoted Sikh at Patna.

Guru Teg Bahadur after being summoned to Delhi under the order of Emperor Aurangzeb, met his friend Saif-ul-Din at Saifabad near the Fort of Bahadurgarh on way to Delhi.<sup>74</sup> ▲

73. Tirlochan Singh, Dr, Guru Teg Bahadur, pp.196-206.

74. Ibid, p.307.

temple was raised there in memory of the Guru's visit. The Guru gave instructions to the people to form Sangats there. He then proceeded farther and halted at the village of Garhi near Samana, where he met a Pathan friend and then he proceeded to the villages of Hali and Chikha in the present District of Karnal. There, he gave religious instructions and formed Sangats. He then proceeded to the village Karha, and then went to Khatkar, a village in the Patiala District. The Guru continued his journey, preaching to the people and forming Sangat wherever he went, till he reached Agra where he was arrested and brought to Delhi.<sup>75</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh, like his predecessors, formed the Sangat at Anandpur, where the hymns were sung daily.<sup>76</sup> The Guru was happy to listen to the Asa-di-Var. He gave divine instructions to the Sikhs after daybreak and practised martial exercises. He used to receive his Sikhs in the afternoon and in the evening the Rahiras was sung. The Guru was fond of wearing uniform and arms and asked his Sikhs to practise archery and musketry.<sup>77</sup> He entrusted the work of making a big drum to Nand Chand. The Masands who were afraid of his increasing

75. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.II, pp.4332-75.

76. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas-Guru Gobind Singh, p.77.

77. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, p.3.



military strength, represented to the Guru's mother, Mata Gujri, that this step of the Guru would make the Hill Rajas hostile. She spoke to the Guru but he remained firm. The Masands also directly represented to him but he did not listen to them and when the big drum was completed, the Guru celebrated it with the offerings of prayers and distributed sacred food to the Sikh Sangat. The drum was named 'Ranjit Nagara' and the whole Sangat of Anandpur went to see it when it was beaten.<sup>78</sup>

The Guru asked the Masands to come to Anandpur along with the Sikh Sangat on the Baisakhi festival. They collected large sums of money, but they gave half of the amount to the Guru and they kept the remaining half for themselves. He asked them why they had brought so little money. They were annoyed and left the Guru's Court and represented to Bhai Chetu that the Guru had threatened them with serious consequences. Chetu spoke to the Guru on behalf of the Masands and the Guru told him that he and his followers needed severe punishment for embezzling the offerings of the Sikhs. The Guru also told him the innumerable stories of torture and harsh treatment meted out to the poor Sikhs. The Guru punished the culprits and pardoned those who were innocent. Among the innocent ones was Bhai Phero, who lived in the locality called Nakka between the Ravi and the

---

78. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas-Guru Gobind Singh, pp.89-91.

Beas.<sup>79</sup> He was given a robe of honour and a number of other Masands were also acquitted, as Bhai Phero pleaded their cases. The Guru ordered that in future the Sikhs should present their offerings direct instead of through the Masands.<sup>80</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh invited the Sikh Sangat at Anandpur on the Baisakhi festival in 1699 A.D. and laid the foundation of the Khalsa brotherhood by giving them the baptism of the sword and enjoined upon them certain rules of conduct. After baptizing the Five Beloved Ones, he stood up in all humility before them and asked them to baptize him in the same manner. They hesitated, but he told them that there was no difference between him and the 'Khalsa'.<sup>81</sup> The creation of the 'Khalsa' organized the Sikh Sangats on a sound democratic footing. The religious congregations of the Sikhs were now transformed into an organized militant body on democratic lines to fight aggression and tyranny. But the spiritual aspect of life was never ignored. The creation of the Khalsa brotherhood blended the spiritual and worldly life into one and vested in them high powers to take decisions, binding on everybody, irrespective of position and rank.

79. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, pp.84-87.

80. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas- Guru Gobind Singh, pp.189-94.

81. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, pp.91-96.

In his wars against the Mughals, the Guru after leaving the Fort of Anandpur proceeded to Chamkaur with the thirty-five chosen Sikhs. He was hotly pursued by the Imperial forces. The Guru's party fought very bravely, but since the number of the Sikhs was too small, they requested the Guru to leave the fort. The Guru was hesitant to leave, but he was ordered in the name of the Khalsa and he had eventually to agree.<sup>82</sup> He seated near him Dayal Singh, Dharam Singh, Man Singh, Sangat Singh and Sant Singh, who alone were left from his army and entrusted the Guruship to them. He told them that he would always be present where the five Sikhs assembled. He told them that whosoever gave food and clothing to the five Sikhs, all his desires would be fulfilled. The Guru circumambulated three times, laid his plume, crest and arms in front of them and uttered "Sri Wahguru-ji-ka-Khalsa, Sri Wahguru-ji-ki-Fateh".<sup>83</sup> This episode underlines the desire of the Guru to decentralize all powers and to share it with the Sangat. Indeed, he elevated the Sangat to the supreme position.

Guru Gobind Singh once saluted with his arrow the tomb of Dadu, a saint of Naraina known as Daduwara in Rajputana.

---

82. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas- Guru Gobind Singh, pp.343-388.

83. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.XIV, p.4904.

Man Singh represented to the Guru and quoted<sup>to</sup> him his own instruction that nobody should worship the tombs, cemet<sup>e</sup>ries and cremation-grounds and asked him why he had saluted the tomb. The Guru told them that he had done it intentionally to find out whether his Sikhs remembered his instructions and expressed regrets and sought forgiveness. The Guru was fined rupees one hundred and twenty-five by the Sangat which he readily paid.<sup>84</sup>

84. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas- Guru Gobind Singh, pp.439-41.

CHAPTER IV

LANGAR

CHAPTER IV

## LANGAR

BACKGROUND

The Langar, known in Sanskrit as 'Analgrha' or the community kitchen was started by Guru Nanak and was continued by the successive Gurus. It was used as a powerful institution for the uplift of the downtrodden who had been groaning under the yoke of socio-economic-cum-political inequities and religious discriminations prevalent in the society at that time.

The idea of a community kitchen had existed much earlier in the Vedic Age, as is evident from a reference to the Atharva-Veda, which says: 'Identical shall be your drink, in common shall be your share of the food'.<sup>1</sup> But these community kitchens which were run on the charities of the people, who considered it a religious merit to provide food and shelter to the needy and the poor, lost their social value with the passage of time. The advent of the caste-system led to divisions on the basis of Varanashram-dharma and as a result of that, social inequities crept into the Indian society. The Brahmans, intoxicated with class arrogance, refused to intermix with the lower classes and introduced the

---

1. Kapur Singh, Prashar Prasana or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, p.339.

sacred lines of the 'chowka'. They exploited this agency for their personal ends and created dissensions, social discrimination, hatred and untouchability in the society.

Community kitchen formed a part of the monastic order of the Buddhists and the Jains. Islam, with its pronounced emphasis on social equality, laid stress on inter-dining. The reformers of the Bhakti-Movement also championed the cause of social inter-communion. But these earlier efforts were not institutionalized attempts at breaking the barriers that divided the people.

Guru Nanak understood that the real cause of the misery of the people was their disunity born out of social prejudice and social barriers. He started the langar as a crusade against social injustice, oppression and tyranny of the caste-system. In this institution, the ideals of love and service, fraternity and equality were taught and practised by the followers of the Gurus. He taught the people that all men were the children of God and, as such, all were brothers. The Guru's langar was to be open to all, where all were to be seated and served food together, irrespective of caste or social status. He <sup>stressed</sup> ~~stressed~~ upon earning one's bread by honest labour, to follow the ideal — "work is worship" as one's motto, to share one's earnings with

others willingly and to meditate on the Holy Nam. He told the people that charity was to be given willingly, with love and devotion. He preached that the worship of God lay in selfless service of the masses who were all the creation of one and the same God. Thus the service of the people was the service of God.

#### CONTENTIONS OF THE GURUS

The 'Guru-ka-Langar', thus, grew into an institution where lessons in social service and practical ethics were given and practised. It helped the Sikhs in sublimating their personal ego for the service of mankind. This is borne out by the various slokas of the Gurus incorporated into the Guru Granth:

He alone, O Nanak, knoweth the way  
Who earneth with the sweat of his brow,  
and then shareth it with others.<sup>2</sup>

Var Sarang, M.I

Those who put in hard work and labour  
and repeat the Name, their faces will  
glow with an inner light, their efforts  
shall bear fruit and they will be  
saved from the cycle of transmigration.<sup>3</sup>

Japji, Slok, M.I

2. ਘਾਨਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ

ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ:1245

3. ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਰਏ ਮੁਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਨਿ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਨਿ

ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 8



Making an earnest effort, live thou whole;  
earning, abide thou in joy.

Contemplating thy Lord, meet thou  
Him, and Thy anxiety is dispelled.<sup>4</sup>

Var Guiri, M.V

One should earn one's living  
with honest means and share it  
with the humble, the poor and the needy.<sup>5</sup>

Gurpartap Surya, Rut.V

He who earns his living with hard work  
and honest means, and gives 'Daswandh'  
in the name of the Guru will earn  
fame in this world. 6

Rahtnama, Bhai Nand Lal

One should share his food with  
others and should not eat alone.<sup>7</sup>

Rahtnama, Bhai Desa Singh

4. ਉਦਮ ਕਰੋਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੈ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁੰਚੁ

ਵਾਰ ਭੁਜਰੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 522

5. ਧਰਮ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਿ ਦਰਬ ਕਮਾਵੈ

ਬਾਟ ਅਤਿਥਿਨ ਕੇ ਪੁਠ ਖਾਵੈ

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਸੂਰਯ ਗਰੰਥ ਰੁੱਤ 5

ਅਧਯਾਯ(38)

6. ਦਸਨਖ ਕਰ ਜੇ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਕਰ ਜੇ ਧਨ ਘਰ ਮੇ ਆਵੈ

ਇਸ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਦਸੋਧ ਜੇ ਛੇਈ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਯਸ ਬਹੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਈ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ

7. ਏਕਾ ਕੀ ਯਹਿ ਖਾਇ ਨਹਿ ਅਵਰਨ ਕੇ ਭੀ ਦੇਇ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ

The true disciples are those who  
are humble, and earn their bread  
by the sweat of their brow and  
share their food with their brethren.<sup>8</sup>

Bhai Gurdas, Var, 32

. In 'Prem Sumarg' it is mentioned that the disciples should do honest labour and earn their livelihood by honest means.<sup>9</sup> It is better to resign to the will of the Lord under all circumstances and to render help to the needy and the poor, even at the cost of one's own interests.

The Sikh Gurus not only laid stress on earning one's bread with honest labour and sharing it with others, but also tried to inculcate the high ideals of love and service in the Sikhs. They enjoined upon them the service of humanity as a whole and told them that unless their earnings were shared voluntarily and willingly, the charity given was useless.

One should serve mankind in this world  
for a better life in the next. 10

Sri Rag, M.I

8. ਕੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਮਿੱਠਾ ਬੋਲਣਾ

ਨਿਵਿ ਚਲਣਾ ਕੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਪਰਵਾਣਾ

ਘਾਨਿ ਖਾਇ ਕੁਰਸਿਖ ਮਿਲ ਖਾਣਾ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ 32, ਪਉੜੀ 1

9. Randhir Singh, Bhai, Prem Sumarg, p.73.

10. ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਤ ਦਰਗ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 26

The whole creation is Thy kingdom, but  
none can achieve anything without service. 11

Asa, M.I

I touch the feet of the Gursikhs  
with all humility. 12

Suhi, M.I

Men of contentment serve their Lord and  
dwell upon none but the True One.  
They put not their feet in sin;  
year, they do good and practise Dharma.  
They loosen their worldly bonds  
and eat but sparingly.  
And God's immense grace is upon them;  
and He blesseth them with more and more.  
And by the praise of the great, one  
attaineth to him. 13

Var Asa, M.I

Service done under compulsion is of no avail.  
Nanak says, one should serve others  
ungrudgingly and with pleasure. 14

Var Suhi, M.II

11. ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਫਲੁ ਕਿਸੈ ਠਾਹੀਂ

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 354

12. ਜੇ ਦਾਸੇ ਕੁਰ ਸਿਖੜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਠਿਵਿ ਠਿਵਿ ਠਾਕਉ ਪਾਇ ਜੀਉ

ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 763

13. ਸੇਵ ਕੀਤੀ ਸਤਿਖੀਈ ਜਿਨੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ

ਓਨੀ ਮੰਦੇ ਪੈਰ ਨ ਰਖਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 466-67

14. ਬਧਾ ਚਟੀ ਜੇ ਭਰੇ ਨ ਕੁਣ ਨ ਉਪਕਾਰੁ

ਸੇਤੀ ਖੁਸੀ ਸਵਾਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਾਰੁ

ਵਾਰ ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ 2, ਪੰ: 787

As the elephant surrenders its will  
to the goad and the anvil to the smith,  
So should one surrender one's body  
and mind (to the Guru) and be ever  
alert in the service of God. 15

Var Sorath, M.III

The service of the people is supreme. 16

Gauri Gawareri, M.IV

One can get happiness only with  
selfless service. 17

Gond, M.IV

Be merciful, O Lord, and bless me  
with Thy vision, that I sing Thy  
praises morning and evening, And  
wipe the dust of thy slave's feet  
with my hair; this is my life's object. 18

Guiri, M.V

15. ਹਸਤੀ ਸਿਰੀ ਜਿਉ ਅਕਸ ਹੇ ਅਹਰਣਿ ਜਿਉ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੇਇ  
ਤਨੁ ਮਨ ਆਕੇ ਰਾਖਿ ਕੇ ਉਭੀ ਸੇਵ ਕਰੋਇ  
ਇਉ ਰੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਪੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਰਾਜੁ ਸਿਸਟਿ ਕਾ ਠੀਇ  
ਵਾਰ ਸੋਰਠ ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 861
16. ਜਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਤਮ ਕਾਮੁ  
ਕਉੜੀ ਕੁਆਰੇਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 164
17. ਨਿਹਕਪਟ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਜੈ ਹਰਿ ਕੇਰੀ,  
ਤਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਐ  
ਕੋਠ ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 861
18. ਕੇਸ ਸੀਰਿ ਦਾਸ ਪਗ ਝਾਰਉ ਇਹੈ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਮੇਰ  
ਰੁਜਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 500

One should go on serving till the last breath;  
only then one can meet the Lord. 19

Ram Kali, M.V

I pray O God, bless me with the  
company of the Gursikhs, so  
that I may serve them by fanning,  
fetching water for them, serving  
food to them. 20

Suhi, M.V

I wish to be in the company of the  
Gursikhs so that I should serve them,  
by bringing water, carrying it on my  
head, washing their feet with my  
own hands, sweeping in front of their  
doors and fanning them. This wish of  
mine can only be fulfilled with His grace. 21

Bilawal, M.V

19. ਪਵਹੁ ਚਰਣਾਤਨਿ ਉਪਰਿ ਆਵਹੁ ਅਸੀ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਵਹੁ  
ਆਪਸ ਤੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਭ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਤਉ ਦਰਗਹ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਹੁ

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 883

20. ਪਖਾ ਫੇਰੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੇਵਾ ਹਰਿਜਨ ਕੇ ਪੀਸਣੁ ਪੀਸਿ ਕਮਾਵਾ  
ਠਾਠਕ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਸਿ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਨ ਦੇਖਣੁ ਪਾਵਾ

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 749

21. ਜਨੁ ਢੇਵਉ ਇਹ ਸੀਸ ਕਰਿ ਕਰ ਪਛ ਪਖ ਲਾਉ  
ਬਾਰਿ ਜਾਉ ਨਖਬੇਰੀਆ ਦਰਸ ਪੇਖਿ ਜੀਵਾਵਉ  
ਕਰਉ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਅਪਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤੇ ਪਾਵਉ  
ਦੇਉ ਸੁਹਨੀ ਸਾਧਿ ਕੇ ਬੀਜਨੁ ਢੇਲਾ ਵਉ,

ਬਿਲਾਵਨ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 813

The Gursikhs should serve one another.  
 Only by serving, one can attain happiness.  
 One should cultivate humility  
 and share one's food with others.<sup>22</sup>

Bhai Gurdas, Var, 20

In the Suraj Prakash, it is mentioned that Guru Ram Dass stressed the ideal of service to the Sikhs saying: "Cast away the robe of pride, jealousy and backbiting and put on the simple garb of humility. If a Sikh calls at your door, welcome him open-heartedly, offer him food and clothing with love and don't refuse him anything".<sup>23</sup>

Guru Har Rai, while emphasizing the importance of service and langar to his Sikhs, told them that by giving food to the needy, one could attain salvation. "The Sikhs should daily distribute langar in their homes to everybody who calls at their doors. Nobody should go without food or remain hungry. Wherever there are Gursikhs, there should

22. ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਇਆ  
 ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਸੇਵ ਸੁਖ ਫਲ ਪਾਇਆ,  
 ਅਪੜ ਲਾੜ ਵਿਛਾਇ ਪੂੜੀ ਠਾਇਆ  
 ਕੋਰੇ ਮੱਟ ਅਲਾਇ ਨੀਰ ਭਰਾਇਆ,  
 ਆਣਿ ਮਹਾਂ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਵੀਡ ਖੁਵਾਇਆ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਵਾਰ 20, ਪਉੜੀ 10

23. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Rashi. I, Adhya, 64.

be a langar. The langar is only meant for disabled persons and religious preachers. The worldly people should do 'Kirt' and not depend on the langar. ... He is my Sikh who serves with humility".<sup>24</sup>

#### DEVELOPMENT OF LANGAR UNDER THE GURUS

The ideals of love and social service, honest labour and sharing one's food with others, the repetition of the holy Nam and worship of Hari were not only preached to the people by the Gurus, but were also applied by them in their daily life. Guru Nanak openly spoke against the existing social distinctions and divisions in the society and tried to bring unity in the ranks of the people by inculcating in them a common mode of worship by starting <sup>the</sup> social institutions of Sangat and Pangat. Sangat stands for association of people and Pangat stands for sitting and eating together in the same row in 'Guru-ka-Langar'.<sup>25</sup> He enjoined upon the people to share their food with others and asked them to consider the kitchen in their house as 'Guru-ka-Langar'. He had great love and sympathy for the poor and the needy, and even as a child the Guru used to visit and serve the Hindu and Muslim saints and faqirs living in the neighbourhood of Talwandi and distributed articles of food and clothing. He was an embodiment of love and service and whosoever went

---

24. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Rashi.I, Adhya, 6.

25. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.13.

to his door never returned disappointed. When his father once gave him money to start a trade and to strike a "Khara Sauda", (profitable bargain), he fed the hungry saints near Chuharkana (now in West Pakistan), considering that act to be the best bargain. At Sultanpur, the Guru used to address the Sangats regularly in the evening and feed them. He was not fond of hoarding money, and distributed everything which he received as salary to the poor and the needy.<sup>26</sup> He considered the people better than his own self, and had a firm faith that the spirit of the Lord permeated all the living beings, and the best service of God was the service of the people. During the course of his travels, he preached and practised these ideals. The Guru preferred to stay at Eminabad with a poor carpenter, Bhai Lalo, who earned his bread by hard labour rather than with Malik Bhago, the local Dewan, who was a proud and dishonest official. The Guru refused to join the grand feast which the Malik had given and to which he had invited all the holy men of the town. The Malik personally met the Guru and asked him why he had refused to join his feast and instead had eaten the food from Lalo who was a Sudra and of low caste. The Guru told him that he had no caste and preferred to eat coarse food earned with hard labour and not the dainty dishes prepared by using money earned with evil means. Malik Bhago

---

26. Puran Singh, The Ten Masters, p.13.



fell at the Guru's feet and begged for mercy.<sup>27</sup>

The Guru blessed him and told him to abstain from sinful living. Malik Bhago distributed the whole of his wealth among the poor and started a life of love, service and devotion. He made it a principle of his life to earn his living honestly. His house became a 'dharamsal', where he started the langar for everybody without any consideration of caste and creed, being rich or poor, high or low.<sup>28</sup> In this way the Guru removed his false pride of high caste and inculcated in him the spirit of doing 'Kirt' and sharing the fruits of it with others. The Guru then converted Sajjan Thag who, like Malik Bhago, distributed everything among the needy and converted his house into a 'Sach Dharamsal' (The temple of truth), where he started serving food and giving shelter to all, irrespective of caste and creed. Guru Nanak visited the de<sup>o</sup>coit Bhoomia's kitchen at Dacca. Bhoomia requested the Guru to take food from his kitchen, which the Guru refused, saying that it was saturated with the blood of the poor. Bhoomia fell at the feet of the Guru who gave him instructions not to harass and persecute innocent people, but to speak the truth and not to harm a person whose salt he had tasted ever in life. Bhoomia promised to obey the

27. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol. I, pp. 43-47.

28. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p. 30.

Guru with all sincerity and the Guru with other saints and travellers took food from his langar and stayed with him for sometime. Bhoomia later on served food to all in the name of God and his kitchen became the 'Guru-ka-Langar'.

Bhai Mansukh, a devoted Sikh of the Guru, visited Ceylon in one of his trade trips. He used to distribute the sacred food among his neighbours after his prayers every morning.<sup>29</sup> Sivanabh, a Raja of Ceylon had ordered the 'Akadashi fast' to be strictly observed throughout his kingdom. Mansukh prepared the sacred food on that day. A complaint was lodged against him to the Raja who called for him and asked him the reasons for preparing the sacred food. Mansukh told him that all his doubts and fears were dispelled by the teachings of the Guru. Raja Sivanabh was very much impressed with his talks and requested him to arrange for his meeting with the Guru. Mansukh told him to go on invoking the Name of God with sincere feeling and the Guru would definitely come to him. Guru Nanak went to Ceylon and stayed in the garden of Sivanabh. The King went barefoot to see the Guru and requested him to sanctify his palace with his visit. The Guru told him to start a langar and build a 'dharamsal' for the poor and the needy. The langar was immediately started and the work of construction of the dharamsal

29. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.II-III, pp.494-99.

was taken up. The Guru stayed there for several months and addressed congregations.<sup>30</sup>

The Guru settled as a farmer during the later part of his life at Kartarpur, where he built a dharamsal and attached to it the langar or a free kitchen, which became a distinctive feature of the colony. The corn which was produced by the sweat of his own brow as he tilled his land himself, was used for feeding those who came to see him. The poor and the needy, who came to him, never went empty-handed from his door. Gradually, the people started working together for this common cause and brought their earnings for the Guru's langar as their contribution, whenever they visited him.<sup>31</sup> He, thus, gave a practical demonstration of his teaching, viz. earning one's bread by honest labour and sharing one's earnings with others by starting the free kitchen at Kartarpur.

The example set by Guru Nanak was followed by his successors, who tried to make this institution as a living force to unite the people on a common platform. Guru Angad organized the langar on a large scale. He and his wife, Mata Khivi, personally worked in the langar and helped in the cooking and the distribution of food. Guru Angad got practical training and experience of service, while working in Guru

---

30. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.I, pp.155-56.

31. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.24.

Nanak's kitchen at Kartarpur, where he used to bring provisions for the langar and also helped the Guru in tilling the land. He always volunteered himself for all types of service to the Guru. Once he carried three wet bundles of grass on his head for the cows and buffaloes, when Guru Nanak's own son spurned this work. He always willingly and readily carried out the order of the Guru.<sup>32</sup>

Guru Angad spent all the offerings, which he received, on the langar at Khadur, where free food was distributed to persons of all creeds, and the pilgrims who came to see the Guru from distant places. The Guru's kitchen provided ~~the~~ delicious dishes like rice boiled in milk and ghee, but the Guru never touched that food and took <sup>e</sup> coarse food earned by twisting "strings of munj".<sup>33</sup>

The daily routine in the Guru's langar at Khadur was that at about nine o'clock, all visitors <sup>u</sup> set in a line without any distinction and the food was served to them. Afterwards, the food was distributed among the children and then the Guru gave religious instructions. The service in the langar was done by the Sikhs.

One evening, the dinner in the Guru's kitchen was delayed owing to a dust storm. Jiva, a cook in the kitchen, said that

---

32. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, pp.4-15.

33. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, Dr, A Short History of the Sikhs, pp.17-18.

the meals could be served only if the Guru could tame the storm. The Guru gave him instructions to be satisfied and contented with the will of the Lord and serve in the kitchen as the humble servant of the Sangat. Jiva felt apologetic and, henceforth, willingly obeyed the Guru's instructions.<sup>34</sup>

Manah, a Sikh of the Guru, who used to work in the kitchen, became haughty with the passage of time and started quarrelling with the people. He told them that he was to serve the Guru only and he was not the servant of the people. Even when the Guru asked him to serve the saints, he refused to do so. The Guru was annoyed and he asked him to get out of <sup>his</sup> sight and to burn himself. Manah went to the jungle, collected the firewood and prepared a pyre but could not relish the idea of death. Perchance, a thief arrived at the scene with a basket of gems and asked him to take the basket of gems from him in exchange for the opportunity of expiating his sins by obeying the Guru's order and jumped into the fire. Manah was arrested later on the charge of theft by the authorities and was hanged.<sup>35</sup> The Guru gave his example to the people and instructed the Sikhs that the perverse would lose both the worlds. Manah's tragic tale, thus, reveals that he suffered simply because he refused to serve the people.

34. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.V, pp.1352-53.

35. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, pp.20-21.

The Guru distributed everything to the needy and all the offerings were sent to the 'langar' where the food was served to the poor, travellers and pilgrims without any distinction. The Sikhs cooked and served the food and cleaned the utensils in the kitchen. Balwand and Satta, the rebeck-players of the Guru composed the Tikhe-di-Var or Rankali-ki-Var in which there is reference to the Guru's langar and philanthropy.

The langar was presided over by Mata Khivi, who used to look after all the details of the langar personally and served the Sikhs who came to see the Guru. The langar was named after her as 'Mata Khivi ka Langar'.<sup>36</sup>

The langar developed into a regular institution at Goindwal during the time of Guru Amar Dass.<sup>37</sup> The Guru made it a rule that whosoever came to see him must partake of the food in the Guru's kitchen and only then could he see him. There were supplies of butter, refined flour and sugar in plenty in the Guru's kitchen, where delicacies were daily served to the visitors. But the Guru himself took coarse food like boiled rice and lentils. The Guru's kitchen remained open till late in the night and the left-overs were thrown to the beasts and the birds, and to the fish in the river.

---

36. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.41-42.

37. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, Dr, A Short History of the Sikhs Vol.I, p.22.

The Mughal Emperor Akbar and <sup>the</sup> Raja of Haripur who came to see the Guru had to take meals in the langar. The Guru refused to see them unless they took food sitting in the common kitchen with other people. Akbar requested the Guru to allow him to make grants of land to meet the vast expenses of feeding hundreds of men and women who were fed daily from the 'Guru-ka-Langar'.<sup>38</sup> The Guru politely refused his offer by telling him that his Sikhs brought the supplies to the langar and whatever was collected daily was spent the same day for the langar and for the next day he left everything to the Almighty. Whereas he rejected the offer of the Emperor, he instructed his Sikhs to make the regular offerings for the langar and to serve and feed the Sikhs.

Once, the Sikhs wanted to offer a good dress and ornaments to the Guru's daughter Bibi Bhani, so that she could dress herself graciously. She returned the ornaments to the Sikhs and told them that the silver and gold were all a mere tinsel and hence useless. She asked them to spend the money on the Guru's kitchen.

The Guru was happy and pleased with the devotion of Jodha, who served in his kitchen and fed the hungry at all times. The Guru bestowed on him Nam and spiritual bliss. Lalu, Durga, Jiwanda, Maya, Ugarsen, Ramu, Dipa and Gangu, Sohan and Bhangu, Saharu (a washerman) and Bulah who requested the

38. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.II, p.97.

Guru for instructions, were told that there was nothing like doing good to others, and sharing one's earning with others, giving food, and clothes to the poor, and asked them to get together on 'Baisakhi' and 'Diwali', prepare and distribute the food to the assembly. He asked them to shed social prejudices and the superstition of the 'chowka' and made them sit in the same row and eat together.

According to Teja Singh, it was for the first time that no sanctity was observed about eating and drinking. This is testified to by a story mentioned in Dabistan-i-Mazahib that a learned Pandit Partap Mal, told a boy who was inclined towards Islam to join Sikhism, as there were no restrictions on food in that religion.<sup>39</sup>

Guru Ram Dass had received practical training in service while working in the kitchen of Guru Amar Dass. He used to cook, bring firewood from the jungles and draw water for the Sikh Sangat. He never looked for comfort and was always busy in serving the people or the Guru. He used to earn his bread by selling boiled lentils and gave away one-fourth of his earnings in charity. He was married to Bibi Bhani, the daughter of Guru Amar Das. Both husband and wife continued to serve the Guru and worked in the kitchen day and night.

---

Footnote

39. Mohsin Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.239.



Guru Ram Dass started his langar at Ramdaspur (the present City of Amritsar) under his direct supervision. The supervision of the langars at Kartarpur, Khadur and Goindwal was entrusted to different devout Sikhs. People from far-off places came to see the Guru and helped him in digging the tank of Ramdaspur. The langar was also started there and free food was supplied to everybody. Since money was needed for carrying on the Guru's kitchen as well as for meeting the cost of labour engaged in the digging work. Bhai Budha and other Sikhs waited upon the Guru for this purpose. It was decided to send his agents everywhere to collect funds as well as to spread the True faith. These agents were known as Masands.<sup>40</sup>

On being regularly organized, the Guru's langar was placed under the supervision of Prithi Chand, the elder son of the Guru, and Bhai Budha and other Sikhs. The Guru stressed the need for fanning, serving water and meals to the travellers and helping the poor and the needy.

One day when the Guru went to visit his kitchen, Handal, a man of submissive habits but of firm faith in the Guru, was kneading the flour at that time. His hands were covered with wet flour. He threw himself at the feet of the Guru by putting his hands at the back so that the Guru might not see them. The Guru was very happy to see his devotion to duty and

---

40. Mohsin Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.233.

blessed him for his selfless service.

The Guru instructed Dharam Das, Dugar Das, Dipa, Jetha, Sansari, Bulah and Tirath to give up pride, remain humble and earn their bread by the sweat of their brows and to serve the Sikhs.

Guru Arjan organized the system of contributions to the common pool by laying down that every Sikh should contribute one-tenth of his income for the common welfare. The money, thus collected, was to be spent on running the free kitchen. A number of Sikhs would bring corn and wood for the kitchen.<sup>41</sup>

The Guru and his wife, Mata Ganga, set personal example of service by serving in the langar, and also by sitting along with the people to take the food. Tired pilgrims coming from distant places used to ~~take~~ rest at the Temple of Amritsar, where the Guru and his wife attended to them every night by massaging their limbs and fanning them, serving them with cool water and food. The Sikhs voluntarily contributed to the fund of the kitchen in the form of cash, corn and wood and those who could not give anything contributed labour with love and there was never dearth of anything for the Guru's kitchen. Once, the provisions in the Guru's kitchen fell short.

---

41. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.60.

Ganga Ram, a Sikh of the Guru, who came from Bhatinda to sell his corn contributed everything to the Guru's langar. The Guru persuaded Ganga Ram to stay till Baisakhi and the offerings of the day were proffered to Ganga Ram, but he declined to accept them. The Guru was happy at his selfless devotion, and blessed him.

The Mughal Emperor Akbar visited the Guru at Amritsar and wanted to make contributions to the running of the Guru's langar, but the offer was politely declined by the Guru. As the Emperor insisted on doing something, the Guru asked him for the remission of the land revenue to the famine-stricken farmers. This the Emperor gladly accepted.<sup>42</sup> The Raja of Mandi visited the Guru at Amritsar along with Kaliana, a devout Sikh of the Guru. The Raja, his queens and the army received religious instructions from the Guru and stayed with him for three days and took meals from the Guru's langar. Similarly, the Hill Rajas of Kulu, Haripur, Suket and Chamba visited the Guru at Amritsar, stayed with him for a few days and took meals from the Guru's kitchen.

Guru Hargobind introduced the langar in the army which he kept at Amritsar. The breakfast was distributed to the Guru's troops as well as to his followers after the morning

---

42. Abu-ul-Fazal, Akbar Nama, p.514.

prayers and meals were served to them seated in rows, twice a day. The Guru started two big langars at Hargobindpur and Kiratpur. He also kept a mobile kitchen for his army because of his constant movement from place to place. Meals were served from the Guru's kitchen to the regular army stationed at various places. At Kiratpur, three hundred horsemen and sixty artillery men daily took their food from the Guru's langar. This attracted a large number of men to join the Guru's troops. People wondered how he could maintain such a large army. The Guru quoted to them Guru Arjan's version that God provided food even to insects in rocks and stones.<sup>43</sup>

During his visit to Kashmir, he went to Srinagar to meet Sewa Das and his mother who had prepared a dress for the Guru. Crowds of Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, flocked to see him and he preached to them the virtues of serving others, sharing one's food with others, by feeding them from his free kitchen. A company of Sikhs brought fresh honey for him. Kattu Shah requested them to give him some honey, which they refused, saying that they could not serve the Guru with the left-overs of Kattu Shah. When the honey was presented to the Guru, it was rotten and full of worms. The Guru told them that the honey was spoiled as it had been refused to a devout Sikh. He ordered his Sikhs to return to Kattu Shah

---

43. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp. 68-69.

and satisfy him.<sup>44</sup> One day, the Guru ordered his Sikhs to fetch firewood from the jungle. The next day, the Guru saw Jhanda, a rich man, bringing a bundle of firewood on his head to the kitchen. The Guru asked him why he was doing such a menial job. He replied that there were orders for the Sikhs to bring firewood and he was as good a Sikh as others.<sup>45</sup>

Guru Hargobind sent Bhai Garhia to Kashmir for preaching the True faith to the Kashmiris. Bhai Garhia spent all the offerings in the Guru's name and gave a great feast in honour of the Guru and distributed the rest of the money among the famine-affected people and brought back only a rupee and a quarter as a token of collection and offered that to the Guru. He requested the Guru to excuse him for spending all the amount collected by him in feeding the poor people and the people affected by famine.<sup>46</sup> The Guru told him that he had done the right thing and blessed him. He told Bhai Garhia to go back to his village and start a langar there. The Guru observed the principle of sharing food with others. While in prison at Gwalior, he distributed the rations among the needy prisoners and took very little for himself. He enjoined upon his Sikhs to earn their bread with honest labour.

44. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Surai Prakash, Vol.VII, pp.2709-10.

45. Mobsin Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p.238.

46. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.74-75.

Such bread was like ambrosia.

Once, two of his devout Sikhs, Sadhu and his son Rup Chand, had hung a leather-bottle on a tree and had vowed that unless the Guru took water, they would not touch it, despite the weather being <sup>h</sup>hot. The Guru came and drank water, blessed them, advising them to keep their kitchen always open to the travellers.<sup>47</sup>

When Baba Atal, a son of the Guru, died, and was to be cremated, the Sikhs suggested to the Guru that his body should be cremated near his habitation. The Guru told his Sikhs that the City of Amritsar would grow in population and this place would be known as 'Annapurna'. There stands now in the memory of Baba Atal, a nine-storey building at Amritsar, where everybody sings, 'Baba Atal pakki pakai ghall'.<sup>48</sup> Even now people bring cooked food to this place which is distributed among the poor and the needy.

The author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib, a Muslim <sup>h</sup>Historian of that period, wrote that during the time of Hargobind whosoever, with the Guru's name on his lips, entered the house of any Sikh was received with warmth and served with food. By now, the langar grew into a regular institution and devout Sikhs started running regular free kitchens in their houses. Everybody was served with food and nobody was refused food or allowed to

47. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.76.

48. <sup>Translation</sup>  
~~Translation~~

starve. The Sikhs were served with love and devotion. Big congregations of the Sikhs were fed by pooling provisions and contributions in the name of the Guru. Individual charity normally leads to personal ego, whereas the collective contributions and a system of collective distribution helped the Sikhs in rising above their petty selves.

Guru Har Rai continued and further developed the institution of langar even to other countries. Bhai Gonda, who was a sincere and devout Sikh, was sent to Kabul by the Guru with instructions to start the 'Guru-ka-Langar' there, and preach the true faith and feed holy men and pilgrims with the offerings. He built a Sikh temple there and also started a free kitchen.<sup>48</sup>

The Guru made no distinction between the rich and the poor. He himself lived on coarse food as did all his predecessors. All valuable offerings received by him were spent on the welfare of the guests and on the running of the free kitchen,<sup>49</sup> distribution of clothes and other necessities of life to the needy. Even the corn of the Guru's land at Kiratpur was used in the free kitchen. Bhai Bhagtu supervised the cultivation of the land at Kiratpur. He was very kind to the workers. Once,

---

48. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.IX, pp.3561-64.

49. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.85-86.

the workers complained to him that sufficient 'ghee' was not put on their 'chapatis'. Bhai Bhagtu immediately purchased 'ghee' from Bhai Sangatia, who happened to pass that way and distributed it among the labourers and workers.

Once, on the Baisakhi festival, where the Sikhs had gathered in large numbers, the Guru enquired from them whether they were sharing their food with others and maintaining langars or not.<sup>50</sup> Some of the Sikhs replied with pride that they were running the langars. The Guru asked them to let him know how they were running their langars; whether they were serving all the Sikhs and visitors at all times. The Sikhs gave different replies. One of them said that he distributed food first among the visiting Sikhs, provided they arrived at the time of the distribution of food. Another replied that he cooked and distributed food with his own hands. The third replied that he washed the feet of the Sikhs and drank that water. Another replied that he served not only food to the Sikhs, but also dusted their shoes before they departed. The Guru told them that he wanted to know if they served food to the hungry who came to their door when all food was served and nothing was left. All replied in the negative. The Guru told them to keep extra food ready to feed the guests so that none went away disappointed.<sup>51</sup>

50. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.IX, pp.3565-68.

51. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.86-87.



He emphasized the fact that such an act was of great merit and further said that they who performed it would enjoy happiness here and hereafter. Whoever sends away anybody disappointed from his house would get no benefit of his past good actions which would be futile.

Guru Har Kishan, though appointed Guru at the tender age of five, continued the practice of running a free kitchen at Kiratpur which was visited by a large number of Sikhs, who came from far and wide to see him. Some of the Guru's Masands became vain, corrupt and rebellious, and embezzled a large portion of the offerings and contributed very little to the langar. As a result of the scanty contributions, it became difficult to prepare the required dishes in the langar, but none went without food. When he started for Delhi, he halted at the village of Panjokhara, where a langar was arranged to feed the Sikhs who accompanied him. He left some Sikhs at Panjokhara before proceeding to Delhi. They kept the free kitchen running in the name of the Guru and a temple was built there later in the memory of his visit. When the Guru reached Delhi, his langar also moved with him and provided food to the crowds of the Sikhs who had come to see him.<sup>52</sup>

Guru Teg Bahadur laid the foundation of Anandpur in 1665, A.D. and started a free kitchen.<sup>53</sup> During the course of

---

52. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol-IV, p.338.

53. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.90-91.

his tours also, he started the langars. The Guru stopped at Dhamdhan in Tehsil Narwana (District Jind, now in the new State of Haryana) in the Bangar tract, where there was scarcity of water. He supplied funds to the people for sinking a well and building a dharamsala at Dhadhan and similarly got wells sunk and dharamsalas constructed at different places. The Guru also got a well sunk at Karha for the welfare of the travellers. He had a very high sense of service and told the people that there was nothing higher than serving others with dedication and sincerity.

Mihan, a devout Sikh of the Guru, used to perform many duties for the Guru, e.g. like bringing of water, cooking and serving food and cleaning the utensils. As he constantly carried the water-pots, his head developed sores. One day the Guru's mother happened to see the condition of Mihan's head. She was moved and reported the matter to the Guru. The Guru was deeply impressed with the sincerity and devotion of Mihan and asked him to remove the cushion from his head and blessed him and gave him a robe of honour.<sup>54</sup>

The Guru gave instructions to the Sikhs to serve others at the cost of their own selves. He told them that wealth should be given in charity and shared with others, and one should try to accumulate the wealth of God's Name and give up all pride.

---

54. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.X, pp.4131-35.

People came from far and wide to see the Guru at Anandpur. The Guru gave them audience three times a day — in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. All of them ate from <sup>the</sup> Guru's langar.<sup>55</sup>

As a great apostle of democracy, Guru Gobind Singh stood for the equality of all Sikhs and ~~forbade~~<sup>forbade</sup> the observance of caste distinctions among the Khalsa. His langar was open to all who came to see him. Besides the Guru's free kitchen,<sup>56</sup> there were other Sikhs of the Guru at Anandpur who ran their own langars on a smaller scale. He came to know that the Sikhs were not running their langars according to the standing instructions and he decided to test them. He disguised himself as a pilgrim and went to the langars of the Sikhs. He found that at all the langars, the pilgrims stood and waited for food, which was not ready. The Guru visited the langar of Bhai Nand Lal, who had managed it well and had served food to everybody, willingly and quickly. He would ask the pilgrims to stay longer in case they required anything more. The langars of Bhai Ram Kaur, Bhai Dewan Chand and Munshi Sahib Chand were also found <sup>functioning</sup> functioning properly.

55. Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.92.

56. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.XI, p.4519.

57. Ganda Singh, Dr(ed.), Kulyat-i-Bhai Nand Lal, p.20.

The Guru narrated the story of his visits to the langars to the Sikhs and said that he was greatly disappointed in many cases, and the most blessed one was Bhai Nand Lal who gave food to everyone. He told them that Bhai Nand Lal had realized the secret of true service and had learnt the true meaning of service to the Guru and the Sangat. He ordered his Sikhs that food, cooked or uncooked, must be served at all times and without delay to those who came to their doors. There was no greater virtue than the serving of food at all times without any consideration of the social status or position of the visitor. The turning away of the hungry amounted to turning away of the Guru himself. Whosoever served the poor and the needy served the Guru.

When the Guru went to Ponta, his langar also moved with him. Fifty-two poets and scholars along with the Sangat and the Pathan soldiers, who had been introduced to him by Syed Badr-ud-Din, alias Budhu Shah, as well as the 'Udasis' were also fed. The fact that the 'Udasis' also took the sacred food from the Guru's langars is borne out by the fact that on the eve of the battle of Bhangani, the Guru sent orders to the 'Udasis' to take up arms and prepare for the defence. All of them, except Mahant Kirpal, fled away. The Guru told him that his disciples had been taking food from his langar but in the hour of need they had run away.<sup>58</sup>

---

58. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas-Guru Gobind Singh, pp.130-31.

The institution of langar had grown into an essential accompaniment of the Sikh temples by that time. The 'parshad' from the langar, where devoted persons of all castes and creeds served, was looked upon as something very sacred. Besides the free kitchens attached to the temples, and run by many devout Sikhs, the 'Guru-ka-Langar' supplied free food to big congregations.

Guru Gobind Singh's last words at Nander to his Sikhs were to keep the kitchen always open and to receive offerings for its maintenance.

CHAPTER V  
WOMAN AND THE SIKH GURUS

*The Sikhs*

CHAPTER VWOMAN AND THE SIKH GURUS

The Sikh Gurus worked for the social uplift of woman who, by and large, had been neglected, discarded and considered inferior to man in the Indian society. They condemned 'Sati', 'Pardah' and infanticide, the social evils of the times, and advocated equal status for woman and her active participation in all spheres of life. They were ardent champions of widow remarriage.

It has been very difficult to define the true status of woman in the ancient Indian society owing to the ignorance of original Sanskrit texts both 'Sruti' and 'Smriti', which contain the laws, customs, and traditions of the period. The most authoritative book on this subject is the Rig-Veda which is the product of the highest, religious thought which shaped the entire course of Hindu philosophy. There is sufficient evidence available in it to prove that woman was held in high esteem and was treated on a par with man in the attainment of knowledge, both temporal and spiritual.<sup>1</sup> The birth of a daughter was welcomed and there is no evidence to show that she was considered unwanted. The Rig-Veda contains 'Suktas' and hymns which were uttered by 'rishis' and women seers

---

1. The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol.I, p.221.

known as 'rishikas' and 'Brahma-vadinis', who had the highest degree of spiritual enlightenment.<sup>2</sup> The important women seers whose hymns are available in the Rig-Veda are Romasa, Lopamudra, Apta, Kadru, Visva Vama, Ghosha, Juha, Vagāmoḥrini, Paulomi, Jarita, Sradaha-Kamayani, Urvashi, Sarnaga Yami, Indrani, Savitri and Deva Yani. Women seers whose hymns are included in the Sam-Veda are Nodha, Akrishtabhasha, Sikatanivarari and Ganapayana.<sup>3</sup>

It is referred to in the Yajur-Veda and the Atharv-Veda, that women, like men, were eligible for a life of education and of the discipline of Brahmacharya. They married after the completion of this period. The Atharv-Veda refers to girls who led a life of disciplined studentship and Brahmacharya, marrying only in the second Ashrama.

In the Vedic Period, both wife and the husband took part in the performance of religious ceremonies and offered prayers and sacrifices together. In fact, these ceremonies were considered incomplete and ineffective without the wife's participation in them. The husband and the wife were, thus, considered complementary halves of one whole and so had equal rights to spiritual life and discipline. Thus the Rig-Veda

2. Mookerji, Radha Kumad, Women of India, pp.1-6.

3. The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol.I, p.222.



accorded the highest social status to woman. These traditions were followed in the later times. The Upanishadas refer to the continuance of these traditions.

The Rig-Veda refers to a society based on monogamy and was patriarchal. The wife was given an honoured place in the house as mistress of the household where she looked after her aged father-in-law and mother-in-law, her husband's brothers and sisters. Marriage was considered a sacred link and widow's were not allowed to remarry. The institution of monogamy is a testimony to the fact that respect and high social status were given to women. They were not secluded in the society.<sup>4</sup> They could move freely in the company of their husbands. They participated in public life, occupied a prominent place in social gatherings, lending charm to them by their graceful dress and pleasing manners. There was no 'purdah' or life of seclusion. The grown-up maidens had the freedom of movement and there are references of love-marriages existing in the society.<sup>5</sup>

Woman is referred to as 'Jaya' in the Aitareya Brahmana, i.e. a second mother of man. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad refers to the rituals performed by a person, praying for the birth of a daughter who should grow up into a learned lady or a

4. Radha Krishnan, S., Dr, Religion and Society, p.139.

5. Majumdar, R.C., Dr Pusalkar, A.D., Dr, The Vedic Age, p.390.

Pandita. Boys and girls received education together both in home as well as in the institutions of higher learning. The Brahman girls were educated in the Vedas, while the Kashitriya girls got training in the use of bows and arrows. But even in those days, there was bifurcation of studies between men and women. Fine arts, like music, dancing and painting were especially encouraged in the case of girls, and men were considered unfit for these accomplishments. There was no purdah and the girls led a free life. They had a decisive voice in the selection of their husbands and got due share in the property of their fathers. It was not necessary for every woman to marry.<sup>6</sup> The Vedic traditions were continued in the later Vedic times. The Graya Sutras as an equal with her husband at religious ceremonies, which fact testifies to the equal rights of women with men in the performance of the highest religious ceremonies. The great grammarian, Panini, in his book Ashtedhyayi, mentions about women's going in for regular Vedic studies like men. Learned ladies of those days worked as teachers. Women had other careers open to them, apart from a mere literary career. In the Epic period, the women were given a due place and respect in society. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata that women should be honoured, because most of the virtues of men depend on women and because

6. The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol.I, pp.223-24.

all pleasures and enjoyments also depend upon them. They are said to be the deities of prosperity and pivots of the social organism. The Barhut sculptures represent skilful horse-women in the army. Patanjali, the author of Mahabhashya ( a masterpiece), used the 'Saktiki' formation to indicate women spear-bearers. Megasthenes refers to Chand<sup>e</sup>r Gupta's body-guards of Amazonian women and women-hunters. Kautilya refers to women archers.<sup>7</sup> Poets like Kalidasa, Bana and Bhavabhuti gave exalted ideas of womanhood. Manu also wrote many slokas in which he pleaded for the happiness of and respect to women. He has mentioned in his slokas that the gods rejoice where the woman is held in high esteem.

In spite of the great respect being given to women, there is ample evidence available in the old Hindu texts to prove that women were considered inferior and subordinate to men and were gradually losing their place of honour.<sup>8</sup> Even in the Rig-Veda, it is clearly stated that woman is weak-minded and unworthy of being trusted. Indra himself said that a woman's mind was not disciplined and sound. Urvashi herself admitted the nature of her own sex in her conversation with the royal sage Pururava that there could be no lasting friendship with the women-folk, as their hearts were the hearts of hyenas.

---

7. Munshi, K.M., Dr, Majumdar, R.C., Dr Pusalkar, A.D., Dr, The Age of Imperial Unity, p.564.

8. Motwani, Kewal, Manu Dharma Sastra, p.110.

In the later period of the Dharma Shastras, the status of woman declined further. They lost their ancient place of grace and honour. Even Manu wrote certain slokas in which they were regarded as morally low creatures. He says: "It is the nature of women to seduce men in this world; for that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females. For women are able to lead astray in this world even a learned man and make him a slave of desires and anger". Manu advocated that women should be considered inferior to men and dependent upon them. According to him she should be under the tutelage of her parents in her adolescence, under the control of her husband in her youth, when married, and should be dependent on her sons after the death of her husband.<sup>9</sup> The Mahabharata is more outspoken in condemning women. "There is nothing that is more sinful than women. Verily, they are the roots of all evils".<sup>10</sup> The discourses of Bhishma are full of attacks on the opposite sex. He says, "There is no creature more sinful than woman. Woman is a burning fire. She is the sharp edge of a razor. She, is verily, all these in a body". Even in the Epic and later Epic literature she is referred to as whimsical, as are the leaves of a lotus flower, as sharp as the edge of a sword and as unsettled as the blast of a storm. The faces of

---

9. Motwani, Kewal, Manu Dharma Sastra, pp.110-11.

10. Indra, Professor, The Status of Women in Ancient India, pp.112-21.

women are like flowers, their words are like the drops of honey and their hearts are like sharp razors; the interior of them no one can know. There is none whom a woman sincerely loves. She, for serving her purpose, does not hesitate to kill even her husband, children or brothers". The birth of a daughter in the family was not considered a source of pleasure; rather there was general gloom and depression. A verse of Atharva-Veda echoes the general desire for the birth of a son and not for a daughter. "The birth of a girl grant it elsewhere, here grant a boy". It is, therefore, not surprising that the birth of a girl was not considered a source of rejoicing, whereas the birth of a son was considered auspicious, and was celebrated with rejoicings and merry-making.<sup>11</sup>

Dr Abinasha Chandra Das, the eminent Indian writer on the Rig-vedic culture, while writing on the conditions prevailing in Ancient India, has given very useful information regarding the status and position occupied by women in ancient times. He says that women captured in war from rival clans, or otherwise, were forced to enter matrimonial alliances, were kept in subjection and treated more like chattels than human beings. They were virtually treated as slaves. Their husbands had complete control over them. There can be no doubt that in the early stages of civilization, their position was more or

---

11. Indra, Professor, The Status of Women in Ancient India, pp.15-21.

less like that of the slaves. The position improved only in the Aryan Age when they were treated with respect and were allowed the choice of their husbands and enjoyed equal freedom with men in all matters, social and religious. Equality and freedom evoked highest virtues in the women of the Rigvedic period and lifted society to a high state of culture.

Buddhism kept up the traditions of Brahmanical religion and accorded an honoured place to women in social life.<sup>12</sup> They were admitted to the order of nuns known as 'Bhikshuni Sangha', which provided them with ample opportunities of social service, avenues of culture and contact with public life. This order of nuns served as a nursery which produced many learned women and some of them became teachers of junior nuns because of their proficiency in the sacred texts. Some of these Buddhist nuns played a prominent role in the work of early Buddhist reformation. Those who entered the order were known as 'theries'. There is a reference to thirteen such 'theries', especially referred to by the Buddha for their spiritual merit. The birth of a female child was not considered a curse. The Buddha is said to have admonished King Pasenadi of Koshalā for his sorrow on the birth of a daughter.<sup>13</sup> "A female child, O Lord of men, may prove even a better offspring than a male".

12. Mukerji, R.K., Women of India, pp.7-8.

13. Ibid, p.8.

*The lot of widows was not one of hardship.*

~~Widows were not attended with hardships.~~ They were not excluded from domestic festivities. They had the right to inherit property and they could join the order of nuns.

But also there is sufficient evidence available in the Buddhist literature to prove that the Buddha considered women incapable of higher achievements and was opposed to their admission to the order, and he reluctantly gave permission to the forming of an order of nuns. Mahapajapati, the foster-mother of Lord Buddha, requested him many times to initiate her into the order to attain spiritual bliss. Her cause was represented by Ananda, who asked the Master why he was not inclined to admit women to the order. The Buddha told him, "Enough, O Ananda; let no woman retire from household and take the state of homelessness". While giving his views about women to Ananda, he asked him not to see a woman, not to talk to her, if perchance he happened to see her; not to lose <sup>his self-control</sup> wits, if perchance he happened to talk to her. The Buddha was not in favour of their inclusion in the Buddhist order and when he reluctantly agreed, he said that Buddhism would not stay for long. This shows the fears which the Buddha had in his mind about the women-folk.

Jainism also allowed women to join the fold, to take to the life of asecism and to liberate their souls from the grinding wheel of Karma.<sup>14</sup> The Jain women were placed on

---

14. Indra, Professor, The Status of Women in Ancient India, pp.254-56.

an equal footing with men as far as religious pursuits and achievements were concerned. They could also become an 'acharya' and they could even obtain the last two stages of an 'arhata' and a 'siddha'. The **five** stages were not denied to them. However, very few women of strong determination and physique could endure ~~the~~ hard life of an ascetic. Though they were not denied any particular privileges as enjoyed by men and were exactly like male ascetics in their form, yet they had their own marks of inferiority. It is clear from the Jain Sutras that their general status was looked upon as inferior to that of men. Besides, in the Jain law-giving Tirthankaras, it is mentioned that woman is not only inferior to man in the religious field but even in secular spheres. In spite of these references, the Jain women had a voice in family affairs and had legal rights of inheritance and of managing their domestic affairs independently. They were considered co-actors with their husbands and had **ample** rights to their fathers' property. To the widows, Jainism gave a place of honourable self-respect. Though there was very little change as far as social position of women was concerned, yet the Jains, by allowing women equal spiritual opportunities with men and admitting them to the religious order, considerably helped the women-folk in maintaining their religious position in the society.



With the advent of the Muslim Rule in India, the position of women in India greatly deteriorated.<sup>15</sup> The continual invasions by the Muslims led to the breakdown of social institutions and to the dislocation of political structure and ruination of the economy of the country. Many social problems cropped up in the wake of these upheavals, which had a depressing effect on the social life of the people, especially of women. The sense of insecurity and fear, which came in the wake of these invasions and the system of 'purdah' enforced by the Muslims on their women-folk, pushed the Indian women back into the secluded confines of domestic life and totally eliminated them from public life. Educational facilities, which were provided to women in the Hindu Period, disappeared as the nunneries and monasteries which were the centres of great learning were demolished during the Muslim Period. Islam advocated the superiority of men to women. It is mentioned in the 'Auyats' that God has made man superior to woman, and when a Muslim dies, his property should be divided among his sons and daughters with a ratio of two shares for the sons and one for the daughters. It is further mentioned that it is ordained that Muslim women should observe purdah and should go covered from head to foot, so that they may be easily recognized as Muslim women.

---

15. Panikar, K.M., Women of India, pp.9-10.

In case they do not go out veiled, they would go to hell. The Prophet said that once he saw hell and saw that most of its inhabitants were women. According to Islamic traditions, they are not allowed to sit along with men in 'masjids' (mosques) and to offer their prayers.<sup>16</sup> These traditions naturally had a very demoralizing effect on their general position in the society and relegated them to the background. However, the position of women in the south did not deteriorate much owing to settled conditions there. Education was widespread and there were a number of women poets, both in the regional languages and in Sanskrit, such as Ganga Devi, the author of the Epic Madhura Vijayam (Fourteenth century), and Vajji, the Karnataka poetess.

Nevertheless, in the field of administration, India produced notable women such as Rudramana, the Kakateya Queen, of whom Marco Polo speaks and Razia Begum (Thirteenth Century). But the general state of the Indian women was not satisfactory and they led a life of seclusion and purdah which was mostly observed by higher classes. Polygamy was permissible. Another social evil which existed was the 'Sati' system, according to which the women were required to burn themselves along with their husbands' corpses on the pyres. Women were generally excluded from succession to property and this led

16. Panikar, K.M., Women of India, pp.10-13.

to their dependence on men. The system of joint family, in a way, considerably helped them in mitigating the effects of social seclusion, economic dependence and lack of schooling facilities which were provided by this institution. In a nutshell, the position of the women deteriorated.<sup>17</sup>

#### CONTENTIONS OF THE SIKH GURUS

Sikhism worked as a potent force to advocate the cause of the emancipation of Indian womanhood. It was a protest against the social evils and tyranny prevalent in the society, and a plea for equal status for women with men in all spheres of life. The Sikh Gurus repudiated the old beliefs of woman's being inferior to man and condemned the social evils of 'purdah', 'Sati' and infanticide. They were in favour of their complete freedom and active participation in public life and told the people that it was unfair to consider women-folk as Sudras or low-castes as it was they who gave birth to men. The hymns of the Gurus bear out emphatically the views expressed above:

From women is our birth;  
in the women's wombs are we shaped.

Women are our friends,  
and from women is the family.

If one woman dies, we seek another:  
through women are the bonds of the world.

17. Panikar, K.M., Women of India, p.13.

O why call woman evil,  
who giveth birth to kings?

From woman is a woman;  
without woman there's none;

Nanak: without a woman is  
the One True Lord alone. 18

Var Asa, Salok, M.I

Our mothers, fathers, sons  
are all the creation of the Lord.

He the Lord Himself hath  
bound us with their bonds. 19

Guiji, M.IV

18. ਭੀਡ ਜੀਮੀਯੇ ਭੀਡ ਨਿਮੀਯੇ ਭੀਡ ਮਿਕਣ ਵੀਆਹੁ  
ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੇਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ  
ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਨੀਯੇ ਭੀਡ ਹੇਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ  
ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਯੇ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੀਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ  
ਭੰਡਹੁ ਗੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ  
ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਚਾ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਯੇ ਭਾਗਾ ਰਤੀ ਚਾਰ  
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੈ ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ ਦਰਬਾਰ

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 473

19. ਮਾਈ ਬਾਪ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਸਭਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਕੀਏ  
ਸਭਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਠਬੰਧੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੀਏ

ਭੁਜਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਘਰੁ 3, ਪੰ: 494

According to Guru Nanak, woman gives birth to man and possesses all virtues. She is superior to all members of the family. The Ghrist Ashram is the best ashram, in which one can attain mukti by doing 'kirt' and sharing one's earnings with others willingly. Once Guru Nanak on the 'Shivratri' festival visited Batala where he came across a group of sadhus. Their leader, Bhangarnath, seeing Guru Nanak in worldly clothes asked him why he had become a householder again after having left his home. It seemed that he was a loser in his shop; that is why he had become a sadhu, and now, when he had collected wealth and had followers, he had again become a householder. He further told him that as it was not possible to get butter from spoilt milk, he could not attain mukti (salvation) as he had again fallen into the same sink of worldly affairs which he had renounced.<sup>20</sup>

Guru Nanak told Bhangarnath that it was not fair for him to speak ill of the 'ghrist' (householder's life) and the mother, who was a symbol and a pivot of the 'ghrist' and who had given him birth. The 'ghrist' which he was criticizing was providing him his daily needs, viz. food, clothing and even money for 'sulfa' (the essence of hemp) for smoking. How could 'ghrist' which served him so well could be bad? He told him further that if one did 'kirt' (labour) and served whosoever

---

20. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Suraj Prakash, Vol.IV, pp.1092-92.

came to him, one could find the 'Gyanmarg' and thus could attain mukti.

The Sikh Gurus, who were practical in their outlook towards life, preached against ascetism and renunciation. They considered it a negative and defeatist outlook to run away from the world. They were of the opinion that 'ghrist' was the best ashram (mode of life) as it regulated their lives and 'karmas' (actions) in the right direction. They were of the conviction that a householder with his good actions and repetitions of God's Name could obtain 'mukti'. Thus they were able to create among their followers love for the worldly life which had been spurned and condemned by the old Indian thought. The Guru gave a true perspective of the 'ghrist ashram' to the people. The Sikh Gurus lived as householders.

One cannot get salvation merely  
by leaving the world. 21

Var Asa, M.I

Yoga is neither in the patched coat,  
nor in the yogis staff,  
nor in the besmearing of oneself with ashes.

21. ਜੀ ਸਦਾਵਹਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਹਿ  
ਛਿੰਡ ਬਹਹਿ ਖਰਬਾਰੁ

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 469

Nor in wearing the earrings,  
nor in close-cropping the head,  
nor in blowing the horn.

If one remaineth detached  
in the midst of attachments,  
one attaineth to the (true) state of yoga.

One becometh not a yogi by mere talk.

If one looketh upon all the creation alike,  
one, is acclaimed as a true yogi.

Yoga is not in abiding among the tombs  
or crematoriums, nor in entering  
into a pseudo-trance.

Yoga consists not in roaming the world,  
nor in bathing at the pilgrim-stations.

If one remaineth detached in the midst  
of attachments then, verily,  
one attaineth to the (true) state of yoga.<sup>22</sup>

Rag Suhi, M.I

22. ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਖਿਥਾ ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੇ ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ  
ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ ਮੁੰਡਿ ਮੁਡਾਇਐ ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਝੀ ਵਾਈਐ  
ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਈ ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਤੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ  
ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਦੇਸਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਜੇਕੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ  
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੇਕੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵੁ ਪਾਈਐ  
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟ ਤ ਸਹਸਾ ਛੁਟੇ ਧਾਵਤੁ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹੀਐ  
ਨਿਝਰੁ ਝਰੇ ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਲਾਕੈ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਪਰਚਾ ਪਾਈਐ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਾਇਆ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਅੰਸ ਜੇਕੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 730

The self-willed abandon their homes  
in a fit of despair and they beg at  
the doors of others:

They shrink from their duty towards  
their household, being instructed  
not by the true Guru, and lo, they  
are caught in the whirlpool of an  
evil mind. 23

Rag Maru, M.I

By meeting the Guru, one's hunger  
is satisfied; by wearing (a mendicant's)  
garb, it is stilled not.

One is afflicted by pain and beggeth  
from door to door and hereafter one  
is punished all the more. 24

Var Wadhans, M.III

One abandoneth one's kindreds becoming a  
sanyasin, but the mind craves and craves;

And one's desires are stilled not till  
he vanquisheth them through the Guru's  
Word and thus attaineth peace. 25

Bilawal, M.IV

23. ਮਨਸੁਖੁ ਨਹਿਰ ਘਰੁ ਤਜਿ ਵਿਕੁਚੈ ਅਵਰਾ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਹੇਰੈ  
ਕਿਹੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਗਵਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨ ਭੇਟੈ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਘਮਨ ਖੇਰੈ  
ਦਿਸਤਰੁ ਭਵੈ ਪਾਠ ਪਛਿ ਥਾਕਾ ਤਿਸਨਾ ਹੋਇ ਵਧੇਰੈ

ਰਾਗ ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰ: 1012

24. ਇਸੁ ਭੇਖੈ ਥਾਵਹੁ ਗਿਰਹੇ ਭਲਾ ਜਿਬਹੁ ਕੇ ਵਰਸਾਇ  
ਸਬਦਿ ਰਤੇ ਤਿਨਾ ਸੋਈ ਪਈ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਇ

ਵਾਰ ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 587

25. ਤਜੈ ਗਿਰਸਤੁ ਭਇਆ ਬਨਵਾਸੀ,  
ਇਕੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਮਨੁਆ ਟਿਕੈ ਨ ਟਿਕਈਆ

ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮਹਲਾ 4, ਪੰ: 835



One can achieve salvation by repetition of 'Nam', while enjoying the pleasures of this world. 26

Var Guiri, M.S.V

Woman, who is the pivot of the 'ghrist' ashram has been considered a helping hand to man in the achievement of mukti. She has been referred to as one who provides the maximum comforts to man.

According to the Vedas and the general opinion of the people, woman helps a man in achieving salvation and provides him with the maximum comforts of life.27

Bhai Gurdas, Var, V

The Sikh Gurus, who were the upholders of the cause of woman in the society, preached that there was no difference between a son and a daughter. They were against female infanticide and told the Sikhs not to have any relations with such people as indulged in such a heinous crime. It is referred to in Bhai Bala-wali-Janam Sakhi. 'Sakhi Kanya Parthaiy' that Guru Nanak considered it a great evil and spoke against the killing of daughters.

26. ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਤੁਕਾਰਿ ਭੋਟਿਯੈ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ

ਹਸੀਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੀਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੀਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੀਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ

ਵਾਰ ਗੁਜਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 522

27. ਲੋਕੁ ਵੇਦ ਕੁਣ ਗਿਆਠ ਵਿਚਿ ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ

ਖੇਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੀ ਕੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਖ ਫਲ ਨਿਹਚਉ ਨਾਰੀ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਵਾਰ 5, ਪਉੜੀ 16

Those who kill their daughters  
cannot attain mukti. 28

Rahat Nama, Bhai Desa Singh

The faithfuls should forsake relations  
with a man who kills his daughter.

One should not depend on the  
earnings of one's daughters. 29

Rahat Nama, Bhai Chaupa Singh

The Sikh Gurus preached against the system of 'purdah', which they considered an imprisonment for women. They advocated equal rights for them and asked women to come out of 'purdah' and sit side by side with men in the gurdwaras and offer prayers. They instructed women not to observe 'purdah', as it was of no use. They further asked them not to imitate those women who had been observing 'purdah' after the fashion of Muslim women.

The Gurus considered the practice of Sati as amounting to forced suicide. They considered that those women who burnt themselves along with their dead husbands were not the real satis. The real satis were only those who kept their dharma and lived keeping fresh the memory of their husbands.

28. ਕੁੜੀ ਮਾਰ ਆਦਿਕ ਹੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਤਿਆਰੇ ਤੇਤੇ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ

29. ਭੁਰੁ ਸਿਖ ਕੰਨਯਾ ਨ ਮਾਰੇ, ਕੁੜੀ ਮਾਰ ਨਾਨ ਨ ਵਰਤੇ,  
ਕੰਨਯਾ ਕਾ ਪੀਸਾ ਨਾ ਖਾਇ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਚੌਪਾ ਸਿੰਘ

Those who burn themselves on the pyre  
of their husbands are not the real satis.

Nanak says, the real satis are they  
who live and die in the memory of  
their husbands and always remain  
calm and contented with their lot.<sup>30</sup>

Var Suhi, M.III

Those who are the embodiments of  
obedience and loyalty, modesty  
and grace, they don't fall into  
trouble at any time.

Those who consume themselves and  
pine away in the memory of their  
departed husbands will get a place<sup>31</sup>  
of honour in the court of the Lord.

Gauri, M.V

30. ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੇ ਮੜਿਆ ਨਰਿ ਜਲੀਨਿ  
ਠਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟਿ ਮਰੀਨਿ  
ਭੀ ਸੇ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਨ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹਿਨ  
ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੀਮਾਲੀਨਿ

ਵਾਰ ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰ: 787

31. ਕਹੁ ਠਾਨਕ ਜਿਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ  
ਧੰਨ ਸਤੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਰਵਾਨਿਆ

ਕਉੜੀ ਗੁਆਰੇਰੀ, ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰ: 185

How can a woman be true sati,  
unless she possesses self-control. <sup>32</sup>

Gauri, Kabir

If one could get salvation by burning  
oneself, then why can't satis get salvation  
who burn themselves along with their  
dead husbands.

If one could get salvation by living  
underground and in caves, why cannot  
the snakes who live in the holes  
get salvation. <sup>32</sup>

Akal Ustat, Guru 10

It is mentioned in the Prem Sumarg that a woman  
whose husband dies at an early age, should remain calm  
and contented and not lose self-control, and should always  
remember the Guru. The same is applicable to men; they  
should not keep illicit relations with other women, but  
should marry according to their choice. <sup>34</sup>

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN  
THE TIMES OF THE GURUS

The Sikh Gurus gave due regard and honour to the  
women-folk and preached that they were the symbol of domestic

32. ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤ ਸਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈਸੇ ਨਾਰਿ ਪੀਡਿਤ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ

ਕਉੜੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਕੀ, ਪੰ: 328

33. ਆਰ ਮੇ ਜਰੇ ਤੇ ਗਤਿ ਰਾਡ ਕੀ ਪਰਤ ਕਰ

ਪਤਲ ਕੇ ਬਸੀ ਕਯੋ ਭੁਜੰਗ ਨ ਤਰਤ ਹੇ

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ 10

34. Randhir Singh, Bhai(ed.), Prem Sumarg, p.46.

harmony and happiness, social cohesion and unity. They took an active part and keen interest in running the institution of the langar which provided practical training in high ideals of equality, love and service as preached and practised by the Gurus. The wives of the Sikh Gurus also took an active part in the running of and serving the common kitchen; thus setting examples of service for other women of the society. The Sikh women were deeply religious with a staunch faith in the Almighty. They were intelligent, far-sighted, having a keen insight into human nature. When the Khalsa was created by Guru Gobind Singh, the 'Khanda-ka-Pahul' was administered both to men and women alike. It had its desired effect in infusing a new spirit into them, and they became bold and brave and fought side by side with men against the enemy. The helpless and the dependent were transformed into fearless, courageous and self-reliant, independent souls. ~~The~~ Sikh history is replete with the examples of such women who were deeply religious and devoted to the cause of truth. They were intelligent and alert with a keen spiritual insight and were imbued with a spirit of social service and sacrifice. They rose equal to the occasion in the defence of their honour and prestige, of their hearths and homes, and thus carved an honourable place for themselves in the annals of the Sikh history. Prominent among them were

the following:

Guru Nanak's sister, Bibi Nanaki, was a lady of high calibre and spiritual insight. She was very perceptive and she understood and appreciated the urges and aspirations of her brother Nanak. She is the first great woman in the Sikh History and Guru Nanak himself held her in high esteem.

Another great figure in the galaxy of celebrated Sikh women is Bibi Amro, daughter of Guru Angad, who transformed the life of Guru Amar Das. It was she who brought him in the fold of Sikhism.<sup>35</sup>

Next comes Bibi Bhani who shaped Sikh <sup>R</sup>History in her own way with her self-effacing service to her father, Guru Amar Das, who made her husband, Bhai Jetha, later known as Guru Ram Das, as his successor. It was a milestone in Sikh <sup>R</sup>History. Her life of dedicated service is a perennial source of inspiration to all women-~~folk~~ of the Punjab.<sup>36</sup>

Another illustrious figure is that of Mata Gujri, who occupies a very important place in the Sikh <sup>R</sup>History. She was an embodiment of supreme sacrifice and such examples are rare in the history of the world. While Guru Gobind Singh was hardly nine, her husband sacrificed his life at Delhi for the sake of dharma (righteousness). It was something unique on

35. Narang, K.S., and Gupta, H.R., History of the Punjab, p.86.

36. Gian Singh, Giani, Tawarikh-Guru Khalsa, p.85.

her part that she did not utter a single depressing word at the time of the departure of her husband for Delhi. It was because of her training that Guru Gobind Singh at such a tender age suggested to his father that he should sacrifice his life for the sake of 'dharma'. She passed through all the ordeals and hardships which Guru Gobind Singh underwent and she always remained with the Guru as a source of inspiration, till the whole family was separated and she was imprisoned in the Fort of Sirhind along with her two grandsons, the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who embraced martyrdom at Sirhind.

When the executioner came to carry away her grandsons to Governor Wazir Khan, Mata Gujri with great presence of mind, bade them farewell, with instructions not to bow down before the enemy nor feel intimidated by his threats, nor to succumb to temptations offered by him, thereby bringing disgrace to the illustrious names of their father and ancestors. The 'Sahibzadas' went to the court in high spirits with their heads held high. Mata Gujri had infused such a high spirit into them that even the enemy was surprised to see their fearlessness.<sup>37</sup>

Another great woman was Mata Sahib Kaur, one of the wives of Guru Gobind Singh, whom he had made the symbolic

37. Wasakha Singh, Sant, Malwa Itihas, pp.470-71.

mother of the Khalsa brotherhood in the absence of her own offspring because of the vow of <sup>e</sup>calibacy taken by the Guru. His marriage to her had taken place under peculiar circumstances and was not consummated. She had had the unique honour of having participated along with her husband in the creation of the Khalsa—the fraternity of saint-soldiers.<sup>38</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh gave the baptism of the sword 'Khande-ka-Pahul' to men and women alike. The baptism of the sword infused a new spirit into their minds. There are many examples in the annals of Sikh history to prove the valour of Sikh women.

Bibi Deep Kaur, a devoted Sikh lady, on her way to Anandpur to see the Guru, came upon a band of Mughal soldiers in the jungle. She gave them a terrible fight and saved her honour by killing them. Guru Gobind Singh was very happy when he came to know of it and said that she was really the pride of womanhood.<sup>39</sup>

Another remarkable woman was Mata Bhag Kaur who performed a deed of great significance by inspiring the deserters who had left the Guru in the lurch in the battle of Anandpur. They rallied round her and marched back to assist the Guru. On their way they were intercepted by the

38. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, pp.143-44.

39. Sewa Singh, Bhai, Bahadur Singhian, pp.51-62.



Mughal forces and engaged in battle at Kudran near Muktsar. All of them fell fighting against heavy odds. Mata Bhag Kaur was also wounded in the fight. Guru Gobind Singh was a witness to their heroic deeds. Mata Bhag Kaur's role was epoch-making in the Sikh History.<sup>40</sup>

---

40. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, p.220.

CHAPTER VI

THE KHALSA BROTHERHOOD

CHAPTER VI

## THE KHALSA BROTHERHOOD

PICTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa on the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty. It was a revolutionary step of unique significance in ~~the~~ Sikh History which brought about a complete change in the outlook of the lifeless, oppressed and downtrodden people, who were groaning under the yoke of the caste-system and the tyrannical rule of the Mughals. A supreme genius and a mastermind, Guru Gobind Singh, infused a new spirit into the life of the people and transformed them into a virile race of soldier-saints. The nation, thus born, turned into a fraternity, free from hypocrisy and superstition, and devoid of fear and hatred.

The society at that time presented a very depressing picture. Hinduism had lost its original lustre. The Punjab had to bear the brunt of foreign invaders.<sup>1</sup> The perpetual yoke of bondage had demoralized the people and they took oppression and persecution lying down.<sup>2</sup> The descendants of the brave and noble Aryans could not protect their prestige and honour and they were so much intimidated that they could

---

1. Lachman Singh, Guru Gobind Singh, pp.30-31.

2. The Tenth Master, The Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, p.147.

do nothing when their wives, sisters and daughters were being driven away like flocks of sheep and goats by the ruthless invaders and were sold as slaves at nominal prices in Afghanistan. The Hindus after Anangpal had, indeed, ceased to exist as a political power.

Later, the Mughals treated the Hindus contemptuously, and denied the ordinary rights of citizenship to them. They were forced to pay 'jaziya' and pilgrimage-tax. Their places of worship were razed <sup>to the ground</sup> and they were forced to embrace Islam. They were not given any post of responsibility in civil and military services and were not allowed to live decently. They could not wear rich clothes, ride horses and drive in palanquins and carriages.<sup>3</sup> They were often trampled down under the feet of elephants at the slightest offence or pretext. Nobody could speak against Islam and capital punishment was awarded for any remark or criticism against it. India at that time was ruled by Aurangzeb who was a religious fanatic and whose will was the law of the land. Under his regime, the Hindu temples were demolished, the sacred-threads of the Hindus were snapped and they were forced to embrace Islam.<sup>4</sup> Those were the days of rank superstition and gross ignorance. Hinduism had lost <sup>its</sup> ~~the~~

3. Harbans Singh, Guru Gobind Singh, p.33.

4. Narang, G.C., Dr, Transformation of Sikhism, p.73.

purity and had degenerated into superstition, casteism and dogmatism, whereas the power-intoxicated Muslims had ceased to abide by the tenets of Islam.<sup>5</sup> The Hindu corporate life had become extinct because of their own social inequalities. The Guru wanted to give the fallen, ~~the~~ godliness, saintliness and manliness.

The Guru helped the Hindu Hill Rajas during the pre-Khalsa period against the Mughal forces. The combined force gave a crushing defeat to the Mughals under Mian Khan and Alif Khan at Nadaun.<sup>6</sup> But this political unity could not last long, as the Guru's liberal and democratic teachings were felt as a serious menace to the power of the Hill Rajas. The Guru's holding of conferences in their territorial limits, where he taught the people to challenge the birth-rights of priests and princes, where the brotherhood of man was taught and practised, where all ate from the same langar regardless of the fact as to who cooked the food and who distributed it, were considered a serious menace to their prestige and power by the Hill Rajas.<sup>7</sup> The Guru fought single-handed against the combined armies of the Hill Rajas and the Mughals and defeated them. This incident encouraged the Sikhs, but at the same time

5. The Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, p.30.

6. Narang, K.S., Gupta, H.R., Dr, History of the Punjab, p.154.

7. Ahluwalia, Rajinder Singh, Guru Gobind Singh, pp.31-32.

it convinced the Guru that he must create in them a strength with a will to resist the tyranny and oppression of the Mughals.

Besides, the seeds of disintegration had started sprouting among the Sikhs themselves. The Masand institution had deteriorated with the passage of time. The Masands had become corrupt and greedy in every sense. They embezzled offerings made to the Guru and committed many sins like the taking of intoxicants and enjoying the society of courtesans. They started boasting that the Guru was of their own making and he would starve, if they did not look after him. The Guru received many complaints against them.<sup>8</sup> The Guru punished the Masands for their misdeeds. He listened in every case to the defence put forth by them and punished those who were found guilty, and pardoned those who were successful in proving their innocence. The institution of the Masands was thus abolished for ever. It was announced that offerings to the Guru should be made direct.<sup>9</sup>

All these factors were opposed to the Guru's universal outlook. The ancient idea of the division of labour had developed into rigid castes with deep-rooted prejudices. A general renaissance and awakening had already been started by

8. Ganda Singh, Dr(ed.), Gur Sobha, p.39.

9. Ganda Singh, Dr(ed.), Huknamas, p.142,160,170 and 178.

the predecessors of Guru Gobind Singh. The work of religious and social instructions had been carried on for more than two centuries by Guru Nanak and the successive Gurus who had condemned the caste-system and other social evils in the society and preached the unity of God and brotherhood of man, and taught the people not to believe in false ceremonies or rituals and idolatry. But the chasm between the social level of the low-caste Sudras and the high-born Brahmins and Kashtriyas continued to be great and they could not join together in a common cause. The institutions of Sangat and Langar had gone a long way in demolishing the old prejudices of caste and had inculcated into them the ideals of love, service and brotherhood and the worship of God. Guru Arjan was martyred for upholding these beliefs and maintaining these institutions. Guru Hargobind taught them how to fight for the protection of their self-respect, and transformed them into soldier-saints, <sup>opposed to</sup> ~~up against~~ oppression and injustice. Guru Teg Bahadur laid down his life in 1675 A.D. in the cause of religious freedom, and rights of the people.<sup>10</sup> By this time the Sikhs had come to acquire a definite language, script and a definite scripture which made them a distinct class. The teachings of the Gurus as well as the unique example of martyrdom had elevated the spirits of the Sikhs,

---

10. Narang, K.S., Gupta, H.R., Dr, History of Punjab, p.147.

but the old shackles of the Hindu society polluted by the caste-system had yet not been completely broken.

Guru Gobind Singh applied himself to self-education in his youth. While going through the Puranic literature, he was deeply impressed with the idea that God had been sending a saviour from time to time for upholding righteousness and for destroying evil. The Guru had cherished a feeling from his early days that he himself was the man of destiny. In his Bachitra Natak, he declared that God had commissioned him to advance righteousness, to emancipate the good and to destroy all evil-doers, root and branch. Explaining his mission, the Guru says: "Understand all ye virtuous souls; for this purpose was I born, to uphold 'dharma', to emancipate the holy and to destroy all evil-doers".<sup>11</sup> The Guru prays, "Grant me strength, Almighty Father, that I may never deviate from righteousness. Fearlessly may I fight all battles and march to victory. Sure and certain may my supreme ambition and learning be, to sing of Thy glory and faith, and when this mortal life comes

11. ਯਾਗੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੰ  
ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੁ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੰ  
ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ  
ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੇ ਮੁਲ ਉਪਾਰੰ

ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ, ਆਪਣੀ ਕਥਾ, ਪੰ:57-58



to a close, May I die with the joy and the courage of a martyr".

Guru Gobind Singh, thus, found the atmosphere suffocating. He found the people of the country slaves to prejudice, pride and passion. They attached undue importance to conventions and customs. The Guru had to face the political tyranny of the Mughals and the spectre of <sup>the</sup> caste system, apart from the vested interests of various sections. He worked ceaselessly to change the psychosis of his countrymen and to infuse into them a strong spirit of unity, liberty and freedom.<sup>12</sup> He instilled into them a strong determination to fight aggression and tyranny and to root out evils, both political and social, wherever they existed. It was not an easy task. The Guru had to wage a relentless war against the tyranny and oppression of the Mughals. He was not against the Muslims but the tyrants, whosoever they were. He ~~put~~<sup>made</sup> ceaseless efforts to raise the society from the depths of social and moral degradation to which it had fallen. For that, the Guru had to sacrifice everything, his home, his father, his family and his children. There is no parallel of such a supreme sacrifice in the pages of history.

Guru Gobind Singh was a versatile scholar, with an eloquent and forceful style of writing. He was well versed

---

12. Narang, G.C., ~~Dr.~~ Transformation of Sikhism, p.80

in all the current languages in northern India, such as Braja, Persian and Punjabi, Hindi and Sanskrit.<sup>13</sup> He revived the spirit of the people by reciting the deeds of ancient heroes in martial tones. Through "Chandi-ki-Var", a soul-stirring poem, he roused the innate heroism of his followers by presenting the symbolic fight of goddess Chandi with the forces of evil, and made heroes out of clay.<sup>14</sup> He, thus, created an urge among the people to resist the tyranny of the powers that were. Similarly, his Zufarnama, the Epistle of Victory, addressed to Aurangzeb, is a vindication of truth and brings out the glory of God who can get the tyrants killed by the weakest of the weak. His writings are included in the Dasam Granth.<sup>15</sup>

The Guru preached universalism as the essential of true religion. He said that all men belonged to the same race. He repudiated the old beliefs of primal and divine origin theory of the institution of 'Varnashramdharma'. He aimed at bringing a complete and basic revolution in social ideals to make the people feel as equal and active members of a fraternity. For this purpose, the Guru created the order

---

13. Khushwant Singh and Suneet Vir Singh, Homage to Guru Gobind Singh, p.22.

14. Pritam Singh, Professor, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, p.112.

15. Gill, Pritam Singh, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, pp.17-24.

of the Khalsa to build up a nation of the purified ones, free from fear and selfishness.

#### THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA

Guru Gobind Singh called a big meeting of his followers at Anandpur<sup>16</sup> on 30th March, 1699 A.D., (Samvat 1756), the 1st of Baisakh to attend the Baisakhi festival. Five persons, namely Daya Ram, a Kshatriya of Lahore; Dharam Das, a Jat of Hariana; Mukkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka; Sahib Chand, a barbar<sup>2</sup> of Bidar; and Himat, a low-caste Dhibar of Jagannathpuri responded to the call of the Guru by offering their lives to him. In a dramatic gesture the Guru gave the assembly an impression that he had beheaded them one after another in the tent to which he had led them, although he had killed only five goats.

The Guru was very much moved by the devotion and faith of these five Sikhs. He gave them spotlessly clean saffron robes and brought out all the five persons and presented them to the assembly. He addressed them "My brethren, you are in my form and I am in yours. He who thinks there is any difference between us is mistaken". The people were surprised when they saw the five Sikhs alive, wearing a new uniform.<sup>18</sup>

---

16. Ganda Singh, Dr, Sri Gur Sobha, p.37.

17. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Surai Prakash, Vol.XII, pp.5046-60.

18. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, Dr, A Short History of the Sikhs, pp.68-71

The Guru then prepared the baptism of the double-edged sword, known as the 'Khande ka Pauhal'.<sup>19</sup> Since the days of Guru Nanak, the system of 'Charan Pauhal' had been in vogue. But the Guru was convinced that under the present circumstances, the Sikhs could survive only with a sense of fearlessness. He, therefore, gave them the baptism of the double-edged sword. He asked the 'Panj Payaras' to stand up. He put pure water into an iron vessel and stirred it with a 'Khanda' (double-edged sword) along with lumps of sugar. He then recited sacred verses, namely the Japji, the Jaap, the Anand of Guru Amar Das, and certain 'Savalias composed by him.' 'The Five Beloved Ones', thus, received the baptism of the sword. Through the furnace of death, they moved to immortal glory. They had stood the supreme test of faith.

#### NORMS AND FORMS OF THE KHALSA

The Guru asked them to observe certain 'Rehtas' or norms of life. He asked them always to wear long hair, to keep a 'kangha' or a comb, a kirpan or sword, a 'kutch' or short drawer, and a 'kara' or steel bracelet. They were to practise the wielding of arms and not to run away from the battlefield. He asked them to take four principal vows — the vows of 'Kulnash', 'Kritnash', 'Dharamnash' and 'Karamnash'.<sup>20</sup>

---

19. Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas-Guru Gobind Singh, p.203.

20. Kapur Singh, Prasharprasa, p.137.

He enjoined upon them to help the poor and provide protection to the weak, to consider their previous castes as lost and treat one another as brothers belonging to one family. They were allowed to intermarry but were to have no matrimonial relations with smokers and with those who killed their daughters or with the descendants or followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal, Ram Rai or Masands who had fallen from the tenets of Sikh religion.<sup>21</sup> They were forbidden to worship idols, cemeteries or cremation-grounds. They were to rise at dawn, bathe, read the hymns of the Gurus, eat the flesh of an animal whose throat had been cut with one stroke.

Listen, O Nand Lal, the duty of  
a Gursikh is to rise early  
and take bath, brush his teeth,  
comb his hair twice a day. 22

Rahat Nama, Bhai Nand Lal

The Khalsa possesses qualities  
much higher than the 'Raj Jogis'  
those who do penance and concentration.

The Khalsa is pure and is in His form.

21. Bhangu, Rattan Singh, Prachin Panth Prakash, p.30

22. ਕੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਰਹਤ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਹੇ ਮੀਤ

ਪਰਭਾਤੇ ਉਠ ਕਰ ਹਿਤ ਚੀਤ

ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਕੁਰੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੁ ਜਾਪ

ਕਰਿ ਇਸ਼ਠਾਠ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪ

The main instructions of the Guru  
to the Khalsa are to keep hair,  
use underwear and to keep a sword.<sup>23</sup>

Sarbloh

One should disassociate oneself  
from the Five evils.

Recite the True Nam.

Shun the company of Minas,  
Masands and Dhirmals.

One should give up false rituals and  
meaningless ceremonies, keep hair and  
remain a true Khalsa.

One should seek the company of 'Sadh Sangat'  
recite Gurbani and imbibe its true spirit.<sup>24</sup>

Gurbilas-10

23. ॐ ਸੈ ਕੁਣ ਹਰਿ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਬਖਸਾ ਭਰਤ ਬਿਆਨੀ ਰਾਜ ਜੋਗੇਸਵਰ  
ਛੁੱਤੇ ਬਿਉਤਿ ਅਨਠਯੇ ਪਾਸਕ ਤਯਾਗੀ ਹਠੀ ਸੁਰੁ ਭਵੇਨੇਸਵਰ  
• ਸੈ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਖਾਲਿਸ ਪਦ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ ਸਿਵਰੂਪੇ ਮਹਾਨੰਦ  
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਸਿਖਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾ ਤ੍ਰੇ ਮੁਢ ਕੰਛ ਕੇਸ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨੰ  
ਸਰਬਲੋਹ

24. ਪਾਚਨ ਸੈਂ ਕਬਿ ਮੇਲ ਨ ਕਰੀਯੈ।  
ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਨਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਉਰ ਧਰੀਯੈ।  
ਮੀਣਾ ਐਰ ਮਸੰਦੀ ਜਾਨ।  
ਧੀਰ ਮਨੀ ਰਮਰਈ ਜੁ ਆਨ।  
ਪੰਚਮ ਕੇ ਜਾਨਤ ਤੁਮ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ।  
ਛਪੀ ਠਗੰ ਕਛ ਯਾ ਸੈ ਬਾਤ  
ਬਿਖਯਾ, ਕਿਰਿਆ ਭਦਨ ਤਯਾਗੁ  
ਜਟਾ ਜੂਟ ਰਾਹਬੇ ਅਨਰਾਗੁ।  
ਸਬਦ ਬਿਨਾ ਅਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਮੇਲਾ  
ਨਿਸਿ ਦਿਨ ਸਾਧੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸੈਂ ਕੇਲਾ

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਲਾਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ 10, ਅਧਯਾਯ 12

The Guru gave the following advice to the Khalsa:

Give up bad thoughts and bad actions,  
do not take money on loan;  
if at all you get, you must return it.  
Neither tell a lie nor hear one.  
Have good company and live a truthful life.  
Be an embodiment of truth in thought and deed.  
Do not smoke or drink.  
Keep yourself away from worldly lies.  
Do the 'simran' (repetition) of the True Name  
and recite 'Sohila' at the time of bed.  
Have faith in the Almighty and all  
obstacles from your way shall be removed.  
Take 'Khande-ka-Pauhal' and keep the norms of life.  
Share your food with others.  
Do not believe in false gods and goddesses.  
Keep the mode of your life in consonance  
with the teachings of the Adi-Granth.<sup>25</sup>

Suraj Prakash

25. ਸਭ ਕੇ ਸੰਗ ਰਖੇ ਬਿਵਹਾਰੇ। ਨਿਸਚਾ ਨੇਮ ਇਨਹੂ ਤੇ ਨਿਯਾਰੇ  
ਜਗਤ ਜੂਠ ਤੇ ਰਹੀਐ ਦੂਰ। ਪਹਿਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੁਸੁੰਭਾ ਕਰੈ।  
ਕੱਛ ਬਿਨਾ ਚਿਰਕਾਲ ਨ ਰਹੇ। ਇਕ ਯਜ ਦੁੱਝੇ ਤੁਰੰਤ ਹੀ ਰਹੇ।  
ਸਿਮਰਨ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਕਰੇ। ਸਪਤਨ ਸਮੇ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ਕਰੈ।  
ਬਿਘਨ ਅਨੇਕਨ ਕੇ ਰੋਇ ਨਾਸ। ਸਦਾ ਧਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕੀ ਆਸ।  
ਗੁਰੁ ਕੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਸਿਖ ਲੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਰੁੱਖ।  
ਜਿਸ ਬੇੜੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਸਵੇ ਸੇ ਭਰਮੇ ਅਪਰ ਨ ਪੰਥ।  
ਸਾਂਤਿ ਬਰਜਾਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਬਰਹਿ ਕੁਸੰਗਤਿ। ਤਿਸ ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਕੇ ਰਖ ਬਰਜ ਕੁਪੰਗਤਿ  
ਗੁਰ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਕੇ ਨਿਸਦਿਨ ਰਹੈ। ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਘਰ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰੈ।  
ਧਨ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਰ ਨਹਿ ਲਲਚਾਇ। ਨਿਤ ਕੜਾਹ ਰੰਚਕ ਲਗ ਖਾਇ।  
ਭੇਖਨ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਕੇ ਯਜੈ। ਖਾਯ ਨ ਅਸਨ ਸੀਤਲਾ ਜਜੈ।

ਸੂਰਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਰੁੱਤ 3 ਅਧਯਾਯ 50

A Gursikh should not believe in idol-worship, incantations, fasts, gods and goddesses. He should surrender his body, mind, soul and property to 'Akalpurkh'. He should not wear the sacred-thread and believe in Karma, Saradh and marriage ceremonies according to the Vedas. He should perform all his duties according to the Guru's instructions. He should help others, consider the Singhs as equal and brothers. He should not kill his daughters, nor should believe in caste distinctions. He should not have faith in fasts like Akadshi, nor marry without the Anand ceremony. 26

Rahat Nama, Bhai Daya Singh

The Khalsa should take  
'Khande-ka-Pauhal' and baptize others.

He should not mix with those  
who kill their daughters, and keep  
his mind always busy in Gurbani  
and keep the 'Wahguru' in his mind  
and greet everybody with  
'Wahguru ji ki Fateh'.

He should do honest labour for  
earning his livelihood and  
give 'Daswandh' (tithe) out of it.  
He should consider the daughters  
of others as his own and be contented

26. ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੱਟ, ਬੁੱਤ, ਤੀਰਥ, ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਤਾ,  
ਬਰਤ, ਪੂਜਾ ਆਰਾ, ਮੰਤ੍ਰ, ਜੰਤ੍ਰ, ਪੀਰ, ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ,  
ਪੁੰਡਿਕਾ, ਸੁਖਣਾ, ਤਰਪਨ ਆਦਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਵਲ ਚਿੰਤ ਦੇਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ।  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੇ ਜਿਨ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਧਨ ਆਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਖਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦਾਸ ਸਿੰਘ



with his wife.<sup>27</sup>

Rahat Nama, Bhai Desa Singh

A Gursikh should not take wine,  
kill his daughter or mix with  
those who kill their daughters.

He should not become a Masand,  
gamble, steal or have relations  
with Muslim women.

He should not have faith in graves,  
cemeteries, mosques, Mullahs,  
Qazis and Brahmins.

He should not pluck grey hair  
or shall have to pay the fine.

He should take lead in calling Fateh  
to a Gursikh and he who does not  
reply will have to pay the fine.

27. ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਰਹਤ ਯਹਿ ਜਾਨ, ਖੰਡੇ ਕੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਛਕੇ।

ਸੋਈ ਸਿੰਘ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਜੋ ਨਹੇ।

ਪਾਚ ਸਿੰਘ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਜੋ ਦੇਵੈ।

ਤਾਂ ਕੇ ਮਨ ਮੇ ਦਿੜ ਕਰ ਰਾਖੇ।

ਪੁਨ ਮਿਲਿ ਪਾਚੇ ਰਹਤ ਜੁ ਭਾਖੇ

ਤਾਂ ਕੇ ਮਨ ਮੇ ਦਿੜ ਕਰ ਰਾਖੇ।

ਕੁੜੀ ਮਾਰ ਆਇਕ ਹੋ ਜੇਤੇ

ਮਨ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਤਿਆਗੇ ਤੇਡੇ।

ਬਾਣੀ ਮਾਰਿ ਨੇਹ ਨਿਤ ਕਰਨੇ।

ਚੁਕਨੀ ਅਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਪਰਹਰਨੇ।

ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਤ ਬਚਨ ਉਚਾਰੇ।

ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਧਾਰੇ।

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ

The Sikhs should settle their  
affairs among themselves, and  
he who goes to the Court without  
the concurrence of the 'Sangat'  
shall have to pay the fine.

He who does not keep his word,  
deceives others or refuses to  
pay the debt shall have to pay the fine.<sup>28</sup>

Rahat Nama, Bhai Chaupa Singh

28. ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਰਾਬ ਕਬੀ ਨ ਪੀਵੈ ਸਾਖ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੰਠਾ ਨਾ ਮਾਰੇ, ਕੁੜੀ ਮਾਰ ਨਾ ਨ ਵਰਤੇ।

... ..  
ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿਖ ਗਰੀਬ ਕੀ ਰਸਨਾ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਕੋਲਕ ਜਾਣੇ  
ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਭੱਦਨ ਨਾ ਕਰਾਵੇ।

... ..  
ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲੀਆ ਪੀਰ ਐਰ ਮਸੰਦ ਨ ਬਣੇ

... ..  
ਸਿਖ ਕਲਫ ਖਿਜਾਬ ਨ ਲਗਾਵੇ, ਜੇ ਲਗਾਵੇ ਸੇ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ  
ਜੇ ਸਿਖ ਚਿੱਟੇ ਕੇਸ ਚੁਕੇ ਸੇ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ ।

... ..  
ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਠਿਬੜੇ

... ..

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਚੌਪਾ ਸਿੰਘ

The Khalsa should get up early in the morning, and take<sup>e</sup> bath regularly and recite the Japji and the Jaap. In the evening he should recite Sodar Rehras. He should not be harsh or tell a lie.

He should not cast amorous glances at other women. He should desist from anger, lust and attachments. He should not backbite, believe in vain display, or be disrespectful to anybody. He should earn his livelihood by honest means. He should not believe in graves, cemeteries, sacred places, gods and goddesses, fasts, mantars and jantars.

He is a Khalsa, who offers his mind, body, soul and wealth to the 'Akal Purkh' and does not bother for anything else. He should not injure the feelings of others or differentiate between a friend or a foe and should not get disturbed when anybody calls him bad names.

He should resign to the will of the Lord, remain humble, keep arms and not run away from the battlefield. The whole world is God's creation and a true Sikh obeys the teachings of the Guru.

Therein lies his salvation.<sup>29</sup>

Prem Sumarg

Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa and knighted the Sikhs as 'Singhs'. The term 'Sikh' stands for a learner on

29- ਜੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਕਉ ਏਹ ਚਾਹੀਐ ਜਾ ਪਹੁਰੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਰਹੈ  
 ਅੰਤ੍ਰਮ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਠੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਠਾਨ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਕਦਾਚ ਜਾਣੇ ਦੇਹ  
 ਕਉ ਪਾਣੀ ਮਾਫਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਹਥ ਪੈਰ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਠਿਆਂ ਤਕ  
 ਧੋਇ ਨੇਵੇ ਸਭ ਦੇਹੀ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੋਇ। ਫਿਰ ਜਪੁ ਤੇ ਜਾਪ  
 ਠਾਨੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਾਰੀ ਪੜੇ। ...

ਜਬ ਜਾਨੈ ਰਾਤਿ ਭਈ ਹੈ ਸਭਨ ਕੰਮ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੇ ਫਾਰਗ ਹੋਇਆ  
 ਤਾਂ ਤਬ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੜੈ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰੈ।...

ਅਰ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਵਡੀ ਰਹਤ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਨ ਬੋਲੇ  
 ਮਰਦ ਹੋਇ ਕੇ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਕਾ ਸੰਗ ਨ ਕਰੇ। ਨੇਭ ਕਰਕੇ  
 ਬਹੁਤ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ। ਬਹੁਤ ਮੋਹ ਨ ਕਰੇ। ਦੁਖਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੇ  
 ਕਉ ਨਾਹੀ।... ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਾਤ  
 ਕਾ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ। ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰ ਖਾਏ।  
 ਮਟ , ਮੜੀ ਤਟ, ਤਾਰਥ, ਦੇਵੀ, ਦੇਵਤੇ, ਬਰਤ,  
 ਪੂਜਾ ਅਰਚਾ, ਮੰਤਰ, ਜੰਤਰ, ਪੀਰ ਪੁਰਖ, ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਪੁਛਣਾ  
 ਕਿਤੇ ਵਲ ਦੇਖੈ ਨਾਹੀ ... ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕੈਣ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ ਕਿਨੈ  
 ਆਪਨਾ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਧਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਉ  
 ਸਉਪਿਆ ਹੈ।

the path of spiritual perfection and self-realization. According to Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa or a Singh is one who has realized the self and has shed his ego. He is in constant communion with God and is an embodiment of purity in thought, word and deed. He is free from all impurities and doubts.

Those who do not follow the path laid by the Guru are hypocrites and impure.

Those who worship the Nam and follow the true path, their doubts are removed.

One should not attach oneself to this world.

One should worship the Nam of the Guru with full faith.

Then alone one can be a true **Khalsa**.<sup>30</sup>

#### Gur Sobha

The Khalsa in spite of its separate entity is above any discriminations of caste or creed.

30. ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੇ ਖਸਮ ਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਰਾਹ ਬਤਾਯਾ  
 ਵਹ ਕਪਟੀ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕੇਤ ਸਮਝਾਯਾ  
 ਬਿਨਸੈ ਸਕਲ ਕਲੇਸੁ ਰਯੋ ਜੰਜਾਲਸਾ  
 ਚੁਕਯੋ ਆਵਨ ਜਾਨ ਮਿਟੀ ਸਭ ਨਾਲਸਾ  
 ਖਾਲਸ ਜਪ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਭਯੋ ਹੈ ਖਾਲਸਾ

Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa with the permission of Wahguru, which is a unique creation as compared with the Hindus and the Turks. 31

Gurbilas, Padshahi 10

The Guru created a new class of warriors who were distinct and superior to Hindus and Turks. 32

Panth Parkash

The Khalsa should be above any considerations of Hinduism or Islam and should treat one another as equals and brothers. 33

Raht Nama, Bhai Chaupa Singh

The Khalsa should be above discriminations of Hinduism or Islam. 34

Rahat Nama, Bhai Daya Singh

31. ਨੈ ਆਇਸ ਕੁਰਦੇਵ ਕੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖਾਲਸ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ।  
ਪ੍ਰਕਟ ਕਰਯੋ ਜਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਸਿਫਤਜ।

ਕੁਰ ਬਿਲਾਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ 10, ਪੰ: 211

32. ਪੁਨ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕਨ ਤੇ ਨਯਾਰਾ।  
ਰਚੋ ਪੰਥ ਯਹਿ ਬਲੀ ਆਪਾਰਾ।

ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼

33. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਰਹੇ।

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਚੌਧਾ ਸਿੰਘ

34. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਕਾਣ ਕੇ ਮੋਟੇ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ

Guru Gobind Singh exhorted the Khalsa to practise the three 'jewels' of <sup>the</sup> creed of 'Deg', 'Teg', and 'Fateh'. Deg stands for honest earning and common sharing. The 'Teg' for heroism to fight against evil and oppression, while 'Fateh' for the victory of the Wonderful Lord, the victory of the divine principles of goodness, truth, justice and bravery.

Buteshah, alias Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, who has written a comprehensive history of the Punjab, is of the opinion that the Guru after baptizing the 'Five Beloved Ones' and knighting them as 'Singha' addressed the great gathering of the Sikhs on Ist of Baisakh, Sanvat 1756, A.D. 1699: "I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, rising above all differences of ~~the~~ religion as now practised. Let the four Hindu castes which have different dharmas laid down for them in the Sastras, containing institutes of Varnasharma dharma, abandon them altogether. Mix freely with one another as brothers and give maximum help and co-operation to one another. Let none worship the Hindu deities such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga or pay homage to Ganga and other places of pilgrimage. All should have faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors, Let men of the four castes receive my baptism of the double-edged sword, eat from the same vessel, feel like brothers and have no contempt for

one another".<sup>35</sup>

It is mentioned in Twarikh-i-Punjab that when the Guru had addressed the Assembly, several Brahmins and Khatrias rose and protested against the teachings of the Guru, which were opposed to the teachings of the Vedas and Sastras and told him openly that they would not leave their ancient faith at his bidding. Although several people refused to accept his religion, about eighty thousand men of faith took 'Amrit' and assured him that they had full faith in his divine mission.<sup>36</sup>

When the Guru had baptized his five tried Sikhs, he knelt before them and requested them to baptize him in the same manner as he had done so that he might also become a disciple in the true sense.<sup>37</sup> The Five Beloved Ones were astonished to hear this request from the Guru whom they considered the representative of God on the earth. They felt hesitant to do so as it was a unique thing in the History of the world. Never before had any religious leader performed such a deed. He told them that henceforth there was no difference between him and the Khalsa. The Khalsa is the Guru

. 35. Bute Shah, Tawarikh-i-Punjab, MS, f.273.

36. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V, p.94.

37. Kapur Singh, Prasharprasa, p.5.



and the Guru is the Khalsa.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, the 'Panj Payaras' baptized the Guru in the same manner as he had done.

Guru Gobind Singh identified his personality with the Khalsa. He said that there was no difference between him and the Khalsa; rather he considered the Khalsa greater. He considered all his achievements and victories against his enemies, and the mitigation of his sufferings all owing to the help and the grace of the Khalsa. He attributed his spiritual dignity and status to the Khalsa. He said, there were otherwise, countless millions of worthless men like him in the world.

I have won all my battles, all my sufferings have been mitigated, all my enemies have been vanquished all my knowledge and learning is due to the grace of the Khalsa. All that I am, is due to them, otherwise there are millions upon millions lowly men like me in this world.<sup>39</sup>

Dasam Granth

---

38. Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal Sikhan, MS.f.48

39. ਜੁਧ ਜਿਤੈ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਦਠ ਕਰੇ

ਅਘ ਅਉਧ ਟਰੇ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਫੁਨ ਧਾਮ ਭਰੇ

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਨਈ

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸਤ੍ਰ ਮਰੇ

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈ

ਨਹੀ ਮੇ ਸੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ

There is no difference between  
me and the Khalsa.

The Khalsa is my very self.

My status or respect is all  
due to the Khalsa.

I am the Khalsa and the  
Khalsa is mine.

I am in the form of the Khalsa  
and the Khalsa is in my form  
and should be respected. 40

Sarbloh

The Khalsa is the form of the Guru.

One should serve the Khalsa and  
obtain happiness and bliss.41

Rahat Nama, Bhai Deaa Singh

40. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ  
ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਵਾਸ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੇਭਾ ਸੀਲ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਸਖਾ ਸੁਭ ਡੀਲ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਵਨ ਭੰਡਾਰ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਤਕਾਰ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਪਰਾਣ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਨ ਕੀ ਜਾਨ  
ਹਉ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਓਤ ਪੋਤ ਸਾਫਰ ਝੁੰਦਰੇ  
ਸੇਵ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕੀ ਸਫਲ ਸਵਪਨ ਪੂਜ ਆਰਘ ਪਾਦ  
ਦਾਨ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਕਰ ਖੇੜਸ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੇ ਸਵਾਦ  
ਸਰਬਲੋਹ

41. ਕੁਰੂ ਸਰੂਪ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੀਏ ਜਕੀ ਟਹਲ ਪਰਮ ਸੁਖ ਲਗੀਏ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ

The Khalsa should be considered  
the living Guru.

The Guru says "whosoever wants to  
meet me should find me in the Khalsa".<sup>42</sup>

Rahat Nama, Bhai Parhlad Singh

Whosoever want to converse with the Guru,  
should recited the God's Name  
and he will be thoroughly satisfied.

Whosoever wants to have the sight  
of the Guru should go to the  
congregation of the Khalsa and  
he will feel that he is having  
the 'darshan' of the Guru.<sup>43</sup>

Prem Sumarg

Guru Gobind Singh blessed 'The Five Beloved Ones' as  
equivalent to the Guru. He declared that whenever any five  
of his Sikhs would assemble, he would permeate them. The  
Five Sikhs would have an authority superior to that of his  
own.

42. ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜਾਨੀਓ ਪ੍ਰਕਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ  
ਸੇ ਸਿਖ ਸੇ ਮਿਲਬੇ ਚਰੈ ਖੋਜ ਇਨੋ ਮੇ ਲੇਹ

ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਹਿਲਾਦ ਸਿੰਘ

43. ਜੇ ਚਾਰੇ ਮੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰੈ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਬਦ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਭ  
ਨਿਸਾ ਹੋਵਸੀ ਅਰ ਜੇ ਚਾਰੇ ਕਿ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰੈ ਜਿਥੇ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦਾ ਇਕੱਠ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਥੇ ਜਾਇ ਕੇ ਅਦਬ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ  
ਕਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੁਮਾਰਗ

Wherever there are five Singhs,  
 there am I present.  
 God is in the Five.  
 The Five can give 'Pauhal' and  
 have the powers to forgive any offender.  
 Whatsoever they do or decide  
 never goes waste and is fruitful. 44

Suraj Prakash

The Khalsa Panth is pure and above  
 the four varanas and ashrams.  
 It is mentioned in the Guru Granth that they  
 are the form of the Guru and those who  
 have their darshan will have the darshan of the Guru.  
 One can have the 'darshan'  
 of the Guru in the 'Khalsa'  
 as well as in the Granth. 45

Sarabloh

44. ਪੰਚੁ ਮੈ ਨਿਤ ਵਰਤਤ ਮੇ ਰੇ ਪੰਚ ਮਿਲਹਿ ਸੇ ਪੀਰਨ ਪੀਰ  
 ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਮਰਜਾਦ ਪੰਚੁ ਪੰਚੁ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਪੁਰਬ ਪੀਨ  
 ਹਵੈ ਤਨਖਾਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਹਿ ਪੰਚੁ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਦੇ ਮਿਲ ਪੰਚ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ  
 ਠਖੇ ਪੰਚ ਕੀ ਵਡ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਪੰਚ ਕਰਹਿ  
 ਸੇ ਨਿਸਫਲ ਨ ਚੀਨ

ਸੁਰਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼, ਰੁੱਤ 6

45. ਪਾਵਨ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਟਯੋ ਚਾਰ ਵਰਣ ਆਸਮ ਸੁਤ ਪੰਥਾ।  
 ਇਨ ਕੇ ਦਰਸਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਦਰਸਨ ਬੁਲਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਾ  
 ਦਵਾਦਸ ਰੂਪ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਏ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਦਵਾਦਸ ਭਾਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਕਟ ਹਰਿ ਸੰਤ  
 ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਕਲਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਧਣੀਛੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਪੰਥ ਖਾਲਿਸ ਵਰਤੰਤ

ਸਰਬਲੋਹ

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE  
CREATION OF THE KHALSA

Thus the Khalsa brotherhood was created by the Guru on the principles of equality and democracy. History bears testimony to the fact that after this memorable event the Guru undertook no task, great or small, without consulting his council of 'The Five' and he also made it a rule for his followers to get the approval of the council of the 'The Five' before undertaking anything important. This was the true spirit of democracy, which the Guru preached and practised. He saluted the tomb of Dadu by lowering his arrow and that was against the Sikh principles. The Guru had to stand trial before the council of 'The Five' and had to ask for forgiveness. A fine was imposed on him, and he willingly paid it.<sup>46</sup>

The twentieth century is an age of democracy and we have democratic governments based on democratic principles in most of the parts of the world. But nobody could dream of even preaching these ideals, not to speak of setting up democratic institutions in India three centuries back, when the autocratic Mughals ruled over the country. It was then a crime to express independent opinions. In such a dark

---

46. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol.V,  
pp.227-28.

period of history when might was right and the ruler's word was law, it was only Guru Gobind Singh who openly preached and practiced the principles of universalism through this institution of the Khalsa brotherhood. To him, men of all races and countries were one and the same. The 'Chosen Five' did not belong to the elite of society. They represented different classes and came from various parts of the country. The creation of the 'Five Beloved Ones' showed that he was above all distinctions of caste or creed. He had come to unite the people. The crowning feature of this splendid feat was that the Guru himself received baptism from the 'Five Beloved Ones' whom he had earlier baptized. He completely identified himself with the masses when he declared that the Khalsa was the Guru and the Guru was the Khalsa. He exalted them by placing the real power in their hands.

Guru Gobind Singh was a rare combination of multiple qualities and his personality was a model of perfection in every respect — a soldier-saint, a poet and a philosopher who awakened in his followers, a spirit of self-sacrifice, created heroes out of lifeless people and wisely wove them together. He was a humanist and his humanism was action-orientated. He evolved a classless well-knit brotherhood of

saint-warriors. He laid the foundation of a society which was unconventional in its outlook and democratic in its application.

Guru Gobind Singh abolished once for all the nomination of any one person as the Guru and democratized the Sikh community. The Khalsa with the Guru Granth presiding over the deliberations became the Guru Panth, believing in the unity of One Formless God. His work covered all the spheres of human life— social, economic, political, religious and spiritual. The Khalsa, which he created, thus, became a spear-head of resistance to all evil. The Khalsa of his making was a model of perfect manhood.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION



CHAPTER VIICONCLUSION

The time was out of joint when Sikhism emerged on the horizon of India. The Gurus came to dispel darkness and enlighten the masses. They applied themselves wholeheartedly to eradicate the socio-religious ills and evils nourished by the steel frame of the Indian society, i.e. the caste-system. They pulled woman out of the malaise of the ages and placed her on a par with man. The forte of the Gurus was love, service, humility and compassion, and they harnessed these qualities to the service of the cause that they had espoused.

The central idea of the Gurus' teaching was the oneness of God, the brotherhood of man and 'Simran' or constant remembering of God. They emphasized the futility of escape from life. They exhorted their followers to 'live pure amidst the impurities of the World'. (Anjan mahe niranjan rahiye). In all their utterances, implicit or explicit, they denounced superstitions, rituals and dogmas which had been leading the people astray from the true path of worship of one God. They aimed at evolving an all-embracing unity, a human fraternity based on the idea of one Supreme Being as an omnipresent and omnipotent force,

and all their efforts and philosophy were directed towards the achievement of this objective.

The Gurus, with the sweep of their practical minds, concretized ideals into the institutions of 'Sangat' and 'Pangat' in order to inculcate into their disciples, the ideals of corporate life, humility and equality they cherished. These institutions became a part and parcel of the Sikh faith and went a long way in removing the rust of the ages and initiated a new era.

The institution of Sangat became a vital force and was instrumental in bringing about structural changes in the social and mental set up of the people.

The institution of Pangat was a practical demonstration of the high ideals of the Gurus, and it helped to inculcate into the minds of the Sikhs the spirit of the dignity of labour and service. The focus was on the supremacy of the Sangat. The values and the ideals concretized in these institutions initiated the Sikhs into new ways of life and helped them transcend their petty selves.

Guru Gobind Singh kept burning the flame lit by Guru Nanak and fed by the other Gurus. The stupendous task accomplished by the Guru was the creation of the Khalsa. It was an event of great magnitude, unparalleled in many ways. It was a dramatic culmination of all that the earlier Gurus

had endeavoured to achieve. The creation of the Khalsa gave the severest blow to the caste-system, and instilled courage into the disheartened people. A new people was born, committed to the great ideal 'all men are one'. The crowning feature of this splendid feat was that the Guru himself received baptism from his own disciples whom he had earlier baptized and, thus, merged himself into the Khalsa. He declared that the Khalsa was the Guru and the Guru was the Khalsa. Never before in history had a religious leader, — a master — so completely identified himself with his disciples as the Guru did.

After Guru Gobind Singh's disappearance from the scene, Banda, who was commissioned by the Guru to fight Mughal oppression and tyranny, emerged as a forceful personality. The catholic and democratic spirit of the Gurus was reflected in the coins that Banda got struck and in the abolition of the 'Jagirdari' (feudal) system. The moment he deviated from the chosen path, his glory vanished.

After the death of Banda Bahadur in 1716, the dark period of Sikh History began. The Sikhs were left without a leader of status and calibre. They were subjected to unparalleled persecutions and atrocities. They passed through the baptism of fire and sword and came out in resplendent glory because they had never lost faith in the democratic

spirit infused into them by the Gurus. They succeeded in wresting political power and established twelve 'Misals' (principalities). The rule of the Misals was, to a great extent, democratic in its outlook. The 'Gurmatta' grew into a distinctive feature of the Misals. All important decisions were taken with mutual consent, and the sanction behind them was both moral and religious.

Lust for power and the spirit of possession gave birth to rivalries among the Misals. This set the stage for the emergence of Ranjit Singh on the political scene of the Punjab and he wrested power from the Misals and established the Sikh Raj. He was a tolerant and large-hearted ruler, imbued with the spirit of Sikhism and was secular in his outlook. The Sikh spirit is reflected in the coins which he got struck (with the Guru's name on them).

After Ranjit Singh, the Brahmanical influences started creeping over the Sikh society. Religious places went into the hands of Sadhus and the professional priests. Hindu rituals got incorporated into the Sikh mode of worship again and idols found their way into the premises of the Sikh shrines. Custodians of the gurdwaras became greedy and the property of these places became hereditary. The Narankaris and the Namdharis were in the vanguard of this revivalist trend.

The Singh Sabha Movement that started in 1873 A.D. was a pronounced reaction to this revivalism. It was a mighty movement and it rejuvenated the Sikh faith. The Gurdwara Reforms Movement, an offshoot of the Singh Sabha Movement, aimed at freeing the gurdwaras from the hold of the hereditary mahants. The Sikh suffered tremendously, were persecuted and imprisoned, but their spirit could not be crushed. They succeeded in getting the Gurdwara Act passed in 1925 A.D., and the control of the gurdwaras passed into the hands of Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, an elected body of the Sikhs. It brought factionalism in its wake and polluted the atmosphere of the gurdwaras again.

The present day scene is disappointing. The Sikhs have ceased to have a living faith in their ideals and beliefs. The caste-system, severely castigated and condemned by the Gurus, has again entrenched itself into the Sikh society. The rituals and the forms, assailed by the Gurus, have also staged a come-back.

The hoary institutions of Sangat, Pangat and Gurmatta are still there. But much of the spirit behind them is gone. The Sikh masses occasionally protest against the deterioration

that has set in. Their disgust with this state of affairs is expressed in the protests that they raise from time to time. Any reform movement, launched in right spirit and right earnest, can give a new lease of life to the democratic institutions projected by the Gurus, which have fallen on bad days, and which alone can set Sikhism again on the right path.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

BIBLIOGRAPHYLIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- S.H.R. Sikh History Research Department.  
 P.S.A. Punjab State Archives.  
 S.G.P.C. Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar.

ORIGINAL SOURCES

- Arjun, Guru (comp.): The Guru Granth(Ptd.), (P), S.G.P.C., Amritsar.  
 Gobind Singh, Guru: The Dasam Granth(Ptd.), (P), S.G.P.C., Amritsar.  
 Gurdas, Bhai: The Varan(Ptd.), (P), S.G.P.C., Amritsar.

MANUSCRIPTS

- Bal, Beer Singh(Kavi), Gurkirat Prakash; MS(P); P.S.A., Patiala, No.682.  
 Bala, Bhai, Janam Sakhi Baba Nanak, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.2318.  
 Bhandari, Sujan Rai, Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, MS.(Per.), P.S.A., Patiala, No.428.  
 Buteshah alias Ghulam Mahi-ud-Din, Tarikh-i-Punjab, MS.(per.), P.S.A., Patiala, No.837.  
 Brahma, Kavi, Gobind Singh digvijay, MS.(P), P.S.A., Patiala, No.699.  
 Farishta, Mohammed Qasim, Tarikh-i-Farishta, MS.(Per.), P.S.A., Patiala, No.362.



- Gurmukh Singh and Darbara Singh, Bhai, Gurbilas Patshahi Chevin, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College Amritsar, No.2308.
- Khushwakat Rai, Tawarikh-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan, MS.(P), P.S.A., Patiala, No.800.
- Kirpal Singh, Bawa, Mehma Parkash, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.2308.
- Mani Singh, Bhai, Bhagat Mala-Sikhan di Bhagat Mala, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.1590.
- Meharban, Sri Baba, Janam Sakhi Guru Nanak Dev ji, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No. 427.
- Mohsan Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, MS.(Per.), P.S.A., Patiala, No.799.
- Nand Lal, Bhai, Zindgi Nama, MS.(Per.), P.S.A., Patiala, No.890.
- Patshahi Dasvin, Parchian, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No. 2300-E.
- Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.2297.

#### DOCUMENTS

- Chaupa Singh, Bhai, Rahat Nama, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.227-A.
- Gobind Singh, Guru, Bachittar Natak, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.1579-D.
- Hukam Nama, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No. 42.
- Zafar Nama, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No. 2218.
- Bani Patshahi Dasvin, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.1589-C.

Kesar Singh, Bansawali Nama Dasan Patshahian ka, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.123.

Nand Lal, Bhai, Rahat Nama, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.227-B.  
— Tankhah Nama, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.1579-C.

Nasihah Namah Patshahi Dasvin, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.1442-E.

Prehlad Singh, Bhai, Rahat Nama Bhai Prehlad Singh, MS.(P), S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar, No.1442-F.

#### MODERN WORKS

##### (ENGLISH)

Agrawala, V.S., India as Known to Panini, University of Lucknow, 1953.

Ahuja, N.D., The Great Guru Nanak and the Muslims, Kirti Publishers House, Chandigarh, 1969.

Aligarh Muslim University, Readings in Democracy, Asia Publishing House, New York.

Ambedkar, B.R., Dr, The Buddha and His Dharma, Siddarth College Publication, I, 1957.  
— Untouchables, Amrit Book Co., New Delhi, 1948.

Asta, Dharam Paul, Dr, The poetry of the Dasam Granth, Arun Prakashan, New Delhi, 1959.

Banerjee, Indu Bhushan, Evolution of the Khalsa, University of Calcutta Press, Calcutta, 1936.

Bhargava, K.D., A Survey of Islamic Culture and Institution, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1961.

- Bryce, James, Modern Democracies, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1929.
- Chhabra, G.S., Dr, The Advance Study in History of the Punjab, Sharanjit, Jullundur.
- Daljit Singh, Guru Nanak, Unity Publishers, Lahore, 1943.
- Director, Publications Division, Delhi, Women of India, Chief Editor, Tara Ali Baig, 1958.
- Editorial Staff of life, The World's Great Religions, Collins, London.
- Elliot Sir H.M., and Dowson, Professor John, History of India as told by its own Historians, Kitab Mahal Private Limited, Allahabad.
- Field, Dorothy, The Religion of the Sikhs, John Murray, London, 1914.
- Fauja Singh, Dr and others, Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969.
- Frederic, Pincott, Sikhism, Sunil Gupta(India), Private Limited, Calcutta, 1885.
- Ganda Singh, Dr, A Brief Account of the Sikh People, Sikh History Society, Amritsar, Patiala and Calcutta, 1959.
- Ghurya, G.S., Caste, Class and Occupation, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1961.
- Gollichan, Walter M, Women Under Polygamy, London, 1914.
- Gopal Singh, Dr, Shri Guru Granth Sahib English Version, Vol. I-IV, Gurdas Kapur and Sons, Delhi, Jullundur and Ambala, 1960.
- Haig, Sir Welsley, The Cambridge History of India, University Press, Cambridge, 1957-58.
- Harbans Singh, The Message of Sikhism, Lahore Book Shop, Lahore, 1941.

- Harnam Singh, Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, Sikh Tract Society, Lahore, 1924.
- Indra Professor, The Status of Women in Ancient India, Moti Lal Banarsidass, Banaras, 1955.
- Ishwari Prasad, Dr, A Short History of Muslim Rule in India, The Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad, 1939.
- Jayaswal, K.P., Hindu Polity, The Bangalore Printing and Publishers Company Limited, Bangalore, 1955.
- Jodh Singh, Bhai, Some Studies in Sikhism, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1953.
- Life of Guru Amar Das Ji, Sikh Tract Society, Lahore, 1921.
- Caste and Untouchability in Sikhism, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1936.
- Jogindera Singh, Sir, The Miracle of Sikhism, Lahore Book Shop, Lahore, 1946.
- Kartar Singh, Sikh Gurus and Untouchability, The Sikh Tract Society, Amritsar, 1936.
- Life of Guru Gobind Singh, The Sikh Tract Society, Amritsar, 1933.
- Life of Guru Nanak, The Sikh Tract Society, Amritsar, 1937.
- Kavishar, Sardul Singh, Guru Nanak and the World Peace, Sikh Tract Society, Lahore.
- Kewal Mutwani, Manu Dharam Shastari, Ganesh and Co., Madras, 1958.
- Khazan Singh, The History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion, Newal Kishore Press, Lahore, 1914.
- Khushwant Singh, The Sikhs, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1953.
- Kohli, Surinder Singh, Dr, A Critical Study of the Adi-Granth, The Panjab Writer's co-operative Industrial Society, New Delhi, 1961.

- Kohli, Surinder Singh, Dr, Travels of Guru Nanak, Publication Bureau, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1969.
- Lakshman Singh, Bhagat, Sikh Martyrs, Ganesh and Company, Madras, 1928.
- Lal, K.S., History of the Khaliis, The Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad.
- Latif, Syed Mohammed, History of the Punjab, Calcutta Central Press Co., Calcutta, 1891.
- Loehlin, C.H., Dr, The Sikhs and their Scriptures, The Lucknow Publishing House, 1958.
- Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, Vol.I-IV, 1909.
- Mahdi Hussain, Tughlak Dynasty, Thacker Spink and Co., Private Limited, 1963.
- Majumdar, D.N., Races and Cultures of India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi, Madras, Lucknow, London, New York, 1965.
- Majumdar, R.C., Dr, and Pusalkar, A.D., The Vedic Age, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1951.
- The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1953.
- McLeod, W.H., Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968.
- M'gregor, W.L., History of the Sikhs, James Madden, London.
- Mukh Dayal, Lala, Heroism of Sikh Women, Bhai Amar Singh Khalsa Agency, Amritsar, New Delhi.
- Narang, G.C., Dr, Transformation of Sikhism, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1960.
- Narang, K.S., Gupta, H.R., Dr, History of the Punjab, Uttar Chand Kapur and Sons, Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, New Delhi, revised edition, 1969.

- Nirmal, M.S., Song of Eternal Peace, Bhai Amar Singh Modgil Press, Lahore.
- Parkash Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, Dharam Prachar Committee, Amritsar.
- Puran Singh, Ten Master, Sikh University Press, Lahore, 1920.
- Radha Krishnan, S., Dr, Religion and Society, George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1948.
- Raghuvaran, V., The Indian Heritage, The Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore, 1958.
- Raverty, H.G.(Tr.), Tabkat-i-Nasiri of Minhaj-us-Saraj, Gilbert and Rivington, London, 1876.
- Seligman, Edwin R.A., Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Macmillan and Company, New York, 1953.
- Seva Ram Singh, The Divine Master, Gulab Singh and Sons, Lahore, 1930.
- Sher Singh, Dr, The Philosophy of Sikhism, Sikh University Press, Lahore, 1944.
- Sinha, Narinder Krishan, The Rise of the Sikh Power, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1936.
- Smith, V.A., Dr, The Oxford History of India, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1943.
- Tara Chand, Dr, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, The India Press, Limited, Allahabad, 1936.
- Teja Singh, Essays in Sikhism, Sikh University Press, Lahore, 1941.  
— Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions, Longmans Green and Co., Bombay, 1937.
- Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, Dr, A Short History of the Sikhs, Orient Longman's Ltd., Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, 1950.

- The Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, 1967.
- Thomas, P., Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, D.B. Tarapore Vala Sons and Co., Ltd., Bombay.
- Trine, R.W., In Tune with the Infinite, G. Bell and Sons, London, 1956.
- Vaswani, T.L., In the Sikh Sanctuary, Ganesh and Company, Madras, 1922.
- William, Erskine, History of India under the Two First Sovereigns of the House of Taimur, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1854.

## (PUNJABI)

- Ahluwalia, Rajinder Singh, Dashmesh Pita Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, 1967.
- Amol, S.S., Sikhi tey Nawan Chanan, Chanana Pustak Bhandar, Amritsar, 1939.
- Baljit Singh, Sagal Jamati, Punjabi Text Society, Chandigarh, 1962.
- Bhangu, Rattan Singh, Pracheen Panth Prakash, Manager Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1939.
- Ganda Singh, Dr., Sikh Itihas, Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, 1932.
- (ed), Sri Gur Sobha, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967.
- Gian Singh, Gyani, Tarikh-i-Guru Khalsa, Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh, Amritsar.

Gill, Pritam Singh, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, New Book Company, Jullundur, 1967.

Harbans Singh, Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, 1967.

Jodh Singh, Bhai, Gurmat Nirnay, Uttar Chand Kapur and Sons, 1944.

Karam Singh, Amar Khalsa, Phulwari Pustak Bhandar, Lahore, 1932.

Kartar Singh, Sikh Dharam Barey, Lahore Book Shop, Lahore, 1946.

Kohli, Sita Ram(ed.), Fatehnamah Guru Khalsa Ji ka, Punjabi Vibhag, Patiala, 1952.

Pritam Singh, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Punjabi Sahit Akademi, Ludhiana.

Randhir Singh, Bhai, Prem Sumarag Granth, New Book Company, Jullundur, 1965.

Santokh Singh, Bhai, Gur Partap Surva Granthavali, Kalgidhar Chamatkar, 1953.

Sewa Singh, Bahadur Singhania, Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh, Amritsar.

Sodhi, Teja Singh, Jiwan Parkash Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh, Amritsar.

Sukha Singh, Bhai, Gur Bilas- Guru Gobind Singh, Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha, Amritsar, 1888 A.D.

Taran Singh, Dr, Dasmesh Darshan, Faqir Singh and Sons, Amritsar, 1967.

Tarlok Singh, Bahadur Sharan Kaur, Darbar Publishing House, Amritsar.



Vir Singh, Bhai, Sri Guru Nanak Chamatkar, Khalsa Samachar Press, Amritsar, 1950-51.

— Sri Kalghi Dhar Chamatkar, Khalsa Samachar Press, Amritsar, 1950-51.

Wasakha Singh, Sant, Malwa Itihas, Malwa Itihas, Gurmat Parcharak Singh Sabha, Krishanpura, Distt. Ferozepur.

(PERSIAN)

Abu-ul-Fazal, Akbar Nama, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1883.

Bhandari, Sujan Rai, Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, Maulavi Abrar Hasan, Muradabad.

Ghulam Hussain, Seir-ul-Mutakhirin, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.

Jahangir Emperor, Tuzk-i-Jahangiri, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.

Muhammed Qasim, Mulla, Tarikh-i-Farishta, Vol. I-II, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.

Mohsan Fani, Dabistan-i-Mazahib, Newal Kishore Press, Cawnpore, 1904.

Sohan Lal, Suri, Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Arya Press, Lahore, 1885, 1889.

(URDU)

Daulat Rai, Janam Sakhi Guru Nanak, J.S. Sant Singh and Sons, Lahore, 1910.

— Swaneh Umri Guru Gobind Singh, J.S. Sant Singh and Sons, Lahore, 1910.

Ganda Singh, Dr(ed.), Kulyat Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Sikh Sangat  
Malaka, Malaya, 1963.

Gyan Singh, Gyani, Tawarikh-Guru Khalsa, (ed. by Rajinder Singh),  
Lyall Khalsa Gazette, Sialkot.

Kanhaya Lal, Rai Bahadur, Twarikh-i-Punjab, Victoria Press,  
Lahore, 1881.

Radha Kishan, Gosha-i-Punjab, Punjabi Press, Lahore, 1861.

Ram Kishan, Hakim, Janam Sakhi Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Parkash  
Steam Press, Lahore, 1919.

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Allah	Arabic name for God
Amirs	A class of rich people among the Muslims
Amrita	Nectar of immortality
Baba	A term of respect applied to saints or old man
Banda	Slave, disciple
Bhai	Brother, a title applied to Sikhs of learning and piety
Bhakti	The doctrine of worship of God
Chowka	Indian Kitchen
Darshan	Singh, view, audience with a spiritual per
Daswandh	One-tenth of one's income, tithe given for religious purposes
Dharam	The code of conduct in life; also, righteousness
Dharamsala	A temple of worship
Dum	Muslim musicians known as mirasi
Gurbani	Utterances of the Sikh Gurus
Gurmukh	A God-orientated person
Guru	Spiritual teacher, enlightener
Gyan	Wisdom, knowledge
Hari	A name of God; also a name of Lord Krishna
Hukam	God's will
Janeu	The sacred-thread worn by the Hindus
Jati	Caste
Karma	The destiny or fate of an individual, action
Khalsa	Sikh brotherhood started by Guru Gobind Singh
Khande-ka-Pauhal	Baptism of the double-edged sword
Khuda	A Persian name for God

Kirt	Honest physical labour.
Kirtan	Singing of songs in praise of God
Langar	Common kitchen
Maulanas	A learned class among the Mohammedans
Mukatnama	Letter of deliverance
Mukti	Release, the final deliverance
Murari	Krishna, the slayer of the demon Mur.
Nam	The Divine Name
Nirankar	The formless God
Niranjan	Immaculate; spotless
Panj Pyaras	The Five Beloved Ones
Panth	Sect, community
Parbrahm	The transcendent, absolute God
Patasa	Sugar-cake
Puja	Worship
Qazi	A muslim judge
Sabada	The all pervading eternal Word
Sadh Sangat	The company of the saints
Sadhu	A saint
Salok	A couplet or stanza
Sangat	Fellowship, society, association
Sati	The ancient Hindu custom of a widow burning herself on the pyre of her husband
Sewa	Service
Sidh Gost	Discourse with the Yogis
Sikh	Disciple
Simran	Meditation
Sohila	Song of Lord's praise,
Thakar	The Master
Trishna	Craving, desire.