

MEDIEVAL INDIAN SOCIETY AS REFLECTED IN THE
BANI OF GURU NANAK

THESIS SUBMITTED TO PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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1988

C O N T E N T S

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
	INTRODUCTION	1 - 9
I	GURU NANAK AND HIS TIMES : AN OVERVIEW	10 - 37
II	POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS	38 - 101
III	ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	102 - 147
IV	CASTE SYSTEM	148 - 199
V	SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS	200 - 256
VI	POSITION OF WOMEN	257 - 298
	CONCLUSION	299 - 311
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	312 - 343

INTRODUCTION

A great deal of work has already been done in the field of dynastic history. Monographs have been written on each of the important sultans of Delhi and on almost all the great Mughals from Babur to Aurangzeb. But very little work has been done in the field of social history. The main problem for the study of medieval Indian society is that the chroniclers of that time were mainly the court historians, who only concerned themselves with the task of giving an account of the battles, reforms and achievements of their kings and nobles. While the contemporary court historians and other chroniclers throw enough light on the ruling elite, there is practically no mention of the masses, who constituted the bulk of the medieval Indian society. In those cases where some of the foreign travellers tried to mention about the masses and various social institutions, they could not do much justice because, due to language barrier, they could not really communicate with the masses and depended more upon oral traditions given to them in distorted form. Moreover, their travel accounts were limited mainly to coastal areas.

Although history had become a professionalized subject in the hands of scholars who were patronized by the court and who produced, by and large, the largest number of chroniclers, we have yet another kind of literature in which history, particularly the history of society, is treated by the Sufi and Bhakti saints. This kind of

literature is useful for studying socio-religious movements and for the growth of intellectual ideas. Most of the saints lived like common men, in the midst of society, following common vocations, of an ordinary individual, but the impact of their moral integrity was profound among those with whom they lived. This literature forms a very useful source of information about the spiritual and ethical standards of the times, and the socio-economic conditions.

Guru Nanak, one of the Bhaktas of medieval period of Indian history occupies a unique place amongst the spiritual leaders, preceptors, reformers and saints of the Bhakti movement in India. His teachings have universal appeal and they hold good for all ages. The impact of his teachings on the Indian society has been incredible indeed. These teachings have greatly influenced the people of India in general and those of Punjab in particular. Guru Nanak did not confine his mission to this country alone. He travelled far and wide, to far off lands and countries, in order to enlighten humanity as a whole and administered to it his message of love, peace, devotion to God, social justice - religious toleration and universal brotherhood. For Guru Nank no country was foreign and no people were alien.

Guru Nanak was born on 15th of April, 1469 A.D in village of Rai Bhoi Di Talwandi now known as Nankana

Sahib in Pakistan. By this time, the Lodis had firmly established themselves in the Punjab. His father Mehta Kalu, a khatri of the subcaste bedi, was patwari of Rai Bhoi di Talwandi, where a pandit and a mulla imparted elementary instructions to Guru Nanak with due care. He easily learnt what his teachers had to offer to him in the form of three R's which he vastly improved through his own genius. Moreover, his inquisitive mind did not rest here. As a young man, he associated himself with intinerant sadhus and saints and this association marked the beginning of that deep understanding of contemporary socio-religious life, which is best reflected in his Bani. This association resulted also in a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the traditional Hindu beliefs and practices.

After marriage, Guru Nanak moved to Sultanpur where his sister's husband, Jai Ram, was in the service of the Lodi administrator of that pargana. On Jai Ram's recommendation the store-keeping of the administrator was entrusted to Guru Nanak who performed his duties to the best satisfaction of his employer. At Sultanpur, Guru Nanak obtained an intimate knowledge of the Lodi administration at the pargana level. More important than this insight into contemporary administration was Guru Nanak's contact with the representatives of Islam at Sultanpur. His dissatisfaction with the existing forms of religious beliefs and practices, grew stronger and stronger and led

to a deep spiritual experience which culminated in the form of teachings meant for both Hindus and Muslims.

At the age of thirty, Guru Nanak left Sultanpur to spend nearly twenty years in visiting numerous places in and outside the Indian sub-continent. He saw shops, cities, their markets and centres of pilgrimage situated on river banks. During his sojourns, the Guru came in contact with the religious beliefs and practices of his times. He discussed, debated and preached, testing and enriching his experience. The path which he discovered through a long and deep searching was offered to all who came in contact with him.

In early 1520s, Guru Nanak settled down in Kartarpur (near Dera Baba Nanak) on the bank of river Ravi and gave a definitive expression to his beliefs and practical shape to his ideas. He visited some leading centres of the Sufis and the Gorakhnathis even from Kartarpur, but most of the time he imparted instructions to regular gatherings or individuals at Kartarpur itself. Here he died in A.D. 1539 at the age of 70.

Guru Nanak Bani containing his teachings, afterwards was collected and preserved in the Adi Granth, the sacred book of the Sikhs. His writings constitute the most authoritative portion of the Adi Granth and are considered to be the primal creed of the Sikh faith.

The Adi Granth was compiled and edited by the

fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. It is a lengthy volume of 1430 large-size printed pages in Gurmukhi script, containing hymns, not only of the Sikh Gurus but also of 36 other Hindu and Muslim saints and bards, who wrote between the 12th and 17th centuries. This work was completed in A.D. 1604. The original compilation is said to be preserved at Kartarpur (district Jalandhar) but the oldest copy now in use is the one which is placed in the Golden Temple - primer-Sikh shrine at Amritsar. It was prepared by Bhai Mani Singh under the supervision of Guru Gobind Singh.

The hymns in the Adi Granth are mostly devotional prayer hymns invoking for the divine grace i.e., the grace of God and Guru. The Guru gives the word or Nam and this Nam leads towards Brahman (God). These hymns also depict the state of separation and the state of bliss when the soul merges in the infinite. The hymns also present the idea of the concept of maya against the immortal domain of truth. Apart from this the hymns also depict the social and religious background of the time. They analyse the political, social and economic conditions of that time. Some of his hymns record the events of those days. In a work known as Baburvani, he wrote on the collapse of the Lodi administration and the chaos preceding the establishment of Mughal rule by Babur.

The literature of the period is admittedly the mirror of the way of life of that epoch. For this reason

the author has taken Guru Nanak's Bani as the base of this work. The Bani which is undoubtedly the poetry of realism is a mirror of the contemporary society. Guru Nanak was a prolific writer and depicted contemporary life, giving his own solutions to most of the social-ills, which were destroying the very fabric of the Indian society. There is no phase of human life and society for which Guru Nanak Bani does not furnish guidance.

Bani of Guru Nanak as contained in the Adi Granth is rich in social references. No other Guru made so many references to the society as Guru Nanak did. He wrote his Bani in 19 ragas, in over 958 sabads. On the basis of this literature of Guru Nanak, an attempt has been made to study the society of his times under the following chapters.

The first chapter, Guru Nanak and his times : An Overview, discusses the political history of Guru Nanak's time on the assumption that it is necessary to know something of his times in order to understand the full significance of the medieval Indian society as reflected in his Bani. Guru Nanak's life-span (1469-1539) roughly covers the entire rule of the Lodis, advent of the Mughals, rise of Sher Shah Suri and the defeat of Humayun at the former's hand. Guru Nanak made references to the attitudes of contemporary rulers towards their subjects.

Second chapter on Political Institutions, discusses

existing state, political institutions and their functioning primarily based on the references available in Guru Nanak's Bani. In these two chapters, some repetition, here and there, could be found which may appear superfluous. But it was unavoidable for many couplets from the Bani of Guru Nanak have been used in both the chapters in two different contexts.

The third chapter on Economic Conditions, deals with the urban and rural life of Guru Nanak's time. Rather than dwelling upon the economy of the medieval times, the major thrust is on the study of the professions and vocations.

The fourth chapter on the Caste System, discusses primarily the Hindu medieval society which was a caste-ridden society. It was divided into four castes or varnas. Brahmins at the top and sudras at the bottom. It also discusses Guru Nanak's views on caste system.

The fifth chapter deals with Socio-Religious Ceremonies and Customs. The most conspicuous events of domestic life are the various stages of growth in the life of a person, the birth, the marriage and the death, together with the various customs all move around him. Religious emotions found their expression in all the phases. The position of a man in society was judged by the amount of care and attention he gave to the fulfilment of these social and religious obligations. Though Guru Nanak's

compositions reveal his awareness of the social life of the Muslims, his pre-occupations appears to have been the Hindu society. The life of the two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims, was over burdened with innumerable rites and ceremonies. Huge sums were spent on fruitless ceremonies, even if a person could not afford their cost or was barely making both ends meet. It was a life of blind conventionalism which led to hypocrisy and mammon worship. These ceremonies, in the views of Guru Nanak, had more superstition than sense in them. Guru Nanak not only condemned these ceremonies but also tried to lift the man out of the moorings to which a man was trapped in for centuries. Guru Nanak laid greater emphasis on ethical and spiritual aspects of human life and told people to discard age old ceremonies which have no relevance to society.

In the last chapter an attempt has been made to study the Position of Women with special reference to married women. Quoting from Guru Nanak Bani this chapter discusses the contribution of Guru Nanak in elevating the women and giving them a respectable position and equal status in society and religion.

The Ideal Society, which was evolved through the precepts and practice of Guru Nanak and his followers, has been discussed in the concluding chapter. Model of such a society was evolved by the Guru himself when after completing his five long udasis, he settled at Kartarpur. It

was here that the high ideals of earning one's living through honest means, sharing one's earnings with others and always remembering God - which became the essence of the Sikh philosophy, were put into practice. It is significant to mention that the implementation of the teachings of Guru Nanak and evolution of twin institutions of sangat and pangat, led to emergence of a new egalitarian order which became the sheetanchor of the Sikh society.

To substantiate the arguments given in the chapters, translation of suitable quotations from Guru Nanak Bani (contained in the Adi Grath) has been given and in the notes and references the actual hymns in Gurumukhi have also been given. Wherever it is felt that the idea of the quotation is fully translated in the text, no separate English translation is provided.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Professor Darshan Singh, Chairman, Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh and Dr. Mohinder Singh, Director, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi, for their help and guidance in the preparation of this work. I would also like to place on record my gratitude to my old teacher, Dr. H.S. Chawla of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, University of Delhi and Mr. J.C. Dua of Dyal Singh College (Evening), University of Delhi, who went through the entire manuscript and gave many valuable suggestions for improvement

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CHAPTER I

GURU NANAK AND HIS TIMES : AN OVERVIEW

Very few scholars of medieval Indian history have cared to study the Bani of Guru Nanak as an authentic source material of socio-economic conditions of the people of Hindustan of the later half of the fifteenth and the first forty years of the sixteenth century - a period, in which the Guru lived. No doubt, such conditions are not fully described in any single chapter of the Adi Granth, which contains the Bani of Guru Nanak,¹ besides that of five other gurus² and various Hindu and Muslim bhaktas of medieval period.³ These conditions have to be studied through careful research, from the idioms, metaphors and similies frequently used by Guru Nanak to convey his message to the people of his age. Occasionally, there are references pertaining to the character of the ruling class, political condition of the times and the law and order situation in the country. In order to understand the society as reflected in the Bani of Guru Nanak it is essential to have a look at the period in which he lived and the situations he responded to.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) lived in an age of political turmoil. In fact, the process of disintegration had commenced during the reign of Firoz Tughluq (1351-1388). Firoz Tughluq had failed to reclaim the deccan and frittered away his energies in fruitless campaigns in far-off-

regions - Orissa, Nagarkot and Thatta-without being able to add any territory to his shrunken empire. His revival of the jagirs, enrolment of an army of slaves and an extra importance given to the Ulema destroyed the merits of the reforms of the Khaljis and strengthened the forces of disorder. In his zeal for piety he tightened punishments and thereby encouraged corruption in administration and inefficiency in the army.⁴

The sultanate of Delhi lost its all-India character during the reigns of his weak successors and became like a provincial kingdom. On Firoz's death in September 1388, throne of Delhi passed to his grandson, Tughluq Shah, son of Fateh Khan, who assumed the title of Ghias-ud-din Tughluq II. He was an inexperienced and pleasure loving youth. His conduct gave offence to the maliks and amris who deposed him and placed Abu Bakr (another grandson of Firoz Tughluq) son of Zafar Khan, on the throne of Delhi on February 19, 1389. But prince Muhammad, who had acted as Firoz's deputy and had been driven out of capital by a party of nobles, asserted his claim to the throne and with the help of certain powerful officials he proclaimed himself king at Samana on April 24, 1389.⁵

Then followed a contest between the two rival monarchs as a result of which Abu Bakar was forced to quit the throne in 1390. But Muhammad too could not rule for long. Owing to intemperance and excessive indulgence his

health was greatly impaired and he died in January 1394.⁶

He was succeeded by Humayun, entitled Ala-ud-din Sikandar Shah who died on March 8, 1395. Then came to the throne Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the youngest son of Muhammad. This prince was destined to be the last ruler of the Tughluq dynasty. His claim to sovereignty was disputed by Nusrat Shah, son of Fateh Khan. For some time there were, thus, two kings ruling at one and the same time - one at Delhi and the other at Firozabad.⁷ Among the supporters of the latter were the amirs of the neighbouring areas in the Punjab (Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak and Jhajjar) but they were much more interested in furthering their own interests than in serving those of their nominal suzerain. Sultan Mahmud controlled only the two forts in the capital, old Delhi and Siri. Farishta recalls the scene of decay in the following words :

"The government fell into anarchy, civil war raged everywhere, and a scene was exhibited, unheard of before, of two kings in arms against each other residing in the same capital".⁸ 'The amirs and maliks', writes Yahya-bin-Ahmad Sirhandi in Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi, 'of the great provinces of the empire had become kings and spent their income as they liked'.⁹ To quote Farishta again, 'The warfare ... continued as if it were one battle between the two cities, wherein thousands were sometimes killed in a day, and the casualties occasioned by the slain were supplied

by fresh reinforcements from different parts of the country. Some of the governors of the provinces took little part in these civil dissensions, hoping to take advantage of them by becoming independent in the end.¹⁰ This politically disastrous contest continued for three years and served - quite naturally - as a prelude to foreign invasions.¹¹

Timur who had ascended the throne of Samarqand in 1369, crossed the Indus on 21 September 1398 to wage a war against the infidels and to lay his hands on the immense wealth and valuables of the country. Travelling via Pak Patan, Dipalpur, Bhatnir, Sirsa and Kaithal, plundering and burning the country and massacring the people on the way.¹² What followed at Bhatnir on 7 November, 1398 is best described in his own words :

'... in the course of one hour the heads of 10,000 infidels were cut off. The sword of Islam was washed in the blood of the infidels, and all the goods and effects, the treasure - and the grain which for many a long year had been stored in the fort, became the spoil of my soldiers. They set fire to the houses and reduced them to ashes, and they razed the buildings and the fort to the ground'.¹³

He crossed the Jamuna on 11 December, 1398 and entered the Jahan-Panah palace. At Loni near Delhi, the capture of the fort was followed by Timur's order that

'the Musalman prisoners should be separated and saved, but the infidels should all be despatched to hell with the proselytizing sword'. There were about 100,000 Hindu prisoners in his camp. Timur who wanted to get rid of the embarrassing presence of these prisoners, butchered them in cold blood before fighting a war against sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Tughluq and his prime-minister Mallu-Iqbal, who put a feeble resistance to the invader. After inevitable defeat Mallu-Iqbal retreated, leaving the sultan's unfortunate subjects to Timur's fury.¹⁴ The carnage and loot continued for four days. Even the body in human flesh and blood was enormous, for each soldiers had secured a large number of prisoners.¹⁵

Timur occupied Delhi on December 18, 1398 and remained there for fifteen days. He had no desire to stay in India and to rule over it. He quit Delhi on January 1, 1399 on a return march to Samarqand. Before leaving the borders of India, Timur appointed Khizar Khan, who had been expelled by a rival (Sarang Khan) from the governorship of Multan, to the government of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur. He crossed back the Indus on March 19, 1399 after inflicting on India more misery than had ever before been inflicted by any conqueror in a single campaign.¹⁶ He left India prostrate and bleeding.

After Timur's invasion the sultanate of Delhi which had already been broken into fragments, now shrunk to the

dimensions of a petty principality comprising the capital city and a few districts around it. It became a very pale shadow of its former self.¹⁷

Khizar Khan, who had been appointed governor of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur, by Timur, founded the Sayyid dynasty in 1414. The rule of the Sayyid sultans remained limited only to 37 years. During their rule, neither a bold policy of wars and conquests like the Khiljis was pursued nor measures for administrative reforms were attempted. Sayyid sultans failed to put forth any inspiring ideal before their followers and subjects and thereby the process of division and dis-integration of the empire, which had persisted during the reign of the later Tughluqs, continued unabated during the rule of the Sayyids. The Sayyids restricted their political vision and activities within a circumference of 200 miles around (Delhi) and finally, failed to defend even that circle and lost the empire to another dynasty - the Lodis.¹⁸

Bahlul, the first ruler of the Lodi dynasty, ascended the throne of Delhi on 19th April, 1451. When Guru Nanak was born in A.D. 1469, Bahlul Lodi (A.D. 1451-1489) had been the ruler of Delhi for about 18 years. Before occupying the throne of Delhi in AD 1451 he had Sarhind, Samana, Sunam, Hissar - Feroza, Lahore, Dipalpur and perhaps some parganas of Multan under his control.

Bahlul had to tackle many baffling problems. His

primary task was to restore the lost prestige of the sultanate of Delhi and to establish the supermacy of the Afghans in the kingdom. Besides he had to suppress the rebellious nobles and jagirdars and to safeguard his kingdom from jealous neighbours who were trying to extend their territories towards the capital. Bahlul faced all these problems boldly and tactfully. By the end of 1451 AD, he had not only occupied Panipat, Hansi and Delhi but also added Sambhal, Mewat, Rapri, Etawah, Kol, Kampila, Patiali and Bhogaou to his dominions. He had considerably revived the power and prestige of the sultanate of Delhi. The most important event of his career as a sultan was his 'life and death struggle' against the Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur. It was only by AD 1486 that he had been able to capture the western territories of the Sharqis.¹⁹

He tried to please his Afghan nobles by giving them extensive jagirs and high offices. Even Afghans from outside India were invited to share power and given important positions in the empire.²⁰ In keeping with the sentiments of the Afghans and the traditions of his father, Bahlul Lodi claimed to be nothing more than one among the peers. The idea of kingship had little affinity with that of his Turkish predecessors. It was a complete negation of the conception of Balban and Ala-u-din Khilji and was quite different from that of even Iltutmish.²¹ The author of Tarikh-i-Daudi describes the way of his functioning in these words :

'In his social meetings he never sat on a throne and would not allow his nobles to stand, and even during public audiences he did not occupy the throne but seated himself upon a carpet. Whenever he wrote a firman to his nobles he addressed them as 'Masnad-i-Ali' (exalted Lordship).²² Indeed so much regard did he evince for them that if any one of the great leaders felt displeased he would go to his house ungirt his sword and sometimes even put off the sash of his turban²³, soliciting forgiveness, saying, 'If you think me unworthy of the station I occupy, choose some one else and bestow on me some other office.'²⁴ He maintained a brotherly intercourse with all his chiefs and soldiers. If any one was ill he would himself go and attend on him.²⁵ He did not, however, use his powers in an autocratic manner and was anxious to make the Afghan leaders believe that he drew his power and authority from their goodwill. But in doing so, he reduced the sovereign to the position of primus inter pares (first among equals) vis-a-vis the nobles.²⁶ He raised the power and prestige of the nobles at the expense of the sultan. He lowered the dignity of the crown and reduced kingship to the position of exalted peerage.²⁷ One good advantage of his policy of primus-inter pares was that it earned him the loyalty and goodwill of the afghan tribal leaders who helped him fight his wars and worked with him ungrudgingly through thick and thin.²⁸

Bahlul's achievements as an administrator were

neither commendable nor mean. He was a moderately successful king. When he died in 1489, Guru Nanak was twenty years old and was living at his home town Talwandi near Lahore with his wife and parents.

After Bahlul's death his third son Nizam Khan, with the help and support of Khan-i-Jahan, Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli and the majority of the nobles, ascended the throne on 17 July, 1489 with the title Sikandar Shah. His succession was opposed by many on the ground that his mother was the daughter of a Hindu goldsmith.²⁹ But Sikandar overcame all these hurdles to claim sovereignty for himself. Bahlul had kept his afghan nobles under his control but had compromised the position of the sultan with the rights of the nobles. But Sikandar was aware of the dangers of a divided authority and allegiance, and was not prepared to share power with anybody.³⁰ He, therefore, gradually introduced a change in the conception of kingship and destroyed the powers of nobility, finished all rebellious nobles and forced others to obey and respect him as the sultan.

Sikandar who is considered to be the greatest king of the Lodi dynasty, however, behaved as a fanatic in religious matters and was intolerant to other faiths. Nizam-ud-din Ahmed writes, 'His bigotry in Islam was so great that in this regard he went beyond the bounds even of excess'.³¹ He had given the proof of his bigotry even as a prince when he had desired to prohibit the Hindus from bathing in the sacred tank at Thanesar.³² When he became

the king, he indulged in policy of destroying temples and images, and building mosques, serais and colleges in their place. Farishta says that he made it a point to destroy all Hindu temples.³³ According to Tarikh-i-Daudi, he utterly destroyed diverse places of worship of the infidels and left not a vestige remaining of them.³⁴ Sacred places of the Hindus of Mathura, Narwar, Chanderi and the Jawalamukhi temple at Nagarkot were destroyed under his orders.³⁵

During the times of Sikandar Lodi jiziya and pilgrims tax were collected from the Hindus with severity. He did not permit them to bathe in the Jamuna at bathing ghats and prohibited barbers from shaving their heads nor could the rituals of Hindus be publically performed.³⁶ Like Firuz Tugluq, he made an attempt to reduce Hindus and convert them to Islam. The prevailing atmosphere and the harsh policies adopted by the state compelled the people to adopt the language and garbs of the Muslims to avoid persecution. Except for his fanaticism, Sikandar was a strong and a capable ruler.

Guru Nanak who had spent several years at Sultanpur Lodi - (a town where Daulat Khan Lodi resided before he was made the governor of Lahore by Sikandar Lodi in 1500 AD) came into contact with the working of the administrative machinery of the Lodis and their policies towards their subjects. He had served as a modi (storekeeper) of Daulat Khan Lodi's grain stores at Sultanpur and it gave him personal experience which is reflected in his compositions.³⁷

It is a pity that students of medieval Indian history have not made full use of these compositions while dealing with the pre-mughal period of the Lodi sultans.

Daulat Khan Lodi was the son of Tatar Khan, who had been among the most important governors of sultan Bahlul Lodi, holding in his charge not only the iqta of Lahore but also of Dipalpur and of Sarhind. He was a powerful and an efficient governor. In the early 1480s he seized some parganas of the sultan's khalisa land and prince Nizam Khan (later Sikandar Lodi) marched against him from Panipat. Tatar Khan was killed in a battle near Ambala in 1485 AD and his iqtas were given to Umar Khan Sarwani (one of his nobles). However, Tatar Khan's son, Daulat Khan, was allowed to retain Sultanpur which was the personal jagir of his father. In AD 1500, Daulat Khan was made the governor of Lahore. He remained loyal to the Lodi Sultan for over twenty years.³⁸

It may be safely assumed that Daulat Khan Lodi at Sultanpur was assisted by some important officials. The office of the amils or the amin would be there in Sultanpur itself and so would be the office of the qannungo. There would also be, the Persian and Hindvi navisandar or writer. The department of justice would have been represented by the qazi who was perhaps assisted by a 'mufti' (the expounder of the shariat). They were the representatives of Muslim orthodoxy also and they were paid by the state

through grants of revenue free land or Madad-i-Ma-ash-grant. On the whole, therefore, Guru Nanak at Sultanpur had first hand knowledge of Lodi administration at the pargana level³⁹ and also that of the justice department. He had also observed the high handedness of the shiqdars and the corrupt lives of the qazis to extort money from the people. Hence, Guru Nanak's references to the contemporary society become all the more important for whatever he wrote, he wrote from his close and personal experience of the contemporary institutions.

It is not generally realized that in Guru Nanak's compositions, references to one or the other aspect of the government and administration of his times were quite frequent. In fact, the entire government structure is covered by the phrases used by Guru Nanak in one context or another. We need not insist that this familiarity with contemporary government and administration would inevitably result from his stay in Sultanpur.⁴⁰

The importance of Sultanpur as a town with considerable proportion of Muslim population must be taken into account to appreciate the significance of Guru Nanak's experience. It is quite certain that his deep understanding of contemporary Islam had much to do with this town where he spent a number of years of his life in the service of Daulat Khan Lodi. It is true that he had come in contact with a few representatives of Islam even before

he came to Sultanpur. But at Sultanpur for the first time he could meet the learned and also probably the mystics of Islam. With his inclination towards religion, he would certainly take interest in the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants of the town and meet the leaders of religious opinion. In his compositions Guru Nanak reveals his familiarity with Islam in its orthodox and sufi forms. His earlier association with itinerant sadhus and saints around his village Talwandi (Nankana Sahib, district Shaikhupura, Pakistan), had been the richest experience before he came into contact with the Muslims in Sultanpur.⁴¹ It is this aspect of his experience which adds deeper meaning and historical value to the references made by Guru Nanak in his Bani.

During the first three decades of his life - the period before his travels - Guru Nanak lived at Talwandi and Sultanpur. The rulers of Delhi then were Bahlul Lodi and Sikandar Lodi. Sikandar died on 21 November, 1517. After his death his eldest son, Ibrahim was elevated to the throne with the unanimous approval of the afghan peers. He assumed the title of Ibrahim shah. Though not devoid of ability and intelligence, Ibrahim Lodi proved a sad failure. He foolishly abandoned the sagacious policy of his father and grandfather and tried to impose a rigorous discipline and strict court ceremonial on his peers who were fierce democrats and treated the king as nothing more than the noble among the nobles. By his policy of playing

the king and insolently punishing those who disregarded his orders, he drove them into rebellion. He, thus, dug the very foundation of the state and lost his throne and life.⁴²

The Lodi regime lacked the military strength, administrative consolidations and political wisdom which were needed to initiate a new era of peace, stability and progress in the country. The political uncertainties during the reign of Ibrahim Lodi and the early years of the Mughal regime had their repercussions on the life of the people, and of these Guru Nanak was not merely a casual witness.⁴³ Although Guru Nanak kept himself aloof from politics, he did not, at least in his mature years ignore the political trends which effected the people's lives. Indeed, he was fully alive to the impact of political turmoil on society and religion. This was quite natural in view of the fact that he was not an ascetic in the traditional Indian sense. He lived the life of a normal householder.⁴⁴

The most dramatic events in the politics of Hindustan during Guru Nanak's life time were connected with the political activities of Babur. From 1519 AD to 1526 AD, he was actively concerned with the affairs of Hindustan. He invaded India five times. But the first four invasions were more or less in the nature of exploratory raids. During his first invasion (1519 AD) he simply conquered

Bajour and Bhera and returned to Kabul. Both the places were lost by him as soon as he was back. In the same year (1519 AD) in September, Babur crossed the Khyber and went upto Peshawar subduing the Yusufzai afghans on the way, but he had to rush back to Kabul because of trouble there.⁴⁵ During the course of his third invasion in 1520 AD, he crossed the river chenab and occupied Sialkot without much resistance. Then he marched on Saidpur (Eminabad) which was taken by assult and put to sword.⁴⁶

This invasion in Guru Nanak's own words took place in 1578 bikarmi, i.e. 1521 AD.⁴⁷ Guru Nanak was an eye witness to the sack of Saidpur and the whole massacre of its inhabitants. According to the memoirs of Babur 'the inhabitants of Saidpur, who resisted were put to the sword, their wives and children were carried into capativity, and all their property plundered'.⁴⁸ Guru Nanak seems to have been close to the scene of atrocities perpetrated by him on the people of Saidpur. He may be said to have been the first medieval Indian saint to condemn war and to denounce exploitation as grave social maladies which seriously hinder the evolution of people's personality. In Guru Nanak's reaction to the political events of his time Babur's invasion of India figures prominently. Active politics was not his field. He, however, observed with keen interest the functioning of the government in the country and felt deeply concerned about the political disabilities of the people.⁴⁹ The suffering of the people during

Babur's invasion (1520-21) has been described by him with deep emotion and he uttered some of the most touching verses which are collectively known as Babar-Vani.⁵⁰

God took khurasan under His wing,
and exposed India to the terrorism of Babur,
The creator takes no blame to Himself,
It was death disguised as a Mughal
that made war on us.
Where there was such slaughter,
such groaning, did'st Thou not feel pain?
Creator, Thou belongest to all
If a powerful party beat another powerful party,
It is no matter for anger,
But if a ravenous lion fall upon a herd,
then the master of the herd should
Show his manliness.⁵¹

Guru Nanak was very bitter about the fact that :

The dogs of Lodi have spoiled
the priceless inheritance (i.e. India)
When they are dead no one will regard them.⁵²

In the defeat and punishment of the Lodis Guru Nanak saw the operation of the Divine Order (Hukam), the inescapable consequence of moral depravity and unrighteousness.⁵³

The wealth and beauty which afforded them
pleasure, have now become their bane.
The order was given to the soldiers
to take and dishonour them.
If it please God, He giveth greatness;
and if it please Him, he giveth punishment.
If they had thought of Him before,
Why should they have received punishment?
But they had lost all thought of God in joys,
in spectacles, and in pleasures.
When Babar's rule was proclaimed
no pathan prince ate his food.⁵⁴

Guru Nanak reacted against the atrocities committed by the army of Babur against the innocent people of the town. While addressing Bhai Lalo (a disciple of Guru Nanak) he writes :

As the word of the lord comes to me,
so do I utter, O Lalo,
Bringing the marriage party of sin,
Babar has hastened from Kabul and
demands perforce the gift of wealth etc. O. Lalo.
Modesty and righteousness both have vanished,
and falsehood marches in the van, O Lalo.
The function of the qazis and the brahmins is over
and the satan now reads the marriage rites.

The Muslim women read the Quran and in
suffering call upon God, O Lalo.
The Hindu women of high caste and
Low caste, put these too in the same account.
Nanak, the paeans of murder are sung,
and the saffron of blood is sprinkled, O Lalo.
Nanak sings the glories of the Lord
in the city of corpses and says this saying.
He, who has made the mortals and
attached them to pleasures, sits apart, and
alone, and beholds them.⁵⁵

There appears to have been a general massacre and
even the women were not spared.

Hindu, Muslim, Bhatti and Thakur women
(Suffered),

Some having their burqas torn from
head to toe, others being slain.⁵⁶

The unequal character of the contest also appears
to have grieved the Guru. On the one side fought a trained,
organised army under the leadership of an experienced
general - Babur and on the other, an extemporised defence -
force mostly composed of the non-combatants of a peaceful
city.⁵⁷

Finding Ibrahim (the sultan of Delhi), to be weak and an inefficient ruler, Daulat Khan, the governor of Lahore, planned to become independent. In 1524, Daulat Khan Lodi sought Babur's help and the latter lost no time in reaching Lahore. No terms of the alliance seem to have been settled between Daulat Khan and Babur. 'As political justice was not the virtue of the age, Babur probably calculated that if affairs turned out prosperously, it would be an easy matter to cast down the puppet king when he would set up'.⁵⁸

When Daulat Khan came to know about the designs of Babur, he tried to oppose him, but was defeated. Babur assigned Jalandhar to Daulat Khan, Sultanpur to his son Dilawar Khan and Dipalpur to Ibrahim's uncle, Alam Khan while keeping Lahore under his own control. Daulat Khan considered this to be a slight to him and went off in a huff. He had made up his mind to recover his lost territories. After this Babur decided to return, for he found he needed a bigger army to proceed further in his designs.⁵⁹

On 17 November, 1525 Babur set out 'to invade Hindustan' for the last time. A month later he crossed the Indus at the head of 12,000 men. After crossing the Bias river, he secured the submission of Daulat Khan, whose army broke up at the invader's approach. This was followed by the submission of Alam Khan Lodi. It was about this

time that Babur received proposals for cooperation from Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar. However, he proceeded towards Delhi to meet the forces of Ibrahim Lodi. At Panipat, the sultan displayed no quality of generalship but that of personal bravery, unable to win, he died as an afghan was expected to die (21 April, 1926).⁶⁰

After his victory at Panipat Babur marched triumphantly to Delhi. On April 27, 1526 the khutba was read in his name in the Jami Mosque.⁶¹ According to Ishwari Prasad, "The victory at Panipat destroyed the power of the Lodi dynasty and transferred the empire of Hindustan from the Afghans to the Timurids".⁶²

Mughal rule established by Babur in its first phase lasted upto 1540 when after defeating Humayun at the battle of Bilgram Sher Shah ascended the throne of Delhi in August, 1540. Since Guru Nanak died in 1539 AD, his Bani (compositions) remains the major source of the study of this period (1451-1540) on which the author has based the findings and drawn a picture of the socio-economic life of the people of Hindustan.⁶³ Other contemporary or semi-contemporary sources like the Persian Chronicles of the times, accounts of the foreign travellers (mostly translated), Varan Bhai Gurdas and several literary works including Kafian Shah Hussain and Kissa Heer Damodar etc. have been used to corroborate the evidence found in the Adi Granth.

NOTES

1. Guru Nanak composed his Bani in 19 Rags :
Sri Rag, Majh, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Vadhans, Sorath,
Dhanasri, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Ramkali, Maru,
Tukhari, Bhairo, Basant, Sarang, Malhar and Parbhati.
There are two Shalokas in Rag Bihagra and he has
written three Vars in Rag Majh, Asa and Malhar.
Other important Banis of Guru Nanak are Japji, Pehre,
Patti, Alahnian, Aarti, Suchajji, Kuchajji, Thiti,
Dakhni Onkar, Sidh Gosht, Sohile and Baran Mahan.
For details, see, Singh Taran, Sri Guru Granth Ji
Da Sahitak Itihas, pp. 244-45. Also see, Jaggi Ratan
Singh, Guru Nanak Bani, pp. 29-32.
2. The other five Gurus whose Bani covers a major part
of the Adi Granth are, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amardas,
Guru Ram Dass, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur.
3. The names of the Hindu and Muslim Bhaktas are as
under :
Sheikh Farid, Kabir, Jaidev, Trilochan, Namdev,
Sadhna, Beni, Ramanand, Ravidas, Pipa, Sain, Dhanna,
Bhikhan, Parmanand and Surdas. Besides these,
Bhaktas, the Bani of Bhai Mardana, Baba Sunder Dass,
Kal, Kalsahar, Tal, Jalap, Jal, Kirat, Sal, Bhal,
Nal, Bhikha, Jalan, Das, Gayand, Sewak, Mathura,
Bal, Harbans, Satta and Balwand. For details, see,
Kohli, S.S., A Critical Study of the Adi Granth, pp. 8-9.

4. Lal, K.S., Twilight of the Sultanate, London, 1963, p. 1.
5. Srivastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi, Agra, 1974, p.219.
6. Ibid.
7. Banerjee, A.C., Guru Nanak and His Times, Patiala, 1971, p.1.
8. Briggs, John, History of the Rise of Mohamman Power in India till the year AD 1612 (English trans. of Firishta), London, 1829, Vol. I, p. 481.
9. Quoted in Habib and Nizami (ed), A Comprehensive History of India, Delhi, 1970, Vol. V, p. 123.
10. Briggs, John, op. cit., p. 481.
11. Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., p. 2.
12. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., p. 221.
13. Quoted by Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., p. 3.
14. Ibid.
15. Lal, K.S., op. cit., p. 30.
16. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., pp. 221-222.
17. Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., p. 5.
18. Sharma, S.R., The Crescent in India, Poona, 1954, pp.150-51.
19. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, Chandigarh, 1969, pp.1-3.
20. Tripathi, R.P., Some Aspects of Muslim Administration, Allahabad, 1936, p. 82.
21. Ibid., p. 83.

22. Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, John, The History of India as told by its own Historians, London, 1872, Vol. IV, pp. 436-37.
23. Tripathi, R.P., op. cit., p. 83.
24. Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, John, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 436-37.
25. Prasad Ishwari, History of Medieval India, Allahabad, 1933, p. 494.
26. Lal, K.S., op. cit., p. 159.
27. Tripathi, R.P., op. cit., pp. 83-84.
28. Lal, K.S., op. cit., pp. 159-160.
29. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., pp. 236-237.
30. Tripathi, R.P., op. cit., p. 85.
31. Nizam-ud-din Ahmed, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Vol. I, p. 335, quoted by Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, John, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 437-38.
32. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., p. 239.
33. Briggs, John, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 586.
34. Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, John, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 477.
35. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., p. 239. Also see, Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, John, op. cit., pp. 464-65, and Briggs, John, op. cit., pp. 576-77.

36. Nirod Bhusan Roy (Tr.), Niamat Ullah's History of the Afghans, Shantiniketan, 1958, p. 95.
37. Grewal, J.S., From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Chandigarh, 1969, pp. 12-13.
38. Grewal, J.S. Guru Nanak in History, pp. 5-6.
39. Grewal, J.S., From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, p. 14.
40. Ibid, p. 13. References to the court, the throne, the army, the palaces, royal canopy, elephants, armour, cavalry, trumpets, salary, mint, taxes, grants of revenue free land, sultan, hukam or amar, wazir, diwan, naib, umra, khan malik, shiqdari, qazi, chaudhary and muqqdam etc.
41. Ibid., p. 14.
42. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., pp. 247-48.
43. Banerjee, A.C., Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, New Delhi, 1978, p. 45.
44. Ibid, p. 44.
45. Bahadur, K.P., A History of Indian Civilization (Medieval India), New Delhi, 1980, Vol. II, p. 252.
46. Beveridge, A.S., The Memoirs of Babur (English Trans), London, 1921, Vol. I, p. 429.

47. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, Bombay, 1950, p. 13. Gave the following explanation in footnote 1, 'Referring to the coming of the Mughals, he (Guru Nanak) says in Rag Tilang, 'They come in 78 and shall depart in 97 and then shall arise another brave man'. The first date refers to the coming of the Mughals in 1521 and the later date refers to the departure of Humayun from India in 1540 AD and the 'brave man' is understood to be Shershah Suri, who dispossessed him.
48. Layden and Erskine (translation), Memoirs of Babur, London, 1921, Vol. II, p. 149.
49. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, op. cit., p. 14.
50. Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., p. 45. He lists four verses (Asa 39, Asa Ashtpadi 11, Asa Ashtpadi 12 and Tilang 5) in Baburvani in which Guru Nanak expressed his agony and described the destruction of the city and the misery of the people with a depth of personal feeling for he must have witnessed the whole drama at Saidpur before his own eyes. Some doubts may be raised whether the Guru actually referred to the siege of Saidpur or of a bigger place like Lahore. But one thing is certain that it was the experience of a warm hearted human being whose eyes were fixed on heaven as also on earth.

51. Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, New Delhi, 1963, Vol. I, p. 119. The original text of the Bani is as under :

Adi Granth, p. 360 :

ਖੁਰਾਸਲ ਖਸਮਲਾ ਕੀਆ ਰਿੰਦੁਸਤਲ ਡਰਾਇਆ॥
ਆਪੇ ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲ ਚੜਾਇਆ॥
ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਣੈ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ॥
ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ॥
ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥
ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਰੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ॥

52. Macauliffe, M.A., op. cit., p. 119,
Adi Granth, p. 360 :

ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ
ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ॥

53. Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., p. 46.

54. Macauliffe, M.A., op. cit., p. 112.

Adi Granth, p. 417 :

ਧਨੁ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਦੋਇ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਲੀ ਰਖੈ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਇ॥
ਦੂਤਾ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਚਲੈ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਇ॥
ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇਇ ਸਜਾਇ॥
ਅਗੇ ਦੇ ਜੇ ਚੇਤੀਐ ਤਾ ਕਾਇਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ॥
ਸਾਹਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗਵਾਈਆ ਰੰਗਿ ਤਮਾਸੈ ਚਾਇ॥
ਬਾਬਰਵਾਣੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਈ ਕੁਇਰੁ ਨ ਰੋਟੀ ਖਾਇ॥

55. Manmohan Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, English and Panjabi translation), Amritsar, 1969, Vol. IV, pp. 2357-58.

Adi Granth, pp. 722-23 :

ਜੈਸੀ ਸੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੀ ਦਲੁ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਛਪ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੂੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਕਾਜੀਆ ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਗਲਿ ਬਕੀ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਸੈਤਨੁ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀਆ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੋਬਾ ਕਸਟ ਮਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਜਾਤਿ ਸਨਾਤੀ ਹੋਰਿ ਹਿਦਵਾਣੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਭੀ ਲੇਖੈ ਨਾਇ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਖੂਨ ਕੇ ਸੋਹਿਲੈ ਗਾਵੀਅਹਿ ਨਲਕ ਰਤੁ ਕਾ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਪਾਇ ਵੈ ਲਾਲੋ॥
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਨਲਕੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਮਾਸ ਪੁਰੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਖੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ॥
ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਈ ਰੀਗ ਰਵਾਈ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਖਿ ਇਕੋਲਾ॥

56. Mcleod, W.H., Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, Oxford, 1968, p. 36.

Adi Granth, p. 418 :

ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਰਕਾਣੀ ਭਟਿਆਣੀ ਠਕੁਰਾਣੀ॥
ਇਕਲਾ ਪੈਰਣ ਸਿਰ ਖੁਰ ਪਾਟੇ ਇਕਲਾ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਸਾਣੀ॥

57. Adi Granth, p. 360.

58. Erskine, History of India under the First Two Sovereigns of the House of Taimur, London, 1954, Vol. I, p. 423.

59. Bahadur, K.P., op. cit., pp. 252-53.

60. Banerjee, A.C., Guru Nanak and His Times, p. 21.
The historian Niamat-Ullah pays him a well deserved compliment. "No sultan of India except sultan Ibrahim has been killed on the battlefield and has won the glory of martyrdom", see Nirodbhusan Roy, op. cit., p. 169.
61. Bahadur, K.P., op. cit., p. 254.
62. Prasad, Ishwari, op. cit., p. 519.
63. The word Hindustan has been used for India, because this name for our country was prevalent during medieval times and even Guru Nanak used this word in his compositions; see Adi Granth, p. 360 :

ਖੁਰਸ਼ਨ ਖਸਮਲਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਨ ਤਰਾਇਆ॥

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Guru Nanak's period (1469 to 1539 AD) was a time of transition and turmoil as already discussed in the preceding chapter. After a short and inglorious rule of the Sayyids, the Lodis established themselves at Delhi and tried to revive the power and prestige of the sultanate. The almost total anarchy of the Sayyids was becoming a thing of the past, but authority of the sultan still rested on rather delicate foundation.¹ The afghan nobles would regard the rulers as their tribal chief and not their master or ruler.²

Bahlul Lodi, the founder of the Lodi dynasty, knew it very well that his very existence was due to the support from his tribemen. With the coming of Sikandar and Ibrahim Lodi to power, the relationship between the sultan and the afghan nobility underwent a complete change. Not only this he tried to make the state theocratic.³ Sikandar Lodi, like Feroz Shah Tughluq, officially imposed Islam on the Hindu subjects although they happened to be in majority. He followed the policy of persecution and destroyed temples (thakardwaras)⁴ in most parts of north India. He put curbs on people performing pilgrimages or bathing on religious occasions at sacred places.⁵

Ibrahim Lodi was a weak, worthless and dissolute king. The vain and haughty ways of the sultan excited rebellions all around. Darya Khan Lohani of Bihar led the confederacy of rebels against him and so did Daulat Khan Lodi of Punjab who revolted against Ibrahim and asserted his independence. The whole of Delhi kingdom was in utter confusion and disorder under him. The distant chiefs grew more turbulent.⁶ Ibrahim failed to understand the character and sentiments of his own race, nor the vast majority of the Hindus of the country had any faith in his sense of justice. The Hindus remained dissatisfied and discontented as ever before under Sikandar, Feroz and Ala-ud-din Khilji.

Corruption was rife and degradation and treachery stalked openly. Confusion and disorder of every kind ran riot over the length and breadth of the empire. Murders of the most horrible type, robberies of most 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 in an abyss of enfeebling debauchery. As Indu Bhushan Banerjee puts it, 'Shameless opportunism and unscrupulous-greed seem to have been the order of the day'.⁷ Guru Nanak who was alive to the exigencies of the times, bitterly criticised and described the character of the times and the rulers in these words :

The kal age is a drawn sword,
The kings are butchers,
Justice has taken wings and fled,
In this dark night of falsity,
the moon of truth is not visible.
I am bewildered and in this darkness
no path is visible.⁸

Bhai Gurdas, who lived in the times of the fifth Guru, also describes the sorrowful state of affairs of this period in these words :

In kalyug, the man has become man eater
and the tyranny is the rule of the day
the protectors have forgotten their mandate
Ignorance is deep rooted,
and falsehood reins supreme.⁹

Under such circumstances how could a well founded administrative system work? The men in power were exploiting the poor and sucking their blood without compunction. Guru Nanak though primarily a social and religious reformer, made many such references here and there from which we can draw a clear picture of the ruling bureaucracy and political institutions as existed during his times. The following words, frequently used in his verses, help us to draw a clear picture of the administrative machinery and

the institutional heads who governed the people. A few words found in the Adi Granth are : sultan, padshah, wazir, naib, salar, taj, takhat, chattar, diwan, darbar, hukam sachi-patshahi, qazi, khan, amir, umra, malik, shiqdar, kotwal, chowdhary, patwari, muqqdam, rayyiat and panchayat etc.¹⁰ Each word has something special to convey. The reference to these and other words would be made in the explanatory notes that follow. Guru Nanak also advocated his concept of an ideal ruler and an ideal person.

The Sultan or Padshah

Although Guru Nanak uses both these words - sultan and padshah, in a metaphorical sense which relate to God, the True King, 'the King of Kings', however, to give the idea of unlimited power of the Almighty, he, in fact, draws picture of the historical personality of the sultan or padshah who enjoyed vast and unlimited powers over his subjects.¹¹ As His (God's) powers are beyond description, so is the case with the powers, prerogatives and authority of the sultan/padshah¹² who was the head of the State.

Thou art the sultan, O Lord,

If I call Thee a Chieftain then is it

any praise for Thee ?¹³

At another place, Guru Nanak writes :

Even if I were a sultan (King)
a gatherer of armies,
and my seat were on a throne,
And I commanded people about and about.¹⁴

These and other such references¹⁵ in Guru Nanak's verses cannot be dismissed as mere metaphors. For a student of history, these convey a special importance when we look at these references in a historical perspective.

According to the Islamic theory of sovereignty, there is only one king of all Muslims wherever they might be living. He is the Caliph or the Khalifa. But in actual practice, the heads of the states in various countries, where the Muslims had established their rule, enjoyed their authority independent of the Khalifa.¹⁶ The sultan was all powerful, who commanded the armies, sat on the throne and ruled over his subjects.¹⁷ His will and word was the law which could not be challenged. He was also the fountain head of justice, in whose court people from far and near came to get their grievances redressed.¹⁸ His powers were very wide, indeed. He was a perfect autocrat and his authority was unfettered.¹⁹

Law of Succession

In the Muslim state sovereignty was supposed to reside in the entire sunni population of the country called

millat. In theory, the sultans were elected by this brotherhood. In spite of the original democratic nature of an Islamic state the rulers of Delhi were not always elected by the millat or the masses.²⁰ Generally, the deciding factor was the sword and power that one could gather to lay his claim on the throne.²¹

He alone hath the power,
He alone hath the way.²²

There was no hereditary principle of succession and the office of the sultan was open, at least in theory to any bonafide Muslim. In the absence of a hereditary principle of succession, one who had the qualities, the will and power to assert his claim got the crown. Guru Nanak writes :

He alone sitteth on the throne
who is worthy of it.²³

Similar view is expressed at another place, where the Guru writes :

That king sitteth on the throne,
who's worthy of it;
Yea, he who realiseth the (God's) Truth,
he (alone) is the true king.²⁴

The sultan was required to be a person capable of dealing with the problems of the state. He was to be in

full possession of physical and mental faculties. One who had love and fear of God in him, was in the opinion of Nanak, the true King of the realm.

Most of the rulers believed in the Divine Right of Kingship. Guru Nanak did not attach any divinity to the office of the king, though he believed that it was the gift of God. According to him the raja is as much a creation of God as everything else in the world. Kingship and riches come not as acquisitions of man but as boons from God, whomsoever, He chooses to grant.²⁵ The raja as well as the beggar exist because of divine dispensation. The poor people beg to eat while the rulers are drunk with power and enjoy unlimited luxuries of the world.²⁶ God has the power to degrade the sultans or other influential persons of the state to ordinary positions and also to upgrade the lowliest to power and glory, if He so desires.²⁷

The God raiseth high that are low,
and the high, He reduceth in His Will.²⁸

To make himself sufficiently worthy of his exalted position, the sultan maintained the largest establishment in the Kingdom. His palaces, his harem, his slaves and retainers, his armies, elephants and horses, gold and jewels gave him such a place that no ordinary human being could think of.

The saddled horses, swift like wind,
and the harems colourfully embellished,
and the houses, halls and mansions.
Such, yea, is the display of the men of the world.
And they indulge, as it pleaseth them,
they eat as is their will, and seeing their palaces,
they lose sight of death.²⁹

As Dr. Ashraf puts it, 'without providing such paraphernalia of royalty, a monarch could hardly be considered a proper monarch, and the padshah was hardly worthy of his exalted position'.³⁰ Such was the ideal of rulership and in fact it was the universal outlook of the age.

The luxurious life that a sultan was leading, was not only due to his materialistic attitude, it was also meant to distinguish himself from the other people. The luxuries and the riches of the rulers included unlimited gold, silver and other precious metals, costly clothes, tents, furniture, dry fruit, meat, butter and other food items and a separate household department which looked after the needs of the ruling family.³¹

The example of the sultan or rulers of the small principalities was imitated by the nobility, as far as their means and resources permitted them. Keeping a large number of slaves (males and females) or domestics was yet another way of projecting the ruler's superior position

over others.³² Slavery was a common feature of contemporary Muslim society. Slaves could be purchased from the markets through auction or on a fixed price as in the days of Ala-ud-din Khilji.³³ Even the Hindu rajas and the rich nobles kept a large number of domestic servants and slaves of both sexes belonging to different nationalities. Guru Nanak uses the words chakar, gola, lala, dass, banda and bandi for those, who were in the service of the rulers, serving them day and night.³⁴

As mentioned above slaves were sold in markets from moderate to very high prices depending on beauty and ability of the slave.³⁵ In case of girls, apart from their facial beauty, sociability and physical fitness were the chief determining factors for a higher price than that of a male slave.³⁶

Female slaves were of two kinds. Those employed for domestic and menial services and those bought for pleasure and company. The latter had a better and sometimes, even a dominating position in the royal and aristocratic households.

Slaves did numerous and varied types of work. They were bearers of basins and ewers, they served their masters with a fan during the summer and whisked flies, they washed the hands and feet of their masters and prepared food and served them. Even the flour which was used in the preparation of bread was ground by the slaves.³⁷ Those who

were trustworthy and loyal were appointed as personal bodyguards of their masters.³⁸ They served and looked after the comforts and safety of their masters.

The chief quality of a slave was to be 'yesman' of his master. Complete surrender rather than the nature to argue was the keynote of the success of the slaves.³⁹ A slave with this kind of disposition earned a special place among those who were serving the ruler or the other rich people of the realm.

The institution of slavery might have served some purposes to the sultans, rajas, raos and the nobles, but it did produce some baneful social consequences. It had certainly the stamp of exploitation.⁴⁰ It was an unhealthy feature of the social life of medieval period of Indian history. In fact, the society was demoralized by the prevalence of slavery.

Bards and Minstrels

There was yet another class of the people who flooded the court of the rulers. They were the bards, minstrels, singers and dancers. Musicians of note, bards and well-known comedians brightened the pleasure parties of the rulers, princes and nobles and sang songs and recited verses in their praise. There was a special class of people who were adept in the art of eulogizing the deeds and qualities

of their masters. They were known as bhatts and dhadis (bards). Guru Nanak calls himself a dhadi of the King of Kings i.e., the Supreme Authority of the world - God. He feels honoured and blessed to be the singer (dhadi) of His court who has given him 'work'. Guru Nanak writes :

Me, the worthless bard,
the Lord hath blest with (His) service.
Be it night or day,
many a time He giveth His call,
and calls me He verily into His presence.
And there I praise Him and receive the robe.⁴¹

These bards used to get food, clothes, rich gifts and robes for their services as is clear from the above couplet of Guru Nanak. We have several such examples of composers and singers in the courts of medieval Indian rulers,⁴² who earned their bread by eulogizing the exploits of their benefactors, and enlivened their assemblies with ready wit and pleasant humour. Poems were recited in the drinking parties amidst the music and blandishment of graceful beauty of dancing girls.

The singers, dhadis (bards) and other such people who served in the court of the ruler or in the courts of the provincial governors and other rich people of the age, were generally considered very low in the social ladder.⁴³ This is clear from the following lines of Guru Nanak, where

he says :

I am the Lord's bard of low caste
the others are all of higher birth than me.⁴⁴

Some of the composers of this period rose to respectable positions and their compositions have become a part of rich literary tradition of the age. Their writings are a valuable source of information to study the period in which they lived.⁴⁵

In the compositions of Guru Nanak, there are three vars⁴⁶ in ballad form, in praise of God. Guru Arjan (the compiler of Adi Granth), a poet with an extraordinary knowledge of the contemporary music and the ragas then prevalent has added a brief note to these Vars as the way these are to be sung. This note to each Var strengthens our view that the dhadis and poets used to sing verses in the praise of the rulers as well. The three Vars, written and composed by Guru Nanak, are set on the modes of the earlier odes then popular with masses, in which the heroic deeds of bravery of some king, a general or a hero are narrated.⁴⁷ Whereas the Vars composed by the earlier dhadi and poets contain the praises of human beings, the Vars (ballads) composed by Guru Nanak contain praises of God, Satguru and Nirankar (the formless), who to Guru Nanak is the king of kings, the chief warrior and the conqueror of wars against evil and unrightousness.

Musical Instruments

As the entire Bani of Guru Nanak is written in different ragas⁴⁸, we come across names of various musical instruments which were popular among the singers and dancers of that age. Bhai Mardana's⁴⁹ favourite instrument was rabab (a four stringed instrument in the form of a short necked guitar). He could reproduce the notes (as directed by Guru Nanak) on it, as Guru Nanak sang the way into the hearts of the millions. Those who played on this instrument were called rababis. Kabir, who was a contemporary of Nanak, has referred to this and other instruments at two places in his compositions, now compiled in the main body of the Adi Granth. At one place he writes :

The elephant is the rabab (rebeck) player,
the bull plays pakhawaj (the drummer),
the crow beats tall (chenney, i.e. the cymbals)
and dressed up in skirt, danceth the donkey,
and the he buffalow stageth the play.⁵⁰

In another hymn he writes :

The drum no longer is beat,
(for) the mind actor hath gone to sleep,
the sitting is broken, the rebeck (rabab),
emitteth no sounds,
yea, it is through error
that one spoils one's works.⁵¹

Bheri (a kind of naqqara - a drum) was played at the royal court. In Red Fort Delhi, there is a Naqqar Khana where the drum was played five times a day.⁵² Kingri (a kind of bina) and singi were the popular instruments of the yogis. Pakhawaj, bansari and ghungroo found favour with the dancers.⁵³

Prerogatives of the Rulers

During the period of our study, the rulers enjoyed certain privileges and prerogatives, which no one else could enjoy or think of. Sitting on the takht⁵⁴ (throne), use of chattar⁵⁵ (royal canopy), taj (crown), issuing of the coins and khutba to be read in his name were some of the things which only a ruler could use or enjoy.⁵⁶ The rulers and aristocracy were always busy in hoarding gold, silver and other riches to improve their financial position. It was an unending lust to which neither the long years of reign or chests full of gold and jewels could give a final satisfaction.

The deserts are satiated not by rain;
nor is fire satiated (by word);
the king is satiated not by his dominions,
(and the riches),
and the seas are thirsty as soon as they are full.⁵⁷

Generally, this wealth was amassed by the rulers and the people around him, by exploiting their subjects or raiding the places of worship of the non-Muslims. Discriminating taxes and other such measures were in common use during Guru Nanak's time. In Var Majh and Asa Di Var he has given a vivid description of the prevailing situations.⁵⁸

Duties of the Ruler

If medieval literature - political and non-political - including the religious writings of the period, can supply any clue to the aspirations of the people it may be safely stated that the people could tolerate any sultan provided he guaranteed peaceful conditions and administered even handed justice.⁵⁹

It was believed that an unjust king disturbed the equilibrium of society and created all round chaos, while his injustice, greed and avarice resulted in calamities like famine, scarcity of rainfall, economic and political crisis and shedding of innocent blood. Guru Nanak clearly states that due to the wrong policies and acts of injustice, the Lodis have ruined a 'precious gem'⁶⁰ Hindustan, and the wrath of God fell on this country in the person of Babur who defeated the Afghans at Saidpur, Lahore and Panipat and set the cities on fire after looting the wealth and honour of the people. The victor made no distinction

between a Hindu or a Muslim, states Guru Nanak :

Where are the stables now,
where the horses,
where are the drums,
where the flutes?
where the red dresses (of the soldiers), pray?
where are the looking glasses,
where the beauteous faces,
no, I see them not before me.

...

Where are the homes, where are the mansions,
where the magnificent serais?
where are the beauteous brides lounging on a
a cosy bed,
seeing whom one would get no sleep,
where are the betal leaves and their sellers,
where the harems :
Yea all have vanished like shadow

...

Hearing of the invasion of Bābar millions of Muslim
divines prayed for his halt,
but he burnt all the age old temples and the
resting places,
and the princes, cut-up into pieces,
were thrown to the winds.⁶¹

The administrative duties of the ruler were as multifarious as the necessities of the state. Though legal fiction had placed sovereignty in the khalifa, in practice the sultan was the actual sovereign and wielded immense powers. He was the supreme legislator as well as the highest court of appeal. He led all military campaigns in person and kept a jealous eye on the governors and higher officials of the state.

No ruler, however, autocrat he might be, dare flout public opinion though it had no recognized ways of expressing itself.⁶² According to Guru Nanak, monarchy was God ordained.⁶³ In his opinion, the monarch exercises the power as a mandate from God in order that he may continue to enjoy this boon, he must always act in consonance with God's dictates, which reside in the will of the people. In one of the couplets Guru Nanak says that for a ruler, the public opinion is like a pointer of God's will, and the one who submits before the democratic ideals has no fear of loosing his crown or throne.⁶⁴

As stated earlier, the sultan was the final executive authority for all state affairs. But the time honoured custom was to call a council (Majlis-i-Am) of the highest officers for discussing the more important problems. The council was consultative merely, it had no constitutional or legal powers; its meetings were secret, the ruler could call whomsoever he liked and could over rule the most

decided opinions of the council.⁶⁵ Nevertheless it was a thing of reality and not a sham. These councillors were chosen by the sultan and therefore consisted mostly of his favourities and supporters. It was only under a weak sultan that the councillors exercised any authority that too only by individuals and never collectively.⁶⁶

The other Important Functionaries of the State

In his task to run the government, the ruler was assisted by a body of ministers of which four generally enjoyed a higher status than the others. The four ministers were, Diwan-i-wazarat, Diwan-i-Ariz, Diwin-i-Insha and Diwan-i-Rasalat. Another important department was that of the justice, whose head was Qazi-ul-Qazat. Sometimes a Naib (deputy) or Naib-i-Mamalik was also appointed. He exercised great authority particularly when the sultan was weak.⁶⁷ Guru Nanak has made no reference to any of these departments anywhere in his Bani. However, words like wazir, naib and diwan etc. do occur in his compositions to give us an idea that they were much nearer to the sultan than the other ministers.⁶⁸

The Wazir

The wazir played an indispensable part in the administrative machinery of the sultanate of Delhi and upon

his wisdom, capacity, sincerity and loyalty the success of the sultan and prosperity of the empire depended. He stood midway between the sovereign and his subjects. There could be only one wazir for the empire as there was only one ruler of the country. But it was not necessary for the king to consult his ministers or wazir on all occasions. He could act even without them or contrary to their advice. Neither the ministers nor the wazir acted as a check on the authority of the king. The Muslim Government particularly in India was an autocratic one and the rulers were their own wazirs.⁶⁹

The wazir was chiefly incharge of the financial department known as Diwan-i-Wazarat. He checked the records sent by the governors and various revenue collectors to his ministry. He had to be cautious and stern, a master of general principles as well as details, in order to keep the servants of the revenue office in check. He was emperor's first adviser, who took precedence over his colleagues.⁷⁰

Diwan-i-Wazarat had under it other minor departments each under a distinct officer of its own. They were an accountant general, an auditor general and a khazin whose office correspond to that of a treasurer.⁷¹

Another important person of this department was a diwan. Under the Mughal rulers they assumed more powers than the wazir. In the Bani of Guru Nanak we find diwan holding court and deciding the revenue cases.

Naib

Besides the wazir, there was an extraordinary officer known as the Naib-i-Mamalik or regent of the state. The naib enjoyed very high position and dignity. In the absence of the sultan from the capital he discharged all urgent and routine duties of the state.⁷² At one place in Guru Nanak Bani the word naib appears in the context of riches and the close associates of the ruler, as under :

The race horses, elephants, standards and bands,
and armies, the royal assistant (naib) and
many other facades,
O, all these without the Lord, are an empty show.⁷³

Perhaps in the above couplet, Guru Nanak is using the word naib for Naib-i-Mamalik, which had different meaning to different sultans. Sometimes it was merely an empty title, but in case of Balban and Malik Kafur the position was different. Under Nasir-ud-din-Mahmud and Ala-ud-din Khilji respectively they enjoyed powers next to sultan only.⁷⁴

Department of Army

Although Guru Nanak makes no mention of a separate department of army under the sultan of Delhi, yet he is conscious of the importance of army to the monarchs of his

times.⁷⁵ With the help of it they had to maintain their position as rulers and had to extend the limits of the sultanate. They had to defend the frontiers and maintain law and order situation throughout the empire. All this could not be achieved without the support of a powerful and well-disciplined force (fauj). This is clear from the following couplet of Guru Nanak, although he spiritualises the whole thing. He writes :

Even if I were a sultan (King),
a gatherer of armies,
and my seat were on a throne,
and I commanded people about and about,
O, all that would be vain, if I forget Thee.
O, my Loved Lord.⁷⁶

The important wings of the army were cavalry and infantry. Besides horses a large number of elephants, camels and other beasts of burden were kept.⁷⁷ Elephants were used in the war fronts or at the time of taking out royal processions on ceremonial occasions. Camels and other animals were employed to carry the food and water supplies to the war camps. In the time of peace they were used to carry tents, food items and other things, whenever the ruler or his family members were on the move from one place to another. It was an expensive affair to maintain all this. A large part of the state's revenue had to be spent

on the maintenance of soldiers, horses and elephants.⁷⁸

Elephants were not always a success in the battlefield. During the struggle against Babar's forces, the Afghan armies were routed in no time. After analysing the real cause of their (Lodis) defeat, Guru Nanak clearly points out that the artillery of Babar created havoc. The elephants in the front line of the Lodhi armies got scared and panicky and they turned back, trampled their own men under their feet and made confusion worse confounded. The Mughal artillery rained death on the unfortunate Afghans who fell by thousands. Their swords, arrows and spears were no match of Babar's disciplined army. Soon the Afghan (Lodhi) hordes were hopelessly broken. The Mughal victory was complete and decisive.⁷⁹

According to Guru Nanak, a ruler should be well-versed in military science and the chief quality of a soldier should be to die in the battlefield facing the enemy's army in the defence of the oppressed.⁸⁰ Those who die in the service of their lord, are rewarded. They are the true heroes and their death is approved by the Lord (God).⁸¹

The sultanate being on the military basis, all the officers of the government had a military rank. One of these officers was 'sipah salar' who was the commander-in-chief of the army. Under the Mughals he enjoyed full civil and executive duties of the governor. Guru Nanak has used

the word salar, probably in the first sense, to explain his position as commander-in-chief of the army. But his tenure was not fixed during the period of our study. Whenever, an expedition was sent a commander-in-chief was appointed whose tenure of office remained only (valid) so long as the expedition lasted.⁸²

Provincial Officers

At no stage in its history was the sultanate of Delhi divided into homogeneous provinces with uniform administrative system in them. Guru Nanak's time (1469AD - 1539 AD) was more disturbed from political point of view than the period of other Sikh Gurus who succeeded him. Although the Lodis had tried to reassert the sultanate's authority over the neighbouring and distant lands in the realm, the local chiefs of the areas, away from the centre enjoyed much more freedom in their respective territories than they had enjoyed under the Khiljis or under Mohd. Tughluq and Feroz Shah Tughluq. It is for this reason that we do not find a clear-cut picture of the provincial administration under the Sayyids and the Lodis, a period which corresponds with the life and times of Guru Nanak. However, the frequent references of rajas, raos, maliks, khans, chowdharis, muggadams, shiqdars, kotwals, patwaris and other petty officials of the village and paragana level or a bigger unit (iqta) under the sultanate period, Guru Nanak

Bani provides us some valuable information about their powers, privileges and mode of functioning. Most of the above officials were corrupt and they generally misused their positions and harassed the public with forcible exactions in the name of the ruler, as is clear from the scattered references in Guru Nanak's Bani.⁸³

Diwan

Like the wazir at the centre, diwan looked after the revenue department at the provincial level. He was assisted by a number of officials at the pargana and village level. Generally, the officers were very strict with the cultivators. They were corrupt and greedy too. Those cultivators who failed to deposit their revenue (dues) in time to the state agency, were visited by local officials who demanded bribe and forced them to present themselves before the diwan. Defaulters in their payment were heavily fined and punished. The following couplet of saint Kabir (a contemporary of Guru Nanak) give us a realistic picture of the prevailing situation.

The service (of my amildar) hath ended :
now I have to render account to diwan (God)
Yea, the cruel couriers of the (Yama)
diwan have now come to seize me.
What has thou earned and where hast thou lost?

: 62 :

Haste, O amil (life), for, the diwan (Dharamraja)
calleth thee to his court.⁸⁴

and

Of the one tract of land, are the five (rulers)
shiqdars

and all the five demand revenue.

I have cultivated no one's land.

To make such a payment is indeed painful.

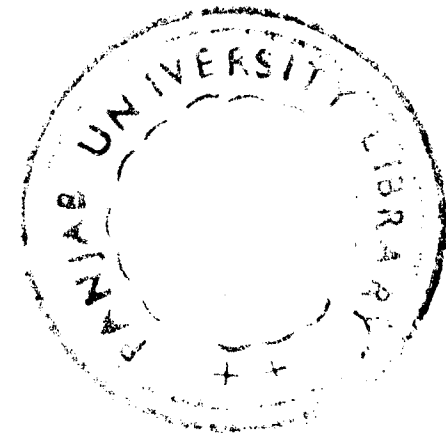
O God's people, the village accountant (patwari)
ever tortures me.

Raising my arms aloft, I complained to my Guru
and he did save me.⁸⁵

Shiqs

A shiq⁸⁶ was a small administrative unit and its head was a shiqdar. He maintained some soldiers who were employed for keeping control and maintaining peace within the areas under his jurisdiction. Besides maintenance of law and order he provided military assistance to the amils and other state officials in the collection of land revenue and other taxes. Many a times he had to use force against the refractory muqqadams and zamindars. He was also required to protect the rights of the sheikhs, mullas and sadats living within his jurisdiction.⁸⁷

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While making a reference to shiqdars, muqqadams and other petty officials, Guru Nanak says, they generally behaved in a highhanded manner and oppressed the people with force and heavy exactions under one or another pretext and squeezed the blood of the innocent people.⁸⁸ Even the courtiers and the servants of the rulers were like dogs who used to 'tear' the docile subjects with their nails. The rulers were no exception either. Guru Nanak compares them with hunting animals who were trained to bring the animals of their own class into the hunting trap of the ruler and eat their flesh. The people were at the mercy of them :

The deers, the hawks and the shiqdars,
are called clever and learned.
For, they trap their own caste,
the kings are like leopards,
the courtiers (muqqadams) like dogs.
The kings's servants tear
(the flesh of the innocent people) with their nails,
and like curs, lick up all the blood they spill.⁸⁹

Saint Kabir also confirms, that the shiqdars, muqqadams, patwaris and the other officials connected with the revenue department were most corrupt and rude in their behaviour towards the peasantry and the tax payers.⁹⁰ These officials tried to imitate the nobility at the centre or

at the provincial level. With lots of power and money at their disposal they led the life of ease and comfort.

Village

The smallest unit of the country was a village. Village life had been the backbone of Indian civilization and had survived through the ages. The sultans of Delhi too did not disturb the village life. Kabir (a contemporary of Guru Nanak) uses the word gaon⁹¹ for village. The villagers continued to manage their affairs through the elected body of the five, known as panchayats besides other village officials described in the earlier pages as muqqadams, khuts, chowdharis and patwaris.⁹² Some of these officials are mentioned in Guru Nanak Bani. Most of them were Hindus and they had a real control over the country side.

Judicial Department

The judicial system under the period of our study was a simple one. The ecclesiastical cases were separated from the civil and criminal cases. The highest court of appeal in civil and criminal cases was that of the sultan/padshah himself. The sultan could try cases singly both as an original and as an appellate judge, he was assisted by the chief qazi and two muftis in the application of the law.⁹³ In civil cases, arising out of the personal law of

the non-Muslims, which came before the court, the law was explained by a brahmin expert, called pandit. The status of the pandit was the same as that of the mufti.⁹⁴ In Guru Nanak Bani there are many references of qazi, mufti and brahmins. He has used the word musfi⁹⁵ for mufti and qadi⁹⁶ for qazi.

According to Guru Nanak judicial department was the most ill-organised during this period. Justice hath taken wings and fled⁹⁷, he writes, 'and the qazis live on bribe and give verdict in favour of those who grease their palm'. Guru Nanak is very critical of the existing nature of the judiciary and boldly writes that the sins of taking bribe cannot be washed away by reciting the Quran and posing as God-fearing men.⁹⁸ Scolding the qazis, he says : 'By playing upon rosary, repeating the name of God, unwillingly and by passing fatwas on the false grounds of Quran, no body would gain spirituality'.

The qazi sitteth in judgment upon others,
And telleth the rosary and mutters the name of Allah.
But he doeth injustice, for his palm is greased,
and if any one asketh him, he quotes
chapters and verse (from the Quran).⁹⁹

Guru Nanak regrets that the qazis live on bribe and tell lies and the brahmins who pretend to be pious are no better than the qazis.

The qazis uttereth falsehood and so eateth dirt
the brahmin slayeth life and then bathes
(at the pilgrim stations).¹⁰⁰

In Guru Nanak's view a real judge should have full faith in God. In other words, only he who is real worshipper of God can show compassion to others. A selfish man cannot be a real judge.¹⁰¹ Those who posed as benefactors, were busy in amassing wealth by all sinful means. Even the king would dispense justice only when he gets (his full).

For without give and take,
no one would do a thing (for another)
The king ministers justice if his palm is greased.
But in the name of God, he is moved not.
Human in form, Nanak by name,
But in deeds a cur¹⁰²

False witnesses could be procured on payment of a few coins into the hands of a qazi. This was nothing short of the death of 'judgment' by strangulation. In Rag Maru Guru Nanak writes :

And he standeth false witness
if his palm be greased
and thus doth he strangle himself with vice.¹⁰³

Even upto the period of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb corruption from this department could not be eradicated.

Writing during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign Bernier states, "if the party really in the wrong had possessed the means of pulling a couple of coins into the hands of the qazi or his clerks, and of buying with the same sum two false witnesses, he would indisputably have gained his cause".¹⁰⁴

There was a qazi in every province and one in every district. The government left small towns and rural areas untouched and appointed no judicial officers of its own to administer justice. The villages had their own panchayats, which not only decided all their disputes, but also enforced their decisions. The people therefore, happy to be left undisturbed by their foreign masters, whose rule over the villages existed only for the collection of revenue.¹⁰⁵

Police Department

There was no police worth the name except a kotwal in important cities. The term kotwal is derived from the Sanskrit word kotpal whom Guru Nanak calls kutvar¹⁰⁶, which shows that he must have originally been a military officer. He had a small contingent of men under him and his main duty was to maintain peace and order in his jurisdiction.

His duties were partly secular. Besides enforcing the Islamic regulations and seeing that the Muslims said their five daily prayers and kept the fast of ramzan and observed other religious ordinances in their daily life, he

had to control the markets and to regulate weights and measures. He enforced the regulations relating to prohibition of drugs, ganja and other items of a like nature.¹⁰⁷

There was no police in the villages or even in the small towns. As the officials in the judicial department were corrupt, so was the police department. In one of his couplets Guru Nanak compares a kotwal with sin and greed with that of a dark prison-house.

Avarice is the dark dungeon and the
demerits are the fetters on the feet.

Wealth ever beats the soul
with its mallet and 'sin' does
the duty of a police-officer.

Whether good, whether bad,
the man is, as Thou lookest
on him, O Lord.¹⁰⁸

It is clear thus, that government was based on the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class. Guru Nanak whose sympathies were naturally with the ruled bitterly criticised the contemporary administrative machinery and the ruling class who had no love for justice or fair play.

Condition of the Hindus

Guru Nanak found that the contemporary Hindu society was declining. The Hindus, in order to get the official ranks, sacrificed their self-respect, and comp-

letely submitted themselves to the Turks.¹⁰⁹ Despite the fact that the Hindus contemptuously looked upon the Muslims as malechas and the Muslims in turn looked upon the Hindus as infidels or kafirs, the Hindus had learnt to accept Muslim rule with all its merits and faults.¹¹⁰ It was therefore not surprising that the Hindus has started taking food and meat prepared in the Muslim fashion and the Turkish impact on their dress and conduct was clearly visible. They had become cowardly and the demoralisation of the Hindus had perverted and corrupted their social attitudes. This was specially true of the caste conscious high caste Hindus who were living a kind of hypocritical life to please their Muslim masters.¹¹¹ The following couplets of Guru Nanak are very significant to have an insight into the condition of the Hindus of his days :

They wear blue clothes in order to be acceptable
to the ruling class;
They earn their living from those
whom they call malechas,
Yet they worship the Puranas;
they eat meat of a goat killed in the
Mohammedan fashion, yet
they allow no one to enter their
cooking squares.¹¹²

At another place, he says that :

The Kshatriyas have given up their religion,
and taken to the foreign tongue.¹¹³

With the advent of the Muslim rule the Hindu culture started acquiring the Islamic tinge because of the pressure of the ruling class. Guru Nanak not only condemned such rulers who were trying to impose their culture and faith on their subject but also condemned such people who had adopted the culture and faith of the rulers.¹¹⁴

The Hindus were given the status of the zimmis¹¹⁵ i.e., the people living under contract as second rate citizens of the state. They had to pay various kinds of discriminatory taxes to their Muslim sovereigns.¹¹⁶ Besides the imposition of jiziyah and pilgrimage tax, certain legal disabilities were also imposed on them. For example, their evidence in the court of law and in suits against Muslims was not given the respect due to their rank. Particularly the position of the Hindus during Ala-ud-din Khilji, Feroz Tughluq and Sikandar Lodi's period was very bad.¹¹⁷

During the campaigns undertaken by the Muslim rulers, the important Hindu temples were razed to the ground and their images broken to pieces. Writing about the period of Sikandar Lodi (a contemporary of Guru Nanak), Dr. Srivastava states that when he became king, he indulged in the policy of destroying temples and images and building mosques in their places. He broke the sacred image of Jawalamukhi temple and Nagarkot and gave its pieces to butchers to use them

as weights to weigh meat with. He destroyed many temples at Mathura, Mandrail, Utagir, Marwar, Chanderi and other places. He ordered a Hindu, named Bodhan to be put to death for no other offence than saying that 'Hinduism is as true a religion as Islam'. Sikandar did not permit Hindus to bathe in Yamuna at bathing ghats and prohibited barbers from shaving their beards. Like Feroz Tugluq, he made an attempt to encourage the Hindus and to convert them to Islam, by giving them high positions and revenue free lands.¹¹⁸

It was under such pressing circumstances that the Hindus developed an inferiority complex and feeling of helplessness. The constant fear of death did incalculable harm to the growth of sound personality of the Hindus. To demoralise them further, they were denied posts in government departments.¹¹⁹ From the following couplets of Guru Nanak it is clear that the Hindus had made a kind of compromise with the ever increasing influence of Islam in their day to day life.

Now that the turn of Sheikhs has come,
the Primal Lord is called Allah
And the (Hindu) Gods and temples have been taxed
such is the current way
the ablution pot, the prayer, the prayer mat, the
call to prayer,
have all assumed the Muslim garb;
even God hath been robed in blue;
(like the muslims did)

And men have changed their tongue and the
Muslim way of greetings prevails.¹²⁰

It is true that the degeneration among the Hindus had started long back, but it deepened and widespread under the Lodis whose period coincides with the period of Guru Nanak. The Hindus felt alienated and hence they were indifferent towards their foreign sovereigns and did not care as who occupied the throne of Delhi. The sultans of Delhi did not make any serious efforts to reconcile the people to their rule and hence lost their support and cooperation when the forces of Babar invaded our country in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

From the above discussions, we can conclude that the rulers of the country were autocrat, with unlimited powers. Their ministers and other officials at the provincial and local levels were corrupt and arrogant in their behaviour towards the common masses. The revenue collecting staff and the judiciary was prone to bribery and forcible exactions and there was no justice worth the name. The rulers themselves had become the butchers and the age like a drawn sword. Not only this, the nature of the state had given rise to the policy of intolerance and persecution of the Hindus, who were hard pressed during the entire period of the sultanate of Delhi. It was a long, dark age of uncertainty and restlessness, leaving its ugly scars on all aspects of the people's life. We can conclude the character

of this age with the following words of Guru Angad, the immediate successor of Guru Nanak who succeeded him in 1539 AD and the second Guru of the Sikhs :

Every beggar today would be a king,
every block head sets up as a pandit,
the blind man would be a connoisseur of gems,
that is the modern way of talking of things.
The really bad man sets up a leader (chowdhary)
the liar is judged the perfect type of man;
Nanak through the Guru alone
it is known, that this is the (way)
of (justice) of the dark age (Kal age).¹²¹

NOTES

1. Johar, S.S., Guru Nanak, Jullunder, 1969, pp. 5-6.
For details, see Lal, K.S., Twilight of the Sultanate, pp. 131-161 and Nirodhbhusan Roy, (Tr. and ed.), Niamat Ullah's History of the Afghans, pp. 9-16.
2. Tripathi, R.P., Some Aspects of Muslim Administration, pp. 81-84. Pandey, A.B., Society and Government in Medieval India, Allahabad, 1965, p. 37.
3. Nirodhbhusan Roy, op. cit., pp. 94-96. Srivastava, A.L., The Sultanate of Delhi, pp. 319-320.
4. Varan Bhai Gurdas, 1/20. See, Varan Bhai Gurdas, S.G.P.C. Amritsar, 1952, p. 10.

ਠਾਕੁਰ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਢਾਹਿ ਕੈ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਉੜੀ ਮਾਸੀਤਿ ਉਸਾਰਾ॥
ਮਾਕਲ ਗਉ ਗਰੀਬ ਨੈ ਧਰਤੀ ਉਪਰ ਪਾਧੁ ਬਿਬਾਰਾ॥
ਪਯੇ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ॥

Regarding this statement by Bhai Gurdas, Banerjee, A.C., in, Guru Nanak and His Times, p. 29, writes that most probably these lines refer to the reign of Sikandar Lodi. The tradition of Sikandar Lodi's orthodoxy survived till the days of Firishta who says that the sultan 'made a point of destroying all Hindu temples'. See Briggs, op. cit., pp. 481-82.

5. Elliot and Dowson, History of India as Told by its Own Historians, Vol. IV, pp. 439-440, 447, 578, and 581.

6. Lal, K.S., op. cit., pp. 221-216.
7. Banerjee, Indu Bhushan, Evolution of the Khalsa, Calcutta, 1963, Vol. I, p. 40.
8. Gopal Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Eng. version), Delhi, 1961, Vol. III, p. 166.

Adi Granth, p. 145 :

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੈ ਕਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ॥
ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ॥
ਹਉ ਭਾਲਿ ਵਿਕੁਨੀ ਹੋਈ ਆਧੈਰੈ ਰਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥

9. Varan Bhai Gurdas, 1/30. See, op. cit., p. 15 :

ਕਲਿ ਆਈ ਕੁਤੇ ਮੁਹੀ ਖਾਜੁ ਹੋਇਆ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਸਾਈ॥
ਰਾਜੈ ਪਾਪ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਉਲਟੀ ਵਾੜ ਖੇਤ ਕਉ ਖਾਈ॥
ਪਰਜਾ ਆਈ ਗਿਆਨ ਬਿਣੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਕੁਸਤੁ ਮੁਖਹੁ ਆਲਾਈ॥

10. These words are scattered throughout the compositions of Guru Nanak in the following Ragas to be found in the Adi Granth :

Sri Rag (Astpadian); Rag Gauri (Astpadian), Rag Asa, Japji, Rag Vadhans (Chhant and Alahanian), Var Majh, Rag Parbhai (Chaupaday), Var Malhar (slok), Rag Bilaval, Suhi and Rag Basant (Hindol).

11. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, pp. 147-50.

12. Guru Nanak uses both these words sultan and padshah indicating the title of the ruling authority of his time.
13. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 576.
Adi Granth, p. 795 :
- ਤੂੰ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਰਉ ਮੀਆ
ਤੈਰੀ ਕਠ ਵਡਾਈ॥
14. Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 18.
Adi Granth, p. 14 :
- ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ਹੋਵਾ ਮੇਲਿ ਨਸਕਰ ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਖਾ ਪਉ॥
ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹਸਲੁ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਨਲਕਾ ਸਭ ਵਉ॥
15. Adi Granth, p. 258 :
- ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਛਤ੍ਰੁ ਸਿਰ ਸੋਉ॥
ਨਲਕ ਦੂਸਰ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਉ॥
16. Nizami, K.A., Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century, Bombay, 1961, p. 110.
17. Nizami, K.A. (ed.), Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib, Bombay, 1961, Vol. I, p. 370. Day, U.N. in Administrative System of Delhi Sultanate, New Delhi, 1969, p. 46. He writes that in the early middle ages the chief duty of the sultan was to conduct the military campaigns. The sultans were generally great military leaders who conducted the

campaigns in person or directed them from the capital. Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary of the fifth Guru also writes :

ਲਸਕਰ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਲਾਡੁਲੈ ਪਤਿਸਾਹਾ ਜਾਏ ਸਾਹਜਾਏ॥
ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਅਗੈ ਚੜਨਿ ਪਿਛੈ ਸਭ ਉਮਰਾਉ ਪਿਆਏ॥

Varan Bhai Gurdas, 5/11, see, op. cit., p. 57.

18. Day, U.N., op. cit., p. 46.
19. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., p. 321.
20. Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., p. 321.
21. 'The sultanate was based purely on force' writes Ashraf, K.M., Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan, New Delhi, 1970, p. 41. We have examples of Jalal-ud-din Khilji, Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq and Bahlul Lodi, founders of their respective dynasties.
22. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 10.
Adi Granth, p. 7 :

ਜਿਸੁ ਹਥਿ ਜੋਰੁ ਕਰ ਵੇਖੈ ਸੋਇ ॥
23. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 992.
Adi Granth, p. 1039 :

ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ ॥
24. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1040.
Adi Granth, p. 1088 :

ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਜਾ ਸੋ ਬਹੈ ਜਿ ਤਖਤੈ ਲਾਇਕ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਜਿਨੀ ਸਚੁ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਰਾਜੈ ਸੇਈ ॥

25. Adi Granth, p. 7 :

26. Adi Granth, p. 566 :

ਇਕ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਕੀਏ ਰਾਜੇ
ਇਕਨਾ ਭਿਖ ਭਵਾਈਆ॥

Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 553

Some Thou blestest with the glory of kingship,
others but wander about as beggars.

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 354.

27. Adi Granth, p. 1329 :

ਉਚਾ ਤੈ ਫੁਨਿ ਨੀਚੁ ਕਰਤੁ ਹੈ
ਨੀਚੁ ਕਰੈ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ॥

28. Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1266.

Similar views are expressed by Guru Nanak in
Var Majh, Adi Granth, p. 145 and Rag Vadhans,
Adi Granth, p. 566.

29. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.

Adi Granth, p. 472.

ਤੁਰੈ ਪਲਾਣੈ ਪਉਣ ਵੇਗ ਹਰ ਰੀਗੀ ਹਰਮ ਸਵਾਰਿਆ॥
ਕੋਠੇ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾੜੀਆ ਲਾਇ ਬੈਠੇ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਸਾਰਿਆ॥
ਚੀਜ ਕਰਨਿ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵਦੈ ਹਰਿ ਬੁਝਨਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿਆ॥
ਕਰ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਸਿ ਖਾਇਆ ਵੇਖਿ ਮਹਲਤਿ ਮਰਣੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਆ॥
ਜਰੁ ਆਈ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਹਰਿਆ॥

30. Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 52.

31. For riches and luxurious items, see Adi Granth, Maj ki Var, pp. 141-42. Incharge of the household department was Wakil-i-dar. He was the most important officer connected with court and royal establishment. 'He controlled the entire household and supervised the payment of allowances and salaries to the personal staff of the sultan'. Even the royal kitchen, the royal stables and royal children were under his care. It was through him that the royal orders relating to household were communicated. Day, U.N., op. cit., p. 61. For detail discussion on the subject, see, Qureshi, I.H., The Administration of Delhi Sultanate, Lahore, 1944, pp. 57-75.
32. Zia-ud-din Barani records the advantages and disadvantages of retaining slaves in Fatawa-i-Jahandari, published under the title, 'Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate (Kitab Mahal), pp. 25-26. He observes : 'Owing to a large number of slaves the King looked powerful and dignified'.
33. Lal, K.S., History of the Khaljis, Allahabad, 1950, p. 285.
34. See, Adi Granth, pp. 474, 567, 729, 936, 991, 1288.
35. Adi Granth, p. 991 :

ਮੁਲ ਖਰੀਦੀ ਲਾਲਾ ਗੋਲਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਉ ਸੁਭਾਗਾ॥

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਚਨੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਕਲਾ ਜਿਤ ਲਾਇਆ ਤਿਤੁ ਲਾਗਾ॥

About the prices of the slaves (during Ala-ud-din's period), Lal, K.S., *op. cit.*, writes, In medieval times slaves of both sexes, like any other commodity, were sold in the market and the sultan fixed prices for them also. The standard price of a working girl was fixed from 5 to 12 tanks, and that of a good looking girl from 20 to 30 and even to 40 tanks. The prices of the boys were fixed from 20 to 30 tanks. The slave boys were classified according to their looks and working capacity.

36. Lal, K.S., *op. cit.*, p. 285.
Rashid, A., Society and Culture in Medieval India, Calcutta, 1969, p. 33.
37. In one of hymns in Rag Maru of Adi Granth, p. 991, Guru Nanak writes :

ਮੁਲ ਖਰੀਦੀ ਲਾਲਾ ਗੋਲਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਉ ਸਭਾਗਾ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਚਨੀ ਹਾਟਿ ਬਿਕਲਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਲਾਇਆ ਤਿਤੁ ਲਾਗਾ॥
ਤੇਰੇ ਲਾਠੇ ਕਿਆ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਰਣਾ ਜਾਈ॥
ਮਾ ਲਾਲੀ ਪਿਉ ਲਾਲਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਉ ਲਾਠੇ ਕਾ ਜਾਇਆ॥
ਲਾਲੀ ਨਾਚੈ ਲਾਲਾ ਗਾਵੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰਉ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਇਆ॥
ਪੀਅਹਿ ਤ ਪਾਣੀ ਆਣੀ ਮੀਰਾ ਖਹਿ ਤ ਪੀਸਣੁ ਜਾਉ॥
ਪਖਾ ਫੇਰੀ ਪੈਰ ਮਲੋਵਾ ਜਪਤ ਰਹਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਉ॥

Gopal Singh (tr.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 946-47.

I am a self off to Thee , O God,
how fortunate am I that I am Thy slave.
In exchange for Thy work, O Guru, I have sold
myself Thy Shop,
and now I go the way Thou hiddest.
If Thou art thirsty I bring water for Thee,
If hungry, I grind corn for Thee,
and I wave fan to Thee and rule Thy Feet and
contemplate ever Thy Name.

See, also Rashid, A., op. cit., p. 34.

38. Qureshi, I.H., op. cit., p. 63. Writing about such slaves who were appointed as personal body guards of the sultan, he writes, 'they were called jandars. The jandars were generally slaves of proved loyalty and were commanded by a trustworthy noble who was styled Sar-i-Jandar, only tall, handsome, brave youngmen of impressive physique were chosen to serve in this capacity'.
39. Guru Nanak's immediate successor Guru Angad, who himself was a true embodiment of selfless service, writes about the qualities of a true servant (slave to the lord), in Adi Granth, p. 474.

contd...

39. ਚਾਕਰੁ ਲਗੈ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਨਲੇ ਗਾਰਬੁ ਵਾਦੁ॥
ਗਲਾ ਕਰੈ ਘਣੇਰੀਆ ਖਸਮ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਸਾਦੁ॥
ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੈ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਮਠੁ॥
ਨਠਕ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਲਗਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਲਗਾ ਸੋ ਪਰਵਠੁ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 468.

If a servant serves the master
but is vain and disputatious,
Talk as well as he may,
he getteth not the approval of the Lord.
If he loses his self and so serves,
he getteth honour.
For approved is he,
who mergeth in whom he loveth
(the master, ruler).

Again he writes on the same page of Adi Granth :

ਸਨਾਮੁ ਜਬਾਬੁ ਦੇਵੈ ਕਰੈ ਮੁੰਢਹੁ ਘੁਬਾ ਜਾਇ॥
ਨਠਕ ਦੇਵੈ ਕੂੜੀਆ ਬਾਇ ਨ ਕਾਈ ਪਾਇ॥

and

ਚਾਕਰੁ ਲਗੈ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਜੇ ਚਲੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਭਾਇ॥
ਹੁਰਮਤਿ ਤਿਸ ਨੋ ਅਗਲੀ ਉਹ ਵਜਹੁ ਭਿ ਦੂਣਾ ਖਾਇ॥
ਖਸਮੈ ਕਰੈ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਗੈਰਤਿ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪਾਇ॥
ਵਜਹੁ ਗਵਾਏ ਅਗਲਾ ਮੁਰੈ ਮੁਹਿ ਪਾਣਾ ਖਾਇ॥

For translation, see Manmohan Singh (tr.),
op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 1564-67.

40. Ohja, P.N., Aspects of Medieval Indian Society and Culture, Delhi, 1978, p. 126.

41. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 143.
Adi Granth, p. 150 :

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ॥
ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰੁ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ॥
ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਲਿ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ॥
ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ॥

42. Writing about the life of Amir Khusrau, Mohammad Habib writes that 'he sang their (rulers) praises because he was paid for doing so and he insisted on being paid handsomely'. Quoted in Politics and Society during the early Medieval period, edited by Nizami, K.A., Bombay, 1972, p. 296.

43. Adi Granth, p. 468 :

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਕਾ ਠੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ
ਹੋਰ ਉਤਮ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਦਾਇਦੈ॥

44. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 461.

45. Amir Khusrau was one of those who enriched our literature, music, poetry and the philosophy. He enjoyed such an important position in the court of prince Mohammad, Ala-ud-din-Khilji, Mubarak and Ghias-ud-din-Tughluq that it is difficult to find another personality of his stature in the entire early medieval period of Indian history.

46. These vars are in Ragh Majh, Rag Asa and Rag Malhar having 27, 24 and 27 pauris respectively; see Taran Singh, Sri Guru Granth Ji Da Sahitak Itihas, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1963, p. 244.
47. To cite an example, in the beginning of Var Majh, Mahalla I, a brief note is added which reads 'to be sung in the measure of the Ballad of Malik Murid and Chandrehre Sohia'. In the English version of Guru Granth, Vol. I, p. 128, Dr. Gopal Singh in footnote, number 2 writes about the ballad of Malik Murid and Chandrehra Sohia, that 'it is a ballad of the sixteenth century narrating the battle of chandrehra, a courtier of Akbar, and Murid Khan his general, whom Akbar had sent out on an expedition to Kabul. Murid Khan had been successful in his mission but took some time to subdue the conquered people. This give an excuse to his adversary Chandrehre of the Sohi tribe, to poison the mind of the Emperor who thereupon ordered the former to march to Kabul and bring Murid Khan to book. A bitter battle ensued in which both these warriors were slain. The ballad, except for its measure, has nothing in common with the contents of the ballads included in the Adi Granth.
48. See footnote 1 of Chapter I. See also, Taran Singh, op. cit., pp. 244-245.

49. Mardana was the first disciple and life long companion of Guru Nanak. He was a Muslim by birth and a mirasi or minstrel by caste and rebeck player by profession. It is said that he improved the old form of instrument by fixing 4 to 6 strings to a hallow gourd so as to produce deep and mellow resonance; see Gupta, Hari Ram, History of the Sikh Gurus, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 249-53 and see also, Chawla, H.S., (ed), Guru Nanak, The Prophet of the People, New Delhi, 1970, pp. 74-91.

50. Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 471.
Adi Granth, p. 477 :

ਫੀਲੁ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਬਲਦੁ ਪਖਾਵਜ ਕਉਆ ਤਲ ਬਜਾਵੈ॥
ਪਹਿਰਿ ਚੋਲਨਾ ਗਦਗਾ ਨਾਚੈ ਭੈਸਾ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰਾਵੈ ॥

51. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., p. 472.
Adi Granth, p. 478 :

ਬਾਤੀ ਸੂਕੀ ਤੇਲੁ ਨਿਖੂਟਾ ਮੰਦਲੁ ਨ ਬਜੈ ਨਟੁ ਪੈ ਸੂਤਾ॥

... ..

ਟੂਟੀ ਤੰਤੁ ਨ ਬਜੈ ਰਬਾਬੁ ਭੂਲਿ ਬਿਗਾਰਿਓ ਅਪਨਾ ਕਾਜੁ॥

52. Naqqar Khana was also known as Naubat Khana (Drum House). In Delhi's Red Fort, it stands at the entrance of the palace area, and was used for playing music five times a day at propitious hours; see Sharma, Y.D., Delhi and Its Neighbourhood,

(Archaeological Survey of India), Delhi, 1964, p. 122 and Percy Brown, Indian Architecture (Islamic period), Bombay, 1975, p. 94.

53. Adi Granth, pp. 62, 368, 477, 730, 764, 790, 934 and 1291.
54. Adi Granth, Bilawal, M.I., pp. 840, 14, 143 and Maru Mahalla I, p. 992.
55. Adi Granth, p. 258.
56. For details see, symbols of royalty in Ashrafs, K.M., op. cit., pp. 67-68.
57. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 140.
Adi Granth, p. 148 :

ਮਾਰੂ ਮੀਰਿ ਨ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿਆ ਅਗੀ ਲਹੈ ਨ ਭੁਖ॥
ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਜ ਨ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿਆ ਸਾਇਰ ਭਰੈ ਕਿ ਸੁਕ॥

58. Adi Granth, pp. 137-150 and pp. 462-475. Tax on Cows and Brahmins has been referred by Guru Nanak on p. 471 :

ਗਉ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਨਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥
ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੈ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਨੁ ਮਲੇਛਾ ਖਾਈ॥
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਟੋਬਾ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ॥

Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., p. 1556.

Thou chargest tax for the cow and brahmin.
The cow-dung will not save thee.
Thou wearest a loin-cloth, puts a frontalmark.
carriest a rosary and eatest the muslims provisions.
O brother, within, thou performest worship,
outside thou readest muslim books and
adoptest Muhammadan-way of Life.

59. Adi Granth, p. 1240 :

ਸੁਰਤੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਕੀ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਾ ਜਤੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਚੁਲੀ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕੀ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਕਾ ਸਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥
ਰਾਜੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਨਿਆਵ ਕੀ ਪੜਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1185.

For the conscious mind, it is through wisdom,
for the yogi through chestity.
For the brahmin through contentment,
for the householder through charity.
For the monarch through justice,
and for the learned by dwelling on Truth.
(that one can find favour and respect in the
society).

60. Adi Granth, p. 360; see footnote 52 of Chapter II.

Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 351.

The jewel (of my country - Hindustan) has been
laid waste by curs, (Lodis),
O, who shall cherish their memory when they are
gone.

61. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., p. 415.

Adi Granth, p. 417 :

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਖੇਲ ਤਬੇਲਾ ਘੋੜੇ ਕਹਾ ਭੇਰੀ ਸਕਲਾਈ॥

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਤੇਗਬੰਦ ਗਾਢੇਰੜਿ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਲਾਲ ਕਵਾਈ॥

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਆਰਸੀਆ ਮੁਹ ਬੰਕੇ ਐਬੇ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ॥

...

...

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਘਰ ਦਰ ਮੰਡਲ ਮਹਲਾ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਬੰਕ ਸਰਾਈ ॥

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਜਿਸ ਵੇਖਿ ਨੀਦ ਨ ਪਾਈ॥

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਪਲ ਤਬੇਲੀ ਹਰਮਾ ਹੋਈਆ ਛਾਈ ਮਾਈ॥

...

...

ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ॥

ਬਲ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਜਲੈ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ ਕੁਇਰ ਕੁਲਾਇਆ॥

62. Nizami, K.A., op. cit., pp. 110-11. Day, U.N.,
op. cit., pp. 46-48.

63. Adi Granth, p. 566 :

ਇਕਿ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਕੀਏ ਰਾਜੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਭਿਖ ਭਵਾਈਆ॥

For translation, see Manmohan Singh, op. cit.,
Vol. IV, p. 1861. Day, U.N. has quoted Zia-ud-din
Barani's statement, op. cit., p. 44 as under
'Sovereignty is not conferred upon everyman but is
placed on the elect'. Guru Nanak expresses the
same view in Rag Vadhans, Adi Granth, on p. 566.
For translation, see Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. II,
p. 533.

contd...

Some Thou blesset with glory of kingship.
O Lord, be merciful to me that I utter Thy Name.

64. Adi Granth, p. 992 :

ਰਾਜਾ ਤਖਤਿ ਟਿਕੈ ਗੁਣੀ ਭੈ ਪੰਚਾਇਣੁ ਕਰੁ ॥

For translation see, Manmohan Singh, op. cit.,
Vol. 6, p. 3250.

65. Nizami, K.A., (ed), Collected Works of Mohammad Habib, Vol. II, p. 371.

66. Day, U.N., op. cit., p. 34.

67. Nizami, K.A., op. cit., p. 373 and Qureshi, I.H.,
op. cit., p. 10.

68. Adi Granth, pp. 159, 225, 473 and 1037.

69. Adi Granth, p. 159 and p. 413 :

ਅਪੇ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਅਪਿ ਵਜੀਰ ॥

ਏਕੈ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਏਕੈ ਵਜੀਰ ॥

70. Qureshi, I.H., op. cit., pp. 78-85.

71. Day, U.N., op. cit., p. 57.

72. Qureshi, I.H., op. cit., p. 93 is of the opinion
that his authority varied according to the
character of the monarch.

73. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 217.

contd...

Adi Granth, p. 225 :

ਹੈਵਰ ਗੈਵਰ ਨੇਜੇ ਵਾਜੇ॥
ਲਸਕਰ ਨੇਬ ਖਵਾਸੀ ਪਾਜੇ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 1037.

74. Day, U.N., op. cit., pp. 34-35; also see, Qureshi, I.H., op. cit., p. 93.

75. Guru Nanak uses the word Lashkar for armies.

Adi Granth, p. 63 :

ਦਰ ਘਰ ਮਹਲਾ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਪਕੇ ਕੋਟ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ॥
ਹਸਤੀ ਘੋੜੇ ਪਾਖਰੇ ਲਸਕਰ ਲਖ ਆਪਾਰ॥

76. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 18.

Adi Granth, p. 14 :

ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ਹੋਵਾ ਮੇਲਿ ਲਸਕਰ ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਖਾ ਪਾਉ॥
ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਨਲਕਾ ਸਭ ਵਾਉ॥
ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ॥

77. See Phul, R.K., Armies of the Great Mughals, Delhi, 1978, pp. 57-80 and Sarkar, J.N., The Art of War in Medieval India, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 98-110.

78. A general idea of the expenses on elephants can be drawn from the daily food an elephant required. Guru Nanak writes in Adi Granth, p. 1286 :

contd...

ਸਉ ਮਣੁ ਹਸਤੀ ਘਿਉ ਗੁੜੁ ਖਾਵੈ
ਪੰਜਿ ਸੈ ਦਾਣਾ ਖਾਇ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1227.

The elephant eateth an immense load of grains,
jaggery and ghee.

Then there were attendants to look after them.

So was the case with horses and other animals.

A major portion of the state's revenue was spent
on the army.

79. Adi Granth, p. 418 :

ਮੁਗਲ ਪਠਾਣਾ ਭਈ ਲੜਾਈ ਰਣ ਮਹਿ ਤੈਗ ਵਗਾਈ ॥
ਓਨੀ ਤੁਪਕ ਤਾਣਿ ਚਲਾਈ ਓਨੀ ਹਸਤਿ ਚਿੜਾਈ ॥
ਜਿਲ ਕੀ ਚੀਰੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਟੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਭਾਈ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 415.

The Mughals and the Pathans (Lodi) grappled with
each other and the swords changed on the battlefield.

And while the Mughals fired their guns,

the others put their elephants forward.

But they whose fortunes were the losers at the
lord's courts,

death was sure for in their lot.

For description of the battle see, Phul, R.K.,

Armies of the Great Mughals, pp. 271-277 and Sarkar,

J.N., The Art of War in Medieval India, Calcutta,

1960, pp. 28, 219 and 224.

80. Adi Granth, p. 1105 :

Saint Kabir has portrayed the character of a true soldiers (a hero) in the following couplet :

ਗਗਨ ਦਮਾਮਾ ਬਾਜਿਓ ਪਰਿਓ ਨੀਸਠੈ ਘਉ॥
ਖੇਤ ਜੁ ਮਾਡਿਓ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਅਬ ਜੂਝਨ ਕੇ ਦਉ॥
ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਠੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੇ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ॥
ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੁ ਨ ਛਾਡੇ ਖੇਤੁ॥

Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 3639.

The battle drum beats in the mind's sky,
aim is taken and the wound is inflicted.
They who are the warriors,
enter the battlefield.
Now is the time to combat.
He alone is known to be a warrior,
Who fights for the oppressed.
He dies cut piece by piece,
but deserts not the battlefield ever.

Also see, p. 1412 of the Adi Granth.

81. Adi Granth, pp. 579-80 :

ਮਾਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੂਰਿਆ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਨਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੈ॥
ਸੂਰੇ ਸੇਈ ਆਗੈ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਣੈ॥

82. Somewhat similar meaning is derived from the following couplet of Guru Nank in Adi Granth, p. 16 :

contd...

ਇਕ ਆਵਹਿ ਇਕਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਉਠਿ
ਰਖੀਅਹਿ ਨਾਵ ਸਲਾਰ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 20,

One cometh and another goeth,

One calls himself a salar

(leader of the armies).

83. Adi Granth, pp. 142, 662 and 1288.

84. For translation, see Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit.,
Vol. IV, p. 753, and Manmohan Singh (tr.), op.
cit., Vol. V, p. 2582.

Adi Granth, p. 792 :

ਅਮਲ ਸਿਰਲੋ ਲੇਖਾ ਦੇਨਾ॥

ਆਏ ਕਠਿਨ ਦੂਤ ਜਮ ਲੇਨਾ॥

ਕਿਆ ਤੈ ਖਟਿਆ ਕਹਾ ਗਵਾਇਆ॥

ਚਲਹੁ ਸਿਤਾਬ ਦੀਬਾਨਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ॥

85. For translation, see Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit.,
Vol. III, pp. 753-54, and Manmohan Singh, (tr.),
op. cit., Vol. V, p. 2584

Adi Granth, p. 793 :

ਏਕ ਕੋਟ ਪੰਚ ਸਿਕਦਾਰਾ ਪੰਚੇ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਹਾਲਾ॥

ਜਿਮੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੈ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੀ ਬੋਈ ਐਸਾ ਦੇਣੁ ਦੁਖਾਲਾ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਗਾ ਮੋਕਉ ਨੀਤਿ ਡਸੈ ਪਟਵਾਰੀ॥

ਉਪਰਿ ਭੁਜਾ ਕਰਿ ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਪੁਕਾਰਿਆ

ਤਿਨਿ ਹਉ ਲੀਆ ਉਬਾਰੀ॥

86. Moreland, W.H., The Agrarian System of Muslim India, Cambridge, 1921, p. 25, he is of the opinion that shiq in the fourteenth century meant something similar to a province. But a careful study of the medieval chronicles would reveal to us that the term as used carries the sense of a sub-province or rather a smaller division, whose head was a shiqdar.
87. See, Tripathi, R.P., op. cit., pp. 279-281, 298-307 and Day, U.N., op. cit., pp. 80-82 and 104.
88. Adi Granth, p. 1288 :

ਰਾਜੈ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥
ਜਾਇ ਜਗਇਨ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥
ਚਕਰ ਨਹਦਾ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਘਉ ॥
ਕੁਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਰੇ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ ॥

89. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1229.
Adi Granth, p. 1288.
90. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 753.
Adi Granth, p. 793, see footnote 85 of the present chapter.

91. Adi Granth, Maru Kabir Ji, p. 1104 :

ਬਾਬਾ ਅਬ ਨ ਬਸਉ ਇਹ ਗਉ ॥

92. The word Muqqadam is an Arabic term meaning the firstman. This word has been applied to men of note as well as village headmen.

Khut, according to Moreland was a Hindu chief, subject to sultan. It is doubtful whether the khut can be called a landlord because his duty seems to be collection and remittance of revenue to the local treasury. Prof. Hodivala identifies a khut with the sanskrit word gramkuta or village headman the word has been used by Barni also in the sense of a village headman.

About chowdhary, Ibn Batuta informs us that he was the head of a sadi which was a collection of hundred villages and the chowdhary was the chief of the local infidels.

Patwari was a low grade officer who used to keep bahi (land records) for the exact amount of tax to be taken from the local cultivators. The ledger (bahi) of the patwari was taken to be the most important document and the entries therein were referred to for the dues from the revenue collectors.

93. Day, U.N., op. cit., p. 143.

94. Ahmad, M.B., Administration of Justice During Muslim Rule in India, Aligarh, 1941, pp. 110 and 115.

contd...

In the deliberations and hearing of the cases muftis attached to the court of Qazi-ul-Quzat played a very important role. He was like a legal assessor and his function was to expound the law. Writing about muftis, Ahmad, M.B., states, 'The muftis of the Chief Justice's Court were lawyers of eminence'. They were in theory appointed by the sultan but candidates for this office were selected by the Qazi-ul-Quzat. The judge had to accept the view of the law given by him and in case of difference, reference was made to the sultan.

95. Adi Granth, p. 472 :

ਵਢੀਅਹਿ ਹਥ ਦਲਾਲ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਫੀ ਏਹ ਕਰੇਹਿ॥
ਨਲਕ ਅਗੈ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿ ਖਟੇ ਘਲੈ ਦੇਇ॥

96. Adi Granth, p. 662 :

ਕਾਦੀ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਮਲੁ ਖਾਇ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੀਆ ਘਾਇ॥

97. Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, Vol. I, p. 170.

98. Taran Singh, (ed), Teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, Patiala, 1977, p. 123.

99. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 908.

Adi Granth, p. 951 :

contd...

ਕਾਜੀ ਹੋਇਕੈ ਬਰੈ ਨਿਆਇ ॥

ਫੇਰੈ ਤਸਬੀ ਕਰੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥

ਵਢੀ ਨੈ ਕੇ ਹਕੁ ਗਵਾਏ ॥

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਪੁਛੈ ਤਾ ਪੜਿ ਸੁਣਾਏ ॥

Damodar, a contemporary of the first three Gurus has almost similar views to express in Heer Damodar. Heer (the heroin of this poem) reproaches the qazi in the following words and says in Heer Damodar; see Parminder Singh, Heer Damodar, Patiala, p. 201.

ਤੂੰ ਕਿਓ ਜੋਰੀ ਕਠੈ ਕਾਜੀ, ਡਰੈ ਖੁਦਾ ਬੋ ਨਾਹੀ।

ਮੇਰਾ ਹੱਕ ਰੰਝੇਟਾ ਏਰੇ, ਜਾਣੈ ਸਭ ਲੋਕਾਈ।

ਨੈਕਰ ਵਢੀ ਹੱਕ ਗਵਾਏ, ਕਛੁ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਵਿਖਾਈ।

ਆਖ ਦਮੋਦਰ ਹੀਰ ਆਖੇ ਕਾਜੀ, ਭਲਾ ਨਿਆਓ ਕੀਤਾਈ।

100. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 637. Adi Granth, p. 662; see footnote 96 of this chapter.

101. Adi Granth, p. 24 :

ਤਾ ਤੂ ਮੁਲਾ ਤਾ ਤੂ ਕਾਜੀ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਨਾਮ ਖੁਦਾਈ ॥

ਜੇ ਬਹੁਤੇਰਾ ਪੜਿਆ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਕੋ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਭਰੀਐ ਪਾਈ ॥

ਸੋਈ ਕਾਜੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਆਪੁ ਤਜਿਆ ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਕੀਆ ਆਧਾਰੋ ॥

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਸੀ ਜਾਇ ਨ ਜਾਸੀ ਸਚਾ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਹਾਰੋ ॥

102. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 339. Adi Granth, p. 350 :

contd..

ਦਰਸਨਿ ਦੇਖਿਐ ਦਇਆ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਲਏ ਦਿਤੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਕਹੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਨ ਮਨੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਮਾਣਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨ ਲਕੁ ਨਾਮ ॥
ਕਠੀ ਕੁਤਾ ਦਰਿ ਫੁਰਮਾਉ ॥

103. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 985.
Adi Granth, p. 1032 :

ਲੈ ਕੈ ਵਢੀ ਦੇਨਿ ਉਗਾਹੀ
ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਲ ਫਾਹਾ ਹੈ ॥

104. Bernier, Francois, Travels in the Mughal Empire AD 1656 - 1668 AD (Translated by Constable, A), Delhi, 1972, pp. 234-238

105. Pandey, A.B., Society and Government in Medieval India, p. 109; also see, Day, U.N., op. cit., pp. 84-85, 112.

106. Adi Granth, p. 1191 :

ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਦ ਮੁਦਗਰ ਪਾਪੁ ਕਰੇ ਕੋਟਵਾਰੀ ॥

107. Raychoudhary, S.C., Social, Cultural and Economic History of India (Medieval Age), Delhi, 1980, p. 30; see also, Qureshi, I.H., op. cit., pp. 92 and 173.

108. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1141.

contd...

Adi Granth, p. 1191 :

ਲਬੁ ਅਧੋਰਾ ਬੰਦੀ ਖਲਾ ਅਉਗਣ ਪੈਰਿ ਲੁਹਾਰੀ॥
ਪੂੰਜੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਮੁਦਗਰ ਪਾਪੁ ਕਰੇ ਕੋਟਵਾਰੀ॥

109. Taran Singh (ed), op. cit., p. 121.
110. Lal, K.S., Twilight of the Sultanate, p. 289.
111. Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora (ed), Papers on Guru Nanak, Patiala, 1970, p. 166.
112. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.
Adi Granth, p. 472 :

ਨੀਲ ਵਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥
ਮਲੇਛ ਧਾਨੁ ਲੈ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ॥
ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ॥
ਚਉਕੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ॥

113. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 637.
Adi Granth, p. 663 :

ਖਤ੍ਰੀਆ ਤ ਧਰਮ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ॥
ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਕੁਲੁ ਹੋਈ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ॥

The protest here is not against a foreign tongue but against a foreign language being forced on others as a symbol of their political subjugation. Guru Nanak was opposed to the idea of either the invader imposing their culture on the subjected populace or the people copying the culture of the ruling elite.

114. Adi Granth, pp. 603, 470, 472.
115. Rashid, A., op. cit., pp. 223-228.
116. Adi Granth, pp. 471-72 :

ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥

Adi Granth, p. 1191 :

ਦੇਵਲ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਗਾ ਐਸੀ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਚਲੀ॥

117. For Ala-ud-din's period, see Fuller and Khallaque, A., The Reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji (translated from Zia-ud-din Barani's Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi), pp. 82-84. For Sikandar Lodhi's period, Nirodbhushan Roy, Niamat Ullah's History of the Afghans (English translation), pp. 95-96 and for general remarks; see Srivastava, A.L., op. cit., pp. 366-370 and Medieval Indian Culture, Agra, 1964, pp. 1-10.
118. Srivastava, A.L., Sultanate of Delhi, p. 270.
119. Gandhi, S.S., History of the Sikh Gurus, Delhi, 1978, pp. 26-28.
120. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1141.
Adi Granth, p. 1191 :

ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਉ ਅਲਹੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੇਖਾ ਆਈ ਵਾਰੀ॥

ਦੇਵਲ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਗਾ ਐਸੀ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਚਲੀ॥

ਕੂਜਾ ਬਾਂਗ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਨੀਲ ਰੂਪ ਬਨਵਾਰੀ॥

ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮੀਆ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਬੋਲੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ॥

121. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1229.

Adi Granth, p. 1288 :

ਨਾਉ ਫਕੀਰੈ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਮੂਰਖ ਪੰਡਤਿ ਨਾਉ॥

ਅੰਧੈ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਪਾਰਖੂ ਏਵੈ ਕਰੈ ਗੁਆਉ॥

ਇਲਤਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਚਉਧਰੀ ਕੂੜੀ ਪੁਰੈ ਥਾਉ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਏਹੁ ਨਿਆਉ॥

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

From times immemorial and because of its geographical peculiarities, India has been an agricultural country with land as the main source of production and maintenance of her people. Except for a small minority in Guru Nanak's time, India's vast population lived in the villages as they have lived down to the present period. The main feature of medieval India's economy was production chiefly for local consumption. The peasant or the cultivator was the backbone of this economy, who tilled the soil, worked hard throughout the year, yet lived in utter poverty and hardship as is evident from a number of couplets in Guru Nanak's Bani.

The system of cultivation in those days was not very different from the present one. The wooden plough, the toothed harrow, the smoothing board, the levelling beam, the sowing drill, spades and sickles were the common implements used in the whole process of production from the land.¹ The crops depended mostly upon rainfall and only partly on wells and canals. To convey the idea of spiritual upliftment, Guru Nanak by using the common vocabulary familiar to village folks indirectly portrays the system of cultivation as under :

Let thy mind be the farmer and deeds the farming
and let thy body be the farm,
water it, yea, with effort.

Let the Lord's name be the seed,
and contentment the furrowing,
and let the fence be of humility.
If thou doest deeds of love,
thy seed will sprout and
fortunate will then be thy home.²

At another place Guru Nanak writes that :

The true and wise farmer knoweth,
that one sows the seeds only after
one hath tilled the land and furrowed it.³

Such examples in Guru Nanak's Bani are not wanting. Referring to the human body as a farm, the actions of a human being as seeds and the Nam of God as water, Guru Nanak indirectly points out the three basic needs of a farmer to have good harvest.⁴ Similar kind of views are expressed in the following couplet :

If good actions be thy farm,
and thy seed be the word,
and the way of Truth thy water,
The growth will then be of faith.⁵

Guru Nanak gives very high place to a farmer, who to him, is like God, who feeds the entire world without having any distinction of high and low or rich and poor in his mind.⁶

Land cultivation was a year-round occupation for those who were engaged in it. The farmers had to work day and night to cultivate and protect the fields from stray animals and others (including the grain lifters) who might turn up at the harvest times. His two busiest periods were the seasons of summer and autumn, harvesting and planting, which in Nanak's Bani have been referred to as Haari and Sauni :

For me, the Harvest of the spring
is the Lord's Name,
Yea, the Lord's Name is again
the Harvest I gather in Autumn.⁷

The autumn harvest, kharif, also known as Sauni, started in the middle of September and continued through November. This was a very busy season, for the farmer had both to harvest the crops in different fields as they ripened and to prepare for sowing the fallow fields that had been lying under water during the rainy season and were now drying out. If the soil had retained the dampness of the rains, it was easier for him to plough, but if it had not rained, he had to irrigate these fields with water drawn

from the ordinary well or from the Persian-wheel. To Babar it was a strange novelty to see such kind of wells in Hindustan which were used for irrigational purposes.⁸ Guru Nanak calls such wells as a rahats or Arhats.⁹ Guru Nanak applied the symbol of rahat or Arhat with deeper meanings attached to it indirectly referring to the system of irrigation prevalent in those days. In Rag Basant Hindol he writes :

Make (service with) hands thy persian wheel,
(Arhat or Rahat),
and the chain and the buckets,
and yoke thy mind, like the bullock to run it,
and then irrigate thy body with the God's Nectar.¹⁰

To water the fields from ordinary wells was a difficult process. It involved a strenuous manual labour to draw water by buckets tied at the one end of the string.¹¹ The other end being in the hands of one who had to pull the bucket out from the well. Usually such wells were popular with the women-folks of the villages who drew water from these wells for domestic needs. The domestic animals like the cows and buffaloes etc. also got their water needs fulfilled from these wells.

Apart from these ordinary or Persian-wheels the land was also irrigated by rivers¹² and canals. But a large part of the cultivation, throughout the country depended

on rains. A normal rainfall was a great boon to the cultivators, as their livelihood and prosperity depended on it. If it was scanty, draught was always accompanied by scarcity, misery and distress.¹³ So the farmers waited anxiously the two months of the rainy season - Sawan and Bhadon on which depended their existence and also major part of the state's income. The importance of the rains for the farming community can be judged by the following couplets of Guru Nanak.

When it rains there's joy all round;
in water lies the key to all life.
It is the rains that grow food, sugar and cotton
which giventh to all a covering.
When it rains the cow hath grass to graze,
and the housewife the curds to churn;
From this is the ghee with which is the
sacred fire propitiated,
and the Yajna and worship performed,
and all our works are blest.¹⁴

Stating further, the importance of rains in country's life, Guru Nanak writes :

'The famine goeth if it rains well
and the streams are full'.¹⁵

Another busy time for the farmers was the summer harvest, rabi, commonly known as Haari, already referred to in an earlier passage.¹⁶ This was the time when the crop had to be cut, threshed and winnowed and the grain for the year must be stored, as also the fodder for the animals.¹⁷

It is difficult to speak of the size of an average holding or even of the proportion of the population which took to active husbandry. We can roughly state leaving aside those who were engaged in domestic labour and crafts, all others took to cultivation on land.¹⁸

The Agricultural Products

The agricultural produce of the country as a whole could not have been very different from what it is today except for the newly introduced cultivation of tobacco, tea, coffee and the extension of jute crop and the like.¹⁹ Some of the important products mentioned in Guru Nanak's Bani are wheat, rice, sugarcane, oil seeds, cotton and milk products like curd, butter, ghee (purified butter) and the sweets made out of milk and coarse sugar.²⁰ Fruits of various varieties were produced in many parts of the country. Some of the (names of the) fruits appearing in the Bani of Guru Nanak and other saint poets of the Adi Granth are : amb (mango), angoor (grapes), khajooran (dates), khakhrian (melons), ber (a big berry fruit), kelay (banana)

and dakh bijoorian (a fruit grown around Bijaur).²¹

The medicinal herbs, spices and fragrant wood were grown in large quantities and found a market in and outside India. A large number of industries and crafts were fed on the surplus of agricultural produce of which there was ample to spend and spare.²² The most important manufactures which flourished on agricultural produce were ropes, baskets, unrefined sugar (gur), oils of various kinds, scents and spirits. Oil was produced through the process of the oil press (ghani) and the spirits, and liquors manufactured from unrefined sugar, mahwa, barley-cake and rice.²³ However, the social status, the limited opportunities of the village craftsmen and the administrative oppression discouraged them from making progress beyond certain limits.²⁴

The peasants and the village craftsmen including carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, oilcrusher (telis), weavers, basket makers and others worked very hard, but it can be asserted with confidence, on the basis of references in Guru Nanak's Bani that their lot was very miserable and they lived constantly in a state of semi-starvation.²⁵ Amongst the producing classes, the agriculturists were the worst sufferers. The major portion of the produce of the land went to the state in the form of land revenue and other taxes. A portion of the rest went to the pandha, maulvi, and the priests and another part went into the pocket of village sahukar in the form of interest on loans. After

all this, only a meagre amount was left with the cultivators for their subsistence.²⁶

The famines were quite frequent and the state made no provision for relief to the affected peasants. Even the remission in revenue was negligible. It is only after the end of the sultanate period and the first two rulers of the Mughal dynasty that the condition of the peasants, started improving. During Sher Shah Suri and Akbar's reign their condition improved considerably and the dahasala system/zabti initiated by Todar Mal proved a beneficial measure.²⁷

Industries

Although agriculture was the main occupation of the bulk of the people, there were many important industries like textiles, indigo, paper and metal work which had made a considerable progress in their respective fields and were known for their quality. Woodwork, leather items, embroidery, calico printing, inlay work, sugar, scents and different kinds of oils were some other items which were produced for wider consumption and some of these products found a good market abroad.²⁸ Guru Nanak's Bani does not mention the volume of production of these items or the places where they were produced, but the casual references to people who carried these works provide us valuable information on the existing industries in India in his times.

Textiles

The manufacture of the textiles was the biggest industry of Hindustan. It included the manufacture of cotton cloth and silk. Cotton was extensively grown in the country. Cotton fabrics were dyed with the leaves of the trees, flower-plants and vegetable dyes. The popular colours were red, yellow, blue, green and black. Guru Nanak has repeatedly mentioned majith²⁹ red colour which was fast and long lasting. People were fond of bright colour as is evident from the contemporary paintings of early Mughal India. The dyeing industry and calico painting went hand in hand with the manufacture of cloth. Coarse cotton clothes were either dyed or printed with a variety of well shaped and well coloured flowers or figures which were so fixed in the cloth that no water could wash them out. The quality of Indian textile products was excellent, and the output was sufficient to meet the demands of internal consumption.³⁰

Industries like embroidery, gold and silver thread work were also flourishing in many big cities. Costly clothes with rich embroidery and gold work were in great demand with the aristocracy and other rich classes of the society. Guru Nanak has given a detailed description of the clothes worn by these people.³¹ A great quantity of woollen stuff and fur was imported from outside for the use of the upper classes.³²

Besides the manufacture of cloth, other goods like carpets, coverlets, beddings, prayer-carpets, bed strings and several other articles were manufactured.³³

Metal Work

Metal work has a very old tradition in our country, to which many ancient idols of South-India, Mehrauli's iron pillar and coins etc. bear witness. In fact, next in importance to the textiles was the metal industry which continued to make progress during the period of our study. The Indian metal workers handled various metals like gold, silver, brass, iron and zink, mixed-metals and mica with great skill and perfection.

In Guru Nanak Bani we find several references to goldsmiths³⁴ (silversmiths), and ironsmiths³⁵ who produced excellent jewellery³⁶ and various types of knives, scissors and items of armoury including swords, daggers, shields iron coats and headcovers for the soldiers and army. Iron chains for prisons, iron buckets for the Persian-wheels axes, hatchets, choppers and agricultural implements were also manufactured.³⁷

Another class of metal workers made utensils of gold and silver for the aristocracy and utensils of common use (for the masses) made of iron, bronze and zink. Guru Nanak's Bani provide us the names of some of the utensils which were in use in those days, thaal (tray, a brass

plate), lota, garva (a jug of brass), karahi (frying pan, a stewpan, cauldren), katori or katora (a small bowl, dish or gabler of metal) and karchi (large spoon or ladle) etc.³⁸

Potter's Work

Although potters (kumhars)³⁹ did not enjoy any respectable status in the medieval Indian society, yet they remained an important part of the village and urban society. Their products like pitchers and clay pots of various sizes and designs were used by every class of society, irrespective of their material position or official status. The only difference could be in the quality of the products used by the upper and lower classes of the people. No home was without earthen pots, be it a palace or an ordinary dwelling. Big earthen trays, water containers (matka or ghara), (surahi, handi), pipkin, piggy banks and toys were the main items commonly used by the people, besides artistic types of vases, jugs, flower-pots and other such items, which found favour with the richer sections of the society. Guru Nanak used the word bhande⁴⁰ (utensils) and all the products used in the kitchen or in day to day life of the common householders.

The potters also made bricks (itan) which were used for making houses, big mansions, royal palaces, tanks, baolies and wells etc. Sometimes clay for making earthen

products was procured from old and dilapidated graveyards.

The clay pots and bricks were then baked in the fire as is clear from the following lines of Guru Nanak in Asa-di-Var.

The dust of a Muslim's grave
becometh lump for the potters wheel,
And of it he (the potter) fashions bricks or
and, burning they (the clay products)
vessels wail.
Yea, the hapless clay burns and cries out as
fiery coals fall, continuously upon it.⁴¹

Stone and Brick Works

A large number of workers were engaged in stone and brick work. The Indian artisans and masons displayed great skill in constructing forts, palatial buildings, tanks and reservoirs. In Guru Nanak's bani, we find references to words like 'kotgarh' (forts), 'pake-bank dwar'⁴² (residential mansions of the rich) and sar or sarovar⁴³ (tanks) etc. which were constructed with stones and bricks. Babar was particularly fond of the skill of Indian workmen. He employed more than 2000 stone-cutters for the construction of buildings at Agra, Dholpur and at other places.⁴⁴ The labourers were poorly paid. They worked very hard to earn their bread.⁴⁵ They were exploited in every possible manner by the rich and the hiring agencies.

The period under review also witnessed the introduction of the use of enamelled tiles and bricks which continued to grow in the subsequent centuries⁴⁶ due to the royal patronage to these industries.

Leather Work

The leather industry considerably developed during the medieval period. Although Guru Nanak has made no direct reference to it, but references of chamars (shoe-makers, tanners or cobblers), a caste or a class of leather workers are found in the writings of other saint poets of Adi Granth.

The social status of this class was very low in the society as is clear from the following couplets of Bhagat Ravidas, who himself was a chamar (shoe-maker) by profession.

My constant companion is Evil
I am oppressed by this thought
My deeds are perverse
My birth is low

...

But Ravidas, the tanner, utterth Thy praise;
for he is dedicated to Thy Love-worship.⁴⁷

At another place, Ravidas states as under :

I am of low caste, with little honour,
Yea, my birth is low :
And still, I, the cobbler,
have not served my Lord,
the King (of the universe).⁴⁸

The leather-workers produced shoes of different kinds, scabbards of swords and daggers, covers of books, saddles and bridles for horses in the royal army as well as for those maintained by the nobles, peasant's water buckets to draw out water from well and other articles of daily use were made of leather.⁴⁹ Leather was also used for packing sugar parcels for export. Skins of goats, buffaloes, oxen etc. were sent from Gujarat in many ship loads to Arabia and other countries.⁵⁰

Oil Crushing Business

It was carried on a large scale by a class of people called telis⁵¹ (the oil producing men). Mustard oil was used in earthen lamps as well as for other domestic needs. Mustard seeds were crushed in the ghani (an oil mill). This is the word used by Guru Nanak in his Bani.⁵²

The process of manufacturing oil was almost similar to the process still in vogue in the rural areas. Telis used the he bull or an ox to make the press work :

Yea, he circles round desire,
as does oilman's bull round the oil press.⁵³

Gur and Sugar

Sugarcane was cultivated in India on a large scale and sugar was made from it for the local consumption as well as for export. The villagers generally used gur (unrefined sugar) which was made out of sugarcane juice. The process of making it was almost similar to the one which still prevails in UP, Haryana, Punjab and other sugarcane growing areas of the country. The usual process of manufacture was as follows :

They cut the sugarcane into sections, then pressed them in the mill; the juice was then heated in big iron-pans until it crystallized into unrefined sugar, then it was either turned into cakes of gur, or with a little more refining made into soft sugar (khand). The most refined and esteemed form of sugar was the crystallized white khand.⁵⁴

The refined sugar (khand) was a luxury beyond the means of the poor. It was used by the rich and the aristocracy. Sweetmeats must have been made almost entirely of the raw-sugar (gur).⁵⁵ Country made liquor was also made out of it as is clear from Guru Nanak Bani.⁵⁶

Honey was collected all over the country but rearing

the honey bees was not a profession by itself.⁵⁷

Perfumery

The rulers and the rich classes of the society were fond of perfumes and scented oils. Words like chowa, chandan, agar and kapoor etc. are frequently used in Guru Nanak Bani.⁵⁸ All these items were in common use in those days. The perfumery industry must have flourished in the big cities only, where the rulers, nobles, the provincial heads, merchants and rich people generally resided.

Other Minor Industries

Certain other minor industries also flourished in various parts of the country. These included coral work, ivory work, imitation jewellery and glass work specially the glass bangles of various colours and sizes. Indian ivory workers at that time were great experts in turning out in-laid and plain articles like bracelets, bangles, dice, chessboard etc. Red coloured ivory chooras (bracelets) were worn by the young brides at the time of marriage. Some of the above mentioned items are found in Guru Nanak Bani as is clear from the following couplets in Rag Asa :

When these beauties were married,
their glamorous spouses sat by their sides,
Yea, and they were carried in planquins
and bangles of ivory dangled round their arms,
(In greetings) water was waved over their heads,
and they were fanned with glass studded fans.⁵⁹

Wood work of different designs and qualities was also produced throughout the country by local workers engaged in this profession. The popular items being palangh and charpais or manjian (beds), peerihian (a kind of flat chair without back), doors, pegs, toys, writing boards (takhtis), writing tablets, pens (qalams), pen containers (qalam dans), saddles and scabbards of swords and daggers.⁶⁰

Paper Industry

During the period of our study, paper was commonly used for writing books (manuscripts), farmans, sanads and maintaining the records of land revenue in vahis (registers kept by the patwaris and other revenue officials). Moneylenders (sahukars) also kept vahis (registers) in which the records of loans and money received back were kept. There are several references in Guru Nanak's Bani which confirm our belief that paper was widely used by government and private agencies for the above mentioned purposes.⁶¹ Paper was manufactured at Gujrat, Burhanpur, Sialkot, Delhi, Patna and Kashmir.⁶² The manufacture of ink was another

product which went alongwith the paper industry.

Ship Building and Boat Making

Ship building and specially boat making industry was in a flourishing state in the times of Guru Nanak. It is evident from the frequent references (in his Bani) to bohith (medium and small sized ships, vessels), nao and beri (boat or a ferry), and patni or tulhara (ferryman), who carried passangers across the river or took them to distant places during normal and rough weather conditions, in their boats or ships. The following couplet of Guru Nanak is very significant in this regard :

The sea is rough and dreadful,
I know not its shores.
I am without a boat or a raft;
neither is there a Boatman nor the Rows,
The True Guru is the only vessel on the fearful (sea)
whose eye of grace takes me across.⁶³

Besides carrying passangers the boats were used by the fishermen to catch fish from the deep waters.

Guru Nanak does not mention the places where the work of making ships or boats was carried on, but it is a matter of common understanding that these places must have been near the rivers or sea-coasts. While ordinary boats or rafts were made of some ordinary wood which was

easily available, the good boats and small and medium sized ships were made of teak wood. The ship building activities were mainly carried on the western coasts of India. Calicut was a great ship building centre.⁶⁴

Trade and Commerce

No clear cut indication is available in Guru Nanak's Bani about the volume of internal and external trade being carried out in the country. However, frequent references of viopari, beopari (businessmen), vivopar, beopar (business), vanjaras (banjaras), mandis (markets) and shahukars (money-lenders) etc.⁶⁵ point out a great deal of trade and commerce flourishing in the country. References of trading in precious metals, jewels, diamonds⁶⁶ and horses⁶⁷ are some of the fields where businessmen and merchants invested a good deal of capital to earn maximum profits. Horses were also used for carrying the merchandise from one place to another. The merchandise was kept in the store houses.⁶⁸

The trade was mainly the monopoly of the vaishyas.⁶⁹ The banjaras carried on the business of conveying agricultural products and other items of common use from one part of this country to another on a very extensive scale. The sensible and shrewed banjaras, as Guru Nanak points out, carried only such items which would fetch them greater profits without any risk involved in the loss or damage of their merchandise.⁷⁰ Guru Ram Dass, in a very symbolic

way, calls those sikhs as banjaras who come in the Sikh congregations to trade in the name of God, which is the most precious thing in the world.⁷¹

Though the main business was done through regular shops (hat) in the market or mandis, the petty shopkeepers had small shops (hatees) through which they carried the retail business. With the opening of these shops in the morning the buyers started coming to purchase the commodities required for the domestic needs.⁷² These shops were usually maintained by the Hindu-Banias⁷³, who were an essential and an important part of the economic structure in medieval India. Sometimes the banias advanced money to the farmers, artisans and others.

Money lending was mainly the business of sahukars⁷⁴ and mahajans⁷⁵, who extended loans to the farmers, petty businessmen and shopkeepers and many a times to the men in power. They were very popular with the people who had loose habits and were given to luxury. The moneylenders charged high and sometimes very high rates of interest from their clients. While the rich people borrowed money to meet the expenses on their luxuries, the poor peasants borrowed money for purchasing bullocks, marriage of their sons or daughters or for purpose of consumption.⁷⁶

The moral standard of merchants was not high. Various fraudulent ways and means were followed by them to earn money. Guru Nanak bitterly criticized such means and

reminded people that wealth accumulated by them by sinful ways was of no avail to them after death.

Many, O many, have been consumed
and wasted away by their riches,
which are gathered not without sinning,
nor carried along when dead.⁷⁷

Attempts of adulteration and use of fraudulent weights and measures were quite common.⁷⁸

Weights and measures differed in weight and number in different places and with different classes of the people, so that there was absolutely no uniformity.⁷⁹ The different weights were mans (maund), seers, paos and chattanks, which were in use in India, until a few years back, before the decimal system was introduced. Goldsmiths used tola, masha and rati to weigh the gold and gold ornaments.⁸⁰

As regards the measuring of time, a year consisted of twelve lunar months and a day and night together went to make eight pahars, each pahar being equal to three hours. A pahar was subdivided into sixty gharis, each ghari equalling twenty-four minutes. A ghari was further subdivided into sixty palas and palas into chasa and visa. In one of his hymns Guru Nanak writes :

The second, the minute, the hour,
the solar and the lunar day,
the changing seasons,
are all created by the same, lone sun.⁸¹

The measurement of distance was made by kos or karoh and gaz. A kos was about two miles according to our present reckoning. For the sake of convenience it was divided into three parts, each of which was called a dhawa. The gaz with which smaller lengths (of land or cloth) were measured, was not uniform throughout the country. It differed in different places and for different commodities.⁸²

Coinage

Coins of gold, silver and copper (of various denominations) were current during the period of our study. The names of some of the coins we come across in Guru Nanak's Bani are tanka and daam besides kauri which was commonly used in the remote areas⁸³ of the country. Gold mohars were also used but were not in daily circulation and were not employed as a money of account. An important feature of the coins current in those days was the monetary rather than token value.⁸⁴ There is a mention of impure and debased coins in Nanak Bani, which were not accepted for any transaction. They were not sent to the Treasury either.

The false coins are not sent to the Treasury,
they see not the Guru-God.

The false ones have no station, nor honour;
O' no one winneth through falsehood.⁸⁵

Inland Communication

For communication on land, there were a number of roads and pathways running all over the country.⁸⁶ Except for a few roads which connected the principal towns of the empire, the condition of roads was very poor. There used to be serais, khankahas, wells and the shady-trees on both sides of principal highways for the convenience and comforts of the merchants and the travellers.⁸⁷ Guru Nanak in his Bani calls this world a halting place like a serai where people come and stay (for an allotted period) and then they leave to the unknown destination.⁸⁸ Sher Shah took special interest towards the improvement of roads and inland communications.

Journey along the roads was covered on the back of the horse, camel or in bullock carts. Horse as a mode of conveyance was preferred for long distant journeys.⁸⁹ Camels and bullock-carts were used for caravans of merchandise. Bullock-cart was a good conveyance for the rural and poor people. Ladies and well-to-do people of the urban society performed journeys in a dola or a doli. The nobles and the affluent officials and their ladies used palkis or

planquins for moving to other places. These palkis were carried by four palki-bearers known as kahars. It was a comfortable, good and dignified means of transport.⁹⁰

Travelling in medieval India was not without perils, discomfort and dangers. The life and property of travellers and merchants was not safe unless they had a large group of men travelling together or had armed guards with them to protect them from thugs, dacoits and highway robbers. Whenever the robbers found a stray-passenger or a small group of men travelling on a lonely road, they attacked them and looted their belongings. Generally, the travellers were killed and their dead body was thrown in a running stream or in a nearby well. The usual method of killing was by strangulation.⁹¹

These dangers and discomforts of travel, insecurity of life and property were great impediments not only for pilgrims and travellers but also for the internal trade and commerce. Sometimes passengers, pilgrims, traders and merchants also suffered on account of external invasions and internal military expeditions.⁹²

Guru Nanak's period witnessed several raids on the North-West Frontier and into the interior parts of the Punjab by Babar, who ultimately succeeded in establishing an empire in Hindustan after defeating Ibrahim Lodi and Rana Sanga in the battles of Panipat and Kanwah respectively. These invasions made the life of the people insecure and

miserable.⁹³ The invading armies not only plundered and looted the towns and villages, but made people captive and homeless. Invasions from the north-west frontier side affected the normal life of the people and dislocated trade and industry to a great extent. Thus life, property, merchandise and agriculture were at the mercy of the conquering armies. Generally, standing crops were burnt which created the famine conditions in the country. After the raids the prices of the commodities rose very high. The poor people died of starvation.⁹⁴

India carried on her overseas trade with eastern as well as Western countries, but Guru Nanak makes no such reference as to the countries India traded with. The only reference found in his Bani are the words des-pardes (foreign lands) where the merchants used to go with loaded ships of merchandise to earn rich profits. Guru Arjan also uses the same vocabulary in his Bani.⁹⁵

Minor Professions

Apart from these professions, there were some ordinary professions in which the lower class people indulged and earned their livelihood. These people included jugglars and acrobats (bazigari)⁹⁶, snake charmers, puppet men and those who worked in the natshalas (theatres)⁹⁷ or performed their shows in the open before the people. Those in the medical profession - vaids and hakims enjoyed fairly good

position in the society.⁹⁸ Even begging was a paying profession for some people who depended on alms and charity. Guru Nanak was against such human parasites who lived on the earnings of others. He preached and emphasized on the necessity of labour to earn one's own livelihood. He declared in a clear and firm language that only those who earn their livelihood with the brow of their labour can find the true path to God.

He alone treadeth the path of righteousness
who earneth his bread with honest labour
and shareth with others.⁹⁹

NOTES

1. Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 113.
2. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 577.
Adi Granth, p. 595 :

ਮਨੁ ਹਾਲੀ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੀ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਰਮੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਤੁ ॥
ਨਾਮੁ ਬੀਜ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੁਹਾਗਾ ਰਖੁ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਵੇਸੁ ॥
ਭਾਉ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਿ ਜੀਮਸੀ ਸੈ ਘਰ ਭਾਗਨ ਦੇਖੁ ॥

3. Gopal Singh (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 22.
Adi Granth, p. 19 :

ਆਪਿ ਸੁਜਣੁ ਨ ਭੁਲਈ ਸਚਾ ਵਡ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ॥
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਧਿ ਕੈ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇ ਦਣੁ ॥

4. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 26.

Thy body is the farm, thy actions the seeds,
tis watered by the name of God, in whose
hands is the whole earth.

Thy mind is the farmer, and when the tree sprouts
in thy soul, thou attainest to the state of Nirvan.

Adi Granth, p. 23 :

ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਰੇ
ਸਲਿਲ ਆਪਉ ਸਾਗਰੀ ਪਾਣੀ ॥
ਮਨੁ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਜੀਮਾਇ ਨੈ
ਇਉ ਪਾਵਸਿ ਪਦੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੀ ॥

5. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 27.

Adi Granth, p. 24 :

ਅਮਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਸਬਦੋ ਕਰਿ
ਸਚੁ ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਈ॥
ਹੋਇ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ਈਮਲੁ ਜੀਮਾਇ ਨੈ
ਭਿਸਤੁ ਦੋਜਕੁ ਮੂੜੈ ਏਵ ਜਾਈ॥

6. Adi Granth, p. 19.

7. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1227.

Adi Granth, p. 1286 :

ਫਸਲਿ ਅਹਾੜੀ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਾਵਣੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ॥

8. See, Beveridge, A.S., (tr.), The Babur Nama in English, London, 1921, Vol. I, p. 206.

"In Lahore, Depalpore, Sirhind and the neighbouring districts, they water by means of a wheel"

9. Adi Granth, p. 1329 :

ਜੈਸੇ ਹਰਹਟ ਕੀ ਮਾਲਾ ਟਿੰਡ ਲਗਤ ਹੈ
ਇਕ ਸਖਨੀ ਹੋਰ ਫੇਰ ਭਰੀਅਤ ਹੈ॥
ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਇਹੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਖਸਮ ਕਾ
ਜਿਉ ਉਸ ਕੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1266.

contd...

As do rotate the buckets
hung on the chain of the persian wheel,
One being emptied and the other filled,
So is the play of our God

10. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1121.
Adi Granth, p. 1171 :

ਕਰ ਹਰਿਹਟ ਮਾਲ ਟਿਡ ਪਰੋਵਹੁ
ਤਿਸ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਮਲੁ ਜੋਵਹੁ ॥
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਿੰਚਹੁ ਭਰਹੁ ਕਿਆਰੇ
ਤਉ ਮਾਲੀ ਕੇ ਹੋਵਹੁ ॥

11. Adi Granth, p. 228 :

ਡੋਲੁ ਬਧਾ ਕਸਿ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਆਕਾਸਿ ਪਾਤਲਾ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 220.

Yea, he's like the pot tied to a string
and goeth in and cometh out (of the well)
of the skies and the under worlds.

12. See, Adi Granth, pp. 143 and 134.

13. Basham, A.L., (ed), The Civilizations of Monsoon
Asia, pp. 17-18.

14. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 142.
Adi Granth, p. 150 :

contd...

ਵੁਠੈ ਹੋਇਐ ਹੋਇ ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਜੀਆ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ॥
ਵੁਠੈ ਅੰਨੁ ਕਮਾਦੁ ਕਪਾਹਾ ਸਭਸੈ ਪੜਦਾ ਹੋਵੈ॥
ਵੁਠੈ ਘਾਹੁ ਚਰਹਿ ਨਿਤਿ ਸੁਰਹੀ ਸਾਧਨੁ ਦਹੀ ਵਿਲੋਵੈ॥
ਤਿਤੁ ਘਿਇ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਸਦ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਇਐ ਕਾਰਜ ਸੋਹੈ॥

15. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 134.
Adi Granth, p. 143 :
- ਕਾਲੁਾ ਰੀਝੁ ਨਦੀਆ ਮੀਹ ਝੋਲ॥
16. See footnote 7 of the present chapter.
17. See, Zekiye Eglar, A Punjabi Village in Pakistan, pp. 51, 52 and 204.
18. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 116.
19. Ibid., p. 118.
20. See footnote 13. Also see, Adi Granth, p. 142 and p. 156.
21. See, Adi Granth, pp. 319, 455, 693, 718, 762, 972, 1371, 1379 and 1382.
22. Jaffar, S.M., Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India, Delhi, 1972, p. 212.
23. Ibid., pp. 212-213.
- For scented oils, see Adi Granth, pp. 19, 226, 269, 678. Guru Nanak describes the process of making gur (unrefined sugar) from the sugarcane in the following couplet of Adi Granth, p. 143 :

contd...

ਵੇਖੁ ਜਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਕਟਿਆ ਕਟਿ ਕੁਟਿ ਬਧਾ ਪਾਇ॥
ਖੁਢਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਰਖਿਕੈ ਦੇਠਿ ਸੁ ਮਲ ਸਜਾਇ॥
ਰਸੁ ਕਸੁ ਟਟਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਤਪੈ ਤੈ ਵਿਲਲਾਇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 134.

See how they cut up the sugarcane
and bind its feet,
And then, men strong of limbs,
Crush it, in a crusher,
(and thus the gur is made).

In a symbolic way Guru Nanak speaks of the distilleries and the raw material out of which country - wine was distilled; see Adi Granth, p. 360 :

ਗੁੜੁ ਕਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਾਵੈ
ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਸੁ ਪਾਈਐ॥
ਭਾਠੀ ਭਫਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕਾ ਪੋਚਾ
ਇਤੁ ਰਸੁ ਅਮਿਉ ਚੁਆਈਐ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 351.

Gnosis thy molasses, concentration the mahua
flowers, deeds the bark of the kikar-tree,
faith the distilling pot, the plaster of love,
thus yea, is the elixir of life distilled.

See also, Adi Granth, pp. 15, 353, 354 and 969.

24. Srivastava, M.P., Society and Culture in India, Allahabad, 1975, p. 129.
25. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 124.
26. Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 130.
See Roychoudhary, S.C., Social Cultural and Economic History of India, (medieval age), Delhi, 1980, pp. 75-76.
27. Habib, Irfan, The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707), Bombay, 1963, p. 251.
Parsad, Ishwari, The Mughal Empire, Allahabad, 1974, p. 328.

Although Guru Arjan has not mentioned Akbar's name in his Bani, yet the following lines are indicative of the improved conditions throughout his empire.

Adi Granth, p. 74 :

ਗੁਣਿ ਗੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਣੁ ਦਾ॥
ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਣੁ ਦਾ॥
ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਫੁਠੀਆ
ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 68.

The merciful Lord hath now given the command.

That no one will domineer over and give pain to another,
and, all will now abide in peace,

O, such is the rule of His Mercy, O dear.

28. See, Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., pp. 122-124; see Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 76; see Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 130; Zaffar, S.M., op. cit., p. 212; and see also, Lunia, B.N., Life and Culture in Medieval India, Indore, 1978, pp. 217-218.
29. See, Adi Granth, pp. 54, 722 and 729.
30. Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 134; and see also, Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., pp. 76-77.
31. Adi Granth, pp. 417-418.
32. Adi Granth, p. 766.
33. Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 136; also see, Adi Granth, pp. 417-18.
34. Adi Granth, pp. 8 and 1239.
35. Adi Granth, p. 143; see also Shalok Farid, ibid., p. 1380.
36. Some of the common items of jewellery worn by the people in Guru Nanak's times were, churian or vangan (bangles), see, Adi Granth, p. 558, haar (necklace), ibid., pp. 836, 937. nevai (silver ankle-bells), ibid., p. 872, nath (nose ring), ibid., p. 1289, kangan (bracelet, wristlet), ibid., pp. 928 and 1308.

Abul Fazal states that for their excellences the goldsmiths were sometimes paid ten times the value of the metal on which they worked, as their wages.

contd..

See, Blochmann (English translation), Ain-i-Akbari, pp. 185-187.

37. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., pp. 130-131; also see, Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., pp. 136-137 and Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 77.
38. See, Adi Granth, pp. 13, 143, 553, 645, 663, 721, 792, 857, 1096, 1139, 1163, 1167, 1195, 1289, 1378, 1429; also see, Chawla, Harbans Singh, Medieval Indian Society as Reflected in the Adi Granth, (Delhi University Thesis), p. 103.
39. See, Adi Granth, pp. 442 and 466.
40. Ibid., pp. 432, 466 and 686.
For ghara (water container), gagar or gagara (water pitcher), matka or matki (a large earthen pot, pitcher), see, Adi Granth, pp. 13, 254, 374, 392, 478, 483, 654, 843, 986 and 1222. For handi (pipkin, pot), see pp. 718 and 1368.
41. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 459.
Adi Granth, p. 466 :

ਮਿਟੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਨ ਕੀ ਪੇੜੈ ਪਈ ਕੁਮਿਆਰ॥
ਘੜਿ ਭਾਂਡੈ ਇਟਾ ਕੀਆ ਜਲਦੀ ਕਰੈ ਪੁਕਾਰ॥
ਜਲਿ ਜਲਿ ਰੋਵੈ ਬਪੁੜੀ ਝੜਿ ਝੜਿ ਪਵਹਿ ਐਗਿਆਰੁ॥
ਨਲਕ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾਰਣੁ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ॥

42. Adi Granth, pp. 141, 729, 752 and 1246.
43. Ibid., pp. 1036-1037.
44. See, Beveridge, A.S., (English translation), The Babur Nama, Vol. I, pp. 268-269.
45. See, Adi Granth, p. 1143 :

ਸਾਰੇ ਦਿਨਸ ਮਜੂਰੀ ਕਰੈ॥

Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 3262.
He toils the whole day for his bread.

46. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 78, also see,
Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 221.

47. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 335-36.
Adi Granth, pp. 345-46 :

ਮੇਰੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਪੋਚ ਸੋਚ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ॥

ਮੇਰਾ ਕਰਮੁ ਕੁਟਿਲਤਾ ਜਲਮੁ ਕੁਭਾਰੀ॥

... ..

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਕੈ ਕਾਰਣੈ ਕਹੁ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰ॥

48. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 481.
Adi Granth, p. 486 :

ਜਾਤੀ ਛੋੜਾ ਪਾਤੀ ਛੋੜਾ

ਛੋੜਾ ਜਲਮੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ॥

ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਨ ਕੀਨੀ

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ॥

49. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 201.
50. Ojha, P.N., Aspects of Medieval Indian Society and Culture, Delhi, 1978, pp. 136-137. For further discussion on the subject, see, Moreland, W.H., India at the Death of Akbar, Delhi, 1962, pp. 162-163.
51. Adi Granth, pp. 712, 718 and 800.
52. Ibid., p. 1288. This word ghani is also used by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev more clearly in his Bani; see, Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 305.

For the angel of death

presses them in the press

(oil crusher or ghani).

as doth the oilman the oil seeds.

53. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 681.
Adi Granth, p. 712 :

ਧਾਵਤ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਹਿ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਤੀ

ਜਿਉ ਤੈਲੀ ਬਲਦੁ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਓ ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 718 and 800.

54. In Guru Nanak Bani words, like gur and khand etc. do appears at places :

contd...

For gur, see, Adi Granth, pp. 15, 142, 360, 582, 1286.

For gur and khand, see the following shalok of Baba Farid in Adi Granth, p. 1379 :

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸਕਰ ਖੰਡੁ ਨਿਵਤ ਗੁੜ ਮਾਖਿਓ ਮਝਾ ਦੁਧੁ ॥
ਸਭੇ ਵਸਤੁ ਮਿਠੀਆ ਰਬ ਨ ਪੁਜਨਿ ਤੁਧੁ ॥

Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VIII, p. 4553.

Sweet are candy, sugar, gur (unrefined sugar) honey and the buffalow's milk.

Yea, sweet are all these,
but sweeter by far is God.

For the process of making gur, see, Varan Bhai Gurdas; also see, Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 134 and footnote 26 of the present chapter.

55. Moreland, W.H., op. cit., p. 272.
56. See footnote 26 of the present chapter.
57. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 134.
58. Adi Granth, pp. 19, 213, 226 and 765.
59. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 414.
Adi Granth, p. 417 :

contd...

ਜਦਹੁ ਸੀਆ ਵੀਆਹੀਆ
ਲਾੜੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ॥
ਹੀ ਡੋਲੀ ਚੜਿ ਆਈਆ
ਦੰਦ ਖੰਡ ਕੀਤੈ ਰਾਸਿ॥
ਉਪਰਹੁ ਪਈ ਵਾਰੀਐ
ਝਲੈ ਝਿਮਕਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 557-58 :

ਚੂੜਾ ਭੰਨੁ ਪਲੰਘ ਸਿਉ ਮੁੰਧੈ
ਸਣ ਬਾਹੀ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹਾ॥
ਨਾ ਮਨੀਆਰੁ ਨ ਚੂੜੀਆ
ਨਾ ਸੇ ਵੰਗੜੀਆਹ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 545.

Break thy cosy bed
and thy ivory bracelets,
O woman,
Thou neither hast true bracelets
nor bangles,
Nor thou knowest the pedlar
who hawks them yea.

For chess and chessboard etc., see Adi Granth,
pp.842, 1020, 1085 and 1205.

60. For these items, see, Adi Granth, pp. 14, 479,
552, 822, 968, 1288, 1291 and 1379.

61. For references of paper, ink, kalam or pen in Guru Nanak Bani, see, Adi Granth, pp. 3, 877 and 1274.

1. ਕਾਗਦਿ ਕਲਮ ਨ ਲਿਖਣ ਹਾਰੁ॥
2. ਕਾਗਦੁ ਲੂਣੁ ਰਹੈ ਘ੍ਰਿਤ ਸੰਗੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਮਲੁ ਰਹੈ॥
3. ਕਾਗਦ ਕੋਟੁ ਇਹ ਜਗੁ ਹੈ ਬਪੁਰੇ ਰੰਗਿਨਿ ਚਿਹਨ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ॥

62. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 221; also see, Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 138 and Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 78.

63. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56. Adi Granth, p. 59 :

ਭਵਜਲੁ ਬਿਖਮੁ ਡਰਾਵਣੈ
ਨ ਕੀਪੀ ਨ ਪਾਰੁ॥
ਨਾ ਬੈੜੀ ਨਾ ਤੁਲਹੜਾ
ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਵੰਝੁ ਮਲਾਰੁ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੈ ਕਾ ਬੋਹਿਥਾ
ਨਦਰੀ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਾਰੁ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 636, 1015, 1040, 1113 and 1287.

64. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 78; also see Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 138 and Lunia, B.N., op. cit., pp. 224-226.

65. For all these words appearing in Guru Nanak Bani, see, Adi Granth, pp. 18, 22, 23, 56, 57, 59, 140, 141, 153, 155, 227, 357, 417, 442, 595, 937, 992 and 1238.

Adi Granth, p. 22 :

ਵਣਜੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਵਣਜਾਰਹੇ ਵਖਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਮਾਨਿ॥
ਤੈਸੀ ਵਸਤੁ ਵਿਸਾਹੀਐ ਜੈਸੀ ਨਿਬਰੈ ਨਾਨਿ॥
ਅਗੈ ਸਾਹੁ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ ਹੈ ਲੈਸੀ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਮਾਨਿ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 26.

O thou traders, trade in the true merchandise,
buy thou the goods that last with thee.
The buyer is all-wise,
let him receive the goods,
with pleasure.

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 140 :

ਸਚਾ ਸਾਹੁ ਇਕ ਤੂੰ
ਹੋਰੁ ਜਗਤੁ ਵਣਜਾਰਾ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 132.

66. Adi Granth, p. 141 :

ਇਕ ਰਤਨ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਵਣਜਦੈ
ਇਕ ਕਚੈ ਦੇ ਵਪਾਰਾ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਤੁਠੈ ਪਈਅਨਿ
ਅੰਦਰਿ ਰਤਨ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ॥

contd..

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 132.

Some trade in jewels, others in glass,
If the true Guru is pleased,
We find the treasure of jewels within us.

67. Adi Granth, p. 166 :

ਨੈ ਤੁਰੈ ਸਉਦਾਗਰੀ ਸਉਦਾਗਰ ਧਾਵੈ॥
ਧਨ ਖਟੈ ਆਸਾ ਕਰੈ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਵਧਾਵੈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 159.

The merchant goeth to trade with his horses.
And earneth wealth and buildeth hopes,
and strengthens his love of maya.

68. Adi Granth, p. 595 :

ਹਾਣੁ ਹਟੁ ਕਰਿ ਆਰਜਾ ਸੁਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਵਬੁ॥
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸੋਚੁ ਕਰਿ ਭਾਡਸਾਲ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚੁ ਤਿਸਨੋ ਰਖੁ॥
ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਵਣਜੁ ਕਰਿ ਨੈ ਨਾਹਾ ਮਨੁ ਹਸੁ॥
ਸੁਣਿ ਸਾਸਤੁ ਸਉਦਾਗਰੀ ਸਤੁ ਘੋੜੈ ਨੈ ਚਲੁ॥
ਖਰਚੁ ਬੰਨ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਮਤੁ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਕਲੁ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 577.

Make thy ever-decreasing age as thy store-house,
and stock it with the Lord's name.
And deal only with the Lord's pedlars,
the saints and reaping the profit be in joy.
Hearing of the sacred books, let this be thy trade,
and load with thy merchandise the horses of truth.
Yea, carry then with thee the fare of merit
and leave not this day's task till tomorrow.

69. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 79.

70. Adi Granth, p. 418 :

ਵਣਜੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਮਖਸੂਦ ਲੈਹੁ ਮਤ ਪਛੋਤਾਵਹੁ॥
ਤਾ ਵਪਾਰੀ ਜਣੀਅਹੁ ਨਾਹਾ ਲੈ ਜਾਵਹੁ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 416.

The following couplet is in the form of an advice
to those who indulge in the true business,
(i.e., seekers of the truth of God), that they
should deal only in such items, which bring profit
on their merchandise.

... ..

Trade, ye with a set object
Lest ye grieve,
yea, ye are traders
only if ye reap some profit.

See also, Adi Granth, p. 18.

71. Adi Granth, p. 442 :

ਵਣਜਾਰੇ ਇਕ ਭਾਤੀ ਆਵਹਿ
ਲਾਹਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੈ ਜਾਹੇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., p. 438.

The traders of the same kind come to Thee
and they reap the profit of the Name.

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 399.

72. Adi Granth, p. 789 :

ਖੁਲ੍ਹੇ ਹਟ ਹੋਆ ਵਪਾਰੁ॥
ਜੋ ਪਹੁਚੈ ਸੋ ਚਲਣਹਾਰੁ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 749.

And as many are the living beings,
so many are the customers.

Yea, when the shops are open,

the trade goeth on,

and no sooner that one cometh from one end
than one quiteth from the other.

For words like shops and bazars etc., see,

Adi Granth, pp. 141, 399, 595 and 992.

73. Adi Granth, p. 718 :

ਬਾਣੀਏ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਹੀਗੁ ਆਛੈ - - - ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 416.

The grocers (banias) home has asafotida.

74. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 140.
75. See, Adi Granth, pp. 1117 and 1216.
76. Jaffar, S.M., op. cit., p. 219.
77. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 415.
Adi Granth, p. 417 :

ਇਸੁ ਜਰ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਘਣੀ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ
ਇਨਿ ਜਰ ਘਣੀ ਖੁਆਈ॥
ਪਘਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ
ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਬਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥

78. Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 140.
79. Jaffar, S.M., op. cit., p. 222.
80. Adi Granth, p. 1239 :

ਧਰਤੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਰਬਤ ਭਾਰੁ॥
ਕਿਉ ਕੰਡੈ ਤੋਲੈ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ॥
ਤੋਲਾ ਮਾਸਾ ਫਤਕ ਪਾਇ॥
ਨ ਲਕ ਪੁਛਿਆ ਦੇਇ ਪੁਜਾਇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1184.

No jeweller can weigh in his scales either the earth or the sea or the mountain, with his little weights (toḷa, masha and rati).

81. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 16.
Adi Granth, p. 12 :

ਵਿਸਏ ਚਸਿਆ ਘੜੀਆ ਪਹਰਾ
ਬਿਤੀ ਵਾਰੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਹੋਆ॥
ਸੂਰਜੁ ਏਕੋ ਰੁਤਿ ਅਠੈਕ॥
ਠਲਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੇ ਕੇਤੇਵੇਸ॥

For measurement of time also see, Adi Granth,
pp. 98, 107, 140 and 843.

82. For weights and measures (of time and distance),
see Jaffar, S.M., op. cit., pp. 222-223.
Adi Granth, p. 464.

83. For tanks or tank, daam and kauri or kaudi, see,
Adi Granth, pp. 133, 147, 156, 195, 227 and 335.

84. Jaffar, S.M., op. cit., pp. 220-221.

85. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 23.
Adi Granth, p. 23 :

ਖੋਟੇ ਪੋਤੇ ਨਾ ਪਵਹਿ
ਤਿਨ ਹਰਿਗੁਰ ਦਰਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥
ਖੋਟੇ ਜਗਤ ਨ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ
ਖੋਟਿ ਨ ਸੀਝਸਿ ਕੋਇ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, pp., 143, 662 and 789.

86. For inland communications, see Farooque, A.K.
Muhammed, Roads and Communications in Mughal
India, Delhi, pp. 35-40.

87. Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., pp. 140-141.
88. See, Adi Granth, pp. 64, 418, 659. For night-stay in a serai, see Suhi Kabir, Adi Granth, pp. 792-793.
89. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 227. For Pack horses, see Adi Granth, p. 166.
90. For references of different types of modes of conveyance, see, Adi Granth, pp. 417 and 1010.
91. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 227.
92. Ibid., p. 228.
93. In one of his hymns, Guru Nanak gives an eye witness account of Babar's attack on saidpur and the miserable condition of the people to which they were subjected to suffer; see Adi Granth, pp. 417-418.
94. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., pp. 228-29.
95. See, Adi Granth, pp. 496 and 1147.
96. Ibid., pp. 481, 487, 655, 736, 1023 and 1061. To quote a line from the Bani of Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1023 :

ਬਾਜੀ ਖੇਲਿ ਗਏ ਬਾਜੀਗਰ
ਜਿਉ ਨਿਸਿ ਸੁਖਣੇ ਭਖਲਈ ਰੇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 976.

contd...

This world is like a juggler's game.

Here one juggles one's part.

Yea, as one mumbles in a dream.

97. See, Adi Granth, pp. 832 and 1139.

98. About this profession, see, Adi Granth, pp. 1008, 1256, 1279 and 1363.

To quote a couplet from Guru Nanak Bani,

Adi Granth, p. 1279 :

ਵੈਦੁ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਵੈਦਗੀ ਪਕੜ ਢੰਢੋਲੇ ਬਾਹ॥
ਭੋਲਾ ਵੈਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਈ ਕਰਕ ਕਲੇਜੇ ਮਾਹਿ॥
ਵੈਦਾ ਵੈਦੁ ਸੁਵੈਦੁ ਤੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਰੋਗੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ॥
ਐਸਾ ਦਾਰੂ ਲੋੜਿ ਨਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਵੈਦੈ ਰੋਗਾ ਘਾਣਿ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਰੋਗ ਉਠਿਅਹਿ ਤਨਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਵਸੈ ਆਇ॥
ਰੋਗ ਗਵਾਇਹਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਤ ਨਲਕ ਵੈਦੁ ਸਦਾਇ॥

99. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 4108.

Adi Granth, p. 1245 :

ਘਾਣਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ
ਨਲਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੇਇ॥

CHAPTER IV

CASTE SYSTEM

The Hindus and Muslims constituted the bulk of the medieval Indian population. The most striking feature of the Hindu society was its caste system which was marked off from others on the basis of social status determined by birth and sanctified by the Hindu law books. The system had a cultural basis in the beginning, but with the passage of time, the castes became hereditary.¹ Certain theological notions like karma and dharma, writes M.N. Srinivas, had contributed very greatly to the strengthening of the idea of hierarchy which was inherent in the caste system.² The idea of karma taught a Hindu that he was born in a particular caste because he deserved to be born there. The actions he performed in a previous incarnation deserved such a reward or punishment, as the case might be. The other important concept attached to the caste distinctions was dharma. The existing moral code was identified with dharma. A man who accepted the caste system and the rules of his particular sub-caste was considered to be living according to dharma, while violation of these codes was punishable both here and hereafter. This was the common belief on which the brahmins based their superiority and exploited the low-born people to their own interest.³

The institution of caste divided the entire Hindu population into various castes and sub-castes. Guru Nanak takes notice of the four varna and refers specifically to the brahmin, the khatri (kshatriya), the vais, (vaishya) and the sudra. He takes notice also of the high and low jatis and refers to the chuharas, the chandalas and the dhanaks, all of whom were probably outcastes. He calls the brahmin, a pandit, a panda, a iyotishi or prohit.⁴ Outside these there were the panchamas (the fifth caste) with innumerable divisions of untouchables, unapproachable and unlookables the majority of aborigines of India belong to the fifth caste and these together with the sudras form the bulk of the Hindu population. Their standard of morality, their behaviour, their dresses, their languages and their modes of living were different. They lacked national solidarity. They had no social cohesion.⁵ There are many references of four varnas in the Bani of Guru Nanak. In Ramkali he says :

Khatris, brahmans, sudras or vaishyas find
not its worth by thousands of calculations.⁶

Alberuni also observed that in the 11th century there were four varnas among the Hindus, the brahmin, the kshatriya, the vaishya and the sudra.⁷ He also observed a number of 'subcastes' of each varna.⁸ Furthermore, he noted that below the varna were certain crafts or professions such as the shoemaker, the fisherman, the sailor,

the hunter, the juggler, the chandalas, and some other categories of people, were still lower in social order, they were rather outside the pale of Hindu society.⁹ Obviously, the varnas did not cover all the people.

Guru Nanak not only mentions these four varnas but also tells us about, the duties, assigned to them by the society. Guru Nanak says in Salok Sahskriti :

The way of union with lord is the way
of divine knowledge,
with the brahmins the way is through the vedas.
Khatri's way is the way of bravery
and of the sudras, the way is the
service of the others.¹⁰

In Alberuni's account the four major castes or varnas, have specific duties assigned to them. The brahmin was to learn and teach the religious scriptures. The duty of kshatriya was to rule and to defend the country and the people, to read but not to teach the veda and to act according to the rules of the puranas. The duty of the vaishya was to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle and to relieve the brahmin of his material needs the duty of the sudra was to serve the high castes. It is highly improbable that these classified duties comprehended all the professions followed by these social groups even in Alberuni's days.¹¹

The concept of varna was accepted and advocated throughout the medieval period by those who regarded themselves as the true representatives of Hinduism. At the close of the 17th century, Sujan Rai described the ahl-i-brahama as those who subscribed to the varna order of the brahmin, the chhatri, the baish and the sudra.¹² In the 19th century, Ganesh Das ascribed the institution of the varna order to Raja Bharat with an implicit appreciation.¹³ He was, however, himself aware of the fact that the Hindu social order of his day did not correspond to the varna order as it was originally conceived.¹⁴

The concept of varna divided the entire population into three social groups. The privileged, the unprivileged and untouchables. Broadly speaking, the people of brahmin, kshatriya and vaish castes belonged to the first group and were the twice born. They were entitled to the ceremony performed by the brahmin priest, initiating them into the second birth. The sacred thread was the chief mark of distinction and an emblem of the superiority of these high caste Hindus.¹⁵ The brahmins wore tilak mark which was another distinctive feature of their superiority.¹⁶ The members of the second group, loosely termed sudras, could not perform the thread ceremony, they were debarred from the privileges of study and recital of scriptures. The untouchables, were the sudras of impure birth, performing social duties which subjected them to constant defilement. They were condemned to permanent social degradation, denied

elementary civic rights and rigidly excluded from places of worship¹⁷, public places and even the neighbourhood of caste Hindus.

Thus the caste system which was woven in the fabric of religious belief, formed the bedrock of the Hindu society. It brought degradation in its train and became a burden and a curse for the society. Guru Nanak, a keen observer of the existing conditions of his own times did not fail to comment on the caste system and the degeneration it had brought into the fold of Hindu society. The traditional four varnas - the brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishya and sudras had undergone tremendous changes ever since the Turkish invasions on North India after 1000 AD.

To the Muslims the institution of caste was something new. Islam with its faith in equality and brotherhood of man did not make any distinction between man and man. Naturally, this institution aroused great curiosity among the early Muslim intellectuals who came to India. The Hindu population as a whole could not reconcile to the idea of mixing with Muslim invaders and tried to isolate themselves from the Muslims with scrupulous determination to save their religion and social system. The Hindus treated the early Muslims as malecha with a social status much lower than that of the sudras.¹⁸ As Alberuni stated in the early part of the 11th century AD, 'All their fanaticism is directed against all foreigners. They call

them malechas - i.e., impure and forbid having any connection with them, be it by inter-marriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating and drinking with them, because thereby they think they would be polluted'.¹⁹ Guru Nanak has also used the word malechas for the Muslims in his Bani.²⁰ But by his time the high caste Hindus including the brahmins had adopted much of their culture and had started wearing their blue colour and taking their food and meat prepared in the muslim fashion. The brahmins in their private life tried to keep their traditional taboos regarding the preparation of food etc., which was nothing more than cheating the masses in the name of superiority of their caste. Guru Nanak strongly denounces the hypocrisy prevalent among these cowardly and caste conscious high caste Hindus in the following couplets of Asa di Var :

They seek approval of the Muslim rulers by
wearing blue.

And worship the puranas succoured by the
barbarian's (malechas) food.

And eat they the he-goat over which is breathed
the foreign word.

And allow they no one to enter upon their
kitchen square.

They mark off the square, and plaster it with
the cow-dung.

And upon it are seated no other but the false ones.

Lest it be defiled, lest it be defiled.
'And this our food be polluted' they cry.
But with their impure body, defiled they are,
Their minds are impure, though they cleanse
their mouths.
Sayeth Nanak 'Dwell, 'O'man on the Truth,
Yea, if thou art pure (of heart),
To Truth attainest Thou'.²¹

Apart from indicating the hypocrisy, cowardice and false sense of purity possessed by the high caste Hindus, the above quoted couplet throws a significant light on the cultural mingling of the Hindus and the Muslims. Despite the fact that the Hindus contemptuously looked upon the Muslims as malechas and the Muslims in turn looked upon the Hindus as infidels or kafirs, there was, it is evident, a certain degree of social intercourse existing between the members of the two communities. As a matter of fact, the Hindus had learnt to accept Muslim rule with all its merits and faults.²² A large number of low caste Hindus embraced Islam because it promised them better treatment and more economic gains. Even the high caste Hindus (as referred earlier) reconciled with the changed situation and adopted their dress, food habits and language. This was done with a double purpose of pleasing the Muslim rulers as well as to gain the economic benefits.²³

The chief result of the political domination of the Muslims was that the brahmins who had been exempted from all sorts of taxes were subjected to pay jizya. Although Guru Nanak makes no direct reference to jizya as such, yet he clearly states that cows and brahmins were taxed by the Muslims. In several cases the tax collectors were also Hindus, belonging to brahmin, kshatriya or other high caste people of the community. The Muslims right from the days of Ala-ud-din Khilji down to Feroz Tughluq and Sikandar Lodi, thought in terms of Islam and treated the Hindus as inferior. They were living in a strange type of contradiction in their day to day life as is clear from the following couplets of Guru Nanak :

They tax the cow and the brahmin
and with the cow-dung they hope themselves to save
(on the one hand) they wear the dhoti,
the saffron mark and rosary, (on the other)
they eat the barbarian's (melacha's) grains.
Within they worship (the idols),
(outside) they read the Quran, and observe
the code of the turks.
Shed thy hypocrisy, O brahmin,
For 'tis through the Name that thou
swimmest across'.²⁴

Traditionally, a brahmin was supposed to spend his

time in the study of vedas and puranas and perform the religious rites. They had, however, abandoned those intrinsic virtues which their class originally stood for, and had themselves fallen a prey to all the vices which they were expected to combat in the community and had only external marks of holiness left in them.²⁵ They would dispense sacred thread to the people, perform their marriages by getting commissions, show them the path for the future on the basis of patri²⁶ or scroll and, though blind in soul, call themselves seers.²⁷ They would go to the houses of other people, sound conches and enjoy their food. They had lost all sense of 'honour and shame' and dealt only in falsehood which had become their way of life.²⁸

Although brahmins had lost their sanctity and integrity by their actions, but they were still acknowledged as the leaders of Hinduism. They were proud of their high caste and their pride led them to acts of cruelty towards sudras or low caste people.²⁹ According to Guru Nanak, 'he alone is a brahmin who knows the Transcendent Lord, who does the deed of devotion, penance and self-restraint, who observes the path of humility and contentment'.

Such a brahman alone is worthy of being worshipped.

He alone is a brahman who knoweth brahman,
yea, the God.

And practiceth austerity and contemplation
and self-control.

And doeth (righteous) deeds.

And keepeth the religion of contentment and
culture.

And earneth emancipation, breaking the bonds
(of desire).

Yea, such a brahmin is worthy of being worshipped.³⁰

The main aim of pandits (brahmins) was to study the scriptures (books) and teach the philosophy contained therein. They were supposed to educate the people and lead a life of restraint and contentment. But they too were concerned with their material and worldly gains only, through their occupation. Guru Nanak clearly states that mere knowledge unaccompanied by 'right conduct', was despicable. 'One may load carts with books, one may read them for all twelve months of the year or indeed, at each and every moment of one's entire life. All this will be of no avail if they are devoid of God's name'. Guru Nanak is critical about those who tell lies and do not practice righteousness. They spend their time in fruitless discussions and quarrel themselves. In Sri Rag, he writes :

The pandit reads the books, but gives no
thought to them,
he instructs the others, but himself trades
in maya.

By the false prattle is the world deluded,
true living is in the word alone.
Many are the pandits and the diviners of future
who read the vedas,
but they waste away life upon life
in clash or arguments which they cherish.
Without the Guru's grace, whoever is ever
saved by mere talk³¹ ?

Guru Nanak advises the pandits to know the acts that result in happiness, for they cite the vedas and the shastras and yet their real interest is in worldly occupations, this pretence does not cleanse the inner dirt, this is precisely the way of the spider that weaves its web all the time, living and dying upside down. Without Guru's grace no one can get rid of the chain of life and death and achieve salvation. Guru Nanak writes in Rag Sorath :

Hear thou, O deed-bound pandit,
the One deed that leads to bliss is to reflect on
the Reality of the Real.
Thou recitest the vedas and the shastras,
but thou doest the deeds of a man of the world.
And thy mind is cleansed not of the scum of guile,
and within thee is piled up in the dirt of sin.
Like the spider thou art caught in thy own web,
tossed upside down.

Myriads have been thus wasted away by their
evil mindedness and love of the other.

For, he who serveth the true Guru attaineth peace,
and then cease his comings and going.³²

About their character Guru Nanak says that even
the learned did not practice righteousness. There was
malice in their mind. He says in his Bani :

The pandit studies and quarrels
He does not understand the things within.³³

'The pandits go through the holy books (vedas)
but do not understand their substance. They give advice
to others. This is the trade of mammon. They tell lie!³⁴
'Pandit understands nothing of the real value, he only reads
books, he advises others and runs his shop on falsehood,
his world revolves around falsehood'.³⁵ 'They only indulge
in profitless strife and remain chained to the cosmic
circuit'.³⁶ 'A million recitations of the puranas and a
million expositions of the shastras are fruitless if one
fails to receive true honour from God'.³⁷ 'The brahmin
or pandit does not know the acts that lead to salvation'.
According to Guru Nanak, 'he who attains to salvation and
leads others to salvation is a brahmin'.³⁸ 'He reads
books and mutters his prayers and he closes his eyes like
the heron (that falls on its prey) and by mere talk presents

iron as gold'.³⁹ 'The pandit is a broker in false practices, his hands will be cut off in the next world'.⁴⁰ 'But his ignorance does not deter him from preaching'.⁴¹ They failed to perform, their functions in accordance with the position assumed by them.⁴² There is a yawning gulf between his acts and professions'.⁴³ Guru Nanak says about himself that 'I am not a clever pandit, misleading others and myself, I tell no false tales, I recognize His hukam'.⁴⁴

Guru Nanak's denunciation of the pandit or brahmin may now be easily understandable. He is often referred to as 'the clever panda'⁴⁵ in contrast to the one who really knows and understands, the generality of men are called pandit.

There are many scholars (pandits)
in this world, but hardly a
man of deep deliberation.
Without meeting the True Guru,
all wander in pride.⁴⁶

According to Guru Nanak, 'the real pandit is one who understands Divine knowledge, he becomes a learned scholar. If any one knows the one Lord amongst all the beings, he talks not of ego, then'.⁴⁷ The wise pandit is one who really knows the true object of worship. If he knows the place, wherefrom the soul wells up. Then alone

can his name be an intelligent pandit'.⁴⁸ The true pandit in the view of Guru Nanak adopts God's Name.

He alone is learned,
he alone scholarly (pandit)
and wise, who practises
the Lord's name.⁴⁹

The kshatriyas, next to the brahmins in social hierarchy, had become covetous and cowardly, and earned their livelihood by dishonest means.⁵⁰ Writing about the kshatriyas and their duties, five hundred years before Guru Nanak, Alberuni had observed that he rules the people and defends them, for he is created for this task. The kshatriya reads the veda and learns it, but does not teach it. He offers to the fire and acts according to the rules of the puranas.⁵¹ Commenting on the traditional duties and responsibilities of the kshatriyas, like Alberuni, Guru Nanak also observes : 'of the kshatriyas the way is of heroism'.⁵² It seems from the above couplet⁵³ that Guru Nanak used the word khatri⁵⁴ for kshatriyas in his Bani.

Like the brahmins there was also a marked change and degradation in the character of the kshatriyas under the direct impact of the Muslim rule over the country. Guru Nanak is pained to see that the kshatriyas whose primary duty was to fight and defend the country have

denounced the path of heroism and have adopted the language and dress of the Muslims to please their new masters (the Muslim rulers). In Rag Dhanasri, he writes :

The kshatriyas have given up their religion (i.e. heroism and defence of the people and the country) and taken to the foreign language (which was a symbol of political and cultural subjugation).

The distinction of good and bad is obliterated, and no one thinks of religion (i.e., attributes of a particular caste).⁵⁵

By the close of the fifteenth century, the social situation in North India and specially in Punjab had considerably changed under the impact of Turkish conquest and the rule of the Delhi sultans. The rajput ruling classes, the kshatriyas of the varna concept, had been dislodged from power. After a prolonged struggle they lost the ground, and many of them were forcibly converted to Islam or migrated to safer places. Those who remained near the centres of Muslim power they accepted subordinate positions with the local authorities. Their significant remnant could perhaps be seen in a few zamindars called the rais. To equate the Hindu zamindars, chaudharies and muqqadams

of the Lodi Punjab with the kshatriyas of the varna concept would be the best way of glossing over a significant social change. The occupation of the old kashatriyas ruling classes with the vital politics of India was gone. At the close of the fifteenth century one could even find individuals tilling the soil but styling themselves as rajput. If the Hindu subjects of the Delhi sultanate were adjusting themselves to the conditions of Muslim rule in the late 15th century, the khatriis of the Punjab were among those who showed a considerable adaptability, and success. The Persian knowing khatriis rose to comparatively higher positions in the administration and to higher status.⁵⁶ Many of them were employed in the civil administration. This class had no stable economic base. Some of them were petty businessmen and some of them even took the responsibility of collecting jizya imposed on their co-religionists.⁵⁷

The position of this class was such that they had to be cunning as they could not afford a conflict with the ruling class, but at the social level they wanted to maintain their superiority. Thus, they were humble to the ruling class and very harsh to the downtrodden. Guru Nanak does not give any credence to these kshatriyas, who are devoid of their 'high traditions', yet feel proud of being kshatriya. In the opinion of Guru Nanak :

He alone is a khatri (kshatriya)
Who is a hero in deed,
and dedicates his body to
compassion and charity,
and knowing the right farm,
soweth the seed of beneficence.
Then such a kshatriya is,
approved of at the Lord's court.⁵⁸

From the above citation there appears to be little in the khatris (kshatriyas) of the time that was commendable. They fell far short of the duties of their own conception. Their failure was greater when they were judged on Guru Nanak's criterion.⁵⁹

Next to the kashtriyas was the class of the vaishyas, who were considered inferior to the brahmins and the kashtriyas in the Hindu social structure. This class consisted of the people whose profession was agriculture and trade. Sometimes they also joined the fighting force, and this class formed the bulk of the population, both in the cities and the rural areas. This class was hard-working, sturdy and of very honest tendency. The duties of the vaishya, were to devote himself to agriculture, cattle breeding, and business either on his own behalf, or on behalf of a brahmin. Alberuni mentions the sub-divisions of the vaishys on the basis of the different trades they adopted.⁶⁰ There are some references about this caste in the Bani of Guru Nanak.⁶¹

In the Punjab, the vaishyas were known as jats. The Hindu society in the rural Punjab was marked by the preponderance of the jats. Divided into numerous clans, they had their zamindars, chaudharies and muqqadams, but the bulk of the jats consisted of ordinary cultivators. They were generally sturdy and loved manly sports. They were not reluctant to pay the ordinary dues to the state through its intermediaries, but they resented oppression and occasionally took arms against their oppressors.⁶²

In the beginning of the 11th century, Alberuni had observed that the duties of the vaishyas are to practice agriculture and to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle and to remove the needs of the brahmins.⁶³ With the passage of time alongwith agriculture, their other main professions became trade and money lending.⁶⁴ Though persons engaged in agriculture were hardpressed under the burden of heavy taxes⁶⁵, yet those who had gone in trade and money-lending business were prosperous economically. Their profound and expert knowledge of financial matters was so well recognised that even Muslim rulers employed them on posts of great responsibility.⁶⁶

Like the brahmins and the kshatriyas, their were several sub-castes among the vaishyas depending on the type of work or business they were engaged in. Guru Nanak Bani indicates a higher social status for those who were sahukars (moneylenders), or traded in horses, diamonds and held

high positions in the courts of central or local authorities.⁶⁷ The petty shopkeepers or bantias of moderate means enjoyed a lower status as compared to those vaishyas who were sound economically.⁶⁸

The lowest class among the Hindus was that of the sudras and the untouchables. The sudras were to serve the people of the other three castes⁶⁹ with humility and a sense of self-surrender. The sudras formed a big section of the Indian proletariat. Many mixed castes were included among the sudras. Majority of the agricultural labourers⁷⁰, craftsmen like kumharas (potters), kahars (palki bearers), malees (gardeners), betel sellers, telis (oil-pressers), tarkhans (carpenters), lohars (blacksmiths) etc. formed the sudra community.⁷¹ Guru Nanak has made a mention of all these professions in his Bani.⁷²

After the sudras were the people called untouchables or chandalas. They were depressed classes outside the caste system. They rendered various kinds of services and were not reckoned among the castes. They lived outside the town or village and performed various functions either too dirty by their very nature or involving cruelty to dumb creatures. People belonging to shoe making (chamars), basket making and sailors, fishermen, jugglers and hunters etc. belonged to this group.⁷³ Kasai or chandal (butcher) and dooms (bards) also belonged to this category.⁷⁴ It is important to note that Guru Nanak kept Bhai Mardana as his companion on the missionary tours, who was a doom/mirasi.

(minstrel) by caste.⁷⁵

In those days, if a chandal touched a member of any other caste he was considered to have been defiled and had to purify himself by taking bath with clothes on. A person could get defiled in a number of ways viz. if he carried on conversation with a chandal, joined him on a journey or took water from a well or pond owned by the chandal, took chandal's food or lived in his house for some time. For this defilement the person had to undertake various kinds of penances under the direction of the brahmins.⁷⁶ The chandalas were expected to carry a bell, whenever on the move, so that the people of high castes might get aside to avoid defilement.⁷⁷ From all counts it can be said that their position was very miserable in the contemporary society. They had been assigned place at the bottom of the social scale. They were discriminated against in every sphere of life and had no rights or privileges. Laying the caste gradation, the oldest Hindu scripture reads 'Brahmin was the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriya his arms, the Vaishya his thighs and Shudra his feet'.⁷⁸

Not only the sudras were prohibited to practise the vedic or ordinary religious exercises, they were also not to study the vedas or the purans nor were they permitted to explain the sacred text.⁷⁹ In fact, they were considered like illegitimate children. They were considered unclean. The doors of knowledge were closed for them and any

attempt to cross the barrier was severely dealt with, the condition of the untouchable was obviously the worst. They lived not only under the shadow of contempt but also below the subsistence level of human existence.⁸⁰

The tendency of the caste system all along has been to divide the community into innumerable water tight compartments. This had rendered the Hindus incapable of thinking in terms of any interest larger than that of their sub-caste. Caste was believed to be predestined an immutable transmigration of souls being the principal dogma of popular Hinduism, birth in a particular caste was not considered an accident but the natural consequence of deeds done in a former life. Interdining and intermarriage between sudras and the other three castes was not to be thought of even where intimate friendship obliterated all other differences, however, a brahmin could marry a sudra wife if he wished so.⁸¹ Sudras were occupied with menial duties. Feeling the pinch of sudra's degraded condition in the society, Kabir challenges the brahmins and the so called superiority of their caste and questions them by saying :

In the womb of the mother, no one knoweth one's caste,
yea, it is from the lord's seed that the whole
creation came into being.

Say, O Pandit, how didst thou become a brahmin-born?
Do not lose the merit of thy human birth
by calling thyself a high caste.

If thou art a brahmin being born of a brahmin
mother.

Then why didn't you choose to be born in some
ways different than the others?

O' how art thou a brahmin and I a low caste?

Is it that I have blood in my veins and
thou hast milk?

Sayeth Kabir 'Honour is that

which the Lord approveth,

Without the Lord's Name,

One findeth not deliverance.⁸²

As cited earlier, they suffered from various religious disabilities including the study of scriptures and freedom of worship in the temples. The following Shabad (hymn) of Bhagat Namdev⁸³ is symbolic of the existing state of affairs for the sudras in the society.

I come to thy temple in a happy mood,
whilst in devotion I Nama (namdev) was
caught and asked to get up.

I belong to a low caste, O Yadava king
(Lord Krishna).

Why have I been born in a calico
printer's family?

I took my blanket and turned back

And sat down at the back of the temple
As I Nama, utter the praises of Hari (God)
The temple of the saints revolves.⁸⁴

Guru Nanak unreservedly repudiates the religious sanction of birth distinctions, refuses to admit that there are any divinely ordained classes amongst mankind, denies that social gradation determines social ethics and civic obligations of individuals and unambiguously declares that class and caste distinctions are just so much non-sense, as all men are born equal, for men were not created from different parts of the primaeval man, but all originate from the same source, the light of God, and therefore, there are no one high or low by birth :

O wonder of wonders?
Thou art the spirit that pervadeth all.
Its Thy light, that lights all hearts.⁸⁵

This idea that all mankind is God's creation occurs several times in Guru Nanak's compositions.⁸⁶ There is no doubt that Guru Nanak firmly believes in God as the creator of all. It is also clear in his view that human beings should be equally entitled to salvation. Guru Nanak's attitude towards the caste system was radical and went far deeper than that displayed by most of the bhagtas of medieval period. Guru Nanak was not a social reformer in the ordinary

sense of the term. He did not aim directly and specifically at removing social injustice. His purpose was to lay down a path for men's spiritual journey. For entering that path, no social qualifications no high rank in the social hierarchy was needed, a craving for spiritual bliss was the only requirement, in pursuing that path it would be necessary for a man to drop his inherited social prejudices.⁸⁷

See thou of each the light within
and ask not his caste,
For hereafter the caste is of no avail.⁸⁸

Because :

Vain is the pride of caste,
Vain the pride of glory,
The Lord alone giveth shade to all,
he who of himself feigneth glory (is vain),
For only if the Lord approveth of him,
is he approved.⁸⁹

Guru Nanak believed in the natural equality of all beings of whatever race, religion or birth they might be. Not only this that there is no high or low, rather, he took pride in associating himself with humble and the down-trodden whom the Hindu society discarded as untouchables and unclean. His two life-long companions belonged to two different caste and community, Mardana a Muslim marasi and Bala a Hindu of

khatri caste. Once, at Aminabad (Saidpur), Guru Nanak stayed at the house of Bhai Lalo, a poor carpenter instead of staying with the brahmins, the so called high caste people or with Malik Bhago (a richman) of high caste of the town. Malik Bhago invited Guru Nanak for dinner and Guru Nanak refused to join it and said :

The lowliest 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.⁹⁰

Thus Guru Nanak was not keen to keep relationship with the brahmins or the so-called high caste people. He attacked the caste system most vehemently and most successfully. He considered caste of no avail and held that not birth but deeds determined one's merit. In his Bani he says :

The God mindeth not our caste or birth,
so one must find the house of truth,
for, as be one's deeds
So, be one's caste.⁹¹

According to Guru Nanak 'low people are not those who are born in a low family, but those who forget the

name of Lord'.⁹² Guru Nanak shows no concern for the iniquitous system of caste. 'God has no 'caste'. There is no 'caste' in the next world and caste there is of no account'.⁹³ 'One does not become 'high' in God's eyes by regarding oneself as high. Without his name one remains an 'out-caste'. It is for God to bestow greatness irrespective of one's caste'.⁹⁴

If the Lord blesseth one caste,
the other caste likes it not,
but He in his hands hath all the glory and
he giveth to whomsoever He pleaseth.⁹⁵

From these verses, it may be safely inferred that in Guru Nanak's view the social fact of one's belonging to a high or low caste is totally irrelevant to one's salvation. One's real caste is determined by the honour one earns from God.⁹⁶ Caste and power not count in God's reckoning who bestows status on a different criterion, only those who are good receive honour from him. In Var Asa Guru Nanak says :

In the next world, caste and power
count not hereafter, the mortal has to
deal with the new beings.
A few, whose honour is of
account, they are good.⁹⁷

Further he says :

What merit is caste?
Know thou the truth within,
whatever the caste may be
He who tasteth the poison will die.⁹⁸

On the question of inter-caste relations, not only his sympathies were with the lower castes but he himself considered low or nich. While addressing God, he always says 'You are high I am low (nich)'.⁹⁹ 'To be low in relation to God, one had no use for caste'.¹⁰⁰ Again he says 'I am a singer (dhadi) of low caste (nich jat) others claim to be of high caste, they do not know themselves and think too much of, self'.¹⁰¹ 'Indeed God made all the 'vessels' and his light shines in all, call every one high, there is none who is low (nich)'.¹⁰² The idea of God's light being in all is closely connected with a social comment.

Guru Nanak has a good deal of appreciation for those who are above the distinction of caste. Only a few men have succeeded in transcending earthly attachment and the jat-varna, they have passed as true (coins). In Rag Parbhati he says :

In this world, rare are such persons,
assaying whom, the lord consigns to His treasury.
They rise above caste and colour and do away
with wordly love and avarice.¹⁰³

'Whatever one's caste, servanthood of God is praiseworthy'.¹⁰⁴ 'In fact, if you desire a good end, do good deeds and think of yourself as low'.¹⁰⁵ Guru Nanak also suggests that 'What Sabad under the Guru's instruction does is to free men from useless thoughts of the jat varna'.¹⁰⁶

Caste and untouchability had disintegrated the Indian society. Guru Nanak vehemently condemned the caste ridden society and preached against varna system. Bhai Gurdas says that the gospel of Guru is common for the four varna, brahmin, kshtriya, vaishya and sudra.¹⁰⁷ Guru Nanak's appreciation for those who are above the distinction of caste is very clear in his compositions.¹⁰⁸ In the view of Guru Nanak, real servant of God is he, who remains above the discrimination of caste and colour. He says, 'Creator is one. All are His children and no body will get any thing without service'.¹⁰⁹

Although complete elimination of a deep rooted system was extremely difficult yet we can say that Guru Nanak did make a dent in the citadel of Hindu caste system and prepared the ground for a social revolution in the country.

The Muslim Society

Caste among the Muslims never existed like an institution, as was the case with the Hindus. Firstly, caste did not enjoy any sanction or justification in their traditional religious ideology. Secondly, there was no such

ritually pure caste like the brahmins in Islam.¹¹⁰ According to Islamic principles, all Muslims are equal and there is no distinction or discrimination among them. But in the course of time caste and class distinctions arose among them like those of the Hindus.¹¹¹ The conception of caste-system was gradually developing among the Muslims and as Dr. Ashraf points out, 'they succumbed to new castes and sub-castes. Various classes of the Muslims began to reside separately in different localities even in the same town. The conception of untouchability evolved in due course in the Muslim society too.'¹¹²

The men who brought about such caste distinctions in the Muslim society were generally the Hindu converts to Islam. Even after adopting a 'new faith', they could not get rid of their Hindu notions and practices and carried them to the new society. In course of time, these notions and practices became part of Muslim society as well. Most of the Hindu converts who took to Islam belonged to the lower castes. They adopted Islam with a view to escape the social disadvantage to which they were subjected to in the Hindu society. But they found their lot no better in the Muslim society which they adopted. They were treated as untouchables in the new society also.¹¹³

In the beginning, there were vast differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. They looked at each other with suspicion and hatred. But in the course of time, they

forgot their fundamental differences and spirit of harmony, cooperation and toleration began to grow among them.¹¹⁴ Hence the inevitable process of give and take started and went on unabated during the entire course of medieval history, affecting the manifold aspects of Hindu and Muslim culture of the country which is clear from Guru Nanak Bani.¹¹⁵

NOTES

1. Sharma, Brijnarain, Social Life in Northern India, Delhi, 1966, (AD 600-1000), p. 36.

Yuan Chwang says that the four Hindu castes were based on 'hereditary clan distinctions', i.e., a Brahmin was to be born in the family of a Brahmin and a Kshatriya in that of a Kshatriya.

2. Quoted by Ahmad Imtiaz (ed), Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims, Delhi, 1973, p. 26.

3. Sagar, S.L., Hindu Culture and Caste System in India, Delhi, 1975, pp. 106-121.

4. These references are to be found in the Adi Granth under the following Ragas : Rag Gauri, Var Majh, Sri Rag, Rag Dhanasari, Rag Asa, Japji, Rag Tilang, Rag Sorath, Rag Vadhans, Rag Gujri, Rag Bhairo, Rag Tukhari, Rag Ramkali, Rag Bilawal, Rag Suhi, Var Malhar, Rag Sarang and Rag Basant.

5. Chatterji, Suniti Kumar, Guru Nanak - A Homage, edited by K.R.S. Iyenger, Simla, 1969, p. 23.

6. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. 6, p. 2859. Adi Granth, p. 878 :

ਖਤੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਸੂਦੁ ਕਿ ਵੈਸੁ ॥

ਨਿਰਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਗਣੀ ਸਹੈਸੁ ॥

7. Sachau, Edward, C, (tr.), Alberuni's India, London, 1914, p. 100.
8. Ibid., p. 102.
9. Ibid., pp. 101-102.

It is not out of place to give Alberuni's full passage on antyaaja as he observed in the beginning of the 11th century AD. He writes, 'After the sudra, follow the people called antyaaja, who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste, but only as members of a certain crafts or professions. These are eight classes of them, who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and birds, and the weaver. The four castes do not live together with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages, and towns of the four castes, but outside them'.

The lowest sections were enumerated as the hadi, doma, chandala and badhatan and they were not reckoned amongst any caste or guild. Alberuni says, 'They are occupied with duty work, like the cleansing

of the villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class and distinguished only by their occupations. In fact, they are considered like illegitimate children.

10. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. 8, p. 4465. Adi Granth, p. 1353 :

ਜੋਗ ਸਬਦੰ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਬਦੰ ਬੰਦ ਸਬਦੰ ਤ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣਹ॥

ਖੜੀ ਸਬਦੰ ਸੂਰ ਸਬਦੰ ਸੂਦ ਸਬਦੰ ਪਰਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਹ ॥

11. Sachau, Edward, C, (tr.), op. cit., pp. 136-137.
12. Sujan Rai, Khulasat-ul-Tawarikh, p. 24, quoted in Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 49.
13. Ganesh Das, Char Bagh-i-Panjab, p. 288, quoted ibid., p. 49.
14. This is to suggest that the socio-economic position of certain social groups did not always correspond to their ritual status. This would be true for instance, of the khatrijs of the Punjab. For social change with respct to caste, see, Upadhyay, V., Social-Religious Change in North India (700-1200), Varanasi, 1964, p. 365.
15. Raghuvanshi, V.P.S., Indian Society in the Eighteenth Century, New Delhi, 1969, p. 52.

At the age of nine, Guru Nanak was asked to wear the sacred thread as per the custom among the high

born Hindus. Guru Nanak did not recognise any sanctity of this traditional ceremony and he refused to do so saying that he would rather have a thread that would neither break nor get soiled, nor be burnt or lost. The Guru's views in respect of this custom are as under :

See, Macauliffe, M.A., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 16.

Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread,
Continence its knot, truth its twist,
that would make a janeu, for the soul,
If thou have it O brahmin, then put it on me.

See, Gandhi, S.S., History of the Sikh Gurus, Delhi, 1978, p. 82.

That such a thread once worn will never break.
Nor get soiled, burnt or lost,
the man who wearth such a thread is blessed.
Thou buyest a thread for a pice
and seated in a plastered square
putteth it round the neck of others.
Claiming an inheritance of holiness
Thy thread helps neither here nor hereafter
The wearer dieth and leaves it behind.

Also see, Banerjee, A.C., The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion, Delhi, 1983, p. 71.

contd..

The original text in the Adi Granth, p. 471 is as under :

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਰੰਢੀ ਸਤ ਵਟੁ ॥
ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਉ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ ॥
ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਨੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨ ਲਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥
ਚਉਕੜਿ ਮੁਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਬਹਿ ਚਉਕੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਸਿਖਾ ਕੰਨਿ ਚੜਾਈਆ ਗੁਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਬਿਆ ॥
ਉਹ ਮੁਆ ਉਹ ਝੜਿ ਪਇਆ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਗਇਆ ॥

16. The brahmins not only wore a tilak mark on their forehead, but they kept a rosary and tied dhoti in a peculiar manner to keep themselves different from the people of other castes. Guru Nanak has criticised such brahmins who lay more emphasis on their outer marks and misguide the innocent people in the name of caste and religion. Only the worship of True Lord can save them.

Adi Granth, p. 355 :

ਕਾਇਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਮਨੁ ਹੈ ਧੋਤੀ ॥ ਗਿਆਨ ਜਨੇਉ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕੁਸਪਾਤੀ ॥
ਹਰਿਨਾਮਾ ਜਸੁ ਜਾਚਉ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਿ ਸਮਾਉ ॥
ਪਾਡੇ ਐਸਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਮੇ ਸੁਚਿ ਨਾਮੇ ਪੜਉ ਨਾਮੇ ਚਜੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥
ਬਾਹਰਿ ਜਨੇਉ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਨਾਲ ॥ ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਿ ॥
ਐਥੇ ਓਥੇ ਨਿਬਹੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਹੋਰ ਕਰਮ ਨਾ ਭਾਲਿ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 345.

contd..

The body is the brahmin, the mind the dhoti,
gnosis the sacred thread, meditation the kusha-ring.
O pandit, dwell thou on such heavenly wisdom,
and seek piety through the Name, read only the Name.
And make Name thy conduct and works.
Thy sacred thread is of avail
only if there is
Divine light within.
And the dhoti and thy saffron-mark,
if thou cherishest the Name.
For the Name alone lasts with thee
both here, and hereafter.
Yea seek no other works but the Name.
For dhoti, saffron mark, sacred thread and
rosary. See, Adi Granth, pp. 201, 237, 471, 888,
1099 and 1359.

17. In one of the hymns Namdev clearly states that when he went to pray in a temple, he was turned out for he belonged to a low caste of Calico printers. See, Adi Granth, p. 1164.
18. Roychoudhary, S.C., Social Cultural and Economic History of India, Delhi, 1980, p. 56.
19. Sachau, Edward, C., Alberuni's India, pp. 151-153. See, regarding their food and drinking habits - Do's and Don't.

20. Adi Granth, pp. 471-472 :

ਮਥੈ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇੜਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਖਾਈ॥ ਹਥਿ ਛੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਸਾਈ॥
ਠੀਲ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥ ਮਲੇਛ ਧਾਨੁ ਲੈ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ॥
ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਣਾ॥ ਚਉਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਜਣਾ॥
ਦੇ ਕੈ ਚਉਕਾ ਕਢੀ ਕਾਰ॥ ਉਪਰਿ ਆਇ ਬੈਠੈ ਕੂੜਿਆਰੁ॥
ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ ਵੈ ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ॥ ਇਹੁ ਅੰਨ ਅਸਾਡਾ ਫਿਟੈ॥
ਤਨਿ ਫਿਟੈ ਫੇੜ ਕਰੇਨਿ॥ ਮਨਿ ਜੂਠੈ ਚੁਲੀ ਭਰੇਨਿ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨ ਲਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ॥ ਸੁਚਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਾ ਸਚੁ ਪਾਈਐ॥

For translation, see, Manmohan Singh, (tr.),
op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 1557-58.

21. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.
Adi Granth, pp. 471-72.

22. Lal, K.S., Twilight of the Sultanate, p. 266.

23. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., pp. 56-57.

24. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 465.
Adi Granth, p. 471 :

ਗਉ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਨਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥
ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੈ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਾਨੁ ਮਲੇਛਾ ਖਾਈ॥
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੋਬਾ ਸੰਜਮ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ॥
ਛੋਡੀਲੈ ਪਾਖੰਡਾ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਇਐ ਜਗਿ ਤਰੰਦਾ॥

25. Fauja Singh and Arora, A.C., (ed), Papers on Guru Nanak, Patiala, 1970; see Chapter by Arora, A.C.,
Society as Depicted in Asa di Var, pp. 165-166.

26. Adi Granth, p. 904 :

ਝੂਠ ਨ ਬੋਲਿ ਪਾਠੈ ਸਚ ਕਹੀਐ॥
ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਬਦਿ ਘਰੁ ਲਹੀਐ॥
ਗਣਿ ਗਣਿ ਜੋਤਕੁ ਕਾਂਡੀ ਕੀਨੀ॥
ਪੜੈ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ਤਤੁ ਨ ਚੀਨੀ॥
ਗਣਤ ਗਣੀਐ ਸਹਸਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਜੀਐ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਰਣਿ ਪਵੈ ਸੁਖੁ ਥੀਐ॥

27. Thomas, P., Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, India, 1956, pp. 10-11.

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 471 :

ਵੇਤਗਾ ਅਧੇ ਵਤੈ॥ ਵਟਿ ਧਾਗੈ ਅਵਰਾ ਘਤੈ॥
ਨੈ ਭਾਗਿ ਕਰੈ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥ ਕਢਿ ਕਾਗਲੁ ਦਸੈ ਰਾਹੁ॥
ਸੁਣਿ ਵੇਖਹੁ ਲੋਕਾ ਏਹੁ ਵਿਡਾਣੁ॥ ਮਨਿ ਅੰਧਾ ਨਾਉ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 465.

Twisting a thread, he puts it upon others,
and taking wages, he marries off his wards,
and reading their horoscopes, showeth the way to all.
Hear ye people, and see the wonder of wonders.
His mind is blind and his name is wisdom (aseer).

28. Thomas, P., op. cit., pp. 11-12.

Adi Granth, p. 471 :

contd...

ਛੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ॥
ਤਿਨ ਘਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਪੂਰਹਿ ਨਾਦ॥
ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਓਈ ਸਾਦ॥
ਕੂੜੀ ਰਾਸਿ ਕੂੜਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ॥
ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਆਹਾਰੁ॥
ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਦੂਰਿ॥
ਨਲਕ ਕੂੜੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 465.

Those who wield the knife wear the sacred thread.
And in their homes do the brahmins blow the couch,
yea, they too relish the same tastes.

False is their stock, yea, false their trade,
and through falsehood fill their bellies they.

The sense of shame and honour from them is far removed,
for, Nanak, tis falsehood that filleth them all.

29. Adi Granth, p. 662 :

ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੀਆ ਘਾਇ॥

Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 2172.

The Brahmin slayeth life
and then bathes (at the pilgrim places).

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 471.

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 437.

The brahmins had become blind to the true path and
were following the path of falsehood and violence.

30. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1337.
Adi Granth, p. 1411 :

ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੁ ਜੁ ਬਿੰਦੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥
ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਕਰਮੁ॥
ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕਾ ਰਖੈ ਧਰਮੁ॥
ਬੰਧਨ ਤੋੜੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤੁ॥
ਸੋਈ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਪੂਜਣ ਜੁਗਤੁ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 662 :

ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੁ ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ॥
ਆਪਿ ਤਰੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰੈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 637.

He alone is a brahmin,
who reflecteth on the 'Brahma',
and saves himself and also
all his kindred.

31. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 53.
Adi Granth, p. 56 :

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਵਾਚਹਿ ਪੋਥੀਆ ਨਾ ਬੁਝਹਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥
ਅਨ ਕਉ ਮਤੀ ਦੇ ਚਲਹਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ॥
ਕਥਨੀ ਝੁਠੀ ਜਗ ਭਵੈ ਰਹਣੀ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁ ਸਾਰੁ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਜੋਤਕੀ ਬੇਦਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥
ਵਾਦਿ ਵਿਰੋਧਿ ਸਨਾਹਣੇ ਵਾਦੇ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੁ॥
ਬਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਕਰਮ ਨ ਛੁਟਸੀ ਕਹਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੁ॥

32. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 613.

Adi Granth, p. 635 :

ਸੁਣਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਾਰੀ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਕਰਮਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਈ ਸੁ ਆਤਮ ਤਤੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ॥

ਸਾਸਤੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬਕੈ ਖੜੋ ਭਾਈ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ॥

ਪਾਖੰਡਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਚੁਕਈ ਭਾਈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਵਿਕਾਰੀ॥

ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਡੂਬੀ ਮਾਕੁਰੀ ਭਾਈ ਉਡੀ ਸਿਰ ਕੈ ਭਾਰੀ॥

ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਘਣੀ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ ਭਾਈ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਈ ਖੁਆਈ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੈ ਭਰਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵੈ ਤਾ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਏ ਭਾਈ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੁ ਰਹਾਈ॥

33. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 507.

Adi Granth, p. 152 :

ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਬਾਦੁ ਵਖਾਣੈ॥

ਭੀਤਰਿ ਹੋਦੀ ਵਸਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ॥

34. Adi Granth, p. 904.

35. Ibid., p. 56.

36. Ibid., p. 56, p. 355.

37. Ibid., p. 358.

38. Ibid., p. 622.

39. Ibid., pp. 470, 1127.

40. Ibid., p. 472.

41. Ibid., p. 1290.

ਅਪ ਨ ਬੁਝੈ ਨੇਕ ਬੁਝਾਏ

ਪਾਠੇ ਖਰਾ ਸਿਆਣਾ॥

42. Ibid., p. 662.

43. Ibid., pp. 471-72.

44. Ibid., p. 221 :

ਨਹ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਨਹ ਚਤੁਰੁ ਸਿਆਣਾ॥

ਨਹ ਭੂਲੋ ਨਹ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਨਾ॥

ਕਥਉ ਨ ਕਥਨੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਪਛਨਾ॥

45. Ibid., p. 1290.

46. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1368.

Adi Granth, p. 413 :

ਜਗਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੇ ਸਭ ਫਿਰੈ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੀ॥

47. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1426.

Adi Granth, p. 432 :

ਕੰਕੈ ਕਿਆਨੁ ਬੁਝੈ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ

ਪੜਿਆ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਸੋਈ॥

ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ

ਤਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਰੈ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥

48. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 4143.

Adi Granth, p. 1256 :

ਜੰਮਹਿ ਜੀਅ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੇ ਥਉ॥

ਸੁਰਤਾ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਤਾਕਾ ਨ ਉ॥

49. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 4251.
Adi Granth, p. 1288 :

ਸੋ ਪੜਿਆ ਸੋ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਬੀਨਾ
ਜਿਨੀ ਕਮਾਣਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

50. Arora, A.C., op. cit., p. 166.

51. Sachau, Edward, C., Alberuni's India, Vol. II,
p. 136; see also Vol. I, p. 101.

52. Adi Granth, p. 1353. For kshatriyas, also see,
pp.1289, 164, 300, 470, 663, 747, 1001 and 1141.

53. See footnote 10 of the present chapter.

54. Adi Granth, p. 1036 :

ਵਰਨ ਭੇਖ ਨਹੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਖੜੀ ॥
ਦੇਉ ਨ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਗਊ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ॥

55. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 637.

Adi Granth, p. 663 :

ਖੜੀਆ ਤਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਛੋੜਿਆ
ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ ॥
ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ
ਧਰਮੁ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

56. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, pp. 49-50.

57. Adi Granth, pp. 471-72.

58. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1337.
Adi Granth, p. 1411 :

ਖੜੀ ਸੇ ਜੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਾ ਸੂਰੁ॥

ਪੁੰਨ ਦਲ ਕਾ ਕਰੈ ਸਰੀਰ॥

ਖੇਤੁ ਘੁਣੈ ਬੀਜੈ ਦਲੁ॥

ਸੇ ਖੜੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥

59. Grewal, J.S., op. cit., p. 178.
60. Sachau, Edward, C., (tr.), op. cit., pp. 101, 125, 247.
61. See footnote 6 of this chapter.
62. Grewal, J.S., op. cit., p. 53.
63. Sachau, Edward, C., op. cit., Vol. II, p. 136.
64. For traders and moneylenders, see Chapter III of the present study.
65. See Chapter III of the present study.
66. Lunia, B.N., Life and Culture in Medieval India, Indore, 1978, p. 154.
67. See Chapter III of the present study.
68. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 139.
69. As cited earlier (footnote 10), Guru Nanak also makes mention of the traditional duties assigned to sudras, see Adi Granth, p. 1353.

70. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 140. Many sudras also tilled the land, reared the cattle and followed the profession of artisans.
71. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 140.
72. See Chapter III of the present study.
73. Sachau, Edward. C., op. cit., pp. 101-102.
74. Ibid., also see, Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 140.
75. Gupta, Hari Ram, History of the Sikh Gurus, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 249-250; also see, Chawla, H.S., (ed), Guru Nanak, Prophet of the People, Delhi, 1970, p. 57.
76. Roychoudhary, S.C., Social, Cultural and Economic History of India, p. 65.
77. Sagar, S.L., Hindu Culture and Caste System in India, Delhi, 1975, p. 98.

Even as late as in the beginning of the twentieth century in the Census Report of 1911, it was recorded that whenever a sweeper used to cross a street, a road or a village, he had to tie a broom with his back so that one could easily recognize him as a 'Bhangi' (a sweeper) and at the same time he kept informed by crying that he was coming by a particular side so that none could be polluted by his touch.

Sagar, S.L., op. cit., pp. 104-105.

What to talk of the medieval period, the present writer sums up the condition of the sudras, and the untouchables in India of today. He writes, 'The feeling of untouchability coming from the Vedic age still exists in the minds of the Hindus. India became free after hundreds of years slavery of Muslims and British rulers. Although the waves of equality and freedom have come to this land, yet the conditions of sudras and untouchables in villages and towns are exactly the same as one could find in ancient and medieval times. When there is an awakening in the world and man is coming near to man for being united for larger and greater tasks for humanity, the Hindus are still living in old fashioned way of life based on caste relations and feelings of untouchability'.

78. Rig Veda, quoted in Gurmit Singh's Guru Nanak, Sirsa (Hissar), 1972, p. 158.
79. Sachau, Edward, C., (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 137.
80. Grewal, J.S., op. cit., p. 55.
81. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., pp. 135 and 140.
82. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 314.
The entire shabad (hymn) of Kabir ji in Gauri Rag Kabir of Adi Granth, p. 324 reads as under :

ਗਫਲ ਵਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤੀ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੈ ਸਭ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ॥
ਕਹੁ ਰੇ ਪੀਡਿਤ ਬਾਮਨ ਕਬ ਕੈ ਹੋਏ॥ ਬਾਮਨ ਕਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਮਤ ਖੋਇ॥
ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਇਆ॥ ਤਉ ਆਨ ਬਾਟ ਕਾਰੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ॥
ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੂਦ॥ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਲੋਹੂ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੂਧ॥
ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ॥ ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਕਹੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ਹਮਾਰੈ॥

... ..

ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਨਿ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥

83. Namdev was the son of a calico printer and hence belonged to the 'low-caste' - the sudra.
84. For translation, see, Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1114. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 3832-3833.
- Adi Granth, p. 1164 :

ਹਸਤ ਖੇਲਤ ਤੇਰੇ ਦੇਹੁਰੇ ਆਇਆ॥
ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰਤ ਨਾਮਾ ਪਕਰਿ ਉਠਾਇਆ॥
ਹੀਨੜੀ ਜਾਤ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਦਿਮ ਰਾਇਆ॥
ਛੀਪੇ ਕੇ ਜਲਮਿ ਕਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਆਇਆ॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਠੈ ਕਮਲੀ ਚਲਿਓ ਪਲਟਾਇ॥
ਦੇਹੁਰੇ ਪਛੈ ਬੈਠਾ ਜਾਇ॥

Sagar, S.L., op. cit., p. 93.

What was true in the medieval period, even today the doors of (many) temples in Maharashtra are closed for the untouchables. There is one place,

Pathakpur, in Maharashtra where thousands of visitors come to see the Hindu Devi-Devtas. There are numerous temples. They are open to all, but closed to untouchables even today.

85. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 16.

Adi Granth, p. 13 :

ਸਭਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ॥

ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਚਲਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 429, 392, 399, 403, 411 and 427.

86. See, Adi Granth, p. 414 :

ਸਗਲੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਤੇਰਾ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ॥

Adi Granth, p. 2 :

ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ

ਸੋ ਮੈ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਈ॥

87. Banerjee, A.C., Guru Nanak and the Problems of His Age, see, Harbans Singh (ed), Perspectives on Guru Nanak, Patiala, 1975, p. 470.

88. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 339.

Adi Granth, p. 349 :

ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੂਛਹੁ ਜਾਣੀ

ਆਰੀ ਜਾਣਿ ਨ ਹੈ॥

89. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 75.

Adi Granth, p. 83 :

ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜ ਨਾਉ॥

ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ॥

ਅਪਹੁ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭਨਾ ਕਹਾਏ॥

ਨਲਕ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾ ਪਤਿ ਲੇਖੈ ਪਾਏ॥

90. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 19.

Adi Granth, p. 15 :

ਨੀਚਾ ਐਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ॥

ਨਲਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ॥

ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ॥

91. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 1319-20.

Adi Granth, p. 1330 :

ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੂਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ॥

ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥

92. See, Adi Granth, p. 349.

93. Ibid., pp. 349 and 1257.

94. Ibid., pp. 1331, 464.

95. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 49.

Adi Granth, p. 53 :

ਵਰਨਾ ਵਰਨ ਨ ਭਾਵਨੀ ਜੇ ਕਿਸੈ ਵਡਾ ਕਰੇਇ॥

ਵਡੇ ਹਥਿ ਵਡਿਆਈਆ ਜੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਤੇ ਦੇਇ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 1188.

96. Ibid., p. 221; also see, p. 7.
ਜਿਸ ਹਥਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਕਰ ਵੇਖਹਿ ਸੋਇ॥
ਨਲਕ ਉਤਮ ਨੀਚ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
97. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1547.
Adi Granth, p. 469 :
ਅਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਅਗੈ ਜੀਉ ਨਵੈ॥
ਜਿਨ ਕੀ ਲੇਖੈ ਪਤਿ ਪਵੈ ਚੰਗੇ ਸੋਈ ਕੋਇ॥
98. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 490.
Adi Granth, p. 142 :
ਜਾਤੀ ਕੈ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਸਚ ਪਰਖੀਐ॥
ਮਹੁਰਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਹਥਿ ਮਰੀਐ ਚਖੀਐ॥
99. Adi Granth, p. 422.
100. Ibid., p. 358.
101. Ibid., p. 468.
102. Ibid., p. 62 :
ਸਭ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ॥
103. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. VIII, p. 4941.
Adi Granth, p. 1345 :
ਐਸੇ ਜਨ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਜਗ ਐਦਰਿ ਪਰਖਿ ਖਜਾਨੈ ਪਾਇਆ॥
ਜਾਤਿ ਵਕਲ ਤੇ ਭਏ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਮਮਤਾ ਲੋਭੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ॥
104. Adi Granth, p. 1256.

105. Ibid., p. 465.

106. Ibid., p. 1198 :

ਜਗਤਿ ਵਕਲ ਕੁਲ ਸਹਿਸਾ ਚੂਕਾ
ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬਦ ਵਿਚਾਰੀ॥

107. See, Varan Bhai Gurdas, Jawahar Singh and
Kirpal Singh Publisher, Delhi, 1/23, p. 9.

108. Adi Granth, p. 1256 :

ਜਗਤਿ ਕੁਲੀਨੁ ਸੇਵਕ ਜੈ ਹੋਇ॥
ਤਕਾ ਕਹਣਾ ਕਹਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥

109. Adi Granth, p. 354 :

ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੇ
ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਫਲੁ ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ॥

110. Ahmad, Imtaz (ed), Caste and Social Stratification
Among the Muslims, Delhi, 1973, see Introduction.

111. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, Chandigarh,
1969, p. 36.

Islamic society was bound to be based on the idea of equality is refuted by the socio-economic facts. It is impossible to equate a Muslim noble with a Muslim bihishti. A broad social stratification in the Muslim society is easily discernible. The nobles undoubtedly formed what may be loosely called the social elite and they enjoyed greater economic

advantages than any other section or group. The craftsmen, personal servants and domestic slaves, both male and female, formed the lowest strata, while the middling strata were formed by the peasants, soldiers, traders, scholars, writers, the sayyids, the shaikhzadas and the administrative personnel. The word 'qaum' in its application to the social groups among the Muslims was almost the equivalent of 'caste'. However, in the Muslim society, inequalities were ignored, tolerated or occasionally denounced, in the Hindu society they were sanctified.

See, Thapar, Romila, A History of India, Penguin Books, 1967, p. 252.

112. Srivastava, M.P., Society and Culture in Medieval India, p. 13.
113. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 11.
114. Srivastava, M.P., op. cit., p. 14.
115. See, Adi Granth, pp. 471-72, 663.

CHAPTER V

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS

Gurbani outlines three distinct phases in man's life, childhood, youth and old age.¹ The most conspicuous events in the life of a person are, birth, marriage and death, besides other events like namkaran, mundan, going to a school for the first time, wearing sacred thread (janeoo) and kurmai (betrothel) etc. Several rites and ceremonies are associated with these events which in Hinduism are known as samaskaras or sacraments.² Guru Nanak's hymns reveal an awareness and description of these rites which in his own opinion were meaningless and extraneous. His attitude towards some of the prevalent customs and rituals can be seen and observed from his compositions (Bani) which are an integral part of the Adi Granth.

Birth Ceremony

The birth of a child was a very impressing scene for the medieval man. Owing to its wonderfulness, he attributed this event to some superhuman agency.³ He also apprehended many dangers on this occasion for the avoidance of which various taboos and observances arose. The helplessness of the mother and the new born during her confinement required natural care, from which ceremonies

connected with the birth of a child originated. The man, who shared the pleasures in the company of his mate, sought to protect her and the baby during the critical time from natural and supernatural dangers. Thus, birth ceremonies had a natural basis in the physical conditions of child birth. In due course these ceremonies assumed socio-religious character which became an inseparable part of the Hindu way of life.⁴

All these customs had been elaborated with scrupulous regard to every detail. The religious emotions found the best expression in them. Society even judged the respectability of a person by the amount of care and attention he gave to the fulfilment of these social and religious rites.⁵

The birth of a child in the family was an occasion of rejoicing and an event of great importance. If it was a male child there were special festivities and the mother was praised for bearing a son, the hope of the family.⁶ The birth of a son strengthened mother's position in the family. He was like a bridge between his mother and the father. The chances of a woman being abandoned or divorced by her husband minimised because the son was there to unite them in a perpetual bond of love. The importance of a son to a family can be ascertained from the following couplets of Guru Nanak :

If a piece of bronze or gold or iron breaks into bits,
the smith welds them again in fire.

If the husband breaks off from his wife,
the sons unite the two again.⁷

After the birth of the child, the naval-cord was severed and the child washed and given the breasts of the mother.⁸ The father put some honey or butter in the mouth of the infant.⁹ Prayers were offered to ward-off the evil spirits. Money and other goods were distributed to the poor and the needy as a part of alms and charity. The purohit or pandha (pandit) prepared a horoscope (janampatri) of the child recording the precise moment of birth, to infer the particular stellar conjunction (lagan) under which it was born.¹⁰ It is stated that even the horoscope of Guru Nanak was prepared by pandit Hardyal, the family priest of Mehta Kalu.¹¹ Guru Nanak criticised such pandits who prepared horoscopes and misguided the people only to earn their livelihood.¹²

Sutak (Days of Impurity).

The woman to whom the child was born was considered ceremonially impure and unclean for ten days.¹³ The period of impurity, popularly known as sutak for women of different castes was different. Alberuni states that these days are eight for the brahmin, twelve for the kshatriya, fifteen for the vaishya and thirty for the sudras. For the low-

caste people which are not reckoned among any caste, no term is fixed.¹⁴ During the period of sutak (impurity), the woman was not permitted to touch any vessel or to cook food in the kitchen. Even the very touch of a woman in sutak was supposed to defile all the cooked food making it impure for consumption. At the expiry of impurity caused by birth, the house was washed and purified and the child and mother bathed. Guru Nanak was very critical of such futile and superstitious practices prevalent in the society.¹⁵ He strongly condemns the idea of sutak (impurity) and writes :

If impurity attaches (to life's birth),
then all, all over, are impure.

In the cow-dung and the wood too is the
life of worms.

As many are the grains of food,
not one is without life.

And is not water life,
that bringeth all to life?

How can then we believe in life's impurity,
when impurity is in our very bread.

Nanak : impurity goes no otherwise
save by being wise.¹⁶

All such impurities and pollutions have no scientific basis whatsoever. Guru Nanak goes on to add that the

real impurities consist in greed, lying, lust and slander which defile the heart, tongue, eyes and ears respectively and lead a man to hell. Only those, who remember the Name of God, know no impurities :

The mind's impurity is covetousness,
the tongue's impurity is falsehood.

The impurity of eyes is coveting another's
Woman, beauty, riches.

The ear's impurity is to hear and carry tales.

Nanak : even the purest of men thus
bound go to the city of the Yama.

The impurity of impurities is
that one loveth the other,
birth and death, yea, are in His Will,
through His Will one cometh and goeth.

All eats and drinks are pure :

for the Lord hath blest us with them in His mercy.

Nanak : they who realise the truth through the Guru,
to them impurity sticketh not.¹⁷

While the woman was still in the child-bed, every care was taken for the safety of the baby and its mother. To keep the evil spirits away from the child, the light was kept burning in the room of the mother and verses from the Holy Scriptures were recited.¹⁸

The Namkarna (Name Giving) Ceremony

There is no mention of this ceremony in the Bani of Guru Nanak. This ceremony was popular among Hindus all over India. It was usually performed on the tenth or the twelfth day of the birth of the child. Namkarna was preceded by a minor purificatory ceremony. The mother and child were bathed, the walls of her room were cow-dunged and her bathroom (usually the room where she had given birth to the child) was carefully cleansed. The pandit or the family purohit was summoned, who after consulting the horoscope and the stars gave a name to the child.¹⁹

The ear-boring ceremony was generally performed on the day of the name-giving ceremony. In the case of the girls the nose was also bored.²⁰ Although no direct reference is found in Guru Nanak Bani, the items of jewellery worn by the women including nath (nose-ring), bunde and jhumke (ear-rings) etc.²¹ are mentioned in his Bani. These items indirectly indicate that some kind of ceremonies must have been attached to the boring of nose and ears. The boring of nose and ears was done by a goldsmith with a gold-wire, for which operation he received a small fee.²² The pandit or the purohit also received some money and gifts. Guru Nanak never approved the manner in which these pandits deceived the people by way of preparing their horoscopes listing the future-events to occur in one's life.

Such pandits were far from the realisation of 'The Ultimate Reality', i.e., God.²³

The naming ceremony of a Muslim child was performed on the day of his birth.²⁴ The auspicious names were usually considered to be those which did not exceed four letters.²⁵ Generally, the grandfather gave a name to the newly born child.²⁶ Similar practice appears to be prevalent among the followers of the Gurus. We find Guru Amardas naming his grandson Anand on the day of his birth.²⁷

Many more ceremonies were popular among the Hindus and the Muslims which were performed during the first year of the child, but all of them are not mentioned in the Bani of Guru Nanak, for him these rits and ceremonies had no spiritual meaning at all and these led the people astray from the true-path. We know from other sources that these ceremonies included annaprasana (food-giving ceremony) and the ceremony of tonsure (cutting off the hair) among the Hindus²⁸ and chatti and aqiqah rites among the Muslims.²⁹

School-Going Ceremony

The education of a child started at an early age. The Vidyarambha Samskara was performed in the fifth or seventh year of the child.³⁰ An auspicious day was fixed for sending the child to a preceptor.³¹ Guru Nanak does mention chatras (preceptors), young students with pati (wooden-board), qalam (pen) and mas, siahi (ink) studying

under the guidance of a pandha or a pandit³², but he does not refer to the type of ceremony which was performed at the time of sending a child to school. He himself was sent to a pandha at the age of seven after the village astrologer had selected the auspicious time for the commencement of his education.³³ Guru Nanak's father Mehta Kalu, took some sweets, nuts and rice which he presented to the school master alongwith some coins on the day of joining the school.³⁴

Guru Nanak does not attach much importance to the wordly education for 'it leads to ego and lust for money.'³⁵ A true pandit (preceptor) is he, who 'cherishes the Name (of God)' and reaps 'the Essence of the Word through a pure mind'. He clearly states that 'the Unwise Dwell not on the word and know naught, realise naught'. In Guru Nanak's views, 'a true educated (wise person) is he who wearth the necklace of the Lord's Name'.³⁶ 'Mere reading of the Holy scriptures and performing the daily rites would not lead a pandit (preceptor, a teacher) to moksha or mukti (deliverance)'.

One may read scriptures and their grammer
and say prayers three times a day.

But where is emancipation without the Guru
for, without the Lord's Name, one's involved
to death.³⁷

Education has a meaning and a purpose to perform
and

it is goodness towards others.

If one dwells on (the essence of) knowledge,
one becometh a benefactor of all.³⁸

Regarding the school going ceremony the Muslim tradition was more precise. The Bismillahkhani or more properly the Maktab ceremony was performed when a boy was four years, four months and four days old.³⁹ At an hour fixed in consultation with an astrologer, the child took his first lesson from the teacher.

Usually in the seventh year, a Muslim child was circumcised (sunat) and the occasion was celebrated with great rejoicings and entertainments according to the means of a family.⁴⁰ Kabir who was a contemporary of Guru Nanak was very critical of such a ceremony. In a sarcastical tone he questions that if a person becomes a Musalman only after the circumcision ceremony then what to do of a Muslim lady? The following lines of saint Kabir indicate the prevalence of this ceremony among the Muslims.

Circumcision is made for love of the women,
so, I shall not be convinced (of its use).

For, if the Lord so Willeth that I be born a Muslim,
I shall be circumcised by Himself.

If circumcision alone maketh one a Muslim,
what is to be done to a woman?⁴¹

Upanayana (or initiation) Ceremony)

After passing through various ceremonies in early childhood, whereas a Muslim child was circumcised at the age of seven, a Hindu child belonging to the three upper castes of the twice born proclaimed his boyhood by wearing a sacred thread (janeoo), usually at the completion of nine years in a traditional ceremonial manner.⁴² In no case was the upanayana of a brahmin to be delayed beyond the sixteenth year, of a kshatriya beyond the twenty-second and of a vaisya beyond the twenty-fourth.⁴³ In ancient times the upanayana immediately preceded the boy's education, and soon after this ceremony, the boy was led into (his) preceptor's house (hence the name upanayana, meaning leading one to one's Guru).⁴⁴

An auspicious day and time was fixed by the astrologer for the upanayana ceremony.⁴⁵ As per Hindu traditions, 'the day must fall in one of the five auspicious months, in which the sun is moving northwards towards the Ecliptic. The time of the day must be between six a.m. and noon, since that is the most fortunate part of the twenty-four hours'. Before the actual ceremony the boy was bathed and seated on a wooden stool, with the father sitting opposite. The sacred fire was lit and the priest recited the sacred verses (mantras). The sacred thread consisted of three white cotton threads each consisting of three finer threads interwoven into one. The thread was

consecrated before girding the boy.⁴⁶

When Guru Nanak attained the age of nine, his father Mehta Kalu was anxious and determined to invest him with the sacred thread, a distinguished mark of the twice born.⁴⁷ Guru Nanak who did not attach any religious sanctity and importance to the traditional rites and rituals refused to wear it. He exposed the hollowness of the 'sacred thread' and the ceremony connected with it in the following lines of his Bani and laid stress on the moral virtues of eternal value, such as mercy, contentment, truth and self-control :

Make the thread of contentment from the
cotton of mercy, giving it twists of truth
and ties of self-control.

The sacred thread thus formed will be for the soul.

If thou has it, O 'Pandit' put it on me.

It will not break, or become soiled,
or be burnt or lost.

Blessed is the man, O 'Nanak',

who goeth with such a thread around his neck.⁴⁸

He also mentions how on the eve of this ceremony 'a goat is slaughtered, cooked and eaten and then every body present saith, 'put on the janeoo'. When the thread wears off, it is exchanged for another'. 'Lord's praise is the true thread', says Guru Nanak. 'For, this pure

thread breaks, never, for with it are we blest in the Lord's court'.⁴⁹

Marriage Ceremonies

Vivaha⁵⁰ (or marriage) is the most important of all the ceremonies in an Indian family.⁵¹ It is decidedly the most expensive and colourful occasion. Referring to the importance of marriage in a society, Alberuni writes, 'No nation can exist without a regular married life, for it prevents the uproar of passions abhorred by the cultivated mind, and it removes all those causes which excite the animal to a fury always leading to harm'. He considered matrimony to be a necessary institution⁵² and as Abul Fazal puts it at a later stage (at the end of the sixteenth century), 'if there be no marriages then the fountain head of humanity shall become choked and the stream of divine benevolence shall sink into the sand'.⁵³ Keeping these two views in mind, the following couplets of Guru Nanak (about a woman's importance in the society) become all the more significant to understand the need and the ceremonies connected with the institution of marriage. Guru Nanak writes :

From the woman is, our birth,
in the woman's womb are we shaped.
To the woman are we engaged,
to the woman are we wedded.

contd..

The woman, yea, is our friend,
and from woman is the family.

If one woman dies, we seek another :
through the woman are the bonds of the world.
O why call woman evil who giveth birth to kings.
From the woman is the woman;
without the woman there's none.

Nanak : without the woman is the One True Lord
alone.⁵⁴

There was no age restriction in respect of marriage during the period under review. But child marriage had become almost a universal feature both among the Hindus and the Muslims. The girls seldom passed the age of nine or ten years and the boys sixteen or seventeen before they were united in wedlock.⁵⁵ Even five centuries before Guru Nanak, Alberuni had observed that 'the Hindu married at a very early age and the parents of the bride and the groom generally arranged the marriage.'⁵⁶ There are frequent references of 'child-marriage', and 'young bride' in the compositions of Guru Nanak.⁵⁷ He himself was married when he was hardly fourteen years old.⁵⁸ Referring to early marriages in Muslim families during Feroz Tughluq's reign, Afif writes, 'with the mercy of the sultan the saadaats (Saiyyiada), qazis (judges) and omrahs (nobles) used to marry their daughters at a very early age'.⁵⁹

As mentioned earlier, the settlement of marriage was entirely the concern of the respective parents. With the help of their family priest, jyotshi (astrologer) or a pandit they examined the horoscopes of the boy and the girl.⁶⁰ If there was no incompatibility in horoscopes the family priests and the astrologers (of boys and girls' family), got busy checking up the genealogies and pedigrees of the two families. If every thing went well, a date was fixed for the betrothel ceremony.⁶¹ Sometimes the match making job was done by the village barber who was paid a fee for it.⁶²

The Betrothel Ceremony

The betrothel ceremony known as mangni⁶³ or kurmai was like a solemnization of the forthcoming marriage of the children. It was an occasion of great joy and rejoicing. The parents of the girl felt greatly relieved on being able to find a good match for the daughter. The ladies of the house sang happy songs to express their inner joy. Even bride's joy was limitless. She invited her friends to come to her house to share the joy and happiness of the family. The following lines from Guru Nanak Bani throw a good deal of light on the prevailing atmosphere at the betrothel ceremony.

Friends have come into my Home :

Yea, the True Lord hath brought about
my union with them.

Through Love, have I met them and the
Lord's mind is pleased :

Yea, meeting with the saints I have found gladness.

And I' Have attained to what my mind longed for.

Eternal is my union, my mind is pleased :

blessed, blessed are my mansion.

And the five strains of music ring

within me unstruck,

now that the friends have come into my home.

Come, loved friends.

Come, come, women, sing the songs of joy.⁶⁴

After this formal recognition (of mangni or kurmai as it was called) an auspicious day and time was fixed for the marriage, with the help of a pandit. It was known as Saha Kadhna.⁶⁵ The gathered members showered blessing on the young bride and wished that her union with her 'husband' would be an occasion of unending bliss.

The day of rendezvous (marriage) is fixed.

Pour oil on the threshold, my mates,

and bless me that I attain

to the union of my Lord (bridegroom).⁶⁶

After the fixation of date for the marriage elaborate preparations began. Although it is difficult to give comprehensive description of the marriage ceremonies performed in those days yet on the basis of whatever scanty references are available in the Bani of Guru Nanak one can draw a fairly good picture of this important event in the life of the Indians of medieval period. The invitations were sent out through the local barber or through special messengers to friends and relations.⁶⁷ For about a week or so, on every evening (preferably at night) preceding the marriage ceremony, the neighbouring women gathered at the house of the bride and the bridegroom sang ghorian⁶⁸ and suhag (the marriage songs, meant for this happy occasion). Guru Nanak has used the word mangal⁶⁹ and Kabir, manglachar⁷⁰ for the happy songs sung on such occasions.

Religious and social conservatism is so strong in India that the marriage customs have not changed much even since the days of Guru Nanak.

After receiving the verbal or written invitation letters, when the relations and friends gathered and necessary preparations for the marriage had been made, the richly clad bridegroom, seated on a gorgeously caprisoned and beautifully decorated mare proceeded to the house of the bride.⁷¹ His relatives and friends in the best attire either followed him on foot or in coaches according to their status. The marriage procession was headed by a

musical party with drums and wind instruments. Guru Nanak and the other Sikh Gurus have used the marriage symbols (in their compositions) to explain the deeper meaning of man's search for the Ultimate Reality i.e., God. However, these symbols become important for the historians when they try to reconstruct the social history of medieval India. In one of the hymns, Guru Ramdas uses the word 'Apurav Janj'⁷² (wonderful marriage-party). Guru Arjun used the word 'Janjis'⁷³ who followed the Lara (bridegroom) to the house of his bride. In the following couplets, Guru Nanak speaks of the Lord (bridegroom) who had come to wed the bride :

When by His grace the Lord (bridegroom)
entered into (me), His own Home,
And my mates assembled to celebrate my marriage.
My mind was in ecstasy, seeing this play,
that my Lord had come to wed me.
Sing ye, O' beauteous brides (the song of) wisdom,
for, into my home hath came the Lord,
the Life of the world.
Through the Guru was I wedded,
when I received my spouse.⁷⁴

On arriving at the destination the party was heartily welcomed by the bride's people and the vadhai (greetings), were exchanged. The ladies of bride's family greeted them

with happy (welcoming) songs.⁷⁵ The marriage party was served sumptuous meals according to host's position. Guru Nanak tells us that meat preparations were served to the members of the marriage party.⁷⁶ The principal marriage rituals commenced at a fixed hour.⁷⁷

There is no mention in Guru Nanak Bani of couple taking seven circles around the sacred fire as was (and is) the practice among the Hindus. Nor there is any reference to the Muhammadan ceremonies observed at the time of marriage. However, from other sources, we know that the bride and the bridegroom circled seven times around the sacred fire, while the priest recited mantras.⁷⁸ After the marriage ceremony, there was the usual feast as is current in our days.⁷⁹ The father of the bride gave handsome dowry to his daughter including jewellery, utensils, clothes, articles of domestic use and some cash.⁸⁰ Guru Nanak and the other Sikh Gurus were against this practice which was very harsh to the poor people who found it difficult to get their daughters married on account of their inability to pay handsome dowry. Sometimes a poor father had not the means to procure even a wedding outfit for his daughter. Macauliffe notes that a man in straitened circumstances appealed to Guru Nanak to procure a wedding outfit for his daughter.⁸¹ Sant Tukaram could get his daughter married only through the contribution of the villagers.⁸² This appears to be the common practice in those days that at the time of the marriage of a village

girl the neighbours, relatives and other village folks would contribute a small-bit towards the marriage-expenses as well as gave blessings to the bride who was leaving her parental home to go to the home of her husband.⁸³

While in a middle class family, the dowry consisted of some gold and silver jewellery, clothes, utensils, articles of various kinds and some cash, the rich parents gave costly clothes, diamonds and rubies, horses, elephants and female servants to their daughters as a part of dowry. We can have some idea from the list of items given by Raja Bhagwan Dass to his daughter at the time of her marriage. Maasir-i-Alamgiri, Tabaqat-i-Akbari and the author of Muntkhub-ut-twarikh, Badauni states that on the marriage of Salim, Raja Bhagwan Dass, the father of the bride - Man Bai gave in dowry several strings of Persian, Arab and Turkish horses, together with one hundred elephants and many male and female slaves besides all sorts of vessels of gold and other costly stuff. He offered to each of the amirs present, Persian, Turkish and Arabian horse with gold saddles.⁸⁴ Reference may be made here to another ceremony called tamol in which presents (not part of dowry) were offered in cash, gold and clothes by bride's father to the bridegroom and some of his relatives.⁸⁵

The rest of the ceremonies were of a secondary propitiary nature. On the eve of departure a few more ceremonies of lesser importance were performed. The bride

accompanied her husband in a doli for her new home where she was received with great joy and happiness. Before she entered the threshold of the house of her in-laws the ladies of the house poured some mustard oil over the threshold and (in greetings) water was waved over the heads of the bridegroom and the bride. The following couplets of Guru Nanak in Rag Asa present a beautiful description of this ceremony, when the bride was received at her in-law's house :

When these beauties were married,
their glamorous spouses sat by their sides,
Yea, and they were carried in planquins
and bangles of ivory dangled around their arms.
(In greetings) water was waved over their heads,
and they were fanned with glass-studded fans.
A hundred thousand coins were offered to them
when they sat and also when they stood.
And they chewed nuts and dates,
and enjoyed the bridal couch.⁸⁷

The day of marriage also synchronised with the day of separation for the bride from her parents, friends and relatives. The pangs of the separation for the bride were more acute if she was married at a distant place, for in those days due to the poor means of communication and transport, it was not possible to travel so easily and

frequently as one can travel in the present days. The following line of Guru Nanak in his Bani clearly shows the inner feelings of a bride who has been wedded to a person living far away. The girl says :

'The father hath wedded me in a land-far removed and so I go not back to my parents's world.⁸⁸

If she was married into an aristocratic family, she was probably confined to a harem, where her intercourse with the rest of the world was severely curtailed for the rest of her life.⁸⁹

If the marriage ceremonies in a Hindu family were performed by a pandit or a family purohit then a qazi was summoned to perform the ceremonies of a Muslim-wedding. Since they (the priests and the qazis) had become so materialistic and greedy and misguided the people, Guru Nanak uses the word shaitan (the wicked) for them who read the pledge (of marriage) and charge money for it.⁹⁰

Though polygamy was prevalent among the Muslims⁹¹ (among the people of rich classes), monogamy was the generality of the Hindus who would take to a second wife only if the first proved barren or died. In Asa di Var, Guru Nanak writes :

The woman, yea, is our friend,
and from woman is the family.
If one woman dies, we seek another :
through the woman are the bonds of the world.⁹²

It is said that Chaitanya remarried after the death of his first wife.⁹³ In spite of the freedom by their religion to marry more than one woman, the common Mohammadan, it appears, preferred to have one wife. Guru Nanak also favoured monogamy as is clear from the above couplet.

Divorce was not a common practice among the Hindus, although it was an important social feature of Islam. In matters of divorce the husband enjoyed absolute and unquestioned powers, while the wife was denied the same.⁹⁴

The condition of the widows was very miserable in the society. While widow remarriage was permitted amongst the Muslims, it was almost non-existent amongst the Hindus. A widow had only two alternatives before her - to live a life of hardships and disgrace or to commit sati with the body of her dead husband. Alberuni says 'The women generally preferred the second course.'⁹⁵ Sometimes the reluctant women were forced to perform sati due to pressure from relatives or public opinion'.⁹⁶ It appears, however, that it was confined to the socially respectable groups.⁹⁷ All the Hindu widows did not become sati.⁹⁸ Many a widows were forced to enter in an immoral type of living to earn

their livelihood. Guru Nanak was opposed to this kind of life for a widow and advocated their cause and favoured widow remarriage.⁹⁷

Death Ceremonies

In the Vedic times, the Indo-Aryans, it appears, buried their dead. The following verses were repeated at the time of disposing of the dead body and they clearly indicate that burial was the Vedic custom.

"Open thy arms, O earth, receive the dead.
With gentle pressure and loving welcome.
Enshroud him tenderly, e'en as a mother
Folds her soft vestments round the child she loves".

Again

"Return to thy mother earth,
may she be kind to thee and lie lightly on thee,
and not oppress thee".¹⁰⁰

Later on, however, cremation replaced burial and it continues to the present day. Ceremonies connected with death, cremation and after life were very important to the Hindus.

From Guru Nanak Bani, we get a fairly good account of the mourning practices and ceremonies after the death

of one's dearest and nearest. Cremation or burning of the dead body was the most recognised mode of the disposal of the corpse during the period of our study.¹⁰¹ Two other ways of disposing of the body were to throw it in the running stream or to leave it for the animals to consume, as is clear from the lines of Guru Arjan Dev :

In (any of) the three ways is the body consumed -
by the waters, the dogs or the fire.

And yet one calls oneself immortal
and abideth in his mansions
for asking the cause of causes.¹⁰²

When a Hindu was about to die, people hastened to lay his body on the floor, the priest began chanting mantras and the near relations distributing gifts to the poor and the needy to ease the passage of his soul into the next world. The floor was plastered with cow-dung and covered with Kusa-grass over which the corpse was laid, with the head resting in northern and the feet in southern direction, the face downwards. If sacred Ganges water was available, some drops were poured over the corpse, a cow was offered as a gift to a brahmin, and some leaves of tulsi were put over the dead man's chest and the caste mark on his forehead.¹⁰³

Before putting the dead body on the bier, it was given a bath with freshwater, perfumed and decked with

wreaths and flowers. The body then was wrapped in silk or cotton cloth, the colour of which differed according to the age, sex, status of the person and other circumstances.¹⁰⁴ The corpse of a married woman, according to Abul FAzal was dressed in her usual daily robes. 'If a woman died before her husband', writes Sinclair Stevenson, 'she was considered so lucky that her face and specially her forehead was smeared with red'.¹⁰⁵

After these preparations, the body was put on the bier made of bamboos and wood shouldered by four persons¹⁰⁶, the bier was then taken to the cremation ground, usually situated near a river bank. The funeral procession which started for the cremation ground was headed by the chief mourners.¹⁰⁷ Relatives and friends followed the corpse bareheaded and barefooted crying and wailing. Some fire in a new earthen pot, kindled from the domestic fire was carried to the cremation ground. A musical band, however, headed the funeral procession of an aged person and conches were blown.¹⁰⁸ The following lines of Guru Nanak Bani are very significant in this regard :

They wash the dead body clean and robe it in silk,
And they blow the conches, shout out the Lord's
word. (Ram Nam Sat Hai).

and the five kindreds (father, mother, wife, son and brother) are benumbed and wail :

'O' cursed be the life of the world' without him.¹⁰⁷

Cremation Ceremony

Ordinary wood was used for the pyre of a commoner while sandal and lignumaloes was employed by the rich. Ghee was put into the eyes, nostrils, ears, mouth etc. of the deceased before the fire was lighted by the eldest son or a nearest male relation if the person died without leaving a son. Prior to the burning of the dead body the priest recited mantras (committed to memory) and performed a petty ceremony.¹¹⁰ Until the corpse was consumed by the fire all people sat there on one side. After this the relatives and mourners left the cremation ground and purified themselves by bathing in a nearby pond, river or at the well before entering the house.¹¹¹ The sons and grandsons of the deceased and the widow too, if she survived her husband got their heads shaved.¹¹² On the third day after the cremation took place, asthi-chayana or the bone-gathering ceremony. The bones collected were carried to some holy river for immersion, preferably in the Ganges, because it was the belief of the Hindus that if the bones of the dead were consigned to the Holy Ganges, the lost soul was assured of a passage to heaven.¹¹³ The bodies

of the children who were below three years were not burnt.¹¹⁴

In the dead man's house there was incessant wailing of women. Wailing was accompanied by beating breast with both hands. While wailing, the women sitting in a circle would relate in long verses all the greatness of the departed person.¹¹⁵ If the dead-man was the head of the family or the son in the prime of his youth, the grief was perhaps more violent and real for the entire family depended on him for sustenance and support.¹¹⁶ If the deceased was a child then the cries and wailings of the women were little different. Here are a few examples from Guru Nanak Bani of wailing by the women on the death of one's husband, son or a child :

When the True Lord so willeth,
He giveth His command to the soul,
and the soul is separated from the body

...

The wife is now devoid of the man;
and the dead corpse lieth in the compound
and she crieth to the Lord's Court :
'O' God, with his death
my mind's faculties are deadened.

...

The 'separation of my beloved is death for me,
(crieth the wife), 'O cursed be the life
of the world.¹¹⁷

...

When the pitcher (of the body) breaks,
every one sayeth : 'Carry him off'
In the home the mother wailleth,
for the brothers take away the bier,
and shaking off her bonds the wife cries,
but the swan-soul goeth alone.¹¹⁸

If he died as a child, they remember his sports,
and wail, 'O, how playful was he and joyous
and beautiful'.

But he is recalled by the One to whom he belonged;
and men wail, alas, in ignorance, knowing not.

If he died as a youth, what could one do
except to wail for him saying;

'He was mine, mine'.

Yea, all wail, goaded and corroded by maya :
O cursed is such a life of the world.¹¹⁹

There was no special mourning dress but the women
who had come to express their sorrow wore white dupattas.¹²⁰
Generally, the women vied with one another in producing
the best melody and rhymes while wailing over the dead.

'Why one should weep over an individual's death when the whole universe is a 'play' of the Creator' writes Guru Nanak.¹²¹ According to him 'only that bewailing is justified which is not for wordly attachment but for the love of God. All other cries are useless, vain and arise from ignorance'.¹²² People used to light the earthen lamp for several days after the death of the near and dear in order to give light to the deceased to show him the way to heaven. Guru Nanak criticised such practices and declared that 'the remembrance of 'His Name' is the time lamp. Only such a lamp can show (path to the departed soul) to heaven and can save him from the fear of Yama'.¹²³

For ten days (the exact number varying according to caste rules), the family and the house in which the death occurred was considered to be ceremonially impure.¹²⁴ No food was cooked or fire burnt in the hearth and the relations provided the family with subsistence. The family slept on the floor on the bed of leaves. All the ten days certain ceremonies were performed to help the deceased's soul to reach its destination.¹²⁵ For first ten or twelve days after death food and water was due to him because he was regarded as still living in a sense. At different intervals during the course of one year, sharadha ceremonies were performed to help to provide (to the deceased's soul) further sustenance until at last the soul had assumed another body and was reincarnated in the world according to karma and the 'Law of the Dead'.¹²⁶

The half yearly sharadha was generally richer and more liberal than the usual monthly one. With the pind-dan or the offering of the balls (of rice) or meal on the last day of the year the heir's duties towards the dead were regarded as practically fulfilled. It was more efficacious if the ceremony was performed at Gaya.¹²⁷ Guru Nanak condemned these ceremonies with characteristic humour and sarcasm :

They offer rice-balls to the gods
and to the dead souls
but the brahmin eats them all.
Nanak : seek thou the rice ball of
the Lord's beneficence
that is eternally inexhaustible.¹²⁸

At another place, Guru Nanak writes :

If a thief robs a house and
this plunder he offers to propitiate the ancestors :
The thing in the other world is recognised,
and the dead souls are charged with theft.
The hands of the go-between (the brahmin) are
chopped off;
thus is the Lord's justice ministered.
Nanak : that alone is received whole in the Yond,
that one giveth out of one's honest day's bread.¹²⁹

No detailed account of the rites and ceremonies performed among the Muslims is available in the Bani of Guru Nanak. It is certain, however, from few scattered references here and there in his hymns that the Hindus burnt the dead bodies while the Muslims buried them. Guru Amardas clearly states that 'some are cremated, others buried'.¹³⁰ In one passage of Asa di Var, Guru Nanak talks about the futile but much pronounced difference between the Hindus and Muslims regarding the disposal of their dead bodies.

He says :

The dust of a Muslim's grave becometh
lump for the potter's wheel.

And of it he fashions bricks or vessels,
and, burning, they wail.

Yea, the hapless clay burns and cries out
as fiery coals fall,
continuously upon it.

Nanak : He who created the world knoweth
alone (i.e. whether cremation is better or
burial and what is to become of us hereafter).¹³¹

That is to say that it is simply vain and whimsical on the part of the Mussalmans to find fault with the Hindu practice of burning the dead bodies, for the Muslim dead bodies which are buried may be dug out by the potter and put into the fire of his oven.¹³²

Lamentations over the death of a near and dear were as common among the Muslims as they were among the Hindus.¹³³ The occasion of death was generally used for the demonstration of grief by mourning friends and relations. The pent up emotions of the whole family and particularly the grief of the women expressed itself in wild outbursts, and the wailing cries created quite an uproar. The ceremonies of mourning went on for days, even for months and in exceptional cases for a whole year.¹³⁴

In this way, the whole life of the two communities - the Hindus and the Muslims, was over burdened with innumerable rites and ceremonies which to Guru Nanak had more superstition than sense in them. Yet the self-styled protectors of Hinduism and Islam, the brahmins and mullahas, professedly attached religious sanctity to all these ceremonies. Guru Nanak not only condemned these but also tried to lift the man out of the moorings to which he was trapped in for centuries.

NOTES

1. Adi Granth, p. 1428 :

ਬਾਲ ਜੁਆਨੀ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਰਥ ਫੁਨਿ
ਤੀਨ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਜਾਨਿ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1349.

Childhood, youth and old age,
three are the stage of thy life.

2. Sharma, Brijnarain, Social Life in Northern India
(AD 600-1000), Delhi, 1966, p. 247; also see,
Pandey, R.B., Hindu Samaskaras, Banaras, 1949.

3. In the words of Guru Arjan, this super human is
none other than, God Himself who sustains, the
child in mother's womb and gives him the human form
and soul :

Adi Granth, p. 1071 :

ਖਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਬਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪਨਹਾਰਾ ਸੋਈ ਤੇਰਾ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੈ॥
ਮਾਤ ਗਰਭ ਮਹਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲਿਆ॥
ਸਾਸਿ ਗ੍ਰਾਸਿ ਹੋਇ ਸੰਗ ਸਮਾਲਿਆ॥
ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਜਪੀਐ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਵਡੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਹੈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1023.

Yea, He, who createth and
destroyeth in an instant.
He alone saveth thee ever.

He, who provided thee sustenance
in the mother's womb,
and abiding ever with thee
taketh care of thee.
Dwell ever thou on Him,
Thy only love,
whose glory is great.

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 1004.

4. Pandey, R.B., op. cit., p. 70.
5. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 176.
6. Pandey, R.B., op. cit., p. 76.
7. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 134.

Adi Granth, p. 143 :

ਕੈਹਾ ਕੰਚੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਸਾਰੁ॥ ਅਗਨੀ ਗੰਢੁ ਪਾਏ ਲੋਹਾਰੁ॥
ਗੋਰੀ ਸੇਤੀ ਤੁਟੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥ ਪੁਤੀ ਗੰਢੁ ਪਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥

8. Pandey, R.B., op. cit., p. 76.
9. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 177.
10. Ibid., p. 177. Also see, Chopra, P.N., Some Aspects of Social Life During the Mughal Age (1526-1707), Agra, 1955, p. 3.
11. Macauliffe, Max, Arthur, The Sikh Religion, Vol. I, p. 1.

12. Adi Granth, p. 904 :

ਝੂਠ ਨ ਬੋਲਿ ਪਾਠੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਹੀਐ॥
ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਬਦਿ ਘਰੁ ਲਹੀਐ॥
ਗਣਿ ਗਣਿ ਜੋਤਕੁ ਕਾਠੀ ਕੀਠੀ॥
ਪੜੈ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ਤਤੁ ਨ ਚੀਠੀ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 863.

O, pundit lie not and speak the Truth,
for, one attains to one's true Abode.
If one rids oneself of ego through the word,
the astrologer maketh our horoscope,
calculating this and that,
and he readeth it out to us,
himself realising not the Reality
(of the Real).

13. Even during the days of menstrual courses, a woman was considered impure. Writing about it Alberuni states, 'The longest duration of the menstrual courses which has been observed is sixteen days, but in reality they last only during the first four days, and then the husband is not allowed to cohabit with his wife, nor even to come near her in the same house, because during the time she is impure. After the four days have elapsed and she has washed, she is pure again, and the husband may co-habit with her, even if the blood

has not yet entirely disappeared, for this blood is not considered as that of the menstrual courses, but as the same substance - matter of which the embryos consist'; see, Sachau Edward, C., Alberuni's India, p. 156. Guru Nanak also notice it and condemned the prevailing custom of calling a woman, impure, during the days of her menstrual courses. 'What about those who are impure by heart? And give only a purificatory bath to clean their body and not the soul'. He writes :

Adi Granth, p. 472 :

ਜਿਉ ਜੋਰੂ ਸਿਰ ਨਾਵਣੀ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੇਵਾਰੁ॥
ਜੁਠੈ ਜੁਠਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥
ਸੂਚੈ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਜਿ ਪਿੰਡਾ ਧੋਇ॥
ਸੂਚੈ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਮਨ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.

As the woman hath her periods
month after month,
so doth impurity abide in the mouth
of the impure, and continually he is scorched.
Pure are not they who bathe their bodies :
Pure, Nanak, are they in whose mind is
He, the Lord.

14. Sachau, Edward, C., op. cit., pp. 156-157.

15. See Arora, A.C.'s article, 'Society as Depicted in Asa di Var', in 'Papers on Guru Nanak', edited by Fauja Singh and Arora, A.C., p. 161.
16. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.
Adi Granth, p. 472 :

ਜੇਕਰਿ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਮੰਨੀਐ ਸਭਤੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਹੋਇ॥
ਗੋਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਲਕੜੀ ਐਦਰਿ ਕੀੜਾ ਹੋਇ॥
ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਣੇ ਐਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ॥
ਸੂਤਕੁ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਪਵੈ ਰਸੋਇ॥
ਨਲਕ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਏਵ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਉਤਾਰੈ ਧੋਇ॥

Similar views are expressed by Saint Kabir, a contemporary of Guru Nanak. He writes :

Adi Granth, p. 331 :

ਜਲਿ ਹੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਥਲ ਹੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ॥
ਜਲਮੇ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਮੁਏ ਫੁਲਿ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਪਰਜ ਬਿਗੋਈ॥
ਕਹੁ ਹੈ ਪੰਡੀਆ ਕਉਨ ਪਵੀਤਾ॥ ਐਸਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਜਪਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੀਤਾ॥
ਨੈਨਹੁ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਬੈਨਹੁ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਸੂਫਲੀ ਹੋਈ॥
ਉਠਤ ਬੈਠਤ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਪਰੈ ਰਸੋਈ॥
ਫਾਸਨ ਕੀ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਭ ਕੋਉ ਜਲੈ ਛੂਟਨ ਕੀ ਇਕੁ ਕੋਈ॥
ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਤਿਨੈ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 321.

contd..

Contaminated is water, contaminated is the earth,
yea, the whole creation is contaminated,
Our birth is contaminated, as is our death,
yea, the whole world is scourged by contamination
O pundit, tell me then, who at all is pure?
And dwell thou on such a wisdom, O friend
which revealeth the pure one to thee.
Aren't our eyes contaminated and our tongues too?
Aren't the ears contaminated?
For contamination is every where
and we are contaminated in whatever we do
and so our kitchen too is contaminated.
Many know how to be ensnared
but rarely how to be released.
Sayeth Kabir : 'He who contemplates the Lord
in the heart, is contaminated not'.

17. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 466-467.
Adi Granth, pp. 472-73 :

ਮਨ ਕਾ ਸੂਤਰੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਹਵਾ ਸੂਤਕ ਕੂੜੁ ॥
ਅਖੀ ਸੂਤਰੁ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਪਰਤਿਆ ਪਕਠ ਰੂਪੁ ॥
ਕੀਨੀ ਸੂਤਰੁ ਕੀਨਿ ਪੈ ਨਾਇਤਬਾਰੀ ਖਾਹਿ ॥
ਠਾਠਕ ਹੰਸਾ ਆਦਮੀ ਬਧੇ ਜਮਪੁਰਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

... ..

ਸਭੇ ਸੂਤਰੁ ਭਰਮ ਹੈ ਦੂਜੈ ਨਗੈ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਜੀਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਰੁ ਹੈ ਦਿਤੇਨੁ ਰਿਜਕ ਸੰਭਾਹਿ ॥
ਠਾਠਕ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਤਿਨਾ ਸੂਤਰੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

18. Thomas, P., Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, p. 88. Writing about the birth ceremonies, the present author states, 'The women of the house keep vigil throughout the night and the family priest repeats verses so that this night supposed to be very dangerous for the child, may pass without evil befalling the child. The Hindus believe that evil spirits are more active when humans sleep, and seldom haunt places where lamps are lit and people keep vigil'.
19. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 88.
20. Ibid., pp. 88-89.
21. See, Adi Granth, p. 1289. Also see, Bhai Gurdas, Veran, 2/11 and Mukbal Heer, Patiala, 1961, pp. 27 and 33.
22. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 89.
23. See footnote 12 of the present chapter.
24. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 12.
25. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 177.
26. Akbar was named Badr-ud-din immediately after his birth, see Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 12.
27. Bhalla, Sarup Dass, Memha Parkash, Patiala, 1970, pp. 201-203.
28. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 89.

29. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 13 and Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 177.
30. Pandey, R.B., op. cit., pp. 108-109.
31. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 90.
32. All these items - like pati (tablet or a wooden-board), Mas/Siahi (ink), Qalam (pen) and kagad (paper) etc. are mentioned in Var Malhar, Mahalla I, Adi Granth, p. 1291. For Pandha/Padha (teacher), see Ramakali Mahalla I, Adi Granth, pp. 937-938.
33. See, Macauliffe, M.A., op. cit., p. 2.
34. Ibid., p. 3.
35. For Guru Nanak's views on education, see Bhai Veer Singh (ed.), Puratan Janam Sakhi, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Amritsar, 1959, pp. 1-5.
36. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 894.
For the original text, see Adi Granth, pp. 937-38 :

ਪਥਾ ਪੜਿਆ ਆਖੀਐ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਬਿਚਰੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ॥
ਬਿਦਿਆ ਸੋਧੈ ਤਤੁ ਲਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥
ਮਨਮੁਖੁ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਬਿਕ੍ਰਦਾ ਬਿਖੁ ਖਟੈ ਬਿਖੁ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਮੂਰਖੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਨ ਚੀਨਈ ਸੂਝ ਬੂਝ ਨਾ ਕਾਇ ॥
ਪਥਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਖੀਐ ਚਾਟੜਿਆ ਮਤਿ ਦੇਇ ॥
ਨਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਹੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਗਰਹੁ ਨਾਹਾ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਇ ॥
ਸਚੀ ਪਟੀ ਸਚ ਮਨਿ ਪੜੀਐ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਪੜਿਆ ਸੋ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਬੀਨਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਰਾਮਨਾਮ ਗਲਿ ਹਾਰੁ ॥

37. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1077.
For original text, see Adi Granth, p. 1127 :
ਪੁਸਤਕ ਪਾਠ ਬਿਆਕਰਣ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਸੰਧਿਆ ਕਰਮ ਤਿਕਾਲ ਕਰੈ॥
ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਉਰਝਿ ਮਰੈ॥
38. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 347.
Adi Granth, p. 356 :
ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰ ਉਪਕਾਰੀ॥
39. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 14 and Ashraf, K.M.,
op. cit., p. 178.
40. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 178.
41. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 473.
Adi Granth, p. 477 :
ਸਕਤਿ ਸਨੇਹੁ ਕਰਿ ਸੁਨੰਤਿ ਕਰੀਐ ਮੈ ਨ ਬਦਉਗਾ ਭਾਈ॥
ਜਉ ਰੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਮੋਹਿ ਤੁਰਕੁ ਕਰੈਗਾ ਆਪਨ ਹੀ ਕਟਿ ਜਾਈ॥
ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਕੀਏ ਤੁਰਕੁ ਜੇ ਹੋਇਗਾ ਅਉਰਤ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੀਐ॥
ਅਠ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਨਾਮਿ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੀ ਰਹੀਐ॥
42. Arora, A.C., op. cit., p.161.
43. Sharma, Brijnarain, Social Life in Northern India
(AD 600-1000), p. 252.
44. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 90.
45. Ibid.
46. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 90.

47. Macauliffe, M.A., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 16.
48. For (tr.), see, Arora, A.C., op. cit., p. 162.
Adi Granth, p. 471 :

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਰ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥
ਏਹੁ ਜਨੈਉ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਠੈ ਘਤੁ॥
ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਇਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥
ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੈ ਪਾਇ॥

49. For (tr.), see, Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. II,
pp. 464-465.
Adi Granth, p. 471 :

ਤਗੁ ਕਪਾਰਹੁ ਕਤੀਐ ਬਾਮਣੁ ਵਟੇ ਆਇ॥
ਕੁਹਿ ਬਕਰਾ ਰਿੰਨਿ ਖਾਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਆਖੈ ਪਾਇ॥
ਹੋਇ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਸੁਟੀਐ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਹੋਰੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਈ ਜੇ ਤਗਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੋਰੁ॥
ਨਾਇ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਤਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਚੁ ਸੂਤੁ॥
ਦਰਗਹ ਐਦਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਸਿ ਪੂਤੁ॥

50. Vivaha is the word for marriage which Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus have used in their Bani. As is clear from the following couplets in the Adi Granth.

Adi Granth, p. 78 :

ਵੀਆਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੇਰੈ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ॥

contd...

Adi Granth, p. 765 :

ਵੀਵਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਸੋਭ ਸੇਤੀ ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦੀ ਆਇਆ॥
ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਗੁ ਧੰਧੜੇ ਲਾਇਆ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 775.

51. See, Sahu, K.P., Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life (1000-1526 AD), Calcutta, 1973, pp. 188-189 and Ojha, P.N., Aspects of Medieval Indian Society and Culture, Delhi, 1978, p. 116.

52. Sachau, E.C., op. cit., p. 154.

53. Quoted by Chopra. P.N., op. cit., p. 16.

54. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 467.

Adi Granth, p. 473 :

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੀਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥
ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ॥
ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧੁ॥
ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੀਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਲ॥
ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਣੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
ਨਲਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ॥

55. Sahu, K.P., op. cit., p. 189.

56. Sachau, E.C., op. cit., p. 154.

57. Guru Nanak has used the word ' ਇਆਣੀ ਬਾਲੀ ' and ' ਬਾਲੀ ' for the child-brides; see Tilang Mahalla I, Adi Granth, p. 722 and Ramkali Var, Mahalla I, Adi Granth, p. 954.

58. On the testimony of Bhai Mani Singh, Macauliffe, M.A., states that (Guru) Nanak was married at the age of fourteen. The Sikh Religion, Vol. I, p. 18. However, author of Puratan Janam Sakhi says that Guru Nanak was twelve years old when he was married to Sulakhni daughter of Mula khatri of Batala, pp. 5-6.
59. Quoted by Sahu, K.P., op. cit., p. 189.
60. Sahu, K.P., op. cit., p. 191.
61. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 92.
62. See, marriage ceremonies described by Damodar Gulati in Heer Damodar, op. cit., pp. 90-93 and Waris Shah, Heer Waris Shah (ed), Sant Singh Saikhoo, Delhi, 1977, pp. 113, 114, 117.
63. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 26.
64. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 728-729. Adi Granth, p. 764 :

ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ ॥ ਸਾਰੈ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ॥
ਸਹਜਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ਹਰਿ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਏ ਪੰਚ ਮਿਲੈ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਸਾਈ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਈ ਜਿਸੁ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਇਆ ॥
ਅਠਦਿਨੁ ਮੈਲੁ ਭਇਆ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਠਿਆ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਸੋਹਾਏ ॥
ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਵਜੈ ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ ॥
ਆਵਹੁ ਮੀਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ॥ ਮੰਗਲ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਨਾਰੇ ॥

In an other hymn Guru Nanak writes :

Adi Granth, p. 773 :

ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕਰਿ ਭਾਉ ਕੁੜਮ ਕੁੜਮਾਈ ਆਇਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ॥

Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 2517.

Embellishing the girl with chastity,
contentment and love her father
the Guru has come to betroth her to her Lord.
A sacrifice am I unto my Lord.

65. See, Shalok Farid, Adi Granth, p. 1377. :

ਜਿਤ ਦਿਹੜੈ ਧਨ ਵਰੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਲਏ ਲਿਖਾਇ॥

66. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 16.

Adi Granth, p. 12 :

ਸੰਬਤਿ ਸਾਹਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਤੇਲੁ॥
ਦੇਹੁ ਸਜਣ ਅਸੀਸੜੀਆਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ॥

67. Referred to footnote 62.

68. See, Adi Granth, pp. 575-576.

69. Adi Granth, p. 764 :

ਆਵਹੁ ਮੀਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ॥ ਮੰਗਲ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਨਾਰੇ॥
ਸਚੁ ਮੰਗਲੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵਹੁ ਸੋਹਿਲੜਾ ਜੁਗ ਚਾਰੇ॥

... ..

ਸਖੀ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਰਸਿ ਮੰਗਲ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨੁ ਆਇਆ॥

70. Adi Granth, p. 482 :

ਗਉ ਗਉ ਰੀ ਦੁਲਹਨੀ ਮੰਗਲਚਾਰਾ॥
ਮੇਰੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਆਏ ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ ਭਤਾਰਾ॥

Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 242-43.

71. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., pp. 27-28.

72. See, Adi Granth, p. 775 :

ਸੁਰਿ ਨਰ ਗਣ ਰੀਰਬ ਮਿਲ ਆਏ ਅਪੂਰਬ ਜੀਵ ਬਣਾਈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 737.

'How wondrous is the wedding party of
the angetic beings, the heavenly
singers, the attendants of gods'.

73. Adi Granth, p. 453 :

ਆਪੇ ਜਾਵੀ ਆਪੇ ਮਾਵੀ ਆਪਿਸੁਆਮੀ ਆਪਿ ਦੇਵਾ॥
ਆਪਣਾ ਕਾਰਜੁ ਆਪਿ ਸਵਾਰੇ ਆਪੇ ਧਾਕੁ ਧਾਰੇ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹੁ ਘਰ ਮਹਿ ਬੈਠਾ ਸੋਰੇ ਬੰਕ ਦੁਆਰੇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 446-47.

He Himself is the groom's party and,

yea, the bride's too,

He Himself is the Master

He Himself the God.

74. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 345.
Adi Granth, p. 351 :

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਅਪਨੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ॥
ਤਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਖੀਆ ਕਾਜੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ॥
ਖੇਲੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਮਨਿ ਅਨਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਸਹੁ ਵੀਆਹੁਣ ਆਇਆ॥
ਗਾਵਹੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਾਮਣੀ ਬਿਬੈਕ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥
ਹਮਰੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ ਜਗਜੀਵਨੁ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥

75. See, Adi Granth, p. 242 :

ਮੇਰੀ ਇਛ ਪੁਨੀ ਜੀਉ ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨੁ ਆਇਆ॥
ਮਿਲਿ ਵਰੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਮੰਗਲੁ ਗਾਇਆ॥
ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇ ਮੰਗਲੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਰਹਸੀ ਮੁੰਧ ਮਨਿ ਉਮਾਹਉ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 233.

My desire was fulfilled
and my friends came to my home.
And meeting my groom,
my mates sang the songs of joy.
Yea, by singing the wedding - songs,
I was imbued with the Lord's (bridegroom's) Love,
and my mind oozed out joy.

76. See, Adi Granth, p. 1290 :

ਜਜਿ ਕਾਜਿ ਵੀਆਹਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ਉਥੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1231.

And in the yagnas, in marriages
and on festive occasions is meat
the main food of men.

77. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 29.
78. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 92.
79. Parminder Singh, Heer Damodar, pp. 92-107.
80. In one of the hymns of Guru Ramdas, we find a reference of dowry being given at the time of marriage to the bride. The worldly bride (human being) is asking her father, to give her a handsome dowry (of the Lord's Name, goodness, simplicity and virtues) so that she may find favour with her husband (i.e., Union with God). The rest of the dowry is useless, a vain show of egoism.
See, Adi Granth, pp. 78-79 :

ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਲੁ ਮੈ ਦਾਜੇ॥
ਹਰਿ ਕਪੜੇ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਵਰੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਕਾਜੇ॥
ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸੁਰੇਲਾ ਗੁਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦਲੁ ਦਿਵਾਇਆ॥
ਖੰਡਿ ਵਰਭੰਡਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਹੋਈ ਇਹ ਦਿਨੁ ਨ ਰਲੈ ਰਲਾਇਆ॥
ਹੋਰਿ ਮਨੁਮੁਖ ਦਾਜੁ ਜਿ ਰਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਹਿ ਸੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਕਰੁ ਪਾਜੇ॥
ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਲੁ ਮੈ ਦਾਜੇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 71.

'O' my father, gift away to me
the dowry of the Lord's Name.
Let the Lord be my wear,
His glory my beauty,
that my task be accomplished,
blessed is the Lord's worship,
the true Guru hath blest me with it.

In all lands, nay, in all the universe
pervades the glory of the Lord,
yea, the gift of the Lord's (Name) is matchless,
and other dowry displayed by the selfwilled
is false egoism and a vain show.

81. Macauliffe, M.A., op. cit., p. 145.
82. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 34.
83. Adi Granth, p. 12.
84. Quoted in Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 35.
85. Ibid., p. 30.
86. See, Adi Granth, p. 12.
Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 16.
Also see footnote 66 of this chapter.
87. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 414-415.
Adi Granth, p. 417 :

ਜਦਹੁ ਸੀਆ ਵੀਆਹੀਆ ਨਾੜੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ॥
ਹੀ ਡੋਲੀ ਚੜਿ ਆਈਆ ਦੰਦ ਖੰਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ॥
ਉਪਰਹੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਾਰੀਐ ਝਲੇ ਝਿਮਕਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ॥
ਇਕ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਬਹਿਠੀਆ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਖੜੀਆ॥
ਗਰੀ ਛੁਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਦੀਆ ਮਾਣਨਿ ਸੇਜੜੀਆ॥

88. Adi Granth, p. 764 :

ਬਾਬੁਨਿ ਦਿਤੜੀ ਦੂਰਿ ਨਾ ਆਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਪੇਈਐ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ॥

89. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 187.

90. Adi Granth, p. 722 :

ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਛਪ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੂੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ॥
ਕਾਜੀਆ ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਗਲਿ ਥਕੀ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਸੈਤਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 692.

Righteousness and sense of shame have hid themselves,
and falsehood walks abroad with abandon.

The days of qazis and the brahmins are over,
yea, the devil himself playeth the priest.

91. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 22.

92. See footnote 54 of this chapter.

93. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 22.

94. Roychoudhary, S.C., Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Medieval Age), p. 59.

95. Sachau, E.C., op. cit., p. 155.

96. See, Abul Fazal's observations, quoted by
Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., p. 59.

97. The practice was more common among the rajputs,
brahmin and khatri widows. It is improbable that
the jats, or the craftsmen, ever adopted the custom.
It was confined, in all probability to rajput,
brahmin and khatri families. Cf., Upadhyay, V.,
Socio-Religious Condition of North India, pp. 153-
154.

98. Obviously, because otherwise there would be no widows. Sidi Ali states, for instance, that 'if the deceased leaves a wife past child - bearing she is not burnt' : The Travels and Adventures of Sidi Ali Reis, pp. 59-60. Alberuni also observes that very old women and mothers need not become sati; Alberuni's India, p. 155, as quoted by Grewal, J.S., op. cit., p. 56.

99. Adi Granth, p. 226 :

ਜਿਉ ਤਨੁ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਪਰ ਕਉ ਦੇਈ॥
ਕਾਮਿ ਦਾਮਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਪਰਵਸਿ ਸੇਈ॥
ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਹੋਈ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 217.

The widow offers her body to another,
yea, far the sake of lust or money,
her mind is swayed thus,
(But) without the spouse,
she is satiated not.

100. Quoted by Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 93.

101. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 183.

102. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 588.

Adi Granth, p. 609 :

ਤੀਨਿ ਸੰਢਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਹੀ ਕੀਨੀ ਜਨ ਕੂਕਰ ਭਸਮੇਹੀ॥
ਹੋਇ ਆਮਰੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਮਹਿ ਬੈਠਾ ਕਾਣ ਕਾਣ ਬਿਸਰੇਹੀ॥

103. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 183.
Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 93.
For details, see Pandey, R.B., op. cit., pp. 234-274.
104. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 39; see also, Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 93.
105. Quoted by Chopra, op. cit., p. 94.
106. Adi Granth, p. 1383 :

ਸਚੈ ਤੈ ਮਣ ਦੇਹੁਰੀ ਚਲੈ ਪਈ ਅੰਨਿ ॥
ਆਇਓ ਬੰਦਾ ਦੁਨੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਤਿ ਅਸੂਣੀ ਬੰਨਿ ॥
ਮਨਕਲ ਮਉਤ ਜਾਂ ਆਵਸੀ ਸਭ ਦਰਵਾਜੇ ਭੰਨਿ ॥
ਤਿਨਾ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਭਾਈਆਂ ਅਗੈ ਦਿਤਾ ਬੰਨਿ ॥
ਵੇਖਹੁ ਬੰਦਾ ਚਲਿਆ ਚਹੁ ਜਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੰਨਿ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਅਮਲ ਜਿ ਕੀਤੇ ਦੁਨੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਆਏ ਕੰਮਿ ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1314.

The Body of three and a half maunds lives on water
and the grains.

Yea, the man came into the world carrying
loads of hope.

(But), when the angel of death shatters all
the doors (of the body),

then the loved ones of man present him bound,
to death.

Lo, the man, quittance, carried on the shoulders
of four of his kind.

And, hereafter, only the deeds, he did in the
world, are of any avail to him.

107. Pedfield, J.E., The Hindu at Home, (being sketches of Hindu daily Life), p. 198.
108. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 40.
109. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 563-64.
Adi Granth, p. 580 :
- ਜਲਿ ਮਲਿ ਜਲੀ ਨਾਵਾਲਿਆ ਕਪੜਿ ਪਟਿ ਅੰਬਾਰੇ॥
ਵਜੇ ਵਜੇ ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀਆ ਪੰਚ ਮੁਏ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰੇ॥
ਜਲੀ ਵੁਠਿਠੜੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਰਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਧਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੇ॥
110. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 41 and Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 94.
111. Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit., p. 256 and Pedfield, J.E., op. cit., p. 220.
112. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 41 and Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 183.
113. Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit., p. 256 and Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 94.
114. Sachau, Edward C., op. cit., pp. 170-171, and Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit., p. 257.
115. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 94, Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit., p. 257.
116. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 184.
117. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 564.
Adi Granth, p. 580 :

ਸਦੜੇ ਆਏ ਤਿਨਾ ਜਾਨੀਆ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਚੇ ਕਰਤਾਰੇ॥

ਨਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਖ ਵਿਛੁੰਨਿਆ ਵਿਛੁੜਿਆ ਮੇਲਣਹਾਰੇ॥

... ..

ਸਧਨ ਛੁਟੀ ਮੁਠੀ ਝੂਠਿ ਵਿਧਵੀਆ ਮਿਰਤਕੜਾ ਐਠੜੇ ਬਾਰੇ॥

ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮੁਈ ਮਰੁ ਮਾਈਏ ਮਹਲ ਕੁੰਨੀ ਦਰਬਾਰੇ॥

... ..

ਜਾਨੀ ਵਿਛੁੰਨੜੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਭਇਆ ਧ੍ਰਿਗ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੇ॥

118. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 472.

Adi Granth, p. 478 :

ਘਟ ਫੂਟੇ ਕੋਊ ਬਾਤ ਨ ਪੂਛੈ ਕਾਢਹੁ ਕਾਢਹੁ ਹੋਈ॥

ਦੇਹੁਗੀ ਬੈਠੀ ਮਠਾ ਰੋਵੈ ਖਟੀਆ ਲੇ ਗਏ ਭਾਈ॥

ਲਟ ਛਿਟਕਾਏ ਤਿਰੀਆ ਰੋਵੈ ਹੰਸੁ ਇਕੋਲਾ ਜਾਈ॥

119. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 980.

Adi Granth, p. 1027 :

ਬਾਲਕੁ ਮਰੈ ਬਾਲਕ ਕੀ ਨੀਲਾ॥

ਕਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਬਾਲੁ ਰੰਗੀਲਾ॥

ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਸਾ ਸੋ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਨੀਆ ਭੂਲਾ ਰੋਵਣਹਾਰਾ ਹੈ॥

ਭਰਿ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਕਿ ਕੀਜੈ॥

ਮੇਰਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਕਹਿ ਰੋਵੀਜੈ॥

ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਰੋਇ ਵਿਗੂਚਹਿ ਧ੍ਰਿਗ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ਹੈ॥

120. Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit., p. 257.

121. Adi Granth, pp. 579-580.

122. Adi Granth, p. 579 :

ਨਲਕ ਕੁੰਨਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੇ ਰੋਵੈ ਲਾਇ ਪਿਆਰੇ॥
ਵਾਲੇਵੈ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਰੋਈਐ ਰੋਵਣ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਕਾਰੇ॥
ਰੋਵਣੁ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਕਾਰੇ ਗਾਫਲੁ ਸੀਸਾਰੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਰੋਵੈ॥
ਚੰਗਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਸੁਝੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਇਹ ਤਨੁ ਏਵੈ ਖੋਵੈ॥
ਐਥੇ ਆਇਆ ਸਤੁ ਕੋ ਜਾਸੀ ਕੂੜਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਅਰੰਕਾਰੇ॥
ਨਲਕ ਕੁੰਨਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੇ ਰੋਵੈ ਲਾਇ ਪਿਆਰੇ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 563.

'O' Nanak, one wails truly, if one wailleth
in love (for Him).

If one wailleth, being involved (in worldly possessions)
the all one's wailing in vain

Yea, vain is such wailing if, forgetful of the lord,
one wailleth for what is not.

And discriminates not between good and evil,
and so wastes his life away in vain.

Nanak, one wails truly, if one wails in love
(for Him).

123. Adi Granth, p. 358 :

ਦੀਵਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਇਆ ਤੇਨੁ॥
ਉਨਿ ਚਲਣਿ ਉਹ ਸੋਖਿਆ ਚੁਕਾ ਜਮ ਸਿਓ ਮੇਨੁ॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 349.

contd..

The Name is my (Luminous) Lamp,
in it is the oil of pain,
as the lamp burns bright it sucketh up the oil,
and no more thereafter is my meeting with the yama.

124. Thomas, P., op. cit., p. 94.
125. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 184.
126. Ibid., p. 184 and Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit.,
p. 257.
127. Sharma, Brijnarain, op. cit., p. 258.
128. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 349.

Adi Granth, p. 358 :

ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਤਲਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਕੇਸਉ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਨਮੁ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ॥
ਐਥੇ ਉਥੈ ਅਗੈ ਪਛੈ ਏਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਅਧਾਰੁ॥
ਗੰਗ ਬਨਾਰਸਿ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ਨਾਵੈ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਉ॥
ਸਚਾ ਨਾਵਣ ਤਾ ਥੀਐ ਜਾ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਨਾਗੈ ਭਾਉ॥
ਇਕ ਨੇਕੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਛਮਿਛਰੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੁ ਵਟਿ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਖਾਇ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਬਖਸੀਸ ਕਾ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨਿਖੂਟਸਿ ਨਾਹਿ॥

129. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.

Adi Granth, p. 472 :

ਜੇ ਮੋਹਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਰੈ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹਿ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਦੇਇ॥
ਅਗੈ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿਵਾਣੀਐ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਚੋਰ ਕਰੇਇ॥
ਵਢੀਅਹਿ ਹੱਥ ਦਲਾਲ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਫੀ ਏਹ ਕਰੇਇ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਅਗੈ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿ ਖਟੇ ਘਲੈ ਦੇਇ॥

130. Adi Granth, p. 648.
131. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 459.
Adi Granth, p. 466 :

ਮਿਟੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਪੇੜੇ ਪਈ ਕੁਮਿਆਰ॥
ਘੜਿ ਭਾੜੇ ਇਟਾ ਕੀਆ ਜਲਦੀ ਕਰੇ ਪੁਕਾਰ॥
ਜਲਿ ਜਲਿ ਰੇਵੈ ਬਪੁੜੀ ਝੜਿ ਝੜਿ ਪਵਹਿ ਅੰਗਿਆਰ॥
ਠਲਕ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਕਾਣ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਰਤਾਰ॥

132. Arora, A.C., op. cit., p. 162.
133. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 46.
134. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 184.

CHAPTER VI

POSITION OF WOMEN

The position of women in a society reflects the standard of its civilization. The position of Indian women through the ages has been for the most part, one of honourable subordination to and protection by men. Ever since the days of the Indian law giver, Manu, Hindu law has assigned to women a dependent, though not a dishonourable status in society. The code of Manu prescribes thus, 'By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one nothing must be done independently even in her own house. In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons, a woman must never be independent. She must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband or sons, by leaving them she should make both (her own and her husband's) families contemptible'.¹

The women in India, in the pre-Muslim period, although dependent upon and protected by men, enjoyed in theory as well as to a considerable extent in practice, an honourable status in society. Apart from their being the unquestioned mistresses of the household, they were free to partake in other outdoor social activities.

Then, a change in the status of women came as a sequel to the advent of the Muslims in India. The position which the women enjoyed before the advent of the Muslim rule in India underwent a complete change during the Turkish supremacy in our country. Due to the growing sense of insecurity and social upheavals which followed the Muslim expeditions and loot, plunder and massacre, The Hindu women in northern India lost their high social status. They were secluded for fear of dishonour. Their spiritual, intellectual and physical developments were obstructed and social status was curtailed.² The social laws and customs which came to be evolved in the changed set-up, stamped women with the stigma of mental deficiency and created in them a profound sense of inferiority complex.³ Gradually, they came to be almost wholly confined to domestic activities. Though women were still treated with respect, yet, the birth of a female child was looked upon as an unfortunate event in a family.⁴

In the following pages, the author has tried to give a critical appraisal of what Guru Nanak has said on the position of women, in his Bani. His Bani is full of references to child marriage, parda and conditions of widows. He has also referred to the life of a householder and the family as a social unit. He also dwells on the relationship between the husband and the wife. By far, the largest number of metaphors in the compositions of

Guru Nanak refer to conjugal relationship of the married couples.⁵

Let us begin our discussion with the institution of parda (veil) in the society, which had become in some form or the other, almost a common feature of Indian-womanhood in those days. Almost from the beginning of the Muslim rule in India, the parda system had become an indispensable part of the social life of women. The parda system in all probability was unknown in ancient India.⁶ The women moved freely in Hindu society. The exclusion of women from male society was not followed. They participated in social activities and functions.⁷ The general adoption of parda, according to Altekar, is subsequent to the advent of Muslim rule in India.⁸ Hindus adopted parda as a protective measure to save the honour of their women folk and to maintain the purity of their social order.⁹

Muslim rulers and nobles who believed in polygamy and could maintain a huge harem were always in the look out for beautiful ladies, fought wars for them and after bloodshed brought ladies to their harems.¹⁰ The reference to women being forcibly taken away by the raiders while breaking the forewalls of their houses can be seen from the following couplets of Guru Nanak :

The raider (death), demolished the house (body),
and robbed it of the women (life, the lone soul)
which had taken shelter in it.

Her neck chained, the raider (yama)
whipped her with his rod,
and carried her away.¹¹

Such circumstances made the life of a young and beautiful woman insecure. Women were often taken away by the powerful rulers and nobles. The example of Firoz Shah Tughlaq's mother (a Bhati Rajput girl) is before us who agreed to marry Rajab to save the kingdom of her father Ran-Mal (Chief of Abohar) from destruction at the hands of Muslim invaders.¹²

Parda system as prevalent at the time did not permit woman to mix freely with other members of her clan. She suffered from lack of association with men. As a daughter the only associates of a girl were her girl playmates and her brothers from among boys and when she was married and became a wife, she lived in the company of her husband.¹³ It was a custom of the age that woman confined to home or in parda was very much appreciated by the society. It was a common saying of those days 'Andar baithi lakh di, Te bahar gayi kakh di' (means one who stays at home is worth a lakh, but the one who wanders out is worth a straw). To quote Amir Khusrau, "The good woman is one who habitually observes parda and wears Burqa (mantle) on her face. A woman who used to wander about in streets is not a woman, rather she is a bitch. The woman should maintain Purda (privacy) in their houses even being as

narrow and as constricted as eye of a needle¹⁴ The unmarried girls were perhaps not expected to observe purda. The poor women, especially in the rural areas, who had to work outdoors for their maintenance, could not have afforded to observe the rules of purda or to remain in seclusion with the same rigidity as their sisters belonging to the upper classes of society. The vast mass of peasant women did not wear any shroud or veil of a specific kind and they did not confine themselves to their houses.¹⁵ They were expected to help their husbands in all 'external pursuits and internal economy'. It was every where a common sight to see women water carriers walking along the streets without any purda.¹⁶ There are some references in Guru Nanak's Bani and in the hymns of other Sikh Gurus and Bhagatas where a woman, carrying a pitcher full of water is mentioned.¹⁷ Such references make us believe that the common women moved much freely than the women of the upper class families of both the communities.¹⁸

The Muslim women observed purda with greater rigidity than the Hindu ones. A milder and less elaborate form of purda, commonly known as ghoonghat seems to have been observed by the Hindu women. Guru Nanak and saint Kabir have used this word in their Bani.¹⁹ They never approved the system of purda or ghoongat which deprived the women to move freely in the society. Kabir says, it is a false pride that has been attached to it by the people.

'This only is the merit of veiling thy face,
that for a few days the people say,
How noble is the bride'.²⁰

These lines clearly indicate that the saint poets of medieval India did not see any merit in the prevailing custom of wearing a ghoongat or purda but to please the members of one's in-law's family or people in general very few married women could take the bold step of casting aside the ghoongat which had become a symbol of respectability in the society. Still some women in the society could challenge the custom of wearing a ghoongat and make themselves free, as is clear from the following couplet of Guru Nanak :

'I've cast off my veil :
the values of the world haunt me no more.
My ignorance, the mother-in-law,
hath lost her moorings,
and no more is her sway over my head'.²¹

On the whole, however, purda or ghoongat might have considerably hampered the progress of women, both Hindu and Muslim, during the period under review. Since Guru Nanak and Guru Amar Dass had preached against purda, the women of their disciples generally discarded it and moved freely without a veil.²²

Sense of insecurity and continuous raids by the Muslim invaders from the north-west compelled the parents to marry their daughters at an early age, even before the age of puberty. The custom in those days did not allow the girls to remain in their parents home for more than six to eight years after their birth. They were usually married when six or seven years old.²³ Guru Nanak has used the word Iani Bali (poor ignorant girl) for such brides who were married long before they could understand the meaning, rights and duties of a married woman.²⁴ A marriage at or after the age of puberty was considered a bad marriage and a sinful deed for her parents.²⁵ Alberuni who was in India in the beginning of the eleventh century does not mention child marriage among the Hindus.²⁶

The accounts of the foreign travellers, the Persian Chronicles, the Bani of Adi Granth and the contemporary literary works abound in numerous instances of child marriages in our period. Both the Hindus and the Muslims had fallen prey to it. Emperor Akbar seems to have disliked early marriages and he tried to check this practice as far as possible. Abul Fazal writes, 'He abhors marriages which take place between men and women before the age of puberty. They bring forth no fruit and His Majesty thinks them hurtful; for afterwards, when such a couple ripens into manhood they dislike having connexion and their home is desolate'.²⁷

Marriages usually took place at the house of the bride's father. There are numerous references of marriage-party and the bridegroom being received by bride's father and their relatives, in Guru Nanak Bani.²⁸ It could be an easy affair if both the bride and the bridegroom lived in the same town or in the neighbouring villages. But if the girl happened to be engaged to a man residing far away, it was a cause of great concern to the girl's parents. In those days of meagre communications and transport the girls who were married to a distant place considered their marriage as an event of permanent separation from their parents home. In the following couplet, Guru Nanak portrays the feelings of such a girl who has been married to a man who lives far away from her parental home :

The father hath wedded me in a Land far removed,
and so I go not back to my parents' world.²⁹

Life long celibacy for girls was discouraged and every girl had to be given away in marriage. On account of political and socio-religious circumstances of the time, parents tried to marry off their daughters as early as possible.³⁰

In Guru Nanak's Bani, we do not come across any reference to the inter-caste marriages even from the references available in other contemporary writings it appears that the marriages generally took place between boys and

girls of the same caste, sub-caste, or profession. Abul Fazal refers to these caste-marriages thus : 'In the present Kaliyuga, no one chooses a wife out of his own caste, nay, each of these (four main castes) being sub-divided into various branches, each sub-division asks in marriage only the daughters of their own equals.³¹

The dowry formed an important part of the marriage deal. The nature of dowry varied according to the economic standard and the social status of the parties concerned.³² It was more universal amongst the richer and well to do sections than amongst the commoners. The Sikh Gurus condemned the dowry system as mere show of one's ego and riches :

Blessed is the Lord's worship;
the true Guru hath blest me with it.
In all lands, nay, in all Universe
pervades the glory of the Lord;
Yea, the gift of the Lord's (name) is matchless.
All other dowry displayed by the self willed
is false egoism and a vain show.³³

After marriage, the girl lived in the joint family of her husband, where the mother-in-law exercised control over her and her commands were to be carried out. If she failed to come up to her expectations her life became miserable. The following couplet of Guru Nanak is very

important in this regard :

My mother-in-law is vicious;
she lets me not stay in peace at home
or seek the joy of my spouse.³⁴

It was this treatment of her mother-in-law and some time of her 'nanad' (husband's sister) which made the girl realise that how badly she missed her parents, particularly brothers.³⁵ Her position was no better than that of an ordinary maid. She had to please each and every member of her husband's family by rendering every possible domestic service. But when grown up and away from the dominating influence of her mother-in-law, a middle class lady had large powers in the management of the household.³⁶ The foreign travellers have noticed with great appreciation the great respect paid to pregnant women not only by their husbands and relations but all the inhabitants of the place belonging to her caste prayed for her health and safety.³⁷

One of the main functions of a woman according to ancient Hindu scriptures was to bring forth a male child. If she happened to give birth to a son people honoured her and looked after her carefully.³⁸ Both the Hindus and the Muslims accorded a preferential treatment to the male members of the society. A female member was considered to be inferior in all respects - a son was always preferred

to a daughter. We find even an enlightened and highly accomplished scholar and poet like Amir Khusrau lamenting over the birth of a daughter in his famous Laila Majnu, thus, 'I wish you were not born and if you were, it would have been better if you had been a boy. No one can alter the decrees of fate'.³⁹ While noticing this kind of preferential longing for a boy and a special treatment given to him in the society, Guru Nanak observes as under :

The father and mother like their son,
the father-in-law the son-in-law.⁴⁰

A son was considered to be the binding link between the parents :

If a piece of bronze or gold or iron
breaks into bits,
the smith welds them again in fire;
if the husband breaks off from the wife,
the sons unite the two again.⁴¹

The birth of a daughter was considered inauspicious. The very silence with which a female child was received was indicative of the disappointment.⁴² Even in the royal families, the difference was clear and well-marked. Only women rejoiced and feasted on the birth of a daughter, while the whole court took part in the celebrations, if a prince was born. We can well understand

the anxiety of Akbar who had resolved within himself that if Almighty God should bestow a son on him he would go on foot from Agra to Muin-ud-din Chishti's mausoleum, a distance of about 140 kos.⁴³ A wife who unfortunately happened to give birth to girls in succession was despised and in some cases divorced. The deplorable custom of infanticide was luckily confined only to a very minor section of the mainly Rajput families.⁴⁴

The foreign travellers have noticed some strange customs connected with the birth of a child. A woman was considered impure for certain number of days after delivery and even during the menstrual period. When in child-bed she had an enforced rest and retired to a separate room. She was not considered fit to be touched by any one except the midwife who attended to her needs. Her food, according to Manucci, would be left at a distance and none would approach her, lest he or she might be defiled.⁴⁵ The Sikh Gurus who were great religious and social reformers of the period, never approved the idea of impurity of a woman during the child-birth or her menstrual period. Guru Nanak very emphatically states :

If impurity attaches (to life's birth),
then all, all over, are impure.

In the cow-dung and the wood too is
the life of worms.

As many are the grains of food,
not one is without life,
And is not water life, that bringeth all to life?
How can then we believe in life's impurity,
when impurity is in our very bed.

Nanak : impurity goes no otherwise
save by being wise.

Guru Nanak further says :

As the woman hath her periods month after month,
so doth impurity abide in the mouth of the impure,
and continually he is scorched.
Pure are not they who bathe their bodies,
pure, Nanak, are they in whose mind is He,
the Lord.⁴⁶

The domestic sphere was the most important field of a woman's activities. The higher education was denied to middle class and ordinary ladies and learning was restricted to primary subjects. Their training was confined to home and domestic affairs, such as needle work, embroidery, dressing the victuals, cooking pots and utensils. She had to look after the cows and other domestic animals, besides supervising the other works entrusted to her. In the early morning and before the sun-set, she would fetch water from the village well and during the day time after

she was free from the kitchen, she would spin for making the family garments.⁴⁷ Thus the whole day was occupied with the domestic commitments which formed the usual routine.⁴⁸ Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus have also made reference to some of these activities which earned love and affection for her in the family.

Guru Nanak in Rag Basant, writes :

If thou embroiderest the skirt (of God's Love)
for thyself,
then alone thou art a true bride;
Yea, if thou arrangest well thy household
and tasteth not vice,
thou art then beloved of thy spouse.⁴⁹

A large number of metaphors relating to women in the compositions of Guru Nanak refer to conjugal relationship.⁵⁰ Possibly, Guru Nanak's conception of a good or bad wife can be inferred from these verses. To bad wife, Guru Nanak calls as Kuchaji⁵¹, Dohagan⁵² and Kulakhni⁵³ by which he means a bride without merit and on the other hand, Suchaji⁵⁴, Suhagan⁵⁵ and Sulakhni⁵⁶ is a bride with merit.

The image of the ideal wife, which emerges from Guru Nanak Bani is not unconventional. Even if she is beautiful, accomplished and well-mannered, she is humble and modest before her husband. She never feels proud of

her beauty, rather in a very humble and submissive way says that she does not possess any charm or merit to please her husband :

I am shorn of all merit, O' Lord
then, how shall I attain to Thee?
Neither I have beauty, nor lustrous eyes,
Neither family, nor culture, nor sweet speech.
I have neither intuition, nor intellect :
Yea, I am ignorant and unwise,
bless me Thou, O my Lord
that I repair to Thy Feet.⁵⁷

Whatever might have been the respective positions of wife and husband, it is a fact beyond dispute that most of the people managed to lead a happy life. The woman adorned her husband with passionate reverence and in return her husband rendered her all tenderness and protection. The wife pined for him in separation. The entire Baramaha⁵⁸ is marked by the exuberance of love. The change of seasons would not make a lady happy, rather she would remain gloomy. Guru Nanak portrays her feelings in the following lines :

I cherish my Lord body and soul,
but the Lord hath gone out
into the distant lands.
The Lord cometh not into the home
and I am sighing to death.⁵⁹

As a natural consequence, the true love and affection of the husband to his wife was unailing. If there was no love between the two, the scents, ornaments and other objects used by the woman to please her husband were of no use at all. In Sri Rag, Guru Nanak says :

If a woman uses the fragrant perfumes
and with saffron fills, the parting of the hair,
and chews the betal-leaf mixed with camphor,
and if she is not accepted by her lord,
all her flavourings are of no avail .⁶⁰

Guru Nanak counselled woman to be devoted worshipper of (God) husband, to be seeker of good name, to be virtuous and chaste and a faithful companion of her husband. Guru Nanak says that woman is beautiful who adorns her head with jewel of love :

O' thou bride, bedeck thy hair with truth;
wear thou the wear of Love.
Gather-in the chandan - like (God)
in thy conscious mind
and live thou in the temple of
inner consciousness

...

...

Beauteous is the woman who decks her
forehead with jewel of love,
And this is her glory
that she cherishes in her mind
the love of the True Lord (Husband).⁶¹

Other contemporary and near contemporary writers also agree that for a woman her husband was her lord, her master and like God to her. All the efforts of a wife were concentrated on proving herself a devoted wife to her husband. Conjugal devotion of a Hindu woman was proverbial.⁶²

In the estimation of Guru Nanak and other saint-poets of medieval India, only a good wife was commendable and deserved love and respect in the family.⁶³ A bad wife had no physical or moral traits to commend her. She neither knew how to please her husband nor she had qualities to become a good housewife. All her ornaments were of no avail if she failed to please her husband. Guru Nanak writes about such women as under :

Without the spouse, why deck thyself,
O' woman, for all thy beauty is vain.
All thy decoration is like the (empty) wind,
for thou enjoyest not the bed of the spouse.
They whose lords are not at home,
their days pass in utter sorrow, alone in bed.⁶⁴

A bad wife in the views of Guru Nanak is generally heedless, sour tongued, slothful and unfaithful to her spouse. She is attached to others and her deeds are black. Her mind is unclean, without merit and virtues. She is totally riddled with sin. Here are a few couplets from the Bani of Guru Nanak :

The deserted (bad) woman abides not in
the Lord's home (i.e. husband's home),
Yea, she knows not the relish of the Lord.
She is sour-tongued : she bow not to her Lord,
(i.e., her husband),
for she is attached to other.⁶⁵

But on the other hand :

The true bride is embellished
by the Lord (husband) Himself,
awakening His Love within her.
And she walk in the will of the true Guru
(i.e., her husband),
and is bedecked spontaneously with the Name.
Such brides enjoy their spouse even on the
Lord's couch in the state of poise.⁶⁶

Polygamy was a practice prevalent both among the Hindus and the Muslims, especially belonging to the richer sections of the society.⁶⁷ Normally, a man used to have

only one wife. The Hindus by and large restricted themselves to monogamy. They married second time only if their wives were unable to bear a male-child or were barren or had died. Taking a new wife after the death of one's first wife is noted by Guru Nanak in Asa di Var :

To the woman are we engaged,
to the woman are we wedded.
The woman, yea, is our friend,
and from woman is the family.
If one woman dies, we seek another :
through the woman are the bonds of the world.⁶⁸

There was another reason too for taking a second wife. It was adultery. Della Vale who visited India during Jahangir's period writes, 'Hindus take but one wife and never divorce her till death, except for the cause of adultery'. Guru Nanak felt that an essential trait of relationship between a husband and wife was fidelity, but he also suggested that fidelity was essential not only for a wife but for husband also.⁷⁰

As noted earlier, the chastity of Hindu women was proverbial. Several travellers on different occasions have made a special mention of the high character of Hindu ladies. Thevenot presents it as an example to all the women of the East.⁷¹ Akbar too held a high opinion of the chastity of the Hindu women who in spite of being sometimes

neglected 'are flaming torches of love and fellowship'.⁷²

In this regard, Guru Nanak writes :

'My Lord is the one and one alone,
yea, there is not another.
And it is through His grace
that I unite with Him (my husband).⁷³

Prostitution was regarded as a disgrace though some of the meaner sort adopted it and lived in separate quarters usually outside the city.⁷⁴ There were also courtesans or the dancing girls whose number, in our period was also considerable. These courtesans and public women might have been largely responsible for the growing moral laxity in the society.⁷⁵ Those who were in the habit of visiting them did not care to realise the feelings of their wedded companions. Guru Nanak has all the sympathies for such women who are deserted by their spouses day after day :

Break thy cosy bed
and thy ivory bracelets, O woman,
and thy arms, yea, and the arms of thy bed;
For, even though thou bedeckest thyself so,
the spouse enjoyeth with others.⁷⁶

Such people did not enjoy any respect in the society as is clear from the following couplet of Guru Nanak :

Thieves, illicit lovers,
prostitutes and touts,
keep company together,
as do men of irreligion
who eat out of the same bowl.
They know not the Lord's praise,
for , within them abideth evil.⁷⁷

Of polyandry no historical instance has been recorded in the literature or inscriptions of our period, but Alberuni referred to its existence among the people of the Indian hills, 'stretching from the region of Panchir into the neighbourhood of Kashmir'⁷⁸, among whom it is still prevalent. But there is no reference to it in the Bani of Guru Nanak.

Some evil practices like sati and jauhar were in full swing during medieval period. Although there are no verses in Guru Nanak's compositions regarding these customs yet the references in Guru Amardas's Bani clearly show that the Sikh Gurus had no appreciation or approval for the widow becoming a sati.⁷⁹ Widow re-marriages were not allowed among the Hindus except among the lower social classes.⁸⁰ A widow either had to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband or on a separate pyre soon after his death or she had to live a simple and pure life devoid of all earthly charms. Referring to the pitiable lot of Hindu widows and the practice of sati, Alberuni says, 'If

a wife loses her husband by death, she cannot marry another man. She has only to choose between two things - either to remain a widow as long as she lives or to burn herself, and the latter eventually is considered the preferable, because as a widow she is ill-treated as long as she lives'.⁸¹

In this connection, it may be mentioned that during the Muslim rulers of Delhi and specially by Akbar and Aurangzeb some efforts were being made to ban this practice or at least to check it. But in spite of such royal efforts, the system continued in varying degrees, till it minimised in the 19th century partly on account of the social reforms and partly under the pressure of state legislations.⁸²

Widow remarriage was permitted amongst the Muslims but the widows were given the status of a second rate wife.⁸³ Amongst the Hindus, as stated earlier, widow remarriage was almost non-existent. Although there are no direct references of widow remarriage or remarriage of a separated woman in Guru Nanak's Bani but on the basis of one verse in his Bani, when it is stated that a widow woman can get satisfaction only from her husband and from none else, we can draw an indication that Guru Nanak did favour the idea of widow's remarriage and resettlement to an honourable family life :

The widow offers her body to another,
Yea, for the sake of lust or money,
her mind is swayed thus;
(But) without the spouse,
she is satiated not.⁸⁴

In this verse, the characteristic trait of a widowed woman is given as 'submitting her body to a stranger to gratify lust and to obtain money'. Without any implication for the widow's position, the legitimate matrimonial relationship is mentioned as praiseworthy. Thus Guru Nanak was of the view that in order to prevent a widow from falling a victim to temptation, opportunities should be created for widow remarriage, so that the widowed women are able to lead normal and socially respectable lives.

Whatever might have been the position of a woman as a girl, bride and widow, she certainly occupied a most respectable position in society as a mother. In almost all the sections of Hindu and Muslim society the mothers and other elderly women were given utmost respect and their commands were invariably carried out. In the domestic affairs, they were consulted on all matters of importance.⁸⁵ The following couplet of Guru Arjan is very significant in this regard :

In all the family she is the noblest.
She is the counsellor of her husband's
younger brother and elder brother.
Blessed is the house, where-in
she has appeared, O' Nanak
she passes her time in perfect peace.⁸⁶

The Rajputs showed maximum regard to their mothers and never dared to go against their wishes, howsoever, unreasonable they might have been. There are instances of Rajput rulers like Rana Sangram Singh II of Mewar taking his meals only after paying respects to his mother. The Mughal emperors too had great regards for their mothers.⁸⁷

They were, however, not respected in the domain of religion, rather they were excluded from the religious deliberations. Kabir regarded woman as a living picture of lust and sexual gratification.⁸⁸ He further says that under her shadow a snake becomes blind and that the man who daily keeps her company must fare even worst.⁸⁹ Another saint-poet of medieval period - Tulsi Dass, placed women at par with beasts and sudras. He declared that animals, beasts, rustic (vulgar), sudras and women need constant censor.⁹⁰ Dadu Dayal another medieval Indian saint poet has similar opinion about the women. He calls woman an enemy of man.⁹¹ A Punjabi poet Peelu says that woman's friendship is a curse because the common sense of a woman lies in her heels.⁹²

But, on the other hand, Guru Nanak gave women back her personal share in the domain of religion. It is evident from a frequently quoted verse in Guru Nanak's Asa di Var, that Guru Nanak was prepared to defend woman against those who insisted on relegating her to an inferior position merely on the basis of her sex. There is no reason to believe that Guru Nanak's path of salvation was not open to women. In this sense, she was certainly placed at par with man, just as the sudra was placed at par with the brahmin.⁹³ In Asa di Var, he says :

It is from woman, the condemned one
that we are conceived and it is from
her that we are born.

It is the woman who keeps our race going.
It is woman who is sought when one loses
one's previous wife.

It is woman to whom we establish our social ties.
Then why denounce her from whom even
kings and great men are born?

There is none save the true one who
is not born of woman.⁹⁴

This couplet refers to the indispensability of woman as mother and wife. It refers in fact to her indispensability for procreation and it poses the question 'Why

denounce her who gives birth to the kings, commoners and the great men'?

Guru Nanak was against the life of celibacy and renunciation of women and regarded brahmacharya and sanyasa ashrama as inferior to married life. He praised married life and the life of a householder to be as pure and chaste as the crystal clear water of the Ganges.

He alone is a householder
who disciplines his sense desired.
And beggeth from God contemplation,
austerity and self control !
And giveth in charity all
he can through his body.
Yea, such a householder is pure,
(and crystal clear) like Ganges water.⁹⁵

Thus, Guru Nanak's appreciation of a householder and placing woman at par with man is a pleasant and meaningful deviation from medieval ideas. A careful study of the foregoing pages of this chapter would clearly reveal to us that the general lot of women during the period under review, was not very different from what it is today, though changes in general, respects have taken place under the influence of modern social forces.

NOTES

1. Manu, V., pp. 147-149 and p. 195, quoted by Ojha, P.N., in North Indian Social Life During the Mughal Period, Delhi, 1975, p. 118.
2. Luniya, B.N., Life and Culture in Medieval India, p. 159.
3. Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 166. Perhaps Jaisi reflects the impression of the people when he says, 'You are women and deficient in sense. That man is a fool who takes the advise of women folk at home. Quoted by Rashid, A., in Society and Culture in Medieval India, Calcutta, 1969, p. 129.
4. Luniya, B.N., op. cit., p. 191.
5. See, Adi Granth, pp. 17, 56, 225, 242, 355, 722, 762, 764, 1107, 1109, 1110, 1171 and 1232.
6. Altekar, A.S., The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, Banaras, 1938, p. 206.
7. Luniya, B.N., op. cit., p. 161.
8. Altekar, A.S., op. cit., pp. 170 and 206.
9. Chopra, P.N., Some Aspects of Society and Culture During the Mughal-Age 1526-1707, Agra, 1955, p. 104.

10. In the Bani of Guru Nanak, the word harem appears twice where he says that these are full of beautiful women, slave girls and other domestic servants; see Adi Granth, pp. 417 and 472.
11. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 519-20. Adi Granth, p. 155 :

ਉਸਾਰਿ ਮੜੋਲੀ ਰਾਖੈ ਦੁਆਰਾ
ਭੀਤਰਿ ਬੈਠੀ ਸਥਾਨਾ॥
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੇਲ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਤ ਕਾਮਣਿ
ਅਵਰਿ ਲੁਟੇਨਿ ਸੁ ਪੰਚ ਜਲਾ॥
ਢਾਹਿ ਮੜੋਲੀ ਲੁਟਿਆ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ
ਸਥਾਨ ਪਕੜੀ ਏਕ ਜਲਾ॥

For full details of the treatment meted out to the women during attacks on the towns of North India, by foreign invaders, see Babarvani, Adi Granth, pp. 417-18.

Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 415.

The kings had lost their heads
and revelled in revelries.

But now the writ of Babar prevails,
not even the princes get bread to eat.

Where are the stables now, where are the horses,
where are the drums, where the flutes?

Where are the sword-belts, where the chariots,
where the red dresses (of soldiers), pray?

Where are the looking glasses,

where the beauteous faces,

no, I see them not before me.

Where are the homes, where the mansions,
where the magnificent serais?

Where are the beauteous brides
lounging on a cosy bed,

seeing whom one would get no sleep.

Where are the betel leaves sellers,
where the harems: Yea all have vanished
like the shadow.

Hearing of the invasion of Babar, millions of
Muslim divines prayed for his halt.

But he burnt all the age-old temples
and the resting places, and the princes,
cut up into pieces,
were thrown to the winds.

12. Parsad, Ishwari, Medieval India (from 647 AD to the Mughal Conquest), Allahabad, 1933, p. 526.
13. Sharma, Brijnarain, Social Life in Northern India, Delhi, 1966, p. 25.
14. Quoted by K.P. Sahu, 'Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life' (1000-1526), Calcutta, 1973, p. 187.
15. Ojha, P.N., North Indian Social Life, p. 120.
Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 172.
16. Ovington, p. 320, quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 108.

17. See, Adi Granth, pp. 325, 333, 347, 393 and 1331. The Sikh Gurus and the Bhagatas has used the word Panihari for women water-carriers - domestic or otherwise.
18. See, Thomas, F.W., Mutual Influence of Mohammadans and Hindus in India, Cambridge, 1892, p. 72. The author writes that seclusion of women is confined to the richer classes only. Among the poor, it is quite unknown.
19. Adi Granth, pp. 484 and 931.
20. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 478. Adi Granth, p. 484, Asa Kabir :
- ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਕਢੈ ਕੀ ਇਹੈ ਬਡਾਈ॥
ਦਿਨ ਦਸ ਪਾਚ ਬਹੁ ਭਲੇ ਆਈ॥
ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਉਪਰਿ ਸਾਰੈ॥
ਗਰਿਕੁਨ ਗਾਇ ਕੂਦਹਿ ਅਰ ਨਾਰੈ॥
21. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 887. Adi Granth, p. 931 :
- ਲਾਜ ਮਰੀਤੀ ਮਰਿ ਗਈ ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਖੋਲਿ ਚਲੀ॥
ਸਾਸੁ ਦਿਵਲੀ ਬਾਵਰੀ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਕ ਟਲੀ॥
ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਈ ਚਲੀ ਸਿਉ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਆਂਦੁ॥
ਲਾਲਿ ਰਤੀ ਲਾਲੀ ਭਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਭਈ ਨਿਚਿੰਦੁ॥
22. Chawla, Harbans Singh, Guru Amardas, Delhi, 1982, pp. 59-60.

23. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 111.
24. See, Adi Granth, Tilang Mohalla I, p. 722. Guru Nanak also uses the word Ianariey, see Adi Granth, p. 722, same shabad.
25. Luniya, B.N., op. cit., pp. 157-158.
26. Sachau, E.C., Alberuni's India, see p. 107 on different systems of matrimony among the Hindus.
27. Ain-i-Akbari, I (Bloch), p. 287, quoted by Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 126.
28. See, Adi Granth, pp. 763-764.
29. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 728. The original text in the Adi Granth, reads as under :

ਬਾਬੁਲਿ ਦਿਤੜੀ ਦੁਰਿ
ਨਾ ਆਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਪੇਈਐ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ॥

See, also Sharma Brijnarain, Social Life in Northern India, p. 12.

30. Upadhyay, V., Socio-Religious Conditions of North India, Varanasi, 1964, p. 152.
31. Abul Fazal, Ain-i-Akbari, III (tr.), p. 339. quoted by Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 129.
32. Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 129.

33. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 71.
Adi Granth, p. 79 :

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ
ਗੁਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦਾਨੁ ਦਿਵਾਇਆ ॥
ਖੀਡ ਵਠੀਡ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਦਿਨੁ ਨ ਰਲੈ ਰਲਾਇਆ ॥
ਗੋਰਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦਾਜੁ ਜਿ ਰਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਹਿ
ਸੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਕਚੁ ਪਾਜੋ ॥

34. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 346.
Adi Granth, p. 355 :

ਸਾਸੁ ਬੁਰੀ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਵੈ
ਪਿਰ ਸਿਉ ਮਿਲਣ ਨ ਦੇਇ ਬੁਰੀ ॥

35. See the following lines by Guru Nanak in
Dakhni Onkar : Adi Granth, p. 935 :

ਬੀਰਾ ਬੀਰਾ ਕਰਿ ਰਹੀ ਬੀਰ ਭਏ ਬੈਰਾਇ ॥
ਬੀਰ ਚਲੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਬਹਿਣ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਇ ॥

36. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 114.

37. Ibid.

38. Ashraf, K.M., op. cit., p. 167.

39. Shibli, Shair-ul-Ajam, Pt. II, p. 123, quoted
by Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 120.

40. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 577.
Adi Granth, p. 596 :

ਮਾਇ ਬਾਧ ਕੇ ਬੈਟਾ ਠੀਕਾ ਸਸੁਰੈ ਚਤੁਰੁ ਜਵਾਈ ॥
ਬਾਲ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਕੇ ਬਾਧੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਭਾਈ ਕੇ ਅਤਿ ਭਾਈ ॥

41. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 134.
Adi Granth, p. 143 :

ਕੈਹਾਂ ਕੰਠੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਸਾਰੁ॥
ਅਗਨੀ ਗੰਢ ਪਏ ਲੋਹਾਰੁ॥
ਗੋਰੀ ਸੇਤੀ ਤੁਟੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥
ਪੁਤੀ ਗੰਢੁ ਪਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥

42. A Rajput is often heard to say, 'Accursed to the day when a woman child is born to me'. Tod. II, pp. 739-40 quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 108.
43. R and B (tr.), Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, pp. 1-2, quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 108.
44. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 109.
45. Manucci, Storia, Vol. III, p. 155, quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 112; see also Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. I, p. 242 and Sachau, Alberuni's India, p. 156.
46. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 466.
Adi Granth, p. 472 :

ਜੇਕਰਿ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਮੰਨੀਐ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਹੋਇ॥
ਗੋਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਲਕੜੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕੀੜਾ ਹੋਇ॥
ਜੇਤੈ ਦਏ ਅੰਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ॥
ਸੂਤਕੁ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਪਵੈ ਰਸੋਇ॥
ਨਲਕ ਸੂਤਕ ਏਵ ਨ ਉਤਰੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਉਤਾਰੇ ਧੋਇ॥

ਅਤੇ

ਜਿਉ ਜੋਰੂ ਸਿਰ ਨਾਵਣੀ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੋ ਵਾਰ॥
ਜੁਠੇ ਜੁਠਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥
ਸੂਚੇ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਜਿ ਪਿੰਡਾ ਧੋਇ॥
ਸੂਚੇ ਸੋਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ॥

47. See, Mohan Singh (ed), Kafian Shah Hussain, Ludhiana. Shah Hussain was a contemporary of Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan.
48. Upadhyaya, K.D., Bhojpuri Gram Geet, pp. 132, 163, 166 and 170, quoted by Rekha Mishra, Women in Mughal India, p. 129.
49. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1121. Adi Granth, p. 1171 :
- ਕਢਿ ਕਸੀਦਾ ਪਹਿਰਹਿ ਚੋਲੀ ਤਾ ਤੁਮੁ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ॥
ਜੇ ਘਰੁ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਚਾਖਹਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਠੰਡ ਪਿਆਰੀ॥
50. See, Adi Granth, pp. 17, 56, 225, 242, 355, 722, 762, 764, 1107, 1109, 1110, 1171 and 1232.
51. See, Adi Granth, p. 762.
52. Adi Granth, p. 72; see also pp. 363, 426, 428, 430 and 559.
53. Adi Granth, p. 1197.
54. Adi Granth, p. 558.
55. See, Adi Granth, pp. 933, 363, 391, 400, 737 and 1108.
56. Adi Granth, p. 89.

57. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 718.
Adi Granth, p. 750 :

ਸਭਿ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਮੈ ਗੁਣੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ॥
ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਕੰਤ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਈ॥
ਨਾ ਮੈ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਬੰਕੇ ਨੈਣਾ॥
ਨਾ ਕੁਲ ਢੰਗੁ ਨ ਮੀਠੈ ਬੈਣਾ॥

... ..

ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਪਾਈ॥

See also, Adi Granth, p. 1171.

58. Adi Granth, pp. 1107-1110.
59. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 1061.
Adi Granth, p. 1108 :

ਮੈ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਸਹੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਪਿਰ ਪਰਦੇਸਿ ਸਿਧਾਏ॥
ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਮਰੀਐ ਹਾਵੈ
ਦਾਮਨਿ ਚਮਕਿ ਡਰਾਏ॥

60. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 22.
Adi Granth, p. 19 :

ਚੰਦਨੁ ਮੋਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਮਾਗ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ॥
ਚੋਆ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਬਹੁ ਘਣਾ ਪਲਾ ਨਾਲਿ ਕਪੂਰੁ॥
ਜੇ ਧਨ ਕੰਤਿ ਨਾ ਭਾਵਈ ਤ ਸਭਿ ਅਡੰਬਰ ਕੁਤੁ॥

See also, Adi Granth, p. 937.

61. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 52.
Adi Granth, p. 54 :

ਸਾਚੁ ਧੜੀ ਧਨ ਮਾਡੀਐ ਕਾਪੜੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ॥

ਚੰਦਨੁ ਚੀਤਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਦਸਵਾ ਦੁਆਰੁ॥

... ..

ਨਾਰੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਮਣੀ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥

ਸੋਭਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਵਣੀ ਸਾਰੈ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥

62. Ahmad Yadgar, Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana,
pp. 95-107, quoted by Nijjar, B.S., Punjab under
the Sultanate, p. 92.

63. See, Keshav, Ramchandrika, Allahabad, Part I,
p. 135 and Dadu Dayal, Dadu Dayal ki Bani, p. 95.

64. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 55.
Adi Granth, p. 58 :

ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਧਨ ਸੀਗਾਰੀਐ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਬਾਦਿ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥

ਨਾ ਮਝੈ ਸੁਖਿ ਸੇਜੜੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਬਾਦਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ॥

ਦੁਖੁ ਘਣੈ ਦੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਨਾ ਘਰਿ ਸੇਜ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥

65. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 423.
Adi Granth, p. 426 :

ਦੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਮਹਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਨੀ ਨ ਜਣਨਿ ਪਿਰ ਕਾ ਸੁਆਉ॥

ਫਿਕਾ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਨਾ ਨਿਵਹਿ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਓ ਸੁਆਉ॥

For such wives (Kuchaji and Dohagan), see also
Adi Granth, pp. 18-19, 72 and 762.

66. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 423-24.
Adi Granth, p. 426 :

ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਆਪਿ ਸਵਾਰੀਓਨੁ ਲਾਇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਭਏ ਚਲਦੀਆ ਨਾਮੇ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ॥
ਸਦਾ ਰਾਵਹਿ ਪਿਰੁ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਚੀ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਭਾਇ॥
ਪਿਰ ਕੈ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਮੋਹੀਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇ॥

For such women to whom Guru Nanak calls (suchaji and sohagan), see Adi Granth, pp. 18-19, 72, 426, 722, 785, 790 and 1088.

67. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., pp. 58-59, see also, Ojha, P.N., op. cit., pp. 132-134.

68. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 467.
Adi Granth, p. 473 :

ਭੀਡ ਜੀਮੀਐ ਭੀਡ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੀਡ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਰੁ॥
ਭੀਡੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੀਡੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ॥
ਭੀਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੀਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੀਡੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧੁ॥

69. Quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 110.

70. Adi Granth, p. 933.

71. Thevenot, Pt. III, Chapter XXIV, p. 47, quoted by Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 120.

72. Abul Fazal, Akbar Nama, (tr.), by Beveridge, H., Vol. III, pp. 256 and 372, quoted by Chopra, P.N., and Ojha, P. N., op. cit., p. 123.

73. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 348.
Adi Granth, p. 357 :

ਸਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਈ॥
ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਮੇਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਈ॥

74. Chopra, P.N., op. cit., p. 123.

75. See Badauni, A.Q., Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, (tr.),
Lowe, Delhi, 1973, Vol. II, p. 312.

76. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 545.
Adi Granth, p. 557 :

ਚੂੜਾ ਭੰਨੁ ਪਲੰਘ ਸਿਉ ਮੁਧੇ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹੀ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹਾ॥
ਏਤੇ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੋਦੀਏ ਮੁਧੇ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਤੇ ਅਵਰਾਹਾ॥

77. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 750.
Adi Granth, p. 790 :

ਚੋਰਾ ਜਾਰਾ ਰੰਡੀਆ ਕੁਟਣੀਆ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ॥
ਵੇਦੀਨਾ ਕੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਵੇਦੀਨਾ ਕਾ ਖਏ॥
ਸਿਫਤੀ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣਨੀ ਸਦਾ ਵਸੈ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ॥

78. Sachau, E.C., op. cit., p. 108.

79. According to the Bani of Guru Amardas, 'a woman was sati or true, if she died of the pains of separation rather of burning herself on the funeral pyre'. The translation of the couplet reads as under :

See Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 747.

A sati is not she who burneth herself
on the pyre of her spouse.

Nanak : a sati is she who dieth
with the sheer shock of separation.

At another place, Guru Amardas says :

Yea,, the sati is one who liveth contented
and embellisheth herself with good conduct.

And cheriseth her Lord ever
and calleth on Him each morn.

Adi Granth, p. 787 :

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮੜਿਆ ਠਗਿ ਜਲੀਨਿ ॥

ਨਲਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੈ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੀਨਿ ॥

... ..

ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹੀਨਿ ॥

ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸਮਾਲੀਨਿ ॥

80. Sahu, K.P., Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life, p. 200, see also, Ojha, P.N., op. cit., p. 144.
81. Sachau, E.C., op. cit., p. 155.
82. See Sahu, K.P., op. cit., p. 205 and Ojha, P.N., op. cit., pp. 149 and 151.
83. Roychoudhary, S.C., Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Medieval Age), Delhi, 1980, p. 59.

84. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 217.
Adi Granth, p. 226 :

ਜਿਉ ਤਨੁ ਬਿਧਵਾ ਪਰ ਕਉ ਦੇਈ॥
ਕਾਮਿ ਦਾਮਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਪਰਵਸਿ ਸੇਈ॥
ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਹੋਈ॥

85. Sachau, E.C., op. cit., p. 179.

86. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1234.
Adi Granth, p. 371 :

ਸਭ ਪਰਵਾਰੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਰੇਸਟ॥
ਮਤੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਰ ਜੇਸਟ॥
ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੀ ਆਇ॥
ਜਨ ਨਲਕ ਸੁਖੇ ਸੁਖਿ ਵਿਹਾਇ॥

87. Roychoudhary, S.C., op. cit., pp. 61-62 and
Chopra, P.N., op. cit., pp. 119-121.

88. Kabir, Vachan-namrits, pp. 71-73 quoted by Rekha
Mishra, Women in Mughal India, p. 129 :

ਨਾਰੀ ਤੈ ਹਮ ਨੇ ਕਰੀ, ਕੀਨਾ ਨਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ।
ਜਬ ਜਲੀ ਤਬ ਪਰਹਰੀ ਨਾਰੀ ਬੜਾ ਵਿਕਾਰ।

At another place, Kabir writes :

see Rekha Mishra, op. cit., p. 129 :

ਨਾਰੀ ਕੁੰਡ ਨਰਕ ਕਾ
ਜੇਰੂ ਜੁਠਣ ਜਗਤ ਕੀ

89. See, Rekha Mishra, ibid., pp. 129-130 :

ਨਾਰੀ ਕੀ ਛਾਇਆ ਪਰਤ ਆ ਹੋਤ ਭੁਜੰਗ॥
ਕਬੀਰ ਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਕੋਲ ਗਤ ਨਿਤ ਨਾਰੀ ਕੇ ਸੰਗ॥

90. Tulsi Das, Ram Charitra Manas, p. 778, quoted by
Rekha Mishra, ibid., p. 129 :

ਢੋਲ ਗਵਾਰ ਸੁਦਰ ਪਸੂ ਨਾਰੀ
ਜੇ ਸਭ ਤਾੜਨ ਕੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ

91. Dadu Dayal, Dadu Dayal ki Bani, Part I, pp. 131-32,
quoted, ibid., p. 130 :

ਨਾਰੀ ਵੇਰਣ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਕੀ, ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਵੈਰੀ ਨਾਰੀ॥

92. Ibid., p. 130 :

ਭੋਠ ਕਾ ਦੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ
ਖੁਰੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ॥

93. Kapur Singh, Parasharprasna or the Baisakhi of
Guru Gohind Singh, Jullunder, 1959, pp. 379 and
471 and Duncan Greenlees, The Gospital of Guru Granth
Sahib, Madras, 1975, p. 25.

94. Manmohan Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1562.
Adi Granth, Asa di Var, p. 473 :

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤ ਜੀਮੈ ਰਾਜਲ॥

95. Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 909.
Adi Granth, p. 952 :

ਸੋ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਜੋ ਨਿਕ੍ਰਹੁ ਕਰੈ॥

ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਕਰੈ॥

ਪੁੰਨ ਦਲ ਕਾ ਕਰੈ ਸਰੀਰੁ॥

ਸੋ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਗੰਗਾ ਕਾ ਨੀਰੁ॥

CONCLUSION

Bani of Guru Nanak as contained in the Adi Granth is a valuable source for the study of social, economic, political and religious life of the 15th and early 16th centuries. From the works of Guru Nanak we learn as to what type of society existed at that time. Not only this, it also suggests as to what type of society should be evolved. Similarly, Guru Nanak Bani throws light on the political set up of his time and suggests an alternative ideal set up in different fields. And lastly, from Guru Nanak Bani we learn about the contemporary economy. There must be some code of conduct to be followed in all the spheres of life and that code of conduct is suggested by Guru Nanak in his writings.

Guru Nanak was a spiritual teacher with a difference because he believed that the world was worth living. Instead of denouncing the world as unworthy he advocated that it was possible to live pure among the impurities of world through 'a disciplined worldiness'.

"As the lotus liveth detached in water
or as the duck floateth carefree on the stream,
so doth one cross the sea of life by attuning himself
to the world and enshrining the Lord in the heart'.

Guru Nanak disapproved of the practice of those who were unwilling to fight the battle of life under the pretence of cultivating spirituality, shied away from wordly responsibilities. In the words of Payne, 'Guru Nanak realised that a religion if it is to be a living force must be a practical religion, one that teaches mankind not how to escape from world but how to live worthily in it, not how evil is to be avoided but how it is to be met or overcome'. After completing his five long Udasis, Guru Nanak himself settled down at Kartarpur. Here, he led a normal family life and discharged secular functions as householder for his wife and his two sons lived with him. The combination of 'piety and practical activity' exemplified in the life of Guru Nanak and his disciples. The concept of righteous living is meaningless except in the context of society. There is constant reference in his Bani to being in the world but not wordly. The ideal is to achieve saintliness as a member of society, to have a spiritual existence with the necessary material requisites - 'rajmen jog kamayo'. According to Guru Nanak, his disciples should have a longing to meet Him (God) and thus only can they abide 'pure amid the impurities of the world'. In this way, Guru Nanak enjoined upon his devotees that while living in the world, they should maintain an absolute - purity - purity of thought, word and deed.

According to Guru Nanak, the individual should

devote himself whole-heartedly to the all pervading, Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient Lord and should lead a family and social life. Emphasis was laid on the life of a householder, all the ascetic orders were decried. Asceticism exhibits defeatist mentality and passivity. It may lead to several evils and vices. One must work hard to earn one's livelihood and not to depend upon the mercy of others. Guru Nanak said, 'Those who work hard for their livelihood and give something in charity to the deserving can alone recognise the path leading towards the Lord'. The individual has not only to perform duties for self but also for his family and society. The service of humanity leads us towards the lord. This is the social aspect of the spiritual culture of Guru Nanak Bani.

Guru Nanak was not merely a theoretical person whose task ends with his preaching for a better society in his compositions. But he was a practical person who wanted that a new society should be evolved in his own life time. His concern about the society is not only reflected in his Bani but more than that it is reflected in his life. By the early 1520s, we find Guru Nanak settled on the bank of the Ravi in the village of Kartarpur. He was more than fifty years old and the time had come for the application of the ideals which he evolved during those preceding years. However, the two decades of Guru Nanak's settled life at Kartarpur are by far the most important

period of his life in terms of his posthumous influence. Here he imparted regular instructions to his disciples.

At Kartarpur, Guru Nanak taught his tenets more by example than by precept. Guru Nanak's whole life was based on this ideal combination of ethical, spiritual and professional life. Guru Nanak had chequered career. He started life by learning the trade of buying and selling. He took the family herd to the pasture, he supervised the family farm, he accepted employment under Nawab Daulat Khan and for several years successfully managed the grain store. Whatever the vocation, he performed his duties diligently and honestly and yet there was ever present an under current of deep devotion to God. This is exactly what he taught to his disciples and this became, in course of time, the main characteristic feature of the new fraternity. This combination of work and worship came to be epitomised in a few simple words. 'Kirt karni, Wand chhakna te Nam japna', i.e., to earn one's livelihood with hard, honest work, to share with others the fruit of one's labour and to practice Nam Simran (the loving devotion to God).

Guru Nanak laid down a socio-political doctrine, which clearly defines his attitude towards authority. Though he was not a politician or a political scientist in the formal sense, his ideas on politics emerged from his attitude to life. Exploitation, in any form he detested,

because it cut at the very roots of human equality and dignity. According to Guru Nanak, authority in every sphere ultimately derives its validity from God. Like many thinkers in medieval Europe, he was of the view that the secular as well as the spiritual evolve from the same source - God. The Guru's concept is best explained by the following lines from the Zafar-Nama, which the 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, wrote to Aurangzeb :

'The successors of both Baba Nanak
and Babur were created by God himself.
Recognize the former as a spiritual
and the latter as a temporal king'.

Thus according to Guru Nanak, monarch was God ordained but the monarch exercises this power as a mandate from God and in order that he may continue to enjoy this boon, he must always act in consonance with God's dictates and the ruler must be responsible to the ruled. Kings can not act as they like, owing no responsibility to the people placed under their rule. On the other hand, royal decisions were subject to public criticism. Guru Nanak himself criticised the rulers of his time. The right to criticise a ruler implies that if a ruler deviates from the path of justice and duty, the people are justified in rising against him. State should create conditions in which people are assured of social justice and fair play. All should be

treated as equals. The state should strive for the establishment of a casteless and classless society free from class bias. There should be no scope for exploitation of man by man.

Guru Nanak talks about the basic needs of individual, i.e., food, shelter and clothing and lays great responsibility on the state regarding their provision. The state should be democratic and should work for the well being and prosperity of individual and society as a whole. Likewise the individual should work for himself, his family and the state. The state should look after his requirements and those of his family. The head of the state should be considerate and should always think of the well being of his people. If a ruler leads a luxurious life without caring for the well being of his subject, his rule will be short lived and might create conditions for the growth of revolution in the state. Guru Nanak said :

'That king will hold the throne who has the necessary qualities of kingship and who follows the democratic ideals'.

Guru Nanak saw that the modern economic system of the world is not just. While a few live in luxury, millions are denied the primary needs of human life. Guru Nanak worked for a society in which there should be no economic inequality and economic exploitation. Guru Nanak was

against human parasites, living on the earnings of others. He preached necessity of labour for the maintenance of one's own livelihood. He set a beautiful example by earning his own living by cultivating his own land at Kartarpur during the last two decades of his life. This dignity of labour is reflected not only in his Bani, but in his life as well. Each was to get his due and none was to encroach upon what belonged to the other. 'That which belongs to another is unlawful, like the flesh of pig to the Muslims and that of a cow to the Hindus'. He expected from the rich, love, affection, care and better working conditions for the poor labourer by saying :

'Where the lowly are treated with loving care, there do Thy Mercy and Thy Grace descend'.

He propagated against exploitation of man by man. He wanted to put an end to the exploitation of all sorts. He always advocated the cause of the oppressed sections of humanity. He explained that honest earning was the sacred milk while huge wealth earned by employing dubious and unholy means was like dirty blood. He explained, 'If a cloth is strained with blood we call it dirty. How can then the mind of those who suck others blood be called chaste'.

He suggested voluntary sharing of one's earnings

with the less fortunate brethren. He gave recognition to the glaring truth that moral life can only subsist on a healthy physical and material foundation. He was foremost in paying meticulous attention to the physical and material side of life and in removing the deep rooted misunderstanding in men's mind that spiritual life consists in blindly negating and suppressing physical and material desires. He did not approve of celibacy and insisted on every capable adult man to lead a married life. He characterised the legitimate economic activities of the individual and his effort to earn livelihood for his dependents as the highest form of religious virtue and gave to mankind a system of economic and social principles for the regulation of worldly existence.

Guru Nanak preached universal brotherhood and amity among communities and nations. He advocated abolition of all distinctions based on caste and creed for he said :

'Call every one as high none is low for God, the only potter has fashioned all alike and his light pervades all creation, whom call high and whom low, when we see the same God within all'.

Guru Nanak strongly condemned caste system and proclaimed that all castes were equal. To give a practical

shape to his teachings in this regard, at Kartarpur he introduced the system of 'langar' (common kitchen) and pangat, (persons sitting together to eat formed the pangat). Here he himself dined with people of all castes and classes high or low. In the langar all dined together sitting on the ground without any distinction of caste, creed, religion or social status. Every one from a prince to a pauper was given the same treatment and was served the same food, prepared in the same kitchen and distributed in the same manner. A spirit of sacrifice, service and brotherhood was developed and the langer became a symbol of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. This is both secularism and socialism in the true sense of the word.

He declared that his preachings applied equally to people of all castes. He declared that caste and their prerogatives are not there in the next world and one can gain merit not through his birth in a particular caste but by the goodness of one's deeds. For sometime, he lived and dined with so called low caste Bhai Lalo. He, therefore, preached equality of men by saying :

'There is one father, we are all his children'. His ideal of equality found practical expression in the common meals (langer) as well as the corporate worship (sangat) of the community at Kartarpur. His dharmal at Kartarpur was open to all men and women irrespective of their caste or creed.

It may be safely assumed that he exhorted the visitors as well as his regular disciples at Kartarpur not to attach any importance to external forms, formalities and ritualism and laid emphasis on the adoption of ethical qualities, to discard pretence and hypocrisy and to cultivate inner devotion and a truly religious attitude by recognising the greatness of God, reflecting upon his revelation and by meditating on the Nam. Furthermore, it was at Kartarpur that a regular discipline and society was evolved for the adoration of God. Although born in a Hindu family he revolted against the principal Hindu customs and ceremonies. He rejected the rituals enjoined by the Shastras and said the real Karma is the remembrance of God. He tried his best to wean people away from all the impediments and formalities which stood in the way of purity of true religion. Ethics was regarded as the basis of all religious beliefs. He told people that spiritual awareness could not be attained without noble actions, without selfless service and without piety and truthful living. No ceremonies were performed by the Guru or his disciples at Kartarpur. On all occasions, happy or otherwise hymns from his Bani were recited and prayer was offered to the Nirankar. Shabad was of greater importance than rituals and was recited to remember God.

Guru Nanak advocated equality for women. He raised his voice to get them an equal status with men in

the domain of religion and society. The sons and daughters are all the creation of God, with the same light of God in them, says Guru Nanak. He enabled women folk to win recognition as independent social entity and laid the foundation for their educational and social development. At Kartarpur doors of his dharmsal were opened for all men and women. Women not only listened to the hymns of the Gurus but they could also sing the hymns and participated in the preparation of langer. For the first time in India, men and women of all faiths, castes and creeds could sit together and eat in the common kitchen of the Guru. Bhai Gurdas says : 'Lok Ved Gur Gyan Vichari Ardh Sariri Mokh Duari, i.e., "A woman is one half of the complete personality of man and is entitled to share his secular and spiritual knowledge equally with him. She is the gate-way to his spiritual liberation". Without her participation in social and religious activities man is incomplete and so is society.

The social world which Guru Nanak was seeking to create was one of complete understanding and equality between men and women, high and low, rich and poor - one of the realistic and positive thinking and free from rituals. The people of such a world were not to be guided by imposters, they were not supposed to cling to superstition or man made social prejudices. For them the mind was to be the only lamp that illuminates the dark path of ignorance

and this lamp was to be kept eternally lighted. Thus his keen mind, free from all ancestral prejudices, led Guru Nanak to open a new road for the Indian society and built a new social order. Kabir and Ravidas managed to get spiritual initiation from the pious Vaishnava, Ramananda but still they could not eat in his kitchen. All superstitions and caste prejudices, however, melted like ice under the rays of Guru Nanak's wisdom. In India, religious and philosophical school which had met earlier at metaphysical and mystic heights came to mingle, now with one another on the social level.

The object of Guru Nanak was to leaven the social and religious thought of the Hindus and to improve the general tone of their moral, spiritual and social life and he was anxious that his work should continue after his death. With this object in view he appointed as his successor, Lehna by name, one of his own disciples whom he preferred to his own sons and who had shown, by his exemplary character, extra-ordinary piety and unflinching devotion, his fitness to occupy his position.

Guru Nanak lived for nearly seventy years and when he passed away in 1539 AD at Kartarpur, he had already transformed the lives of thousands of men and women who had come in personal contact with him, and by his noble life and inspiring teaching, had produced a new atmosphere in the country in which no one could breathe without being healthier

and stronger in the spirit. In the words of Gokal Chand Narang, 'Nanak left the Hindus of the Punjab immensely better than he had found them. Their belief had been ennobled, their worship purified, the rigidity of caste considerably relaxed, their minds greatly emancipated and they were now more fit to enter on the career of national progress to which Nanak's successors were destined to lead them. The seed had been sown. It had fallen on good soil, and with careful nursing it was bound to yield a plentiful crop when the time became ripe for it'.

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