



**SOCIO-RELIGIOUS TRENDS AS REFLECTED
IN NIRGUN BHAKTI LITERATURE DURING
16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES**

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ABSTRACT

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This is to certify that the thesis "*Socio-Religious Trends as Reflected in Nirgun Bhakti Literature During 16th and 17th Centuries*" by **Shamsheed Ahmed** is the original research work of the candidate.

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*Dedicated
to
My Parents*

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ABSTRACT

In the present thesis an attempt, however, has been made to give an account of some aspects of North Indian social and religious life during 16th and 17th centuries on the basis of the contemporary *Nirgun bhakti* literature. The general plan of treatment which has been followed in this work is as under:

Chapter I deals with the origin and development of the *Nirgun bhakti* thought. Attempt has been made here to trace the emergence of *Nirgun bhakti* thought in the *Vedas* and to describe its further development through various stages viz. *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Shandilya Bhakti Sutra*, *Puranas*, Shankaracharya, *Nath Panth* and the medieval *Nirgun bhakti* schools.

Chapter II describes the emergence of the various schools of the *Nirgun bhakti* thought viz. *Kabir Panth*, *Bishnoi Panth*, *Nanak Panth* and *Dadu Panth*, during 15th and 16th centuries and their further development by the later *Nirgun bhakti* saints during the 17th century. Besides, it also attempts to solve the problem regarding the foundation of *Kabir Panth*.

Chapter III deals with the literature of the four aforementioned *Nirgun bhakti* schools. This literature was in the form of poetic verses, composed in the vernacular languages.

In the Chapter IV and V an attempt has been made to describe various facts of social and religious life, in its manifold aspects, as reflected in the literature of *Kabir Panth*, *Bishnoi*

Panth, Nanak Panth and Dadu Panth. Most of the *Nirgun bhakti* saints depict in their poems what they saw and felt and thus, their works constitute invaluable sources for constructing India's socio-religious history during the period under review. All possible attempts have been made here to thrash the grain from the chaff and to study the contemporary *Nirgun bhakti* literature with the sole purpose of collecting the relevant data. However, some important aspects of social life in those days have either been left out or have been treated very briefly owing to the paucity of information.

Besides, all efforts have been made to check up the data collected from the vernacular literary sources by an analytical and corroborative comparison with the contemporary foreign travellers accounts and the Persian chronicles.

Chapter IV deals with the castes, professions and untouchability especially in the Hindu society. It also discusses slavery and food of the people high and low during this period. Various types and designs of costumes of men and women of different social gradations, both amongst the Hindus and Muslims are also described. Besides, it also throws a flood of light on the toilets and ornaments of both the sexes of the communities. It also deals with various kinds of games, sports and the pastimes as were prevalent in those days. More emphasis has been placed here on throwing additional light on the pastimes, particularly those popular among the masses. An attempt has been made here to describe the festivals of both the Hindu and Muslim communities. Marriage ceremonies particularly of Hindus are also mentioned in

great detail. This chapter also describes the prevailing system of Hindu education- primary, secondary and higher. Along with some superstitions, prevalent in the contemporary society, it also discusses in considerable details, the elaborate references have been made to the prevalence of certain almost universal social features like *Purdah*, prostitution and *Sati*. Various household and the professional activities in which women were engaged in the 16th and 17th centuries have also been referred to.

Chapter V deals with the different religious systems and beliefs followed by the people in this period. First of all an attempt has been made to describe various practices of Hinduism such as idol worship, sacrifice (*yajna*), animal sacrifice, alms giving, fast, pilgrimage and the last rites of a Hindu are dealt with great detail in this chapter. Besides, their belief in rebirth and transmigration of the soul is also discussed. Hinduism embrace in its arms various sects which belong to its different religious systems. Compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints contain good information about some Saiva and Vaishnava sects which are described in considerable detail in this chapter. These sects are *Yogis* or *Nath Sampradaya*, *Lingayat* or *Jangama* sect, *Aghori Sampradaya*, *Sanyasi sect* and *Bairaga Sampradaya*. Besides it also deals with *Jainism* of which various references have been found in the *Nirgun bhakti* literature.

This chapter also attempts to describe the fundamental principles and other beliefs and practices of Islam which includes the witness to faith (repeating the holy *kalima*), prayer (*namaz*),

fasting (*roja*) pilgrimage (*haj*) and their belief in the *Quran*, *Hadith* and the Prophet.

Attempt is also made to critically evaluate the minds of various *Nirgun bhakti* saints like Kabir, Jambhoji, Guru Nanak and Dadu Dayal with reference to their scathing poetic remarks on various fundamental Islamic practices.

Besides it also attempts to describe the mystical side of Islam i.e. Sufism which was popular in the Indian sub-continent. It deals briefly with the five major *Sufi* order in India during 16th and 17th centuries. Along with some practices of *Sufis* this chapter describes the *Sufi* concept of four stages and their four corresponding stations.

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Abstract



Introduction

Chapter – I

Origin And Development Of The Nirgun Bhakti Thought

Chapter – II

*Emergence Of The Various Schools
Of The Nirgun Bhakti Thought
During 15th And 16th Centuries*

Chapter – III

Nirgun Bhakti Literature

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INTRODUCTION

The *bhakti* movement as a cult of devotional love for God was first popularized in the South India by the poet-saints who flourished between the seventh and the twelfth centuries and then in Northern India during the fifteen and the sixteen centuries by the *bhakti* saints who were the followers either of the *Saguna* or the *Nirgun* path of *bhakti*. The former means the worship of a personal God in a spirit of love and the attainment of liberation (*moksha*) through it while the latter emphasizes mainly on the impersonal concept of God and gives the monothestic view of the ultimate Reality through the knowledge or *jnana*.

Scanning the vast treasure of the *Nirgun bhakti* literature. We come across various socio-religious practices that must have deeply hurt the minds of *bhakti* saints and the evidence of which is found in many of their sayings which show their dedication and concern for the society. The *Nirgun bhakti* saints developed a belief system or at least tried to infuse their belief into the society that dared to challenge various religious and social doctrines of the period. They seem to show their sympathy to the mindless religious and social rituals that ignores the essence of the religious doctrine.

The period from 16th to 17th centuries had the same ancient religion of Hindu society divided into four major classes which was considered to be divinely ordained. However, various professional groups who later turned out to be distinct class of the society. Through the information gathered from the *Nirgun bhakti*

literature we find mentioning of these various professional groups besides the four major four-fold division of the Hindu society. The literature gives us informations about various social activity undertaken by these professional groups.

Untouchability which was deeply rooted in the society, seems to have great impacts on the mind of the *Nirgun bhakti* saints who describe them as miserable people on the earth. The society of the period seemed to be less concerned about the conditions of the so-called untouchables. The system of slavery was another significant feature of this period and on various occasions slaves of various kinds are described thoroughly by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints.

Interestingly the literature is also enriched with detail accounts of life style of the people of the different strata of the society, which included their food habits, costumes, toilets and ornaments, games and amusements, marriage, superstitions and education.

There are numerous instances about *Purdah* system among the women mentioned by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints in their sayings. It existed both among Muslims and Hindus. It was supposed to be status symbol for the affluent classes of the both the society. The evil of prostitution had also its firm root in the society and though this practice has been condemned on various occasion in the literature of *Nirgun bhakti* saints we find it thriving in the society all the time. However, the custom of *Sati* was also prevalent in this period which shows the element of compulsion attached to the

practice of *Sati*. Besides women are shown to play a central role in the household activities by the *Nirgun bhakti* literature.

In the period of 16th and 17th centuries we invariably find the existence of 33 crore gods and goddesses and like their ancestors the Hindus of this period also believed in the triple deity viz. Brahma (Who was believed to be the creator of Universe), Vishnu (The protector of mankind) and Siva (The destroyer).

Nirgun bhakti literature and other literary evidences reveal the popularity of the belief and worship of the Avataras of Vishnu in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The literature also unfolds various rites and rituals associated with Hindu religion. We find mentioning of sacrifice (*yajna*), animal sacrifice, alms giving, fast, pilgrimage and last rites were prevalent in the period of 16th and 17th centuries. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have also referred to the theory of rebirth and transmigration of the soul. Besides they have given historical accounts of various sects like *Yogis*, *Lingayats* or *Jangamas*, *Aghoris*, *Sanyasis* and *Bairagis*. The literature also provided us the informations regarding *Jainism* and Islam. Sufism have also been dealt by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints in good detail.

CHAPTER –I

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIRGUN BHAKTI THOUGHT

The term ‘*Nirgun*’ means devoid of all qualities or properties¹ and ‘*Nirgun Bhakti*’ denotes devotion to the *Nirgun* God. It emphasises mainly on the impersonal concept of God, the monotheistic view of the ultimate Reality and the importance of *Jnana* (Knowledge). To establish the origin of *Nirgun bhakti* in India, it is necessary to find out the roots of its essential characteristic viz. monotheism which ultimately led to the emergence of *Nirgun bhakti*.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE VEDAS (Circa 2000-600 B.C.)

The idea of monotheism can be traced as far back as the *Vedic* period. *Vedas* are the oldest record of Indian civilization. They are reckoned as the work of seers (*rishis*) and are an expression of their endeavour to arrive at an understanding of God as one. But monotheism in *Vedas* does not rest on the denial of other gods for any one personal God. It was the outcome of the identification of all lesser gods with the idea of one impersonal God. The hymns of *Rigveda* (The earliest among the four *Vedas*) are dedicated to a number of gods, most of them appear as personifications of the power of nature, such as Agni, Varuna etc. but there are many hymns in *Rigveda*, in which the plurality of *Vedic* gods is reduced to one through the philosophic abstraction and impersonalisation of God and the understanding of Him as the one cosmic Reality. A thoughtful negation of the plurality of gods can be seen in one of the earlier hymns, which asserts the unity of

many gods viz. Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni etc. and considers them all as one in these words:

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरयो दिव्यःस सुपर्णो गरुत्मान्।
एक सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्नि यमं मातरिश्वानमाहु ॥

(Rigvedas – Mandala-I, Adhyay-164, Sukta-46)²

Similarly, monotheism is also evident in some of the hymns of *Samveda*. For instance, in the following hymn it is stated that the God, who is the Lord of heaven is one and He is the destination of all pathways:

समेत विश्वा ओजसा पति दिवो य एक इभ्दरतिथिर्जनानाम्।
स पूर्व्यो नूतनमाजिगीषन्त वर्तनीरनु वावृत एक इत् ॥

(Samveda-Samhita-372 – 376, Jagati)³

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE UPANISHADS (600 B.C.-A.D.300)

In these two aforementioned hymns, the idea of an impersonal God is indicated, though it was developed more fully in the *Upanishads* which are known as the *Jnana-Kanda* (The section pertaining to knowledge) of the *Vedas*. The *Vedic* speculations about one God reached their culmination in the *Upanishads*, resulting in a more positive explanation of the oneness of ultimate Reality in terms of the ‘*Brahman*’ and the ‘*Atman*’. *Brahman* serves as the focal point in *Upanishadic* thought. It is explained as an eternal identity and the source of all that exists, i.e. as the whole of reality and as the very essence of things. As stated in the *Katha-Upanishad*:

‘There is that ancient tree whose roots grow upward and whose branches grow downwards-that indeed is called the bright, that is called *Brahman*, that alone is called the immortal. All worlds are contained in it and no one goes beyond, This is that’.

(*Katha-Upanishad-Adhyay-2, Valii-6, Verse-1*)⁴

Brahman is described in the *Upanishads* as undefinable which can not be seen and has not any personal form:

“That which cannot be seen, nor seized, which has no family and no caste, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, the omnipresent (all pervading), infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that it is which the wise regard as the source of all beings”

(*Mundaka Upanishad-Khanda-I, Verse-6*)⁵

In the *Katha Upanishad* it is said about *Brahman* that He is imagined by the heart, by wisdom and by the mind.⁶

The word *Atman* originally meant “breath” “soul”, “self”. An important development which marks the *Upanishads* is the total identification of the *Atman* with the *Brahman*. Both are used as a proper name to denote the same cosmic force. 14th *Khanda* of III chapter of *Chhandogya Upanishad* begins with the words:

“All this is *Brahman* and after a description of the *Atman* it ends with the statement that *Brahman* and *Atman* are one”⁷.

The emergence of the above notions about the *Brahman* or the *Atman* represent a fully developed concept of one God. His *Nirgun* character is also clearly evident in the *Upanishads*:

“He is the one God, hidden in all beings, all pervading, the self within all beings, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the witness, the perceiver, the only one, free from qualities”.

(*Svetasvatara Upanishad-A-6, V.-11*)⁸

In this way, the genesis of *Nirgun bhakti* can be traced as far back as the emergence of the concept of the *Brahman* and its spirit is evident in the *Upanishads*.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA (C. 400-200 B.C.)

Bhagavad Gita is a Vaishnava text and whenever it is discussed in connection with *bhakti* the presence of an impersonal and *Nirgun* view of God therein is generally ignored and the position of the personality of Krishna, the God of the Vaishnavas, in the narrative is emphasized more to prove it as the first Hindu scripture with a well defined idea and image of God as personality.

The understanding of the God of *Gita* on these lines has been possible mainly on account of two factors; one the position of Krishna in it as God incarnate; and two, its narrative form, that of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna in doubt and despair, seeks guidance and solace from Krishna who addresses him directly. The human situation represented in Arjuna, and the utterances of Krishna as God, do project a very personal image of the deity.

But inspite of Krishna being the central figure in the *Gita*, its ultimate description of God revolves definitely on His impersonal and unmanifest nature. Krishna states at one place ‘the foolish regard me as the unmanifest, not knowing my supreme state’:

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥

(*Bhagavad Gita-Adhyay-7, Sloka-24*)⁹

and this deluded world knows me not, the unborn, the immutable:

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥

(*Bh. Gita-A.-7, S.-25*)¹⁰

Besides this, in chapter 13th of *Gita*, the nature of *Brahman* is described as *Anadi* -eternal and *Nirgun* -free from all qualities:

अनादित्वन्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥

(*Bh. Gita*-13, S-31)¹¹

Therefore, in *Bhagavad Gita*, it is the defined personality of Krishna which is raised to the status of the impersonal *Brahman*. Krishna, the manifest describes highest state as the unmanifest (*avyakta*). Finally, it is the devotion to the unmanifest and the impersonal God that has been advocated in the *Gita*.

In *Gita bhakti* and *jnana* stand inter-woven. Both the *bhakta* and *jnani* are described in similar terms and it is the *jnani bhakta* who is wise and has the true knowledge of the self, is described by Krishna as the highest amongst *bhaktas* and the one dearest to him¹². It is argued that when the ignorance is destroyed by *jnana*, the new knowledge, like the Sun, reveals the Supreme¹³.

In this way, *Gita*'s description of the aforesaid state finally attained through *bhakti* and *jnana* leaves very little room for the idea of a personal God.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE PURANAS (C.A.D. 300-1200)

The *Puranas* were originally bardic composition and were recast in the Kushana and Gupta period. *Puranic* literature being the exponent of *bhakti*, deals elaborately on the subject and all the relevant aspects of *bhakti* are dealt with and are presented concretely in them. Besides this, a very important fact is that both the *Saguna* (Furnished with attributes, qualities or properties)¹⁴ and *Nirgun* ideologies are expounded in some of these *Puranas*.

For instance, in the *Markendya Purana* it is especially stated that Narayana has two forms – *Nirgun* and *Saguna*. *Nirgun*, the aim of *Yogis*, is known as Vasudeva. *Saguna* has three forms. His form where the *tamas* quality predominates is *Sesa*. The *sattva* quality appears in the form of incarnations by which the world is maintained and *dharma* founded. *Rajas* predominates in his *sarp-sayya* form. The universe is created by it:

स देवो भगवान् सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणो विभुः ।
चतुर्धा संस्थितो ब्रह्मन् सगुणौ निर्गुणस्तथा ॥
एका मूर्तिरनिर्देश्या शुल्कां पश्यन्ति ता बुधाः ।
ज्वालामालोपरुद्धन्गी निष्ठा सा योगिनां परा ॥
दूरस्था चान्तिकास्था च विज्ञेया सा गुणातिगा ।
वासुदेवाभिधानोऽसौ निर्ममत्वेन दृश्यते ॥
रूपवर्णादयस्तस्या न भावाः कल्पनामयाः
अस्त्येव सा सदा शुद्धा सुप्रतिष्ठैकरूपिणी ॥

(*Markendya Purana-Adhyay-4, Sloka-36-47*)¹⁵

Regarding the concrete (*sakara*) and the abstract (*nirakara*) forms of the Lord the *Padam Purana* says that while the *Sakara Svarupa* has the advantage of serving Him the *Nirakara* has only *Rasa*:

साकारो हि सुखेनैव निराकारो न दृश्यते ।
सेवारसश्च साकारे निराकारेण वै ससः ॥

(*Padam Purana-A-52, S-104*)¹⁶

Thus showing that even the devotion to the formless God (*Nirakara bhakti*) has bliss (*rasa*). By worshipping the concrete form (*sakara-upasana*) a devotee naturally knows His abstract nature (*nirakara-svarupa*):

साकारेण निराकारो ज्ञायते स्वयमेव हि ।
हरिस्मृति प्रसादेन रोमान्विततनुर्यदा ॥

(*P. Purana-A-52, S-10 5*)¹⁷

All these attributes of the Lord are described in great detail in the later *Puranas*, as the *Bhagavata*, with further elaborations.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is definitely a Vaishnava text deals with the incarnations of Vishnu, mainly the life and personality of Krishna is dealt with in great detail. *Bhakti* of the *Bhagavata Purana* also is not confined to its *Saguna* form (as devotion to a personal deity) only, but both the *Saguna* and *Nirgun* traditions are represented simultaneously in it through the personality of Krishna. The personal deity, Krishna is interpreted throughout as the *Nirgun Brahman* – and the *Nirgun Brahman*, as Krishna:

नृणां निःश्रेयसाथाय व्यक्तिभगवतो नृप।
अव्ययस्याप्रमेयस्य निर्गुणस्य गुणात्मनः॥

(*Bhagavata Purana-Skandha-X, A.-29, S.-14*)¹⁸

In the *Bhagavata Purana* *Nirgun bhakti* is explained and sustained with the help of the relevant principles of *Samkhya Vedanta* and *Yoga*¹⁹ (Three among the six classical systems of the Hindu Philosophy). In the III Book of the *Purana* in answer to Devahuti's question about the distinctive features of *Bhaktiyoga*, Kapila enumerates three kinds of *bhakti* viz. *tamasika*, *rajasika* and *sattvika*, caused by the three *gunas* or attributes of the people. Distinct from these three he elaborates separately yet another category, i.e. *Nirgun bhakti*.²⁰ Whereas the first three can be related with various forms of belief in a personal deity, the fourth can be understood only in relation with the idea of an impersonal God:

लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य ह्युदाहृतम्।
अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे॥

(*Bh. Purana-SK.-III, A-29, S-12*)²¹

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, *bhakti* is not represented as a separate spiritual discipline excluding *jnana* and the idea of an

impersonal God. On the contrary, its *Nirgun* category is related to *jnana* and is directed towards the *Nirgun Brahman*. It is stated that one should contemplate on the impersonal *Atman* with *bhakti* as well as *jnana*²² and *bhakti* is described at one place as a characteristic feature of the knowledge of the *Nirgun Brahman*²³.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE SHANDILYA BHAKTI SUTRA

Bhakti Sutras of Shandilya and Narada are the two earliest known works concerned specifically with the *bhakti* theme itself. Here *bhakti* is not just one part of some wider philosophical or religious systematization, but is the very object of the whole enquiry.

As far as *Nirgun bhakti* is concerned, Shandilya's approach is more in keeping with it as well as the classical systems of *Samkhya* and *Vedanta*. He draws his inspiration from the *Upanishads* and interpretes *bhakti* in both *Upanishadic* and *Vedantic* terms. Shandilya's concept of God is impersonal in character. He makes it a point to emphasize that his *bhakti* should not be confused with *deva-bhakti* or devotion to a personal deity:

देवभक्तिरितरस्मिन् साहचर्यात्

(*Shandilya Bhakti Sutra* -18)²⁴

Besides this, he does not attach very great importance to the ritualistic modes of *bhakti*. Important components of *Saguna bhakti* or the Vaishnava forms of *bhakti*, like *Sravana* (Listening to the name of the deity and his deeds) and *Kirtana* (Singing hymns in praise of the deity) are described by him as secondary forms of *bhakti* and according to him, such observances can be of

value only if they lead on to the primary and essential form of *bhakti* which must be felt for the self or *Atman*:

भक्त्या भजनोपसंहाराद्गौण्या परायै तद्धेतुत्वात्
(Sh. Bh. S.-56)²⁵

रागार्थं प्रकीर्तिसाहचर्याच्चेतरेषाम् ।
(Sh. Bh. S.- 57)²⁶

In this way, the primary *bhakti* is the end and secondary is the means to it. To attain the former the secondary is adopted.

Shandilya does not represent *bhakti* as a path separate or opposed to *jnana*. In the relative context of *jnana*, *karma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, Shandilya tries to establish a definite relationship between *jnana* for *bhakti*, the final liberation comes only through the attainment of the latter. Bondage, according to Shandilya, is due to the want of devotion and not that of *jnana*²⁷. When *bhakti* appears it destroys the existing knowledge and leads to new knowledge²⁸. Shandilya's *bhakti* is thus the experience of this renewed knowledge which is different from knowledge attained through intellect alone.

Therefore, there is no indication in Shandilya's *Sutra* to suggest that *bhakti* was ever taken in it as the limited sense of belief in a personal God.

NIRGUN BHAKTI OF SHANKARACHARYA

In the context of *Nirgun bhakti* Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820) occupies a very unique place in the history of India. He represented pure *Upanishadic* / *Vedantic* tradition and is known

for his academic exposition of the *Advaita Vedanta* and his advocacy of *jnana*.

Shankaracharya believed in the existence of an eternal Reality and emphasised upon the oneness of God that is differently understood by various philosophical controversialists in their several systems of philosophy, but which is indeed the one and offered a monistic interpretation of the philosophy of *Vedanta*²⁹ through his commentary on the *Vedanta Sutra* (Also known as *Brahmasutra*) of Badarayana which had served its formal base. His commentaries on the various *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*, which are written on the same lines, gave additional strength to his thought system which in its totality is known as the *Advaita Vedanta* (Or monistic interpretation of *Vedanta*). In the words of S. Radhakrishnan the *Advaita Vedanta* of Shankaracharya, “Stands forth complete, needing neither a before nor an after”³⁰.

Shankara’s concept of *Brahman* is *Nirgun*. According to him, the term ‘*sat*’ (existence) cannot be applied in case of *Brahman* since it is without *jati* (Generic attribute). Since it (*Brahman*) is without qualities we cannot express it through any term of qualifications (or with any qualifying epithets). It being without actions cannot be qualified with any terms denoting action:

न तु ब्रह्म जातिमद् अतो न सदादिशब्दवाच्यं
न अपि गुणवद् येन गुणशब्देन उच्येत निर्गुणत्वाद्
न अपि क्रियाशब्दवाच्यं निष्क्रियावात् ।

(*Bh. Gita*- A-13, S-12)³¹

At another place he says that, “*Brahman* has no genus, or qualities, does not act, and is related to nothing else”³².

Shankara is described as an exponent of the path of *jnana*. But his *jnana* does not exclude *bhakti*, in fact he speaks of *bhakti* in conjunction with *jnana*. And by *jnana*, he means the knowledge gained through the inner spiritual experience and not the knowledge acquired by intellectual endeavour. The highest knowledge according to him, is the experience of the *Brahman* (*Brahmanubhava*) which transcends all empirical knowledge³³. He defines *bhakti* as an enquiry and a search after the real form of one’s own self (*svasvarupa*)³⁴. He regards *bhakti* as a means as well as an end in itself. The highest form of *bhakti* according to him is *Jnana-Nishtha* or the state of abiding in the knowledge of the *self*³⁵. In this form of *bhakti*, there is no contradiction between *bhakti* and *jnana* and the two are identified with each other.

In this way, Shankara does not recommend the path of *jnana* as opposed to *bhakti* nor does he uphold *jnana* in the sense of scholastic learning. *Bhakti* and *jnana* stands in close conjunction in Shankara. If he explains the highest form of knowledge as *Brahmanubava*, the highest form of *bhakti* is defined by him as *Jnana-Nishta*. Thus, Shankara’s *bhakti* falls in the category of *Nirgun bhakti*.

NIRUGNA BHAKTI IN THE NATH PANTH

The Nath-Panth, which is also known as the “*Yogi-Sampradaya*” because of the importance of *Yoga* in it, was one of the most popular ascetic movements of the medieval period. In its

origin it was essentially a Northern movement, but was extended in different parts of the country from the 11th to 15th centuries.

The Nath-Panthis recognize Gorakshanath, more popularly known as Gorakhanath as the founder of their sect. The most authoritative scriptural text of the sect, like the *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*, *Goraksha Siddhanta Sangraha* and the *Hatha-Yoga Pradipika*, are attributed to him.

Gorakhanath and his *Panth* attached no importance to intellectual philosophical explanations of the *Brahman*. The philosophical views of Gorakhanath relate to two fundamental principles only viz. that of the monistic explanation of the ultimate Reality and the *Nirgun* nature of the *Brahman*. In his concept of the *Nirgun Brahman*, we find a kind of inflexibility. For instance, according to him, neither Brahma, nor Vishnu, nor Siva could be equated with the *Brahman*, the *Brahman* could not be put at par with any other entity for it reveals itself as a Self luminous Reality³⁶.

In this way Gorakhanatha strictly recognize the nature of *Brahman* as *Nirgun* and his firm belief leaves no room for the idea of any personal deity.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE MEDIEVAL NIRGUN BHAKTI SCHOOLS

The Medieval movement of the *Nirgun bhakti* which found a rich expression in the 15th and 16th centuries has a distinct character of its own. It's antecedents must be ascertained directly from the works of the *Nirgun bhaktas*, who had advocated

devotion to the *Nirgun Brahman*. Philosophical principles of the classical *Vedanta* had reached to the common people through these *bhaktas* in a simple, spontaneous and non-scholastic language, since we know they were all poets and their compositions are in the vernacular languages.

Kabir (A.D. 1398-1518) was the pioneer of this movement. although his activities were more or less confined to Eastern Uttar Pradesh, the trend set by him led to a number of similar movements in different parts of the country. The nature of his reasoning, and his freedom of thought and expression make him unique amongst those who nourished the monistic tradition and its impersonal view of God. Kabir's uniqueness lies in his rejection of certain beliefs and practices which were always accepted and sanctioned by the followers of *Nirgun* ideology despite their overall commitment to that tradition. The most striking example of this is his rejection of the caste system and the Hindu cults based on the worship of personal deities and their idols, which were so deeply entrenched in the Indian society. He pursued the monotheistic ideas to their rational and without caring for the popular religious sentiments and social conventions.

Kabir views God as *Nirgun*, and in that sense as impersonal and nameless. He very often uses the name Rama for his *Nirgun Brahman*:

निरगुण राम निरगुण राम जपहु रे भाई;

(Kabir Granthavali, Pada-49)³⁷

But he uses the name Rama, only in a symbolic sense, as an epithet for the ultimate Reality which he regarded as nameless and

undefinable. The terms *Brahman*, *Atman* and *Rama* are often used by him in close conjunction with each other and the oneness of their meaning can hardly be questioned:

आत्म राम न चीन्है संतो, क्यू रमि लै राम राया।
(K.G., P.-170)³⁸

ब्रह्म खोजत जनम गवायौ, सोई राम घट भीतरि पायो
(K.G., P.-334)³⁹

Jnana and *bhakti* go hand in hand in Kabir's thought. According to him the true awakening and enlightenment of the spirit is not possible without *jnana*, for God must be known and worshipped through it:

करि सनमुखि जब ग्यांन बिचारी, सनमुखि परिया अगनि मंझारी।।
(K.G., Badi Ashtpadi Ramaini)⁴⁰

But when he speaks of *jnana*, he does not mean the knowledge derived from the *Sastras*, According to him, he who knows the spiritual truth through his own experience is truly a man of knowledge even if he has no scholastic learning to his credit.⁴¹

Kabir preceded *Nirgun bhaktas* such as Jambhoji, Guru Nanak, Dadu Dayal and others and the beginning made by him was carried further by them.

Jambhoji (A.D. 1451-1536) was a very famous saint of Nagaur, Rajasthan. His important contribution is the establishment of Bishnoi sect which especially known for its protection of forests and animals.

Jambhoji was an advocate of the *bhakti* of *Nirgun Brahman*. It may be added here, that when he speaks of *Nirgun Brahman* in most of his exposition on *bhakti*, he underlines the equation of Vishnu with the Supreme God and emphasised on the *bhakti* of Vishnu who according to him is *Paramatattva*.⁴² Along with Vishnu various other names like Allah, Rahman, Rama, Krishna, Sambhu, Vasudeva etc. are also used by him in the sense of God. He states at one place that *Paramataman* (God) is called by thousands names.⁴³ He is eternal, immortal, unbound, unborn and indefinable.⁴⁴

In this way, he identified the Absolute and the various personal deities worshiped by the different religious sects, with the concept of ultimate Reality, to make it acceptable to all.

According to him the knowledge of God cannot be gained by intellectual learning but it can be acquired through affection for God and by His remembrance.⁴⁵

Guru Nanak (A.D.1469-1539) was the founder of Sikhism. His concept of the Supreme was of a universal, omnipresent all embracing, all powerful, all knowing and all merciful God. The doctrine of one God is revealed with extraordinary clarity in his sayings:

‘In every place is contained that Supreme *Brahm*. The donor of all is the one, there is no second. In his asylum emancipation is obtained, what one desires, that comes to pass. In whose heart the Supreme *Brahm* dwells, they are perfect and foremost. Their pure lustre has become manifest in the world. Nanak is a sacrifice for those who have meditated on my lord.⁴⁶

According to Nanak, “He is comprehensible, endless, incalculable, independent, immortal and actionless. He has no caste, He is not born nor He die, He is Self existent, He has no fear and no doubts.....He has no family, He has no illusion He is beyond the beyond, the whole Light is Thine”⁴⁷.

The knowledge of God is called by Nanak as divine knowledge which can be acquired by hearing His name.⁴⁸ According to him in the realm of knowledge the light of divine knowledge is resplendent.⁴⁹ He does not present knowledge as a separate path excluding *bhakti* according to him divine knowledge and divine love both are necessary to acquire God’s favour.⁵⁰

As like other saints Dadu Dayal (A.D.1554-1603) also worshipped the one formless *Brahman* and like Kabir he also gave Him the name ‘*Rama*’, in most of his sayings. Besides this, he also called Him, *Brahman*, *Sain* etc. Dadu’s *Brahman* or *Rama* is *Nirgun*, (The Absolute, the unconditioned, free from all attributes and qualities), *Nirakara* (Formless), *Niranjan* (Free from passion and strain) and beyond from all religions and sects:

पर ब्रम्ह परापरं, सो मम देव निरजन।
निराकार त्रिमल, तस्य दादू वदनं॥

(Dadudyal Granthavali, Sakhi-3)⁵¹

दादू अलह राम का, द्वं पष त न्यारा।
रहिता गुण आकार का, सो गुरु हमारा॥

(D.G., S.-46)⁵²

साईं मेरा सति है, निरंजन निराकार।
दादू बिनसै देशतां, झूठा सब आकार॥

(D.G., S.-25)⁵³

He is immortal, who is immune from birth or death, since which is born and die is the soul not the indwelling Rama. He is the world Guru who neither dies nor comes to life in Him all things are created and destroyed:

दादू जामै मरै सुजीव है, रमिता राम न होइ।
जामण मरण तै रहत हो, मेरा साहिब सोइ।।

(D.G., S.-13)⁵⁴

दादू उठै न बैठै एक रस, जागै सोवै नाहि।
मरै न न जीवै जगत गुर, सब उपजिषये उसमाहि।।

(D.G., S.-14)⁵⁵

According to Dadu Dayal one can enter into *Brahman* or attain *Brahman* with the help of knowledge which can be acquired by concentration, listening and thinking the words of Guru.⁵⁶ And along with knowledge *bhakti* is also necessary to acquire God's affection.⁵⁷

In this way Dadu Dayal gives equal importance to both, *bhakti* and *jnana* in his expositions on *Nirgun bhakti*.

In essence, These *Nirgun bhaktas* shared a common ideology which contributes a part of a continuous tradition rooted in the monotheistic stream of *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* thought. It is true that followers of each one of them (including those of Kabir) formed separate sects of their own. But broadly speaking, these sectarian formations do not detract from the basic unity of the teaching of *Nirgun bhaktas*. They all shared many common beliefs and represent a common movement of *Nirgun bhakti* of the 15th and 16th centuries.

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CHAPTER-II

EMERGENCE OF THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF THE NIRGUN BHAKTI THOUGHT DURING 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES

A *Sampradaya* includes many *Panths* or sects and in turn many *Sampradaya* constitutes a religion. With regard to a *Sampradaya*, it happens sometimes that a certain man of outstanding qualities give a way in a religion to certain new traditions by which a separate *Sampradaya* comes into existence. Somewhat distinctive even from its original roots, comes up reflecting the personality of its founder. The emergence of a *Panth* (The original root of the term *Panth* is *Path* which, in Hindi terminology means for way)¹ take place when a certain man of any *Sampradaya* adopts any distinct way of devotional practices. It also denotes the personality of its founder. But in view of religious rules and regulations it may be regarded less compact than a *Sampradaya* and much less than a full fledged religion.

In the 15th and 16th centuries Kabir, Jambhoji, Nanak and Dadu followed the *Path* of *Nirgun bhakti*, distinctive from the religion and society of their times. They were called *Nirgun bhaktas* who adopted a distinctive way of devotional practise and believed in the idea of universal toleration and love, as against the rigidity, misbeliefs and social hatred which were prevalent in their contemporary period. Jambhoji, Nanak and Dadu established their own sects viz. *Bishnoi Panth*, *Nanak Panth*, *Dadu Panth*, which exist even today. As far as *Kabir Panth* is concerned, it has been a

matter of debate for a long time that whether it was established by Kabir himself or not.

KABIR PANTH

Though a large number of works have been done on the subject, the problem as to when and by whom the *Kabir Panth* was originated is still unsolved. This is because the contemporary authentic sources are lacking and the prevalent traditional accounts have rather encountered the problem much more by creating a host of complications and controversies.

Many of the *Kabir Panthi* works of especially the Chhattisgarh section speak that Kabir in his life time was very much inclined to spread his religion. It appears from the account of *Anurag Sagar* that he himself had sent his four disciples, named Dharamdas, Chaturbhujji, Bankeji and Sahteji, to all the four directions to preach his religion.² But the evidence is too vague to be taken into consideration. Except Dharamdas (Who is said to have been founder of the aforesaid section of the *Panth*) we do not get any reference about any of the three remaining disciples of Kabir. But the point of consideration is that even Dharamdas seems to have not flourished during the time of Kabir but about a century later than his demise. Besides, the author of *Bodh Sagar* refers Kamal having been sent by Kabir himself to Ahmedabad to popularize the saintly ideas³. This may be supported by the fact that in Guru's list of the *Dadu Panth* his name appears in the fifth generations⁴. But it also appears from some other traditional accounts that he himself was rather against the system of forming anything like *Panth*. It is said that Kamal was once asked by some

people to organize a *Panth* but he refused (by taking the plea that he would be subjected for the sin of murdering the spiritual teacher) and therefore he was accused of destroying the ‘*Vansh*’ of his father, Kabir.⁵

However, on the basis of such traditional accounts some modern scholars have tried to prove that Kabir himself is responsible for the origin of the *Panth*. For instance, it is believed by Ram Chandra Shukl that Kabir installed his *Panth* by mixing various Indian religious systems like the *Brahmavad*, the ascetic practices of the *Hathayogis*, the non-violence of Vaishnavism etc. together with the emotional tendencies of the Muslim mystics.⁶ It is of course true that the unique and powerful ideas of Kabir must have attracted a number of people towards him and that some of them would naturally have become his disciples, as we have seen earlier. But to make disciples is a different thing than to create a full fledged *Panth*, for which, as we think, certain rules and regulations of its own distinct from others are very much needed along with an underlying feeling of providing it better than its others co-stars. For example, Guru Nanak not only established Sikhism but also made certain rules and regulations for it in his life-time, which are in some way or the other, prevalent there even now-a-days. Moreover, he went even to the extent of installing, according to the rules laid by himself, one of his followers a successor of his *Gaddi*.

Contrary to this, no such formula seems to have been worked out personally by Kabir and neither he seems to have formed any group of his own distinct from others. Infact, the

complexity of ideas would have created obstacles in his way and thus he did not formulate any complex rules which were not necessary in his pure and simple devotion. His only aim, simply as a religious philosopher, was to fill the hearts of the devotees with the spirit of true *bhakti* and to make them benefitted by it, beyond which he did not believe in anything. It was not indeed possible for him to establish any systematic organisation like a *Panth* especially in the condition that he could never make up his mind to compromise with any sort of ritualism. He himself had remarked that, “A true saint need not going on pilgrims and neither should be called *Mahant*. He should be (rather) busy in sowing true seeds of religions to his disciples”⁷ Besides, once he condemned those *Gurus* who make disciples by receiving *Gurudakshina*⁸. Kabir even did not spare the contemporary authorities who had become very rich and lavish which Kabir says has no values in true religious spirit.⁹ Now the person, who appears opposing so much the group consciousness, would never have tried by himself to organize a separate *Panth* and neither would have allowed his disciples to do so. Under these circumstances it seems difficult to accept that Kabir himself was responsible for the emergence of the *Panth*.

That Kabir was not the founder of the *Panth* seems to be rather confirmed by some of the *Kabir Panthi* works themselves once it is expressed in the *Sadguru Shri Kabir Charitam* that “The *Panth* came into existence after the demise of *Sadguru Kabir*”.¹⁰ For the next time, it speaks that “Kabir Swami did not form his *Ashram* any where”, though at the same time it mentions also that “This task was assigned by him to the *Vansh* of Dharamdas”.¹¹

Now it seems possible that in spite of Kabir's disapproval to the sense of group-formation, the necessity might have been felt after his demise by his followers to spread Kabir's ideology in a more systematic manner. This may also be supported by the fact that within a century after his demise not only various editions of his verses were published but also his teachings were given a definite shape.

It is however, interesting to note that in spite of the fact that there is no certainty with regard to when the *Panth* originated and how it developed, the prevalent branches of it relate themselves for their origin to any of the famous disciples of Kabir. The most important among those usually mentioned in this context are the names of Dharamdas (Who is said to have been the founder of Chhattisgarh section of the *Panth*) and Surat Gopal (Of the Kabir Chaura section) who are said to have become the *Acharya* of their respective sections by Kabir himself.

We have already discussed that there are many works compiled under the Chhattisgarh section which speak that it was Kabir himself who had sent Dharmdas along with three other disciples to preach his religion all around and among them only Dharamdas had succeeded. Sometimes it is also related there that Kabir himself had instructed Dharamdas to organize a *Panth* on his name by assuring that forty two descendants of him to be the successors of his *Gaddi*.¹² Similarly, works of the Kabir Chaura section speak of Surat Gopal as the first organizer of the *Panth* and sometimes also as the first *Acharya* after Kabir.¹³ It is

surprising, however, that the accounts of both the sections ignore the case of each other.

But the interesting point is that neither of the two seems to have been the direct or the contemporary disciples of Kabir but among his later followers who would have flourished in the seventeenth century. It is however, most probable that either Dharamdas or Surat Gopal would have been first among Kabir's followers who thought of and tried for establishing systematic *Panth*, which appears to have developed in the 18th century in many parts of the country. This may be supported by the account of the *Anurag Sagar* (A *Kabir Panthi* work of the Chhattisgarh section) which is said to have been compiled in the 18th century.¹⁴ It accounts that Niranjana, in order to propagate against Kabir, sent his *Dwadash* (Twelve) ambassadors to establish their branches against those of the *Kabir Panth*.¹⁵

However, due to many contradictions among the established theories, it seems more likely that *Dwadash Panth* was merely an imaginative work of Chhattisgarh branch in order to establish its superiority over other sections. Since the names mentioned by *Anurag Sagar* included those names also who were the disciples of Kabir. It is more likely that the Chhattisgarh branch would have felt the growing strength of other branches and thus they very intelligently countered them by dubbing them as the opponents of Kabir Panth¹⁶.

However, on the basis of the date of *Anurag*'s compilation, it may be assumed that in the first part of the 18th century this sort of sect would have flourished in many parts of the country from

the modern Uttar Pradesh to Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Bihar etc. But both Westcott and Keay have disapproved those twelve divisions because of the uncertainty of the names of them.¹⁷ It is stressed by Keay that, “The supported division into twelve branches may have been suggested by the idea of glorifying the memory of Kabir, just as Ramananda is said to have had twelve chief disciples”.¹⁸ Even if we consider them reliable, it would not be possible, in lack of the proper historical material, to determine when and which one came firstly into existence. It is however, expressed in the *Sadguru Shri Kabir Charitam* that “Though Kabir Swami did not establish his *Ashram* anywhere this task was assigned by him to only the ‘*Vansh*’ of Dharamdas.” Consequently, his son Muktamani Nabh after returning from Puri, established for the first time an ‘*Acharya Ashram*’ in Kughramal (i.e. Kudarmal in the Central Provinces),’ and therefore, it is further suggested there that “Only Kughramal should be regarded as the traditional root place of the *Kabir Panth*, because all other *Mathas* are only the later offshoots of it.”¹⁹ But this also seems to be not very reliable.

BISHNOI PANTH

Bishnoi Panth was founded by famous saint of Rajasthan, Jambhoji who was born in Vikram Samvat 1508 (A.D.1451) in a village called Pipasar in Nagaur, Rajasthan. Jambhoji belonged to famous Parmar clan of Kshatriya caste. His father Lohatji was the eldest son of Rolaji who is believed to be the 40th descendant in the family of Maharaja Vikramaditya²⁰ and his mother Hansaji (Popularly known as Ksarbai) belonged to a respectable Jagirdar

family of Chapar village. We do not have any reliable information about the education of Jambhoji. From his childhood he preferred to live a life of an ascetic and did not marry in his whole life.

After the death of his parents in A.D. 1483, Jambhoji left Pipasar and went to live at Sambharthal, where a great famine occurred in A.D. 1485. He provided as much relief as he could to the famine stricken people, and in the same year he founded his sect named '*Bisnoi Panth*'²¹.with a simple ceremony. He took his bath, put a pitcher of fresh water (*kalash*) on a small wooden platform, held a rosary in his hand, uttered a few *mantras* and delivered his first sermon. Pulhoji, his uncle was the first to listen to his sermon and was initiated in the *Bishnoi Panth*. Tantu his aunt was the first lady who became his follower²². The number of his followers increased very soon and the sect spread far and wide. It became popular mainly in the region of Western Rajasthan. Besides this, it also gathered a large number following in Saurashtra, Maharashtra, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Jambhoji was known for his charitable works. He helped people at the time of famine and made ponds and wells at many places for the easy availability of water. In A.D. 1488 he constructed a pond at Jambholave near Falaudi in Jodhpur, Rajasthan which is known as '*Jambhsar*' or '*Jambhsarover*'. Another pond had constructed by him at Sauhjani in Muzzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh which is called '*Vishnu Talab*'²³. Besides this, he was an advocate of environmental balance and promoted plantation and conservation of animals and trees. He constructed special protected areas and had prohibited the killing

of animals in such areas²⁴. Plantation and conservation of animals and trees had made obligatory by him for every follower of *Bishnoi Panth*.

As other followers of *Nirgun bhakti*, Jambhoji also believed in one God who pervades the whole universe, He is the creator, sustainer and reabsorber of every thing. He was *Nirgun bhakta* and in confirmation with it he did not believe in idol worship and therefore built no temple for God. However, there are some temple built by the devoted Bishnois in the memory of Jambhoji but they are without idols or images. But as their substitutes, his symbols are kept and worshipped their²⁵.

Jambhoji preached simple and noble life of reasonable restraints. He liked simple and pure life and gave no importance to outer appearance, ostentation and ceremonial activities. He laid down 29 rules for the guidance of his followers²⁶.

After the death of Jambhoji in Samvat 1593 (A.D.1536) his mission was carried further by his devoted followers. Among them Udoji (A.D. 1448-1536) who was his contemporary, was a famous speaker and lecturer of Bishnoi ideology. He composed five poems or *Kavittas* related to the 29 rules of *Bishnoi Panth*²⁷. Another saint, Alamji (A.D. 1473-1553) was a famous *Gayana*²⁸ of the sect.

Vilhoji (A.D. 1532-1616) had come into the *Bishnoi Panth* in A.D. 1544 and was famous for his charitable works as well as literary compositions. His main contributions to the sect are that he made arrangements for the better administration of various

‘*Satharies*’²⁹ or *Ashramas* of the sect and other sacred places related to Jambhoji and organized the *Bishnoi Panchayat*³⁰. Kesoji Godara (A.D. 1573-1679) and Surjanji Punia (A.D. 1583-1691) were among the main disciples of Vilhoji. They continued the works began by their teacher Vilhoji and strictly followed the basic principles taught by Jambhoji. Besides this, he also contributed in the composition of Bishnoi literature.

NANAK PANTH

The founder of Sikhism was Guru Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539), that’s why it is also called *Nanak Panth*. He was followed by a continuous line of nine successors, who for about two centuries guided the destiny of Sikhism. The line of the Gurus came to an end with the death of Guru Gobind Singh in A.D. 1708.

The fundamentals of Sikhism were laid down by the first of the line, Guru Nanak who is generally believed to have been born at village Talwandi, presently known as *Nankana Sahib*, in district Shaikhpora, now in Pakistan. His father Mehta Kalu Chand, a Khattri of Bedi sub-caste was a respected accountant under the lord of the village Rai Bular. Nanak also is said to have served as a *Modi* (An official in charge of the granary) under Nawab Daulat Khan Lodi in Sultanpur near Kapurthala³¹. He was married and had two sons. At the age of thirty he became a *Faqir* (An ascetic) and now his mission was to spread the idea of universal toleration through which he sought to bring Hindus and Muslims together.

Nanak and his disciples had no faith in idols, idol temples, *Vedic mantras* and other misbeliefs. As it is stated in *Dabistan-i-*

Mazahib, Nanak praised Muhammadans as well as the incarnations and the gods and goddesses of Hindus but he knew them all to be creation and not the creator.³² His preachings were intensely monotheistic and he was against caste system and all type of social rivalry and hatred. For the dissemination of his precepts and ideas, Guru Nanak undertook long tours. A Muslim named Mardana who was his close companion and Bhai Bala joined him. During these tours he is said to have long intercourses with various Hindu and Muslim religious leaders.³³

Besides the fundamental principles of Sikhism, some of its basic institutions may also be traced back to the period of Guru Nanak. The head of the sect, the Guru was assigned a pivotal position. His holy compositions, was called *Gurbani* or *Shabad*, which in point of veneration, was as high as the *Guru* himself. Besides this, Guru Nanak attached great importance to setting up of *Sangats* i.e. holy assemblies and wherever possible, he tried to establish them. Along with it another institution called *Pangat* or *Guru Ka Langar* (Free common messing) also originated.³⁴ Before he breathed his last, Guru Nanak selected his successor, who was not his son, and commissioned him to carry on the work he had started. Thus Guru Angad from the caste of the Trehan Khattris sat in place of Nanak.

After Guru angad (A.D. 1539-1552), Guru Amardas (A.D. 1552-1574), from the Bhalla Khattri caste, become his successor and after him sat Guru Ramdas (A.D. 1574-1581), who is from the Sodhi Khattris and after his death his son Guru Arjun (A.D. 1581-1606) succeed him.³⁵ The period from Guru Angad, the immediate

successor of Guru Nanak to Guru Arjun fifth in line of succession, formed the first phase in the development of Sikhism. During this period i.e. A.D. 1539-1606, it made rapid strides organizationally as well as in numbers and developed in to a distinct community. The evolution of the institution of *Sangat* was an important factor in the development of Sikhism. The *Sangat* acquired more and more functions as the range of interests of the Sikhism widened and gradually attained a very important status.

From the line of third *Guru*, Guru Amardas, construction of new pilgrimage and religious centres had been started. A *Baoli* (A tank or well with staircase reaching down to the water surface) was constructed at Goindwal by Guru Amardas.³⁶ The two *Guru* viz. Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjun, who succeeded Guru Amardas one after the other, also evinced great interest in building up new religious centres for their followers. Guru Ramdas founded the town of Ramdaspur which subsequently got its present name, Amritsar, from the holy waters of pool built there. The work on this tank was commenced by Guru Ramdas, but it reached its completion under his son and successor, Guru Arjun, who as well built a *Gurudwara* or Temple in the centre of the tank calling it *Harimandir*, i.e. God's House.³⁷ (Also called Golden Temple). Similarly, Guru Arjun constructed a big tank and temple at Taran Taran a place near Amritsar.³⁸ He also founded the town of Kartarpur (District Jalandhar).³⁹ All these religious centres formed a great cementing force for the rising Sikh community. The Sikh *Sangats* from far and near were drawn towards these holy places. During their visits they had opportunity not only to meeting the holy *Guru* and having his blessings, but also of coming into close

contact with one another. They were provided free accommodation as well as free food at *Guru Ka Langar* (Free community mess) during their stay. All these works and all the aforesaid building projects could be carried through with the help of a large number of faithful Sikhs who contributed by their *sewa* or service as well as their wealth. Guru Ramdas established all these arrangements and all the aforesaid building projects could be carried through with the help of faithful Sikhs who contributed not only by *sewa* or service (participation in the community projects and *Langar*) but by their wealth also.

The process of Integration of Sikhism went hand in hand with the enlargement of its ranks.

For the consolidation expansion of the Sikhism Guru Ramdas established the nucleus of a new order of missionaries called '*Masands*' This new order was further reorganized and elaborated by the fifth Guru Arjun.⁴⁰ This measure led to the emergence of a large number of new *Sangats* in the country. These *Masands* were given the freedom to enroll new members of Sikh *Sangats* through the initiation ceremony of *Charnamrit*.⁴¹ They were also required to collect voluntary offerings from the faithful and to bring them to the headquarters of the *Guru*⁴². The new measure met with immediate success and there was no difficulty left regarding the availability of finance to satisfy the requirements of the ever rising members of Sikhism. Another great contribution of Guru Arjun was the compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred book of the Sikhs.

The rapidly growing proportions of Sikhism led to a sharp reaction among the orthodox sections of the Muslim population. However, they could cause no immediate harm to it on account of Mughal Emperor Akbar's policy of religious liberalism. The Emperor met some of the Sikh *Gurus* and showed his regard towards them by making special royal grants. It is said that a land was granted by Akbar to the daughter of Guru Amardas, when the latter refused to accept the land and other gifts made by him.⁴³ But the accession of Mughal Emperor Jahangir to the Mughal throne in A.D. 1605, when prince Khusrau revolted against his father Emperor Jahangir. Guru Arjun is said to have helped the rebellious Prince. The rebel was, however, crushed and Khusrau was captured. The Sikh *Guru* was also taken captive for supporting him and was fined rupees two lakhs which he was unable to pay and as such was kept as a prisoner in the sandy country of Lahore, where he had to undergo great rigours and hardships and at last died in A.D. 1606.⁴⁴

After Guru Arjun, his son Hargobind claimed the succession and sat in place of his father in A.D. 1606. On account of the steady growth of power of the Sikh *Gurus* and the incidents such as the alleged help of Arjun to Khusrau in this rebel, Jahangir thought it administratively necessary to put a check on the growing influence of Sikhs. On the other hand Guru Hargobind had not only to put up with the Mughal Emperor but to face his uncle Prithi Chand who had earlier successfully contested the *Guruship* all the bitterness caused by the incident of confinement and death of Guru Arjun was already there.

Confronted with this situation Hargobind thought that the only course left for him was to resort to arms. With a view to infuse martial spirit in his followers, the *Guru* framed a programme of militarizing the community.⁴⁵ He put on two swords representing the temporal and spiritual powers of the *Guru* respectively,⁴⁶ and announced that in future he would prefer offering of arms and horses from the devotees.⁴⁷ Arrangements were made for imparting to the Sikhs training in the art of fighting, and a small contingent of warriors was built up.⁴⁸ Hunting was practised because it provided necessary training in the exercise of war.

In A.D. 1606, Hargobind constructed *Akal Takht* or God's Throne in front of *Harimandir*, Amritsar. There he sat on a raised platform 12 feet high in princely attire. *Harimandir* was the seat of his spiritual authority and *Akal Takht* the seat of his temporal authority. There he administered justice like a king in court, accepted presents and awarded honour and punishments.⁴⁹

The reports against king-like and warlike activities of the *Guru* aroused the anger of Jahangir. He imprisoned the Sikh *Guru* in the fort of Gwalior on account of the balance of the dues of fine that he had imposed on his father Arjun. After twelve years the Emperor released him.⁵⁰

Jahangir died in A.D. 1627, Guru Hargobind had no trouble with him ever since his release from the imprisonment. But under the Emperor's son and successor Mughal Emperor Shahjahan, a series of armed clashes occurred between Guru Gobind Singh and Mughal forces at many places.⁵¹

Guru Hargobind was succeeded in A.D. 1644 by his grandson Har Rai who was the seventh in the line of succession from Guru Nanak. Unlike his predecessors, he was a man of pacifist and retiring nature. But he shared his grandfather's view regarding the need of military preparedness and continued this practise. Besides this, he went round the different centres of his sect, reorganised them, wherever necessary, and set up a few new centres called '*Bakhshises*' (Bounties)⁵².

Guru Har Rai died at Kartarpur in A.D. 1661 and before his death he nominated his younger son Har Krishan, a child of six years, as his successor in preference of his elder son Ram Rai.

The appointment of Har Krishan by his father as his successor was fully in conformity with the succession practise as observed since the time of Guru Ramdas. Prior to Ramdas, as we have seen above, succession was open to the entire Sikh *Sangat* (Congregation) and a successor was chosen irrespective of whether or not he belonged to the family of Guru. From Guru Ramdas onwards the *Guruship* assumed a hereditary character. But there was no rule as to who among the male members of the family was more entitled to the office of Guru than others. This succession practise, though quite normal to that age had led to the growth of some splinter groups within the ranks of the community such as *Minas* and *Dhirmalias*. The *Minas* were the descendants of Prithi Chand, the eldest son of the fourth Guru Ramdas, whereas the *Dhirmalias* were the descendants of Dhirmal, a grandson of Guru Hargobind. Both Prithi Chand and Dhirmal were disappointed claimants to *Guruship* and had endeavoured to set up

rival Gurudoms of their own. Now a third splinter group was in the process of formation. This was to be known as *Ramrayas* after the name of Ram Rai.⁵³

Ram Rai, who in Delhi at the court of the Mughal Emperor Aurengzeb did not favour the succession of his younger brother Har Krishan. Having good relations with Aurengzeb at that time he made an appeal for the Emperor's intervention in this matter. Guru Har Krishan was then summoned to Delhi and there he was put up at the house of Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur. But shortly afterwards, Guru Har Krishan was stricken with small-pox and died in A.D. 1664.⁵⁴ But before his death he had selected Tegh Bahadur as the next *Guru*, who was the youngest son of the sixth Guru Hargobind. His succession was violently contested by the rival claimants and on account of constant difficulties at the hands of these rival groups, he spent much of his time touring outside the Punjab in what are now known as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Assam.⁵⁵

He returned to Punjab, probably in A.D. 1671 and with his return, the period of his crowning glory began. He undertook extensive tour of the countryside. During his travels, large crowds of people gathered around him and sought blessings and guidance from him. His bearing was of a mighty warrior and he had not given up the militant tradition of his father. Deep impact of his teachings on the people alarmed the Mughal officials. He was arrested by the imperial troops and was imprisoned at Delhi, where he met his death in A.D. 1675 about which the accounts differ. Ernest Trumpp and Max Arthur Macauliffe who translated

Adi Granth in 1877 and 1909, respectively, are of the opinion that it was Emperor Aurengzeb who caused the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur.⁵⁶

At the time of the accession of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh in A.D. 1675, Sikhism had turned in to a disintegrated and disunited organization and it helped the splinter groups to promote their interests further. They were already engaged on a campaign of vilification against mainstream of Sikhism. They either appointed their own *Masands* or temporal with the loyalty of the existing *Masands* to strengthen their hold on the people. *Masands* too became corrupt. Most of them misappropriated the collection of voluntary offerings made by the faithful Sikhs. Fortunately, Guru Gobind Singh was a great organiser and had the vision, imagination and magnetism of a great leader. His grasp of the issues was firm and clear. He had also a clear understanding of the remedies that could resolve these issues. He embarked upon his task for reorganizing his people. He continued his predecessors' tradition of training their followers in the technique of fighting and hunting. But the degree of emphasis laid on these aspects under him was far greater than had been the case ever before.

He renamed the Sikhism as *Khalsa*-the pure. The *Khalsas* were to worship only one immortal God, be free from caste prejudices and take baptism of water stirred with a *Khanda*- two edged sword (*Khanda di pahul*) in place of *Charan pahul* (Or initiation by *Charnamrit*)⁵⁷ *Masand* system which had become corrupt and oppressive had been abolished and any kind of association with the *Masands*, *Minas*, *Dhirmalias* and *Ram Rayas*

were forbidden. Guru Gobind Singh adopted the specific surname of *Singh* (Lion) for all the Sikhs. He impressed the *Khalsa* with the belief that they were under the special control and protection of God. The new salutation given to the Sikhs was ‘*Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa*’ ‘*Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*’ (The Lord is the *Khalsa*, the Lord is the victory). For unity and singleness of purpose among his followers Guru Gobind Singh introduced and made compulsory the use of *Kes* (Long unshorn hair) *Kangha* (Comb), *Kripan* (Dagger), *Kara* (Steel bracelet) and *Kachha* (Short drawers)⁵⁸ known as five ‘*Kakas*’ in Sikh religious terminology.

Besides this, he completed the *Adi Granth* and put the seal of finality on it after including in it the *Shalokas* of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur.⁵⁹

Guru Gobind Singh fortified the town of Anandpur and built some forts their viz. Anandgarh, Kesgarh, Fatehgarh, Tolgarh and Lohgarh to strengthen his power and to have safe resort against the Rajput Rajas of the adjoining hills and the Mughals who got alarmed by the growing power and influence of the *Guru* and combined with the object of destroying his power. Armed clashes took place between combined forces and the warriors of Guru Gobind Singh at Chamkaur and Muktesar.⁶⁰

Emperor Aurengzeb died in A.D. 1707 and Guru Gobind Singh became friendly with his son and successor Bahadur Shah. He accompanied the Emperor and proceeded towards Nander in, about 150 miles North-West of the present city of Hyderabad in South. Here the *Guru* settled permanently and breathed his last on A.D. 1708, at the hands of an assassin. A day before his death, he

made the historic announcement abolishing the line of personal *Guruship* and conferring the powers of the *Guru* upon the *Khalsa* and the *Adi Granth*. He stated, "Henceforth the *Guru* shall be the *Khalsa* and the *Khalsa* the *Guru*. I have infused my mental and bodily spirit into the *Granth Sahib* and the *Khalsa*" By this act of investiture, individual leadership was replaced by collective leadership.

Guru Gobind Singh was, thus the last of the line of the Sikh *Gurus*, After him the holy book of Sikhs *Adi Granth* or *Granth Sahib* was invested with *Guruship* and *Khalsa* were enjoined to look upon it as the living Guru.

DADU PANTH

Dadu Panth which is also known as "*Brahma Samprodaya or Para Brahma-Samprodaya*" ⁶¹ was founded by Dadu Dayal (A.D. 1544-1603), who according to *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* was a cotton carder by profession in the village of Naraina in the district of Marwar, Rajasthan and lived in the period of Emperor Akbar. ⁶²

Dadu established his Panth at Sambhar where he came in Samvat 1631 (A.D. 1574)⁶³. He and his *Panth* became famous and rapidly he gathered a large following. As Kabir and Nanak, Dadu was also the follower of formless, one *Nirgun Brahman*. His preaching was intensely monotheistic, and with regard to rituals, caste distinction, idol worship, incarnations, priests, pilgrimage, ceremonial ablutions and so forth, he hold the same opinion as Kabir and condemned all these misbeliefs. For the dissemination of his precepts and ideas, he undertook long tours and visited

almost whole of Rajputana. Besides this, he is also said to have visited Delhi,⁶⁴ Kashi, Bihar, Bengal in the East where he met various saints and had long intercourses with them.⁶⁵

Dadu's mission was to spread the idea of universal toleration. Perhaps, it was the influence of the Sufis of Western India- Ahmedabad and Ajmer, that he was a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. He called both Hindus and Muslims as brother and says, "The two brothers are hand and feet, the two are two ears, the two brother are two eyes- Hindus and Musalmans".⁶⁶

As all other saints of *Nirgun bhakti* school Dadu was also a householder. He did not require the abandonment of secular pursuits. His followers were left free to remain celibate or to marry. He never enjoined nor forbade marriage.⁶⁷

The sect which Dadu established, has its chief seat at Naraina, where he died. Their *Dadu Panthis* used to hold an annual festival which gave an opportunity to them to assemble together in memory of the great man who tried to sink all differences of creed and caste in one relation of love.

Among the many followers of Dadu, fifty two are mentioned in the list given by Raghava or Raghodas in his *Bhaktmal*.⁶⁸ And among these fifty two his most famous disciples were Garibdas, Rajjabdas and Sundardas.

Garibdas (A.D. 1586-1636) who was the elder son of Dadu Dayal was a man of saintly character and made a deep impression on the minds of his fellow disciples. We have the evidence of Rajjabdas who was a close disciple of Dadu Dayal that Garibdas

was appointed, by general consent, the spiritual head of the seat at Naraina but he soon resigned office and the control of the seat passed into other hands. After that his life was spent in prayer and meditaion.⁶⁹

It is clearly indicated in the Raghava's *Bhaktmal*⁷⁰ that Rajjabdas (A.D. 1567-1689) was an ardent disciple of Dadu Dayal. He was a prominent mystic poet of *Dadu Panth*. His original name was Rajab Ali Khan and he belonged to a reputed *Pathan* family of Sanganer (Near Amber, Jaipur). Rajjab's father was a subordinate officer in the army of Raja Bhagwan Das and later Raja Man Singh. He is also said to have been trained in his early age in physical exercise and in the use of arms.⁷¹ But of deeply religious nature, his own interest lay chiefly in the direction of study and meditation. He was a learned man having a strong grip on scholarship. Later he turned to be a spiritual figure under the guidance of Dadu Dayal. It is also said that Rajjab have possessed a certain standing as a religious teacher even before he met Dadu dayal.⁷² In later years his influence and authority in the *Dadu Panth* was increased very much and it is said that even in Dadu's life time the verses composed by him were highly esteemed and widely used by his follower disciples. But towards Dadu his attitude was ever that of a loyal and devoted disciple. He was so close to his teacher that much of his time was spent in his company and he was among the disciples present at Naraina at the time of Dadu's death in A.D. 1603. He was so deeply affected by the incident that he afterwards composed some particular poems known as '*Bhent Ke Savayye*' as a tribute to his teacher's memory which is still very popular among *Dadu Panthis*.⁷³

There is said to have been some twelve or sixteen personal disciples of Rajjabdas. They are said to have found an independent branch in *Dadu Panth* which is known as “*Rajjab Panth*” or “*Rajjabawat*” it has got its own spiritual lineage from Rajjabdas. The *Rajjab Panthis* or followers of Rajjabdas who are mostly Muslims are still found in many parts of Rajasthan.⁷⁴

Sundardas (A.D. 1596-1689) was another famous disciple of Dadu Dayal. He was called Sundardas the younger, to distinguish him from another disciple of the same name. He was born at Deosa near Jaipur in Rajasthan in the family of a Bania. It is related that when Sundardas was six years of age Dadu came to Deosa and took Sundardas with him to Naraina.⁷⁵ But after the death of Dadu Dayal in A.D. 1603 he returned home and after spending some time at Deosa he went to Varanasi to study *yoga*, grammar, poetry and Hindu philosophy. The arrangements of his study was made by Rajjabdas who was very close to him.⁷⁶ In A.D. 1625 he returned to Rajputana and settled down at Fatehpur, Shekhawati, worked with his co-disciple Rajjabdas to spread the religion of *bhakti* taught by Dadu. The then Nawab of Fatehpur Alif Khan who was himself a poet, highly appreciated the talents of Sundardas and became the intimate friend of him.⁷⁷

Sundardas led a wandering life. He travelled over a large part of Northern India as well as into Gujarat, Kathiawar, Punjab and the Deccan.⁷⁸

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CHAPTER-III

NIRGUN BHAKTI LITERATURE

LITERATURE OF THE KABIR PANTH

Among medieval saints of India, Kabir occupies a prominent place. With each passing century since his death, his name and fame have gained more luster and the wise utterances and verses of this rustic philosopher which embody his remarkable teachings are recited and quoted all over India.

According to some scholars the language of his verses is old *Avadhi*, a dialect of Eastern Hindi (*Purbi Hindi*) used in West Mirzapur, Allahabad and Oudh. Kabir himself says, “My speech is of the East; no one can understand me only he can understand me, who is from the farthest East.”¹

The use of vernacular language by Kabir instead of Sanskrit for religious teachings made it possible to popularize the *Nirgun* tradition among the masses. The philosophical thought which was the core of the scholarly Sanskrit work got transmitted by him with a spontaneous poetic flavour through simple *Dohas* and *Padas* which could be easily understood by the general people which was otherwise beyond their reach. Undoubtedly Kabir was certainly a pioneer who enriched the *Nirgun bhakti* literature with his versatile scholarship.

The verses of Kabir mainly consists of the following three kind of verses.

Padas; couplets or verses of devotional poetry especially intended to glorify the God.

Ramainis; which are short doctrinal poems consists of an indefinite number of *Chaupais* (A verse of four lines in a particular metre) followed by a *Doha* (A couplet in a particular metre) called the *Sakhi*.

Sakhis; which are short apophthegms consisting of a single couplet (*doha*) like the *Sakhis* of the *Ramainis*.

It seems likely that Kabir himself did not write his poems and that his verses were written down by his disciples who used to gather around him at the time of discourse at Banaras.

Today, in India, there are innumerable poems which are attributed to Kabir but it is not at all likely that all of them are really the genuine works of Kabir. Among the various collections of Kabir's poems *Bijak* is considered the most authoritative by the members of *Kabir Panth*. The word '*Bijak*' means a document by which a hidden treasure can be located. The compiler of the collection probably chose this word as a title for verses which were considered to reveal the hidden treasures of religious knowledge.

There is an oral tradition that the contents of the *Bijak* were originally dictated by Kabir to one of his disciple Bhaggoji or Bhagwandas. Bhaggoji took it to Dhanauti, where it long remained in the keeping of the Dhanauti Mahants and was afterwards published in manuscript form. It is also claimed by someone that the *Bijak* was given to the royal family of Rewah by Kabir himself

and that they have an original manuscript of it which was written out by Kabir's disciple Dharamdas in A.D. 1464. However, no original manuscript of *Bijak* has been discovered so far.

In the present form the *Bijak* consists of a collection of verses which are written in various metres. Besides *Sakhis* and *Ramainis*, it consists of the following: The *Adimangal*; which is a short introductory poem. *Shabdas*; which are similar with *Ramainis* but in the *Lalita* metre and without any *Sakhi*.

Chauntisi- It is another important composition of Kabir in which serious religious teachings are delivered through thirty four consonants of Nagari.

The *Vipramatisi*- It is a composition of thirty short verses, which were meant to attack on the orthodox religious system of the Brahmanas. *Kahara*, *Basantas*, *Chancharis*, *Belis*, *Birhulis* and *Hindolas* are religious songs in various metres whereas the *Sayar Bijak Ka Pad* is the conclusion of the whole *Bijak*.

The *Bijak* come down to us in various published editions. Some of these show certain similarities of style and teachings of Kabir but some other differ considerably one from the other and show very large variations, even when two versions contain the same poem, the text varies seriously. For now, it is very difficult to say what the true text of *Bijak* is. Some example can be cited in this connection.

First edition of the *Bijak* was printed at Banaras in A.D. 1868, which contains the commentary of Vishvanath Singh, Raja of Rewah. It has also been published from Nawal Kishore Press,

Lucknow in A.D. 1872 and from Venkateshwar Press, Mumbai in V.S. 1961/A.D. 1904. The Chhattisgarh section of *Kabir Panth* recognizes this edition. It consists of a short introductory poem (the *Adimangal*), 84 *Ramainis*, 12 *Kaharas*, 12 *Basantas*, 1 *Chauntisi*, 2 *Belis*, 2 *Chancharis*, 3 *Hindolas*, 1 *Birhuli* and 383 *Sakhis*.

In A.D. 1890 Prem Chand of the Baptist Mission, Monghyr, edited and printed an edition named *Bijak of Kabir* at Calcutta. The order of the verses in this edition is different from that of other editions and is not identical with any of the editions published by *Kabir Panthis*. It contains 84 *Ramainis*, 113 *Shabdas*, 1 *Chauntisi*, 1 *Vipramatisi*, 2 *Chancharis*, 1 *Birhuli*, 2 *Belis*, 3 *Hindolas*, 12 *Kahara*, 12 *Basantas*, 364 *Sakhis* and 60 supplementary *Sakhis*.

Another edition of *Bijak* named *Bijak Shri Kabir Sahab Ka*, which contains the commentary of Purandas of Burhanpur was published from Lucknow in A.D. 1892, from Allahabad in A.D.1905 and from Venkateshwar Press, Mumbai in A.D. 1921.

This text is recognized by the section of *Kabir Panth* which has its headquarters at Banaras. It comprised *Pritham Anusar*, 84 *Ramainis*, 115 *Shabdas*, 1 *Chauntisi*, 1 *Vipramatisi*, 12 *Kaharas*, 12 *Basantas*, 2 *Chancharis*, 2 *Belis*, 1 *Birhuli*, 3 *Hindolas* and 353 *Sakhis*.

In A.D. 1911 another edition of *Bijak* was presented by Ahmad Shah which was published by Baptist Mission, Kanpur, with the title *Bijak of Kabir*. It's text follows the order of the

edition of Raja of Rewah and the verses found in other editions have been added at the end, thus making up the number of *Shabd*s to 115 and the number of *Shakhs* to 445. Besides, it is also consists of the *Adi Mangal*; 1 *Chauntisi*, 1 *Vipramatisi*, 12 *Kaharas*, 12 *Basantas*, 2 *Chancharis*, 2 *Belis*, 1 *Birhuli*, 3 *Hindolas*, and at the end it contains *Sayar Bijak Ka Pad*. *Bijak* was also published by Velvedere Press, Allahabad in A.D. 1922 with the title *Kabir Sahab Ka Bijak*.

It is said that the *Adimangal* and *Sayar Bijak Ka Pad* found in the Raja's edition and the *Pritham Anusar* found in the edition of Purandas, are not the part of the original text of *Bijak* and were added by interpolation.²

We thus find that the collection, considered to be authentic, also has many foreign verses incorporated in it.

Another important and authoritative collection of Kabir's poems has come down to us in the *Adi Granth* or *Guru Granth Sahib* which is the sacred book of the Sikhs and was compiled in A.D. 1604 by the orders of sixth *Guru*, Guru Arjun. Besides the compositions of Sikh *Gurus*, the *Granth* also contains panegyrics of the various *Gurus* and hymns of several *bhaktas* or devotees such as Kabir, Namdev and others whose teachings were supposed to corroborate that of the Sikh *Gurus*. Of these the hymns of Kabir are found in bulk.

The *Adi Granth* is divided in three parts, the first of which is liturgical, while the second contains the general body of the hymns and the third part is supplementary. It is in the last two

portions that the verses of Kabir are found which included 231 *Sakhis* and 228 *Padas*. Most of the verses attributed to Kabir in the *Adi Granth* are also found in the *Bijak*.

There are several other compositions of Kabir's verses which got published by different authors. For instance, Shyam Sundar Das had edited a collection of the verses of Kabir, published by Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Varanasi in V.S. 1985/A.D. 1928, under the title of *Kabir Granthavali*. This collection is mainly based on two handwritten volumes. The first was written by Malukdas in Banaras in V.S. 1561/A.D. 1504, 14 years before Kabir's death (A.D. 1518) and the second was written in V.S. 1881/ A.D. 1824. Both of these are preserved in the library of the Sabha.

This collection contains 809 *Sakhis*, arranged under 59 *Angas* or chapters and 403 *Padas* arranged under 16 *Ragas* or musical modes and 7 *Ramainis* on which they are to be sung³. These are *Raga Gauri*, *Raga Ramkali*, *Raga Asawari*, *Raga Sorathi*, *Raga Kedaro*, *Raga Todi*, *Raga Bhairava*, *Raga Vilavala*, *Raga Maru*, *Raga Lalita*, *Raga Basanta*, *Raga Mali Gauri*, *Raga Kalyan*, *Raga Sarang*, *Raga Malar*, *Raga Dhanashri*.

However, the verses found in *Guru Granth Sahib* which include 192 *Sakhis* and 222 *Padas* of Kabir are not identical with the material contained by both of the aforementioned handwritten volumes.

Parasnath Tiwari edited another collection of Kabir's work under the title of *Kabir Granthavali*. It was published by Hindi Parishad, Allahabad Vishvavidyalya in A.D. 1961.

Kabir Granthavali is based on various manuscripts of different schools of thought of *Nirgun bhakti*. It also relies upon various other published editions of Kabir's verses by different authors. *Kabir Granthavali* is largely dependent on sources like *Panchavani*, *Sarbangi*, *Gunaganjanama*, collection of *Niranjani Panth*, *Guru Granth*, *Bijak*, *Shabdavali* and *Sakhis*.

Panchavani collection has three collections belonging to Dadu Mahavidyalya and two collection belong to Purohit Harinarayn.

There are three handwritten volumes preserved at Dadu Mahavidyalya, Jaipur. First was compiled by Mati Ram in V.S. 1531/A.D. 1474, second was compiled by Jagannath in V.S. 1768/A.D. 1711 and third was compiled in V.S. 1830/A.D. 1773. The other two collection of *Panchavani* belongs to Late. Purohit Harinarayan Vidyabhushan of Jaipur are preserved in Basta No. 7, serial No. 485-839, compiled in V.S. 1715/A.D. 1658 and in Basta No. 3, S. No. 236-237 compiled in V.S. 1741/A.D. 1684 respectively.

The other two famous compiltions of *Dadu Panthi* literature viz. *Sarbangi* and *Gunaganjanama* also feed the *Kabir Granthavali*. *Sarbangi* was compiled by Rajjabdas in circa V.S.1730/ A.D. 1673. Three handwritten copies of this collection are preserved in the Dadu Mahavidyala, Jaipur. Among them first

was compiled in V.S. 1830 / A.D. 1773 while second and third were written in V.S. 1841 / A.D. 1784 and V.S. 1847 / A.D. 1790 respectively. *Sarbangi* consists of 155 *Padas*, 181 *Sakhis* and 1 *Ramainis* of Kabir.

Gunaganjanama is another important source of *Kabir Granthavali*. It was compiled by another *Dadu Panthi* poet Jagannath. One copy of it is preserved in Dadu Mahavidyalya Jaipur and another in the N. P. S. Varanasi. It contains almost 400 *Sakhis* of Kabir.

The other source of *Kabir Granthavali* is a comprehensive collection of *Niranjani Panth* (Rajasthan) which is also preserved in the Dadu Mahavidyalya. It was compiled by Hari Ramdas in V.S. 1861/ A.D. 1804 and incorporates the verses of various mystic poets of different schools of *bhakti* thought including Kabir. It contains his 1385 *Sakhis*, 661 *Padas*, 12 *Ramainis* and 7 *Rekhtas*.⁴

Guru Granth Sahib is another significant source of *Kabir Granthavali*. An edition of *Guru Granth Sahib* was published by Sarva Hind Sikh Mission, Amritsar in A.D. 1937.

Bijak forms another important source of *Kabir Granthavali*. Two handwritten copies of the *Bijak* of Kabir compiled in V.S. 1942 / A.D. 1885 and V.S. 1950 / A.D. 1893 respectively are preserved in the collection of Uday Shankar Shastri of Varanasi. Besides this, one edition named *Mul Bijak* which was published by Mahant Methi Gosai of Mansor Math in V.S. 1994 / A.D. 1937.

Shabdavali also forms an important source of *Kabir Granthavali*. There are four editions of *Shabdavali* of Kabir. First of them was published in A.D. 1908 by the Velvedere Press, Allahabad. There are also some handwritten and published copies of the *Sakhis* of Kabir which also enriches the *Kabir Granthavali*. *Sakhis* of Kabir includes a handwritten volume which was compiled by Sadhu Bhagavatidas in V.S. 1881 / A.D. 1824 and is preserved in the Kabir Mandir, Moti Dungri, at Jaipur. A printed edition of *Sakhi* named *Satya Kabir Ka Sakhi Granth*, published by Venkateshwar Press, Mumbai also forms part of *Kabir Granthavali*. There are also two editions of *Sakhis* which have been referred in *Kabir Granthavali*. One edition is published by Velvedere Press, Allahabad and second was published in A.D. 1926. A copy of *Sakhi* collection published by Kabir Dharma Vardhak Karyalya, Siabagh, Baroda in A.D. 1935 under the title of *Sadguru Kabir Sahib Ka Sakhi Granth* also find reference in *Kabir Granthavali*.

Aforesaid handwritten and published volumes represent all the works which are attributed to Kabir. There is very little variation of contents in all the copies and most of the verses of Kabir are common to all of them. However, they differ sometimes with regard to their number and serial number.

Thus, *Kabir Granthavali* of Hindi Parishad Allahabd Vishvavidyalya has been edited very scientifically by its editor. It contains 200 *Padas* of Kabir which are arranged under 16 *Angas* or chapters, 21 *Ramainis* and his 744 *Sakhis* arranged under 34 *Angas*.

Kabir's immediate disciple Dharamdas who was the reputed founder and outstanding leader of the Chhattisgarh section of the *Kabir Panth*, figures very largely in the literature of the *Panth*, a great deal of which is in the form of supposed dialogues between Dharamdas and Kabir. A collection of his verses under the title of *Dharamdas Ki Shabdavali* was published by Velvedere Press, Allahabad in A.D. 1960. It contains 107 *Shabd*s, arranged under 9 *Angas*, 31 *Shabd*s arranged under the titles of *Mangal*, *Badhava* and *Sohar*. Besides this, his *Raga Basanta*, *Raga Gari*, *Holi*, *Barahmasa*, *Pahara*, *Namlila* and *Muktilila* have also been included in this collection.

Literature Of The Bishnoi Panth

The literature of *Bishnoi Panth* contains the verses of its founder Jambhoji. The verses are in the form of *Shabd*s. The literature of *Bishnoi Panth* also contains compositions of Jambhoji's disciple and the latter saints of the *Bishnoi Panth*.

Jambhoji's *Shabd*s are 120 in number which are far greater than the collective verses of other saints of the time. Jambhoji himself did not write down his *Shabd*s. The entire verses which are attributed to him are infact written down by his disciple during the time of his preaching. According to the tradition his disciple Redoji treasured up them in his memory and recited them daily, since then these 120 *Shabd*s are sung and recited by the Sadhus i.e. '*Thapanas*' and singers i.e. '*Gayanas*' of the *Bishnoi Panth* at various religious occasions. The verses of Jambhoji are designated as *Chhatrapati Shabda Vani* and are considered very sacred and dignified as the '*Fifth Veda*' in *Bishnoi Panth*. The Bishnois still

try hard to maintain the accuracy in the *Shabd*s of Jambhoji, and can be regarded as authentic.

The language of the *Shabd*s is mainly Rajasthani – Marwari which has been enriched by the terms of various languages, such as *Brijbhasha*, a dialect of Brij Kshetra i.e. Mathura and Brindavana, Sanskrit, Eastern Hindi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Arabic and Persian.

No English translation of the *Shabd*s of Jambhoji has yet been published. However, various editions in Hindi are available. These are as following:

One of the collections of the *Shabd*s which was published by the Hindu Press, Delhi in V.S. 1646/A.D. 1589 under the title of *Shri Jambha Sagar*, contains 117 *Shabd*s with a detailed commentary by Swami Isvarananda. The text of this collection is not recognized by the followers of the *Bishnoi Panth*. Another collection was also published by Swami Isvarananda in V.S. 1655 / A.D. 1598 from Dharmik Yantralya, Allahabad under the title of *Jambha Samhita*. It consists of 152 *Shabd*s and some of them are different from the authentic *Shabd*s of Jambhoji. The edition is based on a handwritten volume which was in the collection of Pandit Jagannath Tiwari of Dharmik Yantralya, Allahabad. It is noteworthy that in the *Jambha Samhita* some *Mantras* or spiritual instructions of the *Bishnoi Panth* have been included under the title of *Shabd*s. Besides this, variation in text and number of the *Shabd*s is also there.

A third collection of *Shabdās* was published from Meerut by Sadhu Shankardas in V.S. 1666 / A.D. 1609 under the title *Shabdāvani*. It is comprised of 126 *Shabdās* which includes *Guru Mantras* of *Bishnoi Panth* viz. *Adi Shabda*, *Vishnu Vrihamivana* and *Chhabis Dharm Ki Akhari*.

Another collection named *Jambhagita* was published by Swami Sacchidananda with his commentary from Vidya Press, Lahore in V.S. 1662 / A.D. 1605. Number of *Shabdās* included in it is 120.

Sadhu Ramdas published his collection of 120 *Shabdās*, from Vidya Prakash Press, Lahore in V.S. 1663 / A.D. 1606 with the title *Shabdāvani* in V.S. 2011 / A.D. 1954. An important and comprehensive work named *Jambha Sagar* was published by Swami Ramandanda Giri, Bishnoi Sabha, Hissar. It contains 120 *Shabdās* as well as a detailed commentary on them.

Among all the aforementioned published editions, the text of *Shabdāvani* by Ramdas, *Jambhagita* by Sacchidananda and *Jambha Sagar* by Bishnoi Sabha, Hissar are considered as the most authoritative by the followers of *Bishnoi Panth*.

On the basis of these collections, Surya Shankar Pareikh has published his edition from Vikas Prakashan, Bikaner in A.D. 2001 with the title *Jambhoji Ki Vani*. This edition is divided in three sections. First section contains the biography of Jamhboji, second presents a critical study of his *Shabdās* and their various elements such as *Jiva*, *Brahman*, *Srishti*, *Sadachara* etc. Third be

designated as the review section consists of the 120 *Shabdas* of Jambhoji with Hindi translation.

The compositions of Jambhoji's disciples and followers are also considered very sacred by the followers of the *Bishnoi Panth*. The works of these latter Bishnoi saints form a vast literature of the *Panth* and called *Jambho Ki Vani*. Among all the latter Bishnoi saints Jambhoji's disciple Vilhoji was the most famous for his contribution in the composition of Bishnoi literature. The collections of his compositions named *Vilhoji Ki Vani* was published by Krishnlal Bishnoi from Sambharathal Prakshan, Haryana in A.D. 1993. This work is mainly based on an old manuscript, viz. *Parmananda Ji Ka Potha* compiled in V.S. 1818-19/A.D. 1761-62 and preserved in Swami Vivekananda Sangrahalya, Adampur, Haryana.

Vilhoji Ki Vani contains following composition of Vilhoji.

Katha Gyanchari, is a very important work and considered second only after the *Shabdavani* i.e. the *Shabdas* of Jambhoji. It is a lyrical poem which contains 132 Dohas and *Chaupais*.

Sakhis of Vilhoji are 10 in number and are arranged in seven *Ragas* to which they are to be tuned and sung.

Katha Dharabhandh Chauhjugi, is a mythological composition and consists of 53 *Dohas* arranged in *Raga Dhanashri*.

Manjh Akhara Duha Dus Avatar Ka, contains 27 *Dohas* arranged under *Raga Khambhavachi*.

Katha Avatarpat, is composed in *Raga Asa* and contains 142 *Dohas* and *Chaupais*. It is also called as *Katha Anaharpat*, *Autarpat Ka Bakhan*, and *Avatarchirat Jambhoji*.

Katha Gugaliye Ki, is a composition of 86 *Dohas* and *Chaupais* arranged under *Raga Asa*.

Katha Pulheji Ki, consists of 25 *Dohas* and *Chaupais* arranged in *Raga Asa*.

Katha Sach Akhari Vigatavali, contains 55 *Dohas* and *Chaupais*.

Vison Chhattisi, is a composition of 36 *Kundalis*.

Katha Dunapur Ki, is arranged under *Raga Asa* and consists of 65 *Chhandas*.

Vilhoji Ki Parmadhrupi Chhappaya, is a composition of 45 *Chhappayas*.

Vilhoji Ke Harjas, is of the most important compositions. It has 20 *Harjas* and are arranged under 8 *Ragas*.

Katha Jaisalmer Ki, consists of 112 *Dohas*, *Chhappayas* and *Kavitts*.

Katha Ravana Goyand Ki, contains 39 *Dohas* and *Chaupais* arranged under *Raga Asa*.

Battis Akhari consists of 39 *Chhandas* and also contains 29 rules of *Bishnoi Panth*.

Besides all the aforementioned works, this collection contains other miscellaneous *Sakhis*, *Dohas*, *Sorthas* and *Kavittas*,

under the title *Chhutak Sakhi, Kavitta Prasang Ke, and Vilhoji Ke Aptomadesh.*

Many other saints of *Bishnoi Panth* have also contributed greatly to their sacred literature in which their *Harjas* (Religious songs) are regarded as the most important. Both the *Nirgun* and *Saguna* forms of the God are described in the Bishnoi *Harjas*. Krishnlal Bishnoi had edited a collection of the *Harjas* of Bishnoi saints under the title of *Bishnoi Santon Ke Harjas* which was published by Sambharathal Prakashan, Haryana in A.D. 1993. This collection is based on *Parmananda Ji Ka Potha*. It covers the period of almost 450 years and contains 140 *Harjas* of 27 saints of *Bishnoi Panth*. These are as follows: *Harjas* of Udoji Naina, arranged under 6 *Ragas* viz. *Khambhavachi, Gauri, Kafi, Ramkali, Kedara* and *Ghumar*.

12 *Harjas* of Alamji arranged under 7 *Ragas*; *Suhab, Dhanashri, Khambhavachi, Nat, Sorath, Malhar, and Gauri*.

20 *Harjas* of Vilhoji, arranged under 8 *Ragas, Gauri, Asa, Bhairava, Bilavala, Ramkali, Malhar, Dhanashri* and *Sorath*.

13 *Harjas* of Kesoji Godara which are arranged under 9 *Ragas; Maru, Bhairava, Dhanashri Malhar, Bilvala, Gauri, Hanso, Suhab, and Kedara*.

48 *Harjas* of Surjanji Punia arranged under 10 *Ragas; Bilavala, Malhar, Asa, Maru, Sorath, Dhanashri, Bhairava, Gauri, Kedara, and Khambhavachi*.

6 *Harjas* of Parmandaji Banial which are to be sung in 3 *Ragas; Khambhavachi, Sarang* and *Dhanashri*.

The collection also contains 28 miscellaneous *Harjas* of 21 other poets of the *Bishnoi Panth*. These are arranged under 10 *Ragas*, *Dhanashri*, *Asa*, *Khambhavachi*, *Ramkali*, *Hanso*, *Sorath*, *Malhar*, *Bhairava*, *Vihagarau*, and *Bilavala*.

Literature Of The Nanak Panth

The sacred scripture of the *Nanak Panth* is known as *Adi Granth* which is popularly called *Granth Sahib* or *Guru Granth*. From the very beginning the *Adi Granth* received deep respect from Sikhs not merely as the collection of their *Guru* teachings but also as a living proof of the Sikh doctrine, since there was no difference between the *Guru* and his word (*Shabdas* or *Bani*). Thus, the *Granth* serves as the symbolic representation of the *Gurus*, who are considered as only one man viz. Nanak, the light of whose soul passed on to each of his successors one by one.

All *Gurus* of the period were gifted poets who composed hymns of religious appeal and in Sikhism worship consisted of singing those hymns of *Gurus*. The sixth Guru Arjun wished to lay down the contents and the rules of the hymns that were supposed to be sung in rituals performed by the Sikhs. He also desired to raise the status of Sikhism from a sect to a religion. This object could be attained by providing the Sikhs with holy scripture of their own. He therefore, made a collection of all the compositions of his predecessors and with the addition of his own and those of some like minded saints of the land in the form of the *Adi Granth*⁵ in *Gurumukhi* script. The script was developed by the second Guru Angad from a local script of Punjab.⁶

The *Adi Granth*, then called *Pothi Sahib*, was completed in V.S. 1661/A.D. 1604. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh put the seal of finality on it after including in it the *Shabdas* of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur and one single *Dohra* of his own. The line of the *Gurus* closed with the tenth *Guru Gobind Singh* as per the wish of the *Guru* himself who called upon Sikhs to regard the *Granth Sahib* as the living *Guru*.

There used to be a notion among the Sikhs that the sacred *Granth* must not be allowed to be printed, but now this prejudice has vanished and now the *Granth* is being published. However extreme precautions have been exercised to maintain the accuracy of the text and that's why there is almost no textual variation in all the available published editions of it. The printed *Adi Granth* consists of 1430 pages. It contains 974 hymns or 2949 stanzas of Guru Nanak, 62 of Guru Angad, 907 of Guru Amardas 679 of Guru Ramdas, 2218 of Guru Arjun and 115 of Guru Tegh Bahadur and hymns of 16 saints both Hindu and Muslim, and songs of 4 minstrels. The number of saint's hymns is as follows: 2 Jaideva, 134 Shaikh Farid, 4 Tirlochan, 60 Namdeva, 1 Ramananda, 1 Sadhana, 3 Beni, 14 Ravidas, 541 Kabir, 4 Dhanna, 1 Pipa, 1 Sain 1 Parmananda, 1 Surdas, 2 Bhikhan, and 1 Mirabai. Of the minstrels there are: 3 Mardana, 6 Sundar, and 8 Satta and Balwand. Apart from this 123 *Savayyas* of *Bhatts*, who flourished in different periods in *Gurus* darbars, have also been included in *Granth Sahib*.

In the *Adi Granth* the hymns are not given in chronological order according to the *Gurus* but are adjusted in accordance with

31 *Ragas* to which the hymns were to be recited. Under each particular *Raga* there are different *Mahlas*. The first one belongs to Guru Nanak, second belongs to Guru Angad, third *Mahla* belongs to Guru Amardas, fourth to Guru Ramdas, fifth to Guru Arjun and ninth *Mahla* belongs to Guru Tegh Bahadur.

The *Granth* itself consists of the following portions.

1. The *Japji*, it is recited by the Sikhs in the morning prayer.
2. The *Sodaru*, sung as the evening prayer together with,
3. *Sopurkhu*, the combined name for both the *Sodaru* and *Sopurkhu* is *Rahirasa*.
4. *Sohila*, recited as a prayer before retiring to rest. Then follows the hymns which are arranged under 31 *Ragas* which form the body of the *Granth*. These are: 1. *Raga Siri*, 2. *Raga Majh*, 3. *Raga Gauri* 4. *Raga Asa*, 5. *Raga Gujari*, 6. *Raga Devgandhari*, 7. *Raga Bihagra*, 8. *Raga Vadhansu*, 9. *Raga Sorathi*, 10. *Raga Dhanshri*, 11. *Raga Jaitshri*, 12. *Raga Todi*, 13. *Raga Bhairavi*, 14. *Raga Tilang*, 15. *Raga Suhi*, 16. *Raga Bilavalu*, 17. *Raga Gaud*, 18. *Raga Ramkali*, 19. *Raga Natnarayan*, 20. *Raga Maligaura*, 21. *Raga Maru*, 22. *Raga Tukhari*, 23. *Raga Kedara*, 24. *Raga Bhairau*, 25. *Raga Basantu*, 26. *Raga Sarang*, 27. *Raga Malar*, 28. *Raga Kanara*, 29. *Raga Kaliyan*, 30. *Raga Prabhata*, 31. *Raga Jaijavanti*.

This is followed by the conclusion of the *Granth* and is called *Bhog*. This portion contains *Shaloka Sahaskriti*, *Gatha*, *Funhe*, *Chaubole*, *Shalokas* of Kabir and Farid, *Savayyas* of the

Gurus and Bhattas, Shalokas of the Gurus and Ragamala or index of musical measures.

The original manuscript of *Granth Sahib* was installed in *Harimandir*, popularly called Golden Temple at Amritsar. In *Harimandir* the worship of God simply consists of recitation from the *Granth*. No preaching and no discussions are permitted. The original copy of Guru Arjun exists in the *Gurudwara* at Kartarpur near Jalandhar. For the first time *Guru Granth Sahib* was published in *Gurumukhi* by Bhai Mohan Singh Vaidya from Taran Taran, Amritsar under the title *Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahibji*. It's Nagari edition was published in A.D. 1927 with the same title and from the same publication. In the Nagari script *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* was also published by Sarva Hind Sikh Mission, Amritsar in A.D. 1937. Shiromani Gurudwara Prabanddhak Kameti, Amritsar, published it in *Gurumukhi* in A.D. 1951. Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow had published *Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahib* with Hindi transliteration by Nanda Kumar Avasthi and Hindi translation by Manmohan Sahgal. It was presented in four volumes. First of them was published in A.D. 1978, second in A.D. 1980, third in A.D. 1981 and its fourth volume was published in 1982.

For the first time Earnest Trumpp had translated *Adi Granth* into English. This edition was published from Delhi in A.D. 1877 under the title *The Adi Granth*. Max Arthur Macauliffe had presented his English translation of the *Granth* in A.D. 1909, in 6 volumes under the title *The Sikh Religion* which was published from Delhi.

The tenth Guru of Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh himself prepared no authentic compilation of his own compositions and though he gave the final shape to the *Adi Granth* in A.D. 1705, he did not include any of his compositions (except a single *Shaloka* which is included in the verses of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur) in the *Granth Sahib*.

After his death the compositions attributed to him were compiled in one volume by his disciple Bhai Mani Singh in A.D. 1734. The compilation is collectively known as *Dasham Padshah Ka Granth*. It's old collections and published versions include the following compositions of Guru Gobind Singh:

1. *Japu*, 2. *Akal Ustat*, 3. *Bichitra Natak Granth* 4. *Chandi Charitra Ukati Vilas*, 5. *Var Shri Bhagvati Ji Di*, (*Chandi Di Var*), 6. *Chaubis Avatar*, 7. *Brahma Avatar Katha*, 8. *Rudra Avatar*, 9. *Parasnath-Rudra Avatar*, 10 *Mehdi-Mir Vadh Kathan*, 11. *Gyan Prabodh Granth*, 12. *Shastranamamala*, 13. *Shabada Hazare*, 14. 33 *Savayyas*, 15. *Savayya Jo Kihu Lekh Likhiyo Vidhana*, 16. *Pakhyan Charitra*, 17. *Zafarnama*, 18. miscellaneous compositions.

Some handwritten collections which include the aforementioned compositions of Guru Gobind Singh are preserved in the *Gurudwara* of Patna. Among them one was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh which included some pages written by Guru Gobind Singh.⁷

Besides this, various other hand written volumes and manuscripts containing his compositions are preserved in Shri

Guru Ramdas Library, Amritsar, Shiromani Gurudwara Reference Library, Amritsar, and Patiala Central Library.

There is no doubt that the largest part of the *Dasham Granth* was composed by Guru Gobind Singh. However, some stories and translations in the volume like *Pakhyan Charitra* and *Hiqayat* which are said to be a part of *Zafarnama*, seem to be entirely out of tune with the *Guru's* teachings and on that ground are not considered as genuine and authoritative compositions of Guru Gobind Singh. Moreover, writers attached to the *Guru's* court might have been responsible for certain compositions which are attributed to him after his death.

The *Japu* and *Akal Ustat* are among the most authoritative and important works of Guru Gobind Singh. The *Japu* is a devotional song. It is recited in the morning prayer and used in the baptism of the *Khalsa*. It is based on the model of *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* and contains about 950 names of God. It portrays Gods as *Nirakara*, *Anama*, *Anadi*, *Nirvikara* etc. According to Macauliffe, "The *Japuji* of Guru Gobind Singh is held by the Sikhs in the same spirit as the *Japji* of Guru Nanak. Like the works of Hindu scholars called *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* which has Vishnu's thousands names. The *Japu* was composed to supply the Sikhs with similar number of epithets of the creator."⁸ The *Japu* contains 199 *Chhandas* and compiled in *Brijbhasha* language in *Gurumukhi* script. Terms of Persian and Arabic are also be found in it at some places.

The *Akal Ustat* (Praise of the immortal) contains 271 *Chhandas*. It is noteworthy that there are several questions related

to *Jivana-Marana*, *Pap-Puniya*, *Jnana-Ajnana* etc. are put in *Chhandas* 201 to 210 of the *Akal Ustat* to which no answer is given, and the last *Chhanda* of this composition is not complete. All those facts indicate the incomplete nature of this work.

The next composition of *Dasham Granth* is *Bichitra Natak* which stands by itself as a composition of autobiographical and historical importance. It consists of 471 *Chhandas* which are arranged under 14 chapters.

Interestingly, the major part of the compositions preserved in the *Dasham Granth* deals with Hindu mythological stories such as *Chandi Charitra Ukti Vilas*, which is a free version in *Brijbhasha* of the chapter on *Durga Saptashati* in the *Markendya Purana*. It contains 262 *Chhandas*, arranged under 8 chapters.

Var Shri Bhagvati Ji Di or *Chandi Di Var* comes next to the *Chandi Charitra Ukti Vilas* and based on the same plot i.e. *Durga Saptashati* of *Markendya Purana*. It is composed in Punjabi and contains 55 *Chhandas*.

Chaubis Avatar speaks of twenty four incarnations of Vishnu in total 4315 *chhandas*,

In the work named *Brahma Avatar Katha*, seven incarnations of Brahma are described in 355 *Chhandas*. Other two compositions named *Rudra-Avatar* and *Parasnath-Rudra Avatar* deal with the incarnations of Rudra and Parasnath respectively. Former is divided in 24 sections and comprises 498 *Chhandas* while the latter contains 358 *Chhandas*.

Mehdi-Mir Vadh Kathan is another composition included in *Dasham Granth*, which is described in 11 *Chhandas*. It is said that this is inspired by the literary works of Shia sect of Muslims.

In the composition named *Gyan Prabodh Granth*, the four stages of the progressive evolution of religions is described through the examples of *Mahabharata* and other mythological stories. These four stages are: 1. *Raj Dharma* (Religion of politics and government), 2. *Dan Dharma* (Religion of charity) 3. *Bhog Dharma* (Religion of householder's controlled enjoyment) 4. *Moksha Dharma* (Religion of striving for salvation). This work contains 336 *Chhandas*.

The *Shastranama Mala* is ostensibly a catalogue of weapons which were used in the period of Guru Gobind Singh. This composition has a close link with the *Guru's* militant ideology. In this work the description of weapons has been given in 1318 *Chhandas*.

10 *Shabd*s of Guru Gobind Singh have also been included in '*Dasham Granth*. These *Shabd*s are collectively called *Shabad Hazare* and are arranged under 8 *Ragas* viz. *Ramkali*, *Sorath*, *Kalyan*, *Bilavala*, *Devagandhara*, *Khyal*, *Tilang* and *Kafi*. Except 6th *Shabda* which is composed in Punjabi in *Khyal*, the language of all the *Shabd*s is *Brijbhasha*.

33 *Savayyas*, of Guru Gobind Singh deals with the attributes of God and repudiates the doctrine of incarnation. It also criticizes ascetic practices and superstitions and condemns the *Masands*. Besides *Dasham Granth* also contains 3 *Savayyas* and 1 *Doha*

arranged under the title *Savayya Jo Kihu Lekh Lekhiyo Vidhana*. Here *Khalsa* is described by Guru Gobind Singh.

The *Guru's* philosophy of protest against violation of truth and righteousness is expressed in poetic style and contains intensive usage of Persian language in *Zafarnama*. It is in the form of a letter which was sent to Aurangzeb by Guru Gobind Singh.

Zafarnama consists of 12 Persian *Baits*. Besides this, 12 *Hiqayats* (Persian stories) are also attached to it which have been described in 868 *Baits*. The *Hiqayat* is practically a Persian version of the *Pakhyan Charitra* and each story opens with praises of God.

Besides this, 49 miscellaneous *Kavittas* and 4 *Baits*, describing the rules of Sikhism are also included in the *Dasham Granth*.

Thus, the *Dasham Granth* is not a single work with a single theme. It is a collection of writings on diverse themes in three languages-*Brijhasha*, Punjabi and Persian. Guru Gobind Singh's mastery of Persian is evident in the *Zafarnama* and the *Hiqayat*. The *Var Shri Bhagvati Ji Di* is the first and the finest specimen of *Vir rasa* poetry in mixed Punjabi and *Brijhasha*. The remaining parts are composed in *Brijhasha* though in many cases has been enriched by appropriate words borrowed from Sanskrit, *Awadhi*, *Dingal* (Rajasthani), Punjabi, Persian and Arabic.

Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow has published *Shri Dashm Granth Sahib* with Hindi translation and Nagari transliteration by Jodhsingh. First and second volumes of this edition were

published in A.D. 1983 while the third and fourth volumes got published in A.D. 1984.

LITERATURE OF THE DADU PANTH

Dadu Panthi literature of 16th and 17th centuries comprised of the verses of *Panth's* founder Dadu Dayal and his disciples viz. Rajjabdas and Sundardas.

Maximum number of Dadu's verses as found today in various collections is 3120 which included 2680 *Sakhis* classified under 37 *Angas* and 446 *Padas* and are arranged under 26 or 29 *Ragas*. The language of his compositions is mainly Rajasthani-Hindi which has been enriched by the terms of several other languages such as Gujarati, Sindhi, Punjabi, Marathi, Persian and Sanskrit.

As was the case with many other saints of the period Dadu Dayal himself did not compile his own. It is said that after his death the compositions attributed to him were collected under the title *Hirde Bani* by some of his disciples like Santdas and Jagannathdas. This collection is not found today but its revised text, made by Dadu's close disciple Rajjabdas in A.D. 1595, named *Angabandhu* is available. This contains the verses of Dadu Dayal which are properly classified and arranged under 37 different *Angas* (chapters).

Besides this, there are several other collections and *Panchavani* collections of *Dadu Panth* such as *Sarbangi* of Rajjabdas and *Gunaganjnama* of Jagannathdas which included the

compositions of Dadu Dayal with the verses of various other saints.

There are many handwritten collections which contain the compositions of Dadu Dayal. Among them three volumes can be regarded as authoritative due to their direct relation with the followers of *Dadu Panth*. These are:

One handwritten volume which was written in V.S. 1710/A.D.1653 by a *Dadu Panthi* author named Khemdas, is now preserved at the Naraina sect of *Dadu Panth*.

Second work was written by *Dadu Panthi* poet Jagannathdas in V.S. 1768/A.D. 1711 and is now preserved in the Dadu Mahavidyalya at Jaipur. Third collection which included the verses of Dadu Dayal is preserved in N. P. S., Varanasi, with the number 1406. It was written by another *Dadu Panthi* author named Mansaram in V.S. 1797/ A.D. 1740.

Besides these, four other handwritten volumes also exist, which are preserved in the N. P. S., Varanasi, with the numbers 1394, 1611, 1393 *Ka* and 1759. Among these, second and third are dated as V.S. 1874/A.D. 1817 and V.S. 1908/A.D. 1851 respectively.

Some published versions of Dadu's verses have also been presented by different editors. Among them first was edited by Sudhakar Dwivedi which had been published from N.P.S., Varanasi in Nagari Granthmala series no 11 and 14 in A.D. 1906 and 1907 respectively. It's first part was named *Shri Dadu Dayal Ki Bani* and second *Dadu Dayal Ka Shabad*.

In A.D. 1907 verses of Dadu Dayal was published by Vaidik Yantralya, Ajmer in two parts under the one title *Shri Swami Dadu Dayal Ki Bani*. This collection was edited by Chandrika Prashad Tirpathi on the basis of *Angabandhu*.

One edition of *Dadu Bani* was published by Jail Press, Jaipur in V.S. 1975 / A.D. 1918

Volverdere Press, Allahabad had published a collection of Dadu's compositions in V.S. 1985/A.D. 1928.

Another edition had been edited by Swami Jivananda Bharatbhikshu and was published by Shri Dadu Sewak Press, Jaipur in three parts under the title *Anbhaya Vani* in V.S. 2003/A.D.1956. Mangal Press, Jaipur had published another edition of Dadu's verses in V.S. 2008/A.D. 1951. This was edited by Shriswami Mangaldas of Dadu Mahavidyalya, Jaipur

On the basis of all the aforementioned handwritten and published volumes, Parshuram Chaturvedi edited a collection of Dadu's compositions. This edition was published by N.P.S., Varanasi, in V.S. 2023/A.D. 1966 with the title *Dadudayal Granthavali*. It contains 2453 *Sakhis* of Dadu Dayal divided under 37 *Angas* while his 427 *Padas* are arranged under 26 *Ragas* viz. *Rag Gaudi*, *Rag Mali Gaudo*, *Rag Kalyan*, *Rag Kando*, *Rag Adanho*, *Rag Kedaro*, *Rag Maru*, *Rag Ramgari*, *Rag Asawari*, *Rag Sidhoodo*, *Rag Gujari*, *Rag Prajyo*, *Rag Sarang*, *Rag Dev Gandhar*, *Rag Todi*, *Rag Hussaini Bangalo*, *Rag Nat Narain*, *Rag Sorath*, *Rag Gund*, *Rag Bilaval*, *Rag Suho*, *Rag Basant*, *Rag Bhairon*, *Rag Lalit*, *Rag Dhanashri*, *Rag Aarti*. Besides this, two

Laghu Granthas (Small works) viz. *Granth Kaya Veli* which contains 8 *Padas* and *Granth Pahara* which consists of 4 *Padas* are also included in the end.

Besides, the collection and preservation of their teacher's compositions, Dadu's disciples produced a large quantity of devotional verses of their own. Among them, of outstanding worth are the works of Rajjabdas. Even in Dadu's lifetime his poems were highly esteemed and widely used by his fellow disciples. But most of his best works including his famous spiritual tribute, known as *Bhent Ke Savayye* to Dadu and Gharibdas were composed after Dadu's death (A.D. 1603-04). These are still very popular among the *Dadu Panthis* and are present in various *Panchavani* collections of the *Panth*.

Rajjabdas is said to have been the author of about twenty *Laghu Granthavalis* (Small works) and a huge amount of *Sakhis*, *Shabd*s, *Savayyas*, *Arillas* and other miscellaneous verses. An old and mutilated copy of his works may still be seen at his shrine in Sanganer, Rajasthan. Works of Rajjabdas are well preserved in the various *Panchavani* collections of *Dadu Panth*.

An edited text of some important works of this great mystic poet was published as *Rajjab Bani* by the Gyan Sagar Press, Mumbai in A.D. 1918. This is a very comprehensive collection dealing with variety of subjects which includes Rajjab's 5352 *Sakhis* under 193 different *Angas*, 209 *Shabd*s arranged under 20 *Ragas* and 117 *Savayyas* under 26 *Angas*. The text also includes his *Bhent Ke Savayye*. In addition to these 3 *Gurchhandas*, 82

Arillas, 13 small and miscellaneous *Shabd*s and 89 *Chhappayas* are also incorporated in the same collection.

As the edition was largely obscure and sometime very inaccurate, a revised text of the same was prepared by Dr. Brijlal Verma and was published by the Upama Prakashan, Kanpur in A.D. 1963. The second edition of it also included a *Bani Kosh* or an index of different works.

In its present form *Rajjab Bani* seems to have also incorporated some works written in his name by his disciples or followers as was the case with many other saints of the period.

The greatest contribution of Rajjabdas lies in his famous compilation known as *Sarbangi* or *Sarvanga-Yoga*. This collection was compiled by him in circa V.S. 1730/A.D. 1673. Unfortunately, the original manuscript is not available but a number of its copies are preserved in several *Panchavani* collections at Jaipur and at Varanasi. For instance, the Dadu Mahavidalya at Jaipur preserves the work in Basta No. 3 compiled by Charandas in V.S. 1819/A.D. 1762 (ff. 332-500); Basta No. 36, compiled in V.S. 1825/A.D. 1768 (ff.9-261), Basta No. 19 compiled by Maujiram in V.S. 1833/A.D. 1776 (ff. 256-488) and Basta No. 8 Compiled by Ram Ghandas at Nagpur in V.S. 1841/A.D. 1784 (ff. 253-500). Likewise, the N.P.S. at Varanasi, contains the text of *Sarbangi* in the manuscripts of Serial No. 1394 compiled by Ramdas in V.S. 1771/A.D. 1714 (ff. 611-790), Serial No. 1708 compiled by Khusyaldas in V.S. 1836/A.D. 1779 (ff. 229-427) and Serial No. 1407 compiled by Gyandas in V.S. 1872/A.D. 1815.

There is, however, a very little textual variation in all available copies of the work though they differ sometimes in giving the total number of *Angas*. *Sarbangi* of Rajjabdas contains, under 142 or 145 *Angas*, a total of 3836 verses and hymns of different kinds which included 2643 *Sakhis*, 877 *Shabdas*, 188 Sanskrit *Shalokas*, 75 Persian *Baits*, 24 *Arillas*, 15 *Kavittas*, 7 *Chaupais*, 2 *Savayyas*, 2 *Ramainis*, 1 *Soratha*, 1 *Gatha* and 1 *Kundalya Chhanda*. In addition to these there are fifteen *Laghu Granthavalis*- two in Sanskrit and the rest in Hindi. The two Sanskrit works are *Granth Sadh Mahima* and *Granth Niranjan Ashtak*, and the Hindi works are *Avigat Lila*, *Granth Anga Bhed*, *Granth Akal Lila*, *Prem Pariksha*, *Man Prakash Pariksha*, *Shabad Pariksha* and *Gyan Pariksha*- all of Rajjabdas. *Granth Sadh Parkhya* of *Chaturbhuja*, *Saunj*, of Dadu Dayal, *Guna-Nishani* of Wazid, *Abhay Mantra Granth* of Gorakhnath, *Granth Gavitri* of Prithinath and *Nirban Jogpad* of an unidentified author.

It is important to note that the *Sarbangi* incorporated the compositions of about a hundred mystic-poets of different schools of thought flourished from 12th to 17th century A.D. Among them the saint of different schools of *bhakti* thought, the Muslim mystic of different orders and the *Siddhas* and *Yogis* are included.

The collection has maintained the traditional *Panchavani* system by giving maximum representation to the verses of five saints viz. Dadu, Kabir, Namdeva, Raidas and Hardas. Rajjab's own verses also find appearance. However, it gives a different classification of the *Angas* than the popular *Panchavani* system. This is evident from the name *Sarbangi* i.e. a work containing all

the chapters, a special attention has been paid to the division of *Angas*. The whole work is divided, according to subject matters into 142 or 145 *Angas* under which *Sakhis* are arranged.

As compiling of the sacred texts was considered an act of devotion, a great care and caution was taken to maintain the accuracy of the text in the *Sarbangi* collection. Even a cursory reading of it shows that there is a marked linguistic difference between the verses of *Dadu Panthi* teachers and those of other schools, notwithstanding the casual variation due to the local dialect and style. On one hand the verses of Dadu Dayal and his followers are found in the popular vernacular form with a great effect of Persian style and terminology together with the influence of local Rajasthani dialect, while on the other hand, the verses of Kabir, Raidas, Surdas and others are preserved in their native linguistic form i.e. *Purbi Hindi* or *Awadhi*. Likewise, while the verses of the Maharashtrian saints like Gyandeva and Namdeva are found in a loose form of the *Marathi* language, those of Nanak, Shaikh Farid and other saints of the Western side are greatly under the influence of the Punjabi language and its style. It is worth noting that the difference is not confined to the linguistic level but it is also visible in the use of terminology and symbolism found in the various regional as well as periodical accounts.

Shahabuddin Iraqi has edited *The Sarbangi of Rajjabdas* or *Rajjabdas Ki Sarbangi* on the basis of the manuscripts copies of *Sarbangi* preserved in the N.P.S., Varanasi and Dadu Mahavidyalaya, Jaipur. This edition was published from Aligarh in A.D. 1985.

Sundardas, who was another famous disciple of Dadu Dayal was the contemporary of Rajjabdas. He was primarily a scholar, a prolific writer and a poet of real distinction. He composed many works of devotional nature. Purohit Harinarayan of Jaipur had collected and edited various compositions of Sundardas and presented a thoroughly reliable text of the complete works of Sundardas. This edition was published in two parts by Rajasthan Research Society, Calcutta in A.D. 1936 under the title *Sundar Granthavali*. This collection is mainly based on an original manuscript compiled in the supervision of Sundardas by his disciple Rupadas at Fatehpur, Rajasthan, in V.S. 1742/A.D. 1685 and a handwritten copy by a *Dadu Panthi* author Asha Ram.

Sundar Granthavali contains the following compositions of Sundardas.

Gyan Samudra, is the most widely known work of Sundardas and is a popular exposition of the way of *bhakti* and of the teaching of the *Samkhya* and the *Vedanta*. It takes the form of a dialogue between master and disciple. It consists of 314 *Chhandas* which are divided in 5 chapters *Laghu Granthavali* which comprises 37 small *Granthas* of Sundardas composed in 1216 *Chhandas*.

Sundardas's *Savayye*, popularly known as the *Sundar Vilas*, takes its names *Savayye* from the dominant metre in which it is written. It consists of 563 *Chhandas* arranged under 34 *Angas* dealt with a large variety of subjects. Both in matter and arrangement, it bears a strong resemblance to the *Bani* of Dadu. A collection of *Sakhis* and hymns are among the large and more

important works of Sundardas. This collection contains 1351 *Sakhis* under 31 chapters and among these eight have the same titles as those of the *Savayyas*. The collection also contains 213 *Padas* of Sundardas arranged under 27 *Ragas* and 149 miscellaneous compositions of Sundardas.

The language of the aforesaid compositions of Sundardas is mainly *Brijbhasha* and Rajasthani and has also been enriched by the terms of Persian and Arabic. Besides this, a slight influence of Gujarati, *Purbi*, Punjabi and other languages are also be found in many cases.

Notes And References:

1. *Bijak*, S-194, p. 203
2. Keay, p. 54
3. Each *Raga* being considered suitable to some reason of the year or time or the day
4. *Rekhtas* are short didactic poems or verses in praise of God or of *guru* (teacher)
5. Guru Arjun dictated the hymns to Bhai Gurudas who actually wrote the sacred *Granth*, Gupta, p. 96
6. Macauliffe, II, p. 56, III, pp. 59-94
7. Prasinni Sahgal- *Guru Gobind Singh Aur Unka Kavya*, Lucknow, 1965, p. 102
8. Macauliffe, V, p. 261, f. no.-1

CHAPTER-IV

SOCIAL TRENDS AS REFLECTED IN THE NIRGUN BHAKTI LITERATURE

Classification Of Casteism And Professions

Ancient classification of the Hindu society into four major classes or *varnas* continued to exist in the 16th and 17th centuries i.e. in the Mughal period. They were as following: *Brahmanas* (Priests), *Kshatriyas* (Rulers and warriors), *Vaishyas* (Who were engaged in trade, agriculture and various crafts) and *Shudras* (Who were meant to serve the three higher *varnas* and formed the bulk of the labouring masses). This four-fold division of society was mainly based on occupations and for centuries it had been regarded as fundamental, primeaval and divinely ordained as identical by the *Purush-Sukta* of the *Rigveda* which refers to the emergence of the four-fold social order from the four limbs of the creator¹.

Brahmanas

The *Brahmanas* whose status was traditionally regarded the highest among the four *varnas* had been for centuries the repository and radiator of the ancient cultural traditions. In the period under review, they continued to command great respect at least in the Hindu society owing not only to the claim of their being at the top of the Hindu social hierarchy and the traditional sanctity associated with them, but also to their austerity and intellectual achievements. In the 17th century the *Brahmanas* of

Gujarat and Agra were respected very much and accounted sacred by all sections of the people².

However, the superiority of *Brahmanas* was strongly challenged by *Nirgun bhakti* saints who in the meantime had firmly established their root by believing in equality and oneness of the mankind and thus could exercise much influence on the mind of the people. Kabir whose real wrath was directed against the *Brahmanas* and their practices, laughed at their pride and their claim of superiority over the others³.

While condemning *Brahmanas*, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have provided us a fair description of the formers daily life and practices. On the basis of that information it can be said that in the 16th and 17th centuries a large number of *Brahmanas* lived according to the ideal pattern of conduct prescribed by *Dharmashastras*. Some *Nirgun bhakti* saints have specifically mentioned *Brahmanas*' belief in the traditional six-fold duties – *Shatkarma*⁴. They regularly performed evening religious prayers⁵ and followed the scheme of the four *Ashramas* or four stages of life. 1. *Brahmacharya* (Religious studentship or the state of chastity), 2. *Grihastha* (The stage of the householder), 3. *Vanaprastha* (The stage of anchorite) and 4. *Sanyasa* (Life as a wandering ascetic)⁶. *Brahmanas* as stated earlier, served as the priests of the Hindu society. They worshipped idols and paid great devotion to the *Gayatri mantra* which they used to recite many times in a day⁷. They entertained a kind of monopoly on learning or study and mastered the *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Gita*, *Vyakarna* and other branches of Hindu learning⁸.

About the outward appearance of *Brahmanas*. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have described that they gave much importance to the sacred thread (*Janeu*⁹ or *Yajnopavita*) which was worn by every male of the upper three communities viz. *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*. Besides this, *Brahmanas* wore *Mala* or garland (Generally made of *Tulsi* or *Rudraksha* beads) in their neck and two-fold *Dhoti* (A piece of cloth worn round the lower body, one end of which passes between the legs and is tucked in behind) on the lower part of their body and observed *Tilak* or sectarian mark on their forehead¹⁰.

Brahmanas segregated themselves from the members of the lower castes and followed abnormal notions of purity and pollution. Kabir described that even when touched by others, *Brahmanas* purified themselves by pouring water on their body¹¹. Guru Nanak had sharply commented on their practice of drawing line in the kitchen while cooking their food, to guard against pollution¹².

Kshatriyas

After *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas* formed the second in line of the caste system and held a very significant position in the society. From the very early period they had been rulers and warriors and were expected to protect and safeguard the other members of the society. By the early medieval period *Kshatriyas* had come to be represented by the Rajputs who formed the most influential section of this caste. In the period under review many Rajput rulers were the subordinate allies of the Mughal emperors and served under them. They were kings of their respective

principalities and were excellent soldiers. They were bold and courageous people determined and loyal¹³.

For this caste *Nirgun bhakti* saints have mentioned both the terms i.e 'Kshatriya'¹⁴ and 'Rajput'¹⁵ and their role in the society was well documented by them. According to Kabir a *Kshatriya* would follow his *Kshatriya dharma* and used to acquire splendour by his actions. Kabir further describes that it was obligatory upon *Kshatriya* to save his people in war against the enemies. And while protecting his people he would even kill people and sacrifice his own life to fulfill his duty¹⁶. Jambhoji described *Kshatriyas* as brave people who fought with sword in the battle field¹⁷.

Vaishyas

The third line in the caste system called *Vaishyas* who were at the top of trade and commerce and this was the main reason for their importance in the economic life of the Indian society. In the 16th and 17th centuries also, *Vaishyas* maintained this tradition and were highly flourishing in trade. Some of them were Shroffs i.e. money changers or bankers while others were brokers by whose agency the merchants used to buy and sell¹⁸.

Nirgun bhakti saints have used the terms 'Vaishya'¹⁹, 'Bania'²⁰ and 'Vanika'²¹, for the members of this caste which according to them were garnering stupendous profits in their trade by all means²². Some of them were treacherous and were unfamous for their improbity. At one place Kabir has sarcastically

mentions a clever *Bania*, whose work was to deciet the people by weighing less and charging more profit²³.

Shudras

With regard to the fourth *varna*, the *Shudras*, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have mentioned them in their description of the four-fold division of society²⁴. In this period the means of livelihood of this *varna* was mainly agriculture and industrial arts. It comprised the majority of agricultural labourers and petty peasants; artisans and craftsmen and also some vendors, manual workers, servants and attendants; and those following low occupations. Thus, whatever profession *Shudras* adopted they were meant to render service to the members of three higher *varnas* which had been their traditional duty from the ancient period. Guru Nanak has also mentioned that service (*seva*) to others was the duty of *Shudras* in this period²⁵.

Thus, on the basis of the information provided by *Nirgun bhakti* saints it can be said that the aforementioned traditional division of the Hindu society in four *varnas* was quite effective during the 16th and 17th centuries as a broad basis of status determination and the distribution of general duties and privileges. Beside this four-fold division of the Hindu society, there was great complexity created by a number of sub-sections and small groups with varying degrees of social status. These sections or groups originated and developed, mainly on the basis of various professions and functional specialization and turned in to castes due to their hereditary nature. In their compositions these saints

not only mention these castes but at some places describe their specific role or works in the contemporary society.

Kayasthas

In ancient period *Kayasthas* were scribes who wrote and maintained the records related with the land and revenue. In that period the term '*Kayastha*' used to denote an official title or designation. But in the early medieval period this professional class consolidated into a caste, obviously owing to the hereditary nature of their profession. As royal officials, *Kayastha* remained important in the 16th and 17th centuries also and were appointed to the influential posts under the Mughals. A Venitian traveller Nicollo Manucci (A.D. 1653-1708) has informed us that, "They (*Kaith*) were great scribes and arithmeticians and through this art they ruled all the courts"²⁶. *Nirgun bhakti* saints, Kabir and Rajjabdas have described *Kayastha* (*Kaith*) as scribes who never committed mistake in their work²⁷. However, the ugly face of this professional caste also needs to be worth mentioning due to their atrocities and oppressions. At one place Kabir has described the position of poor peasants who were too scared to stay in their villages because of the oppressions of the *Kayastha*²⁸.

Sunar

Sunar or goldsmith have long been famous for their artistic ability of making gold ornaments and their popularity also continued in the 16th and 17th centuries where they occupied the status of a glorified class. In this period the goldsmiths of Gujarat were very famous²⁹.

Nirgun bhakti saints also could not remain aloof from their influence and in the spiritual context they seem to be admiring the skill of making many types of gold ornaments with one and the same gold³⁰. Guru Nanak has given a detail description of a *Sunar*'s works such as the process of moulding gold in the furnace with the help of a hammer, crucible and anvil³¹. Besides this, Nanak has also informed us about the different weights and measures of gold prevalent in his contemporary period. These were *Tola* (A weight about 30 gms.), *Masha* (Twelfth of a *Tola*), and *Rattak* or *Ratti* (Equal to eight barley-corns)³².

Jauhari And Sarraf

Jewellers and appraisers of pearls, diamonds and other precious stones were called '*Jauhari*', while the merchants of gold and silver were known as '*Sarrafs*, who also carried money exchange or a bankers business³³. In this period the trade of pearls and precious stones was at its zenith. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to *Jauharis* as the traders of pearls and diamonds³⁴. They seem to be highly influenced by a *Jauhari*'s ability of knowing the quality of the diamonds and other precious stones. According to them a foolish or blind man can neither identify diamond nor can evaluate it but only a *Jauhari* can estimate its right value³⁵. *Sarraf* is referred to by the saints as the appraiser of gold. According to Guru Nanak gold is melted by *Suhaga* (Borax) and the gold which is tested on touch-stone and fire is considered pure by a *Sarraf*³⁶. Guru Angad has described God as a *Sarraf* who judges or tests his curious devotee on touch-stone and estimates his right value³⁷.

Luhar

Luhar or blacksmith played very significant role in the medieval society. Besides, agricultural and other tools, they also manufactured arms for military purpose. *Luhar*'s work was particularly related with the masses and was of pervasive nature. That's why *Nirgun bhakti* saints have accepted *Luhar* as an ideal. Their sayings contain extensive references to *Luhar*. Kabir has described them as the “*Survir-Satguru*”³⁸. He and other saints were especially influenced by the process through which *Luhar* heats the iron and from it makes the pure, glittering and radiant tools. The iron was heated in a furnace which was kindled by wood or coal with the help of *Dhamani* (Bellows)³⁹ and by this process *Luhar* moulded the iron in different shapes⁴⁰ with the help of his specific tools such as, *Ahrana* (Anvil), *Hathaura* (Hammer), *Sandasi* (Pincers), *Ghana* (Heavy hammer)⁴¹ etc.

References to blacksmith have also found place in the memoirs of Dutch traveller Francisco Pelsart (A.D.1620-1627)⁴². Besides this. Jahangir's *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* mentions a blacksmith named Kalyan⁴³.

Badai

The artisan who engaged in the usual wooden works were generally called ‘*Badai*’ or carpenter. In the period under review they manufactured agricultural tools, items of daily needs such as bullock-carts, boats, boxes, furniture and building material etc. Among them who were perfect in their work and produced high quality material were permitted to work in royal palace⁴⁴. *Nirgun*

bhakti saints viz. Kabir, Dharamdas and Sundardas have given account of *Badai* and have described different processes of his work, such as sawing of the wood to scratch that and to make spinning wheel of wood⁴⁵.

Kumhar

Kumhar or potter⁴⁶ proved his importance in the society by his earthen pots which were generally used by common people. In their sayings, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have made extensive references to *Kumhar*, his wheel and the vessels made by him. At many places they have described the process of a *Kumhar*'s work. A *Kumhar* carved out different types of vessels on the wheel by setting up his hands inside and outside the pot⁴⁷ and then he pulls the pot down from the revolving wheel by cutting the former through a wire⁴⁸, which is followed by baking that in the fire of furnace (*amva*)⁴⁹ and then final touch is given by painting that with different pictures⁵⁰.

Julaha

During the period under review, India was famous for various kinds of cotton and silk cloths. These cloths were woven by *Julahas* or weavers most of whom were Muslims⁵¹. Since Kabir himself belonged to this caste he has described the daily life and works of a *Julaha* in great detail. In his different compositions, he has given full account of the process of weaving on the loom. A *Julaha* spinned cotton thread by the spinning wheel. After spinning the *Julaha* starched them by the water made of rice flour in a wooden tub, when the threads dried he rubbed them by brush

this process was called '*Manjha*'⁵². In this way he prepared the thread for weaving a cloth. The cloth was very consciously and devotedly woven by him. According to Kabir a *Julaha* used to prepare a small '*Puria*' or '*Than*' (Bolt of cloth) of nine or ten *Gaz* (Yard) and a large *Than* of nineteen *Gaz*⁵³.

Other saints have also given descriptions about *Julaha*. For instance, Dadu Dayal made a reference that a *Julaha* would weave cloth very consciously and during his work if the thread got broken, it was immediately mended and in this way a cloth is prepared called '*Gazina*'⁵⁴ (A hand woven thin rough cloth). While Sundardas has described that a *Julaha* spends his days and nights in weaving and without breaking off even a thin string, he prepares a high quality cloth called '*Khasa*'⁵⁵.

Dhunia or Pinjara

Dhunia, *Pinjara* or cotton carder was very closely related with the *Julaha*. He is also mentioned in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints⁵⁶. Sundardas has described the work of *Dhunia* whose work was to beat or comb the cotton with the help of his bow⁵⁷.

Teli

Nirgun bhakti saints have made numerous references to *Teli* or oil miller, his bulls, his press mill (*kolhu*) and the process of oil pressing. The oil was extracted from the ripe oil seeds of mustard, sesame etc. by pressing them in the press mill, which was operated with the help of bulls. Kabir tells us that by pressing unripe mustard seeds one can neither get oil nor residue⁵⁸. Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh has referred to the *Teli* as the one who

pressed out the oil from the seeds of sesame through his ‘*Kolhu*’ or press mill⁵⁹. Rajjabdas compares *Kolhu* of the Teli with ‘*Kal*’ (Death or eventual destiny) and the oil seeds with the body⁶⁰. In their sayings saints have expressed their deep sympathy to the bulls of *Teli*. They compare the man, who is bounded with the illusions and desires of the world, with the bulls of *Teli* that are bounded with *Kolhu* and revolve blindly in one circle⁶¹.

Dhobi

Dhobis or washermen have also been referred to by *Nirgun bhakti* saints as allegories in spiritual descriptions. According to Dharamdas as *Dhobi* removes the filth from the cloths and cleans them, ‘*Satguru*’ clears the heart of man. He further has described the work of *Dhobi*. A *Dhobi* applies ‘*Reh*’ (Fossil alkali-consisting chiefly of sodium salt) on the cloths and places them upon the furnace, and then finally beats the clothes on a stone or board at a river bank or at a pond in order to remove the dirt⁶². From the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints, we get information about the use of soap (*sabun* or *saban*)⁶³ in the 16th and 17th centuries to remove stains from the cloths. After cleaning the clothes he washes them in clean water and squeezes water from the cloths by twisting them⁶⁴. An English traveller Peter Mundy (A.D. 1608-1667) and an Italian Gemelli Careri (A.D. 1695) have also mentioned the work of washerman⁶⁵.

Mali

A *Mali* or a gardner maintained and supervised parks, gardens, trees, fruits and flowers. Along with gardening *Mali* also

used to sell flowers in the markets⁶⁶. In the spiritual and philosophical contexts, *Nirgun bhakti* saints often describe the creator as a *Mali* who has planted innumerable plants and trees in this garden of world. He carefully irrigates them, protects and maintains every branch, every leaf and the entire ‘*Vanaspati*’ (Flora) and because of his efforts and care all the trees of garden consequently bear flowers and fruits⁶⁷. In their sayings the saints have generally mentioned the irrigation works done by *Mali* in the garden. Guru Nanak has described the works of a *Mali*, who digs the land with adze (*basula*) and plough the bed (*kyari*) of vegetables or flowers and finally irrigates the land with the help of Persian wheel (*Rahat*)⁶⁸. The saints also referred to *Malin*, the wife of a *Mali*, who always assisted her husband in his work as she used to pluck the flowers for the worship of the god⁶⁹.

Nai

In the period under review we find mentioning the work of *Nai* or barber which continues even today. His work was to shave the heads and beards. Especially the barbers of Etawa (In modern U.P.) were very famous for their neatness in shaving and artificial champing (massage of the head)⁷⁰. In one of his sayings Kabir takes the liberty to suggests that a *Nai* should shave the hearts of people⁷¹ (implying cleaners of heart). Barbers also played important role in Indian marriages as found in the description of marriage by Dharamdas he refers to a custom in which the *Nai* washed the feet of bridegroom⁷².

Kalwar

The members of this community used to trade in wine. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have described them in the same context. In their sayings they have used several terms for ‘*Kalwar*’ such as ‘*Kalal*’ or ‘*Kalar*’⁷³ and ‘*Kalali*’ or ‘*Kalwarin*’⁷⁴ (The wife of a *Kalwar* or a woman who kept a liquor shop). Guru Nanak has referred to the *Kalali* as the seller of wine at whose shop people used to drink wine daily⁷⁵. Kabir has mentioned the furnace of a *Kalal* upon which wine was placed and prepared. He informs us that the wine was prepared from the sugar candy and *Kalali* served that to the drinkers⁷⁶.

Tamboli

This community was engaged in the business of betel leaf or ‘*Pan*’. In 17th century there were many fields of *Pan* in India. It was chewed along with areca nuts (*supari*)⁷⁷. Betel leaves were very soft material, so *Tamboli* very consciously took care of them⁷⁸. The work of selling and preparing *Pan* was generally done by *Tambolin* the wife of *Tamboli* who used to prepare ‘*Bira*’ (A rolled *Pan* leaf) and offers to the interested persons⁷⁹.

Darji

The work of a *Darji* or tailor was to stitch the cloths. From the accounts of foreign travellers, we get information that in the 17th century the tailors worked day and night and earned five to six tankas in wages⁸⁰. In their sayings, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to *Darji* and his work⁸¹. Vilhoji has described the process of the work of a *Darji* who used to measure the cloth by a *Gaz*

(Yard) and cut that by scissors which was then stitched with needle and thread in order to prepare a ‘*Kurta*’ (Collarless shirt)⁸².

Dheemer Or Jheever

The caste of fishermen⁸³ was known by the name of ‘*Dheemer*’. In the compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints, *Dheemer* is mentioned by the terms ‘*Jheever*’⁸⁴ and ‘*Godiya*’⁸⁵. They have described that a *Jheever* used to catch fishes by throwing net in the water of pond or river⁸⁶. Besides the net, fishes were also caught with the help of ‘*Bansi*’ or fish hook and this method of fishing is described in detail by Sundardas⁸⁷.

Kevat

For water transportation wooden boats were used. And a *Kevat*’s or boatman’s work was to convey passengers from one side of the river to the other. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have compared *Satguru* with a *Kevat* without whom the ocean of this world cannot be crossed⁸⁸.

Kahar

In the 16th and 17th centuries litters (*palkis* or *dolis*) were generally used for travelling particularly by women. These *Palkis* were carried by *Kahars*⁸⁹ or *Mahras*⁹⁰ (Palanquins bearers) on their shoulder. They carried people from one place to another⁹¹. *Palki* or *Doli* had a special place in Indian marriage. The bride used to depart to her in law’s house in *Palki* or *Doli*. Both Kabir and Dharamdas have described *Kahars* carrying the *Dola* of a bride⁹².

Banjara

In the period under review *Banjaras* are mentioned as those people who were engaged in trade of grain. They had acquired great ability in transporting trade commodities to a large distance. They owned a large number of bullocks. According to *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *Banjara* was a tribe. Some of them had 1000 bullocks. They took grain from different districts to the town and sold that⁹³. Various references of *Banjaras* are also found in the accounts of foreign travellers, Peter Mundy has referred to some *Banjaras* whose oxen were 14,000 in number, all laden with grain, wheat, rice etc. on the way to Agra for trade⁹⁴. According to *Nirgun bhakti* saints *Banjaras* used to load commodities on their bullocks and dispatch them for trade in the form of *Carvan (Tanda)*⁹⁵. In the course of their journey they used to pay taxes to ‘*Jagatis*’ or tax collectors at different places⁹⁶.

Rangrej

The work of a *Rangrej* or dyer⁹⁷ was to dye cloths. In 16th and 17th centuries cloths were dyed by indigo in Agra and at Ahemdabad⁹⁸. In this period Agra used to be a well established centre for this work. It was situated very close to Bayana where indigo was produced in large quantity⁹⁹. According to Guru Gobind Singh, a *Rangrej* used to keep colours in his bag¹⁰⁰. He also used to colour a cloth with the dye for which he used an earthen pot in which he used to add *Majith* or *Manjistha* (The madder plant which was used for red colour)¹⁰¹. *Manjistha* was used to give fast and firm colour to the cloth.

Manihar

Manihars were the makers and the sellers of glass bangles. In the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints references to *Manihars* are not generally found. However, in one of his composition Guru Nanak has indicated that *Manihars* were engaged in the business of bangles¹⁰².

Sikligar

The work of *Sikligar* (Gilder, polisher and cleaner) was to whet the arms and to make mirrors and we find numerous instances where his work has been greatly appreciated by *Nirgun bhakti* saints who recognize him as ‘*Guru*’ or teacher¹⁰³. In the spiritual contexts saints describe the *Sikligar* as the one who removes the rust from the arms¹⁰⁴. At one place Kabir has mentioned ‘*Kharsan*’¹⁰⁵- the whet-stone of *Sikligar* by which he removes rust from the sword. Besides this, Kabir also mentions that *Sikligar* used to make mirrors and polish the back of a glass with the help of a instrument ‘*Maskala*’¹⁰⁶.

Kasai

Kasai or butcher’s work was to kill animals and to sell their meat¹⁰⁷. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have regarded *Kasai* as ‘*Kal*’ as the messenger of death. In their sayings we find references of *Kasai* and his knife ‘*Chhuri*’ by which he cuts the throat of animals¹⁰⁸.

Ahir And Gujar

The members of both of these communities viz. *Ahir* and *Gujar* were engaged in cattle rearing and the business of milk and

curd. In the accounts of an English Traveller William Finch (A.D. 1608-1611) we find mentioning of some *Gujars* who lived near Sikandra in Agra, and had cattles. They used to make butter and cheese from the milk¹⁰⁹. In a spiritual context Kabir mentions *Gujari* who stirred milk¹¹⁰. Rajjabdas had made similar description of a *Ahir* woman who stirred milk and got buttermilk (*Chhachh*)¹¹¹ from that.

Chamar

The members of this community were engaged in the works of leather that's why they were called '*Charmkara*' in ancient period. They used to thrash the skin of dead animals and make leather from it. According to *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Chamar* used to carry dead animals for skin¹¹². The members of this caste belonged to the weak section of the society and were very often exploited by the members of the higher castes. Rajjabdas has written that *Chamar* used to do forced labour (*begari*) in the villages¹¹³.

Independent Professionals

In the compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints we also find some references regarding the people who belonged to different independent professions but at the same time cannot be specified as castes. However, these professionals played significant role in the contemporary society.

Vaidh And Hakim

In the period under review, *Vaidh* and *Hakim* were *Aurvedic* and *Tibbi* physicians¹¹⁴ respectively. They were experts in treating different types of diseases and were regarded very respectable in

the society. According to the information provided by the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints, a *Vaidh* had great skill in diagnosing the disease by just checking the pulse of the patient¹¹⁵. The medicines which were then recommended by them used to be mainly herbal in nature (*jadi-booti*)¹¹⁶. Generally the juices (*ras*) of these herbs were used as medicines¹¹⁷. However, a *Vaidh* used to be quite strict in instructions to the patients which like the present day included do's and don'ts. We find many instances in the text of *Nirgun bhakti* saints where patients were given directions to abstain from sweets and spicy food¹¹⁸. Surprisingly, they also seem to be knowing the science of ophthalmology as we find mentioning of the eye disease which a *Vaidh* used to clear it by means of an instrument called '*Shalaka*'¹¹⁹.

Besides *Vaidh*, references to the *Hakim* or *Tibbi* physician are also found in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. At one place Rajjabdas has mentioned a *Hakim*¹²⁰, while Dharamdas has referred to a *Yunani* medicine called '*Jawarish*'¹²¹, which was used to treat stomach-ache.

Garuri

There were an another professional group called snake-charmers or *Garuris* who used to recite certain kind of charm or *mantra* against snake-bite¹²². In the same way *Garuri* also treated scorpion-bite by using charm¹²³. They used to give grinded herb to the patients for drinking¹²⁴. An English traveller Edward Terry (A.D. 1616-619) has referred to snake-charmers who used to treat snake-bite by applying a kind of powder at the effected place to lessen the effect of poison¹²⁵.

Marjeeva

In their sayings *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to *Marjeeva* whose work was to dive into deep sea to find out pearl oysters¹²⁶. Saints have praised the skill of *Marjeeva* and described him as a devotee who enters into deep waters of devotion and unfolds profound knowledge of all pervading supreme spirit¹²⁷.

Untouchability

From the literature of the *Nirgun bhakti* saints it becomes evident that Untouchability, as an evil, was very much prevalent in this period. The practice of untouchability was deeply connected with certain abnormal notions of purity and pollution. It was deemed as arising in various ways by birth, by pursuit or by impure occupation etc.

In the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. There are references of ‘*Chandala*’¹²⁸, ‘*Chamara*’¹²⁹ and *Duma*¹³⁰ (*Doma*) who were not reckoned among the four castes and were associated with such occupations which were presumed to be filthy and impure. Of these *Chandalas* used to work at funeral places while *Doma* played on lute and sing¹³¹. In one of the sayings of Jambhoji, he mentions the *Duma* who used to beat drums in the funeral processions¹³² while *Chamaras* as mentioned earlier were engaged in leather works. The terms like ‘*Chuhra*’¹³³ or ‘*Chuhara*’¹³⁴ also used for the people who were accepted with menial works such as cleansing of the villages or towns and other services. They were considered untouchables by the members of other castes¹³⁵. Thus the references of these people in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti*

saints clearly indicate the presence of untouchability in 16th and 17th centuries.

Slavery

Though the system of Slavery is an ancient phenomena, we gather the information that the slaves existed in the society and they were at the bottom of the social ladder. They were both males and females and were purchased and utilized for any kind of work. Males were needed for heavy duties while females for various other purposes like singing and dancing. And the most beautiful among them served as concubines for the rich and well to do people. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to male slaves as ‘*Laala*’¹³⁶, ‘*Dasa*’¹³⁷, ‘*Chera*’¹³⁸, ‘*Launda*’¹³⁹ and ‘*Ghulam*’¹⁴⁰ and female slaves as ‘*Laundi*’¹⁴¹, ‘*Bandi*’¹⁴², ‘*Dasi*’¹⁴³ and ‘*Cheri*’¹⁴⁴ and have mentioned that they were sold and purchased in the markets like the commodity¹⁴⁵. These slave markets existed in almost all important places in the country. Slaves were also sold in the fairs held in major cities.

Furthermore, we also get information regarding the duties of male slave i.e. *Dasa* whose works were to fan for his mater, to wash feet, to massage his feet, to carry water, to grind millstone, to sweep house¹⁴⁶ etc. Mughal Emperors had thousands of slaves in their imperial household¹⁴⁷. In his account Manucci has given the names of some of the king’s principle slaves who were established as chiefs to govern and guide the rest¹⁴⁸.

Among the female employees of the royal *Haram*, the lowest section or the menials were slaves who were brought as presents

or were bought in the market. They were given appropriate names that suited the person in gesture or speech or gait or acts. Manucci has enumerated some of the names of female slaves¹⁴⁹.

Food

The Indians, through the ages, have been known for their high degree of proficiency in the culinary art. This art came to be further encouraged and developed during 16th and 17th centuries i.e. the age of *Nirgun bhakti* saints, when the Mughals were ruling over the country. The dishes, during this period, did not suffer from lack of variety or quality and they were chiefly in keeping with the socio- economic status of the different classes amongst the Hindus and the Muslims.

Nirgun bhakti saints have informed us that different kinds of *Bhojan*¹⁵⁰ and several kinds of *Vyanjan*¹⁵¹ and *Pakvaan*¹⁵² were prepared in the Indian homes. Vilhoji has enumerated thirty six (*chhattis bhojan*)¹⁵³ kinds of dishes.

The staple food of the people in India in the period under review, consisted of *Gehun*¹⁵⁴ (Wheat) *Dhan*¹⁵⁵ (Paddy) or *Chaval*¹⁵⁶ (Rice), *Makka*¹⁵⁷ (Corn), *Jvar*¹⁵⁸ (Millet), and *Jau*¹⁵⁹ (Barley). Some of these were used in the form of *Ata*¹⁶⁰ (Flour), *Maida*¹⁶¹ (Fine flour) and the other as whole grain. Various varieties of *Dal*¹⁶² (Pulses) such as *Mung*¹⁶³, *Chana*¹⁶⁴ (Gram) etc. were also used. In this period rice of different variety was available in India in abundance¹⁶⁵ and according to the information provided by the saints it was cooked in various ways. The royal and well to do classes cooked them in different kinds of

dishes such as *Biryani*¹⁶⁶ (A dish of meat and fried rice), *Pulav*¹⁶⁷ (A dish of fried or boiled rice and meat with spices), *Tahari*¹⁶⁸ (Boiled rice with spices) and *Khichri*¹⁶⁹ (A dish richly prepared with rice *mung dal*, *ghee*, salt etc.) which was the most universal and popular food. While the common people, whose food generally suffered from monotony and lack of variety, were satisfied with *Bhat*¹⁷⁰ (Boiled rice), *Khichri*¹⁷¹ which was prepared in an ordinary way and *Chirva*¹⁷² (Rice boiled, pounded and roasted). Poorer of them were depended on rice water which is called ‘*Patara Manda*’¹⁷³ by Sundaradas.

Bread which was also termed as *Roti*¹⁷⁴ or *Manda*¹⁷⁵ was made of wheat, gram and barley flour. Rajjaldas has referred to the “*Jau Ki Roti*”¹⁷⁶ (Bread of barley) which was generally the bread of commoners. *Rotis* were made either on *Tawa*¹⁷⁷ (An iron plate) which was put on fire, or were baked in an oven the latter were called as *Tandoori* or ‘*Tandul Roti*’¹⁷⁸ and ‘*Bhatti Roti*’¹⁷⁹. From the gram flour a deep fried savoury was prepared called ‘*Pakora*’ or ‘*Bara*’¹⁸⁰ which consisted of vegetables, sliced and coated in batter of gram flour. From the flour of wheat *Puri* or *Pur*¹⁸¹ (A small round cake, deep fried in *ghee* or oil) was also prepared.

Among the vegetables, used in the 16th and 17th centuries following are mentioned in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints, *Bhainta*¹⁸² or *Baingan*¹⁸³ (Brinjal). *Hara Sag*¹⁸⁴ (Green leafy vegetable), *Kaddu* or *Kadua*¹⁸⁵ (Pumkin) *Kand*¹⁸⁶ (A bulbous root), *Muli*¹⁸⁷ (Radish), *Kakri*¹⁸⁸ (A type of cucumber) *Patol*¹⁸⁹ (*Parval* – a kind of cucumber) and *Pyaj*¹⁹⁰ (Onion) and *Lahsun*¹⁹¹

(Garlic) which were available in large quantities and were invariably used in all rich and spicy preparations. Among the many vegetable preparations, *Sag* was one of the most pleasant dish. It was prepared with spinach, and other greens with onions, *ghee*, pepper, cloves and other spices¹⁹².

Animal flesh or non-vegetarian food was included in the daily diet of the people. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to the animals whose flesh was eaten. They were *Bhains*¹⁹³ (Buffaloe), *Gay*¹⁹⁴ (Cow), *Gadar*¹⁹⁵ or *Bhed* (Sheep), *Bakra*¹⁹⁶ or *Bakri*¹⁹⁷ (Goat) and *Mrig*¹⁹⁸ or Hiran (Deer). Of these buffaloes were freely killed but the meat was not considered good to eat though the common people did use it¹⁹⁹. Cows were also killed for their meat, however, their slaughter was forbidden by Emperor Jahangir²⁰⁰. Sheeps and goats were plentiful in the country and their meat was ample and cheap²⁰¹. Besides this, the jungles were abundant in different variety of deer and other animals and the people used to go there regularly for hunting²⁰².

Along with the above, fishes²⁰³ were also eaten which were in large quantity in the Indian rivers and in the sea along the coast and were quite cheap. Surjanji Punia has referred to *Singi*²⁰⁴ or *Singala*²⁰⁵ fish.

Besides this, the flesh of *Murgi*²⁰⁶ (Hen), *Kukri*²⁰⁷ (Wild hen) and *Titar*²⁰⁸ (Partridge) was also eaten.

In a large variety of non-vegetarian dishes, saints have mentioned, *Yakhni*²⁰⁹ (Prepared with meat, onions and salt), *Salan*²¹⁰ (Meat curry), *Kabab*²¹¹ or *Sinh Kabab*²¹² (It was of

various kind and was prepared from meat, salt, fresh ginger, onions, pepper, cloves etc.), and *Biryani* and *Pulav* (As noted above).

Spices

It could never be regarded possible to cook food in an Indian home without spices, of which various items have been mentioned by *Nirgun bhakt* saints, such as, *Kesar*²¹³ (Saffron used as spices as well as cosmetics), *Laung*²¹⁴ (Cloves) *Illaichi* or *Laichi*²¹⁵ (Cardamoms) *Jayphal* or *Jayphar*²¹⁶ (Mace) *Haldi*²¹⁷ or *Hardi*²¹⁸ (Turmeric), *Hing*²¹⁹ (Asafoetida), *Sarson*²²⁰ (Mustard seeds), *Sonhi*²²¹ (Dry ginger) and ofcourse *Laun*²²² or *Loon*²²³ (Salt). Abul Fazl has given in details the prices of these items of spices during Emperor Akbar's reign²²⁴.

Milk And Milk Products

*Doodh*²²⁵ (Milk), and *Chhachh*²²⁶ (Buttermilk) were the common drinks of the people. Besides this, *Ghee*²²⁷ or *Ghrit*²²⁸ (Clarified butter) and *Makhan*²²⁹ (Butter) were important items of food in India which were used abundantly by the people. *Ghee* was used for frying vegetables, meat, for the preparation of sweets used in *Khichri* and was applied to *Rotis*. *Dahi*²³⁰ (Curd) was also an integral part of meals in an Indian family. Curd was milk turned thick after coagulating it with rennet. It was usually taken at lunch time. The main preparation of curd was *Rayta*²³¹ which was either made plain with salt or sometimes was made tasty by adding sliced or chopped cucumber or other vegetables.

Oil

Nirgun bhakti saints have referred to ‘*Sarson Ka Tel*’²³² (Mustard oil) and ‘*Til Ka Tel*’²³³ (Sesame oil) which were used for cooking.

Sweets

Because of the abundance of milk, *ghee* and sugar in the country, a variety of sweets (*mithai*)²³⁴ were prepared. There were many sorts of sugar available in the country among them *Shakkar*²³⁵ (Sugar), *Khand*²³⁶ (Coarse sugar), *Guda*²³⁷ (Raw sugar) and *Bheli*²³⁸ (lump of raw sugar), have been mentioned by *Nirgun bhakti* saints. *Missri*²³⁹ (Sugar candy) was yet another kind. Sometimes *Batasha*²⁴⁰ (Hollow sugar cake) and “*Mithai Ki Muraten*”²⁴¹ (Images made from sugar) were prepared from sugar. Besides this, *Madhu*²⁴² or *Sahai*²⁴³ (Honey) was also used by people and was considered healthy.

Saints have referred to the availability of a variety of sweets and sweet dishes in the country. These were *Kheer*²⁴⁴ (Made of rice boiled in milk, with sugar), it was one of the popular sweet dish prepared in every Indian home, *Sivaiyan* or *Sevakiya*²⁴⁵, (Noodles or vermicelli, generally made sweet with milk, sugar and various dry fruits), *Lapsi*²⁴⁶ (It was made of flour, milk and sugar), *Sheera*²⁴⁷ (It was made of coarse wheat flour or semolina, ghee, raw sugar and dry fruits), *Manda*²⁴⁸ (A pastry made with refined flour, and fried in *ghee*), *Khowa*²⁴⁹ (Thickened milk), many types of sweets were made of it. *Rabri*²⁵⁰ (Thickened and sweetened milk), *Laddu*²⁵¹ and “*Motichur Ke Laddu*”²⁵² (It consisting of balls

made of gram flour or thickened milk with sugar, saffron and other ingredients), *Ghevar*²⁵³ (Made of refined flour in the form of cake with *ghee* and sugar), *Peda*²⁵⁴ (Made of milk and sugar), *Kalakand*²⁵⁵ (Made of thickened milk or gram flour with sugar), *Malida*²⁵⁶ (A kind of sweetmeat, made of pounded meat with milk, butter and sugar).

Foreign travellers, who came to India during 16th and 17th centuries, found many confectioners' shops in the markets of various cities, visited by them, full of sweets. The Portuguese traveller Fray Sebastian Manrique (A.D. 1629-1643) was surprised to find huge amounts of food stuffs and dainties of all sorts in the numerous markets of the country. He has stated, "Entire streets could be seen wholly occupied by skilled sweetmeat makers, who proved their skill by offering wonderful sweets"²⁵⁷.

Fruits

Fruits, green and dry, of different varieties constituted an important item in the diet consumed, especially by the rich and well to do classes, both among the Hindus and Muslims.

Nirgun bhakti saints have made frequent references to the availability of different kinds of green fruits (*phal*)²⁵⁸ in the 16th and 17th centuries. *Aam*²⁵⁹ (Mango) was very popular in this period also. Beside this, *Seb* or *Sebariya*²⁶⁰ (Apple), *Kela*²⁶¹ or *Kera*²⁶² (Banana), *Anar*²⁶³ (Pomegranates), *Narangi* or *Naurangiya*²⁶⁴ (Orange), *Angoor* or *Ankur*²⁶⁵ (Grapes), *Sadaphal*²⁶⁶ (Pomelo or shaddock), *Jamun* or *Jamuniya*²⁶⁷ (Blackberry), *Ber*²⁶⁸ (Plum), *Nariyar*²⁶⁹ or *Naliyar*²⁷⁰ (Green coconut), *Khazoor*²⁷¹ (Date),

*Amla*²⁷² (Embelic), *Neembu*²⁷³ (Lemon), *Ganna* or *Ikh*²⁷⁴ (Sugarcane), *Shahtoot* or *Toot*²⁷⁵ (Mulberry) and *Singhara*²⁷⁶ (The water-chestnut) were also plentiful. Some varieties of dry fruits (*mewa*)²⁷⁷ are also referred to by the saints such as *Badam*²⁷⁸ (Almond), *Chhuara*²⁷⁹ (Dry date), *Gari*²⁸⁰ or *Khopra*²⁸¹ (Kernal of dry coconut) and *Dakh*²⁸² (*Munakka* or raisin).

Important Flavours, Drinks And Intoxicants

Both the Hindus and Muslims were fond of using a great variety of flavours. One of the most popular among them was betel leaf (*pan*²⁸³ or *tambul*²⁸⁴) which was generally taken after the meals with *supari*²⁸⁵ (areca nut) for changing the odour of the mouth and sweetening the breath.

Among the drinks *Nirgun bhakti* saints have mentioned *Sharbat*²⁸⁶ (A kind of cold drink, prepared from the mixture of water, milk or curd, sugar scents and spices), which was very common during the summer among the well to do or royal classes. Juice of any fruit (*sira*)²⁸⁷, especially juice of sugarcane (*ganna* or *ikh ka ras*)²⁸⁸ was and still is the favourite drink for the commoners.

The use of wine seems to have been restricted only to few among the great aristocrats, mostly Muslims, although it was not altogether unknown to the Hindu well to do classes²⁸⁹. Many references to the *Madu*²⁹⁰, *Madira*²⁹¹ or *Sura*²⁹² (Wine) can be found in the compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. Guru Gobind Sing has referred to the use of *Sharab*²⁹³ (Wine). However, the most common and perhaps the cheapest intoxicating drink was the

*Tari*²⁹⁴ or juice of coconut palm or date trees. It was a very common drink throughout India²⁹⁵, particularly in the lower sections.

Besides wine, the use of intoxicants of different kinds including *Bhang*²⁹⁶ (Hemp leaves), *Afeem*²⁹⁷ (Opium), *Posat*²⁹⁸ (Poppy seeds), *Aak*²⁹⁹ (Swallow-wort), *Dhatura*³⁰⁰ (Thornapple), *Tamakhu*³⁰¹ (Tobacco) etc. were also very common in this period.

Dress, Toilets And Ornaments

Indian dresses through the ages, have been chiefly determined by the geographical factor and climatic conditions as well as the changing needs of the socio-religious manners and customs of the different types of people living in this country.

The costumes, during the period under review, did not differ much materially from their modern counterparts, except of course, in their cuts and designs.

The sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints have furnished with a rich material related to the dresses and costumes of their contemporary period. Dresses were made from the large variety of material i.e. cotton, silk, wool, golden stuff etc.

Sundardas has described that with cotton alone various types of cloths were produced such as *Khasa*, *Malmal*, *Sahan*, *Sitara*, *Sirisaf*, *Bafta*, *Bhiraun*, *Parkala* and *Gazina*³⁰². A detailed list of many other types of cloths is given by Abul Fazl³⁰³.

Male Dress

There were a number of garments for male to cover the upper part of their body. Of these *Jamah*³⁰⁴ was among the most favoured apparel of the Mughal Emperors. It was a coat with full and tight sleeves worn over the shoulders, reaching up to the knees. It was tied usually on the right side³⁰⁵. Besides this, there were some other costumes referred to by saints which were worn by the common men, such as *Baga*³⁰⁶ (A knee length outer garment), *Kurta*³⁰⁷ (A collarless shirt), and *Cholana*³⁰⁸ or *Chola*³⁰⁹ (A long gown or cloak). The peasants and the poorer classes, who tried their best to cut their dresses requirements to the minimum, were satisfied with their *Gudari*³¹⁰ (A patched or tattered garment).

In the winter season the rich people covered the upper parts of their bodies by shawls (*shal*)³¹¹ of very fine woollen fabrics of different attractive colours. They were especially manufactured in Kashmir. Emperor Akbar greatly patronized the shawl industry and encouraged people to produce these in many varieties³¹². Woollen coats were also used, of course in the winter season. Rajjabdas has referred to the “*Jare Ka Kot*”³¹³ (The coat for winter season). Besides these, *Kamari*³¹⁴, (Blanket) was used generally by ascetics.

A considerable degree of respectability and honour came to be associated with the wearing of the head dresses. A good deal of references to the use of *Pag*³¹⁵ (Turban) as a head dress, are available in the *Nirgun bhakti* literature. Turbans were popular among both the Hindu and Muslim noblemen equally. Even

Emperors Akbar and Jahangir wore turbans³¹⁶. Turbans of the Emperors and well to do classes were made of the finest possible cloth. Sometimes these were white and sometimes coloured and adorned with gold and silken threads and other decorative and precious devices³¹⁷. However, the common people wore simple turbans made of ordinary and cheap cloths. *Dastar*³¹⁸ (Turban) was particularly worn by Sufi saints. Other head dresses mentioned by *Nirgun bhakti* saints were *Topi*³¹⁹ (Cap which is referred to by them in connection with the Hindu head dress) and *Kulah*³²⁰ (Cap). The Muslims generally shaved their heads and used *Kulahs* on them³²¹. Mughal emperors also wore *Kulahs* of different kinds³²².

The well to do classes put shoes or sleepers on their naked feet. The wealthier sections used shoes of Spanish, Turkish or Moraccan leather³²³. References to shoes of different varieties popularly known as '*Panahi*'³²⁴ or '*Panhia*'³²⁵ and slippers known as '*Paijar*'³²⁶ are available in the compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. Another kind of sleepers were known as '*Pavodi*'³²⁷ (*Kharaun*-wooden sandle) which were worn by ascetics.

It was also very popular fashion among the wealthier sections to tie one's waist a broad scarf or girdle. It was called '*Pataka*'³²⁸ or '*Kamarband*'³²⁹ (Waistband) and was made of costly stuffs and of varied colours.

To cover the lower part of the body fine *Dhotis*³³⁰ (A piece of cloth worn round the lower body, one end of which passes between the legs and is tucked in behind) of high quality fabrics were very commonly used by the rich Hindu people. While the

common men contended themselves with the minimum of clothings. They wore *Dhoti*³³¹ made of cheap quality cloth. *Tahbandh*³³² or *Tahmad* (A cloth worn wrapped round the waist and falling to the ankles) was particularly worn by Muslims. Poorer sections passed their time in *Langota*, *Jagota*³³³, *Langoti*³³⁴ (loin cloth).

Female Dress

Women's dresses were less varied than those of men. Hindu ladies generally worn a *Sari*³³⁵ (A broad piece of cloth, wrapped round the middle part of the body and thrown over the head) of different shades such as red, yellow etc³³⁶. Ladies of wealthier families also worn *Saris* which were made of thin and fine stuffs such as silk (*pat*)³³⁷ etc, and decorated with numerous attractive prints and designs. Along with *Sari*, *Angiya*³³⁸ (Short jacket and blouses) which was also called '*Kanchuli*'³³⁹ or '*Choli*'³⁴⁰ (Corsets) were worn round the chest by the rich and poor women alike. They were made in various colours, cuts and designs, sometimes they bore beautiful embroidery ('*kasida choli*')³⁴¹.

Another variety of popular dresses of ladies consisted of *Lahanga*³⁴² or *Ghaghara* (A long and very loose skirt) with a *Choli* or *Angiya* (As noted above) and a *Chunri*³⁴³ or *Chunia*³⁴⁴ (*Orhani*³⁴⁵ or *Dupatta* - long scarf which was thrown over to cover the head and upper parts of the body), it was generally made of thin fabrics and in different shades such as red and sometimes it was dyed in multicolours³⁴⁶.

During cold weather the aristocratic ladies wore shawls of finest texture.

Toilets And Ornaments

Nirgun bhakti saints have referred to elaborate arrangements made by both men and women, especially of the higher classes to enhance their physical charm and attractiveness. The women particularly of Hindu community adorned themselves with all the sixteen traditional adornments (*solah singar*)³⁴⁷.

People applied various types of perfumes (*attar*³⁴⁸ or *itr*) and perfumed cosmetics to their bodies such as *Chowa*³⁴⁹ (A fragrant paste made of four ingredients), *Chandan*³⁵⁰ (Sandal wood oil, powder or paste), *Kapoor*³⁵¹ (Camphor), *Kasturi*³⁵² (Musk), *Argajah*³⁵³ (Perfume of aloe-wood), *Kesar*³⁵⁴ or *Kumkum*³⁵⁵ (Saffron) etc. after their usual bath. *Darpan*³⁵⁶ or *Arsi*³⁵⁷ (Mirrors) were commonly used by people to adorn themselves. Women and some men also applied *Kajal*³⁵⁸, *Kajar*³⁵⁹ or *Anjan*³⁶⁰ (Collyrium) and *Surma*³⁶¹ (Cosmetic of antimony or lead sulphide) in the eyes in order to enhance their radiance. It was almost a common practice among the Hindu men to put a *Tilak*³⁶², *Tika*³⁶³ or *Chhapa*³⁶⁴ (A saffron or sandal mark) on their forehead. While the Hindu ladies put *Tilak*³⁶⁵ or *Tika*³⁶⁶, generally of *Kumkum* on their forehead. Juice of *Tambul*³⁶⁷ or *Pan* (Betel leaf) was used especially by women both Hindu and Muslim in order to redden their lips and to make them look attractive. While *Mehdi*³⁶⁸ (Henna) was used by them to redden the hands and feet. Women's hair were always oiled with various kinds of *Tel*³⁶⁹ (Oil) and *Phulel*³⁷⁰ (Perfumed oil). They kept their hair well dressed and

plaited³⁷¹ and sometimes coiled³⁷² them behind. Married Hindu ladies considered very necessary to apply *Sindur*³⁷³ (Vermilion) for marking the parting of their hair (*mang*).

In India women were normally accustomed to put on ornaments from their very early years. There were wonderful variety of women's ornaments which were used for the different limbs of the body. Abul Fazl has mentioned thirty seven different types of ornaments either plain or studded with jewels³⁷⁴. An attempt, however, has been made here to describe only those referred to by *Nirgun bhakti* saints. In their sayings, the ornaments worn by women are called *Abharana*³⁷⁵, *Abhushan*³⁷⁶, *Bhukhan*³⁷⁷ and *Gahna*³⁷⁸.

Ornament Of Head

*Sishphul*³⁷⁹ or *Sirphul*, *Rakhri*³⁸⁰ or *Rakti*: It was a large beautifully embossed ornament worn on the back part (nearly on the crown) of the head. It resembled the marigold³⁸¹.

Ornament Of Forehead

*Bindi*³⁸² or *Tiki*³⁸³. It was a small tinsel ornament worn on the forehead³⁸⁴.

Ornaments Of Ear

*Kundal*³⁸⁵: It was an ear ornament worn in the lower part. It was usually made of gold, silver or copper and it hung down from the ear almost touching the shoulders³⁸⁶.

*Bali*³⁸⁷: It was circlet with pearls, worn in the lobe of the ear³⁸⁸.

*Mundre*³⁸⁹ or *Karnaphul*: A tassel-like ornament made with silver chains and little balls³⁹⁰.

Ornament Of Nose

*Besar*³⁹¹ or *Besari*³⁹²: It was a broad piece of gold to the upper end of which a pearl is attached and at the other end a golden wire which is clasped on the pearl and hung from the nose by gold wire³⁹³.

Ornaments Of Neck

*Har*³⁹⁴: It was necklace of strings of pearls interconnected by golden roses³⁹⁵.

*Mala*³⁹⁶: Necklace studded with pearls or gold beads³⁹⁷.

*Motisiri*³⁹⁸, *Mukut Har*³⁹⁹, *Motin Mal*⁴⁰⁰ or *Moti Mal*: It was a necklace of pearls⁴⁰¹.

*Kanthamala*⁴⁰²: It was made of elongated gold beads⁴⁰³.

*Gaj Mukta*⁴⁰⁴ or *Gaj Moti Har*⁴⁰⁵: It was also a necklace made of special pearls, which is said to be taken from the forehead of the elephant⁴⁰⁶.

*Kanhashri*⁴⁰⁷: A gold necklace made of two or three strings⁴⁰⁸.

*Hamel*⁴⁰⁹: A necklace made of gold or silver coins⁴¹⁰.

Ornament Of Waist

*Kshudra Ghantika*⁴¹¹: It was an ornament of waist consisting of golden bells, strung together on gold wire and twisted round the waist while moving the bells created musical sound⁴¹².

Ornament Of Fingers

*Mundri*⁴¹³, *Mudrika*⁴¹⁴ or *Anguthi*: It was a ring worn by both women and men to adorn their fingers, normally one for the each. The well to do classes adorned their rings with jewels and diamonds and at times they were set with fine looking glasses⁴¹⁵.

Ornament Of Wrist

*Pahunchi*⁴¹⁶: It was a bracelet made of a series of strings of shells or small elongated beads⁴¹⁷.

*Kangan*⁴¹⁸ or *Kankan*⁴¹⁹: It was a bracelet made of stiff metal and worn round the wrists. It had knobs on the upper side⁴²⁰.

*Churi*⁴²¹: They were bracelets generally made of flat ribbon of gold or silver and sometimes of glasses (*kach banda*⁴²²-as called by Guru Gobind Singh). They were worn ten or twelve in number over the wrist up to the elbow⁴²³.

*Chura*⁴²⁴: Bracelets made of ivory⁴²⁵.

Ornament Of Arms

*Bajuband*⁴²⁶: It was a trinket adorned with semi-circular ornaments, made hollow and filled up with melted resin. The ends were furnished with loops of the same metal generally silver and secured by silken skeins⁴²⁷.

Ornaments Of Feet

*Painjani*⁴²⁸: It was a hollow *Kara* with little bells or small pebbles inside⁴²⁹.

*Payal*⁴³⁰: They were ankle ornaments made with chains and pendants of silver, set with a fringe of small spherical bells, all of which clink together at every motion of the limb⁴³¹.

*Ghungru*⁴³²: They consisted of small golden bells six on each ankle, strung upon silk⁴³³.

*Nupur*⁴³⁴ or *Nevar*⁴³⁵: It was an ornament of the toe with small bells⁴³⁶.

*Anwat*⁴³⁷: It was an ornament worn on big toe. It was a ring furnished with little bells and attached along with each side of the foot to the pazeb⁴³⁸.

*Bichhua*⁴³⁹ or *Bichhiya*: It was an ornament for the instep shaped like half a bell⁴⁴⁰.

Games And Amusements

Games and amusements were the popular pastimes and mode of social interaction among people during 16th and 17th centuries. The pastimes that were in vogue during this period such as *Chaugan* (Polo), *Shikar* (Hunting) animal fight etc. were influenced by the military and adventurous characteristics of the age and were practically the monopoly of the aristocratic classes. While others like *Chaupar*, dice or gambling, chess, playing cards, kite flying, wrestling, fencing etc. were accessible to the rich and poor alike.

Games and amusements referred to by *Nirgun bhakti* saints are as following:

Chaugan

The game of *Chaugan* or polo is quite old in origin. It was introduced in India by the Turks, who played it with great zest. The game became popular with the aristocracy and in the Mughal period it was a very important means of recreation. The skill of Rajputs in playing this game was undoubtedly very high⁴⁴¹. As is indicated by Rajjabdas it was played on horseback⁴⁴². Sundardas has narrated that it was played in the *Maidan* (Open ground) with a ball (for which he has used the term ‘*Goi*’) which was carried to the *Hal* (Goal) by the players⁴⁴³. Similarly Guru Gobind Singh has indicated that *Chaugan* was played in the maidan with a ball (for which he has used the term ‘*Gua*’) and stick (‘*aj*’)⁴⁴⁴.

Detailed description of *Chaugan* can be found in *Ain-i-Akbari*⁴⁴⁵. Emperor Akbar was very fond of this game. He himself took part in the game and maintained well demarcated *Maidans*, the most famous of them was at Fatehpur Sikri⁴⁴⁶.

Shikar:

Shikar or hunting was one of the best means of recreation during Mughal times and appeared to have been favourite with the monarchs and aristocratic sections of the society. However, sometimes the commoners also participated in it. Almost all the Mughal Emperors of the period under review namely Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb were very fond of hunting lions, tigers, leopards, deers, antelopes, elephants etc⁴⁴⁷.

In the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints, various references of hunters and hunting can be found. Guru Gobind Singh himself was

a skilled hunter and in one of his saying he has claimed that besides enjoying different games, he has hunted *Reechh* (Bear), *Rojh* or *Nilgai* (Large antelope) and *Jhankhara* or *Barahsingha* (Twelve-tined antelope)⁴⁴⁸.

Kabir and Dharamdas have also mentioned *Shikari*⁴⁴⁹ (Hunter) in their sayings. These hunters hunted wild animals on horseback by different arms⁴⁵⁰. Sundardas has referred to an *Aheri* (Hunter) who killed lion, tiger and deer by his bow and arrow⁴⁵¹. Rajjabdas has described the hunting of a deer, tiger, elephant and also birds like partridge and hawk⁴⁵².

Fishing was also very much in vogue in India during this time. The saints have described that fishes were caught by throwing net in the river⁴⁵³ or with the help of *Bansi* or fish hook and were sold in the markets⁴⁵⁴.

Chaupar

The game of *Chaupar* is of Indian origin, coming down to us from the ancient times. This game is played now-a-days under three different names: *Pachisi*, *Chausar* and *Chaupar* with certain differences. In the 16th and 17th centuries *Chaupar* became the favourite game of the court, however, it was also popular among the common Hindu population particularly the Rajputs⁴⁵⁵.

Detailed description of *Chaupar* has been given by Abul Fazl⁴⁵⁶. During Akbar's reign Mughal nobles used to take part in this game in a very large number, sometimes finishing sixteen games lasting nearly for three months⁴⁵⁷.

Kabir and Guru Nanak both have referred to the game of *Chaupar* which was played on spreading cloth by placing *Sari* (*Goti*) and by throwing *Pasa* (Dice)⁴⁵⁸. Sundardas gives description of two people who play *Chaupar* and throw the dice repeatedly. They become happy when they win the game while defeat makes them sad⁴⁵⁹.

Jua

Jua or dice (gambling) was another source of enjoyment in this period. It was considered unethical both by Hindus and Muslims, inspite of that it was very popular among the kings, aristocrats and lower sections of the society alike. There are references to this game in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. For instance, Kabir and Dharamdas have mentioned that a *Juari* or gambler lost everything in gambling⁴⁶⁰. Similarly Rajjabdas has described that in dice one gambler won the game while the other lost his money⁴⁶¹. References to the gamblers and gambling can also be found in the compositions of Guru Nanak⁴⁶², Dadu Dayal⁴⁶³ and Sundardas⁴⁶⁴.

Kite Flying

Kite flying has long been an interesting pastime especially for the boys. In the Mughal period also it was among the most popular amusements. Kite or *Patang* was generally made with paper of different colours. It was flown into the sky with the help of a string called '*Dor*'. Dharamdas has mentioned the game of kite flying⁴⁶⁵ while Rajjabdas has referred to kite by the term '*Gudi*' and has mentioned its '*Dor*'⁴⁶⁶.

Kathputali

The art of dancing puppets or *Kathputali* is prevalent in India from the very old period. In the period under review it was a popular pastime for Indian folk. According to Guru Arjun and Dharamdas puppets were made up of wood and paper and were tied with the strings to give movement to the different limbs of puppets⁴⁶⁷.

Kushti

Kushti (Wrestling) was a favourite form of art in this period. The princes, noblemen and even commoners received some kind of training in this art. Mughal Emperors were very fond of this amusement. For instance, Emperor Shahjahan had a number of renowned wrestlers at his court. They were men of great strength and they frequently contested in the presence of the king⁴⁶⁸.

Punjab was and still is famous for wrestling. Most probably this is the reason why most of the references to wrestling come from the sayings of the Sikh *Gurus*. Describing the zeal and determination of wrestler in a spiritual and philosophical contexts, Guru Nanak refers to the wrestlers (*mall*) as the one who steps into the ring with a determination to defeat the opponent⁴⁶⁹. Similarly, narrating the scene of a wrestling ground, Guru Arjun describes that all the wrestlers (*pahalwans*) showed their extreme zeal to step into the ring for wrestling (*dangal*). They showed their readiness to fight by striking their hands on their arms. In order to encourage the wrestlers flutes were played and drums were trumpated in the ground⁴⁷⁰. Guru Gobind Singh refers to some wrestlers who had gathered in the ring all oiled and flexing their muscles to beat the opponent⁴⁷¹.

Bajigar, Nat, Maskhara And Other Skilled Performers

They were all source of recreation and enjoyment for the Indian folk particularly rural population. They had their presence in almost in every part of India and used to earn their livelihood by performing their arts. Some of them were also employed by the rulers or the nobles for their own amusement or for entertaining their guests. These performers had specialized in different tricks and were known by different names such as ‘*Bazigar*’ (Jugglers or Magicians) who used to amuse the masses by their wonderful and interesting performances. Sometimes animals were also used in their performance to attract the people. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to *Bazigars* on many occasions. In one of his sayings Kabir has described the *Bazigar* as the one who entertained people by making the monkey to dance on his command⁴⁷². While according to Guru Nanak, *Bajigars* used to amuse people by making different appearances in different costumes and poses⁴⁷³.

It is also evident from the sayings of saints that the acrobats, both male and female (*nat*, *natwa* and *natani*), were experts in various kinds of tricks and physical feats. They amused the people in general by beating drums, dancing, singing and by performing spectacular acrobatic feats such as walking on a tight rope or standing on a bamboo without support⁴⁷⁴. Sometimes they exhibited a very high degree of technical skill and precision in their art. Abul Fazl has also referred to these *Nats* or *Natwas* in his *Ain-i-Akbari*⁴⁷⁵.

Besides these, there were professional jokers or jesters who used different kinds of tricks, mimicry and caricatures and had

invested various witty jokes and antics to provide laughter and to amuse their patrons and public. They are mentioned in the sayings of the saints as '*Maskharas*'⁴⁷⁶ and '*Bhands*'⁴⁷⁷. Manucci has also referred to the court buffoons of Dara Shukoh who displayed perfection in making the audience to laugh⁴⁷⁸.

There was a class of professional bards known as '*Bhats*'⁴⁷⁹, '*Kalawants*'⁴⁸⁰, '*Dhadhi*'⁴⁸¹ and '*Guni*'⁴⁸² whose only duty was to sing in very high tones, the praises of their patrons and in return they obtained gifts and rewards from the latter. Thus, they earned their livelihood by flattery and exaggerations.

The '*Bahu-rupis*'⁴⁸³ or '*Bahu-rupias*' and '*Swangi*'⁴⁸⁴, who were both male and female, also entertained common people by their interesting performances. They moved from door to door in different costumes and make-up.

Hindu Festivals

The festivals (*teohars*) of the Hindus were, indeed, numerous occurring in almost all important periods of the year. They fell normally in those seasons in which the peasants had been enjoying comparative leisure, and thus they could find ample time to take part in such festivals. In spite of the numerous upheavals and changes in the political life of this country, through the ages, these festivals which are essentially based on religion, have continued to exist as popular occasions of universal social intercourse and rejoicings.

Though there are records of numerous festivals of Hindus, here an attempt has been made to describe only those referred to by *Nirgun bhakti* saints in their sayings.

Holi

Holi was, as even today, a very important festival of the Hindus. It was in fact, a festival of great popular rejoicings, of intense mirth and gaiety on a mass scale. *Holi* was celebrated on the last day of the month of *Phalguna* (February-March) and the celebrations continued generally for two or three days. Its celebration was characterized by huge bonfires where people enjoyed by singing popular songs, which included some indecent songs (*gali* or *gari*) and some pertaining to the lives and deeds of Lord Rama and especially Lord Krishna. People used to dance and play various musical instruments like *dhol*, *dhaph*, *mridang*, *bina*, *tambura* etc. They played *Holi* by throwing perfumed red powder colour (*abir*, *gulal* etc.) upon each other and by squirting out coloured water through a *Pichkari* (Squirt) upon everybody. At some places, especially in the rural areas *Holi* was and still played by mud (*kichar* or *kich*)⁴⁸⁵.

A village named Barsana near Vrindavan in modern (U.P.) is regarded as the birth place of Radha (Beloved of Krishna). *Holi* was and still is celebrated here as “*Lathmar Holi*” in which men throw colours upon the women and women beat men with clubs. In one of his sayings Guru Gobind Singh has described this *Holi* in great detail⁴⁸⁶.

Diwali

Diwali or *Dipavali* (Row of lamps) is the festival of lamps and is one of the most popular festivals of the Hindus. It is celebrated on the last day of the *Krishna-paksha* (Dark fortnight) in the month of *Kartika* (October-November). From the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints we find that in the 16th and 17th centuries also *Diwali* was celebrated with great zest. A large number of wick-lamps were lighted, inside and outside of every Hindu home, temple or public building. This day the entire country seemed to be flooded with light and appeared to have reached the horizon⁴⁸⁷. It was regarded as the most important festival of the *Vaishyas* or the merchant community whom Rajjardas called ‘*Sah*’⁴⁸⁸. They maintained their accounts on that day⁴⁸⁹.

According to Sundardas, people who desired to achieve power by accomplishing some *Mantras*, kept awake throughout the night of *Diwali* and used to recite different magical incantations⁴⁹⁰.

Krishna Janmashtami

Krishna Janmashtami is another important festival of Hindus and is mentioned by Guru Nanak in his sayings. The day falls on the 8th day of *Krishnapaksha* (Dark fortnight) in the month of *Bhadon* (August-September) and is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Krishna. People performed special worship of Lord Krishna and treated their Lord as a child and even used to sing *Lori* or *Lorini* (Lullaby) for the Lord⁴⁹¹.

Muslim Festival

Speaking from the orthodox point of view, the Muslim life has little room for any kind of social festivals. Almost all their festivals are intensely religious and yet the Muslims could not remain unaffected by the Indian environment and traditions after centuries of mutual contact and intercourse. Thus the Muslims also began to attach social and recreational significance to some of their festival. This became more conspicuous among the commoners.

Id

Nirgun bhakti saints Kabir and Rajjabdas have mentioned the festival of 'Id'⁴⁹² Muslims attached great importance to the *Id* or *Idul-fitr* festival and the holy prayers offered on that occasion. This festival was observed after a prolonged fast (*roja*)⁴⁹³ for one full month and its date depended as today upon the visibility of the moon. On that day people offered prayers in the *Id-gah* (Place of prayer) and embraced each other in order to show fraternity⁴⁹⁴.

Marriage

In Indian society marriage, especially a Hindu marriage has always been considered as divine and sacred and made in heaven. It is regarded more as a family and social matter than a personal concern of the marrying couple. And most probably for this very reason many traditions are attached to the Indian marriage.

At many places in their sayings, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have allegorically used the institution of marriage to express their love and affection to God or 'Satguru'. They have described in great

detail all the ceremonies related to a Hindu marriage. According to the information provided by them, when a girl reached at the age of marriage, her father would send a *Brahman* to the house of her future bridegroom to fix their marriage. When the marriage got fixed, the ceremony of engagement or *Tilak* used to be performed⁴⁹⁵.

On the day of the marriage or *Lagan* elaborate preparations would take place at the house of the bride. Courtyard was smeared with mud, or sandal wood paste⁴⁹⁶ and ornamented with ceremonial patterned square or circle of coloured powder or flour⁴⁹⁷. A *Mandap*⁴⁹⁸ was constructed which was sometimes decorated with the wreaths of pearls (in the rich and well to do families) and a sacred water pitcher-*Kalash*⁴⁹⁹ was placed and women joined together at the house of bride, sang marriage songs-*Mangalcharan* and applied turmeric paste- *Haldi* on her body⁵⁰⁰. For the occasion of her marriage the bride wore a red wedding garment⁵⁰¹ and adorned herself with all the sixteen traditional adornments *Solah Singar*⁵⁰² and her head was ornamented with garland of flowers-*Maur*⁵⁰³. In Punjab the bride wore the bangles (*chuda*) made of ivory⁵⁰⁴. This custom still exists there.

Almost similar arrangements were made at the house of bridegroom. The courtyard of his house was also smeared with sandal wood paste, many auspicious and ceremonial figures were put on the flour and a *Kalash* was also adorned for the wedding ceremony. His hands were dyed with henna-*Mehdi*. He was bathed by *Kahars* and his feet were washed by *Nai*. He was given new cloths to wear and was adorned with bright jewels. Besides all

these, the ceremony of garlanding the bridegroom was among the most important ceremonies held at the groom's house. He was garlanded with *Sehra* (Garland of flowers or other material) or *Maur* (A high crowned cap)⁵⁰⁵.

After making all these and other necessary preparations, the bridegroom, his family members, relatives and friends would go to the bride's house in the form of a procession (*barat*) accompanied by a band and music⁵⁰⁶. When they arrived at the bride's house, they were greeted by the bride's people and were given a feast there⁵⁰⁷. The bride and the groom sat in the *Mandap* and then the wedding ceremonies were commenced. The ceremony of *Panigrahna*⁵⁰⁸ i.e. the joining of the right hand of the bride and bridegroom, was performed. The bridegroom applied vermilion (*sindur*) in the hair parting of the bride⁵⁰⁹. The father of the bride performed a ceremony known as *Kanyadan*⁵¹⁰ which signified the formal gift of his daughter to the bridegroom (this ceremony was also performed by the close relatives of the bride.), then the couple had the hems of their garments knotted together to signify their perpetual and inseparable union, this being the ceremony of *Gamth*⁵¹¹. At the end of these came the ceremony of the *Bhamvar*⁵¹²-five or seven steps were taken in circumbulation round the *Vedi*⁵¹³ of sacred fire. *Bipra*⁵¹⁴ or *Brahman* chanted the verses of sacred texts while the couple was completing their rounds. After this, the wedding ceremony was completed which made the bridegroom and the bride husband and wife before God and man in perpetuity and the bride was departed generally in a *Doli* or *Palki* to the house of her husband⁵¹⁵. Thus, the daughter was formally and legally passed into another family. When the

bride arrived at her in law's house, her husband's relatives welcomed her. In Punjab the bride when entered her new house oil was poured at the door⁵¹⁶ and auspicious water was passed over her to avert evil from her⁵¹⁷. Besides these, some other ceremonies, like money as omen (*shagun*) was also given to the bride⁵¹⁸.

Superstitions

In the period under review, superstitious beliefs permeated the whole of society including both the Hindus and the Muslims communities. People were staunch believers of Astrology which had taken possession of their minds to such an extent that every good family had an astrologer of its own. In every enterprise they consulted their astrologers, no marriage took place and no journey was under taken without consulting them⁵¹⁹. According to Manucci both Mughals and Hindus are so credulous that they put faith in all that these men choose to tell them. These astrologers counted the situation of planets and cast horoscopes and satisfied the astrological fancies⁵²⁰.

Beside this, people also practiced witchcraft. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have mentioned different terms such as '*Jantar-Mantar*'⁵²¹, '*Tant- Mant*'⁵²², '*Totaka*'⁵²³, '*Jhara*'⁵²⁴ etc. for witchcrafting. It was practised by magicians both male and female who were called '*Bhopa*' or '*Bhopi*'⁵²⁵. People wore different types of *Taviz* in the form of amulets or lockets to protect themselves from evil spirits. Guru Nanak has referred to the people who sold *Taviz*⁵²⁶.

Education

16th and 17th centuries formed bright period in the history of both Hindu and Muslim education. The compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints contain some references to the Hindu learning. It was mainly imparted by *Pathshala* or elementary schools, *Tols* or colleges and private tutors.

Elementary or Primary instruction was imparted in a large number of *Pathshalas* or *Chatshalas*⁵²⁷. These elementary schools were scattered over the different parts of the country. *Pathshala* was the place where the seed of knowledge was sown in the mind of a student. The curriculum of these schools generally comprised instruction in the alphabet, vowels and consonants, combination of words, spelling, *Vyakaran* (Grammar), lessons in reading and elementary numerals or arithmetic⁵²⁸. The *Adhyapakas* or *Padhas*⁵²⁹ (Teachers) were mainly *Brahmanas*.

The primary education is then followed by higher education which allowed the desirous students to continue their education. They join some *Tol* (College) which was the higher seat of learning. There were many centres of Hindu learning and the most famous in this period were Banaras or Varanasi, Nadia, Multan, Mithila and others⁵³⁰. In these *Tols*, Sanskrit language and literature formed a very important subject of learning. Generally speaking, the curriculum in these institutions included *Kavya* (Poetry), *Vyakarna* (Grammar), *Jyotisha* (Astronomy or Astrology), *Chhanda* (Rhetoric), *Nirukta* (Lexicon) and *Nyaya Darshan* (Philosophy)⁵³¹. Of these *Kavya*, *Vyakarna* and *Chhanda* have been mentioned in the sayings of Rajjabdas⁵³² and Sundardas⁵³³ as three important subjects of study. Abul Fazl has

mentioned in his *Ain-i-Akbari* about the Emperor Akbar's interest in the reorganisation of Hindu learning⁵³⁴.

Position of Women

The story of Indian womanhood, through the ages, has been for the most part, one of honourable subordination to and protection by men. In the period under review, though women were still treated with respect, they were stamped with the stigma of mental deficiency by social laws and customs. They came to be almost wholly confined to home and to domestic activities. In this period the general lot of women can be examined in the light of certain remarkable contemporary customs and practices.

Purdah system

Purdah or veil was maintained generally by the Muslim women who observed it with great rigidity⁵³⁵. However, some sections of the Hindu women, particularly belonging to the upper and rich classes also observed *Purdah*.

References to *Purdah* in the sense of veil can be found in abundance in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. At one place the term 'Peran'⁵³⁶ (*Burqa*-a long veil worn by Muslim women) is also used by Guru Nanak. Saints also gave various references to 'Ghoonghat'⁵³⁷ which was a milder and less elaborate form of *Purdah* and was generally observed by the Hindu women.

Numerous instances which are found scattered in the *Nirgun bhakti* literature show that the women of the higher classes both among the Hindus and the Muslims, went out of their houses on special occasions, in well guarded and properly covered litters or

palanquins (*dolis*⁵³⁸ or *palkis*⁵³⁹). These references can be correlated with the descriptions made by foreign travellers in their accounts⁵⁴⁰.

On the whole, however, *Purdah* might have been considerably hampered the progress of women during the period under review. It had become one of the potent factors responsible for their subordination to men in the society. The term '*Purdah*' may also be used to signify the seclusion of women in a separate building or in a segregated apartment or part of the building, which came to be popularly known as the '*Haram*'⁵⁴¹ in this period. Apart from being applied to the place of residence, this term also connotated the totality of the female inmates who were thus excluded from the view of the public.

Prostitutes

The prostitutes or the public women, whose number was also considerable in this period though did not command any respect in the society yet their presence in the society speak volume about the condition. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have condemned their immoral behaviour in most of their references to prostitution. They have used the terms '*Ganika*'⁵⁴², '*Besva*'⁵⁴³, '*Beshya*'⁵⁴⁴ and '*Randia*'⁵⁴⁵ for prostitutes and regarded this as a great sin. From their sayings we get information that the society was not really sympathetic to the illegitimate child of a prostitute and had no respect for him⁵⁴⁶.

In the period of Emperor Akbar we get information that stern steps were taken to check this immoral traffic in women. A particular area was set apart for the habitation of prostitutes and

the Emperor insisted on sending all women of ill repute to that area. As Badayuni states, “They (The prostitutes) were made to live outside the city in a place called “*Shaitanpurah*”⁵⁴⁷. An officer was appointed to keep this evil under proper control. However, inspite of all these it appears that Akbar could not eradicate this evil⁵⁴⁸.

Custom Of Sati

The practice of *Sati* was indeed a social stigma prevalent in that period. The death of husband was certainly the greatest tragedy, the saddest calamity in the life of a Hindu women. Widow remarriage was not allowed among the Hindus excepting certain lower castes⁵⁴⁹. A widow had either to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband or on a separate pyre soon after his death or had to lead a life of abysmal anguish, of unending sufferings and woe, devoid of all the charms and earthly life⁵⁵⁰. In the majority of cases the widows realised that it was better for them to become *Sati* then to lead a life of bitterness and continued agony. Besides, there was also the question of prestige of the family. A widow who became *Sati* was considered as the most virtuous woman by the society⁵⁵¹.

The compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints contain various references to the practice of *Sati* system. On the one hand the saints oppose this practice as a social evil while on the other side they acclaim a *Sati*'s devoted love for her husband, for the sake of which she embraces the flames of her husband's pyre⁵⁵².

The rites connected with *Sati* were performed both with the corpse of the husband and without it. However, the former was preferred and was more popular. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have also described it. From their compositions we find that when the husband died, his widow preferred to accompany him. She ascended his funeral pyre with *Sindhaura*⁵⁵³ or *Sindura* (A small casket in which vermilion is kept) in her hands and burnt herself alive with her husband's corpse⁵⁵⁴.

Guru Nanak, Guru Amardas and Guru Gobind Singh have condemned *Sati* system in very clear terms and have suggested the widows to lead a life of contentment and chastity instead of throwing themselves on their dead husband's funeral pyres⁵⁵⁵.

In the aforementioned references only the voluntary nature of the practice of *Sati* is described where a widow sacrificed her life at her own free will. But in this period this practice became more or less obligatory in nature. This is evident by the accounts of the contemporary foreign travellers which speak of the element of compulsion attached to the practice of *Sati*⁵⁵⁶.

Women: Household And Professions

In their sayings *Nirgun bhakti* saints have depicted the picture of common women who belonged to the rural areas and lower classes of the society. They have mentioned various household and professional works done by these women in the 16th and 17th centuries. On the basis of the information provided by the saints, it can be safely said that in this period the activities of the women mainly centred round household chores. A women, whether she was daughter in law (*bahu*) or mother-in-law (*sasu*), she used to take keen interest in spinning and weaving⁵⁵⁷.

Grinding was the chief household activity of her. She grinded grain with the help of millstone (*chakki*)⁵⁵⁸ almost every day for daily meal. Along with it she threshed rice⁵⁵⁹ and used to churn curd⁵⁶⁰ in her daily works. She kept her house and kitchen (*pakshal*⁵⁶¹ or *chauka*⁵⁶²) neat and clean. She would wake up very early in the morning and would broom her house⁵⁶³ and smear her courtyard⁵⁶⁴ generally with cow dung or mud. Arrangement of water for daily needs was another important duty of a woman. She used to go to *Kua*⁵⁶⁵ (Well) and *Bavri*⁵⁶⁶ (Deep tank with steps) every day to fetch water in pitchers (*gagri*⁵⁶⁷, *ghailia*⁵⁶⁸ and *kumbh*⁵⁶⁹)

Apart from the household chores women also worked in different capacities. They ran shops and sold commodities in the market. They were betel leaf sellers (*tambolin*)⁵⁷⁰, wine maker or seller (*kalali*)⁵⁷¹. They worked as *Malin*⁵⁷² to take care of flowers in the garden and used to sell them in the market. They also worked as *Dai*⁵⁷³ (Nurse or midwife) who were trained to assist women in child birth and looked after the children of the people of higher classes.

The female slaves (*bandi*⁵⁷⁴ or *laundi*⁵⁷⁵) used to work in the royal *Harams* and in the houses of rich classes and serve their masters with great sincerity. And as female acrobats (*natani*)⁵⁷⁶, they entertained the masses by their spectacular tricks and physical feats.

Notes And References:

1. *Rigveda*, IV, M-10, A-7, S-90, p. 618
2. Francisco Pelsart- *Jahangir's India*, Eng. Tr., W.H. Moreland & P. Geyl, Delhi, 1972, pp. 76-77; *Indian Travels of Thevenot And Careri*- Edited, Surindernath Sen, National Archives of India, Delhi, 1949, p. 90
3. *Kabir Sahib Ka Bijak*- Velvedere Press, Allahabad, 2000, Sh.- 11, p. 35
4. *Kabir Granthavali*- Edited, Parasnath Tiwari, Ist Ed. Part-II, Hindi Parishad Allahabad, Vishvavidhyalya, Allahabad, 1961, R-7, p. 120; *Sundar Granthavali*-Edited, Hrinarayan Sharma, Ist Ed., Part-II, Rajasthan Research Society, Calcutta, 1936, Chhanda-23, p. 554; viz. *adhyayana* (studying or repeating the *Veda*), *adhyapana* (teaching), *yajana* (offering sacrifices), *yajana* (conducting them for others), *dana* (giving) and *pratigraha* (accepting gifts). The six duties according to the later law-books are *snana* (religious bathing) *samdhya japa* (repetition of prayers at the three *samdhya*s), *brahma-yajana* (worship of the Supreme Being by repeating the first words of sacred books), *tarpana* (daily oblations of water to the gods, sages and pitries), *homa* (oblations of fuel, rice to fire), *deve-puja* (worship of the secondary gods either in the domestic sanctuary or in temples) Williams, p. 1108
5. K.G. (Tiwari),II, R-7, p. 120; *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*- Hindi Tr., Manmohan Sahgal & Nagari Transliteration, Nandakumar Avasthi, 2nd Ed., Vol. II, Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow, 1987-88, M-1, p. 367
6. S.G., I, *Chaupai*- 13, 14, 15, p. 89
7. S.G.G.S., II, M-1, p. 367; K.B., R-35, p.15
8. Ibid., R-34, p.14; Ibid., Sh-101, p.64; *Dhani Dharamdas Ki Shabdavali*- Velvedere Press, Allahabad, 1997, Sh.- 3, p. 9; D.G., P-27, p. 388; S.G., II, Chh-23, p.554
9. K.B., Sh-46, p.46; S.G.G.S., II, M-1, p. 368; R.S., S-39, p.153; S.G., I, Ch-3, p. 303

10. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 367; *K.G. (Das)*, *P-60*, p. 214
11. *K.B.*, *R-35*, p. 15
12. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 370; Pelsart describes thus, "They (Brahmanas) sit down to eat, naked and with bare head, inside a well-marked enclosure, which no one enters while they are eating, if they are disturbed, they will give up the meal"-Pelsart, p. 76; Md. Azhar Ansari- *European Travellers Under The Mughals (1580-1627)*, Ist, Ed., Delhi, 1975, p. 98
13. Pilsart, p. 78
14. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 101; *S.G.*, II, *S-45*, p. 775; Peter Mundy- *The Travels of Peter Mundy In Europe And Asia (1608-1667)*, Edited, Richard Carnac Tempele, Vol. II, London, 1914, p. 94
15. *K.G. (Das)*, *P-126*, p. 97; *S.G.*, II, *S-40*, p.774; Jean Baptiste Tavernier- *Travels In India*, Eng. Tr., V. Ball, Edited, William Crook, Vol. II, Delhi, 1977, p. 143
16. *K.B.*, *R-83*, p. 29
17. *J.V.*, *Sh-105*, p.294
18. Tevernier, II, pp 143-44
19. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 101; *S.G.*; I, *Doha-13*, p.168
20. *K.G. (Tiwari)*, *S-10*, p. 165; *S.G.*, I, *S-42*, p.700
21. *D.G.*, *S-104*, p. 123; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-32*, p. 573
22. *R.S.*, *S-37*, p.443; Pelsart has mentioned the wealthy Baniyas of Agra and Surat- Pelsart, pp. 22, 41-42
23. *K.G. (Tiwari)*, *P-93*, pp. 54-55
24. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p.101; *S.G.*, I, *D-13*, p.168
25. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 364
26. Nicollo Manucci- *Storia Do Mogor (1653-1708)*, Eng Tr., William Irvine, Vol. II, Rep., Delhi, 1990, p. 422
27. *K.G. (Tiwari)*, *S-23*, p. 213; *R.S*, *Kavitt-1*, p. 304

28. K.G. (Tiwari), P-41, p.24
29. Careri, p.256
30. R.S., P-2, p. 148; S.G., II, Chh-10, p.386; Francois Bernier-*Travels In The Mughal Empire (A.D. 1656-1668)*, Edited, Archibald Constable, Delhi, 1983, p. 254; Pelsart, p.60
31. S.G.G.S., I, Japu, P-38, p. 61
32. Ibid., IV, M-1, p. 347
33. Tevernier, I. p.24
34. K.B., S-169, p.98; D.S., Sh-26, p.26; Pelsart, p.77; Mundy, II, p. 238; Bernier, p. 302
35. S.G.G.S., III, M-2, pp. 600-01; D.G., S-26,27,p.264
36. S.G.G.S., III, M-1, p.541
37. Ibid., M-3, p.222
38. K.G. (Das), S-28, p.3
39. *Vilhoji Ki Vani*-Edited, with Hindi Tr. Krishanlal Bishnoi, 2nd Ed., Haryana, 1997, *Harjas*-13, p.183; K.B., S-71, p.90
40. S.G.G.S., III, M-1, p.112; R.S., P-2, p. 114
41. V.V., H-13, p.183; R.S., P-2, p.335
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43. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri Or Memoirs Of Jahangir* -Eng. Tr., Alexander Rogers & Edited, Henry Beviridge, Vol. II, Rep., Delhi, 1999, p. 211
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48. *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*-With Hindi Tr. & Nagari Transliteration, Jodhsingh, Vol. II, 3rd Ed., Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow, 2002, *Chh-1784*, p. 233
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50. *K.B.*, *Vipramatisi*, p. 72
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53. *Ibid.*, *Sh-15*, p.36
54. *D.G.*, *P-1*, p.438
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60. *R.S.*, *S-42*, p.353
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72. D.S., Sh-16, p. 44
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88. K.G. (Das), P-310, p. 145; J.V., Sh-15, p. 197; D.S., Sh-13, p. 22; S.G.G.S., II, M-4, p. 700; D.G., S-35, p.294; R.S., S-40, p. 121
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99. *Pelsart, pp. 13, 14, 15*
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108. *K.B., R-17, p.9; S.G.G.S., III, M-1, p. 541; D.G., S-39, p. 250; R.S., S-12. p. 541; S.G., I, Ch-16, p. 334*
109. *Early Travels, p. 152*
110. *K.G. (Tiwari), II, P-127, p.75*
111. *R.S., P-2, p. 369*
112. *S.G.G.S., M-4, p. 227*
113. *R.S., P-16, p. 163*
114. *In the accounts of foreign travellers there are many references of physicians who flourished during 16th and 17th centuries. Manucci has*

given a long list of Indian physicians in his *Storia* – Manucci, II, p. 332; German Traveller Mandelslo has described, the Hindu physicians who were very able and so highly respected in Goa – *Mandelslo's Travels In Western India A.D. 1638-9*- Edited, M.S. Commissariat, 1931, Oxford, Mumbai & others, 1931 p. 82; While *Tuzuk* has informed us about a learned physician named Hakim Ali who flourished in the period of Akbar and Jahangir – *Tuzuk*, I, p. 124

115. S.G.G.S., IV, M-1, p. 441; S.G., II, S-83-84, p. 673
116. J.V., Sh-18, p. 200; R.S., S-23, p.112
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118. D.G., S-142 -43-44, p. 14
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120. R.S., S-37, p. 113
121. D.S., Sh-1, p. 5
122. K.B., S-29, p. 13; S.G.G.S., IV, M-4, p. 513; D.G., S-66, p. 135
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124. K.B., S-143, p.96
125. *Early Travels*, p. 313
126. K.B., S-304, p. 96; D.G., S-61, p. 49; R.S., S-31, p. 578; S.G., I, Ch-7, p. 6
127. Ibid.
128. K.G. (Das), S-9, p. 41; J.V., Sh-112, p. 300; S.G.G.S., III, M-1, p. 307; R.S., P-12, p. 170
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132. J.V., Sh-64, p. 249; Careri, p. 249

133. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 79
134. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-66*, p38
135. *S.G.*, II, *S-23*, p. 714
136. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-4*, p.479
137. *Ibid.*, II, *M-5*, p. 485
138. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-14*, p. 208
139. *D.G.*, *P-6*, p. 340
140. *K.G.* (Das), *P-113*, p. 95; *D.G.*, *P-6*, p. 340; *S.G.*, II, *P-4*, p. 921
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142. *R.S.*, *S-24*, p. 442
143. *S.G.*, I, *D-9*, p. 190
144. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p.83
145. *K.G.* (Das), *P-113*, p.95; *Ibid.*, *S-180*, p. 199; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-4*, p. 479; *Ibid.*, III, *M-1*, p. 685
146. *Ibid.*, II, *M-5*, pp. 485-86; *Ibid.*, III, *M-5*, p.262; *S.G.*, II, *P-4*, p. 920
147. For slaves under Akbar, see *Ain*, I, pp. 263-64
148. Manucci, II, pp. 333-34
149. *Ibid.*, pp. 314-15
150. *D.S.*, *Sh-2*, p. 49; *S.G.*, II, *S-13*, p. 734
151. *R.S.*, *P-27*, p. 130
152. *D.G.*, *S-18*, p. 17; *S.G.*, I, *S-41*, p. 133
153. *V.V.* *K-2*, p. 206; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 82
154. *J.V.*, *Sh-105*, p. 294; *Ain.*, I, p. 64
155. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 551; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-160*, p. 193; *Ain*, I, p. 65
156. *J.V.*, *Sh-105*, p. 294; *R.S.*, *S-6*, p. 583; *S.G.*, II, *P-2*, p. 907; Mundy, II, p. 27; *Ain*, I, p. 65
157. *R.S.*, *S-15*, p. 432

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160. V.V., *Ch-42*, p. 198; *Ain*, I, p. 66
161. K.G., (Tiwari), II, S-10, p. 210; S.G.G.S., I, M-1, p. 411
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165. Ibid., p. 60
166. S.D.G.S., I, *Chh-329*, p.633
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171. Pelsart, pp. 60-61; Bernier, p. 381
172. S.D.G.S., I, *Chh-329*, p. 633
173. S.G., I, *Chh- 21*, p. 352
174. K.G. (Das), S-12, p. 33; V.V., *Ch-51*, p. 121; S.G.I, *Ch-21*, p. 352; S.G.G.S., I, M-5, p. 317; *European Travellers*, p. 88
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178. R.S., S-6, p. 574
179. S.G., II, *Chh-3*, p.1005
180. K.G. (Tiwari), II, P-114, p. 67; *D.S.*, RG-1, p. 58; S.D.G.S., I, *Chh-329*, p. 633

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182. *K.B.*, S-144, p. 96
183. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-6*, p. 383.
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188. *R.S.*, *P-1*, p. 300
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204. *B.S.K.H.*, *H-12*, p. 73
205. Bernier, p. 252
206. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-27*, p. 404; *European Travellers*, p.88
207. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, *P-183*, p. 106
208. *R.S.*, *P-1*, p. 320; *Ain*, I, p. 67
209. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-329*, p. 633; *Ain*, I, p.63
210. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-329*, p. 633
211. *Ibid.*, IV, *Bait-71*, p. 691; *Ain*, I, p. 63
212. *D.G.*, *P-5*, p. 356
213. *S.G.*, II, *P-8*, p. 888; Linschoten, I, p. 21
214. *K.B.*, *Sh-23*, p. 39; *D.S.*, *Sh-3*, p. 6; *S.G.*, II, *P-8*, p. 888; Tevernier, II; p. 12; Linschoten, I, p. 41
215. *D.S.*, *Sh-3*, p. 16; Linschoten, II, p. 67
216. *K.B.*, *S-263*, p. 105
217. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-3*, p. 209; *S.G.*, I, *Chh-3*, p. 357
218. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-10*, p. 64; *Ain*, I, p. 67
219. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-3*, p. 357; *Early Travels*, p. 18; *Ain*, I, p. 67
220. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-9*, p. 220
221. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-8*, p. 103; *Ain*, I, p. 67
222. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-24*, p. 139
223. *V.V.*, *Ch-50*, p. 120; *Early Travels*, p.11
224. *Ain*, I, p. 67
225. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, *S-5*, p. 216; *D.S.*, *RG- 1*, p. 58; *D.G.*, *S-31*, p.4; *R.S.*, *S-16*, p. 429; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-14*, p. 535; *European Travellers*, p. 97
226. *R.S.*, *P-2*, p. 369; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-6*, p. 1006
227. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-5*, p. 229; *V.V.*, *Ch-39*, p. 97; *D.S.*, *Sh-8*, p. 39; *D.G.*, *S-31*, p. 4; *Ain*, I, p. 67

228. *K.B.*, *Sh-99*, p. 64; *D.S.*, *Sh- 1* p. 49; *R.S.*, *S-21*, p. 120
229. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 467; *R.S.*, *S-4*, p. 568; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-7*, p. 131; *European Travellers*, p. 92; Linschoten, I, p. 56
230. *J.V.*, *Sh-9*, p. 190; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 432; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-14*, p. 535; *Ain*, I, p. 67
231. *S.G.*, II, *S-13*, p. 734; *Ain*, I, p. 67
232. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-6*, p. 102; Pelsart, p. 49
233. *S.G.*, II, *S-51*, p. 781; *D.G.*, *P-17*, p. 373
234. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-34*, p. 21; *R.S.*, *P-27*, p. 130
235. *K.B.*, *Sh-12*, p. 35; *D.S.*, *R.G. -1*, p. 58; *R.S.*, *S-5*, p. 583; Mundy, II, p. 96 Linschoten, I, p. 23
236. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-179*, p. 105; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 683; *R.S.*, *P-30*, p. 401; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-8*, p. 103
237. *K.G.* (Das), *P-51*, p. 81; *D.S.*, *Sh-8*, p. 39; *R.S.*, *P-1*, p. 223
238. *K.B.*, *S-157*, p. 97
239. *D.G.*, *S-80*, p. 157; *R.S.*, *S-22*, p. 310; *S.G.*, II, *D-11*, p. 677; Linschoten, I, p. 56; Tevernier, II, p. 17
240. *D.S.*, *Sh-3*, p.6
241. *R.S.*, *S-13*, p. 518
242. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 683; *R.S.*, *P-27*, p. 130; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-8*, p. 103
243. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-68*, p. 40; Thevenot p. 17
244. *K.B.*, *Sh-99*, p. 64; *D.S.*, *Sh-2*, p. 49; *R.S.*, *P-30*, p. 401; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-329*, p. 633
245. Ibid.
246. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-187*, p. 109; *S.G.*, I, *S-35*, p. 133
247. Ibid., *Ch-5*, p. 350
248. Ibid., *Chh-21*, p. 352
249. *K.B.*, *S-119*, p. 94; *D.S.*, *RG-1*, p. 58

250. S.G., II, *Chh-1*, p. 466
251. K.G. (Tiwari), II, *P-187*, p. 109; S.G., I, *S-35*, p. 133
252. R.S., Take, p. 377
253. V.V., *K-2*, p. 206
254. K.G. (Das), *S-12*, p. 33
255. S.G., I, *Ch-49*, p. 328
256. S.D.G.S., I, *Chh-20*, p. 156
257. *Travels Of Frey Sebastian Manrique (1629-1643)*, Eng. Tr., C. Eckford Luard, Vol. II, Series - II, Hakluyt Society, Oxford, 1927 p. 156
258. K.G. (Das), *S-17*, p. 54; R.S., *S-46*, p. 114
259. K.G. (Das), *P-117*, p. 227; V.V., *Ch-21*, p. 143; *European Travellers*, p. 100; Tevernier, II, p. 48
260. K.G. (Das), *P-117*, p. 227; Careri, p. 206; Tevernier, II, p. 18
261. K.G. (Das), *P-117*, p. 227; S.D.G.S., II, *Chh-2148*, p. 321; R.S., Take, p. 125; Mundy, II, p. 215; Tevernier, II, p. 150; *European Travellers*, p. 100
262. K.B., *S-242*, p. 103
263. S.G., II, *Chh-7*, p. 605; S.D.G.S., I, *Chh-49*, p. 267; *European Travellers*, p. 100; *Ain*, I, p. 70
264. D.S., *Sh-10*, p. 41; *European Travellers*, p. 100; Linschoten, II, p. 35
265. S.G.G.S., I, *M-5*, p. 583; *European Travellers*, p. 100; Tevernier, II, p. 221
266. K.G. (Das), *P-214*, p. 120; D.G., *P-34*, p. 391
267. D.S., *Sh-26*, p. 26; *Ain*, I, p. 71
268. K.B., *S-242*, p. 103
269. D.S., *Sh-2*, p. 49; V.V., *Ch-23*, p. 143
270. K.G. (Das), *P. 117*, p. 227; S.G., II, *Chh-4*, p. 580; Tevernier, II, p. 150; *European Travellers*, p. 100

271. *K.B.*, *Sh*-13, p. 35; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-99, p. 171; *European Travellers*, p. 100; *Linschoten*, I, p.48
272. *B.S.K.H.*, *H*-6, p. 54; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-8, p. 255; *Ain*, I, p.71
273. *K.G.* (Das), *P*-117, p. 227; *European Travellers*, p. 100; *Mundy*, II, p. 14
274. *K.B.*, *S*-144, p. 96; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-7, p. 605; *Mundy*, II, p. 48, 55; *Linschoten*, II, *P*-65
275. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-200, p.203; *Ain*, I, p. 70
276. *K.B.*, *Sh*-10, p. 34; *R.S.*, *P*-5, p. 551; *Ain*, I, p. 76
277. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M*-1, p. 411; *R.S.*, *P*-27, p. 130
278. *D.S.*, *Sh*-3, p. 15; *Mundy*, II, p. 311; *Thevenot*, p. 26
279. *Ibid*; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-1, p. 225; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-33, p. 92
280. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-1, p. 225
281. *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-33, p. 92
282. *K.G.* (Das), *P*-214, p. 120; *S.G.*, II, *S*-13, p. 734
283. *K.B.*, *Bas*.-4, p. 76; *Mundy*, II, p. 96; *Mandelslo*, p. 46
284. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-5, p. 178
285. *V.V.*, *K*-3, p. 207; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-4, p. 45
286. *S.D.G.S.*, IV, *B*-54, p. 653; *European Travellers*, p. 91
287. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S*-9, p. 207
288. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M*-4, 489; *Ibid.*, III, *M*-56, p. 944
289. *Pelsart*, p. 65; *Thevenot*, p. 23; *Careri*, p. 200
290. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 307, p. 307; *D.G.*, *S*-8, p. 148
291. *S.G.*, II, *S*-14, p. 772
292. *K.G.* (Das), *S*-101, p. 195; *Careri*, p. 200
293. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-663, p. 518
294. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-145, p. 85

295. Thevenot, p. 24
296. V.V., *D-21*, p. 4; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p.34
297. Ibid; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-49*, p. 94
298. Ibid; V.V., *D-21*, p.4
299. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-22*, p. 231; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-48*, p. 94
300. Ibid.
301. V.V., *D-23*, p. 233; *European Travellers*, p. 91
302. *S.G.*, I, *Chhap-19*, p. 75
303. *Ain*, I, p. 100-101
304. *D.S.*, *Sh-16*, p. 44; *Ain*, I, p. 95
305. M.A. Ansari- “*Dress Of The Great Mughals*”, *Islamic Culture*, An English Quarterly, Vol. XXXI, No.-3, Hyderabad, July 1957, p. 257
306. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 606; *S.G.*, I, *Chh-12*, p. 351
307. V.V., *H-17*, p. 185
308. *K.B.*, *S-58*, p. 89
309. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 101
310. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P.85*, p. 197; *J.V.*, *Sh-115*, p. 300; *R.S.*, *S-25*, p. 338
311. *S.G.*, II, *S-8*, p. 696; Bernier, p. 267
312. *Ain*, I, p. 98
313. *R.S.*, *S-12*, p. 579
314. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-34*, p. 156
315. *K.B.*, *Sh-99*, p. 64; *R.S.*, *P-3*, p. 338; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-11*, p. 324; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-149*, p. 190
316. Ansari (Article-*Dress*), pp. 262-63
317. Bernier, p. 240; Thevenot, p. 52; Careri, p. 248
318. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 906
319. *K.B.*, *Sh-4*, p. 31; V.V., *S-5*, p.46

320. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 640; *S.D.G.S.*, IV, *B-80*, p. 692
321. Thevenot, p. 52; *Ain*, I, p. 96
322. Ansari (*Art.-Dress*), pp. 262-63
323. The shoes were normally designed on Turkish pattern i.e. pointed in the front and open above with low and flat heels. The *Banias* of Agra, however, used high heeled shoes. The shoes were bordered with gold, silver, velvet and brocades and embroidered with flowers of silk or made of red leather worked with small flowers – Thevenot, pp. 52-53; Bernier, p. 240
324. *K.G.* (Das), *S-159*, p. 198; *S.G.*, II, *S-20*, p. 808
325. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 387
326. *R.S.*, *P-3*, p. 276; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-11*, p. 632
327. *J.V.*, *Sh-116*, p. 301
328. *K.B.*, *S-58*, p. 89; *S.G.*, I, *Chh-16*, p. 351; Thevenot, pp. 51-52
329. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 82; Manucci, III, p. 38
330. *J.V.*, *Sh-57*, p. 240; *V.V.*, *K-16*, p. 212; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-5*, p. 574; Manucci, III, p. 39
331. Ibid.
332. *S.G.*, II, *P-4*, p. 895
333. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 418; According to Babar, “Pesants and people of low standing go about naked. They tie on a thing called ‘*lunguta*’ a decency clout which hangs two spans below the navel – *Babur-Nama Or Memoirs Of Babar* – Eng. Tr., A.S. Beviridge, Rep., Delhi, 1979, p. 519
334. *K.G.* (Das), *S-33*, p. 191; Careri, p. 187
335. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-12*, p. 351; *D.S.*, *Sh-20*, p. 46; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-190*, p. 200
336. Ibid.

337. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-65*, p. 38; *D.S.*, *Sh-20*, p. 24; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-5*, p. 503
338. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p. 66; *R.S.*, *S-2*, p. 127; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh- 749*, p. 748; *Ain*, III, p. 342
339. *V.V.*, *H-19*, p. 186
340. *K.G.* (Das), *S-3*, p. 47; *V.V.*, *H-19*, p. 186; *D.S.*, *Sh-8*, p. 62; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-3*, p. 808
341. *Ibid.*, IV, *M-1* p. 184
342. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p.66; *R.S.*, *S-2*, p. 127; *Ain*, III, p. 342
343. *K.B.*, *Chanchar -1*, p. 81; *D.S.*, *Sh-9*, p. 40
344. *S.D.G.S.*, I *Chh-77*, p. 565
345. *Mundy*, II, p. 155
346. *D.S.*, *Sh-9*, p.40; *Ibid.*, *Sh-20*, p. 47
347. *Ibid.*, *Sh-17*, p.45; *D.G.*, *S-29*, p. 99
348. *D.S.*, *Sh-6*, p.50
349. *K.B.*, *Bas.-11*, p.80; *D.S.*, *Holi-4*, p. 55; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 643; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-90*, p. 47; *S.G.*, I, *D-15*, p. 180; *Ain*, I, p. 79
350. *Ibid*; *Ain*, I, p. 80
351. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-101*, 59; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 643; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-19*, p. 128; *Ain*, I, p. 80
352. *S.G.*, II, *P-8*, p. 888; *Ain*, I, p. 80
353. *K.B.*, *Bas.-11*, p. 80; *D.S.*, *Ho.-4*, p. 55; *R.S.*, *S-8*, p. 102; *S.G.*, I, *D-15*, p. 180; *Ain*, I, p. 79
354. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, P.34; *S.G.*, I, *P-8*, p. 888
355. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-226*, p. 209
356. *K.B.*, *S-60*, p. 89; *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-72*, p. 43; *D.G.*, *S-2*, p. 203; *R.S.*, *P-2*, p. 114
357. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-11*, p. 186; *K.B.*, *S-29*, p. 87; *S.G.* II, *Chh-1*, p. 614

358. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-165*, p. 96; *D.S.*, *Sh-7*, p. 3; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-3*, p. 200; *S.G.*, II, *P-3*, p.858
359. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-17*, p.11
360. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 74
361. *Ibid.*, II, *M-1*, p. 66; *S.D.G.S.*, IV, *K-40*, p. 721; *R.S.*, *S-18*, p. 221
362. *K.B.*, *Sh-4*, p. 31; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 307
363. *R.S.*, *P-3*, p. 164
364. *K.B.*, *Sh-4*, p. 31
365. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-5* p. 106
366. *Ibid.*, p. 225
367. *Ibid.*, III, *M-3*, p. 200
368. *Ibid.*, *M-4*, p. 317; *R.S.*, *S-8*, p. 586
369. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-19*, p. 128
370. *Ibid.*, *D.S.*, *Sh-6*, p. 50
371. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-1*, p. 349
372. *Ibid.*, I, *D-34*, p. 133
373. *Ibid.*, II, *P-3*, p. 858; *D.S.*, *Sh-17*, p. 45; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 225
374. *Ain*, III, pp. 343-44
375. *D.S.*, *Sh-9*, p. 12; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 302
376. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-4*, p. 655
377. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-57*, p. 33; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 71; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-213*, p.70
378. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-5*, p. 511
379. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-16*, p. 74; *S.D.G.S.*, IV, *K-40*, p. 721
380. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-13*, p. 344

381. S.P. Sangar-“*Ornaments Of Hindu Women In Mughal India (As Reflected In The Contemporary Hindi Literature)*” J.I.H., Vol. XLIV, Part-I, Kerala, April 1966, p. 183
382. *D.S.*, *Sh-17*, p. 45; *D.G.*, *S-2020*, p. 67; *S.D.G.S.*, IV, *K-40*, *P-721*
383. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-165*, p.96
384. Sangar, (Article) p. 184
385. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-16*, p. 74; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 640; *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Chh-2146*, *P-321*
386. Ovington, I, p. 142; Thevenot, p. 53
387. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-16*, p. 74
388. Sangar (Art.), p. 188
389. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 351
390. Sangar (Art.), p. 186
391. *S.D.G.S.*, IV, *K-40*, p. 721
392. *R.S.*, *P-2*, p. 127; *S.G.*, II, *P-7*, p.873
393. Sangar (Art.), p. 189
394. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-13*, p. 344; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 351; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-224*, p. 311
395. Sangar (Art.), p. 191
396. *S.G.*, II, *P-7*, p. 87
397. Sangar (Art.), p. 192
398. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 225; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-557*, p. 696
399. *Ibid.*, I, *Chh-224*, p. 311
400. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-5*, p. 227; *S.G.*, II, *P-7*, p. 873
401. Sangar (Art.), p. 192
402. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-16*, p. 74
403. Sangar (Art.), p. 192

404. *K.B., Kah.-9*, p. 76
405. *D.S., Sh-4*, p. 57
406. Sangar (Art.), p. 192
407. *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-557*, p. 696
408. Sangar (Art.), p. 193
409. *S.G., II, P-3*, p. 858
410. Sangar (Art.), p. 194
411. *S.G., I, P-16*, p.74; *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-84*, p. 286
412. Sangar (Art.), p. 195
413. *V.V., H-19*, p. 186; *S.G.G.S., II, M-1*, p. 66
414. *R.S., S-7*, p. 102; *S.G., I, Chh-16*, p. 74; *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-366*, P. 467
415. Thevenot, p. 53; Manucci, II, p. 340
416. *R.S., S-3*, p. 128
417. Sangar (Art.), p. 197
418. *K.G. (Tiwari), II, P-2*, p. 11; *D.S., Sh-16*, p. 44; *S.G.G.S., II, M-1*, p.66
419. *V.V., D-122*, p. 22; *S.G., I, Chh-16*, p. 74; *S.D.G.S., II, Chh-2146*, p. 321
420. Sangar (Art.), p. 198
421. *V.V., H-19*, p. 186; *S.G.G.S., II, M-1*, p. 581
422. *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-351*, p. 639
423. Sangar (Art.), p. 199
424. *S.G., II, P-7*, p. 874
425. *S.G.G.S., II, M-1*, p. 225
426. *R.S., P-20*, p. 128; *S.D.G.S., IV, K-40*, p. 721
427. Sangar (Art.), p. 199
428. *R.S., S-37*, p. 109
429. Sangar (Art.), p. 203
430. *K.G. (Das), P-139*, p. 100; *B.S.K.H., H-6*, p. 20

431. Sangar (Art.), p. 203
432. *D.S., Sh-18*, p. 66; *S.G.G.S., II, M-1*, p. 59; *S.G., II, P-7*, p. 874; *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-218*, p.72
433. Sangar (Art.), p. 203
434. *R.S., P-2*, p. 295; *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-52*, p. 94
435. *V.V., D-122*, p. 22
436. Sangar (Art.), p. 204
437. *D.S., Sh-18*, p. 66
438. Sangar (Art.), p. 204
439. *K.G., (Das), P-139*, p. 100; *D.S., Sh-18*, p. 66
440. Sangar (Art.), p. 204
441. *Ojha*, p. 55
442. *R.S., S-4*, p. 146
443. *S.G., Chh-3*, p. 291
444. *S.D.G.S., IV, B-38*, p. 630
445. According to which the game was played in two ways, either the ball was carried from the centre to the *Hal* or goal with the crooked end of the *Chaugan* stick or the players forcibly hitted the ball with the stick of the middle towards their opponents goal. While the former was called *Roll* in India, the later form was known as *Bailah* – *Ain*, I, p. 309
446. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* - A.Q. Badayuni, Eng. Tr., W.H. Lowe, Vol. II, Rep., Delhi, 1973, p. 235; *Akbar-Nama* - Abul Fazl, Eng. Tr., H. Beviridge, Vol. II, Rep., Delhi, 1979, p. 233
447. *Ain*, I, pp. 293-304; *Tuzuk*, II, p. 109
448. *S.D.G.S., I, Chh-1*, p. 130
449. *K.B., Sh-23*, p. 151; *D.S., Sh-19*, p. 24
450. *V.V., D-89*, p. 16; *S.G.G.S., IV, M-5*, p. 102
451. *S.G., II, Chh-29*, p. 567

452. *R.S., P-1*, p. 320
453. *Ibid., S-8*, p. 131
454. *S.G., I, S-5*, p. 128
455. K.M. Ashraf – *Life And Conditions Of The People Of Hindustan*, 2nd Ed., Delhi, 1970, p. 235
456. According to him, to play this game a board was made in the form of a cross, each rectangular piece containing three rows of eight equal spaces. In the centre of the cross a square was formed. Each player used three dices, which were marked with one, two, five and six dots on the sides. Four or more persons took part in the game, and two persons formed a team- *Ain*, I, p. 315
457. *Ibid*; p. 316
458. *K.G. (Tiwari), II, S-32-33*, p. 140. *S.G.G.S., IV, M-5* pp. 221-22
459. *S.G., II, Chh-30*, p. 640
460. *K.G. (Tiwari), II, P-99*, p. 58; *D.S., Ch-11*, p. 71
461. *R.S., Granth Akal Lila-9*, p. 275; There are references of this game in the contemporary travellers accounts, for instance, Thevenot refers to the Hindus of Delhi and Banaras, thus, “The Gentiles being great lovers of play at dice, there is much gambling----. They are so eager at it in Delhi and Banaras, that there is a vast deal of money lost there and many people ruined” – Thevenot, p. 67
462. *S.G.G.S., III, M-5*, p. 320
463. *D.G., S-5*, p. 300
464. *S.G., II, P-5*, p. 845
465. *D.S., Ch-9*, p. 74
466. *R.S., S-14*, p. 562; *D.G., S-15*, p. 111; *S.G., II, Chh-21*, p. 415
467. *S.G.G.S., I, M-5*, p. 588; *D.S., Sh-2*, p. 7
468. *Manucci, I*, p. 184

469. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-2*, p. 442
470. *Ibid.*, I, *M-5*, p. 236
471. *S.D.G.S.*, I *Chh-49*, p. 114
472. *K.B.*, *S-94*, p. 92
473. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 71
474. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, *P-1-2*, p. 10; *D.S.*, *Ch-3*, p. 53; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-5*, p. 514; *R.S.*, *S-3*, p. 149; *Ibid.*, *P-3*, p. 351; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-28*, p. 91; *Ibid.*, *Ch-33*, p. 98
475. *Ain*, III, p. 272
476. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-26*, p. 214; *D.G.*, *S-110*, p. 598
477. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-10*, p. 446; *Ain*, III, p. 272
478. Manucci, I, pp. 213-14
479. *R.S.* *S-2*, p. 517; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-21*, p. 551
480. *Ibid.*; *Ain*, III, p. 271
481. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-3*, p. 479; *Ain*, III, p. 271
482. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-3*, p. 196; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-21*, p. 551
483. *D.G.*, *S-158*, p. 596; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-5*, p. 230; *Ain*, III, p. 272
484. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-5*, p. 783
485. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-144*, pp. 84-85; *D.S.*, *Ch-1 to 5*, p. 55; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-5*, p. 208; *R.S.*, *P-3*, p. 135; *S.G.*, II, *P-1*, pp. 930-31; *Ibid.*, *P-2*, p. 919; *Ibid.*, *P-5*, P. 921; Thevenot, p. 81
486. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-225*, P. 605
487. *Ibid.*, II, *Chh-921*, p.36
488. *R.S.*, *Sh-16*, p. 327
489. *Tuzuk*, I, p. 245
490. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-21*, p. 610
491. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-5*, p. 100

492. *K.B.*, *Sh-98*, p. 63; Pelsart, p. 73
493. *Ibid.*
494. *R.S.*, *S-4*, p. 297
495. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p. 45
496. *Ibid.*, -3, p.36
497. *Ibid.*, -17, p. 45
498. *K.G.* (Tiwari), *P-110*, p. 63
499. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p. 45
500. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-110*, p. 63; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-4*, p. 168
501. *Ibid.*, *M-3*, p. 192
502. *D.S.*, *Sh-17*, *P-45*
503. *Ibid.*, -12, p. 33
504. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 225
505. *D.S.*, *Sh-16*, p. 44; Thevenot, p. 118
506. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-5*, p.5; *D.S.*; *Sh-18*, p. 45; *K.B.*, *Sh-25*, p. 40; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-4*, p. 249; Thevenot. pp. 117-18
507. *K.B.*, *Sh-25*, p. 40; Thevenot, p. 117
508. *K.B.*, *Sh-25*, p. 40
509. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p. 46
510. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 37
511. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-110*, p. 64; *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p.46
512. *Ibid.*
513. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-5*, p.6
514. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p. 46; Thevenot. P. 118
515. *D.S.*, *Sh-18*, p. 46; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 225; Manucci, III, p. 61
516. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 71
517. *Ibid.*, II, *M-1*, p. 225

518. Ibid.
519. Manucci, I, p. 215; Ibid., p. 204; Pelsart, p. 77
520. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 478; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-24*, p. 90
521. *D.S.*, *Sh-14*, p. 22
522. *J.V.*, *Sh-100*, p. 290
523. *D.S.*, *Sh-14*, p. 22
524. *S.G.*, II, *S-17*, p. 734
525. Ibid., *S-21*, p. 790
526. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 360
527. Ibid., II, *M-4*, p. 569
528. Ojha, p. 86
529. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-4*, p. 569
530. M.P. Srivastava – *Social Life Under The Great Mughals (1526-1700 A.D.)*, Allahabad, 1978, pp. 124-25
531. Ojha, p. 81
532. *R.S.*, *P-3*, p. 513; *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-101*, p: 59
533. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-6*, p. 976
534. *Ain*, I, p. 289
535. Manucci, II, p. 175; Thevenot, p. 53; *Muntakhab*, II, p. 402; Careri, p. 248
536. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 227
537. *K.B.*, *Chan-1*, p. 82; *D.S.*, *Sh-9*. p.32; *D.G.*, *P-7*, p.447
538. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 225; *D.S.*, *Sh-17*, p.66
539. Ibid; *R.S.*, *P-13*, p. 162
540. Manucci, III, p. 150; Thevenot, p. 76; Careri, p, 246
541. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, *P-89*, p. 52; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 227; Pelsart, p. 64; *Ain*, I, p. 46

542. *S.G.*, I, S-36-37, p. 133
543. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, M-5, p. 118
544. *K.B.*, S-252, p. 104; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-20 p. 547
545. *S.G.G.S.*, III, M-1 p.204
546. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, S-20, p. 151; *B.S.K.H.*, H-26, p.84; *S.G.G.S.*, II, M-4, p. 509
547. *Ain*, I p. 201
548. *Ibid.*, p. 202
549. *Careri*, pp. 256-57
550. *Ain*, III, p, 356
551. *Bernier*, pp. 310-11; *Careri*, pp. 249-50; *Ain*, III, p. 355
552. *D.G.*, P-22, p. 386; *Ibid.*, S-10, p. 155; *R.S.*, P-13, p. 318
553. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, 5-1 to 3, p. 179; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-8, pp.420-21
554. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, S-23, 24, p. 182; *R.S.*, S-4, p.155
555. *S.G.G.S.*, I, M-5, p. 530; *Ibid.*, III, M-3, p. 197; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-84, p.45
556. *Bernier*, p. 313; *Careri*, pp. 249-50; *Manucci*, III, pp. 57-58
557. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, P-136, pp. 80-81; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-19, p. 545
558. *R.S.*, S-25, p. 540; *S.G.G.S.*, III, M-5, p.676; *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, S-5, p. 198, *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-13 p.334
559. *K.B.*, *Bas*-6, p.79
560. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, P-127, p. 75; *R.S.*, P-1, 9.199
561. *S.G.G.S.*, II, M-5, p. 106
562. *Ibid.*, M-1, p. 225
563. *K.B.*, *Bas*-6, p. 79; *D.S.*, *Sh*-7 p.50
564. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, P-51, p. 30; *D.S.*, *Sh*-1 p. 48
565. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, P-95, p. 55; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, M-1, p. 557
566. *D.S.*, *Ch*-2, p. 55

567. *K.B.*, R-73, p. 26; *D.S.*, *Sh*-19, p. 67
568. *Ibid.*, *Sh*-2, p. 7
569. *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-34, p. 99
570. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-1, p. 227; *D.S.*, *RG*-1, p. 59
571. *K.G.*, (Tiwari), II, *P*-51, pp. 29-30; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-1 p.41
572. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-187, p. 109
573. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 755
574. *R.S.*, *S*-24, p. 442
575. *Ibid.*, *S*-23; *S.G.*-II, *S*-28, p. 764
576. *D.G.*, *S*- 158, p. 596; *R..S.*, *S*-3, p. 149; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-33, p. 98

CHAPTER – V

RELIGIOUS TRENDS AS REFLECTED IN THE *NIRGUN BHAKTI* LITERATURE

Hinduism

In the 16th and 17th centuries we invariably find the existence of Hindu concept of 33 crore gods and goddesses¹ and like their ancestors the Hindus of this period also believed in the triple deity² viz. Brahma (Who was believed to be the creator of Universe), Vishnu (The protector of mankind) and Siva (The destroyer)³. According to the description made by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints, Brahma lives in *Satyalok*⁴ with his wife Savitri⁵ (Saraswati). He is the creator of the *Vedas*⁶ and rides on swan (*Hams*)⁷. In the same period the independent worship of Brahma was also popular in Rajasthan and a temple of this deity on the side of the sacred lake Pushkara, near the modern Ajmer, was the only one known.

The devotees of Vishnu are called Vaishnavites⁸. For them god Vishnu is the source of the Universe and of all things. In the various compositions of *Nirgun bhakti* saints we find mentioning of the most known cosmic myth of the Hinduism, according to which god Vishnu sleeps in the primeval ocean in *Vaikuntha*⁹ (Highest heaven) on the thousand headed snake *Sesa*¹⁰ and his wife Lakshmi¹¹ whose another name is Kamla¹² always remains near to him. He rides on the great eagle *Garuda*¹³ and is generally thought of as wholly benevolent who works continuously for the welfare of the world.

Almost as popular as Vishnu was god Siva who has been mentioned by many other names such as Rudra, Mahesh, Mahadeva and Shankar in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints.¹⁴ Siva was regarded in the great reverence by his followers and was the chief deity of ascetics. He is depicted in the sayings of saints as seated in the deep meditation on the high slopes of the Himalayan mount *Kailasha*¹⁵ and accompanied by his wife Parvati¹⁶ or Sakti¹⁷. The narration also describes the mount of Siva, the bull (*vrasabha*¹⁸ or *nandi*) standing near him. Though Siva is always shown in the meditation¹⁹, yet has been described also as the Lord of dance (*nateshwara*²⁰ or *nataraja*) which implies that Siva had two distinct images, primarily the meditation reveals his great mystical power and secondly that his dancing image reflects the philosophical aspect. This aspect of Siva was and is still popular in Tamil Nadu where religious dancing has been mentioned in their tradition. Siva has been described in the sayings of Sundardas as *Ardhanarisvara*²¹ (A figure half Siva and half Parvati representing the union of the god with his Sakti).

Furthermore, Siva was also worshipped in the form of *Linga*²² (Male organ) which is symbolized as a short cylindrical pillar with rounded top. This is the survival of a very ancient cult which is surviving till date.

Besides Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, mother goddesses are also frequently mentioned by *Nirgun bhakti* saints. These goddesses were usually connected with the gods as their spouses and were also worshipped in this period. The cult of goddess is

still strong in Bengal and Assam, and is well known in other parts of India.

One of the goddess was the Sakti²³, the strength or potency of her male counterpart. Her chief form was that of the wife of Siva, called in her benevolent aspect, Parvati²⁴. (Daughter of the mountain), Gauri²⁵ (The white one) etc. In her grim aspect she was called by various names such as Durga²⁶ (Inaccessible), Kali²⁷ (The black one) and Chandi²⁸ (The fierce). In fierce aspect she was often depicted as a horrible hag, frequently with eight arms bearing different weapons with carnivorous tusks and a garland of skulls. Her mount was a lion²⁹. She has also been shown as a sternly beautiful woman slaying a buffaloe-headed demon known as Mahisasur³⁰. The more gentle aspect of the goddess was that of Parvati often portrayed as obedient spouse of Lord Siva.

Along with Parvati or Durga other important goddesses of Hinduism are also mentioned by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints. One of them is Lakshmi³¹ or Kamla³² (The wife of Lord Vishnu) who is the goddess of good luck, fortune and temporal blessings. The other is Saraswati³³ (The wife of Brahma) has been shown as the patron of art, music and letters and is still worshipped by students, writers and musicians and this cult continuous to exist.

Besides these greater gods and goddesses, there were infinite number of lesser gods, demigods and spirits good and evil, who were worshipped in Hinduism and some of them have been mentioned by *Nirgun bhakti* saints in their sayings.

These are:

Ganesh³⁴: Ganesh was the chief of the *Ganas* (The *Ganas* were a class of demigods who were subordinates of Siva). Ganesh, undoubtedly, is the most important and most worshipped among all of them. He is the son of Siva and Parvati³⁵. He has an elephant head with one broken tusk and a fat paunch. The non-sectarian worship of Ganesh at the beginning of a religious rite or on a special occasion has been very common among the Hindus.

Hanuman³⁶: The Monkey god, the son of Vayu the friend and servant of Rama, was and still is a popular deity. He is worshipped in many shrines in the form of monkey with more or less human body. He is a beneficent guardian spirit and in his honour monkeys are generally looked on as sacred.

The tradition of Sun (*Surya*) worship has been continuing from quite early ages and was also prevalent in the 16th century as has been described by Jambhoji³⁷. In comparison with the Sun, the Moon (*Chandrama*)³⁸ had no independent cult, but was worshipped as one of the nine planets i.e. *Navagraha*³⁹, whose worship was widely popular in different parts of India. They were worshipped for health, long life, prosperity, ample rains, success over enemies etc. The cult of nine planets was closely connected with the growing popularity of astrology in the period under review.

Hindu worship was not confined to the propitiation of gods and demigods, for the whole of nature, was in some sense divine and sacred. Animals and plants were and still are considered holy,

notably, of course, the cow⁴⁰ who was regarded sacred by Hindus. Among the various “wishing cow” *Nirgun bhakti* saints have mentioned *Kamdhenu*⁴¹, a sacred cow whose milking fulfilled all desires. Despite her sanctity, there was no cow goddess. The living beast was revered, not as representative of any deity, but in her own right. The bull⁴² on the other hand, received honour largely as the mount of Lord Siva; the image of *Nandi* is found in most Saivite temples and honoured with occasional offerings.

After the cow, the snake was perhaps the most revered animal and the cult of serpents was wide spread in India. Legendary serpents, such as *Sesa*⁴³ and *Vasuki*⁴⁴ were worshipped by the people, which gave prestige to the snakes.

There were also sacred trees and plants such as *Vata* (The banyan tree), the secondary roots of which reaching down from its branches, formed the basis of much religious symbolism. In Prayag or modern Allahabad a banyan tree called ‘*Akshay-Vata*’ (The undecaying banyan) or ‘*Akshay-Taru*’⁴⁵ (The undecaying tree as referred to by Sundardas) was and still is regarded very sacred. Among the sacred plant, *Tulsi*⁴⁶, a type of basil, was sacred to Lord Vishnu and by his devotees it was frequently worshipped and was used in almost every Hindu rite. It is still grown in the courtyard of many Hindu homes and tended with great care.

It seems that hills or mountains (*parbat*)⁴⁷ had also some degree of sanctity. Even rocks often had religious significance, especially if upright and resembling Siva *Linga*. Besides a kind of black stone containing one or more ammonite (*saligrama*)⁴⁸ which

was supposed to be pervaded by the substance of Vishnu was sacred to Vaishnavas and many of them wore it in their neck⁴⁹.

Avatarvad (The Theory Of Incarnation)

The Vaishnava concept of *Avatarvada* can be traced back to the sacred literature of ancient period. In a verse of *Bhagavad Gita*, we find the resolve of Lord Vishnu to incarnate himself from age to age for the protection and preservation of the virtuous and the destruction of the wicked⁵⁰. *Nirgun bhakti* literature and other literary evidences reveal the popularity of the belief in and worship of the *Avataras* of Vishnu in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The theory of *Avatarvad* was popularized by the *Puranas*. But the number of the *Avataras* of Vishnu given in the different *Puranas* vary to a considerable extent⁵¹. However, according to the most popular classification, the incarnation of Vishnu are ten⁵². An incarnation might be total (*purnavatara*) or partial (*ansavatara*)⁵³. Every good or great man was thought of as a partial incarnation of Vishnu. The ten chief incarnations, however, are of more special type, for in them, the god is believed to have taken flesh to save the world from imminent danger of total destruction. Among them Rama and Krishna were and still are more popular⁵⁴.

Rajjabdas and Guru Gobind Singh have just given the number of fourteen other *Avataras* in their sayings⁵⁵.

Rites And Rituals

The basic rite of Hinduism is '*Isvara-Puja*' or divine worship. In general, a god is worshipped in the form of an idol. In

the period under review the idols of the gods were made of different materials such as stone (*pashan*⁵⁶, *pahan*⁵⁷, *pathar*⁵⁸), clay (*mati*⁵⁹ or *mitti*), shellac (*kanjo*⁶⁰ or *laksha*), wood (*kath*⁶¹ or *kasth*), brass (*pitar*⁶² or *pittal*), iron (*loha*)⁶³, silver (*rupa*⁶⁴ or *chandi*) and gold (*kanchan*⁶⁵ or *sona*) and were placed and worshipped in every Hindu home as well as temples. In a temple, the heart of the temple or the central shrine was the home of chief divinity where a throne of metal or other substance was placed as his seat⁶⁶. Sometimes the chief deity was joined by other lesser gods⁶⁷. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have described in detail all the ceremonies related to divine worship.

Firstly the idol of the god was washed, dried⁶⁸ and dressed with expensive costumes and jewellery⁶⁹ and then was honoured with flowers, garlands, incense and lamps. Devotees made *Tilak* (Sectarian mark) with sandal or saffron and rice (*akshat*)⁷⁰ on the forehead of the idol⁷¹ and waved flapper (*chamvar*)⁷² over the idol's head. Food offering was then made according to ability. In the temples the offerings comprised of various types of dishes and sweets, of which some part was offered to the god⁷³ and the remaining of it was distributed among his worshippers as *Prasad*⁷⁴. An important part of divine worship was the ceremony of *Arati*. The ceremony of *Arati* required a devotee to stand before the deity and perform the worship by clapping, dancing and singing the praise of the god amidst the sounds of *Ghanta* (Gong), *Shankha* (Conch-shell) and *Mridanga*⁷⁵ (A kind of small drum). Then they circumambulated the deity several times⁷⁶. They fall prostrate with their whole body at the feet of the deity⁷⁷ and paid their homage to get the blessings in the form of boons. This type

of prostration was called *Dandavat*⁷⁸ (Staff-like). Besides this, repetition of an incantation or the name of deity⁷⁹ and counting the beads of a rosary⁸⁰, generally made of *Tulsi*⁸¹ or *Rudraksha*⁸² was also a mode of divine worship.

Yajna (Sacrifice)

Yajna or sacrifice has been an important rite of Hinduism from the very ancient period. Its chief purpose was the gratification of the gods in order to obtain boons from them. In the *Nirgun bhakti* literature generally the term *Homa*⁸³ is used for sacrifice. *Sompaku*⁸⁴ or *Som-Pak-Yajna* (Simple or domestic sacrifice) performed by the head of a *Brahmana* family was the daily practice in Hinduism. According to the information provided by the saints, to perform sacrifice *Samdha*⁸⁵ or *Samidha* (Fire wood) was collected in a sacrificial altar and fire was kindled in them. Then oblations (*ahuti*)⁸⁶ of *Ghee*⁸⁷, *Til*⁸⁸ and other materials were offered in the name of the deity with the recitation of sacred verses generally from the *Vedas*.

Nirgun bhakti saints have also referred to some great sacrifices such as *Ashvamedha*⁸⁹ (Horse-sacrifice) and *Vajpeya*⁹⁰ (Chariot-race – one of the seven forms of the *Soma* sacrifice, generally offered by kings aspiring to the highest position). One of the sacrifices i.e. *Ashvamedha* has also been mentioned by Abul Fazl⁹¹.

It appears that these great sacrifices must have performed in the ritualistic manner only in the 16th and 17th centuries, but by no means it can be compared with the ancient period. These were

complex rites which involved much preparations, the sacrifice of many animals and the participation of several well-trained priests.

Animal Sacrifice

Animal sacrifice was practiced in Hinduism especially in the cult of goddess⁹². Animals were sacrificed like buffaloes⁹³, goats⁹⁴ and cockerels⁹⁵. These animals were the most favourite for the rites.

Dana (Alms giving)

The practice of bestowing alms to the *Brahmanas* was widely followed in the Hinduism. For Hindus it was the mode by which the provision for their last journey was secured. In their different sayings *Nirgun bhakti* saints have described various kinds of alms which were prevalent in their contemporary Hindu society. These were: 1. *Gau-dana*⁹⁶: the alms of cow has been prevalent in India from ancient times. It was generally made at the time of the death of a person. In the 16th century Abul Fazl had mentioned ‘*Go-Sahasradana*’ which consisted of the alms of thousand cows, adorned with gold, pearls and other precious materials⁹⁷. It was generally made at pilgrimage places⁹⁸ by kings and the people of royal and well to do classes. 2. *Tula-dana*⁹⁹: the weighing of the person against gold, silver and other valuables. It is also referred to by Abul Fazl¹⁰⁰. 3. *Dharani-dana*¹⁰¹ or *Dhara-dana* as mentioned by Abul Fazl, it was a figure of the surface of the earth made up of gold and upon which were represented mountains, woods and seas, weighing not less than sixteen *Tolahs*, eight *Masha* and not more than 3,633 *Tolahs*¹⁰². 4. *Pattal-dana*¹⁰³:

the alms of a leaf-plate full of rice, wheat, paddy mixed with milk and clarified butter¹⁰⁴; 5. Alms of gold¹⁰⁵; 6. Alms of cloth¹⁰⁶; 7. *Bhumi-dana*¹⁰⁷: alms or grant of land. It was generally made by kings.

For charity, although no distinct season was fixed, however, it was generally given in times of *Grahana*¹⁰⁸ (*Eclips*) and ‘*Makar Sankranti*’¹⁰⁹ (When the Sun enters capricorn) and on some other occasions.

Vrat (Fast)

Among the numerous kinds of Hindu *Vratas* or fasts, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to the fast of *Ekadashi*¹¹⁰, which was kept on the eleventh day of each lunar fortnight of every month. Kabir has described that Hindus kept twenty four *Ekadashi* fasts in a year¹¹¹. According to the saints, on this occasion people took only fruits¹¹² and milk¹¹³. *Singhara*¹¹⁴ or the water-chestnut was and still is important in the Hindu fasts. It is used as fruits as well as flour which was made of dried water-chestnut. The fast was concluded on *Dwadashi*¹¹⁵ or the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight.

In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl has described various kinds of fasts kept by Hindus in the 16th century¹¹⁶.

Tirtha-Yatra (Pilgrimage)

In the Hindu scheme of life ‘*Tirtha-Yatra*’ occupies a significant place. It is believed that *Tirtha-Yatra* undertaken with faith and piety destroys sins and lead moral elevation, mental discipline, happiness and even salvation. That’s why *Tirthas*

attract large number of pilgrims from the different regions and have become vital spots of Indian culture.

In the 16th and 17th centuries also *Tirtha-Yatra*¹¹⁷ acquired much importance and popularity which is clearly reflected in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. According to them sixty eight places (*arsath-tirath*)¹¹⁸ were considered sacred and were most famous for pilgrimage. Of these, the chief *Tirthas* figuring in their works are Kashi or Banaras (Varanasi), Prayag (Allahabad), Mathura, Dwarika, Vrindavana, Gaya, Jagannathpuri, Haridwara, Badrinatha, Kedarnatha, Kurukshetra and Pushkara¹¹⁹.

Besides this, certain rivers which were sacred to the Hindus have also been referred to by the saints. Of these the most important was Ganga¹²⁰ which was often personified as a goddess in her own right. Ten days¹²¹ during the year were considered more sacred and were regarded more efficacious for taking bath in the Ganges. Some other rivers mentioned by *Nirgun bhakti* saints are Jamuna, Sarasvati, Godavari, 'Triveni Sangam'¹²² (Confluence of the river Ganga, Jamuna and Sarasvati at Prayag).

Abul Fazl has described the ancient concept of classification of *Tirthas* where the four divisions of *Tirthas* are as following 1. *Deva* or divine, 2. *Asura*; 3. *Arsa*; 4. *Manusha*¹²³.

The Last Rites

So far as the last rites are concerned, they were mostly based on the Hindu traditions which they had followed for centuries. Some of these rites have been described by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints. On the death of a Hindu the last rites were performed

generally by the eldest son and in his absence by the youngest. This was the prevalent custom in almost all parts of Northern India in the period under review.

When a person breathed his last the *Brahmana* read prayers over him and alms were given¹²⁴ to console his soul and appease gods. Relatives put *Ganga-Jal* (Ganga's water), *Tulsi-Dal* (Leaves of *Tulsi* plant) and gold in the mouth of the dying person¹²⁵. And when he died his relatives got themselves engaged in number of rituals and many rites were performed¹²⁶. The dead body was washed and dressed in new clothes¹²⁷ or loin cloth. After that the body was carried to the funeral ground (*shamsan* or *masan*), mostly on the river bank. A funeral pile was formed upon which the body was laid¹²⁸. The funeral pile of the rich and affluent people was prepared from sandal wood¹²⁹. The pyre was given fire by the son with all the solemnities¹³⁰. He performed '*Kapal Kriya*'¹³¹ (Ceremonial breaking of the skull of the burning corpse).

After completing all the rites, the relatives and friends of the deceased used to take bath and wash their cloths on the river bank or at a nearby pond and at home recitation of the sacred texts especially of '*Garuda Purana*' by a *Brahmana* was taken up later¹³². Some days after the death of a person the son or other relative, who had set fire used to collect the ashes from the funeral ground to throw into the Ganga river¹³³. The ceremony of '*Diya*'¹³⁴ was also performed by the wife or the son of the deceased which involved putting a kindled earthen lamp with flower in leaf basket and was flown into the Ganga.

The ceremony of '*Pindadana*' was also performed at Gaya by the son of the deceased in which oblation of cooked rice was made through a *Brahmana* as nourishment to the new body of the deceased¹³⁵. It was believed that when the natural body dies, the soul takes a subtle frame called '*Preta*'¹³⁶ and cannot enter paradise in his form and that the act of *Pindadana* would release the soul from this form and would finally allow it to assume another form fitted for paradise.

We get information from the saints compositions that the day of departure of the person was observed in ceremonial form where the son or the wife of the deceased performed *Shradh*¹³⁷ ceremony. It was also observed for the ancestors and was performed on the first day of the first quarter of the new Moon, or on the sixteenth lunar day of the month of Kuar (Sept-Oct.) and is marked by giving charity and feeding four to five *Brahmanas* at a pilgrimage place in the name of the deceased¹³⁸.

Self-Immolation

On the basis of the evidences provided by the saints, it can be said that self-immolation or religious suicide had become quite common in the period under review. These suicides were generally committed at sacred places in various forms. The custom of cutting one's own throat¹³⁹ in Prayag at the confluence of Ganga and Jamuna was very common¹⁴⁰. There was a belief that if a person would put his own head in a noose and drowned himself into the river Ganga to end his life shall find way to heaven¹⁴¹. Besides there were also other horrible method of suicide

encountered like getting voluntary plunging oneself inside snow¹⁴² or even getting oneself sawed at Kashi¹⁴³.

Belief In Rebirth Or Transmigration Of The Soul

Nirguna bhakti saints have referred to the Hindu belief of the theory of rebirth and transmigration of the soul. They also subscribe to the Hindu thought of eighty four lakhs birth¹⁴⁴ and believed that soul passes into a different body after death like divine, human, animal and this depends on the previous deeds and on the deeds of previous births¹⁴⁵, which consequently defines how a soul could find happiness and sorrow¹⁴⁶.

In Hinduism, the continual passage of the soul from body to body is often compared to an ever-rolling wheel¹⁴⁷ and in Hinduism the desire for release from transmigration seems to be the primary goal of mankind. Guru Ramdas warns that a person who has no respect for his *Guru* or preceptor cannot obtain salvation from the tedious passage of transmigration¹⁴⁸.

Various Sects

In the period under consideration i.e. 16th and 17th centuries, there existed various sects which belonged to either the Saiva or the Vaishnava system of Hinduism. Some of them have been described in great detail by different *Nirguna bhakti* saints. Here an attempt has been made to describe these sects, their followers and their practices on the basis of rich material available in the *Nirguna bhakti* literature.

Yogis

The term 'Yogi' is properly applicable to the followers of the *Yoga*, the Patanjala school of philosophy, which amongst other tenets maintained the practicability of acquiring entire command over elementary matter by means of certain ascetic practices. The journey to this goal required the eight courses of *Yoga* (*Astanga-Yoga*) to be strictly followed. 1. The first lesson is *Yama*¹⁴⁹ (Abstentions). In this great stress has been laid on *Ahimsa* or non-violence as it is considered that all other virtues are rooted in. *Ahimsa* may be interpreted broadly as abstinence from malice towards all living creatures. It has been further stressed that it is not merely non-violence but non-hatred (abandonment of hostility) which is needed for a *Sadhaka*¹⁵⁰. 2. The second course is *Niyama*¹⁵¹ (Observances), deals with the purification of both external and internal part of the body and also prescribes contentment, austerity and devotion to God as necessary prerequisites for a person to become Yogi¹⁵². 3. The third is *Asana*¹⁵³ - it talks about postures. The posture should be steady and comfortable. And this is possible when the person sits with the head, trunk and the neck in a straight line¹⁵⁴. 4. The fourth being *Pranayama*¹⁵⁵ which teaches a *Yogi* to control the motion of exhalation and inhalation after the full practice of *Asana*¹⁵⁶. 5. The next is *Pratyahara*¹⁵⁷ which is withdrawal from the external world. It means the withdrawal of the senses from their natural outward functioning¹⁵⁸. 6. This is followed by *Dharana*¹⁵⁹ which means concentration. It required a *Yogi* to concentrate the mind on a particular object¹⁶⁰. 7. This is followed by *Dhyana*¹⁶¹, an unbroken current of knowledge of the object of *Dharana* becomes *Dhyana*

or mediation¹⁶². 8. The last lesson of a *Yogi* is *Samadhi*¹⁶³ - this is a higher state of meditation in which all the properties of form are given up and only meaning without form remains¹⁶⁴.

Yoga became more popular in India in the form of '*Hathayoga*' which was expounded by Gorakhnath¹⁶⁵. '*Hatha*' is a compound word in Sanskrit, formed of two syllables '*Ha*' and '*Tha*'. The letter '*Ha*' stands for '*Surya*' (The Sun) and the letter '*Tha*' denotes '*Chandra*' (The moon). When '*Surya*' and '*Chandra*' are brought in a balanced condition this is called '*Hathayoga*'. In other words, the union or *Yoga* of '*Surya*' and '*Chandra*' is called '*Hathayoga*'¹⁶⁶.

'*Hathayoga*' was and still is practiced by the disciples and followers of Gorakhnath, (A sect of '*Kanphata Yogis*'). This sect was called by different names such as '*Yoga Marga*', '*Nath Sampradaya*', '*Siddha Sampradaya*', '*Siddha Marga*', '*Avadhuta Mata*'¹⁶⁷ etc. and was divided into twelve classes¹⁶⁸ viz. 1. Satanath, 2. Ramanath, 3. Dharmanath, 4. Lakshamananath, 5. Darianath, 6. Ganganath, 7. Bairag, 8. Raval or Naganath, 9. Jalandharip, 10. Aaipanth, 11. Kapilani, 12. Dhajanath¹⁶⁹.

Followers of *Yogi* or *Nath Sampradaya* worshipped Lord Siva who is also known by the names Adinath¹⁷⁰ and Bhairava¹⁷¹. According to their tradition '*Hathayoga*' was originally taught by Lord Siva to Parvati. A significant factor of the '*Hatha*' text was therefore, that they began with a tribute to Adinath. This feature is also evident in the sayings of Sundardas which deal with the '*Hathayoga*'¹⁷². In the texts of the sect many perfect *Yogis* or *Siddhas* are figured. Among them eighty four¹⁷³ are most popular.

It is said that they are still upon the earth. Some of these Siddhas viz. Adinath, Matsyendranath, Meananath, Gorakhnath, Charpatinath, Chauranginath, Gopichandra, Bharthari and Kaneri are referred to by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints¹⁷⁴. The philosophy of ‘*Hathayoga*’ is described in great detail by *Nirguna bhakti* saints¹⁷⁵. It is evident from their sayings that the ultimate aim of a *Yogi* is to attain *Siddhi* and to unite with Siva. However, this is not an easy job. According to Sundardas this aim cannot be achieved without the process of internal purification i.e. the purification of *Nadis* or veins. The veins are distinguished in two principal parts. *Ida* is the veins of left side and is also called the lunar veins¹⁷⁶. *Pingala* is the veins of right side and is also called the solar veins¹⁷⁷. In the middle of these two is the chief vein of the body which is known as ‘*Susumna*’ and it runs through the spinal cord¹⁷⁸. And along it lies six wheels (*Shatchakra*¹⁷⁹ or concentrations of psychic energy) at different points. These are – 1. ‘*Adhara Chakra*’ symbolically represented by four petals of lotus¹⁸⁰, 2. ‘*Svadhishthana Chakra*’ with six petals¹⁸¹, 3. ‘*Manipura Chakra*’ with ten petals¹⁸², 4. ‘*Anahata Chakra*’ with twelve petals¹⁸³, 5. ‘*Vishuddhakhya Chakra*’ with sixteen petals¹⁸⁴ and 6. ‘*A-jna Chakra*’ with two petals¹⁸⁵. At the top of the vein *Susumna* within the skull is situated ‘*Sahasrara*’ (Also called *Shunya Chakra*), a especially powerful psychic centre symbolically referred to as a lotus of thousand petals¹⁸⁶. In the lowest wheel behind the genitals is the ‘*Kundalini*’¹⁸⁷ the serpent power, generally in a quiescent state¹⁸⁸.

The veins or *Nadis* are purified by the regular practice of six-fold activities (*shatkarman*)¹⁸⁹ prescribed in ‘*Hathayoga*’.

These are *Dhauti, Vasti, Neti, Lauli, Trotaka* and *Kapalbhati*¹⁹⁰. *Pranayama* and different *Asanas* are then followed which provide the *Yogi* the power to control the body. As the *Yogis* believed that once *Nadis* or veins are purified the *Vayu* (breath) flows through with ease. By different *Yogic* practices the *Yogi* stops the motion of *Vayu* in the lunar and the solar veins. viz. *Ida* and *Pingala Nadis* respectively and make it to pass through *Susumna*. By this process the mind attains steadiness. Then the sleeping *Kundalini* is awakened which rises upwards through the vein *Susumna* and passes through all the six wheels of psychic force and unites with *Siva* in the topmost '*Sahasrara*'. By awakening and rising his *Kundalini* the *Yogi* can gain spiritual power and by uniting it with *Siva* he can attain salvation¹⁹¹.

Sundardas has described the principal of *Hathayoga* where a *Yogi* is required to reside in a small cottage in solitude, in a righteous country which is free from all kinds of disturbances. The cottage should have a small entrance and no other opening, holes or pits. The idea was to keep the learner free from all worries and in complete isolation from the outside world. A *Yogi* should control his diet, the good grain-wheat, rice especially *Sathi rice* (rice produced in 60 days) milk *Ghee*, sugar, butter, honey, dry ginger, *Patola* fruit and rain water are considered to be wholesome food for *Yogis*. Eating food which is bitter, sour, salty is prohibited. The pungent, green vegetables, oil, mustard and sesame, meat, asafoetida, garlic and alcohol consumption are all strictly forbidden¹⁹². Wicked company, bathing early in the morning, fasting, over eating, talking too much, over exertion etc.

are also to be avoided by a *Yogi*. Infact any work which causes discomfort to the body is asked to be avoided.

The *Yogis* or *Nath Yogis*¹⁹³ were called '*Kanphatas*'¹⁹⁴ due to their peculiarity in having their ear-lobes teared and ring called '*Mundra*'¹⁹⁵ (*Mudra*) inserted in them at the time of their initiation. There was another class of *Yogis* called *Aughar*¹⁹⁶ whose ears were not teared and they did not wore *Mudra*. *Mudra* of *Kanphata Yogis* was made of different metals and sometimes of crystal (*phatak*)¹⁹⁷. They wore *Gunja* or *Chirghat*¹⁹⁸ (The smallest of Jewellers weight,) and *Kanthmala* or *Kanthla*¹⁹⁹ usually made of *Rudraksha* beads in their neck and carried *Jata*²⁰⁰ (Long and matted hair). They used to grow their nails (*nakh*)²⁰¹ of hands and mark their forehead with a transverse line of *Bhasma*²⁰², *Bhabhut* or *Bibhuti*²⁰³ (Ashes) and used to smear their body with the same²⁰⁴. They wore a patched garment dyed with ochre colour²⁰⁵ called *Kantha*²⁰⁶ or *Khintha*²⁰⁷. Some of them wore *Langot*²⁰⁸ or *Jagota*²⁰⁹ (loin-cloth) tied with *Mekhala* or *Mekhali*²¹⁰ (Belt, girdle), while some would put on *Mrigchhala*²¹¹ (Deer skin) while some of them remained entirely naked²¹². The footwear of *Yogi* was *Pavodi*²¹³ or *Kharaun* (Wooden soled sandal). Some used *Paychiye*²¹⁴ (Socks made of leather) to cover the feet. Some *Yogis* would also put on *Baghambar*²¹⁵ (Tiger skin) over their shoulders which was also used as their *Asana* or seat to sit on.

Yogis' mode of salutation was *Adesha*²¹⁶. They earned their livelihood by begging and used to take alms in the name of '*Alakha Niranjan*'²¹⁷ – 'the invisible God'. They used to carry *Batua*²¹⁸ (Purse), *Jholi*²¹⁹ (A bag or sack), *Chipiya*²²⁰ or *Kamandal*

(An earthen or wooden water pot) and begging bowl called 'Khappar'²²¹ (Which was usually a broken piece of earthen ware or coconut shell). They also kept *Adhari*²²² (A portable seat or tripod which was used as a hand support at the time of sitting) and a *Danda*²²³ or *Sota* (A small club), for the purpose of incantation. They used a *Singi*²²⁴ (A small horn) and *Kingri*²²⁵ or *Kinguri*²²⁶ (Stringed instrument). They used their musical instruments like *Kingri* while singing²²⁷ religious songs containing vivid description of Bhartihari and Puranic legends of the marriage of Siva and Parvati²²⁸.

In one of his sayings Kabir has mentioned about the growing militarization of the sect of *Nath Yogis* in the medieval period. They had different type of weapons and even horses to challenge their opponents²²⁹. This is evident from the fact that in the 16th century the *Nath Yogis* of Cuchh in Gujarat had resorted to violence and forcibly converted the 'Atithas' (Ascetics) of Junagarh in the sect of *Kanphata Yogis*. The 'Atithas' when objected, had to face the *Yogis* in the open fight²³⁰.

However, *Yogis* usually lived in the forests and caves²³¹ by making small cottage or hut (*mathika*²³² or *marhi*²³³) as ascetics. Siva was the main object of their worship. Some of the *Yogis* also officiated as the priests in Saiva temples and were called 'Mahanta'²³⁴. They used to live in the groups of their disciples called 'Jamats'²³⁵ in *Mathas*. There were many centres, established by them at different places in India, such as Jodhpur, Jaipur, Nauhar (Shri Gangasagar), Tai (Sikar), Mahamandir, of Rajasthan have always been famous seats of *Nath Yogis*²³⁶.

Kadrimatha in South Kanara district in modern Karnataka was and still is one of their famous centre in South India²³⁷. In the 17th century a *Yogi* named Bhatnath was the head of *Kadrimatha*²³⁸. *Gorakh-hattri*²³⁹ in Peshawar was another sacred and famous centre of *Yogis* in this period. In this period *Nath Yogis* entertained the reputation of being peculiarly enlightened ascetics for their profound meditation and other religious mortifications²⁴⁰. But at the same time some *Yogis* had fallen into disgrace because of their various disgusting practices and disrespectful conduct. Common people were frightened by them. They were *Tantrics* and followed the leftist path of *Nath Sampradaya*. In some of their sayings *Nirgun bhakti* saints have described their practices. They lived in cremation places where they recite incantation over dead body²⁴¹ for acquiring power, made animal and even human sacrifices to Bhairava (A manifestation of Lord Siva), consumed wine, *Bhang* and other intoxicants and were meat eaters²⁴². These practices were very much similar to those of '*Kapalikas*' and on the basis of literary sources of *Nath Sampradaya* they are also included in that sect. They were Saiva *Yogis* and wore *Mudra* or *Kundal* in their ears. The founders of their sect namely, Jalandharnath (Jalandharpad) and Krishnapad (Kanipa, Kanupa, Kanhupa) were the famous *Acharyas* or preceptors and *Siddhas* of *Nath Sampradaya*²⁴³.

The '*Kapalikas*' maintained that if one's mind was fixed on the soul enthroned in the feminine organ and was aware of the six signs (*mudrikas*) viz. 1. a necklace, 2. an ornament, 3. an ear ornament, 4. crest jewel 5. ashes, 6. the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*), one could attain salvation and whose body bore

these marks, was free from transmigration²⁴⁴. *Kapalikas* wore *Kundal* and *Mala* of human bones in their ears and neck and kept *Narkapal* (Human skull). Wine was necessary for the fulfillment of their various practices²⁴⁵. In one of his compositions, Sundardas has condemned these *Kapalikas* as the corrupt people²⁴⁶.

Lingayats Or Jangamas

The foundation of this sect is generally attributed to Basava, who was the son of Madiraja, a *Brahmana* supposed to be of the *Aradhya sect*²⁴⁷. *Lingayat* sect was also known by the name of 'Virasaiva'. And as described by Sundardas and Guru Gobind Singh, the followers of this sect worshipped Siva as their one and only deity and their essential characteristic was that they wore *Linga*²⁴⁸ the emblem of Siva on some part of their body, generally in a silver or metallic casket suspended round their necks with a cord like a necklace. And their attendance at temples and worship of the *Linga* therein were by no means necessary for them²⁴⁹.

In the South of India, especially in Karnataka, the *Lingayats* are still numerous. The members of 'Acharya' or teacher class of *Lingayat* sect are popularly called 'Jangamas'²⁵⁰ whom Sundardas has referred to as worshipper of Siva²⁵¹. Of these there are some who are called 'Viraktas' (Passionless) and who lived a life of celibacy and asceticism and maintained a convent (*matha*)²⁵². It is evident by some of *Farmans* (Imperial orders) of Emperor Aurangzeb that even lands were granted by Emperor to the *Jangambari Matha* of Banaras²⁵³. The class also had married men who laid the life of householders and also followed priestly

occupation. *Jangamas* exercised great religious control over the followers of the sect²⁵⁴.

The *Lingayats* or *Jangamas* fiercely reject the verses written in the praise of Vishnu, Rama and Krishna such as *Bhagavad Gita* and *Ramayana* and also deny the authority of *Brahmanas*. They also reject the efficacy of pilgrimage, self mortification and the restrictions of castes. While they revere principally the *Vedas* and the teachings of the great Saivite reformer Shankaracharya²⁵⁵.

Jangamas lived upon alms and abstained from meat and wine. They are still found in the villages as mendicants who carry a bull symbolizing *Nandi*, the bull of Siva, decorated with various colours and strings of cowri shells. They move from place to place and asks alms²⁵⁶. According to Sundardas they always begged in the name of Siva²⁵⁷.

Aghoris

Nirgun bhakti saints like Kabir and Sundardas have referred to ‘*Aghori*’²⁵⁸ (*Aghorpanthi*) in their sayings. They were a class of Saiva mendicants. *Aghori* style of worship had some horrible practices which required even human sacrifice. They lived in cremation places and practised cannibalism. They smeared their bodies with human excreta and also carried it with them in a wooden cup or skull²⁵⁹. The *Aghoris* represented their filthy habits as merely giving practical expression to the abstract doctrine that the whole universe is full of *Brahman* and consequently that one thing is as pure as another. By eating the most horrible things they showed their indifference to worldly objects and said to have

utterly subdued their natural appetites and thus claimed to acquire great power over themselves and over the forces of nature. It was believed that an *Aghori* could at will assume the form of a bird, an animal or fish and that he could bring back to life a corpse of which he had eaten a part²⁶⁰.

They were universally hated and feared. Kabir also criticized them because of their practices and says, “The (*Aghori*) lost their community and family honour”²⁶¹. They are still found in Banaras and at Girnar near Mount Abu in Rajasthan²⁶².

Sanyasis

Literary meaning of the term ‘*Sanyasi*’ is the one who renounces the world and it is applicable to the people who have abandoned the world or have overcome their passions²⁶³.

The state of *Sanyasi* was the fourth stage or *Ashrama* in the life of any Hindu of first three classes viz. *Brahamana*, *Kshatriya* and *Vaishya*. At this stage all worldly ties were renounced²⁶⁴. When a person would enter the stage of *Sanyasa*, he had to discard his sacred thread, shave his top-knot²⁶⁵ (in case of a *Brahmana*) and leave his house and would lead a wandering life and would keep himself subsisted upon the alms²⁶⁶.

Sanyasis were also called ‘*Dasnami*’ or ten-named²⁶⁷ as they were divided into ten classes viz. *Tirtha*, *Asrama*, *Vana*, *Aranya*, *Sarasvati*, *Puri*, *Bharti*, *Giri* or *Gir*, *Parvata* and *Sagara*. They were regarded as the descendants of the original members of the fraternity who relate their origin to Shankaracharya, who was regarded as an incarnation of Siva and was very much revered by

*Sanyasis*²⁶⁸. Besides Shankara, the different orders of *Sanyasis* also hold Muni Dattatreya²⁶⁹ in high veneration. He was the son of Atri and Anusuya and was known for his practice of the *Yoga* and was regarded as an incarnation of a portion of Vishnu²⁷⁰.

Some of the members of the *Sanyasi* sect carried ‘*Danda*’ or a small wand with them and were thus called ‘*Dandis*’²⁷¹. *Sanyasis* generally kept long and matted hair (*jata*)²⁷². However, many of them shaved their head and beard²⁷³. They wore ochre coloured tattered clothes²⁷⁴, applied *Tilak*²⁷⁵ (Sectarial mark) on their forehead and wore a *Mala*²⁷⁶ (Garland generally made of *Rudraksha* beads) in their neck. Sometimes they smeared their forehead with ashes (*bibhut*²⁷⁷ or *rakh*²⁷⁸) which was generally taken from the fire of an *Agnihotra Brahmana* or it might be the ashes of burnt cow dung from an oblation offered to the god. They spend their time in meditation or in practices corresponding with those of the *Yoga* and in the study of *Vedanta*²⁷⁹. In the period under review, there were many *Sanyasis* who had extraordinary perfection in their meditation. One of them was a *Dandahari* named Chaturvapa who was so perfect in *Yoga* that he could suspend his breath for three hours²⁸⁰. Some of them remained immovable for years standing upon one leg²⁸¹ and were called ‘*Thavesar*’ or ‘*Sthavar*’²⁸². While still other ascetics kept continuous silence and were called ‘*Mauni*’²⁸³. In one of his sayings Sundardas has referred to ‘*Paramahansa Sanyasi*’²⁸⁴ which was the most eminent among the four gradations of *Sanyasis* (*Kutichara*, *Bahudaka*; *Hansa* and *Paramahansa*). The *Paramahansas* were the ascetics who got solely occupied with the

investigation of *Brahman* or spirit and were equally indifferent to pleasure or pain, heat or cold, and satiety or want²⁸⁵.

Bairagis

The term '*Bairagi*' or '*Vairagi*' implied a person devoid of passion and estranged from the interests and emotions of mankind. This was indeed used in many cases but was more precisely attached to the Vaishnava mendicants of the Ramanandi class²⁸⁶.

They were the followers of Ramananda²⁸⁷ who was born at the close of the 13th century and preached in Northern India at the beginning of the 14th century²⁸⁸. They addressed their devotion peculiarly to Lord Vishnu and had reverence for all of his incarnations. They maintained the superiority of Rama. As the every Vaishnava sect, they had high regard for the *Saligrama* stone and *Tulsi* plant²⁸⁹.

This ascetic order of Ramanandi Vaishnavas travelled different *Tirthas*²⁹⁰ dedicated to Vishnu²⁹¹ in various parts of India singly or in bodies and subsisted upon alms²⁹². They applied various streaks or sectarian marks on their forehead, breasts and arms made of '*Gopichandana*' (White clay)²⁹³. On the forehead they had marking or *Tilak* with two perpendicular white lines, drawn from the root of the hair to the commencement of each eyebrow, and a transverse streak connecting them across the root of the nose and in the centre was a perpendicular streak of red sandal or '*Roli*' (A preparation of turmeric and lime)²⁹⁴. Besides these marks, the *Bairagis* wore a necklace (*Kanthi*²⁹⁵ or *mala*) of *Tulsi* beads²⁹⁶ and also carried a rosary of the seeds of the same plant.

Jainism

In the 16th and 17th centuries *Jainism* was quite popular in parts of Western and Northern India. Many regions of Gujarat and Rajasthan and parts of modern Madhya Pradesh (M.P.) and Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) had a large number of followers of this faith. They were mostly merchants and bankers (*vaishyas*) who formed a very opulent portion of the society.

The leading tenets of the *Jains* clearly distinguished them from the rest of the Hindus. Firstly, they deny in the divine origin and infallible authority of the *Vedas*; secondly, they had great reverence for certain deified saints, who acquired by practice of self-denial and mortification, a station superior to that of the gods; and thirdly, extreme and even ludicrous tenderness of animal life.

The holy mortals or deified saints who are highly adorned by *Jains* are twenty four²⁹⁷ in number. They are called by various epithets. Some of these titles such as '*Tirthakara*'²⁹⁸ or '*Tirthankara*', '*Arhat*'²⁹⁹ or '*Arihant*'³⁰⁰ and '*Jinaraja*'³⁰¹ are referred to by *Nirgun bhakti* saints. The first, *Tirthankara* implies one who has crossed over (*Tiryateanena*) that is the world compared to the ocean; *Arhat* is one who is entitled to the homage of gods and men, and *Jina* is the victor over all the human passions and infirmities³⁰². Among these twenty four, two namely Parsavanath and Mahavira, the twenty third and twenty fourth *Tirthankara* of the sect held in highest esteem by *Jains*.

The moral code of *Jains* can be expressed in its five ethical principles: *Ahimsa* (Non-violence) *Satya* (Truth), *Asteya* (Non-

stealing), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy) and *Aparigraha* (Non-possession)³⁰³. Besides this, there are number of minor instructions and prohibitions.

In the very early period *Jains* got divided into two principal divisions – ‘*Digambara*’ (Space-clad, naked) and the ‘*Svetambara*’ (White-clad)³⁰⁴ who were also called ‘*Sewaras*’³⁰⁵. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to both the divisions of *Jains* by calling them *Digambara*³⁰⁶ and *Svetambara*³⁰⁷. This division has persisted down to the present day. Besides, the whole *Jain* community was also classified into two groups namely *Yatis*³⁰⁸ or *Jatis*³⁰⁹ (The *Jain* ascetics who led a religious life) and *Sravaka*³¹⁰ or *Sravaga*³¹¹ (The secular member or the laymen of the sect). The regimen of the *Jain* ascetics or *Yatis* was and still is strict in the extreme. They subsisted upon the alms³¹² supplied by the *Sravakas*. Their hair, beards and moustaches were not shaved but were pulled out by the roots³¹³. They followed the aforementioned five principles quite strictly. They were expected to follow a life of abstinence, taciturnity and continence. Acts of violence and killing whether intentional or not were regarded as the most potent cause of the influx of *Karma* and were, therefore, particularly to be avoided. Meat eating was quite forbidden to ascetics and laymen alike³¹⁴. Even insect life was carefully protected especially by the *Jain* ascetics. They strained their drinking water to save the lives of animalculae and wore a piece of cloth over their mouths³¹⁵ to prevent the minute living beings in the air from being inhaled and killed³¹⁶. They travelled barefoot³¹⁷ and besides water pots³¹⁸ they usually carried dusters to brush ants and other insects from their path and save them from being trampled under feet³¹⁹. In the

Adi Granth it is mentioned that *Jain* ascetics carried *Fuman*³²⁰ (A brush of cotton threads) with them and was most probably used for the same purpose.

There were many famous *Jaina* ascetics who were honoured by Mughal Emperors in the period under review. Among them Padamasundara, Hiravijaya Suri (He got the title *Jagadguru* from Emperor Akbar), Vijayasena, Bhanuchandra were contemporaries of Akbar and honoured by him³²¹. While Siddhichandra *Yati* and Nandivijaya were honoured with the title '*Khushfaham*'- man of sharp intellect. Vijayadeva Suri was honoured with the title '*Mahatap Viruddharak Bhattaraka*' by the Emperor Jahangir³²².

As far as *Sravakas* or the common *Jains* are concerned, they formed, as stated earlier, a predominantly mercantile community. From the very early period Jainism encouraged the commercial activities, no Jain could take up the profession of agriculture, as this involved not only the destruction of plant life but also of many living beings in soil. Besides this, *Sravakas* observed some other usual prohibition of the sect such as they abstained from meat, wine, honey, butter, opium and everything that grow beneath the earth³²³, *Sravakas* gave alms only to the *Yatis* and presented offerings and paid homage only to the *Tirthankaras* whose statues were erected in many splendid *Jain* temples³²⁴. The rituals of *Jains* were very simple. They walked round the statue three times, made an obeisance to the images with offerings usually of fruits or flowers³²⁵. Kabir also mentioned that *Jains* offered flowers to the statue in the temple³²⁶.

There were many famous *Jain* centres in India in the medieval period. For instance, Agra, which became a centre of Jainism from the days of Akbar and by the end of the 17th century, it had as many as forty eight *Jaina* temples. Amkalesvara near Barauch in Gujarat, Bikanar, Sanchor, Jalor, Jaisalmer, Abu, Chitrakuta, Bairat in Rajasthan, Deogarh in U.P., Bankapura and Sravana Belgola in Karnataka and several others³²⁷.

Islam

Muslims or the followers of Islam form an integral part of the Indian society. The Muslim community in 16th and 17th centuries in Northern India consisted of a number of foreign elements who had settled here generations earlier; and the Indian Muslims who had embraced Islam at some stage and were trying to emulate the various customs and rituals recommended by Islam. Among the foreign Muslims the major groups were of Turks who settled down during the Sultanate period; the Afghans, the Mughals and the Iranis. Of these the last three groups took active interest in politics and administration and thus considered as members of the ruling class in the period under review.

The Muslim community presented a sharp contrast to the vast Hindu majority on account of having a very distinct and unified account of religious beliefs and practices which were instituted by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and enshrined in the Holy *Quran*. These practices which constituted the basic and fundamental principles of Islam are as following, giving witness to the oneness of Allah (God) and His Prophet (*Shahada*), prayer (*salat*), charity (*zakat*), fasting (*sawn*) and pilgrimage (*haj*)³²⁸.

Except charity, *Nirgun bhakti* saints have given detailed information about other Islamic principles and practices followed by the Muslims during 16th and 17th centuries.

The witness to faith (*shahada*) in Allah (God) consists of repeating the Holy, *Kalima*³²⁹ (Creed) i.e. ‘There is no god but God’, ‘*Lailaha Illa Allah*’ and ‘Muhammad is the messenger of God’ ‘*Muhammad Ur Rasual Allah*’. As mentioned by Sundardas that *Kalima* was an essential part of the faith³³⁰ and that it was recited in order to witness conversion to Islam³³¹. He further mentions that Muslims have not followed the path of Allah (God) as prescribed by Muhammad (PBUH). Sundardas while harshly criticizing the Muslim in his couplet says that Muslims do not properly understand the secret of the *Kalima* and what they kill as sacrifices are contrary to the teachings of Islam³³².

The second most important principle of Islam is prayer called *salat* or *namaz* by Iranians and the Muslims of Indian subcontinent. *Nirgun bhakti* saints have referred to these obligatory prayers as *Nivaz*³³³ or *Namaz*³³⁴. Muslims might pray alone but since the congregation prayers are strongly recommended in Islam, they generally offered their prayers in congregation (*jamat*)³³⁵ in the mosque (*masjid*³³⁶ or *masiti*³³⁷) which was led by a *Imam*³³⁸ who leads the prayer.

We also find in the text of *Nirgun bhakti* saints like Kabir³³⁹ and Jambhoji³⁴⁰ some highly ill understood and obnoxiously provoking verses. On one occasion Kabir has infact made fun of Muslims by asking whether the God is deaf that they used the call of prayer (*Azan* or *Bang*) to be called from the top of minaret³⁴¹. It

is interesting to know that the concept of the call was to call the people and had nothing to do with the hearing of God. It seems probably that the saint did not properly know the essence of the call and went for the reckless charging and still it is possible that they witnessed the Muslims who were only maintaining the external form of religion as a mere tradition. As with regard to the preparation of prayer *Nirgun bhakti* saints give a vivid account of the same. Muslims were required to perform the ablution, either minor (*wadu* or *ozu*)³⁴² or major (*ghusl*)³⁴³ depending on the state of purity of the individual prior to the ablution.

Nirgun bhakti saints have used the term ‘*Roja*’³⁴⁴ (Fast) which was obligatory for Muslims to observe from sunrise to just after sunset during whole month of *Ramadan* (the ninth month of lunar calendar)³⁴⁵. Kabir says, “Muslims kept fast for thirty days in a year”³⁴⁶.

Pilgrimage (*Haj*) is the another principle of Islam. As with regard to the ritual of *Haj* Jambhoji says that a *Turk* (Here referred to Muslim) who goes to *Haj* (Pilgrimage) and asks something from God, and still his actions are contrary to the commands of Allah (God); is like the one has forsaken his religion³⁴⁷. On another instance Sundardas has become harsh by commenting that the Pilgrims are only satisfied by their tedious journey yet they do not know that the journey alone cannot give them the supreme salvation³⁴⁸.

As described by the *Nirgun bhakti* saints, Muslims read the verses of *Quran* regularly³⁴⁹ and also recite them when they offered *Namaz*. They hold that in principle the specific commands

and prohibition found in the *Quran* express God's will for all time. Therefore, it plays a central role in Islamic law and is recognized as a source of the *Sharia* the Islamic legal system³⁵⁰. Guru Nanak mentioned that in this period law of *Shara* or *Shariat* was held supreme and justice was dispensed by *Qazi* (Judge). The *Qazi* or Judge had blue official garment³⁵¹.

We also find mentioning of the Prophet of Islam (Muhammad) in the verses of the saints besides the word *Hadith* (The collection of the sayings of Prophet) also seem to be known to the saints³⁵².

There were some other practices of Muslims which are also mentioned in the saints verses. They visited like shrines and tombs (*dargah*) of the Holy *Sufi* saints. *Nirgun bhakti* saints seemed to express their grief over the practice by calling upon them to make the God happy instead of *Pir*³⁵³.

All the *Nirgun bhakti* saints in fact were severely critical of the rituals which had taken away the real essence of religion. At one place the mere chanting the name on rosary (*tasbeeh*) was also criticized³⁵⁴. *Dadu* in his philosophical verse wishes that his whole body should become unified in praising the God instead of merely uttering the name by tongue on rosary³⁵⁵.

Another important practice of Muslims was the rite of circumcision (*sunnat*) of a boy. *Kabir* on occasion makes another comment on the practice of circumcision when he asks the Muslims that should the God wanted He would have given birth only in this way and that he questions about women, what about

the women³⁵⁶. This verse like his previous one seemed to be utterly based on a wrong notion as the practice was taken up not as religious command from *Quran* but by the instruction of Prophet which was meant to avoid the germs which normally gather near the tip of the skin of penis. Similarly Jambhoji makes a bit mild comment in his verse on the practice of circumcision when he questions the Muslims about purpose of circumcision. He argues that by merely cutting of the foreskin it would not serve any purpose unless a man knows in reality the supreme lord³⁵⁷.

Sufism

Sufism is an Islamic way of reaching God which specialize in the spiritual dimension of Islam. In the Islamic world it is popularly known as '*Tasawwuf*' (Arabic) while Western writers have termed as 'Islamic Mysticism'³⁵⁸.

Many *Sufi* ideas and *Sufi* terminology have found place in the sayings of *Nirgun bhakti* saints. The terms, '*Auliya*', '*Shaikh*', '*Masaikh*', '*Pir*', '*Murshid*' etc. are often used with reference to Muslim mystics in the *Nirgun bhakti* literature³⁵⁹. Besides these terms the titles '*Qutb*' and '*Ghaus*' which were used for Sufis are also mentioned by the saints³⁶⁰. '*Qutb*' means axis pivot, head of the hierarchy of *Auliya*, the highest stage of sanctity among Muslims. While '*Ghaus*'; denotes the helper (of the age) a title second to the rank of *Qutb*³⁶¹.

Sufism aims at the personal experience of the central mystery of Islam i.e. *Tauhid* - Unity of God³⁶². It makes use of the symbolism of love (*ishq*)³⁶³ to show the attraction between God

and the universe. Thus, love of God (*Ishq-i-Haqiqi*) and the Absolute Unity of creation and creator are the important strands in Islamic mysticism³⁶⁴. Here the creator is infact the only beloved (*mashuq*³⁶⁵, *mehboob*³⁶⁶) and the holy object of desire (*talab*)³⁶⁷ of the mystic who is the lover (*ashiq*)³⁶⁸ of Allah. All these major components of *Sufism* are described in great detail by *Nirgun bhakti* saints especially by Sundardas.

Till 16th century various *Sufi Silsilas* were established in India and Sufism had reached every nook and corner of the country. In *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl mentions fourteen orders which he says were common in his time³⁶⁹. However, there were five well known major religious orders in 16th and 17th centuries, that made inroads into the religious life of Indian Islam. They were 1. *Chishti Order* – Shaikh Salim Chishti was a very famous and highly respected *Sufi* saint of this order. 2. *Suharwardi Order*– Sheikh Jamali was the renounced *Sufi* in the 16th century of this order. 3. *Shattari Order* – In 16th century Syed Muhammad Ghaus was very famous saint of this *Silsila*. 4. *Qadri Order* – Mian Mir and Mullah Shah Badakshi were eminent *Sufi* in the 16th and 17th centuries. 5. *Naqshbandi Order*– Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi played a big role in popularizing this order.

In Sufism a highly exalted and venerable status is attributed to the mystic guide. The preceptor – disciple relationship is popular as ‘*Pir-Muridi*’ in Islam³⁷⁰. In Sufism the preceptor is an object of contemplation who alone is capable of revealing the truth and it is the duty of the *Murid* to respect his *Pir*’s command. In his ‘*Pir-Murid Ashtak*’ Sundardas describes the communication

of *Pir* and *Murid* in which the disciple expresses his desire to know the right path to reach at the sublime state of obeisance (*bandagi*) to God (*Mehboob*) and to communicate with Him³⁷¹. The preceptor tells to his disciple that by purifying his innerself through renouncing devilish desires and the greed for worldly possessions and by repressing his animal spirit (*nafs*), he can achieve communication with God³⁷². In this composition the *Sufi* concept of the four stages *manjil* or *manajil* viz. *Sharia*, *Tariqa*, *Haqiqa* and *Marifa*, as well as their four corresponding stations (*maqamat* or *maqam*) viz. *Nasut*, *Malkut*, *Jabrut* and *Lahut* are described³⁷³.

In Sufism great emphasis has been given on the strict observance of *Sharia* and its station *Nasut*. And in addition to the five essentials of Islam viz. faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage, repentance (*tauba*), preparatory to mediation (*ibadat*) observance of the destination between permitted (*halal*) and prohibited (*haram*) food and of other injunctive commandments (*farman*) of God are strongly urged³⁷⁴.

The complete mastery of the stage of *Sharia* and the station of *Nasut* then leads to the next stage of *Tariqa*³⁷⁵ and the station of *Malkut*. The seeker of this stage when loses all desires then only he transcends the feelings of desire, anger, greed and attachment and also of malice and envy³⁷⁶.

At the stage of *Haqiqa*³⁷⁷ and the station of *Jabrut* the seeker finds himself in the world of spirits and comes to realize his own self as at one with the Supreme soul. The bright irradiance

of the light (*nur*)³⁷⁸ of the spirits totally blurs the destination between the self and the non-self³⁷⁹.

The attainment of the station of *Jabrut* in the stage of *Haqia* leads mystic to the penultimate stage of *Marifa*³⁸⁰ with its station of *Lahut*. Here he is invested with the power of miracles (*karamat*) and offered the vision of Allah³⁸¹.

Notes And References:

1. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-105, p.61; *D.S.*, *Sh*-7, p. 16; *J.V.*, *Sh*-53, p. 236; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-5, p.438; *D.G.*, *P*.9, p.470
2. *K.B.*, *Sh*-16, p. 2; *D.G.*, *S*-134, p. 143; *R.S.*, *S*-66, p. 271
3. *K.B.*, *R*-27, p. 12; *S.G.*, I, *D*-56, p. 205
4. *Ibid.*, *D*-7, p. 206
5. *Ibid.*, II, *P*-6, p. 922
6. *K.B.*, *Sh*-114, p. 68; *D.G.*, *S*-132, p. 142
7. *S.G.*, II, *S*-15, p. 751
8. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M*-5, p. 263; *R.S.*, *Granth Abigat Lila*, p.218
9. *S.G.*, I, *D*-7, p. 206
10. *Ibid.*, *D*-17, p. 207
11. *Ibid.*, II, *P*-6, p. 922
12. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-163, p. 95
13. *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-8, p. 521
14. *Ibid.*, I, *D*-8, p. 206; *Ibid.*, II, *Chh*-8, p.474; *K.B.*, *R*-10, p. 6; *Ibid.*, *Sh*-30, p. 42; *R.S.*, *S*-13, p. 167; *D.G.*, *S*-110, p. 189; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-7, p. 445
15. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-155, p.90; *S.G.*, I, *D*-8, p. 206; *S.D.G.S.*,I, *Chh*-43, p. 167
16. *K.B.*, *R*-27, p. 12
17. *Ibid.*, *R*-3, p. 4; *D.G.*, *S*-11, p.97
18. *S.G.*, II, *S*-16, p.751
19. *D.G.*, *S*-103, p. 26
20. *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-19, p. 651
21. *Ibid.*
22. *K.B.*, *R*-27, p. 12

23. Ibid., *R-25*; *D.S.*, *Barhamasa-8*, p. 52; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-19*, p. 651; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-1*, p. 159
24. *K.B.*, *R-27*, p. 12
25. *S.G.*, II, *P-6*, p. 922
26. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-155*, p. 90
27. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *D-76*, p. 175
28. Ibid., *D-5*, p. 160
29. Ibid., *D-24-25*, p. 164
30. Ibid., *K-52*, p.169
31. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-155*, p. 90; *R.S.*, *S-34*, p. 355; *S.G.*, II, *P-6*, p.922
32. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-163*, p. 95
33. Ibid., *P-149*, p. 87
34. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-8*, p. 474
35. *K.B.*, *Sh-45*, p. 46
36. Ibid., *Bas-10*, p. 80; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Savayya-46*, p.168
37. *J.V.*, *Sh-30*, p. 215
38. *K.B.*, *S-323*, p. 109; *J.V.*, *Sh-30*, p. 215
39. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-155*, p. 90; *J.V.*, *Sh-101*, p. 291
40. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 406; Thevenot, p. 91; Manucci, III, p. 42; Bernier, p. 326
41. *D.G.*, *S-139*, p. 14; *R.S.*, *S-18*, p. 545; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-20*, p. 496
42. Ibid., *Chh-8*, p. 521
43. *J.V.*, *Sh-5*, p. 186
44. Ibid.
45. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-13*, p. 994; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-3*, p.595
46. *R.S.*, *S-43*, p. 109
47. Ibid., *S-12*, p. 176

48. K.G. (Tiwari), II, S-10, p. 226; S.G.G.S., IV, M-1, p.183
49. Ibid., III, M-5, p. 78
50. Kamala Roy – “*The Ten Incarnations Of Vishnu In Bengal Antiquity Of Avatarvad*”, I.H.Q., Vol. XVII, No.-3, Delhi, September, 1941, pp.370-85
51. Ibid.
52. K.B., Sh-8, p. 34; R.S., S-24, p. 268; S.D.G.S., I, Chh-4, p. 330; 1. *Matsyavatara* (Fish-Incarnation), 2. *Kurmavatara* (Tortoise-Incarnation), 3. *Varahavatara* (Boar-Incarnation), 4. *Narsimhavatara* (Man-Lion Incarnation), 5. *Vamanavatara* (Dwarf-incarnation), 6. *Parasuramavatara* (Incarnation of Rama with axe), 7. *Ramavatara* (Rama – Incarnation), 8. *Krishnavatara* (Incarnation of Krishna), 9. *Buddhavatara* (Buddha Incarnation), 10. *Kalkyavatara* (Kalki-Incarnation); Roy, (Article) pp. 370-85; *Ain*, III, pp. 308-319
53. Ibid., pp.308
54. K.B., R-54, p. 20; S.G.G.S., II, M-3, p. 242; D.G., S-134, p. 143; R.S., S-18, p. 302
55. R.S., S-24, p. 268; S.D.G.S., I, Chh-4, p. 330; *Ain*, III, p. 319
56. J.V., Sh-27, p. 209; D.G., S-143, p. 144
57. Ibid., P-29, p. 389; S.D.G.S., I, Chh-99, p. 102
58. K.B., Sh-4, p. 31; S.G.G.S., II, M-1, p. 577
59. K.B., Sh-70, p. 54
60. J.V., Sh-71, p. 266
61. Ibid.
62. K.B., Sh-4, p. 31
63. K.G. (Das), P-28, p. 206
64. J.V., Sh-71, p. 266
65. K.G. (Das), P-28, p. 206

66. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-17*, p.20; *Ibid.*, *Ch-8-9*, pp. 95-96
67. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 350
68. *D.G.*, *S-245*, p. 72; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-18*. 20
69. *J.V.*, *Sh-71*, p. 266
70. *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Sav-2*, p. 69
71. *D.G.*, *S-245*, p. 72; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 73; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-19-20*, p. 20; *Ibid.*, *Ch-8-9*, pp. 95-96
72. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p.73; *D.G.*, *P-2*, p. 497
73. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-187*, p. 109; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-20*, p. 20
74. *D.G.*, *S-245*, p. 72; *Ibid.*, *S-242*, p. 71
75. *Ibid.*, *P-30*, p. 390; *Ibid.*, *P-1*, p. 497; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-21*, p. 21; *Ibid.*, *Ch-11-12*, p.96
76. *D.G.*, *P-2*, p. 497
77. *J.V.*, *Sh-71*, p. 266; *S.G.G.S.*, IV *M-1*, p. 35; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-11*, p. 96
78. *Ain*, III, p. 303
79. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-21*, p. 21
80. *D.G.*, *S-245*, p. 72; *R.S.*, *P-20*, p. 485; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-20*, p. 332
81. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 183
82. *S.G.*, II, *Chh-22*, p. 597
83. *D.G.*, *P-2*, p. 562; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-20*, p. 90
84. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-5*, p. 263
85. *Ibid.*, I, *M-1*, p. 205
86. *Ibid.*
87. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-20*, p. 90
88. *Ibid.*
89. *R.S.*, *S-39*, p. 109
90. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-12*, p. 88

91. *Ain*, III, p. 304
92. *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-19, p. 90
93. *K.B.*, *Sh*-11, pp. 34-35
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.*, *Sh*-105, p. 65
96. *D.S.*, *Sh*-2, p. 5; *J.V.*, *Sh*-57, p. 239; *R.S.*, *S*-38, p. 109; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-1, p. 613
97. *Ain*, III, p. 305
98. *J.V.*, *Sh*-57, p. 239; *R.S.*, *S*-38, p. 109
99. *R.S.*, *S*-14 p. 581; *S.G.*, II, *S*-12, p. 677
100. *Ain*, III, p. 305
101. *R.S.*, *S*-40, p. 109
102. *Ain*, III, p. 306
103. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M*-1, p. 552
104. *Ibid.*
105. *J.V.*, *Sh*-104, p. 293; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-5, p. 796
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, IV, *M*-5, p. 324; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-25, p. 90
108. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-4, p. 674
109. *Ibid.*
110. *K.B.*, *Sh*-98, p. 63; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M*-1, p. 362; *R.S.*, *S*-41, p. 109; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-5, p. 304
111. *K.B.*, *Sh*-90, p. 63
112. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 325
113. *K.B.*, *Sh*-10, p. 34
114. *Ibid.*
115. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 325

116. *Ain*, III, pp. 326-27-28
117. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-84*, p. 49; *V.V.*, *H-4*, p.177; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 202
118. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-35*, p. 21; *J.V.*, *Sh-3*, p. 183; *V.V.*, *H-4*, p. 177; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-3*, p. 421; *S.G.*, II, *D-12*, p. 721
119. *K.G.* (Tiwari),II, *P-84*, p. 49; *Ibid.*, *S-23*, p.156; *Ibid.*, *S-11*, p. 226; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-3*, p. 421; *Ibid.*, III, *M-1*, 757; *D.G.*, *S-127*, p. 163; *R.S.*, *S-3*, p. 497; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-6*, p. 458; *Ibid.*, *Chh-15*, p. 460
120. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 757
121. *Ibid.*, II, *M-1*, p. 911; 1. *Ashtami*: the eight day of the lunar fortnight; 2. *Chaudas*: the fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight; 3. *Amavasya* or *Amavas*: the last day of the dark fortnight of a lunar month; 4. *Purnima*: the night or day of full Moon; 5. *Uttarayana*: the summer solstice or the Sun's Northward progress; 6. *Dakshinayana*: the winter solstice or the Sun's movement South of the equator; 7. *Chandragrahana*: eclipse of the Moon; 8. *Suryagrahana*: eclipse of the Sun; 9. *Sankranti*: entry of the Sun into a new sign of the Zodiac e.g. *Makar Sankranti* which signifies the entry of the Sun into capricorn; 10. *Vyatipat*: an inauspicious position of the Sun and Moon (When they are on opposite sides of either solstice, and of equal declination).
122. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-4*, p. 403; *Ibid*; III, *M-1*, p.757; *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Chh-2389*, p.381
123. *Ain*, III, pp. 332, 335, 336
124. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 558; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-1*, p. 613; *Gau-dana*- the alms of cow was the main ceremony connected with the dying person- Careri, pp. 260-61
125. *K.B.*, *Vip*, p. 71

126. These included taking out the dead from the house, cleaning the floor with cow dung, setting of coffin which was quite open and made of pieces of wood tied together with straw- Manucci, III, p. 68
127. *S.G.*, I, *Chh-42*, p. 327; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-5*, p. 972
128. *S.G.*, I, *Chh- 43*, p. 328
129. *K.G. (Das)*, *P-99*, p. 223; Manucci, III, p. 68
130. In the absence of the son the youngest brother of the deceased or failing him the eldest burnt the funeral pile – *Ain*, III, p. 365
131. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-44*, p. 328
132. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-45-46* p. 328; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 522
133. *K.G. (Das)*, *P-356*, p. 156; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-45*, p. 328
134. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 522; *Ibid.*, I, *M-1*, p. 431
135. *K.G. (Das)*, *P-356*, p. 156; *J.V.*, *Sh-50*, p. 233; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 64; *D.G.*, *S-20*, p. 205
136. *K.B.*, *Vip*, *P-71*; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-45*, p. 328
137. *K.G. (Das)*, *P-356*, p. 156
138. Manucci, III, p. 69
139. *S.G.*, I, *S-23*, p. 147
140. *Ain*, III, p. 358
141. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-83*, p. 44
142. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-4*, p. 542; *Ain*, p. 358
143. *S.G.*, I, *S-23*, p. 147; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-83*, p. 44
144. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-3*, p. 275
145. *Ibid.*, III, *M-1*, p. 307; *Ibid.*, *M-4*, p. 228; Careri, p. 254
146. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-3*, p. 269; Careri, p. 254
147. *Ibid.*, p. 273; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 531
148. *Ibid.*, III, *M-1*, p. 307

149. S.G., I, Ch-37, p. 106
150. G.M.L. Srivastava- *The Yoga Of Patanjali And The Integral Yoga Of Sri Aurbindo*, Ist Ed., Delhi, 1987, p. 42
151. S.G., I, Ch-37, p. 106
152. *The Yoga Of Patanjali*, p. 42
153. S.G., I, Ch-38 p. 106
154. *The Yoga of Patanjali*, p. 44
155. S.G., I, Ch-39, p. 106
156. *The Yoga of Patanjali*, p. 44
157. S.G., I, Ch-42, p.107
158. *The Yoga Of Patanjali*, p. 45
159. S.G., I, Ch-43, p. 107
160. *The Yoga Of Patanjali*, p. 46
161. S.G., I, Ch-44, p. 107
162. *The Yoga Of Patanjali*, p. 46
163. S.G., I, Ch-49, p. 108-09
164. *The Yoga Of Patanjali*, p. 46
165. Gorakhanth is said to have been flourished in the 9th century or 10th century A.D. However, on the basis of some dialogues or ‘*Goshthi*’ between Kabir and Gorakhnath and between the latter and Guru Nanak, it is also argued that Gorakhnath was the contemporary of both the *Nirgun bhakti* saints viz. Kabir and Guru Nanak- Hazari Prasad Dwivedi-*Nath Sampradaya*, 3rd. Ed., Allahabad, 1981 pp. 50-53, 95-97
166. *Hatharatnavali*-Srinivasabhata Mahayogindra, with original Text, Eng. Tr. Edited, M. Venkata Reddy, Ist Ed., Andhra Pradesh, 1982, p. 55
167. N. S., pp. 1-3

168. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 558; *N.S.*, pp. 12-13
169. *Ibid.*
170. *S.G.*, I, *D-3*, p. 87; *J.V.*, *Sh-47*, p. 231
171. *Ibid.*, II, *P-2*, p. 871; *K.G. (Tiwari)*, II, *P-142*, p. 83
172. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-1*, p. 102
173. *K.G. (Tiwari)*, II, *S-5*, p. 209
174. *Ibid.*, *P-128*, p. 76; *D.G.*, *S-105*, p.26; *S.G.*, I, *D-4*, pp. 87-88
175. *K.G. (Das)*, *S-22*, p. 11; *Ibid.*, *S-16*, p. 101; *Ibid.*, (*Tiwari*), II, *P-56*, p. 32; *Ibid.*, *P-113*, pp. 66-67; *J.V.*, *Sh-6*, p. 187; *Ibid.*, *Sh-18*, p. 200; *D.G.*, *P-67*, p. 332; *Ibid.*, *P-69*, p. 333; *Ibid.*, *S-2*, p. 256
176. *S.G.*, I, *Chhap-45*, p. 44; *Hatharatnavali*, p. 104
177. *Ibid.*
178. *Ibid.*, p. 105
179. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-56*, p.46; *Hatharatnavali*, p. 20
180. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-1*, p. 45
181. *Ibid.*, *Ch-2*
182. *Ibid.*, *Ch-3*
183. *Ibid.*, *Ch-4*
184. *Ibid.*, *Ch-5*
185. *Ibid.*, *Ch-6*
186. *N.S.*, pp-123-129
187. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 582
188. *N.S.*, pp. 123-129
189. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-9*, p. 103
190. *Ibid.*, *Ch-9-10*; *Hatharatnavali*, pp. 11-17
191. *N.S.*, pp. 123-129
192. *S.G.*, I, *Ch- 1-8*, pp. 102-03; *Hatharatnavali*, pp. 20-24

193. J.V., *Sh-46*, p. 230; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 180
194. J.V., *Sh-43*, p. 227; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 362; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-63*, p. 96; *R.S.*, *P-2*, p. 487; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-26*, p. 587
195. *K.G.* (Tiwari), *P-175*, p. 101; J.V., *Sh-46*, p. 230; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-3*, p. 487; *D.G.*, *P-17*, p. 405; *R.S.*, *P-1*, p. 487
196. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-6*, p. 229
197. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 475
198. J.V., *Sh-43*, p. 227; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-37*, p. 92
199. *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Sav- 2*, p. 686
200. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-85*, p. 50; J.V., *Sh-43*, p. 227; *D.G.*, *P-17*, p. 405; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-26*, p. 587; *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Sav-18*, p. 696
201. *Ibid.*, *S.G.*, II, *Chh-6*, p. 385
202. *Ibid.*, *P-2*, p. 871; *Ibid.*, *P-456*, p. 923
203. *K.G.* (Das), *S-4*, p. 9; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-3*, p. 487; *D.G.*, *P-17*, p. 405; *S.G.*, II, *Chh-26*, p. 587; *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Sav-18*, p. 696
204. J.V., *Sh-42*, p. 226; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 56; *S.G.*, II, *P-2*, p. 871
205. *Ibid.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 178; *Ibid.*, II, *M-1*, p. 64
206. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-151*, p. 88; J.V., *Sh-44*, p. 228; *D.G.*, *P-1*, p. 405
207. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-3*, p. 487; *Ibid.*, *M-1*, p. 56; *S.D.G.S.*, II, *Sav-18*, p. 696
208. A famous *Nath Yogi* named Loha Pangal, who was the contemporary of Jambhoji and Jasnathji, wore the *Langot* of iron – ‘*Lauh*’ – J.V., *Sh-45*, p. 229; *Ibid.*, p. 69; *Sabad Granth* –Edited, Surya Shankar Pareikh, Bikaner, 1996, p. 116
209. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 418
210. *K.G.* (Das), *P-208*, p. 118; J.V., *Sh-44*, p. 228; *S.G.*, II, *P-456*, p. 923
211. J.V., *Sh-116*, p. 301, *S.G.*, I, *Ch-37*, p. 92
212. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-174*, p. 101; *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 80

213. J.V., *Sh*-116, p. 301
214. *Ibid.*, *Sh*-45, p. 229
215. *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-37, p. 92; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*- 708, p. 736
216. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *Japu*-28, p. 54
217. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S*-8, p. 167; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-1, p. 355; *S.G.*, II, *P*-1, p. 899
218. *K.G.* (Das), *P*-207, p. 118
219. *Ibid.*, (Tiwari) II, *P*-142, p. 83; J.V., *Sh*-44, p. 228; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-3, p.487; *D.G.*, *P*-17, p. 405; *S.G.*, II, *Chh*-15, p. 537
220. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-805, p. 764
221. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-151, p. 88; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 475; *D.G.*, *P*-17, p. 405
222. *K.G.* (Das) *P*-205, p. 118; *D.G.*, *P*-17, p. 405
223. *K.G.* (Tiwari) II, *P*-151, p. 88; *D.G.*, *P*-17, p. 405; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-3, p. 487
224. *K.G.* (Das), *P*-206, p. 118; J.V., *Sh*-47, p. 231; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 56; *D.G.*, *P*-17, p. 405; *R.S.*, *P*-1, p. 487; *S.G.*, II, *P*-1, p. 899
225. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-142, p. 83
226. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-3, p. 487; *Ibid.*, *M*-5, p. 433
227. *Ibid.*, II, *M*-4, p. 90; *Ibid.*, III, *M*-1, p. 475
228. *N.S.*, pp. 7-20
229. *K.B.*, *R*-69, p. 25
230. *Sabad*, p. 116
231. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M*-1, p. 358; *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-151, p. 88; *D.G.*, *P*-18, p. 405
232. *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-2, p. 102
233. *D.G.*, *S*-20, p. 248
234. *K.B.*, *R*-69, p. 25

235. K.G., (Das), P-207, p. 118; S.G.G.S., I, *Japu*-28, p. 54; S.G., II, P-1, p. 900
236. *Sabad*, p. 116
237. R.N. Saletor-*Encyclopaedia Of Indian Culture*, Vol.II, Delhi, 1981, p. 779
238. Della Valle, II, pp. 345-351
239. J.V., *Sh*-50, p. 233; Mughal Emperor Babur and Jahangir have informed us about the importance of this place during medieval period. Babur describes that, "Tales had been told us about *Gur-Khattri*, it was said to be a holy place of the *Jogis* and Hindus who come from long distances to shave their heads and beards there" B.N., p.230; And Jahangir mentions that, "Near Peshawar, I walked round *Gorakhatri* which is the worshipping place of the *Jogis*"- *Tuzuk*, I, p. 102
240. *Dabistan* refers to some of the respectable *Yogis* of 17th century as Baliknath, Sanjanath, Surajnath and Serudnath – *D.M.*, pp. 137-38
241. S.G., I, *Chh*-2, p. 235; *Ibid.*, f.no.-2
242. K.G. (Tiwari), II, P-142, p. 83; J.V., *Sh*-42, p. 226; *Ibid.*, *Sh*-43, p. 227; S.G.G.S., III, M-1, p. 56; S.G., I, *Chh*-2, p. 235; *Ibid.*, II, P-2, p. 871; R.S., S-15, p. 429; *Sabad*, p. 116
243. N.S., pp. 4-8, 85; It is noticeable that the *Nath Panthis* of Bengal also called themselves *Kapalikas* -*Ibid.*, p. 16, f.no.-6
244. *E.I.C.*, p. 682; R.G. Bhandarkar- *Vaishnavism, Saivsim And Minor Religious Systems*, Varanasi, 1965, p. 127
245. N.S., p. 85
246. S.G., I, *Ch*-18, p. 89
247. Bhandarkar, p. 131
248. S.G., I, *Ch*-17, p.89; S.D.G.S., I, *Chh*-30, p. 35

249. M.A. Canny- *An Encyclopaedia Of Religion*, Delhi, 1976, p. 223; Bhandarkar, p. 139; Barbosa, I, pp. 217-220; Della Valle, II, p. 208
250. K.G. (Tiwari), II, P-161, p. 94; S.G.G.S., III, M-3, p. 355; S.G.,I, D-3, p. 189; R.S., S-22, p. 112; Bhandarkar, p. 138
251. S.G., II, P-10, p. 863
252. Bhandarkar, p. 138
253. B.N. Pande – *Islam & Indian Culture*, Rep., Delhi, 1990, pp. 38-40
254. Bhandarkar, p. 138
255. A.E.R., p. 196
256. H.H. Wilson – *Religious Sects Of The Hindus*, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 125, 126
257. S.G., I., Chh-4, p. 236
258. K.G. (Das), P-389, p. 164; S.G., I, Ch-32, p. 92
259. A.E.R., p. 10; Wilson, pp. 131-32
260. A.E.R., p. 10
261. K.G. (Das), P-389, p.164
262. A.E.R., p. 10
263. Ibid., p. 314; Wilson, p. 103
264. A.E.R., p. 314
265. S.G., I, Ch-15, p.89
266. S.G.G.S., III, M-1, p. 736
267. Ibid., IV, M-1, p. 558
268. Wilson, pp. 109-115
269. S.D.G.S., I, Chh-23, p. 122; S.G.,II, P-1, p. 895
270. D.M., p. 139; Wilson, p. 115
271. Ibid., pp. 108-109; D.M., p. 140
272. S.D.G.S., I, Chh-23, p. 122; S.G., II, P-1, p.895

273. Ibid.
274. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 736
275. *S.G.*, II, *P-1*, p. 895
276. Ibid.
277. *S.G. G.S.*, III, *M-1*, p. 736
278. *S.G.*, I *Chh-3*, p. 236
279. Wilson, p. 109
280. *D.M.*, p. 142
281. *S.G.G.S.*, IV, *M-1*, p. 351
282. *D.M.*, p. 148
283. *K.B.*, *Sh-38*, p. 44; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-5*, p. 230; *D.G.*, *P-20*, p. 316; *R.S.*, *S-42*, p. 109; *D.M.*, p. 148
284. *S.G.*, I, *Ch-15*, p. 89
285. Wilson, pp. 130-31
286. Ibid., p. 104
287. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-25*, p. 123
288. *Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics* – Edited, James Hastings, Vol. II, New York, 1909, p. 337
289. Wilson, pp. 27-28
290. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 616
291. *D.M.*, p. 184
292. Wilson, p. 25
293. Ibid., pp. 20, 28
294. Ibid., p. 20
295. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh-25*, p. 123
296. *D.M.*, p. 184
297. *S.G.*, II, *Chhap-11*, p. 983

298. Ibid.
299. Ibid., I, *Chh-5*, p 236
300. Ibid., II, *P-10*, p. 863
301. Ibid., II, *Chh-20*, p. 610
302. Wilson, pp. 160, 161
303. S. Gopalan- *Outlines Of Jainism*, Delhi, 1973, pp. 159-65
304. A.L. Basham – *The Wonder That Was India*, 3rd Rev. Ed., Calcutta & others, 1998, p. 289
305. *D.G.*, *S-31*, p. 173; Abul Fazl has referred to the *Svetambara* as *Sewaras* –*Ain*, III, p. 222; Jahangir also refers to them as *Sewaras* in his Memoirs – *Tuzuk*, I, p. 438; *D.M.*, p. 212
306. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P-161*, p. 94; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 59; *R.S.*, *P-9*, p.281; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-38*, p. 92
307. Ibid., II, *S-25*, p. 735
308. *Ain*, III, p. 216; *D.M.*, p. 211
309. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-29*, p. 139; *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 230; *R.S.*, *S-30*, p. 139
310. *Ain*, III, p. 220; Wilson, pp. 190, 91
311. *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh- 81*, p. 44
312. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S-29*, p. 139; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 431
313. *K.B.*, *R-30*, p. 13; *S.G.*, I, *Ch-18*, *P-89*; Ibid., *Chh-5*, p. 236; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-I*, p. 431; *Ain*, III, p. 220; *Tuzuk*, I, p. 437; *D.M.*, p.212
314. *Ain*, III, p. 222
315. *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M-1*, p. 432
316. *Ain*, III, pp. 219-20; *D.M.*, p. 212; Mandelslo, p. 25; Wilson, pp. 177, 190
317. *S.G.G.S.*, II, *M-1*, p. 360; *Ain*, III, p. 220; *Tuzuk*, I, p. 437; *D.M.*, p. 212

318. S.G.G.S., I, M-1, p. 432
319. Abul Fazl mentioned that *Jaina* ascetics sweep the place, on which they were about to sit, with their hands - *Ain*, III, p. 220; While according to *Dabistan*, during travel Jain ascetics carried a besom of the bark of a soft tree with them to sweep the path before they put down their feet – *D.M.*, p. 212
320. S.G.G.S., I, M-1, p. 432
321. A.K. Chatterjee – *A Comprehensive History Of Jainism (1000 A.D.-1600 A.D.)*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1984, pp. 166, 167
322. Puspa Prasad- “*Jahangir And Jains (Study Based On Jain Historical Sources And Inscriptions)*”, I.C., Vol. LVI, No.-1, Hyderabad, January 1982, pp. 37, 38, 40
323. *Ain*, III, p. 222
324. Mandelslo, pp. 23-25
325. *Ibid.*, p. 25; Wilson, p. 177
326. *K.B.*, R-30, p. 13
327. Chatterjee, pp. 283-357
328. Andrew Rippin – *Muslims Their Religious Belief And Practices*, Vol. I, Britain, 1999, p. 86; Jafri Begum – *Muslim Society In India (712 - 1200 A.D.)*, Delhi, 2002, pp. 47-56
329. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, R-6, p. 120; J.V., *Sh*-10, p. 191; S.G.G.S., I, M-1, p. 406; *D.G.*, S-213, p. 68; Rippin, I, p. 87
330. S.G., II, P-2, p. 932
331. Rippin, I, p. 87
332. S.G., II, P-2, pp. 931-32
333. *K.B.*, *Sh*-97, p. 63; J.V., *Sh*-10, p. 191; S.G.G.S., I, M-1, p. 406; *D.G.*, S-211, p. 68
334. Neal Robinson – *Islam A Concise Introduction*, Britain, 1999, p. 89

335. *D.G.*, *S*-212, p. 68
336. *K.B.*, *Sh*-97, p. 63; Rippin, I, p. 91
337. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *P*-129, p. 76; *J.V.*, *Sh*-10, p. 191; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M*-1, p. 406
338. *D.G.*, *S*-212, p. 68; Rippin, I, p. 91; Thevenot, p. 13
339. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S*-3, p. 225
340. *J.V.*, *Sh*-10, p. 191, Thevenot, p. 13
341. *K.G.* (Tiwari), II, *S*-3, p. 225
342. *J.V.*, *Sh*-10, p. 191; *D.G.*, *S*-211, p. 68; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-4, p. 304
343. *Ibid.*
344. *K.B.*, *S*-49, p. 19; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M*-1, p. 406; *D.G.*, *S*-39, p. 152; *R.S.*, *P*-6, p. 411; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-5, p. 304
345. Rippin, I, p. 95; Robinson, p. 117
346. *K.B.*, *Sh*-90, p. 63; Della Valle, I, p. 179; Careri, p. 217
347. *J.V.*, *Sh*-50, p. 234; Careri, p. 246
348. *S.G.*, II, *P*-16, p. 894
349. *K.B.*, *Bas*-10, p. 80; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M*-1, p. 104; *D.G.*, *S*-81, p. 24; *R.S.*, *S*-6, p. 590; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-48, p. 126
350. Robinson, pp. 66-71
351. *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 473
352. *D.G.*, *S*-77, p. 254; *R.S.*, *S*-16, p. 286; *S.G.*, II, *P*-2, p. 932; *K.B.*, *R*-48, p. 19; *D.G.*, *S*-77, p. 254; *R.S.*, *S*-17, p. 286; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-3, p. 303; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-5, p. 485; *R.S.*, *P*-3, p. 357; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-1, p. 275; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M*-1, p. 473; *R.S.*, *S*-24, p. 325
353. *K.B.*, *R*-48, p. 19; *S.G.G.S.*, I, *M*-1, p. 406; *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-5, p. 304
354. *S.G.*, I, *Ch*-4, 304; *S.D.G.S.*, I, *Chh*-20, p. 332
355. *D.G.*, *S*-213, p. 68
356. *K.B.*, *Sh*-84, p. 58

357. *J.V., Sh-11*, p. 192
358. *Sufi Cults And The Evolution Of Medieval Indian Culture* – Edited, Anup Taneja, Delhi, 2003 p. 15
359. *K.B., Sh-4*, p. 31; *S.G.G.S., II, M-5*, 485; *Ibid., I, M-1*, p. 181; *D.G., S-133*, p. 58; *R.S., P-3*, p. 357; *Ibid., S.G., I, D-1*, p. 238; *Ibid., Ch-1*, p. 275; *Ibid.*
360. *Ibid.*
361. Fatima Zehra Bilgrami – *History Of The Qadri Order In India (During 16th And 18th Century)*, Delhi, 2005, Appendix-II, pp. 391, 395
362. I.H. Azad Faruqi – *Sufism And Bhakti, Maulana Rum And Sri Ramkrishna*, Delhi, 1984, p.1
363. *D.G., S-30*, p. 57; *S.G., I, Chh-1*, p. 289; Asim Roy – *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition In Bengal*, Delhi, 1983, p. 120
364. Akhtar Qamar- “*The Role Of The Sufi Silsilah– Tariqahs In Islamic Religion And Society*,” *I.C.*, Vol. LVI, No.-3, Hyderabad, July 1982, p. 202.
365. *S.G., I, Chh-5*, p. 291; Roy, p. 189
366. *S.G., I, Chh-1*, p. 283
367. *Ibid., Chh-4*, p. 284
368. *D.G., S-130*, p. 57; *S.G., I, D-6*, p. 291; Roy, p. 189
369. *Ain*, III, pp. 393-397
370. Roy, p. 159
371. *S.G., I, Chh-1-2*, p. 283
372. *Ibid., Chh-3*, p. 284
373. *Ibid., Chh-1-8*, pp. 283-85; *Ibid., f.no.-8*, p. 285
374. *S.G.G.S., III, M-5*, p. 906; *D.G., S-129*, p. 57; Roy, pp. 170-71
375. *D.G., S-130*, p. 57; *S.G.G.S., III, M-5*, p. 906

376. Roy, pp. 170-71
377. *D.G.*, S-132, p. 58; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p. 906
378. *D.G.*, S-132, p. 58; Roy, p. 171
379. *Ibid.*
380. *D.G.*, S-131, p. 58; *S.G.G.S.*, III, *M-5*, p.906
381. Roy, 171

CONCLUSION

A careful perusal of the foregoing chapters has made us to reach to certain general conclusions. The origin and the subsequent establishment of the *Nirgun bhakti* in the Indian soil was the consequence of the great social, cultural and religious upheaval prevalent in the system. It certainly formed the basis and provided impetus to *Nirgun bhakti* cult to acquire strength so much so that it had brought a large number of people in its fold and gave the most needed support and strength to the general masses.

There had been a continuous living tradition of *Nirgun bhakti* from the ancient to the medieval times. It was rooted in the monotheistic stream of *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* thought. Monotheism in *Vedas* did not rest on the denial of other gods for any one personal God. In the many hymns the plurality of *Vedic* gods is reduced to one through the philosophic abstraction and impersonalisation of God and the understanding of Him as the one cosmic Reality. Monotheism is also evident in some of the hymns of *Samveda*. The idea of one impersonal God was developed more fully in the *Upanishads*, resulting in a more positive explanation of the oneness of ultimate Reality in terms of the '*Brahman*' and the '*Atman*'. His *Nirgun* character is also clearly evident in the *Svetasvara Upanishad*. The *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhakti Sutra* of Shandilya did not only speak of the *Nirgun bhakti* but along with it also embarked upon *Saguna bhakti* also. They described it as a superior form of devotion. In the *Puranas* also both the

Saguna and the *Nirgun* ideologies are expounded. Even in the *Bhagavata Purana* which is a Vaishnava text and deals with the incarnations of Vishnu, both the *Saguna* and *Nirgun* traditions are represented simultaneously. Shankaracharya, the formulator of *Advaita Vedanta* spoke of this form of *bhakti* in his different works. Gorakhnath the founder of *Nath Sampradaya* strictly recognized the nature of *Brahman* as *Nirgun* and his firm belief leaves no room for the idea of any personal deity.

During the medieval period poet-saints viz. Kabir, Jambhoji, Nanak and Dadu Dayal had heralded a popular movement for the propagation of *Nirgun bhakti* to the total exclusion of *Saguna*. They had opposed the worship of all personal deities and had made it very clear that their *bhakti* was for the *Nirgun Brahman*. However, to make the *Nirgun* ideology acceptable to all they did use various other names like Atma, Ram, Vishnu, Allah, Rahman, Vasudeva etc in the sense of ultimate Reality, i.e. one supreme God.

In this sense it can be safely argued that they adopted a distinctive way of devotional practice and believed in the idea of universal toleration and love as against the rigidity, misbeliefs and social hatred which were prevalent in their contemporary period. Jambhoji, Nanak and Dadu established their own sects viz. *Bishnoi Panth*, *Nanak Panth* and *Dadu Panth*. So far as *Kabir Panth* is concerned it was established by Kabir's followers after his demise.

All the *Nirgun bhakti* saints were gifted poets and composed verses of religious appeal which formed a vast *Nirgun bhakti*

literature. For their compositions they used the languages of their native land e.g. the language of Kabir's verses was old *Avadhi*, a dialect of Eastern Hindi (Purbi Hindi), the language of the compositions of Jambhoji and his followers was mainly Rajasthani-Marwari, the hymns of Sikh Gurus were composed in Punjabi language and compiled in *Adi Granth* in *Gurumukhi* script and the language of Dadu and his followers compositions is mainly Rajasthani-Hindi.

The use of vernacular languages instead of pure Sanskrit for religious teachings made it possible to popularize the *Nirgun* tradition among the masses. The thought which had remained enshrined in the scholarly Sanskrit works was transmitted by them through simple language which could be easily understood. These compositions did not only convey religious message but also constituted invaluable source for constructing India's socio-religious history of the contemporary period.

On the basis of the information provided by *Nirgun bhakti* literature it can be said that the traditional division of the Hindu division into four *varna* viz. Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra was quite effective during the 16th and 17th centuries as a broad basis of status determination and the distribution of general duties and privileges. Besides, there was great complexity created by a number of sub-sections and small groups with varying degrees of social status. These sections or groups originated and developed mainly on the basis of various professions and functional specialization and had turned into castes due to their hereditary nature. They were Kayastha, Sunar, Jauhari and Sarraf,

Luhar, Badai, Kumhar, Julaha, Dhunia or Pinjara, Teli, Dhobi, Mali, Nai, Kalwar, Tamboli, Darji, Dheemer or Jheever, Kevat, Kahar, Banjara, Rangrej, Manihar, Sikligar, Kasai, Ahir and Gujar, Chamar. Besides this, there were different groups of professions which though cannot be specified as castes yet they formed a large chunk of the society. For instance, Vaidh and Hakim, Garuri and Marjeeva.

Untouchability as a social stigma did thrive in the society and was the significant tool of exploitation in the hands of upper classes. Perhaps this is the reason why *Nirgun bhakti* saints on many occasion did make scathing attack on the existing system. There were slaves in the royal and well to do households, both male and female who were brought as presents or were bought in the markets and utilized for any and every work.

Food during this period did not suffer from lack of variety of quality and was chiefly in keeping with the socio-economic status of the different classes amongst the Hindus and Muslims.

The richer and the well to do classes relished a variety of delicious dishes vegetarian or non-vegetarian prepared with different kinds of grain, vegetables, animal flesh, fishes, spices, ghee and oil. On the other hand, the food of the commoners was characterized by the lack of variety and quality. Milk and milk products, sweets and fruits were abundant in India and were consumed on large scale by all classes. Besides, the use of wine and other intoxicants were very common especially among the well to do Hindu classes and lower sections of the society.

Different kinds of dresses were worn by the people according to their socio-economic status. Dresses were made with a large variety of material such as cotton silk, wool, golden stuff etc. From cotton alone various types of clothes were produced. The costumes of the aristocrats differed almost radically from those of common men who tried their utmost to reduce their cloth requirements to the minimum. The women were fond of dresses of different cuts, designs and colours. People of the upper classes followed various devices and made elaborate arrangements to augment their physical charm and attractiveness. They had a very high standard of toilets and cosmetics. Women both Hindu and Muslim were fond of ornaments of different metals especially of gold. The women in general and of the higher classes in particular were loaded with ornaments of different varieties from the top to the toe.

Various kinds of games, amusements and other pastimes were in vogue in those days. Some of the games and sports like *Chaugan* (Polo), *Shikar* (Hunting) etc. were influenced by the military and adventurous characteristics of the age and were generally the monopoly of the rulers and the aristocrats of both Hindus and Muslims. On the other hand the games like *Chaupar*, dice or gambling, kite-flying, wrestling etc. were accessible to the rich and poor alike.

The *Kathputali* players, acrobats, Jugglers or magicians, professional jesters, buffoons, bards etc. were all source of recreation to the people particularly to the rural folks. Besides, numerous Hindu and Muslim festivals which were celebrated with

great joy and social ceremonies were other means of amusement and social interactions.

Various ceremonies related to the Hindu marriage performed during those days. On the day of the marriage elaborate preparations would take place at the house of bride and bridegroom. Women used to sing marriage songs. Bride was beautifully dressed with cloths and ornaments. Similarly bridegroom was also adorned with the new cloths and jewels. After making all necessary preparations bridegroom would go to the bride's house in the form of procession. They were welcomed at the house of bride. A *Mandap* was prepared for the setting of bride and bridegroom. Here various ceremonies were performed. Father of the bride gives his daughter to the bridegroom as a gift. After completing all the ceremonies, bride was departed to house of her husband. Some ceremonies were also performed when she arrived at the house of her husband.

Educated or non-educated people of both the Hindu and the Muslim communities were highly superstitious. They believed in astrology to such an extent that in every enterprise they consulted astrologers. Besides, they believed in ghosts and practiced witchcraft.

People especially of the upper classes both Hindu and Muslim possessed a fair degree of literacy. In the *Nirgun bhakti* literature references of Hindu education are found. They had their own educational institutions which imparted primary, secondary and higher education to them. The most famous centres for the

Hindu learning in this period were Banaras, Nadia, Mithila, Multan etc.

The social status of women during the period under review was generally not very much different from what is today. *Purdah* had become the characteristic feature of the contemporary Indian social life, particularly among the upper and well to do classes *Purdah* was more strictly observed by the Muslim women than by the Hindu ones. There was prosperous class of courtesans and public women who reaped very good harvest inspite of the efforts of Akbar to ban their profession. The condition of the Hindu widows was pitiable and the practice of *Sati* had become universal and obligatory among the Hindus.

The common women and those who belonged to the rural areas and lower sections of the society not only looked after their households but also worked in different other capacities and contributed to the livelihood of their families.

Religious beliefs and practices followed by the people in the period under review were not very much different from what are prevalent today. Hinduism was followed by the majority of people. They believed in many gods and goddesses whose legends are included in the Hindu mythology from centuries. Among them the triple deity viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva were regarded as the creator, protector and the destroyer of the world and their respective wives namely Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati were most revered. Different incarnations especially of Vishnu were worshipped with great devotion. Besides, every creation of God

like various forces of nature, animals, plants, rivers, mountains etc. were considered sacred and holy.

Hindu rites consisted of idol worship, sacrifice (*yajna*), animal sacrifice etc. Since the Hindu believed in rebirth and transmigration of the soul, various rituals and ceremonies were performed by them in life time to secure not only their present birth but also their last journey and next birth. These rituals included different kinds of *Dana* (Alms), *Vrat* (Fast), *Tirtha-yatra* (Pilgrimage) etc. It was believed that these rituals performed with faith destroyed sins and will to lead moral elevation, mental discipline, happiness and even salvation. Similarly after the death of a Hindu a number of differing rites and rituals like the ceremony of *Diya*, *Pindadana*, *Shradh* etc. were performed with the belief that after the conclusion of these ceremonies the soul of the deceased abandons the '*Preta*' form and assumes another fitted for paradise. Besides, these rites were also performed as the nourishment to the new body of the deceased. The practice of self immolation or religious suicide was also the result of the wish to acquire easy way to heaven.

In this period there were people who followed different Saiva and Vaishnava sects such as the *Kanphata Yogis* of *Nath Sampradaya* or *Yoga Marga* founded by Gorakhnath. They practiced '*Hathayoga*' expounded by the founder of the sect and were found in all parts of the country like Jodhpur, Jaipur, Nauhar Tai, Mahamandir in Rajasthan.

Kadrimath in Karnataka and *Gorakhhattri* in Peshawar were among their famous centers in the period under review. *Kapalikas*

who performed some disgusting practices were also included in the *Nath Sampradaya*.

Lingayats or *Jangamas* were other Saiva mendicants and were recognized by the Siva *Linga* which they wore generally in their necks. *Aghoris* were known for their horrible and filthy practices which included human sacrifices, to smear their bodies with excrement etc. while *Sanyasis* were those who abandoned the worldly ties after entering into the stage of *Sanyasa*, the fourth stage or *Ashrama* in the life of any Hindu of first three classes. They were also called *Dasnamis* since their sect was divided into ten branches.

Bairagis were the Vaishnava mendicants of the Ramanandi class. The followers of Ramananda, addressed their devotions to Lord Vishnu and revered all of his incarnations especially Rama.

In this period Jainism had a large number of followers in many regions of Gujarat, Rajasthan, modern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. They belonged to the merchant and banker (*Vaishya*) class who formed a very opulent portion of the society. Their basic principles and practices were altogether same as they follow today.

Basic principles of Islam have always been of great importance in the life of a follower of Islam. Their beliefs and practices were instituted by the Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) and are enshrined in the holy *Quran*. Muslims performed their various religious practices during this period which is hitherto prevalent.

Their important practices were to recite *Kalima* (Witness to faith) *Salat* (Prayer), *Roja* (Fast) and *Haj* (Pilgrimage).

During medieval period an another important sect called *Sufis* got organized themselves in the form of religious orders for the propagation of the spiritual mission of Islam and through these orders they made the teachings and practices of mysticism popular in the Muslim society. During 16th and 17th centuries well known *Sufi* saints had existed. *Sufis* used to perform various types of practices to reach the God and had exercised great control on the general masses. Their ascetic outfit and practices made the people realize of their ingenuity.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.	<i>Adhyay</i>
A.S.	<i>Anurag Sagar</i>
<i>Ain.</i>	<i>Ain-i-Akbari</i>
Ansari (Dress)	M.A. Ansari-Dress Of The Great Mughals
A.E.R.	An Encyclopaedia Of Religion
A.B.O.R.I.	Annals Of The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
<i>Bijak</i>	The Bijak of Kabir
Bishnoi	Krishanlal Bishnoi
B.S.K.H.	<i>Bishnoi Santon Ke Harjas</i>
<i>Bhaktmal</i>	Raghodas
Bernier	Francois Bernier
Barbosa	Duarte Barbosa
<i>Bas.</i>	Basant
B.	<i>Bait</i>
B.N.	<i>Babur-Nama</i>
Bhandarkar	R.G. Bhandarkar
Begum	Jafri Begum
Chand	Tara Chand
<i>Chhap.</i>	<i>Chhappaya</i>
Careri	Indian Travels Of Thevenot And Careri
<i>Chh.</i>	<i>Chhanda</i>
<i>Ch.</i>	<i>Chaupai</i>
<i>Chan.</i>	<i>Chanchar</i>
Chatterjee	A.K. Chatterjee
<i>D.G.</i>	<i>Dadudyal Granthavali</i>
Dwivedi	Kedarnath Dwivedi

<i>D.M.</i>	<i>Dabistan-i-Mazahib</i>
<i>D.S.</i>	<i>Dhani Dharamdas Ki Shabdavali</i>
<i>D.</i>	<i>Doha</i>
Della Valle	The Travels Of Della Valle In India
European Travellers	European Travellers Under The Mughals (1580-1627)
Early Travels	Early Travels In India 1583-1619
E.I.C.	Encyclopaedia Of Indian Culture
Gupta	Beni Gupta
Gupta	H.R. Gupta
<i>H.S.K.B.I.</i>	<i>Hindi Sahitya Ka Brihat Itihas</i>
<i>H.</i>	<i>Harjas</i>
<i>Ho.</i>	<i>Holi</i>
<i>Hatharatnavali</i>	<i>Hatharatnavali- Srinivasabhatta Mahayogindra</i>
J.R.I.H.R.	Journal Of The Rajasthan Institute Of Historical Research
J.I.H.	Journal Of Indian History
I.C.	Islamic Culture
I.H.Q.	Indian Historical Quarterly
J.B.R.S.	Journal Of The Bihar Research Society
J.H.I.I.H.C.	Journal Of The Heras Institute Of Indian History And Culture
<i>Kh.</i>	<i>Khanda</i>
<i>K.G. (Das)</i>	<i>Kabir Granthavali- Shyamsundar Das</i>
Keay	F.E. Keay
K.B.O.P.L.	Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library
<i>K.B.</i>	<i>Kabir Sahib Ka Bijak</i>
<i>K.G.</i>	<i>Kabir Granthavali- Parasnath Tiwari</i>
<i>K.</i>	<i>Kavitt</i>

<i>Kah.</i>	<i>Kahra</i>
Linschoten	The Voyage Of John Huyghen Van Linschoten To The East Indies
<i>M.</i>	<i>Mahla</i>
Macauliffe	M.A. Macauliffe
Muni	Brahmaleen Muni
<i>M.</i>	<i>Mandala</i>
Mundy	Peter Mundy
Manucci	Nicollo Manucci
Mandelslo	Mandelslo's Travels In Western India A.D. 1638-9
<i>Muntakhab</i>	<i>Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh</i>
N.P.S.	Nagari Pracharni Sabha
<i>N.S.</i>	<i>Nath Sampradaya</i>
Orr	W.G. Orr
Ovington	John Ovington
Ojha	P.N. Ojha
<i>P.</i>	<i>Pada</i>
Pelsart	Francisco Pelsart
P.P.H.C.	Proceedings Of Punjab History Conference
P.I.H.C.	Proceedings Of Indian History Congress
P.R.B.	Parkh Research Bulletin
Q.R.H.S.	The Quarterly Review Of Historical Studies
<i>Rigveda</i>	<i>Rigveda Samhita</i>
Radhakrishnan	S. Radhakrishnan
<i>R.S.</i>	<i>Rajjabdas Ki Sarbangi</i>
<i>RG</i>	<i>Rag Gari</i>
Roy	Kamala Roy
Rippin	Andrew Rippin

Robinson	Neal Robinson
Roy	Asim Roy
<i>Srimadbhagavadgita</i>	<i>Srimadbhagavadgita- Shankarbhashya</i>
S.	<i>Sloka</i>
SK.	<i>Skandha</i>
Sh.	<i>Shabda</i>
S.	<i>Sakhi</i>
Singh	Ganda Singh
<i>Sikhism</i>	Fauja Singh, Tirlochan Singh & others
S.G.	<i>Sundar Granthavali</i>
S.G.G.S.	<i>Sri Guru Granth Sahib</i>
S.D.G.S.	<i>Sri Dasam Granth Sahib</i>
Sangar	S.P. Sangar
Sav.	<i>Savaiyya</i>
<i>Sabad</i>	<i>Sabad Granth</i>
Trumpp	Earnest Trumpp
Thevenot	Indian Travels Of Thevenot And Careri
Tavernier	Jean Baptiste Tavernier
<i>Tuzuk</i>	<i>Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri</i>
Taneja	Anup Taneja
V.	<i>Valli</i>
V.S.	<i>Vikram Samvat</i>
V.V.	<i>Vlhoji Ki Vani</i>
<i>Vip.</i>	<i>Vipramatishi</i>
Williams	Monier Williams
Wilson	H.H. Wilson
The Yoga Of Patanjali	The Yoga Of Patanjali And The Integral Yoga Of Sri Aurbindo

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