

**WOMAN IN GURU GRANTH SAHIB AND  
CONTEMPORANEOUS BRAJ LITERATURE:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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### **CERTIFICATE**

It gives me immense pleasure to certify that Ms. Gagandeep Kaur a student of Ph.D. in department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala has worked under my guidance and supervision in the preparation of her dissertation entitled: "**Woman in Guru Granth Sahib and Contemporaneous Braj Literature: A Comparative Study**" which is a partial requirement for the degree of Ph.D. This dissertation is worthy of consideration for evaluation.



**(Dr. Kulbir Singh Dhillon)**  
Supervisor

## Chapter – 1

### WOMAN IN INDIAN ETHOS

History and literature are complementary to each other. History is a record of facts of past based on sources. The historian in search for the fact is likely to miss the life of the common human being, the impulse and emotion which governed and dominated the feelings of the people living at a particular time. To have a vivid picture of the past, one has to study the literature along with history. Thus, the study of history is incomplete without the study of literature. Literature is a social product and as such it inevitably reflects the life of the era out of which it springs. Literature reflects the spirit of an age as Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales is regarded as the mirror of the Fourteenth century England. It is in the literature of a nation that we find the history of its life and the motives of its deeds. In this connection W.H. Hudson rightly says, "We care for literature on account of its deep and lasting significance. A great book grows directly out of life; in reading it, we are brought into large, close and fresh relation with life and in that fact lays final explanation of its power. Literature is the vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about different aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language."<sup>1</sup> Language is the main vehicle

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<sup>1</sup> W.H. Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, George G. Harrap & Company, London, 1910, p. 10.

of literature. Literature is absolutely language based and language being a cultural phenomenon; it is all but wholly contained by its local and the socio-historical forces that are in operation through ages in the particular locale.<sup>2</sup> Literature expresses the immediate hopes and aspirations of society, of down trodden and the destitute. It has also the power to shape and mould the spirit of an age according to its new ideals. The writings of Rousseau kindled the flame of the French Revolution which in its turn stirred the minds of the people with the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

On the other side to understand the literature of a period the knowledge of history is required. For example if a person wants to study Shakespeare's drama 'King Lear', he/she has to understand the Renaissance. So the study of literature is essential for the better understanding of history and vice-versa. This is as true of devotional literature as of literatures any other form. Devotional literature contains 'the religious writings that are neither doctrinal nor theological, but designed for individuals to read for their personal edification and spiritual formation.'<sup>3</sup> Devotional writers do not particularly write on material matters yet they are the product of the society, they give valuable information about the life of their age. For example the writings of Guru Nanak Dev enshrine the spirit of the Fifteenth century India as the writings of Martin Luthar reflects the

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2 Satinder Singh, ed., *Comparative Indian Literature*, Punjabi Adhiyan School, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1990, p. 43.

3 George Thomas Kurian, *The Encyclopedia of Christian Literature*, Vol. 1, [www.wikepeida.org](http://www.wikepeida.org).

spirit of Europe during the same period. Viewed thus, literature becomes a source of history. The scope of history is too vast, not only confined to past politics; it touches almost every domain of human life. Study of the literature of a period may also help to explore some important facts which still remain unexplored due to the absence of historical sources. It is in accordance with these views of literature that the study of the *Bhakti* period devotional literature (Guru Granth Sahib and Contemporaneous Braj literature) has been undertaken to analyse the condition of woman during the period under study. Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature belong to the two different categories of *Bhakti* i.e. '*Nirguna*' and '*Saguna*'. This work is an attempt to compare these two categories of *Bhakti* to have a comprehensive idea about the condition of woman during the period under study. But before taking this task it will be useful to trace the general condition of woman in Ancient Indian ethos through available sources.

In the pre-Aryan India a mother dominated (matriarchal) social system was prevalent. E.B. Havell writes that the pre-Aryan social structure was different from the Aryan, "In being matriarchal instead of patriarchal. Their mothers and children formed the nucleus of the settled society. They could never realize the Fatherhood of God; the Earth Mother embodied all their ideals of the Divine India were their mother, not their father."<sup>4</sup> This is also evident from the *Sankhya Shastra* which is a pre-Aryan work. Its antiquity is obvious when one

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4 E.B. Havell, *The History of the Aryan Rule in India*, K.M.N. Publishers, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 11-13.

finds that it is mentioned even in *Rigveda*<sup>5</sup>. In the basic postulates of *Sankhya*, *Prakriti* is at the forefront and though the *Purusha* is also there, all the strings of creation and desolation are in the hands of *Prakriti*.<sup>6</sup> Paul Thomas, an Indian scholar invokes archaeological evidence in support of the conjecture that the pre-Aryan civilization was woman centered. Many figures of goddesses discovered in the archaeological finds of *Harappa* and *Mohan-jo-daro* suggests that the popular deities of the Pantheon were predominantly feminine and that the society was matriarchal.<sup>7</sup> He writes, "The importance of mother-worship in religion, the abundance of female figurines with rich ornaments, the comparatively lesser importance given to males, would all indicate that society in Ancient Indus Valley was more favourable to women than to men; it was possibly a matriarchate of the type of Ancient Egypt."<sup>8</sup> The status of woman was very high in all walks of life at that time. As no socio-religious role or power was assigned to *Purusha*, apart from cohabiting with the female-*Prakriti* for procreation.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest known literary compositions of the Indo-Aryans are the hymns of the *Rigveda*. There are many indications in Vedic literature which goes to prove that Vedic Aryans were patriarchal<sup>10</sup>,

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5 Jodh Singh, "Gender Discrimination and Sikh Ethos," *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Vol. II, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, April-June 2000, p. 28.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

7 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, p. 6.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

9 Jodh Singh, "Gender Discrimination and Sikh Ethos", p. 29.

10 R.P. Sharma, *Woman in Hindu Literature*, Gyan Publishing House, Delhi, 1995, p. 60.

and a man had almost absolute power over his wife and children.<sup>11</sup> Why Vedic Aryans were patriarchal? To quote R.P. Sharma's words, "Scarcity of food and the daily cycle of hardships may have turned the early Aryans into professional hunters and food gatherers... They could not afford to be non-violent and vegetarian. Besides, their surroundings may have compelled them to keep their women and children inside the caves. They had to be protected from wild beasts and the hazards of nature. They could not be allowed to accompany men on hunting expeditions. Circumstances like these may have made it expedient for adult males to assume the role of Providers and Protectors of their women and children. It was no linguistic accident that the Vedic word for 'husband' and 'brother' came to mean, 'the protector' (*Bharta/Bhrata*) and that for 'wife' and 'sister', the Protected (*Bharya/Bhagini*)."<sup>12</sup> Thus Rigvedic gods were full-blooded martial male deities who helped them in their campaigns, confounded their enemies, protected their fields and cattle and were generally worshipped for enhancing their welfare.<sup>13</sup> In spite of male dominance, woman as wife and mother was esteemed. Indeed, it may be argued that Vedic religion had an appreciation of both femininity and complementarily between husband and wife, albeit within a patriarchal structure.<sup>14</sup>

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11 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 50.

12 R.P. Sharma, *Woman in Hindu Literature*, pp. 14-15.

13 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 40.

14 Katherine K. Young, "Hinduism", ed., Arvind Sharma, *Women in World Religions*, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1995, p. 61.

Ordinarily girls were less welcomed than boys as one finds a very frequent longing for a male child in the *Rigveda* : "May we possess a family of males."<sup>15</sup> It is surprising, however, that no desire for the birth of a daughter is ever expressed in the entire range of the *Rigveda*.<sup>16</sup> The *Atharvaveda* leaves no doubt that son was preferred to daughters.<sup>17</sup> But it must be added that it did not lead to female infanticide during this period.<sup>18</sup> Once the temporary feeling of disappointment was over, the family took keen interest in the daughter as it did in the son. The young girl was called by the name *Duhitri* indicating her principal duty in the Vedic family; namely, milking the cow.<sup>19</sup> Her name is also interpreted as the potential nourishes of a child.<sup>20</sup> Thus milking the cow and preparing clarified butter and curds seem to have been her chief concern. She had to perform other duties as well like working for the spinsters, weaving cloth and embroidering garments. They brought water in jars from wells and watched the standing crops in fields.<sup>21</sup>

Girls were educated like boys. It appears that in Vedic period women were on an equal footing with men in the matter of receiving the knowledge of the sacred literature.<sup>22</sup> They had free access to

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15 Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1964, p. 23.

16 B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Rgveda*, S Chand and Co., New Delhi, 1933, p. 4.

17 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, Om Publications, Faridabad, 1999, p. 35.

18 *Ibid.*

19 Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 24.

20 B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Rgveda*, p. 5.

21 *Ibid.*

22 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1955, p. 134.



educational opportunities and discrimination in education on the basis of sex was unknown. *Upanayanam* was common to boys and girls. There were women who continued studies throughout their life time, they were known as '*Brahmavadinis*'.<sup>23</sup> Name of twenty three *Brahmavadinis* are found in *Rigveda*. Some famous are *Gargi*, *Romasa*, *Ghosha*, *Lopamudra*, *Apala*, *Atreyi*, *Indrani*, *Vak* and *Godha*.<sup>24</sup>

Child-marriage was unknown during this period.<sup>25</sup> A maiden according to the *Atharvaveda* after completing her *Brahmacharya* only, is entitled to marry a husband.<sup>26</sup> Educated brides of this age had an effective voice in the selection of their partners in life.

The *Rigveda* does not give detailed account of the forms of marriage prevalent at that time, but there are indications in the hymns, of *Swayamvara*, marriage by capture and contract marriage.<sup>27</sup> In some marriages love played an important role; there is a mention in the *Rigveda* of festival like the *Samana* to which young women went well adorned with ornaments and bright garments and possibly met eligible young men; many marriage negotiations might have started from here.<sup>28</sup> Religious and sacramental conception of marriage was present.<sup>29</sup> The purpose of marriage was to procreate children and

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23 V. Janapathy, *Indian Woman through the Ages*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2002, p. 50.

24 *Ibid.*

25 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 159.

26 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 134.

27 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, pp. 51-52.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

perpetuate the race.<sup>30</sup> Monogamy seems to be the general rule. Polygamy was limited to the aristocratic families only.<sup>31</sup> Polyandry too seems to have existed in *Rigvedic* times. The twin *Asvins* (Gods of Medicine in India) had a common wife in *Surya*; *Rodasi* is mentioned as a lady attended by numerous husbands in the form of the *Maruts* (storm gods).<sup>32</sup>

Seclusion of women was absolutely unknown.<sup>33</sup> In social and religious gatherings they occupied a prominent position. No religious and social work was considered to be completed without the active support of one's wife. A.S. Altekar observes that her presence and co-operation was absolutely necessary in religious rites and ceremonies. To quote him, "The wife used to pound the sacrificial rice, give bath to the animal that was to be immolated... Women's participation in Vedic sacrifices was thus a real and not a formal one; they enjoyed the same religious privileges as their husbands."<sup>34</sup>

If a wife had the misfortune to be widowed, she had to ascend her husband's funeral pyre. The *Sati* custom was not in vogue at all.<sup>35</sup> The remarriage of a widow to the younger brother of her husband was a very common practice.<sup>36</sup> This is evident from a *Rigveda* hymn read along with one in *Atharvaveda*, according to which immediately after

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30 B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Rgveda*, p. 93.

31 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, pp. 56-57.

32 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 52.

33 B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Rgveda*, p. 48.

34 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization from Pre-Historic Times to the Present Day*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1959, pp. 197-98.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 339.

36 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 49.

the death of husband, the wife, lying by his side on the funeral ground, was raised by his brother and led back home to become his wife.<sup>37</sup> Even when she was not actually married to the brother, the latter was expected to raise issues to her in *Niyoga*.<sup>38</sup>

*Niyoga* is the custom of the young widow allying herself with the younger brother of her husband for the sake of progeny (son). In the absence of brother-in-law, she can get offspring's by cohabiting with a *Sapinda* or a *Sagotra* relation. The practice of *Niyoga* known as Levirate was prevalent even among Ancient Greeks and Romans.

Mother was an object of great honour at that time. In the Vedic hymns mother is called *Matri*.<sup>39</sup> Whenever she is spoken of along with father her name begins the compound i.e. *matara-pitara*.<sup>40</sup>

Illegitimacy is as old as the *Rigveda* which is indicated in some hymns. Considerable stigma was attached to illegitimate children and one comes across references in the *Rigveda* of the exposure of infants.<sup>41</sup> A famous hymn in the *Rigveda* seems to indicate that marriage between a brother and a sister was not regarded with favour, though not altogether unknown.<sup>42</sup> There are clear references in Vedic literature to a state of promiscuity in Ancient Indian society. Even the Vedic gods such as *Pusan* and *Prajapat* are known to have had

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37 *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

38 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 112.

39 Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 52.

40 B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Rgveda*, pp. 150-51.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 198.

42 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 40.

incestuous relationships with sisters, mothers and daughters.<sup>43</sup> The main disability from which woman suffered in this age was proprietary one. She could not hold or inherit property.<sup>44</sup>

There are some denounced hymns in Vedic literature which held women not only in disrespect but even in positive hatred<sup>45</sup>:-

"With women there can be no lasting friendship; hearts of hyenas are the hearts of women."<sup>46</sup>

or

"Women have a fickle mind, women can be easily won over by one who is handsome and can sing and dance well."<sup>47</sup>

Thus it can be said that the position of woman seems to have deteriorated considerably by the Rigvedic times when compared with earlier age.<sup>48</sup>

Coming to the later-Vedic period in Indian literature, one get a clear picture of Indo-Aryan social life and condition of woman from the *Brahmanas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Grihya Sutras*. The changes which took place during this period in the position of women were gradual. The desire for a male issue was as strong as before. At that period this belief was established that sons alone were competent to

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43 Romila Thapar, "Looking Back in History", ed., Devaki Jain, *Indian Women*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1975, p. 7.  
 44 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 339.  
 45 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 9.  
 46 B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Rgveda*, p. 159.  
 47 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 339.  
 48 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 54.

redeem their parents from hell and daughters were incapable of performing this spiritual function.<sup>49</sup> A passage in the *Aitareya Brahmana* says that while the son is the hope of the family, the daughter is a source of trouble to it.<sup>50</sup> Elaborate ceremonies began to develop during that period for ensuring the birth of sons.<sup>51</sup> Though sons were generally preferred, the desirability of having learned daughter was not entirely lost sight off, yet the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* mentions a ritual by which a person prays for the birth of a daughter who should be a *Pandita* or learned lady.<sup>52</sup>

In the higher section of society the girls used to go through a course of education. There was, however, a gradual decline in female education as the period advanced.<sup>53</sup> Child marriage had not come into vogue by the *Grihya Sutra* period. Further, some *Sutras* make provisions for the girl being in her menstrual period at the time of marriage. The marriageable age for the bride continued to be about sixteen.<sup>54</sup> Marriage ceremony was made more elaborate by adding new rites and rituals i.e. introducing the fire as a witness in the marriage ceremony and other rituals the *Pani-grahana* and *Saptapadi* – seven steps or rounds together.<sup>55</sup>

In the *Grihya Sutras*, first time, a definite classification of different forms of marriage was given. *Asvalayana* classified them into

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49 *Ibid.*

50 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 48.

51 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 57.

52 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 5.

53 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 340.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 341.

55 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, pp. 66-68.

eight and this classification has been followed by other Sutra writers as well as the authors of the epics and law codes. These eight forms of marriage were *Brahma*; *Daiva*; *Prajapatya*; *Arsha*; *Gandharva*; *Asura*; *Paisacha* and *Rakshasa*.<sup>56</sup>

In the *Brahma form* the father carefully selected the son-in-law and married his daughter to him according to proper religious rites. In *Daiva form* a daughter was offered in marriage to an officiating priest by the sacrifices. In *Prajapatya form* the bride was given away by a guardian instead of father. In *Arsha form* the father of the bride was permitted to accept a pair of cattle, a cow and a bull from his son-in-law for facilitating the performance of sacrifices. *Gandharva* was a love marriage. *Asura* was bride purchase. *Paisacha* was drugging and raping of bride. *Rakshasa* was marriage by capture.<sup>57</sup>

The birth of a son became necessity at that time. For this, it became obligatory for a man to marry again and raise sons if first wife failed to give birth to a son. Thus the practice of polygamy seems to have planted itself more firmly.

*Sati* custom was altogether rare and widow had the option of remarriage. *Grihya sutras*, which describe in detail the important ceremonies of domestic life including the cremation ceremony, are silent about it.<sup>58</sup>

Their proprietary rights continued to be unrecognized, the only exception being in favour of marriage gifts of moveable property

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56 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

57 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, pp. 37 to 47.

58 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 175.

(*Istridhan*).<sup>59</sup> In the *Satapatha Brahmana* it is mentioned that a disobedient wife is enjoined to be taught obedience by physical force. The *Maitrayani Samhita* places woman on par with dice and drink, and describe her as one of the major evils in society.<sup>60</sup>

Thereafter the decline in the status of women started when the grip of priest class (*Brahmans*) became more and more strong on society with the writings of many *Smritis* and *Purans*.<sup>61</sup> Many of the religious ceremonies earlier performed by woman then were shifted to the priests (*Brahmans*).<sup>62</sup> The sentiments of '*Suchi*' and '*Asuchi*' came into existence. A woman was began to be considered generally '*Asuchi*' (impure) and particularly so during their menstrual periods, pregnancy and child birth. She was not eligible to perform religious acts like *Homas* during this period.<sup>63</sup>

Among the *Smritis*, *Manu Smriti* is the most important. Manu is emphatically in favour of marrying girls at a tender age. He states that a man aged thirty years shall marry a maiden of twelve or a man of twenty-four a girl of eight years of age.<sup>64</sup> *Yajnavalkya* was of the opinion that the parents of a girl who did not give her away in marriage before puberty "will be visited by the sin of the destruction of the foetus at every time of her menses."<sup>65</sup>

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59 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 340.

60 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 58.

61 Maheep Singh, "The Status of Woman in Hindu and Sikh Societies", *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. IX, Guru Nanak Foundation Delhi, April 1990, p. 134.

62 V. Janapathy, *Indian Woman through the Ages*, p. 55.

63 *Ibid.*

64 Manu Smriti IX cited from M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 94.

65 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, pp. 224-25.

By this time marriage was also made compulsory for a woman without whom she could not hope to go to heaven. For a girl, it became equivalent to the *Upanayanam* for boys, and the age of eight was considered ideal for both, marriage (for the girl) and *Upanayanam* (for the boys). Because of early marriage in that period the girl students almost seemed to have disappeared.<sup>66</sup> One does not come across such a word as *Brahmavadinis* anywhere in the codes of *Manu* and *Yajnavalkya*. The woman was considered incompetent to study Vedic lore. This in competency of woman reduced her to an inferior status of *Shudra*, who was also debarred from performing any sacrificial act. This in competency of woman reduced her to an inferior status of *Shudra*, who was also debarred from performing any sacrificial act. This is the reason why in numerous metrical texts of the *Smritis* and *Epics Istri* and *Shudra* are generally classed together in one category.<sup>67</sup>

After marriage, the husband's family often looked on her as a dangerous figure, a temptress, until she bore her first child, preferably a son, after which she was safe.<sup>68</sup>

The practice of polygamy was treated as a privilege reserved for the twice born classes in the time of *Manu*. And in this regard *Brahman* was considered as the most fortunate who could keep as many as four wives. Likewise a *Kshatriya* could marry three wives. Similarly a *Vaishya* was entitled to two wives. A *Shudra* was allowed one wife only.<sup>69</sup>

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66 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 142.

67 Romila Thapar, "Looking Back in History", p. 9.

68 Katherine K. Young, "Hinduism", p. 81.

69 *Manu Smriti* III-12, cited from M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 6.



The subjugation of woman started in the *Smriti* period. *Manu* and *Yajanavalkya* prescribed a subordinate social role to woman. *Manu* stated, "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband; when her lord is dead to her son; a woman must never be independent."<sup>70</sup> The same idea has been developed by *Yajanavalkya*. He advised men, never to entrust three things to the control of others i.e., riches, books and women, for he added, they are spoiled and defiled by them.<sup>71</sup>

*Manu* is of the view that the main duty of wife is to serve her husband because with the service of the husband she can get salvation. He says, "There is no sacrifice, pious practice, or fast which concerns women in particular; she must cherish and respect her husband and then will she be honoured in heaven."<sup>72</sup>

*Manu* and *Yajnavalkya* discouraged the act of self immolation (*Sati*) by equating it with suicide. The legislator commands the wife whom death had deprived of her support not to contract new ties. *Manu's* objection to widow remarriage was that a gift could be given away only once.<sup>73</sup> He submitted widow to an ascetic life, whereby through prayer and penitence she might rejoin her husband whom she had lost.<sup>74</sup> He approved divorce under certain condition, "A barren wife may be superseded in the 8<sup>th</sup> year, she whose children all dies in

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70     *Manu Samriti*, cited from R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi, 1960, p. 474.

71     M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 205.

72     Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 17.

73     M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 97.

74     Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 65.

the 4<sup>th</sup> year, she who bears only daughter in the 11<sup>th</sup> year, but she who is quarrel- some without delay.<sup>75</sup>

He raised the status of mother above the father. He said, "A mother is more to be revered than a thousand fathers."<sup>76</sup> Thus it may be said that Manu has assigned to woman a dependent though not a dishonourable status in society.<sup>77</sup>

The position of woman was improved in the sphere of proprietary rights in this period as *Manu* advocated that the widow should be recognised as an heir to her husband's property.<sup>78</sup>

The great epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which are also a source representing the socio-religious life of India, the North India particularly. In these epics detailed account about the position of women in society is available. The birth of a female child, no doubt, was less welcomed than that of the male, but it did not lead to female infanticide. Some parents who desired daughter but were not so blessed sometimes adopted daughters.<sup>79</sup> *Sita*, *Kunti*, *Sakuntala* and *Parmadvarya* all were adopted daughters.<sup>80</sup> A maiden was not only an object of affection at home but also considered an auspicious creature whose presence was required on ceremonious occasions. They were

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75 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

77 Harbans Kaur Sagoo, "Position of Women in Indian Society as Reflected in Guru Nanak's Hymns", *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. XVII, Guru Nanak Foundation, Delhi, 1997, p. 25.

78 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 353.

79 Shakambari Jayal, *The Status of Women in the Epics*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1966, p. 288.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

presented at the coronation of *Rama*. Moreover, the brotherless daughter was known as '*Putrikadharmini*' which meant that her son was to inherit his maternal grandfather's property and perform his funeral rites.

Education in the wider sense was denied to a girl.<sup>81</sup> Child-marriage was prevalent. *Mahabharata* says, "A person of thirty years of age should marry a girl of ten years of age – or a person of one and twenty years of age should marry a girl of seven years of age."<sup>82</sup> One of the main reasons for child-marriage, advocated by later law-givers, was that the fertile period of a woman should not be wasted. *Sita* appears to have been married at the tender age of six.<sup>83</sup> In the case of marriage, a girl to some extent had freedom to select her life partner as the *Swayamvara* form of marriage was very popular.<sup>84</sup> The husband was not only a friend, but an ideal, preceptor and God of the wife. She has to worship him with single-minded devotion. It was the belief that through the services rendered to the husband a *Pativrata* attained the highest heaven.<sup>85</sup>

The practice of polygamy had been very widely prevalent in the epic period. The motive behind this practice at that time was not religious. A man, if only he had a desire, could marry another wife without being subject to any social opprobrium. Two wives had been

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81 V. Janapathy, *Indian Woman through the Ages*, p. 76.

82 Mahabharata, Anushasan Parva, Ch. 44, cited from Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 164.

83 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 51.

84 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 141.

85 Mahabharata III, cited from Shakambari Jayal, *The Status of Women in the Epics*, p. 41.

married to *Pandu*; *Kunti* and *Madri*.<sup>86</sup> *Arjuna* married *Draupadi*, *Subhadra*, *Ulupi* and *Uttara*.

Polyandry, a custom by which a woman is taken as a common wife by a number of men, rarely prevailed. The only classical instance is given by the *Mahabharata* in which the five *Pandava* brothers had a common wife-*Draupadi*. This marriage took place only to save the mother *Kunti* from untruth because she had commanded her sons by saying, "Enjoy all of you, that which you have obtained."<sup>87</sup>

Intercaste marriage had also taken place as *Bhim* an Aryan prince married a *Rakshasi*, the non Aryan and a son was born from this marriage.<sup>88</sup>

The earliest reference to the practice of *Purdah* was found in the the *Mahabharata*. It was prevalent among the women of royal families. When *Draupadi* was dragged to *Hastinapura* from *Indraprastha* by *Dussasana*, it was lamented, 'as being a high born lady, she was not seen by the sun and the wind'.<sup>89</sup>

At that period, prostitution had also been allowed to creep into society which is proved from the description of royal families and processions to war. The camp-followers in the army of *Duryodhana* included 'merchants', spies and prostitutes.<sup>90</sup>

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86 Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 227.

87 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, pp. 66-67.

88 Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 238.

89 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 156.

90 *Mahabharata*, Udyoga Parva cited from M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 195.

*Sati* custom was prevalent during that period. The *Mahabhart*a gave two instances of *Sati*. *Madri* immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her husband *Pandu*.<sup>91</sup> The four wives of *Vasudeva* namely *Devaki*, *Bhadra*, *Rohini* and *Madira* burnt themselves with the body of their husband.<sup>92</sup> The attitude of *Mahabhart*a towards *Sati* was, more or less, neutral. There was no condemnation and no undue praise showed to *Sati*. If any widow loved her husband so well that she thought it was impossible to live after him, she could follow her husband, but it was neither compulsory nor even generally recommended. However it appears that it was confined to certain royal clans at that time.<sup>93</sup>

Widow-remarriage and divorce were becoming unpopular among the Indo-Aryans, but the need for sons remained paramount. Hence *Niyoga* began to be widely practised as a legitimate method of procuring sons for dead men.<sup>94</sup>

The *epics* prescribed a conduct of veneration and respect towards mother. She was considered the creator, nourisher, educator and the greatest preceptor of her child and thus of her race and society. Of the two parents, the mother's role was greater and more significant. Mother is placed higher than the preceptor, father and even higher than the whole earth. There was no preceptor like her. She was infact the highest preceptor.<sup>95</sup> In *Mahabhart*a a parallel

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91 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 157.

92 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 120.

93 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 299.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 264.

95 Shakambari Jayal, *The Status of Women in the Epics*, p. 133.

between mother and earth has been often drawn because of the fact that the earth suffers without protest when ploughed, it instead provides life-giving corn to nourish people. So does the mother who nourishes and sustain children while she herself may be undergoing unspeakable sufferings.<sup>96</sup>

The religious rights of woman were curtailed. Impurity imposed upon the woman, lack of education, admission of non-Aryan woman into Aryan families, may all have been responsible for her exclusion from the Vedic sacrificial religion.

In *epic* literature a large number of derogatory couplets are founded regarding woman. The *Mahabharata* is more outspoken in condemning woman ruthlessly and holding her sex in utter disrespect and infamy. It is stated that there is nothing that is more sinful than woman. Verily women are the roots of all evils.<sup>97</sup> Even the *Ramayana* does not entertain very high regard to the women. They are said to be creature of illusion, devoid of religion, fickle, crooked and frightful as *Krtya* power, which brings destruction.<sup>98</sup>

The Buddhist canonical literature provided the information regarding the views of *Buddha* towards woman. The *Jataka* books, the *Milindapanha* and the *Vinayapitaka*, particularly the portions of it known as the *Bhikkhuni – Khandhaka* (that is the tenth and last *Khandhaka* of the *Cullavagga*) and the *Bhikkhuni – Vibhanga*.

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96 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

97 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 12.

98 Shakambari Jayal, *The Status of Women in the Epics*, p. 229.

Buddha initially objected to instituting an order of nuns but was finally persuaded by his disciple *Ananda*.<sup>99</sup> It was on the initiative taken by women themselves that *Buddha* had to concede religious liberty to them. It is narrated in the text of *Cullavagga*, which is second book of *Vinaya-Pitaka*, that *Gautama's* foster-mother *Mahaprajapati*, begged to be admitted into the *Sangha* but he refused, then she approached *Ananda* to intercede on her behalf. She had come on foot all the way from *Kapilavastu* to *Vashali*, where *Buddha* was staying at that time and *Ananda* seeing her swollen feet, weary and distressed, pleaded on her behalf. *Buddha* turned down *Ananda's* proposal to find an order of nuns.<sup>100</sup> Then *Ananda* asked the master,

"Are women, Lord, capable when they have gone forth from the household life and entered discipline proclaimed by the Blessed one? Are they capable of realising the fruit of conversion, or of the second path, or of the third path or of *Arhantship*?"<sup>101</sup> *Buddha* replied, "They are capable, *Ananda*."<sup>102</sup>

*Buddha's* acceptance of capability of woman and *Gautami's* service prepared a ground for the admission of women into *Sangha*. But *Buddha's* permission to woman was conditional. It placed nuns under a more rigorous discipline than monks. He demanded from

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99 Romila Thapar, "Looking Back in History", p. 13.

100 Harcharan Singh Sobti, "Image of Women as Reflected in Jatakas", *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. XII, Guru Nanak Foundation, Delhi, 1993, p. 31.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

102 *Ibid.*

them strict observing of *Atthagurudhamma* (the Eight Chief Rules).<sup>103</sup> Some of the restrictions placed upon the nuns were no doubt reasonable ones; thus it was laid down that they should avoid the company of men with doubtful character; that only monks of unquestioned purity and integrity should be allowed to preach nuns; that they should always live together in groups of two and three etc. Some other rules, however, betray a lack of confidence in the character and judgement of woman. First rule among these lays down that a nun, though 100 years old, must stand in reverence before a monk, though he may have been just initiated in the *Sangha*.<sup>104</sup>

Further an Almswoman's (*Bhikshuni*) position is shown to be different from an Almsman's (*Bhikshu*), not only in degree but also in kind.<sup>105</sup> It is said in *Milindapanha* that an Almswoman cannot create a schism in the order but only an Almsman.<sup>106</sup> The Almswoman neither preach to the Almsmen nor to the other Almswomen but only to the laity. It is said that a woman can neither be a *Buddha* nor a universal Monarch. It makes a thorough denial of the potency of women to rise to the pinnacle in any of the realms.<sup>107</sup> *Buddha* is of the view that the entry of women into *Sangha* will soon harm it. He says, "If, *Ananda*, Women had not received permission to enter the order, the pure

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103 I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1975, p. 118.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 290.

106 *Ibid.*

107 *Ibid.*, p. 291.



religion would have lasted long, the good law would have stood fast a thousand years. But since they have received that permission it will now stand only for five hundred years..."<sup>108</sup>

After *Buddha's* permission for admission of women into his *Sangha*, their status elevated tremendously.<sup>109</sup> The birth of a female child was not attended with great sorrow and encumbrance, as it was done before. In the *Jatakas* two persons named *Brahmadatta*<sup>110</sup> and *Kasiraja*<sup>111</sup> and a *Brahman* woman<sup>112</sup> all are recorded to have put up a prayer for either a son or a daughter. *Gautama* himself admonishes the King *Pasenadi* of *Kosala* for his sorrow that the queen *Mallika* had given birth to a daughter. *Buddha* upholding the honour of womanhood uttered the following weighty remarks, "A woman – child, O Lord of men, may prove even a better offspring than a male."<sup>113</sup>

Contrary to all previous legal tenets of *Dharma Shastras*, the Buddhist canons hold that the adoption of a daughter is quite valid. This is a remarkable innovation. For the first time in the Indian devotional literature the female children were given such a creditable position.<sup>114</sup> The Buddhist period does not lack the instances of the adoption of daughters. *Samavati* was adopted by the householder

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108 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 82, also see Harcharan Singh Sobti, "Image of Women as Reflected in Jatakas", p. 35.  
 109 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 215.  
 110 Jataka, 521 cited from I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 21.  
 111 Jataka, 538, *Ibid.*  
 112 Jataka, 509, *Ibid.*  
 113 Samyutta Nikaya cited from I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 110.  
 114 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 186.

Mitta.<sup>115</sup> *Buddha* did not subscribe to the prevailing *Brahmanic* view that a son was indispensable for man's salvation.<sup>116</sup>

There are no records of female infanticide in Buddhist literature because of the influence of the doctrine of non-violence (*Ahinsa*). Female education was given great importance among the ladies in commercial and aristocratic families. Some educated ladies figured amongst the Buddha's chief disciples. These were Queen *Khema*, *Dharampala*, *Gutta* and *Anopama*.<sup>117</sup> Some of them like *Sanghamitra*, the daughter of *Ashoka*, even went to foreign countries to spread the gospel of *Buddha*.

The custom of child-marriage did not appear to have been prevalent, for there was little mention of it in the canonical literature. The cause for abstaining from marrying daughters at a tender age was given by the merchant *Goshaka*, the father of *Samavati*, in an answer to a king who asked for the hand of the former's daughter. Replying in the negative, even to the monarch, he says, "We householders do not give young girls for fear that they are maltreated and ill used."<sup>118</sup> No age was prescribed as the correct marriageable age, but girls probably got married between the age of sixteen and twenty. *Visakha* for example, was married when she was sixteen.<sup>119</sup>

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115 *Ibid.*

116 I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 23, also see Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 81.

117 I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 104.

118 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 193.

119 I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 28.

*Buddha* did not consider marriage as an inviolable sacrament. A woman was not felt bound to marry to save her self-respect and that of her family, but, on the contrary, she found that she could honourably remain unmarried.<sup>120</sup> He maintained that celibacy was superior to sex life. He treated marriage as the greatest impediment to all nobler and sublime pursuits. His definite view was that a married life was full of hindrances and defiled by passions.<sup>121</sup> *Buddha* himself, a year after his marriage, renounced the world and lived a strictly celibate life.

From a reading of *Pali classics*, it is clear that monogamy prevailed at that time. The practice of polygamy was prevalent only among aristocracy. King *Pasenadi* had five wives : *Mallika*, *Vasabha*, *Ubbiri*, *Soma* and *Sakutla*. King *Udena* has *Samavati* as his chief consort and two other *Vasuladatta* and *Magandiya* as his junior wives. *Bimbisara* is also mentioned to have two wives, one *Khema* and the other *Chellana*,<sup>122</sup>

There is only one reference to the practice of polyandry in the *Jatakas*. Princess *Kanha* is said to have had five husbands at the same time.<sup>123</sup>

Buddhism also checked the spread of *Purdah* which is prevailed in some royal households. There is a legend which purports to say that *Yasodhara*, the wife of *Buddha*; appeared unveiled in public and

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120 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

121 Tereyga Sutta cited from M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 195.

122 *Ibid.*

123 Jataka, 536 cited from I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 39.

when criticised by some elders proudly told them that a woman's modesty was not to be preserved by the veil but by her own will power.<sup>124</sup>

Viewed in the light of canonical literature it becomes clear that widow burning (*Sati*) was not practised. It appears from the scriptural data that widows went unabashed in the Buddhist ages. If they chose to stay at home, no severe austerities were imposed upon them against their will. Moreover, they had the right to inherit property.<sup>125</sup> But widow remarriage was not very popular.<sup>126</sup>

As a mother she was honoured and revered. Her importance was insisted upon again and again. It is stated in *Jataka*, "A mother like a sire should be reverend with honour crowned."<sup>127</sup>

*Buddha* never hinted that woman had not the same chance as man or was in any way unfitted by her nature to attain '*Nirvana*'. The way of salvation was open to woman. He was of the view that the unending bliss of *Nirvana* was not monopoly of any particular class and sex. Any human being could aspire to it and could endeavour for its attainment. The sex distinction evaporated on the path of spirituality.<sup>128</sup>

Jain texts were mostly written by monks who believed in the superiority of the celibate life to that of the married life. They considered woman, as the temptress who perpetuated miserable

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124 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 98.

125 I.B. Horner, *Woman Under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 75.

126 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

127 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

128 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

life.<sup>129</sup> She is called '*Nari*' (*Na-ari*) because there was no worse enemy for man than she; she is *Mahila* because she charms by her wiles and graces; she is called *Padma* because she accelerates a man's passion; she is called *Mahitiya* because she creates dissention; she is *Rama* because she delights in coquetry; she is called *Angana* because she loves the *Anga* or body of men; she is *Josiya* because by her tricks she keeps men under subjection; she is *Vanita* because she caters to the taste of men with her various blandishments.<sup>130</sup>

From the time of *Parasvanath* up till now, women have been admitted to the religious order of nuns. There is however some difference of opinion between the *Digambaras* and *Swetambaras* about their title to liberation. *Digambaras* hold the view that there is no *Nirvana* for women. The crucial point in the development of faith reached when woman also sought permission to enter into it. *Uttara*, the sister of *Shivabhuti* was the first to raise the question. The solution was very difficult. How could the teacher allow women to go naked? It was impossible conception, *Shivabhuti*, therefore, refused her admission and declared, "No woman attain *Moksha* without rebirth as a man."<sup>131</sup> On the other side *Swetambaras* maintain that a woman can attain salvation. This sect is of the view that there is no harm to the soul by the wearing of white garments.

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129 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 241.

130 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, pp. 110-11.

131 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 260.

In Jain literature there is much information preserved which throws light on the general condition of woman in society at that time. In this literature four types of marriage were approved namely marriages arranged by parents; *Swayamvara*; *Gandharva* and *Asura*. It does not appear to have approved the *Rakshasa* and *Paisacha* forms of marriage recognised by the *Grihya Sutras*.<sup>132</sup> Monogamy was the general rule, but Kings and nobles were polygons and had *harmes* of considerable size.<sup>133</sup>

Some sort of *Purdah* was observed by the ladies of the royal clans. *Trisala*, mother of *Mahavira*, is said to have listened to the interpretation of her dreams, foretelling the birth of her illustrious son, by sitting behind a curtain.<sup>134</sup>

At that time *Sati* does not appear to have been prevalent in India at large extent, but later *Jain* texts mention it.<sup>135</sup> The *Jain* law is more liberal with regard to the status of widow than the *Hindu* law. The great divergence between the *Hindu* and the *Jain* law lies in the point that according to the *Mitakshara*, it is the son who is the direct heir to his deceased father in preference to his widowed mother.<sup>136</sup> In the *Jain* law, it is the widow who has a claim to property over the son. According to the *Vardhaman Niti*, "If a lady is good, she shall become the owner of all the property of her husband, whether there is a son or

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132 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, p. 239.

133 *Ibid.*

134 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 113.

135 S. Vats Shakuntala Mudgal, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, pp. 240-41, also see Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 110.

136 M.A. Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p.266.

not, she shall have full powers like her husband."<sup>137</sup> *Arhan Niti* makes the point still more clear by declaring that on the death of husband, his wife succeeds his estate, and in the absence of his wife, his son.<sup>138</sup> Mother was held in great esteem. 'Trisala', mother of *Mahavira*, was given the highest place in *Jain* literature.

*Yogic* literature like Buddhism and Jainism, also stressed the need of renouncing worldly life and woman for the attainment of salvation. *Yogis* used derogatory words for woman in their writings. *Yogi Gorakh Nath* called woman *Baghani*, a she-wolf who robbed man of his youthful *vigour*.<sup>139</sup> They take vow to remain celibates forever. But reports from various areas show that marriage is common among *Yogis*. Married *Yogis* were called *Bindi-nagi*, *Samjogi* and *Grhasta*.<sup>140</sup> Among *Yogis* marriage was usually at an early age, widow remarriage was allowed, polygamy was practiced and divorce was permissible.<sup>141</sup>

It is to be noted that some women received initiation into *Yogic* orders. These were either married women, or those who entered the sect after the death of their husband.<sup>142</sup> Some of them were also in - charge of temples.<sup>143</sup>

Then came the period of the *Rajputs*, who ruled India after the death of *Harsha Vardhana* till Muslims invaded and occupied the country. During this period women suffered from several handicaps

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137 *Ibid.*

138 *Ibid.*

139 Upinder Jit Kaur, *Sikh Religion and Economic Development*, National Book Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, p. 303.

140 George Weston Briggs, *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1973, pp. 46-47.

141 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

142 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

143 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

although their honour was dear to *Rajputs*. The birth of a girl child was not received with favour among *Rajputs*. *Tod* writes that *Rajputs* were often heard to exclaim, "Accursed the day when a woman child was born to me."<sup>144</sup> They were denied the right to study Vedas but were free to receive secular education and military training. Female-infanticide was there.<sup>145</sup> This practice among the *Rajputs* was of great antiquity and arose from combined motives of pride and poverty.<sup>146</sup> The practice of '*Jauhar*' was very common among the *Rajputs*. This is the practice in which the womenfolk immolated themselves 'ex-masse' on a burning fire. *Rani Padmini*, wife of *Raja Ratan Singh*, the *Rana* of *Mewar* and his other wives performed '*Jauhar*' after his defeat from *Ala-ud-din Khalji*. Another example was, the '*Jauhar*' of *Rani Karmeti* and other ladies of *Chittor* at the time of its siege by *Bahadur Shah* in 1535.

Thus, on the whole, in Indian society of pre-*Turkish* period, the position of women was swiftly changing. The rights of freedom and honour enjoyed by them in the Ancient period gradually dwindled in the social sphere.<sup>147</sup>

The *Turks* brought their own heritage which they derived from the *Arabs* and the *Abbasids*. Their coming to India did not bring any good change in the position of women. Female infanticide was widely

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144 James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Vol. II, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1971, p. 740.

145 V. Janapathy, *Indian Woman through the Ages*, p. 146.

146 Bhagat Singh, "Condition of Women in the Punjab in the Early Nineteenth Century", *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XV, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, p. 357.

147 Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D.)*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1971, p. 5.



prevalent inspite of the Prophet's saying that the birth of a daughter did not bring her father any shame; bringing her up and educating her was rather a means of salvation for him. He said, "If a man of whom only daughters are born, bring them up properly, the same daughters will become a covering for him against hell."<sup>148</sup>

In respect of the partition of ancestral property or the property of the father among his children, a daughter is as much as an heir as a son under *Muslim* law and the son does not exclude a daughter from a share in the father's property and she had also the right to sell it. She retained this right even after her marriage. According to the *Muslim* law the *Muslim* lady was further safeguarded after her marriage, through *Mehar*, whereas a *Hindu* woman had no right to the property of her husband's parents.<sup>149</sup> *Mehar* is the amount of money sanctioned to the woman at the time of marriage. *Mehar* is of two types. In the first type, the woman is entitled to the *Mehar* only after she has been divorced or after her husband's death. In the second type the money has to be given to the woman right at the time of marriage either in cash or in kind.<sup>150</sup>

Female education was limited only to the women of upper class. The field of fine arts specially attracted their attention and the art of

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148 L. Sebasti and S.J. Raj, *Quest for Gender Justice : A Critique of the Status of Women in India*, T.R. Publications, Madras, 1991, p. 134.

149 S.C. Roy Choudhary, *Social, Cultural and Economic History of India (Medieval Age)*, Delhi, 1980. p.162.

150 L.Sebasti and S.J. Raj, *Quest for Gender Justice : A Critique of the Status of Woman in India*, p. 160.

music and dance was fairly popular. Some ladies of the royal dynasty or the aristocratic class wielded much influence in politics. *Sultan Rezia* is a notable example of it. She was first lady *Sultan* among *Muslims*, who ruled the vast empire of her father with remarkable energy and ability.

To the *Muslims* marriage was not a sacrament as understood by the *Hindus* and *Roman Catholics*, but a secular institution mainly based on the theory of contract.<sup>151</sup> Divorce among the *Muslims* was, therefore, easier than the *Hindus*. Divorce is of two types among the *Muslim* i.e. *Talak* and *Khula*.<sup>152</sup> *Talak* is a kind of divorce which depends on the will of the husband without any legal proceeding. In this type a man has to repeat the word *Talak* three times and send his wife away.<sup>153</sup> *Talak* can be effective after the period of *Iddat*. *Iddat* is the period of three months after *Talak* during this period the husband should not cohabit with his wife.<sup>154</sup> *Khula* is special forms of divorce among *Muslims* by which the wife can get separated from her husband and break the matrimonial bonds. A *Muslim* woman cannot divorce herself, but she may obtain a divorce in a court of law under certain conditions. According to the *Muslim Marriage Act*, for instances a *Muslim* woman can claim divorce in case her husband take another

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151 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 243.

152 L.Sebasti and S.J. Raj, *Quest for Gender Justice : A Critique of the Status of Woman in India*, p. 161.

153 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p.245.

154 L.Sebasti and S.J. Raj, *Quest for Gender Justice : A Critique of the Status of Woman in India*, p.161.

wife, on the ground that there is inequality of treatment either psychologically or economically.<sup>155</sup>

The system of polygamy was very common. It lowered the position of woman as *Muslim* law allowed a man to keep four wives at a time. Apart from four wives he is allowed to keep concubines and slave-girls if he could afford them.<sup>156</sup>

According to *Muslim* law the main duty of wife is to stay at home and perform household duties. She has to obey all the orders of her husband. She is not free for public appearance. In the earlier days of Islam, woman was free to visit the Mosque and pray. This practice was later condemned as good men found it difficult to concentrate their mind on prayers in the presence of women; by the Third century of the *Muslim* era, the practice of letting women attend the Mosque generally fell into disuse, though among certain sections of Muslims it has continued to the present day.<sup>157</sup>

The Prophet of *Islam* instructed the *Muslims* to respect their wives and mothers. Dealing with wives the Prophet said, "The best blessing among the blessings of the world to a man, is a virtuous wife".<sup>158</sup> He said that one's God and Prophet, is his mother. He has said, "Paradies lies at the feet of the mother".<sup>159</sup>

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155 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, pp. 245-46.

156 *Ibid.*, p.243.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 250.

158 L. Sebasti and S.J. Raj, *Quest for Gender Justice : A Critique of the Status of Woman in India*, pp. 43-44.

159 *Ibid.*, p. 207.

The *Sultans* of Delhi had large *harems* and a considerable part of their time was spent in the company of their wives and concubines. But their *harems* were not as elaborated as they developed in the times of the Mughals. Mughals, who inherited the traditions of *Chengiz Khan* and *Timur*, had great *harems*. In these *harems* their mothers, wives, sisters and other ladies resided. The mother of the Emperor was the most respected and next to her was the chief queen (*Maharani*). European travelers particularly *Bernier* and *Mauncci* have supplied plenty of information about the Mughal ladies way of life in the *harems*.<sup>160</sup>

Mughals allowed their females sufficient political rights and thus enabled them to take active part in politics. A notable example of it was *Nur Jahan*. She was a powerful lady of masterful personality who retained political power in her hands for as many as eleven years. But Mughals did not seem to have conceded to her the right of sovereignty.<sup>161</sup>

During Mughal period female infanticide was continued in some sections of both the *Hindus* and *Muslims*.<sup>162</sup> According to *Bernier*, Mughal princesses usually remained unmarried as their parents considered son-in-law a possible danger to succession. *Shahjahan's* two daughters, *Jahanara* and *Roshanara* grew into spinsters, which

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160 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 254.

161 Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India*, p. 17.

162 Bhagat Singh, "Condition of Women in the Punjab in the Early Nineteenth Century", p. 357.

led to a good deal of talk in the town. Jahanara was a partisan of *Dera*, *Shahjahan's* eldest son, while *Roshanara* was a staunch ally of *Aurangzeb*, the youngest one. While *Aurangzeb* was the Viceroy of the *Deccan*, it was *Roshanara* who kept him informed of all that was a happening in the imperial capital. It would appear that there was an agreement between the two that when *Aurangzeb* would ascend the throne *Roshanara* was to be married as a reward for her services: an agreement, by the way, respected by *Aurangzeb* in the breach rather than in the keeping.<sup>163</sup>

Child marriage found detailed references in European travel accounts during the period under study. Both *Hindu* and *Muslim* had fallen prey to this social evil. *Tavernier*, *Manucci* and *Thevenot*, as they have noted, say that the normal age for marriage of *Hindu* girls was between four to ten years.<sup>164</sup> *Manucci* has provided information about it through instances that in *Sind* and *Ajmer*, a few women have children even at the age of nine or ten years.<sup>165</sup>

*Manucci* admitted the prevalence of the custom of dowry among the *Hindus*, offered to the bride-groom side. He further indicates that the *Muslim* society, particularly its richer and higher sections, could not remain altogether unaffected by the *Hindu* system of dowry.<sup>166</sup>

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163 L. Sebasti and S. J. Raj, *Quest for Gender Justice : A Critique of the Status of Woman in India*, p. 254.

164 Meera Nanda, *European Travel Accounts During The Reigns of Shahjahan And Aurangzeb*, Nirmal Book Agency, Kurukshetra, 1994, p. 111.

165 N. Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, tr., William Irvine, Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1966, p. 201.

166 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 61.

*Manucci* and *Thevenot* recorded that polygamy was a practice prevalent both among the *Hindus* and the *Muslims* especially those belonging to the richer sections of the society.<sup>167</sup> *Thevenot* mentioned that the result of polygamy was the bitter relationship existing between the co-wives in the household of a polygamist<sup>168</sup> *De Laet* referred that an average *Hindu* remained Monogamous except in the case if a wife proved to be barren, he had the liberty to marry again with the consent of the *Brahmans*.<sup>169</sup>

Considerable discussion has been going on whether the *Purdah* was prevalent in Ancient India or not. Some hold that it was quite unknown in the pre-*Muslim* days. Others maintain that royal Hindu ladies used to wear veils even before the advent of *Turkish* rule in India. To conclude, it can be said that in pre-*Turkish* times *Purdah* was confined to a small section of *Hindu* society but with the advent of *Turkish* rule it gained powerful impetus owing to the culture of the conquerors.<sup>170</sup> At the time of Akbar it was observed with greater rigidity. *Badauni* writes, "If a woman was found running the danes and bazars of the town and while doing so did not veil herself. She was to go to the other side and become a prostitute."<sup>171</sup> European travelers referred to the prevalence of *Purdah* in Mughal Indian

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167 *Ibid.*, p.71; Jean De Thevenot, *Voyages De Mr. De Thevenot*, III part, ed., Surendranath Sen, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1949, p. 187.

168 Thevenot, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 88.

169 De Laet, *Description of India and Fragment of India History*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, Delhi , rpt. 1975, p. 86.

170 A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, pp. 176-77.

171 K.N.Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, p. 88.

society. *Manucci* accepted the *Purdah* as a part of *Muslim* culture. Thevenot linked it with religion and recorded, “If these Indian women be idolaters they go bare faced and if *Mohammedans*, they are veiled.”<sup>172</sup> *Johan Marshall* observed that the rigour of *Purdah* was so strict that even male doctors were not allowed to see the ladies of princely and noble families. He mentioned, “A curious method was adopted for diagnosing the disease without seeing the patient's face or feeling her pulse. A handkerchief was rubbed all over the body of the patient and then put into a jar of water. By its smell the doctor judged the cause of illness and prescribed the medicine.”<sup>173</sup> *De Laet* mentioned that unlike *Muslim* women *Hindu* ladies did not cover themselves from head to toe. It was enough to have a sheet of cloth or *Dupatta* to cover their heads. It was everywhere a common sight to see water-carrier women walking along the streets without any *Purdah*.<sup>174</sup> The main disadvantage of the *Purdah* was that women were denied knowledge of the outside world and the pleasure of a mixed society.

The plight of a widow was very miserable in medieval India. She had to commit *Sati*. If she did not do so, then she was condemned to a life of humiliation. She was asked to shave her head, put on a simple rough cloth, sleep on a coarse cloth spread on the ground and lead an extremely simple life. Her appearance on festive occasions or in religious ceremonies was considered to be inauspicious. It was feared

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172 Thevenot, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 53.

173 John Marshall cited from Meera Nanda, *European Travel Accounts During The Reigns of Shahjahan And Aurangzeb*, p. 109.

174 De Laet, *Description of India and Fragment of India History*, p. 81.

that the sight of such a woman would forestall success in important matters. Foreign travelers specifically *Alberuni*, *Ibn Battuta*, *Mannuci* and *Bernier* have described this custom in detail. *Alberuni* in the Eleventh century was familiar with this practice; it was regarded as a meritorious act. The widow who refused to become *Sati* was ill treated as long as she lived.<sup>175</sup> *Ibn Battuta* noticed an example of *Sati* near *Pakpattan* and several others elsewhere in India.<sup>176</sup> *Bernier* referred to the sad plight of *Hindu* widows. He concluded that the main reason behind the cruel and dreadful practice was the element of compulsion sought to be legitimized by *Brahmans*.<sup>177</sup> *Bernier* says, “Many person whom I then consulted on the subject would have persuaded me that an excess of affection was the root-cause why these women burn themselves with their deceased husbands; but I soon found that this abominable practice is the effect of early and deeply rooted prejudices. Every girl is taught by her mother that it is virtuous and laudable in a wife to mingle her ashes with those of her husband and no woman of honour will refuse compliance with the established custom. Besides there was also the question of prestige of the family, if a widow expressed her unwillingness for it, the people began to doubt her fidelity and affection towards her departed husband.”<sup>178</sup> Hence,

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175 Alberuni cited from, J.S. Grewal, *Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak*, ed., Kiran Pawar, *Women in Indian History : Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Perspectives*, Vision and Venture Publications, Delhi, 1996, p. 142.

176 *Ibid.*

177 Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, tr. and ed., Archibald Constable, Oxford University Press, London, 1916, p. 314.

178 *Ibid.*, pp. 310-11 and 313.



though many *Muslim* rulers especially Akbar tried to abolish *Sati* among the *Hindus*, the institution, however for all practical purposes, flourished without much hindrance.<sup>179</sup>

Prostitutes or the public women are also described in considerable details in the accounts of *Bernier*, *Manucci* and *Thevenot*. These public women and dancing girls were invited on special occasions like feasts, festivals and marriages etc. They also provided suitable recreation to inmates of the *harem*, maintained by the Emperor and the Nobles.<sup>180</sup> Dancing and singing was the sole occupation of the women belonging to a caste called *Kanchani*.<sup>181</sup>

The foreign travelers, thus, have given extensive information about the role and position of Indian woman during Mughal period. They have also furnished detailed information about the life of royal ladies in the *harem*. But the travelers are strangely silent about the domestic and social position of *Muslim* wives. *Meera Nanda* concludes that their silence constitutes an implied comment on the unenviable lot of *Muslim* wives who probably were the victims of the polygamous lust of their husbands.<sup>182</sup>

Thus, a large number of factors-cultural, social, economic, religious and historical are responsible for lowering the position of Indian woman from Ancient to medieval period.

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179 Paul Thomas, *Indian Women through the Ages*, p. 263.

180 *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74 ; N. Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. II, p. 196; Thevenot, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 71.

181 *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74.

182 Meera Nanda, *European Travel Accounts During The Reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb*, p. 119.

It was in such a scenario that the *Bhakti* movement began. *Bhakti* is understood as monotheism based on a loving devotion to a personal God.<sup>183</sup> It is divided into '*Nirguna*' and '*Saguna*' and more recently between *Vaishnava Bhakti* and *Sant* tradition. The '*Nirguna*' and '*Saguna*' model was first popularized by *Hindi* scholars such as *Ramachandra Shukla*, *P.D. Barthwal* and *Parashuram Chaturvedi*.<sup>184</sup> *Ramachandra Shukla* was the first important scholar who propounded the notion of '*Bhakti Kal*' and divided the *Bhaktis* (devotees) into two distinct theological categories-*Kabir*, *Raidas*, *Dadu* among other, placed in the *Nirguna* category and *Ramanujacharya*, *Vallabhacharya* and *Surdas* the *Saguna* category. *Shukla's* view of the *Medieval Bhakti* movement as consisting of two distinct theological categories has since been accepted by most of the *Hindu* scholars irrespective of their differences with him on other issues.<sup>185</sup> *P.D. Barthwal* in his work '*The Nirguna School of Hindi Poety*' produced one of the earliest general works in *English* on the *Saints* and their utterance (*Banis*). His work is particularly important for information on many obscure *Saints* of the later medieval period.<sup>186</sup> *Barthwal's* work was later superseded by *Parashuram Chaturvedi's* encyclopedic study, '*Uttari Bharat Ki Sant Parampara*' which gives an account of most medieval and modern

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183 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, Sanjay Parkashan, Delhi, 2003, p. 35.

184 Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, "Beyond Theological Differences : Sant-Vaishnava Interaction in Medieval India," *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Indian Council of Historical Research, Delhi, June 2009,p.56.

185 *Ibid.*, 57.

186 *Ibid.*

Saints.<sup>187</sup> The last four decades have witnessed a surge of Western scholarly interest in medieval *Sants*.<sup>188</sup> Most Western scholars have depended heavily on the *Nirguna-Saguna* model popularized by the Hindi scholars.<sup>189</sup> *Karine Schomer* and *W.H. Mcleod*, edited, 'The *Sants: Studies in Devotional Tradition of India*' is the most influential and comprehensive study of Medieval Saints by Western scholars.

*Saguna Bhakts* worship the incarnations of God like Vishnu, *Rama* and *Krishna*, but *Nirguna Bhakts* (devotees) believe in one formless God and have no faith in idol worship or incarnate gods. *Ramanujacharya*, *Ramananda*, *Vallabhacharya* and *Ashtachhap* writers are the prominent *Saguna Bhakts* (devotees) whereas *Namdev*, *Kabir* and *Guru Nanak* are included among *Nirguna Bhakts*. These *Bhakts* wrote devotional poetry in praise of God in the vernacular language instead of *Sanskrit*. Though they did not write purposely on material matters yet their writings by employing similes and metaphors throw valuable light on life around them. Woman has received a considerable attention in their writings. 'Guru Granth Sahib' has been taken as the best available primary source for the understanding of *Nirguna* exposition and for *Saguna Bhakti* contemporaneous 'Braj literature' is useful. Braj literature contains the literary works of *Braj Bhasha* which was the richest form of *Hindi* in the medieval age. In this work the focus of Braj literature is

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187 *Ibid.*

188 *Ibid.*

189 *Ibid.*

primarily limited to the works of *Ashtachhap* writers as they are the contemporary to the Sikh Gurus. Furthermore their works are the best writings of *Braj Bhasha* as after them this language had lost its prestige and *Khadiboli* Hindi (Modern standard Hindi) began to supplant it.<sup>190</sup> On the basis of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature this work will compare the two famous categories of *Bhakti* to explore the feminine dimension pertaining to them. Their devotional writings have consisted specifically poetry.

Their devotional poetry is marked by intensity and spiritual insight. Metaphor is the most important factor in their poetry. The metaphors create imagery. Every poetic image is to some degree metaphorical.<sup>191</sup> If there is no image, there will be no poetry because imagination contains reality.<sup>192</sup> Every poetic image serves mainly two purposes. It gives shape to poet's experiences along with depicting the world around him/ her. *B. Ifor Evans* defines imagery, "As a form of mysticism which has its roots in the objective world around the poet because he receives his immediate experiences in his struggle that he does in order to exist and make this world better for all to live in."<sup>193</sup>

The composers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have used a wider range of imagery in their writings. The abstract spiritual ideas and subtle thoughts are saved from becoming obscure and misty

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190 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, Thomson press, Faridabad, 1976, p. 100.

191 S.S. Kholi, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth*, Motilal Banarsidass, Publishers, New Delhi, 1961, p. 116.

192 Jagjit Singh Grewal, *Imagery in the Adi Granth*, Punjab Parkashan, Chandigarh, 1986, pp. 2 and 262.

193 *Ibid.*, p.2.

only through the use of poetic imagery.<sup>194</sup> Both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) have used imagery to make the masses understand their higher spiritual experiences.

S.S. Kholi has divided the imagery of Guru Granth Sahib into two groups: imagery from Nature and imagery from daily indoor life. The first group includes the images from the life of countryside, the weather and its changes, the seasons, the sky, the sunrise and dawn, the clouds, rain and wind, sunshine and shadow, the garden, flowers, trees, growth and decay, pruning and grafting and weeding, the sea and ships, the river and its banks the weeds and grasses, pools and water, animal, birds and insects, sports and games.<sup>195</sup> The second group of imagery includes the images from the daily indoor life i.e. eating, drinking, cooking, the work of the kitchen, washing and wiping dust, dirt, rust and stains, the body and its movements, sleep and dreams, clothes and materials, patching and mending, common handicrafts, the feel of substances, smooth or soft or sticky, fire, candles and lamps, sickness and medicines, parents and children, birth, death and marriage.<sup>196</sup> Kholi's classification of imagery of Guru Granth Sahib is drawn from Spurgeon's division of the images of Shakespeare into two groups i.e. images from Nature and images from daily indoor life.

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194 *Ibid.*, p. 263.

195 S.S. Kholi, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth*, p. 117.

196 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

J.S. Grewal in his work 'Imagery in the Adi Granth' divides the imagery, used in Guru Granth Sahib, in three sections. The first section deals with imagery from Nature. It includes images of sea, river, pools, trees, flowers, bushes, animals, birds, insects, seasons, weathers, sky, sun, moon, battlefields, kinesthetic images, day and night, light and darkness, games, etc. The second section concerns the images of indoor life. It includes images from occupation, houses, homes, kitchen, forts, nectar and poison, fire, human relations, ornaments, human body, diseases, learning, birth and death. The third section of miscellaneous imagery includes images from mythology, history, religion, heaven and hell and all other images from the world of music, colour, path, metals, machines, dirt and dust.<sup>197</sup>

This division can be applied to the imagery in Braj literature also. Braj writers have also used images from Nature, from indoor and outdoor life to explain their spiritual ideals. The writers of both ideologies have almost the same type of spiritual, social, political and intellectual experiences.<sup>198</sup> Therefore, in their poetical compositions they repeated the same thoughts and applied the same images. A few examples of the similar imageries used in both ideologies will not be out of order rather it will help to understand these ideologies properly. Both ideologies have used the imagery of the clouds and lightning. It is stated, "the Lord does not come home, I feel miserable and sigh; the flash of lightning frightens me":-

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197 Jagjit Singh Grewal, *Imagery in the Adi Granth*, p. 14.

198 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਵੈ ਮਰੀਐ ਹਾਵੇ ਦਾਮਨਿ ਚਮਕਿ ਡਰਾਏ ॥<sup>199</sup>

ਨਿਸਿ ਅੰਧਿਧਾਰੀ ਫਾਮਿਨਿ ਡਰਪਾਕਰਿ ਮੋਕੀਂ ਚਮਕਿ-ਚਮਕਿ ॥<sup>200</sup>

In both ideologies the imagery of the weather and its changes has been used to depict month by month the sufferings of the lonely woman (*Jivatma*) for union with Husband (God). The entire *Baramaha* of Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev and Nanddas is an example of it. In the month of *Chet*, the lovely spring has come, and the bumble bees hum with joy. The forest is blossoming in front of my door: I wish my Lord would return to home:-

ਚੇਤੁ ਬਸੰਤੁ ਭਲਾ ਭਵਰ ਸੁਹਾਵੜੇ ॥

ਬਨ ਫੂਲੇ ਮੰਝ ਬਾਰਿ ਮੈ ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਬਾਹੁੜੈ ॥<sup>201</sup>

ਚੈਤ ਚਲੋ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੰਤ, ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਪਾਓਂ ਪਰਿ ਕਹੈਂ ॥

ਨਿਪਟ ਅਸੰਤ ਬਸੰਤ, ਮੈਨ ਮਹਾ ਮਧ ਮੰਤ ਜਹੈਂ ॥<sup>202</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have also used domestic imagery. In both ideologies the imagery of mother-child love has been used for depicting the love of God and devotee. It is stated that just as a mother takes care of her child, attentively watch over her/ him and thinks about her/ his needs similarly God looks after a devotee:-

ਜਿਉ ਜਨਨੀ ਸੁਤੁ ਜਣਿ ਪਾਲਤੀ ਰਾਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਮਝਾਰਿ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਦੇ ਗਿਰਾਸੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਪੋਚਾਰਿ ॥

ਤਿਉ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਰਾਖਤਾ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਪਿਆਰਿ ॥<sup>203</sup>

199 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Tukhari Baramaha Mahala 1, p. 1108.

200 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2008, Pad 192, p. 122.

201 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Tukhari Baramaha Mahala 1, pp. 1107-08.

202 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, ed., Brajratandas, Nagari Parcharni Sabha Kashi, 1957, p. 144.

203 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 4, p. 168.

Parmanddas has used the similar imagery:-

क्यों न जाइ ऐसे के सरन ।

प्रतिपालै पौखे माता ज्यों चरन कमल भवसागर तरन ॥<sup>204</sup>

The imagery of wife-husband is also used to depict the love of God and devotee. Human soul (*Jivatma*) is represented as the wife who is forever seeking union with her Husband (God):-

ਭਰਤਾ ਖੇਖਿ ਬਿਗਮੈ ਜਿਉ ਨਾਰੀ ॥

ਤਿਉ ਹਰਿ ਜਨੁ ਜੀਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਚਿਤਾਰੀ ॥<sup>205</sup>

Surdas have used the similar imagery. He stated that if anybody (male-female) worship the Lord Krishna with *Bharta Bhava* (husband) will get salvation without doubt:-

जो कोउ भरता-भाव हृदय धरि हरि-पद ध्यावै ।

नारि पुरुष कोउ होइ, श्रुति-ऋचा-गति सो पावै ॥<sup>206</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib the imagery of female activity of churning milk and obtaining butter is symbolically used for meditating on the Divine Name and obtaining *Amrita*, the Divine elixir.<sup>207</sup> Ashtachhap writers have also used the imagery of milk and milk products to the level of spirituality. They compared *Goras*<sup>208</sup> to the *Rasa* of senses i.e. pleasure achieved or enjoyed by senses.<sup>209</sup> It is explained by

204 Parmananddas, *Pad- Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Parmananddas*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2008, p. 12.

205 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 198.

206 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Vol. I, ed., Nanddulare Bajpai, Nagari Parcharni Sabha Kashi, 1972, Pad 10/1793, pp. 523-24.

207 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 728.

208 'Goras' means milk and milk products i.e., curd, yoghurt and butter etc.

209 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 24.



*Ashtachhap* writers in '*Dan Lila*' where the Lord Krishna demanded from the *Gopis* to give him *Dan* in form of '*Goras*' which indirectly is a demand to sacrifice pleasure of senses.<sup>210</sup>

Both ideologies seem to be well-versed in *Yoga* and its diction. They have also used imagery from *Yogic* practices to explain their spiritual ideas. It is stated that *Yogis* should give up the *Yogic* practices. They are advised to meditate on Divine Name:-

ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ਜੋਗੀ ॥<sup>211</sup>

जोग जाग जप-तप नहीं, या कलियुग मारै ।<sup>212</sup>

Analogy and comparison have been also used to express ideas. It is stated that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again, so is the world created from the God and it again mingled in God:-

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਬੁਦਬੁਦਾ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਨੀਤ ॥

ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਮੀਤ ॥<sup>213</sup>

ज्यों पानी में होत बुदबुदा पुनि ता माहि समाइ ।

त्यौंही सब जग प्रगटत तुम तैं, पुनि तम माहिं बिलाइ ।<sup>214</sup>

The lives of animals and birds are also used in order to form imagery. One is familiar with the animals and birds in day to day life. As these images have the quality of familiarity in them, they are very useful in making to understand quite easily the most complicated and

210 *Ibid.*, pad 23, p. 57.

211 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 879.

212 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Braj Bhushan Sharma, Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli, 1963, Pad 935, p. 370.

213 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Shloka Mahala 9, p. 1427.

214 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4620, Vol. II, p. 574.

confusing spiritual experiences of the Saints.<sup>215</sup> Both ideologies have used the imagery of fish in water to express *Bhakti* towards God:-

ਮੇਹਿ ਮਛਲੀ ਤੁਮ ਨੀਰ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਉ ਸਰੈ ॥<sup>216</sup>

ਸਾਨਹੁ 'ਸੂਰ' ਕਾਠਿ ਡਾਰੀ ਹੈਂ, ਬਾਰਿ ਸਘੈ ਤੈਂ ਮੀਨ ।<sup>217</sup>

Both ideologies have used the imagery of black bee. It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that the plant of the lotus is in full bloom and the black bee enticed and fascinated by its love, encircles it. It becomes beyond the control of the human soul to bear the pangs of separation of the Super soul, (God):-

ਚੇਤੁ ਬਸੰਤੁ ਭਲਾ ਭਵਰ ਸੁਹਾਵੜੇ ॥

ਬਨ ਫੁਲੇ ਮੰਝ ਬਾਰਿ ਮੈ ਖਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਬਾਹੁੜੇ ॥<sup>218</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers have also used the imagery of black bee to explain the *Gopi* pangs of separation from Lord Krishna in *Bharmargit*. Krishna sends *Udho* to *Braj* after he has gone to *Mathura*. *Udho* has taken the message of Krishna to *Gopis*. The *Gopis* in their distress and disorientation directed their laments to a passing black bee by confusing both *Udho* and black bee as messengers. Because of this these poems are known as *Bhramargit*. Name given after the name of black bee (*Bhramar*):-

ਤਾਹਿ ਭੱਵਰ ਸੋ ਕਹਤ ਸਬੈ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਉਤਰ ਬਾਠੇਂ ।

ਤਰਕ ਬਿਤਰਕਨ ਜੁੱਤਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਰਸ ਰੂਪੀ ਘਾਠੇਂ ।<sup>219</sup>

215 Jagjit Singh Grewal, *Imagery in the Adi Granth*, p. 6.

216 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bilwal Mahala 5, p. 847.

217 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4687, Vol. II, p. 506.

218 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Tukhari Baramaha Mahala 1, p. 1108.

219 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawal*, p. 160.

To conclude, the reason for the common imagery used in both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) is that they have the similar social, economic, political and religious environment. Their imagery has wider coverage. It touched each and every aspect of life. This imagery is far away from hard and fast rules of the poetry rather it is based on reality. Both ideologies have used common imageries which are mentioned above. This similarity will help to understand their views and thoughts which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter – 2

### THOUGHT CONTENT OF GURU GRANTH SAHIB AND BRAJ LITERATURE

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature belong to the two different categories of *Bhakti* movement i.e. *Nirguna* and *Saguna*. However, the contrast between them is not as neat as this taxonomy would imply. Spatial contiguity of the followers of these different categories created scope for both encounters and negotiations—a process that was further intensified by new strategies of religious propaganda carried out by the peripatetic groups of *Saints*, *Vaishnava* and *Yogis*. In this new complex scenario, *Nirguna* and *Saguna* differences frequently lost their determinative potential and were superseded by conflict over the use of shared symbols and other religious-cultural forms.<sup>1</sup> They are allied with each other on the basis of certain shared emphases: Recognition of the both states, *Nirguna* and *Saguna* of the Lord; believe in the fact that *Jiva* (creature) and World are the creation of the God; about the influence of *Maya* on the Individual's; the necessity of devotion, the repetition of the Divine Name, importance of Guru, condemnation of caste pride; stress on discountenancing *Yogic* practices and importance of *Satsang*. For their better understanding, it is essential to analyse their thought content.

Guru Granth Sahib is the name given to the '*Holy*' scripture of the Sikhs. Guru Granth Sahib is the treasure of *Bhakti* literature,

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<sup>1</sup> Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, "Beyond Theological Differences : Sant- Vaishnava Interaction in Medieval India", p. 66.

poetry and spiritual elevation for mankind. It is a unique and multiracial Scripture. The essence of its ideology is to integrate humanity, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. *Dharmpal Maini*, a scholar trained at Banaras Hindu University, argues that the Adi Granth, “is a firm milestone of Indian spiritual literature”, and cannot be considered a “sectarian document.”<sup>2</sup>

Primarily its name was '*Pothi Sahib*'.<sup>3</sup> Guru Arjan used to say that know the *Pothi* in the place of the Ultimate One.<sup>4</sup> During the period of Guru Har Rai it was called as *Granth Sahib* which means 'The Holy Book'.<sup>5</sup> *Granth Sahib* named as '*Guru Granth Sahib*' when Guru Gobind Singh conferred permanent guruship to it in 1708.<sup>6</sup> This tradition of elevating the '*Granth Sahib*' to the '*Guru Granth Sahib*' is authenticated by the two major sources of the first half of the Eighteenth century, *Sainapat's 'Sri Guru Sobha'* and *Koer Singh's 'Gurbilas Patishahi 10'* and by two sources of the second half of the Eighteenth century *Kesar Singh Chhibar's 'Bansavali Nama Dasan Patishahian ka'* and *Sarupdas Bhall's 'Mahima Parkash'*.<sup>7</sup> *Bansavali Nama* states that after the compilation of Dasam Granth in order to distinguish it from Dasam Granth it was named Adi Granth.<sup>8</sup> Adi

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2 Dharmpal Maini, “Adi Granth te Puratan Adhiatmak Granth”, ed., Jeet Singh Sital, *Gurmat Sahitt*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1989, p. 5 and 8.

3 Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2008, p. 28.

4 ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ ॥ *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sarang Mahala 5, p. 1226.

5 S.S. Kohli, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth*, p. 1.

6 Gobind Singh Mansukhani, "A Study of the Sikh Scripture", *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XXX, Calcutta, 1982, p. 20.

7 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.19.

8 Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 28.

means that which is in the beginning or the first. Thus Adi Granth means the First Text. Dasam Granth was the composition of Guru Gobind Singh and his court poets.<sup>9</sup>

The tradition recognizes three main version of Guru Granth Sahib. These are '*Bhai Gurdas Vali Bir*' or '*Kartarpuri Bir*', '*Bhai Banno Vali Bir*' and '*Damdami Bir*'.<sup>10</sup> The *Rahitnama* of *Chaupa Singh* a prominent member of the Sikh court at Anandpur, is the earliest document to refer to the history of the Guru Granth Sahib. He traces the creation of the Guru Granth Sahib to the decision of Guru Arjan and attributes a key role in the compilation of the original Text to Bhai Gurdas.<sup>11</sup> It was completed in 1604 and formally installed at the Harmandir Sahib.<sup>12</sup> According to Sikh tradition, this *Pothi* came to Kartarpur along with Guru Hargobind when he left Amritsar and moved to Kartarpur due to the hostile relations with the Mughals.<sup>13</sup> This was usurped by Dhir Mall, son of Baba Gurdita (who was the elder son of the Sixth Guru and heir apparent to the *Gurugaddi* after him) after the death of Baba Gurdita so as to assert his claim to the pontificate.<sup>14</sup> This *Pothi* is currently in the custody of Karamjit Sodhi, a descendent of Dhirmal, at Kartarpur<sup>15</sup> in Jalandhar district of Punjab.

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9 S.S. Kohli, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth*, p. 1.

10 Piar Singh, *Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy*, Anant Education and Rural Development Foundation, Michigan, 1996, p. 33

11 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p.19.

12 Gobind Singh Mansukhani, "A Study of the Sikh Scripture", p. 20.

13 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 60.

14 Piar Singh, *Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy*, p. 10.

15 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 59.

Second recension is '*Bhai Banno Vali Bir*'. Sarupdas Bhalla narrates that soon after the original *Bir* was completed, *Bhai Banno* obtained Guru Arjan's permission to take it to his village with the intent to prepare a copy for him. He prepared a copy of the Holy Scripture. The newly completed manuscript, along with the original was presented to Guru Arjan, who gladly confirmed its authenticity by putting his attestation on the manuscript.<sup>16</sup> Bhalla calls it the *Khara* recension (*Khare Ki Misal*) naming it after *Bhai Banno's* village *Khara Mangat*.<sup>17</sup> *Sri Gurbilas Patishahi 6* narrates a different story about the compilation of *Bhai Banno's Bir*. It states that Guru Arjan asked *Bhai Banno* to take the original Granth to Lahore for binding. During this trip to Lahore, *Bhai Banno* arranged to have a copy made without the prior permission of the Guru. Guru Arjan did not approve of this recension and called it *Khari Bir* (salted edition).<sup>18</sup> This recension has seven extra hymns which are not included in original Granth. Four of them appear within the main body of the Text. These are attributed to Guru Arjan in *Raga Ramkali*; to *Bhakt Kabir* in *Sorath*; to *Mirbai* in *Raga Maru* and to *Surdas* in *Raga Sarang*. The remaining three appear in the final section in which two sets of Shlokas and the *Ratanmala* are attributed to Guru Nanak and the *Haqiqat Rah Muqam Rajeh Shiwnabh Ki* and *Siahi Ki Bidhi* are without attribution.<sup>19</sup>

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16 ਦੇਖ ਪ੍ਰਸਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭਏ ਸਹੀ ਸਹੀ ਲਿਖ ਦੀਨ। Sarupdas Bhalla Mahima Prakash, Bhag Duja, Khand 1, ed., Dr. Uttam Singh Bhatia, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1971, p. 361.

17 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p.70.

18 *Sri Gurbilas Patishahi 6*, ed., Giani Inder Singh Gill, Vazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1977, pp. 89-90.

19 Piar Singh, *Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy*, pp. 33-34.

This recension remained at *Khara Mangat* with *Bhai Banno's* descendants before partition. The partition of Punjab led to the family's departure from their village; the manuscript was housed temporarily at Amritsar and at Barauta (district Meerut), before arriving at its present location at Kanpur.<sup>20</sup>

The third and the final version of the Guru Granth Sahib was prepared by Bhai Mani Singh under the direction of Guru Gobind Singh. This version contains the hymns of Ninth Guru (Guru Tegh Bahadur).<sup>21</sup> Kesar Singh Chibbar reports that Guru Gobind Singh did not include his compositions in Guru Granth Sahib by considering them his "light-hearted activity" (*Khed*) and Guru Granth in his view was the "real Scripture".<sup>22</sup> This recension is known as Damdami Bir for its compilation at a place called Damdama Sahib which, at present, is identified by some scholars, with a place at Anandpur Sahib and by others with Talwandi Sabo.<sup>23</sup> G.B. Singh in his work '*Sri Guru Granth Sahib Dian Prachin Biran*' holds the view that Damdami Bir took its final shape at a place called Damdama Sahib in Anandpur and not at Talwandi Sabo.<sup>24</sup> Pashaura Singh in his work 'The Text and

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20 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p.79.

21 *Ibid.*, p.122.

22 ਸੰਮਤੁ ਸਤਾਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਪਚਵੰਜੇ, ਸਿਖਾਂ ਬਿਨਤੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਗੇ ਸੀ ਕੀਤੀ।  
ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਵਾਜ਼! “ਜੋ ਬਚਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਿਲਦ ਇੱਕ ਚਰੀਐ ਕਰ ਲੀਤੀ।”  
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਚਨ ਕੀਤਾ : “ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ।”  
ਏਹ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਹੈ ਖੇਡ, ਜੁਦਾ ਮਨ ਮੰਥ।

Keshar Singh Chibbar, *Bansavali Nama Dasan Patishahian Ka*, ed., Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1997, p. 161.

23 Piar Singh, *Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy*, p. 34.

24 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 28.



Meaning of the Adi Granth' also agrees with G.B. Singh's view.<sup>25</sup> Giani Gian Singh's account holds the view that it is compiled at Damdama (Talwandi Sabo) a place near Bathinda.<sup>26</sup>

Upto 1864 the manuscripts of Guru Granth Sahib remained handwritten. In 1864-65 Lal Harsukh Rai, the proprietor of the Kohinur Printing Press, Lahore, printed the Damdami Bir.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the Nineteenth century the major work of publication had moved to Amritsar. The first edition of Guru Granth Sahib at Amritsar was published at Vazir Hind Press in 1902. The publication effort of the Sikh community eventually became centered there and a publishing house called Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh becomes the major producer of the Guru Granth Sahib.<sup>28</sup> Shrimoni Gurudwara Parbadak committee published Guru Granth Sahib's one volume edition firstly in 1952.<sup>29</sup> All the printed copies of the Guru Granth Sahib are based on Damdami Bir.<sup>30</sup> In the present work the printed version of the Damdami Bir is used which is published by Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh publishing house at Amritsar.

In the 1990s the Text of the Guru Granth Sahib also become available in a digital format produced by a variety of individuals and

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25 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

26 Piar Singh, *Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy*, p. 11, also see Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib* pp. 28-29.

27 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 125.

28 *Ibid.*

29 Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guur Granth Sahib*, p. 30.

30 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 31, also see Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guur Granth Sahib*, p. 29.

organizations for example *IK Oankar Bani System* (1994) developed by Balwant Singh Uppal; *Scripture and the Heritage of the Sikhs* (1995), a CD-Rom by Preet Mohan Singh Kapoor and Bhupinder Singh; *Gurbani CD* (1995), a CD-Rom developed by Kulbir Singh Thind; *Gurbani Researcher* (1998), a CD-Rom developed by Joginder Singh Ahluwalia; *Encyclopedia of Sikhism* (1998), a CD-Rom developed by Raghbir Singh Banis.<sup>31</sup> In 2012 an application *Sikh World* is developed from where the whole Guru Granth Sahib can be downloaded with commentary and English translation. For this purpose site *www.IK13.com* is also useful.

The influence of Singh Sabha Movement is responsible for the commentary on the Guru Granth Sahib. First complete commentary on Guru Granth Sahib in Punjabi was prepared by Giani Badan Singh under the influence of Maharaja of Faridkot. This work was completed in 1833 but published later in 1918. This *Tika* (commentary) was known as *Faridkot Vala Tika*. The commentaries of *Giani Narain Singh Mujangwale* and *Giani Bishan Singh Lakhuwal* are also important.<sup>32</sup> In 1877 Earnest Trumpp tried to translate the Guru Granth Sahib in English with the title 'The Adi Granth' or 'the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs'. This translation is incomplete and has many discrepancies. The other English translations include Gopal Singh's, 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib', 4 Vols; Monmohan Singh's, 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib', 8

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31 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 142, also see Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 212-13.

Vols; and Gurbachan Singh Talib's, 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib, 4 Vols. An interesting translation of Guru Granth Sahib has been completed by Nikky Gurinder Kaur Singh, under the title 'The Name of My Beloved'. Jarnail Singh of Toronto has published a French translation: Sri Gourou Granth Sahib in 4 Volumes.<sup>33</sup> Now this scholar is translating the Text into German language. Guru Granth Sahib is also translated into Hindi by Dr. Manmohan Singh and by Shri Lakshmi Chela Ram.<sup>34</sup> Recently a person from Bathinda has translated text into Urdu. Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib is going to publish this translation. Here one thing should be kept in mind that these translations cannot substitute for the original Text because the translation of the sacred Texts is a very difficult task.

Guru Granth Sahib consists of the *Bani* of first five Gurus (Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas & Guru Arjan Dev) Ninth Guru (Guru Tegh Bahadur) and a large number of *Hindu Bhakts* (devotees), *Muslim Sufis*, (*Jaidev, Sheikh Farid, Sain, Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev, Sadhna, Beni, Trilochan, Sundar, Surdas* and *Parmananddas*) and *Bhatts*. It contains 1430 pages and divided into 31 ragas. The order of the Bani of Guru Granth Sahib is as follow:

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33 *Ibid.*

34 Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 217.

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Order of Bani</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1.	<i>Japji</i> – The Morning Prayer	1-8
2.	<i>Rahiras</i> – The evening prayer	8-12
3.	<i>Kirtan Sohila</i> – The bed time Prayer	12-14
4.	The Ragas are in the following order :	
i	<i>Sri Raga</i>	14-93
ii	<i>Majh</i>	94-150
iii	<i>Gauri</i>	151-346
iv	<i>Asa</i>	347-488
v	<i>Gujari</i>	489-526
vi	<i>Devghandhari</i>	527-536
vii	<i>Bihagra</i>	537-556
viii	<i>Vadhans</i>	557-594
ix	<i>Sorath</i>	595-659
x	<i>Dhansari</i>	660-695
xi	<i>Jaitsari</i>	696-710
xii	<i>Todi</i>	711-718
xiii	<i>Bairari</i>	719-720
xiv	<i>Tilang</i>	721-727
xv	<i>Suhi</i>	728-794
xvi	<i>Bilwal</i>	795-858
xvii	<i>Gaund</i>	859-875
xviii	<i>Ramkali</i>	876-974
xix	<i>Nat Narain</i>	975-983
xx	<i>Mali Gaura</i>	984-988

xxi	<i>Maru</i>	989-1106
Xxii	<i>Tukhari</i>	1107-1117
Xxiii	<i>Kedara</i>	1118-1124
Xxiv	<i>Bhaira</i>	1125-1167
Xxv	<i>Basant</i>	1168-1196
Xxvi	<i>Sarang</i>	1197-1253
Xxvii	<i>Malar</i>	1254-1293
xxviii	<i>Kanara</i>	1294-1318
Xxix	<i>Kalyan</i>	1319-1326
Xxx	<i>Prabhati</i>	1327-1351
Xxxi	<i>Jaijavant</i>	1352-1353
5	Shlokas and Swayyas are given in the following order :	
I	<i>Shlokas Sahaskrit</i>	1353-1360
Ii	<i>Gatha</i>	1360-1361
Iii	<i>Phunhay</i>	1361-1362
Iv	<i>Chaubolay</i>	1363-1364
V	<i>Shlokas of Kabir</i>	1364-1377
Vi	<i>Shlokas of Farid</i>	1377-1384
Vii	<i>Swayyas of Guru Arjan</i>	1385-1389
Viii	<i>Swayyas of Bhattas</i>	1389-1409
Ix	<i>Shlokas of Gurus</i>	1410-1426
X	<i>Shlokas of Ninth Guru</i>	1426-1429
Xi	<i>Mundavani</i>	1429
6	<i>Rag Mala</i>	1429-1430

Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj *Bhasha*. Braj *Bhasha* was the richest form of Hindi in the medieval age. The word

Braj goes back to *Rigvedic* Period. In *Rigveda*, the word 'Braj' is used in the sense of a 'pasture', 'hoard of cows', 'place for the cows to rest'.<sup>35</sup> In a number of *Purans*, however, it has been used in the sense of a particular territory or region. But in *Mahabharata* it occurs with the same implication as in *Rigveda*.<sup>36</sup> It was only after the Thirteenth century that the word Braj came to be applied to a particular region. Braj region spreads around the river *Yamuna*, at some places it crosses the river *Ganga* and extends from *Punjab* to the Western borders of *Bengal*.<sup>37</sup> It was located in the vicinity of *Delhi* and *Agra* and included the places like *Itawa*, *Aligarh*, *Mathura* and *Brindaban* etc. The centre of Braj region was *Mathura*.<sup>38</sup> In the modern set up, the Braj *Pradesh* include within its fold some parts of *Haryana*, some parts of *Rajasthan*, *Gwalior* area of *Madhya Pradesh*, whole of Western *Uttar Pradesh*, and the plains of *Kumayun* and *Garhwal*.<sup>39</sup>

Braj *Bhasha* acquired a literary character during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century when it received on the one hand, religious patronage through Vallabhacharya and on the other hand, a place of honour in the courts of local chieftains as well as *Muslim Kings*.<sup>40</sup> Braj *Bhasha* acquired prestige as the language of the devotional poetry centred on *Shri Krishna*.<sup>41</sup> The main reason for the connection between Krishna-

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35 *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1987, p. 578.

36 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. x.

37 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 97.

38 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. I, Hindi Sahitya Samalan, Prayag, 1970, p. 10.

39 *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 578.

40 Savitri Sinha and R.D. Mishra, "Development of Hindi Languages", ed., Nagendra, *Indian Literature*, Delhi, 1968, p. 590.

41 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 99.

*Bhakti* and Braj *Bhasha* revolves around the assumption made by the Sixteenth-century devotees of *Shri Krishna* in North India that *Shri Krishna*, as a native of Braj, spoke Braj *Bhasha*. The *Krishna-Bhakts* naturally felt that the most appropriate language to praise *Shri Krishna* would be his own language i.e. Braj *Bhasha*.<sup>42</sup>

During medieval Period, Vallabhacharya (1478-1530) was the first to appreciate the importance of Braj *Bhasha*. He patronised Braj culture, language, literature, music and painting.<sup>43</sup> But the propagation of this language was brought about chiefly by Surdas and other *Ashtachhap* writers. In Braj literature *Surdas*, *Parmananddas*, *Kumbhandas*, *Krishnadas*, *Nanddas*, *Chaturbhujdas*, *Govindswami* and *Chhitsuwami* are known as *Ashtachhap* or the eight seals (stamps) because the poems they wrote are regarded as standard works of Braj *Bhasha*.<sup>44</sup> Among them the first four were the followers of *Acharya* Vallabhacharya and the later four were the disciples of *Goswami* *Vitthalnath*, the son of *Vallabhacharya*,<sup>45</sup> who grouped them under the name of '*Ashtachhap*' in 1545 A.D.<sup>46</sup> These writers were the faithful devotees of Lord *Krishna*. All of them were initiated into *Pushtimarg* by Vallabhacharya and his son *Vitthalnath*. *Pushtimarg* is founded by Vallabhacharya. It is the path in which the only support of the devotee is the grace or *Pushti* of Lord *Krishna*. *Pushtimarg* is based on

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42 *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

43 *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, pp. 578-79.

44 F.E. Keay, *A History of Hindi Literature*, Award Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, p. 72.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

46 *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 579.

Vallabhacharya's doctrine of '*Suddhadvait*'. According to this doctrine, '*Brahm*' is the embodiment of '*Sat*' (eternity), '*Chit*' (consciousness), and '*Anand*' (Bliss). *Pushtimarg* considers *Sri Krishna* the perfect incarnation of the divine being and its followers strive to merge them in God's '*Anandlila*' through love and self-surrender.<sup>47</sup> *Ashtachhap* writers have also explained *Pustimarg* in their writings. Nanddas in his work '*Bhasha Dasham Sakand*' says that '*Pushti*' is the grace of God on devotees without counting their shortcomings :

जद्यपि भगत भज्यो बहु दोषन । ताकी रच्छा कहियै 'पोषन' ।<sup>48</sup>

A Brief account of the *Ashtachhap* writers under study is in the following order.

### 1) **Surdas**

Surdas was born in the year 1478 A.D. at Sihi village, very near in the south of Delhi not far from the Braj region.<sup>49</sup> It is mentioned in '*Chaurasi Vaishnavan Ki Varta*' that the poet was born blind in the home of a *Saraswata Brahman*.<sup>50</sup> The story of Surdas' life in the *Varta* starts from Gaughata when he first met Vallabhacharya. But to tell the story of his early life and education no authentic source is available and whatever material other than the *Varta* is extant can at best be taken as intelligent guess work.<sup>51</sup> When Vallabhacharya halted

47 *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 3473, also see Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. II, pp. 394-95.

48 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 190.

49 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. I, p. 198.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

51 K.D. Sharma, "Life and Works of Suradasa", ed., Nagendra, *Surdas :His Mind and Art*, Bahri Publishers, Delhi, 1978, p. 9.



at Gaughata he initiated Surdas into his *Sampradaya Pushtimarg*.<sup>52</sup> Soon after his initiation Vallabhacharya installed him as chief singer at *Shri Nathji* temple in *Govardhan*. He stayed in a nearby hamlet known as Parasoli and breathed his last probably in the year 1583.<sup>53</sup>

It is indicated in the *Varta* that Akbar heard of the fame of Surdas and his musical composition and expressed a keen desire to meet him. When the meeting finally took place, the poet was required to compose a poem for Akbar. Surdas responded with a poem whose refrain declared that he had no room in his heart for anyone but Krishna.<sup>54</sup> Then Akbar offered him a few villages and a handsome amount of money but the poet declined the offer and requested the Emperor not to try to meet him again.<sup>55</sup>

Surdas is believed to have written three works: *Sursagar*, *Sursarawali* and *Sahitya Lahri*.<sup>56</sup> In the present work only *Sursagar* is used which is considered the first work in Braj *Bhasha*.<sup>57</sup> There is not any mention of any Braj *Bhasha* writer in the history of the *Hindi* literature before Surdas.<sup>58</sup> The main trust of *Sursagar* is the depiction of the divine sports of *Shri Krishna* as given in the tenth chapter of the

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52 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

53 O.P. Ralhan, *Surdas the Blind Saint*, Anmol Publishers, New Delhi, 2004, p. 26.

54 John Stratton Hawley, *Surdas : Poet, Singer, Saint*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984, p.10, also see *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Surdas*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2007, p. 6.

55 *The Varta of Surdasa*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 122.

56 K.D. Sharma, "Life and Works of Suradasa", p. 14.

57 Suman Sharma, *Madhya Kaleen Bhakti Andholan Ka Samajik Vivchan*, Vishwavidyalaya Parkashan, Varansi, 1974, p. 148.

58 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. 1, p. 26.

*Bhagvata Purana*.<sup>59</sup> In this work *Nagari Parcharni Sabha's*<sup>60</sup> published edition of *Sursagar* is used. This edition is based on a number of manuscripts discovered by *Sabha*. It is not within the scope of the present work to offer a full justification for manuscripts.

## 2. Parmananddas

Parmananddas was born in 1493 A.D. in the family of a Kanaujiya Brahmans living in the city of Kanauj.<sup>61</sup> The day he was born, a prosperous merchant gave a large financial present to his father. This moved his father to say that his son had brought great joy to him, and therefore, he should be named Parmananddas, and thus this name was bestowed upon the child.<sup>62</sup>

Parmananddas passed a very happy childhood in Kanauj. By the time he grew up, he had composed and sung a great number of *Padas*. People began to call him *Swami* and a number of them became his companions. At about this time Parmananddas' father suffered a great misfortune and lost all of his wealth. So he went towards South in search of a new fortune. Meanwhile Parmananddas continued to compose *Padas*. He settled in Prayag in 1519.<sup>63</sup>

Parmananddas was initiated into *Sampradaya* in 1521 A.D. by Vallabhacharya who brought to him the significance of the tenth

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59 K.D. Sharma, "Life and Works of Suradasa", p. 15.

60 Nagari Parcharni Sabha is an institution established in Benares for the advancement of literature written in Indian languages especially in Hindi. This institute is discovering the oldest manuscripts of Braj Bhasha writers.

61 *The Varta of Parmananddas*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 140.

62 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, p. 15.

63 Krishandev Jhari, *Ashtachhap Aur Parmananddas*, Sharda Parkashan, Delhi, 1976, p. 70.

chapter of the *Bhagvata Purana*. When Vallabhacharya set out for Braj, Parmananddas also accompanied him.<sup>64</sup> He breathed his last in 1584 A.D.<sup>65</sup> *Parmanandsagar* is his authentic work. *Govardhan Nath Shukla* has edited this work which is based on the manuscripts available from *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli, Nathdwara* and from *Shri Dwarakadas Parikh*.<sup>66</sup>

### 3. Kumbhandas

He was born in 1468 A.D. at Jamunavati.<sup>67</sup> He never felt attracted to the life of the family man although he was eventually married to girl. He was initiated by Vallabhacharya into the *Sampradaya* in 1500 A.D.<sup>68</sup> Since Kumbhandas had a beautiful voice and could compose excellent *Kirtans*, Vallabhacharya assigned him the permanent duty of singing *Kirtans* before *Shri Govardhan Nathji*. All the *Kirtans* composed by Kumbhandas are on the subject of the divine love of *Krishna* and *Radha*.<sup>69</sup>

Once, after hearing Kumbhandas' *Pada*, Akbar sent some of his men to bring him to royal palace. When Akbar's men told him that he was wanted at the imperial court, he was terribly unhappy but he had no choice except to obey. However, he refused to ride the royal carriage and walked all the way to Fatehpur Sikri. On reaching the

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64 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. I, p. 222.

65 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio- Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. 16.

66 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, ed., Govardhan Nath Shukla, Bharat Parkashan Mandir, Aligarh, 1958, p. 12.

67 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. I, p. 231.

68 *Varta of Kumbhandas*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 164.

69 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio- Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. 17.

royal palace he was shown much respect but Kumbhandas was not pleased with this. He was very unhappy when Akbar expressed a desire to hear a *Pada* from him. He thought that his *Padas* were meant only for the Lord, and he could not commit the blasphemy of singing the same in the presence of a *mlechchha*. Hence, he composed a *Pada* and sang it before Akbar. This *Pada* says that a Bhakta has no business coming to Sikri. It has ruined his shoes and he forgot *Hari's* Name. He was made to pay homage to the one (Akbar) whose very face brings sorrow. Without Lord *Krishna* everything is only a sham:

भक्तन कौ कहा सीकरी काम ।

आवत जात पन्हैयां टूटी बिसरि गयौ हरि नाम ।।

जाकौ मुख देखै दुख लागै, ताको करनी पड़ी प्रनाम ।

‘कुभनदास’ लाल गिरधर बिनु, यह सब झूठो धाम ।<sup>70</sup>

It is stated in the *Varta* that Raja Man Singh of Amer also met him.<sup>71</sup> He breathed his last in 1583 A.D. Kumbhandas does not write any particular *Granth*. There is only mention of his *Padas* in Vallabh *Sampradaya*. These *Padas* are found in *Nathdwara* and *Kankroli*. *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli*<sup>72</sup> has published his *Padas*. Government of India's publication bureau at New Delhi has also published his *Padas* in 2008.<sup>73</sup>

70 Kumbhandas, *Kavya Sangrah*, ed., Prabhu Dayal Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, Aggarwal Press, Mathura, 1949, p. 102.

71 *Varta of Kumbhandas*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 179, also see Dr Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 3.

72 Vidhaya Vibhag Kankroli is in Rajasthan. This institute has taken great initiative to discover and publish the manuscripts of Ashtachhap writers. For this purpose it has founded an 'Ashtachhap Samiti'.

73 Parkashan Vibhag Govt. of India has also decided to publish the works of Ashtachhap writers by recognizing their importance. From 2001 to 2009 it has published works of all Ashtachhap writers.

#### 4. Krishandas

He was born in the village of Chilotra<sup>74</sup> in Gujarat in 1496 A.D. Krishandas' father governed the village as its headman. On his birth the Brahmans predicted that the birth signs of the new born child showed clearly that the child would be a *Bhakta* of *Shri Krishna* and said that the child should be named Krishandas, and hence this name was bestowed upon the child.<sup>75</sup> When he was around twelve years old, a grain merchant came to Chilotra and set up a shop on the outskirts of the village. Krishandas' father allied himself with a thief who intended to rob the merchant. The thief robbed the merchant one night. Krishandas knew about this deal and advised the merchant to take a formal complaint before the King. He promised him that he himself would testify on his behalf. The King was greatly impressed when he heard about the boy who had the courage to expose the crime committed by his own father, and decided that he would ask the boy to stay at his court. He told Krishandas that he was impressed by his honesty, and that he wanted him to stay at his court so that he might benefit from his presence in the times to come. To this request, Krishandas replied humbly that honesty always displeased everyone, as it had displeased his father; hence he had decided to become a homeless ascetic. The King continued to try to persuade Krishandas to remain at his court, but he did not accept his offer and after obtaining his father's permission, he left Chilotra and set out to travel to Braj.<sup>76</sup>

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74 *Varta of Krishandass*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 208.

75 *Ibid.*

76 *Ibid.*, pp.208-211.

He received his initiation from Vallabhacharya in 1512 A.D.<sup>77</sup> Vitthalnath, son of Vallabhacharya, assigned Krishandas the office of the *Adhikari* and made him responsible for the management of the temple.<sup>78</sup> Krishnadas composed beautiful *Kirtans* describing the *Krishna Lilas*. He died in 1579 A.D.<sup>79</sup> while examining a well which was being constructed at the request of *Vaishnavas*. He has written only *Padas* which are published by *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli* in 1962 and by Government of India's publication bureau at New Delhi in 2001.

## 5. Nanddas

He was born in a Brahman family in 1533 A.D. at Rampur village situated in the east of Mathura.<sup>80</sup> *Dosau Bawan Vaishnavan Ki Varta* states that he was the cousin brother of Tulsidas.<sup>81</sup> It is said that his failure in worldly love turned him towards *Krishna Bhakti*. He was initiated by Vitthalnath into *Sampradaya*.<sup>82</sup>

After his initiation into *Sampradaya* he stayed at *Govardhan* in the company of Surdas. He spent the rest of his life in writing several works in the praise of Lord and participating in the *Kirtans* of *Shri Nathji*. He breathed his last in 1583 A.D.<sup>83</sup>

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77 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

78 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, p. 19.

79 *Varta of Krishnadas*, tr. Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 221.

80 Sarla Choudhary, *Ashtachhap Kavi Nanddas*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2006, p. 3.

81 Krishandev Jhari, *Ashtachhap Aur Nanddas*, Sharda Parkashan, Delhi, 1976, p. 73.

82 *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. VI, 1994, p. 2874.

83 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. 25.

Fourteen works of Nanddas are *Ras Panchadhyay*, *Siddanth Panchadhya*, *Man Manjri*, *Anekarth Manjri*, *Roopmanjri*, *Rasmanjri*, *Virahmanjri*, *Bhramargit*, *Govardhan Lila*, *Shyam Sagai*, *Rukmini Mangal*, *Sudhama Charit*, *Bhasha Dasham Sakand* and *Padavali*.<sup>84</sup> All these works are edited by *Nagari Parcharni Sabha* under the title of *Nanddas Granthawali*.

## 6. Chaturbhujdas

He was born in the year 1530 A.D. at Jamunavati village in Braj territory.<sup>85</sup> He was the youngest son of Kumbhandas.<sup>86</sup> He was initiated by *Goswami Vitthalnath* into *Sampradaya*. He led the life of a normal family man, though he was never involved much in it. After the death of his wife, he got married to a widow on the request of *Goswami Vitthalnath*.<sup>87</sup>

Single minded devotion to *Shri Nathji* was the distinguishing feature of his life. He spent his entire life at his birth place *Jamunavati* and daily visited the temple of *Shri Nathji*. In 1585 A.D., when *Vitthalnath* breathed his last, *Chaturbhujdas* was in his village. On hearing this news, he went to *Govardhan* with a heavy heart, and after having the *Darshana* of *Shri Nathji*, he, too, left for his heavenly abode.<sup>88</sup> *Chaturbhujdas* did not write any particular '*Granth*' but only

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84 Savitri Awasti, *Nanddas Jeevan Aur Kavya*, Shodh Parbandh Parkashan, Delhi, 1968.

85 Prabhu Dayal Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, p. 273.

86 *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 245.

87 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. 20.

88 *Ibid.*

compiled miscellaneous *Padas* which are edited by *Vidhaya Vibhag Kankroli* and Government of India's publication bureau at New Delhi.

## 7. Govindswami

He was born in 1505 A.D. at Antari village located in the present Bhartpur.<sup>89</sup> He was a Brahman. No account of his family and parentage is available, but it is certain that he was married, and also, that he had a daughter by that marriage. It appears that he got fed up of his family life and the world around him and renounced the worldly pleasures to seek spiritual enlightenment. He left his home for Braj, and settled there in the *Mahaban* village. He was a master musician and a lover of classical Music.<sup>90</sup>

In 1535 A.D. he came to Gokul and became a disciple of Vitthalnath.<sup>91</sup> After his initiation, he went to *Govardhan*, and settled there permanently. It is reputed that Tansen, the famous singer of Akbar's Court, was highly impressed by him and frequently visited him.<sup>92</sup>

It is mentioned in *Ashtachhap Ki Varta* that one morning Govindswami was setting on the *Yashodha Ghat* of *Gokul* and was practising the *Bhairav Raga*. The passersby were so enthralled by the *Raga* that they stood there and listened to the Divine music in wrapt

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89 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Kavi Govindswami*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2002, p. 2.

90 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. 21.

91 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. I, p. 268.

92 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Kavi Govindswami*, p. 2.



attention. Akbar, too, happened to be there in the guise of an ordinary *Muslim*. He was so impressed by the music that he could not check himself, and happened to say *Wah! Wah!* Govindswami looked at him and was terribly unhappy. With sorrow in his eyes he commented that his *Raga* had lost its sacredness as a *mlechchha* had heard it, and therefore it was no longer fit to be presented to his Lord. He never used *Bhairav Raga* for *Shri Nathji's Kirtan* again.<sup>93</sup> He died in 1585 A.D.<sup>94</sup> He compiled only *Padas* on various subjects which are edited by *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli* and by publication bureau of Indian Government.

## **8. Chhitswami**

He was born in Mathura in 1515 A.D.<sup>95</sup> His profession was a *Purohit* of various families. He was also acted as the *Purohit* of the famous Birbal of Akbar's Court.<sup>96</sup> He was initiated into *Sampradaya* by Vitthalnath.<sup>97</sup> An incident in Chhitswami's life shows that he was a great follower of Goswami Vitthalnath. On account of his being the family *Purohit* of Birbal, he received from him an annuity which was used to look after his family. Once when he had gone to Birbal's house to receive this grant, Birbal happened to pass some unpleasant remark about Goswami. This made Chhitswami very angry and he

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93 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, p. 22.

94 *Ibid.*

95 *Ibid.*

96 Basant Yamdgan, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Chhitswami*, ParkashanVibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2003, p. 2.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

walked away in a huff, telling him that he did not want that annuity ever. When *Goswami* heard about this incident, he asked Chhitswami to go to Lahore to one of his followers to receive some financial help. Chhitswami flatly refused this offer by saying that he had not become a *Vaishnava* in order to receive alms. Finally *Goswami* sent a messenger to Lahore and an annual grant was arranged for Chhitswami's family.<sup>98</sup>

After his initiation, he settled permanently in Poonchhri near Govardhan. He spent his time in meditation and *Kirtan* of *Shri Nath Ji*. He breathed his last in 1585 A.D.<sup>99</sup> He compiled only *Padas* which are edited by *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli* and by publication bureau of Indian Government.<sup>100</sup>

The high point of literature in Braj *Bhasha* inspired by Krishna-*Bhakti* was written by these *Ashtachhap* writers. Among them Surdas' writings are most important. He was perhaps the first writer of Braj *Bhasha*. Parmananddas' and Nanddas' writings are placed after him. In remaining other five, Kumbhandas', Krishandas' and Chaturbhujdas' writings are of middle category. Govindswami and Chhitswami's writings are placed in the end according to ranking.<sup>101</sup>

Due to their effect Braj *Bhasha* had become the leading literary

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98 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, pp. 22-23.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

100 Basant Yamdgam, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Chhitswami*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2003.

101 Prabhu Dayal Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, p. 348.

language of North India during Sixteenth and Seventeenth century. After *Ashtachhap* writers this language had lost its prestige. During the second half of the Nineteenth century, *Khadiboli Hindi*, modern standard Hindi, began to supplant this language.<sup>102</sup>

### **Interaction between Two Ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature)**

*Ashtachhap* writers had made Braj *Bhasha* so effective during Sixteenth and Seventeenth century that even the writers of other languages had also used it. This language is used in Guru Granth Sahib. Fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, has used this language in *Sukhmani Sahib*,<sup>103</sup> *Phunhay*<sup>104</sup>, and *Chaubolay*<sup>105</sup>. *Sholkas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur are also written in Braj *Bhasha*.<sup>106</sup> *Ragamala*, at the end of Guru Granth Sahib, is also in this language.<sup>107</sup> Some of the bards whose *Swayyas* are in Guru Granth Sahib belong to Braj *Mandal*.<sup>108</sup> On the other side *Ashtachhap* writers had also used Punjabi language in their works.<sup>109</sup>

The organisation of sacred literature in *Ragas* was a part of the medieval Indian religious milieu. It seems to have been well entrenched by the late Sixteenth century.<sup>110</sup> The writers of Guru

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102 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 100.

103 Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 74.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 172.

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Ibid.*, p. 185.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

109 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Surdas*, p. 25.

110 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 89.

Granth Sahib and Braj literature have composed their couplets (*Padas*) in *Ragas*. *Todi, Sarang, Kanara, Gauri, Gujari, Bilwal, Kedera, Malar, Dhanasari, Basant, Nat, Bihagra, Sorath, Jaitsari, Suhi, Ramkali, Maru, Bhairo, Jaijavant* or *Devchandhari* are the some common *Ragas*<sup>111</sup> which are used in both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj Literature). In this connection the observations of Gurinder Singh Mann are worth mentioning, after physically examining the *Kartarpur Pothis*, he concludes that this *Pothi* is clearly structured in two distinct parts. The opening section begins with *Raga Sri* and ends with *Raga Tilang*; the second begins with *Raga Suhi* and ends with *Raga Prabhati*. This division has great significance. The *Kartarpur Pothis* begins with *Raga Sri*, a favourite *Raga* of the *Vaishnavas*, and its first section ends with *Raga Tilang*, a favourite *Raga* of the *Sufis*. Then in the second section of the Text this sequence is exactly reversed. It commences with *Raga Suhi*, a favourite among *Sufis* and ends with *Raga Prabhati*, which was especially associated with *Vaishnavas*. The placement of these *Ragas* in key points in the Sikh Text seems to indicate Guru Arjan's engagement with the two major religious groups i.e. *Vaishnavas* and *Sufis*.<sup>112</sup>

Gurinder Singh Mann refers to the end of the *Kartarpur Pothis*'s table of contents, which divides up the thirty *Raga* sections in order of appearance in the Text as follows:

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111 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Krishandas*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, 2001, p. 52, also see Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Surdas*, p. 28.

112 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 93.

- *Sri, Majh, Gauri*
- *Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari*
- *Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath*
- *Dhansari, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang*
- *Suhi, Bilwal, Gond, Ramkali*
- *Nat Narain, Mali Gaura, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara*
- *Bhairo, Basant, Sarang, Malar, Kanara*
- *Kalyan, Prabhati*<sup>113</sup>

The only possibility could be that this division may have been related to the eight *Pahirs* that make up the day, with each set of *Ragas* intended for one *Pahir*. This same principle forms the basis for the eight *Artis* (prayers) performed throughout the day in *Vaishnava* temples.<sup>114</sup> *Ashtachhap* writers have mentioned about the eight daily *sevas*<sup>115</sup> connected with the Lord *Krishna*. These are ***Mangla***: The image is washed, dressed and is taken off the couch, where it is supposed to have slept during the night and this is done about half an hour after sunrise; ***Sringar***: the image having been anointed and perfumed with oil, camphor and sandal and this is done about an hour and a half after the preceding ceremony; ***Gwala***: the image is now visited, preparatory to his going out to attend the cattle along

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113 *Ibid.*

114 Pritam Singh, "Keertana and the Sikhs", *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1976, p. 182.

115 There is great difference between Seva of Vallabhacharya's Sampradaya and the ordinary worship called Puja. According to Vallabhacharya that Seva is unselfish love for and service of the Divine being, while Puja is worship done for the doer's benefit. Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 51.

with cowherd and this ceremony is held about forty eight minutes after the *Sringar*; **Rajbhog**: held at mid way when Lord *Krishna* is supposed to come in from the pastures; **Uthapan** the calling up; the summoning of the God from his Siesta and this takes place between two or three hours before sunset; **Bhog**: the afternoon meal and it takes place about half an hour after preceding ceremony; **Sandhya**: refers to the evening *sringar* of the image and last is **Shayan**: the image about eight or nine in the evening is placed upon the bed for sleep and food is left near to bed incase he should become hungry during the night.<sup>116</sup> All these activities are performed because the followers of *Pustimarg* considered tha the *Svarupa* of Lord Krishna is alive and real so it must be made comfortable. They do not call the *Svarupa* as *Murits*.<sup>117</sup>

Thus, it must be argued that inspite of the fact that Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature belong to the two different schools of *Bhakti*, there are some similarities between them. These similarities are responsible for the citation of couplets of Surdas and Parmananddas in Guru Granth Sahib as in Sikh Scripture only those compositions are included whose perspective resembled with its thought.<sup>118</sup> Surdas' single verse appears in *Raga Sarang*. This verse is:

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116 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya* , pp. 48-49, also see Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, pp. 36-37.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 48

118 Gurcharan Singh, "Bharti Sahit Vich Bhakti Ate Sufi Kavya Dhara Te Punjabi", ed., Satinder Singh, *Comparative Indian Literature*, p. 246.

ਛਾਡਿ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਮੁਖਨ ਕੇ ਸੰਗੁ ॥<sup>119</sup>

One can find the single verse even in Surdas's works Sursagar:

तजौ मन, हरि-बिमुखनि कौ संग।<sup>120</sup>

*Giani Narain Singh*, the commentator of Guru Granth Sahib, mentioned that this single verse is followed by a blank space, which is in turn followed by a hymn under the heading *Sarang Mahala 5 Surdas*. The hymn closes with the signature of Surdas in its last line. Taken in context, the appearance of Guru Arjan's name alongside that of Surdas indicates that this hymn is composed by Guru Arjan and is in direct response to Surdas' verse that precedes it.<sup>121</sup> The hymn of Guru Arjan is:

ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ਪ ਸੂਰਦਾਸ ॥

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਸੰਗ ਬਸੇ ਹਰਿ ਲੋਕ ॥

ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਅਰਪਿ ਸਰਬਸੁ ਸਭੁ ਅਰਪਿਓ ਅਨਦ ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਝੋਕ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਦਰਸਨੁ ਪੇਖਿ ਭਏ ਨਿਰਬਿਖਈ ਪਾਏ ਹੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਥੋਕ ॥

ਆਨ ਬਸਤੁ ਸਿਉ ਕਾਜੁ ਨ ਕਛੁਐ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਬਦਨ ਅਲੋਕ ॥

ਸਿਆਮ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤਜਿ ਆਨ ਜੁ ਚਾਹਤ ਜਿਉ ਕੁਸਟੀ ਤਨਿ ਜੋਕ ॥

ਸੂਰਦਾਸ ਮਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਹਥਿ ਲੀਨੋ ਦੀਨੋ ਇਹੁ ਪਰਲੋਕ ॥<sup>122</sup>

Parmananddas' couplet is also in *Raga Sarang* and included in Guru Granth Sahib. This Couplet is as follows:-

119 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Raga Sarang, p. 1253.

120 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/332, Vol. I, pp. 91-92.

121 Dr. Dharmपाल Singal, ed., *Bhagtan Di Bani*, National Book Trust India, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 277-278, also see Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p.116.

122 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sarang Mahala 5, 1253.

ਤੈ ਨਰ ਕਿਆ ਪੁਰਾਨੁ ਸੁਨਿ ਕੀਨਾ ॥  
 ਅਨਪਾਵਨੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਉਪਜੀ ਭੂਖੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਨਾ ਦੀਨਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
 ਕਾਮੁ ਨਾ ਬਿਸਰਿਓ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਨ ਬਿਸਰਿਓ ਲੋਭੁ ਨ ਛੂਟਿਓ ਦੇਵਾ ॥  
 ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਨਹੀ ਛੂਟੀ ਨਿਫਲ ਭਈ ਸਭ ਸੇਵਾ ॥  
 ਬਾਟ ਪਾਰਿ ਘਰੁ ਮੂਸਿ ਬਿਰਾਨੋ ਪੇਟੁ ਭਰੈ ਅਪ੍ਰਾਧੀ ॥  
 ਜਿਹਿ ਪਰਲੋਕੁ ਜਾਇ ਅਪਕੀਰਤਿ ਸੋਈ ਅਬਿਦਿਆ ਸਾਧੀ ॥  
 ਹਿੰਸਾ ਤਉ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਨਹੀ ਛੂਟੀ ਜੀਅ ਦਇਆ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਲੀ ॥  
 ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਥਾ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਨ ਚਾਲੀ ॥<sup>123</sup>

This couplet is also recorded in Parmananddas' work Parmanandsagar:

ਤੈਂ ਨਰ ਕਾ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸੁਨਿ ਕੀਨਾ ।  
 ਅਨਪਾਧਨੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਹਿੰ ਤਪਜੀ, ਭ੍ਰੁਖੇ ਦਾਨ ਨ ਦੀਨਾ ।  
 ਕਾਮ ਨ ਬਿਸਰਯੈ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਨ ਬਿਸਰਯੈ, ਲੋਭੁ ਨ ਛੂਟਯੈ ਦੇਵਾ ॥ ।  
 ਮੋਹੁ ਮਲਿਨਤਾ ਮਨੇ ਨਹਿੰ ਛੂਟੀ, ਵਿਫਲੁ ਭਈ ਸਭ ਸੇਵਾ ॥ ।  
 ਬਾਟ ਪਾਰਿ ਘਰ ਮੂਸਿ ਬਿਰਾਨੋ, ਪੇਟੁ ਭਰੇ ਅਪਰਾਧੀ ।  
 ਜੇਹਿ ਪਰ ਲੋਕੁ ਜਾਯੁ ਅਪਕੀਰਤਿ ਸੋਈ ਅਵਿਧਾ ਸਾਧੀ ॥ ।  
 ਹਿੰਸਾ ਤੈ ਮਨਤੇ ਨਹਿੰ ਛੂਟੀ, ਜੀਵੁ ਦਯਾ ਨਹਿੰ ਪਾਲੀ ।  
 ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦੁ ਸਾਧੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਥਾ ਪੁਨੀਤੁ ਨ ਚਾਲੀ ॥<sup>124</sup>

To find both couplets in Sursagar and Parmanandsagar authenticates that the Surdas and Parmanandas whose couplets are cited in Guru Granth Sahib are the reputed writers of Braj *Bhasha*.

Use of Braj *Bhasha* in Guru Granth Sahib and Punjabi by Braj writers, use of similar *Ragas* by both ideologies and citation of

123 *Ibid.*

124 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 909, p. 320.



couplets of Surdas and Parmananddas in Guru Granth Sahib have proved that beyond theological differences there is interaction between these ideologies. Hawley, an eminent authority on the *Bhakti* movement, draws our attention to an alignment between Namdev (a Nirguna Saint) and Surdas (a prominent *Saguna Vaishnava*).<sup>125</sup> David N. Lorenzen believes that the *Nirguna Saints* and the *Saguna Vaishnava* devotees shared common historical roots.<sup>126</sup> In this connection Deen Dayalu Gupta rightly announced that from these similarities it may be argued that *Ashtachhap* writers not only knew about the Saint writers of their period but to some extent were also influenced by them.<sup>127</sup> On the other side, in Guru Granth Sahib occasionally, Guru Nanak makes use of the Krishan-Gopi lore for expressing his own ideas<sup>128</sup> :

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਗੋਪੀਆ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਕਾਨ ॥<sup>129</sup>

For more understanding of their connection, there is a need to explore their thought content:

**God:** In Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature both states, *Nirguna* and *Saguna* of the Ultimate Reality have been recognised :

ਨਿਰਗੁਨੁ ਆਪਿ ਸਰਗੁਨੁ ਭੀ ਉਹੀ ॥

ਕਲਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਮੋਹੀ ॥<sup>130</sup>

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- 125 John Stratton Hawley, "The Nirgun/Sagun Distinction in early Anthologies of Hindi Devotion," ed., David N. Lorenzen, *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community Identity and Political Action*, Delhi, 1996, p.165.
- 126 David N. Lorenzen, "Introduction :The Historical Vicissitudes of Bhakti Religion," in *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community Identity and Political Action*, Delhi, 1996,p 21.
- 127 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. I, p. 18.
- 128 J.S. Grewal, "A Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak", ed., Kiran Pawar, *Women in Indian History : Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Perspectives*, p. 155.
- 129 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 465.
- 130 *Ibid.*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 287.

Guru Arjan Dev makes this very clear by saying that the Lord is formless and also formed ; the One Lord is without attributes, yet with attributes:

ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਆਕਾਰ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਏਕ ॥<sup>131</sup>

or

ਸਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਆਪਿ ॥<sup>132</sup>

Braj writers also accept that the Ultimate Reality is both, *Nirguna* and *Saguna* :

जाकी माया लखै न कोई। निर्गुन-सगुन धर बपु सोई।<sup>133</sup>

or

तुम बिन कौन दीन खल तारै, निरगुन सगुन रूप धरि आए।<sup>134</sup>

Nanddas in his work *Bhasha Dasham Sakand* accepts these two states of Ultimate Reality :

ऐसै अस्तुति बहुं विधि कीनी। निर्गुन सगुन रूप रंग भीनी।<sup>135</sup>

The Concept of *Nirguna Brahma* is so elusive and abstract that our mind cannot comprehend it. Thus imagery is used in Guru Granth Sahib for comprehending the Ultimate Reality. Where imagery is used to realize the Ultimate Reality, the *Nirguna* becomes *Saguna* :

ਅਵਿਗਤੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲੁ ਉਪਜੇ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਸਰਗੁਣੁ ਥੀਆ ॥<sup>136</sup>

Surdas in his work *Sursagar* mentioned that God has become *Saguna* by transcending His *Nirguna* state for the sake of His *Bhakt*s:

131 *Ibid.*, Gauri Bavan Akhari Mahala 5, p. 250.

132 *Ibid.*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 290.

133 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/621, Vol. I, p. 210.

134 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1004, Vol. 1, p. 311.

135 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 236.

136 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, Siddha Goshta, p. 940.

निरगुन तैं सगुन भए, संतन हितकारी ।।<sup>137</sup>

Although imagery is used in Guru Granth Sahib for comprehending the Ultimate Reality yet one finds it resorting from image to image without admitting being able to capture either God's intensity or Its infinity. The *Nirguna* still remains *Nirguna* despite having many qualities. God has thousand eyes, forms, feet and fragrances, yet without eyes, forms, feet and fragrances It is :

ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹਹਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ  
 ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹੀ ॥  
 ਸਹਸ ਪਦ ਬਿਮਲ ਨਨ ਏਕ ਪਦ ਗੰਧ ਬਿਨੁ  
 ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਗੰਧ ਇਵ ਚਲਤ ਮੋਹੀ ॥<sup>138</sup>

Thus it becomes clear that the *Saguna* of Guru Granth Sahib is not to be taken as anthropomorphic or as resembling the concept of *Avtar*, in which the transcendent Lord comes down upon earth in the form of human being.<sup>139</sup> The *Nirguna* perception of *Krishna*, *Rama* and *Hari* is that of a non-incarnate, formless, absolute Supreme Being. Guru Nank states that the Master who created air, water and fire also created *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. He alone is the giver of gifts; all others are beggar. There are 33 crores of gods who beg from the master whose stores suffer no diminution:

ਪਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸ ਅਕਾਰ ॥  
 ਸਰਬੇ ਜਾਚਿਕ ਤੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਅਪੁਨੈ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥

137 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4515, Vol. II, p. 471.

138 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Kirtan Sohila, p. 13.

139 James Massey, *The Doctrine of Ultimate Reality in Sikh Religion*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, rpt., 2010, p. 87.

वेटि उेडीम नचगि धृड नष्टिक सेसे उेटि नगी डंडात् ।<sup>140</sup>

On the other hand Braj writers believed that the Lord lives in heaven, he has come to the world in human form, as *Avtar*, to end the miseries of the people :

‘परमानन्द’ प्रभु बैकुण्ठ जाके, ब्रज लीनो अवतार ।।<sup>141</sup>

or

धन्य कृष्ण अवतार ब्रह्म लियौ ।<sup>142</sup>

or

बेद-उपनिषद जासु कौं, निरगुनहि बतावै ।

सोइ सगुन है नंद की दाँवरी बँधावै ।<sup>143</sup>

Krishandas states that Lord has come in the form of *Avtar* to end the miseries of *Jiva* :

जीव उद्धारन कारन कलि में पुरुषोत्तम लीला-अवतार ।।<sup>144</sup>

Nanddas also agrees with this view:

तब श्री कृष्ण अवतरहि आइ । सिद्ध करैं भगतन के भाइ ।।<sup>145</sup>

Kumbhandas has explained the Ancient theory that *Brahma* has created the world, *Vishnu* is the sustainer and *Mahesh* is the destroyer of the world and established the unity of three of them with Lord Krishna:-

ब्रह्म रूप उतपति करौ, रूद्र रूप संहार ।

विष्णु रूप रच्छा करौ, सो मैं हौं नंदकुमार ।।<sup>146</sup>

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- 140 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gujari Mahala 1, p. 504.  
 141 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 27, p. 10  
 142 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2225, Vol. I, p. 637.  
 143 *Ibid.*, Pad 1/4, p. 1.  
 144 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1012, p. 414.  
 145 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 191.  
 146 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 17.

In Japji there is also mention of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*.

Here they are shown born from One Divine Mother:-

ਏਕਾ ਮਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਵਿਆਈ ਤਿਨਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥  
ਇਕੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਇਕੁ ਭੰਡਾਰੀ ਇਕੁ ਲਾਏ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ॥<sup>147</sup>

Further it is stated that Lord is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world. Earlier there was only One Lord, there was no *Brahama*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*:-

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥  
ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ ॥<sup>148</sup>

Even there was no *Gopi*, no *Krishna*, no cows and cowherds:-

ਗੋਪੀ ਕਾਨੁ ਨ ਗਊ ਗੋਆਲਾ ॥<sup>149</sup>

Further it is stated that God created and destroyed the world Himself. Even God link each and every person to their tasks:-

ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਆਪਿ ਖਪਾਏ ॥  
ਆਪੇ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਧੰਧੈ ਲਾਏ ॥<sup>150</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib believes that God created the *Avtars* by Its will. God is above the *Avtars* like *Rama* or *Krishna*. The creator of the Universe does not become great by killing *Ravan*. He who is all pervasive, who created all living beings, and who runs Universe does not become great by subduing the serpent *Kali*, or by killing *Kansa*. The One who is manifest everywhere cannot be concealed: -

ਅੰਪੁਲੈ ਦਹਸਿਰਿ ਮੂੰਡੁ ਕਟਾਇਆ ਗਾਵਣੁ ਮਾਰਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਭਇਆ ॥

147 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Japji, p. 7.

148 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1035.

149 *Ibid.*

150 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1020.

ਕਿਆ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਖੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਤੂੰ ਸਰਬੇ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਇ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਹਥਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਕਾਲੀ ਨਥਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਭਇਆ ॥

ਕਿਸੁ ਤੂੰ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਜੋਰੁ ਕਉਣ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥<sup>151</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers considered Lord Krishna as the *Avtar* of *Parbrahman*. They were the worshippers of *Ananda Lila (Rasa)* of *Shri Krishna*.<sup>152</sup> Surdas' *Gopis* are saying to *Udho* that they were the worshippers of *Anand-Lila* of Lord Krishna. They do not want *Mukti* without him.<sup>153</sup> Parmananddas apart from Lord Krishna also considered *Nanda*, *Yashoda*, *Gopi*, *Gowal* and *Gokal* as the embodiments of *Ananda-Svarupa* and the *Sur*, *Mun* and *Sant* who worshipped them always remained in the state of *Ananda*.<sup>154</sup> Nanddas called *Shri Krishna* as *Rasak* and *Raskaran* and considered Lord the base of the whole *Rasa* in the world.<sup>155</sup> Krishandas with Lord Krishna also counted *Radhika* as the embodiment of *Rasa* and called her *Raskani*.<sup>156</sup> Kumbhandas also called Lord Krishna *Rasak* and Govindswami and Chhitsuwami is the worshippers of the *Rasak Jodi* (couple) of *Radha* and *Krishna*.<sup>157</sup> Chaturbujdas had made it clear that the Lord Krishna beomes happy only with *Rasa* and *Radha* has

151 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 350.

152 Mayarani Tondon, *Ashtachhap Kavya Ka Sanskritik Mulayakan*, Hindi Sahitya Bhandar Parkashan, Lacknow, 1960, p. 563.

153 *Ibid.*

154 *Ibid.*, p. 564.

155 *Ibid.*

156 *Ibid.*

157 *Ibid.*, 565.

achieved him through this *Rasa*. *Ashtachhap* writers have given great importance to *Rasa* (*Ananda*) in their works because Vallabhacharya (the spiritual guide of the *Ashtachhap* writers) considered that *Brahma* (God) consist of 'Sat', 'Chhit' and 'Ananda'. *Sat* is simple existence, being neither conscious nor able to feel. *Chhit* is awareness, understanding and consciousness. By *Ananda*, a word which refers to feelings of happiness, of delight, of joy, is meant the ability to take pleasure. This quality is most important, according to Vallabhacharya, 'without *Ananda* the Divine play that is called *Lila* would be impossible'.<sup>158</sup> Thus, ultimately Braj writers emphasize on the worship of *Saguna Brahma* :

निरगुन कहौ कहा कहियत है, तुम निरगुन अति भारी।  
सेवत सुलभ स्याम सुंदर कौं, मुक्ति लही हम चारी॥<sup>159</sup>

or

निर्गुन भए अतीत के सगुन सकल जग माहिं।<sup>160</sup>

On the other side, Guru Granth Sahib emphasizes on the worship of *Nirguna* God:

ਨਾਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਇ ਲਇਐ ਨਰਕਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ॥<sup>161</sup>  
ਤੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ॥<sup>162</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib states that God has no form, no feature, no colour. It is independent of these three qualities :

158 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 65.

159 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4518, Vol. II, p. 472.

160 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 157, also see Chhitsuami, *Pad-Sangrah*, p. 52.

161 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 465.

162 *Ibid.*, Japji, p. 4.

ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖ ਨ ਰੰਗੁ ਕਿਛੁ ॥

ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਿੰਨ ॥<sup>163</sup>

The *Bhramargit* poems of Surdas and Nanddas clearly negate the *Nirguna* philosophy by saying that it is not possible to worship the God, who has no form and feature :

जाकैं रूप न रेख बरन बपु, संग न सखा सहाई ।

ता निरगुन सौं नेह निरंतर, क्यों निवहै री माई ॥<sup>164</sup>

Naddas in his *Bhramargit* emphasized that the Lord has all qualities i.e. form, feature :

जो उनके गुन नाहिं और गुन भये कहाँ ते ॥

बीज बिना तरू जमें मोहिं तुम कहौ कहाँ ते ॥<sup>165</sup>

**Jiva (creature) :** Guru Granth Sahib holds the view that *Jiva* is the creation of the God :

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ॥<sup>166</sup>

By the order of the True Lord the *Jiva* comes into existence :

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਓਡਿਆਈ ॥<sup>167</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers believed that *Jivas* are not created but are manifested by *Brahma* out of himself. In *Jiva* God's '*Sat*' and '*Chhit*' *guna* remained. So, *Jivas* are part or fragments of *Brahma*. They are to *Brahma* as sparks are to fire :

163 *Ibid.*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 283.

164 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4548, Vol. II, p. 478.

165 Naddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 155.

166 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Japji, p. 1.

167 *Ibid.*



तुमते हम सब उपजत ऐसैं, अगिनि तै बिस्फुलिंग गन जैसैं ॥<sup>168</sup>

or

सो हौं एक अनेक भाँति करि सोभित नाना भेष ॥<sup>169</sup>

Similarly Guru Granth Sahib accepts that God creates *Jivas* out of Itself. The human soul is a sort of miniature of God. As it comes out of God it carries the qualities of God :

ਇਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਓ ਅੰਨਤਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥<sup>170</sup>

or

ਜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡੇ ਸੋਈ ਪਿੰਡੇ ਜੇ ਖੋਜੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਵੈ ॥<sup>171</sup>

So, both ideologies believe that the Lord and the *jivas* are non-different :

जीव ब्रह्म अंतर नहीं मनि कंचन जैसे ॥<sup>172</sup>

or

तुमहीं जीवन तुमहीं जीय । तुमहीं सब कोउ अवर न पीय ॥<sup>173</sup>

Vallabhacharya divided *Jivas* into three categories. These are *Pushti Jiva*, *Maryada Jiva* and *Pravaha Jiva*. *Pushti Jivas* are well-nourished, complete and have the *Anugraha* (grace) of *Shri Krishna*. *Maryada Jivas* are within the limits of the actions and live in expectations of the rewards that the *Veda* promises in heaven. *Pravaha Jivas* are those who crave riches and sensual pleasures on earth. These *Jivas* are demonic and have little potential for *Uddhaar*;

168 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 197.

169 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 2/381, Vol. I, p. 105.

170 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 3, p. 131.

171 *Ibid.*, Dhansari, Bhagat Pipa Ji, p. 695.

172 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 894, p. 315.

173 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 220.

there are two kinds of demonic *Jivas*: those that are knowingly evil and those that are unknowingly evil.<sup>174</sup> According to Vallabhacharya's thought *Pushti Jivas* are the best *Jivas*. He said that *Pushti Jivas* are manifested from the body (*Kaya*) of *Shri Krishna*, while the *Maryada Jivas* are manifested by the speech of *Shri Krishna*, and the *Pravaha Jivas* are produced from the mind of *Shri Krishna*.<sup>175</sup> There is a great deal of significance in the origin of the *Pushti Jivas* as they originated from the body of *Shri Krishna* which is made of the *Ananda* portion of his being. Vallabhacharya considered that all *Bhakts* (devotees) are *Pushti Jivas* and that the *Bhaktimarga* is the *Pushtimarg*. The followers of *Pushtimarg* are satisfied only with direct experience of the Divine body of *Shri Krishna*. Vallabhacharya is of the view that Gopi (female) is the Guru of the *Pushtimarg* who enjoyed physical love-play with Lord Krishna during his life in Braj on earth and who enjoy eternally the love of Shri Krishna in the endless *Lila* in *Goloka*.<sup>176</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers in their works do not have divided *Jivas* in these three categories. Even Surdas, who deals in detail about the creation of *Jivas*, does not have mentioned these categories of *Jivas*.<sup>177</sup> Parmananddas and Nanddas have mentioned about the creation of the *Jivas*. Krishandas, Kumbhandas and Govindswami do not have mentioned about the creation of *Jivas*.<sup>178</sup> Chaturbujdas and

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174 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, pp. 71-72.

175 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

176 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

177 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, pp. 427 to 31.

178 *Ibid.*, p. 434.

Chhitswami have not mentioned particularly about *Jivas* but while explaining their views about God both of them accepted that Lord Krishna and *Jivas* are non-different.<sup>179</sup>

As far as Guru Granth Sahib is considered no such division of *Jivas* can be seen in it. Guru Granth Sahib only considered that creatures are of two types i.e. *Gurmukh* and *Manmukh*. *Gurmukh* is that *Jiva* who attain the company of the Lord:-

ਵੀਅਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥<sup>180</sup>

*Manmukh* is an ego-centered person who craves only for the riches of the world:-

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਨੀ ਜਾਸਨਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਭੁ ਹਾਰਿ ॥<sup>181</sup>

*Gurmukh* may be compared with *Pushti Jiva* of Vallabhacharya's thought and *Manmukh* with that of *Pravaha Jiva*. Furthermore as Vallabhacharya considered *Gopi* as the prime preceptor of *Pushtimarg*, same in Guru Granth Sahib *Suhagan* is guide on spiritual path.<sup>182</sup>

**World :** Both ideologies believe that God is the creator of the world. Guru Granth Sahib states that whenever God wishes It creates the world and expand it, whenever It wishes, It again becomes one :

ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਕਰੇ ਬਿਸਥਾਰੁ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ॥<sup>183</sup>

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179 *Ibid.*  
 180 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 4, p. 78.  
 181 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 3, p. 950.  
 182 *Ibid.*, Dhansari Mahala 1, p.689.  
 183 *Ibid.*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 294.

Same view is expressed by Surdas and Nanddas :

कोटि ब्रह्मंड छनहिं मैं नासै, छनही मैं उपजावै।<sup>184</sup>

or

तुम परमेश्वर सब के नाथ। बिस्व समस्त तिहारै हाथ।।

छिनक मैं करौ, भरौ, संहरौ।। ऊर्ननाभि लौं फिरि बिस्तरौ।।<sup>185</sup>

It is only the God who has created the world :

ਏਕੋ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਕੀਆ ॥<sup>186</sup>

or

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥<sup>187</sup>

Only God has the power for the creation of world :

तिन कीन्ह्यौ सब जग बिस्तार। जाकौ नाहीं पारावार।।<sup>188</sup>

or

आदि अंत कोऊ नहिं जानत, हरता करता सब संसार।।<sup>189</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers differentiated *Jagat* and *Sansar*. They believed that *jagat* is the creation of the God and it consists of God's 'Sat' *guna*. As it is created from the God it again mingled in God. To explain this view Surdas takes the example of the bubble in the water. He mentioned that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again, so is the world created from the God and it again mingled in God:-

184 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1100, Vol. I, p. 340.

185 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 197.

186 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Basant Mahala 1 Ashtapadai, p. 1188.

187 *Ibid.*, Japji, p. 3

188 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 4/403, Vol. I, p. 118.

189 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1115, Vol. 1, p. 347.

ज्यों पानी में होत बुदबुदा, पुनि ता माहिं समाइ ।  
 त्योंही सब जग प्रगटत तुम तैं, पुनि तम माहिं बिलाइ ॥<sup>190</sup>

Similar view is expressed by Guru Tegh Bahadur. He also takes the example of the bubble in the water to explain the creation of world from God. He states that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again, so is the Universe created; says Nanak, listen, O my friend:-

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਬੁਦਬੁਦਾ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਨੀਤ ॥  
 ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਮੀਤ ॥<sup>191</sup>

*Sansar* is created by the ignorance of the *Jiva*. It is created by the *Avidya Shakti* of *Maya*, so it is false. *Ashtachhap* writers compared it with poison :

विष सागर संसार विषम संग ते माहि उद्धरिये ।<sup>192</sup>

or

सरनागित आयौ दोष मिटायौ सब तजि यह संसार हो ।<sup>193</sup>

Above cited couplets negate the theory that the world is created out of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* but according to them, God is the only eternal entity who has created *Purusha* and *Prakriti* :

ਸਿਵ ਸਕਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਕੈ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਵਰਤਾਏ ॥<sup>194</sup>

190 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/4620, Vol. II, p. 574.

191 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Shloka Mahala 9, p. 1427.

192 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt, of India, New Delhi, 2002, Pad 3, p. 37.

193 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1122, p. 465.

194 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 3, p. 920.

Braj writers have also accepted the power of God over the power of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*.<sup>195</sup>

**Maya :** The word *Maya* is used in Indian philosophy from Ancient times. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha in his *Mahan Kosh* (encyclopedia) according to Gurbani states, "*Maya* is the *Shakti* (Power) of God which is responsible for the creation of the world."<sup>196</sup> Guru Granth Sahib holds that *Maya* is not a separate ultimate reality. It has been created by God. Human beings are serving the maid (*Maya*) and do not see the Lord:-

ਚੇਰੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਚੀਸੈ ॥<sup>197</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers called it *Vidya Maya*. It is that *Shakti* or power of *Brahma* which creates and destroys this world with the *Iccha* of *Brahma*.<sup>198</sup> Among *Ashtachhap* writers Nanddas is the only one who has dealt with *Vidya Maya* in detail.<sup>199</sup> This *Maya* is under the control of *Brahma* :

माया मोहन लाल की, जिन मोहे सब संत ।<sup>200</sup>

or

प्रभु तुव माया अगम अगोचर, लहिं न सकत कोउ पार ।<sup>201</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib also believes that this *Shakti* (*Maya*) is responsible for the creation of the world. God fashioned the world by creating human *Maya* in various colours and kinds:-

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195 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. II, p. 444.  
 196 Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, p. 2869.  
 197 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 229.  
 198 Mayarani Tondon, *Ashtachhap Kavya Ka Sanskritik Mulayakan*, p. 572.  
 199 *Ibid.*  
 200 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 52.  
 201 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4778, Vol. II, p. 530.

ਰੰਗੀ ਰੰਗੀ ਭਾਤੀ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਈ ॥<sup>202</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib accepts that the illusion of *Maya* takes an individual away from God :

ਏਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਉ ਦੁਜਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥<sup>203</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers called this *Avidya Maya*. Surdas is the one among the *Ashtachhap* writers who mentioned the *Avidya Maya* in detail.<sup>204</sup> It brings out the misery of the *Jiva*. Because of its influence, the individual forgets self nature as a part of *Brahma* and lives in a painful world of sufferings without uttering the name of *Brahma* :

ਕਠਿਨ ਜੋ ਗੱਠਿ ਪਰੀ ਮਾਯਾ ਕੀ, ਤੋਰੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਖਟਕੈਂ ।

ਨਾ ਹਰਿ-ਭਕਿ, ਨ ਸਾਧੁ-ਸਮਾਗਮ, ਰਹੁੰ ਵੀਚਹੀਂ ਲਟਕੈਂ ।<sup>205</sup>

This *Maya* leads an individual towards transmigration.

ਮਾਇਆ ਨਾਮੁ ਗਰਭ ਜੋਨਿ ਕਾ ਤਿਹ ਤਜ ਦਰਸਨ ਪਾਵਉ ॥<sup>206</sup>

Its influence on the individual can be vanished only with the help of God :

इहि माया सब लोगनि लूटयौ । जिहिं हरि कृपा करी सो छूटयौ ।<sup>207</sup>

So *Ashtachhap* writers have divided *Maya* into two distinct categories i.e. *Vidya Maya* and *Avidya Maya*. *Vidya Maya* is responsible for the creation of the world and it is true. *Avidya Maya* is that *Shakti* (Power) which is responsible for the creation of ignorance

202 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Japji, p. 6.

203 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 3, p. 921.

204 Mayarani Tondon, *Ashtachhap Kavya Ka Sanskritik Mulayakan*, p. 573.

205 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/292, Vol. I, p. 81.

206 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Dhansari Namdev, p. 693.

207 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/284, Vol. I, p. 76.

among individuals about the Lord and this *Maya* is false. Because of its influence individuals are immersed in *Kama*, *Karodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha* and *Ahankara*. Although Guru Granth Sahib does not divided *Maya* into these two parts directly yet through the hymns like *Nanak Sachay Kee Saachee Kar*<sup>208</sup> and through *Ha-umai Maa-i-aa Mohnee Doojai lagai Jaa-ay*<sup>209</sup> one can find references about *Vidya Maya* and *Avidya Maya*.<sup>210</sup>

**Yoga:-** Guru Granth Sahib have used metaphors from the ideas and practices of the *Yogis* with its own orientation.<sup>211</sup> Guru Nanak tells the *Yogis* in detail what *Yog* is not and what it should be.<sup>212</sup> *Yog* does not consist in donning the cloak, holding the staff, or smearing the body with ashes:-

ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਖਿੰਥਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੈ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ ॥<sup>213</sup>

It does not consist in wearing the earrings, shaving the head, or blowing the horn (*Sing*):-

ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ ਮੂੰਡਿ ਮੁਡਾਇਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਝੀ ਵਾਈਐ ॥<sup>214</sup>

The real *Yog* is to live 'detached-in-attachment':-

ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥<sup>215</sup>

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208 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Japji, p. 7.

209 *Ibid.*, Bilwal Mahal 3, p. 853.

210 Mandeep Kaur, "Gurbani Vich Maya Da Sankalap", *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 40th session, 2008, p. 18.

211 G.S. Talib, *Indian Poetry : Sacred and Secular*, Publication Bureau, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1984, p. 69.

212 J.S. Grewal, *Lectures On History, Society and Culture of the Punjab*, Publication Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, p. 117.

213 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahal 1, p. 730.

214 *Ibid.*

215 *Ibid.*



*Yog* does not consist in mere talk; only he can be called a real *Yogi* who regards all human beings as equal:-

ਗਲੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਏਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਰ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥<sup>216</sup>

*Yog* does not consist in living outside (habitations) in *Marhis* and *Masans*; it does not consist in deep meditation. *Yog* does not consist in wandering in different countries in all the ten directions; it does not consist in bathing at sacred places. *Yog* is attained by remaining 'detached-in-attachment':-

ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਣੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ ॥

ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਦੇਸਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ ॥

ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥<sup>217</sup>

Similarly in *Ashtachhap* writings *Gopis* are giving a very different interpretation of *Yog* to *Udho*.<sup>218</sup> They are saying to *Udho* that the *Yoga* which he is teaching to them they are the followers of that:

ऊधौ करि रहीं हम जोग ।<sup>219</sup>

Their hairs have grown as '*Sali*' (sacred thread) and they are badly burned by fire of separation from the Lord:-

सीस सेलीकेस मुद्रा, कानबीरी बीर ।

बिरह भस्म चढ़ाइ बैठीं, सहज कंथा चीर ।<sup>220</sup>

216 *Ibid.*

217 *Ibid.*

218 Mayarani Tondon, *Ashtachhap Kavya Ka Sanskritk Mulayakan*, p. 531.

219 Surdas, *Sursagar Pad 10/3694, Vol.II, p. 429.*

220 *Ibid.*

Their heart is like horn (*Singi*) and their eyes are the *Khhapar's* to beg the *Darshan's* of the Lord:

हृदय सिंगी टेर मुरली, नैन खप्पर हाथ ।  
चाहतीं हरि दरस भिच्छा, देहिं दीनानाथ ।<sup>221</sup>

The literature under study even objected to the way of life of the *Yogis*. It is stated that some people wander as *Yogis* having put on ochre coloured clothes, but within them there is much worldly thirst and desire for clothing and food :

ਇਕਿ ਭਗਵਾ ਵੇਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਜੋਗੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸਾ ॥  
ਅੰਦਰਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਛਾਦਨ ਭੋਜਨ ਕੀ ਆਸਾ ॥  
ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਨ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਨ ਉਦਾਸਾ ॥<sup>222</sup>

Similarly, Braj writers do not have sympathy for *Yogic* practices. A *Yogi* puts on external marks, matted hair, pierced ears and ashes on his body. But the followers of *Shri Krishna* have actually suffered the burning of *Viraha* and show internal as well as external evidence of it in his/her devotion :

ऊधौ जोगए जोग हम नाही ।  
जोगी भ्रमत जाहि लागि भूले, सो तौ है अप माहीं ।<sup>223</sup>

Krishandas, one of the *Ashtachhap* writers, emphasized that instead of *Yogic* activities a devotee should rely on the *Bhakti* and *Seva* of the Lord :

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221 *Ibid.*  
222 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Var Majh Mahala 1, p.140.  
223 *Surdas, Sursagar*, Pad 10/3924, Vol. II, p. 477.

सेवा-रीति दिखाइकें निर्भय करि डारे ।

जोग जाग जप-तप नहीं, या कलियुग मारै ॥<sup>224</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib *Yogis* are advised to give up the *Yogic* practices and are advised to meditate on Guru Sabad:-

गुर का सषदु वीचरि नैगी.<sup>225</sup>

Parmananddas is saying that those who smear ashes on their body and called them *Udasi (Yogi)* have only place in *Kashi*. Braj people are the followers of *Saguna Svarupa* of Lord Krishna:-

भस्म लगाय गेरें लिंग बाँधी निस दिन फिरो उदासी ।

परमानन्द दास को ठाकुर सुन्दर घोष निवासी।<sup>226</sup>

Among *Ashtachhap* writers only Surdas expressed his views about *Yogis* and *Yogic* practices in detail. In Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak is the one who deals in detail about *Yogic* practices. Guru Nanak's composition is known as *Siddha-Goshat* (dialogue with the *Siddhas*). It is included in *Raga Ramkali*.

### **Renunciation (*Sananyas*):-**

Both ideologies have no faith in renunciation. It is stated that the fire is not quenched by wandering in all the ten directions; the inner dirt is not removed by roaming in various garbs. Guru Nanak Dev is saying one should live 'detached-in attachment':-

अंजन माहि निरंजनि रहीअै नैग जुगति इव पाਈअै ॥<sup>227</sup>

224 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 935, p. 370.

225 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 879.

226 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 836, p. 293.

227 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Raga Suhi Mahala 1, p. 730.

Guru Amardas holds the Similary view that one should live in world without attachments :

ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜਾਤਾ ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ਜੀਉ ॥<sup>228</sup>

Braj writers also emphasized that one ought not to retreat from the world, but instead live gratefully within it as an active participant, as a householder. Parmananddas says that one should live in one's house just like a passerby (*Bataoo*):-

छाँड़ि अहार देह सुख और न चाहे काऊ।

‘परमानंद’ बसत हैं घर मे जैसे रहत बटाऊ।<sup>229</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib further states that those who with true heart have achieved the true *Sabad* they have become *Udasi* while living within their homes:-

ਸਚਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਚੁ ਮਨਿ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਉਦਾਸਾ ॥<sup>230</sup>

Similary Parmananddas said that in Krishna's *Viraha* the *Gopi* of the *Gokul* have made forest (*Ban*) in her house:-

कृष्ण बिरह गोकुल की गोपी घर ही में बन कीनौ।<sup>231</sup>

**Guru** : Almighty God, whose qualities have been mentioned earlier in this chapter can only be realised by the grace of the True Guru :

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮਨੁ ਜੀਤਿਆ ਗਤਿ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਘਰੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਇ ॥<sup>232</sup>

228 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 3, p. 1016.

229 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 529, p. 180.

230 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 1, p. 140.

231 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 529, p. 180

232 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 26.

Ashtachhap writers have also recognised the necessity of Guru for the spiritual advancement of the human beings :

सतगुरु कौ उपदेश हृदय धरि, जिन भ्रम सकल निवारयौ ।  
हरि भजि बिलंब छाँड़ि सूरज सठ, ऊँचे टेरि पुकारयो ।<sup>233</sup>

God Itself is described as Guru. Guru Granth Sahib states that God is *Adi Guru* and *Jugad Guru* i.e. God is the Divine Teacher in the beginning and primal age :

ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰਏ ਨਮਹ ॥ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਗੁਰਏ ਨਮਹ ॥<sup>234</sup>

or

ਅਪਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਉ ॥<sup>235</sup>

In Braj literature similarly, one finds that Guru is mentioned in the same breath and on the same plane as God :

हरि-गुरु एक रूप नृप जानि । यामैं कछु संदेह न आनि ।  
गुरु प्रसन्न, हरि प्रसन्न होइ ।  
गुरु कैँ दुखित दुखित हरि जोइ ।<sup>236</sup>

The knowledge of the Lord can not be obtained without the words of Guru :

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਦੀਖਿਆ ਕੈਸੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥<sup>237</sup>

Without the true-Guru, the *Naam* is not obtained :

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਉ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਕਿਆ ਸੁਆਉ ॥<sup>238</sup>

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233 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/336, Vol. I, p. 93.  
234 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 262.  
235 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 1, p. 599.  
236 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 6/416, Vol. I, p. 130.  
237 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bhairo Mahala 5, p. 1140.  
238 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 58.

Guru is described as the guide who helps individual to get rid off from worldly affairs :

गुरु बिनु ऐसी कौन करे ।  
माला-तिलक मनोहर बाना, लै सिर छत्र धरै ।।  
भवसागर तैं बूड़त राखे, दीपक हाथ धरे ।  
सूर स्याम गुरु ऐसो समरथ, छिन मैं लै उधफै ।<sup>239</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib emphasized on the importance of '*Sabad Guru*' which is its uniqueness. Guru Nanak clearly states to the *Siddha's* in *Siddha Goshat* that his Guru is '*Sabad Guru*' :

सबदु गुरु मुरति पुनि चेला ॥<sup>240</sup>

or

सबदु गुरु पीरा गहिर गंभीरा  
बिनु सबदै नगु बडुिरानं ॥<sup>241</sup>

On the other side, *Ashtachhap* writers were the faithful devotees of Vallabhacharya and Vitthalnath. Chittswami, one of the *Ashtachhap* writers, states that he is the follower of *Goswami Vitthalnath* :

हम तौ श्री विठ्ठलनाथ उपासी ।  
सदा सेवौं श्री विठ्ठल नंदन, कहा करौं जाय कासी ।।<sup>242</sup>

Govindswami declares that he repeated the name of Vallabhacharya day and night :

वल्लभ श्रीवल्लभ श्री वल्लभ गुन गाऊ ।<sup>243</sup>

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239 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 6/417, Vol. I, p. 133.  
240 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sorath Mahala 1, p. 635.  
241 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 943.  
242 Chittswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 48, p. 62.  
243 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 19, p. 118.

Chaturbhujdas states that he is the follower of Vitthalnath who has come to *Kaliyuga* in form of *Avtar* of Lord Krishna only to end the miseries of the *Bhakts* (devotees):-

श्री विट्ठलनाथ गोकुल-भूप ।

भक्त- हित कलिजुग कृपा करि धरे प्रगट स्वरूप ।।<sup>244</sup>

About this difference it may be said that in no *Sampradaya* of *Bhakti* movement '*Sabad*' is considered as Guru except in Guru Granth Sahib.<sup>245</sup>

**Naam Simran (The repetition of the Divine Name):** Both ideologies have given importance to the repetition of the Divine Name. They are of the view that salvation can be achieved only through *Naam Simran*. Even the lowest reach the highest domain with the repetition of God's Name. The one who has got the the True Name into his heart, can neither die nor be looted. They are purged of every sin and they attain eternal peace. Guru Granth Sahib lays great stress on the significance of the *Naam Simran*. The disciple is instructed to remember the *Naam* at all times :

ਉਠਤ ਬੈਠਤ ਸਦ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਧਿਆਈ ॥<sup>246</sup>

or

ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਸਿਮਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਮੁ ॥<sup>247</sup>

244 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, Parkash Vibhag, Govt. of Inida, New Delhi, 2009, Pad 138, p. 69.

245 Satinder Singh, ed., *Comparative Indian Literature*, p. 305.

246 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 270.

247 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

In Braj literature too, great importance is given on reciting the *Naam* of Lord :

जो जन हिरद नाम धरै ।

अष्ट सिद्धि नव निधि को बपुरी लटकत लारि फिरै ।<sup>248</sup>

or

जो भव सागर तरिबो चाहे धारे प्रभुकर माथे ।

गिरिधर 'गोविंद' के प्रभु कौ गावे गुन गुन गाथे ।<sup>249</sup>

The first and the foremost duty of a disciple is the remembrance of the *Naam*, which is only the holy *Karma* :

सरब परम महि म्हेसट परम ॥

हरि के नामु जप निरमल करम ॥<sup>250</sup>

By repeating the *Naam* of the Lord, all the sins are washed away, all the wishes are fulfilled and the state of final beatitude is obtained :

भरीअै मति पापा कै संगि ॥

उह प्ये नावै कै रंगि ॥<sup>251</sup>

or

नाम सुमिरत भये पावन सकल खल कलि के जिया ।<sup>252</sup>

With *Naam* the fear of death melts away :

नानक गुरमुखि नामु जपत गति पाहि ॥<sup>253</sup>

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248 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 889, p. 316.  
 249 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 192, p. 118.  
 250 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 266.  
 251 *Ibid.*, Japji, p. 4.  
 252 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1122, , p. 465.  
 253 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 265.



Braj writers agreed with above cited view that without *Naam Simran*, one can not get rid off from transmigration :

जो प्रभु को नाम लेत भव जल तरिं जात हे ।<sup>254</sup>

or

बिनु हरि सुमिरन मुक्ति न होइ । कोटि उपाइ करौ जौ कोइ ।<sup>255</sup>

As world is like a fire so there is great necessity of *Naam* :

ਸੀਤਲੁ ਥੀਵੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਪੰਦੜੋ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥<sup>256</sup>

or

हरि बिनु सुख नहिं इहाँ न उहाँ । हरि हरि हरि सुमिरौ जहँ तहाँ ।<sup>257</sup>

The real comfort lies in the repetition of the Name of God. With every breath God's Name should be repeated :

ਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੈਤ ਤੂ ਸੁਖੀ ॥

ਸਾਸਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਉ ਮਨ ਤਨ ਜੀਅਰੇ ਸੁਖੀ ॥<sup>258</sup>

or

सौ बातनि की एकै बात । सूर सुमिरि हरि हरि दिन रात ।<sup>259</sup>

**Mukti (Nirvana) :** The word '*Mukti*' or '*Nirvana*' has been used for God Itself :

ਤਿਨ ਉਪਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੁ । ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਪਿਆ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੁ ॥<sup>260</sup>

The ultimate aim of life is the attainment of the lotus feet of the Lord. The state of bliss and joy at the feet of the Lord is inexpressible :

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254 Nanddas, *Nanddas Grathawali*, p. 284.  
 255 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/348, Vol. 1, p. 96.  
 256 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Var Jatsari Mahala 5, p. 709.  
 257 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/348, Vol. I, p. 97.  
 258 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sorath Mahala 5, p. 617.  
 259 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/348, Vol. I, p. 97.  
 260 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 200.

ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਕੀ ਮਉਜ ਕੋ ਕਹਿ ਕੈਸੇ ਉਨਮਾਨ ॥  
ਕਹਿਬੇ ਕਉ ਸੋਭਾ ਨਹੀ ਦੇਖਾ ਹੀ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ॥<sup>261</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib states that the *Bhakta* of God has no other desire except the attainment of the Beloved :

ਧਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਛਹਿ ਸੁਰਗ ਨ ਆਛਹਿ ॥  
ਅਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਸਾਧ ਰਜ ਰਾਚਹਿ ॥<sup>262</sup>

Mukti, for Braj writers also means the *Darshan*, *Seva* and participation in Divine *Lila* of *Shri Krishna* :

ਸੇਵਾ ਸਦਨ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਕੀ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਹ੍ਰੁਤੇ ਸੀਠੀ ।<sup>263</sup>

A *Bhakta* of God has only desire for God's love. That's why he/she does not even think of *Mukti* :

ਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਾਰੇ ॥<sup>264</sup>

Braj writers have no desire of going to heaven. They considered *Gokul* better than *Vaikuntha* :

ਜੋ ਸੁਖ ਗੋਕੁਲ ਮੇਂ ਲਹੈ ਸੋ ਸੁਖ ਭੈਕੁੰਠ ਨਾਹਿੰ ।।<sup>265</sup>

**Caste** : Guru Granth Sahib believes that there is no clan or caste while dwelling in the womb. Everything is created from the seed of *Brahma* :

ਗਰਭ ਵਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤੀ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ ॥<sup>266</sup>

261 *Ibid.*, Shlok Kabir, p. 1370.

262 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 251.

263 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 853, p. 299.

264 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Devgandhari Mahala 5, p. 534.

265 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1043, p. 430, also see Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Basant Yamdgam, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Chhitsuwami*, p. 14.

266 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Kabir, p. 324.

*Ashtachaap* writers expressed the view that caste and name are not important. Upon all the creatures there is one shadow of God :

जाति, गोत, कुल, नाम, गनत नाहिं, रंक होइ कै रानौं।<sup>267</sup>

There is no caste in the next world :

ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ ॥<sup>268</sup>

God does not have care for the caste and creed of his worshipper :

जाति पाँति कोउ पूछत नाहीं, श्रीपति कै दरबार।<sup>269</sup>

The caste and name both are raillery;

ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ ॥<sup>270</sup>

Guru Nanak called him the lowest of the low and poorest of the poor. He is with these lowest and the poor. Further he is questioning why should he compare and copy the great and rich:-

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੁ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕੀਆ ਰੀਸ ॥<sup>271</sup>

Despite the fact that Braj writers condemn caste pride, it is intriguing that they have completely dissociated themselves from *Muslims* and called them '*mlechchha*'.<sup>272</sup>

On the other side, the writers of Guru Granth Sahib apart from theoretical also took practical steps to root out caste system from society. Khushwant Singh rightly observes, "The *Bhaktas* had paid only lip service to the ideal of casteless society; Nanak took practical

267 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/11, Vol. I, p. 3.

268 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 349.

269 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/231, Vol. I, p. 63.

270 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Var Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 83.

271 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 15.

272 See Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, p. 22.

steps to break the vicious hold of caste by starting free community kitchens – *Guru-ka-langar*- in all centres and persuading his followers irrespective of their castes, to eat together".<sup>273</sup>

**Satsang :** Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature has laid great emphasis on *Satsang*. It is stated that *Satsang* is essential for a happy life and for achieving *Mukti* :

ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਹੋਹਿ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਜੋਨਿ ਨ ਆਉ ॥<sup>274</sup>

Nanddas, one of the Ashtachhap writers, in his work *Bhramargit* expressed the same view :

ਪੁਨਿ ਕਹੈ ਸਭ ਤੈਂ ਸਾਧੁ ਸੰਗੁ ਤਤਮ ਹੈ ਭਾਇ।<sup>275</sup>

Their similarity on the importance of satsang can be observed from the couplet of Parmananddas which is included both in Guru Granth Sahib and Parmanandsagar :

ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਥਾ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਨ ਚਾਲੀ ॥<sup>276</sup>

In Parmanandsagar

ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦ ਸਾਧੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਥਾ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਨ ਚਾਲੀ।<sup>277</sup>

**Woman :** Both ideologies have made woman the central character of their Holy composition and explained the spiritual path through her voice which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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273 Khuswant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, IInd Edition, 2004, p. 40.  
 274 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sarang Mahala 5, p. 1220.  
 275 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 165.  
 276 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Raga Sarang, p. 1253.  
 277 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 909, p. 320.

### Chapter – 3

## PERCEPTION OF WOMAN : THE SPIRITUAL CONTEXT

Dictionary meaning of word 'perception' is, the way to think about something. In this chapter this term is used, to explain how Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have perceived woman in their writings. Both ideologies relate feminine imagery and symbols to the Divine Reality. The feminine imagery and symbols thus appear to bring woman within the orbit of emancipatory venture. As explained by Eliade quoted by Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, “Symbols have an existential value; symbols always point to a reality or situation concerning human existence; symbols preserve contact with the deep sources of life; symbols express the spiritual as life experience.”<sup>1</sup>

The composers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have made woman the central character of their poetic composition. While talking of the matters of spirituality, the imagery of mother-child love (*Vatsalya Bhava*) and that of wife-husband (*Madhura Bhava*) have been used in Braj literature.<sup>2</sup> Similarly in Guru Granth Sahib too, for comprehending the Nirguna God imagery of mother-child love and wife-husband has been widely employed. The metaphor that the Gurus found suitable for the expression of their intense, sacred and selfless love for the Divine is the sincere authentic love of a woman for

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1 Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 106.

2 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 89.

the beloved, and that of a mother for her son; something that was considered spiritual in essence and not the negative quality of worldly attachment. Both these metaphors were appropriately used to express the true love of devotee for the Lord and of the Lord for the devotee.<sup>3</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib has used the imagery of mother-child love for depicting the love of devotee for God and of God for devotee. It is stated that as a mother loves and cares her child, same way, the devotee should have attachment to the Lord :

ਜੈਸੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਅਰੁ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

ਐਸਾ ਹਰਿ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਤਾ ॥<sup>4</sup>

As the mother is rejuvenated upon seeing her son, so is the Lord's humble servant imbued with It, through and through:-

ਪੂਤ ਪੇਖਿ ਜਿਉ ਜੀਵਤ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

ਓਤਿ ਪੋਤਿ ਜਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਰਾਤਾ ॥<sup>5</sup>

In the above cited hymn Guru Arjan has used the imagery of mother-son love, instead of mother-daughter, to explain the relation between God and devotee. The verse is taken from daily life of the people. As during medieval period less importance is given to girls as compared to boys in the society, so Guru Arjan has used the imagery of mother-son love only to clarify his spiritual ideas to common people.

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3 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, GS Distributions, Ludhiana, 2012, p. 239.

4 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bhairo Namdev, p. 1164.

5 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 198.

*Ashtachhap* writers also believed that to achieve the Lord *Krishna* one should worship him through the image of *Mata Yashoda*. Because *Mata Yashoda* has received that 'Anand' through her motherly devotion which is not even received by *Devatas* :

जसोदा अति हरषिति गुन गावै ।

... .. ॥

सिव बिरंचि जाकौ नहि पाबत, ताकौ लाड़ लड़ाबै ॥<sup>6</sup>

It is the good fortune of *Mata Yashoda* that she considered Lord *Krishna* as her son:-

जसुमति भाग सुहागिनी हरि कौ सुत जानै ।<sup>7</sup>

Surdas stated that *Mata Yashoda* has worshipped Lord *Krishna* through *Vatsalya Bhava* and by doing so she has achieved *Mukti* by setting at home:-

बड़े भाग प्रगटे जसुदा कै घर बैठे हीं नव निधि आई ॥<sup>8</sup>

As at the sight of the child, mother becomes joyful, similarly the God's devotee finds life by contemplating the God :

माता वारिक देखि अनंद ॥

तिउ हरि जन जीवहि जपि गोबिंद ॥<sup>9</sup>

Parmananddas, one of the *Ashtachhap* writers, clearly states that his Lord is his child and he feels happy by worshipping his Lord *Krishna* through the image of *Mata Yashoda* :

6 Chhitsuami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 108, p. 93.

7 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/690, Vol. I, p. 232, also see Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 46, p. 15.

8 *Ibid.*, Pad 250, Parishisht, Vol. II, p. 643, also see Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 43, p. 15.

9 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Basant Mahala 5, p. 1180.

तू मेरौ ठाकुर तू मेरौ बालक तोहिं विस्वंबर राखै ।  
 'परमानन्द स्वामी' चित चोरयौ चिरजीवौ यों भाखै ।।<sup>10</sup>

Thus, they have metaphorically used the powerful symbiotic bond of mother-child relationship for the devotee and the Ultimate-Reality. It is stated that the mother loves to see her son eat. The Fish loves to bathe in the water. The True Guru loves to put food in the mouth of *Gursikh*:-

माता प्रीति करे पूतु खाए ॥  
 मीने प्रीति बडी जल नाए ॥  
 सतिगुर प्रीति गुरसिख मुखि पाए ॥<sup>11</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers too, used this symbiotic bond through the relationship of *Mata Yashoda* and the Lord *Krishna*. Parmananddas in the voice of *Mata Yashoda* states that she becomes joyful with the sight of *Bal Gopala* (Lord *Krishna*). When she sees him playing in the home then she fills with *Ananda*. She takes Lord *Krishna* in her lap and plays with him by considering Lord as her son:-

बाल बिनोद गोपाल के देखत मोहि भावै ।  
 प्रेम पुलिक आनन्द भरी जसुमति गुन गावै ।।  
 बलि समेत धन साँमरो आँगन में धावै ।  
 बदन चूमि गोद लियो सुत जानि खिलावै ।।<sup>12</sup>

Further, the mother image offers that just as a mother take care of her child, attentively watch over her/him and think about her/his

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10 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 61, p. 21.  
 11 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 4, p. 164.  
 12 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 80, p. 28.



needs, the same way God looks after Its devotee. As the mother rears the child after bearing her/him and keeps an eye on her/him and feeds her/him everywhere, similarly the Holy Preceptor preserves Its disciple:

ਜਿਉ ਜਨਨੀ ਸੁਤੁ ਜਣਿ ਪਾਲਤੀ ਰਾਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਮਝਾਰਿ ॥  
 ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਦੇ ਗਿਰਾਸੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਪੋਚਾਰਿ ॥  
 ਤਿਉ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਰਾਖਤਾ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਪਿਆਰਿ ॥<sup>13</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also believed that as a mother takes care of her child and protects her/him, God also does the same for His devotee :

ਕਧੋਂ ਨ ਜਾਝ ਏਸੇ ਕੇ ਸਰਨ ।  
 ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲੈ ਪੈਖੇ ਮਾਤਾ ਜਯੋਂ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਭਵਸਾਗਰ ਟਰਨ ।।<sup>14</sup>

Like mother, God never counts the shortcomings of the devotee. As the child becomes annoyed with mother and mother makes the child joyful. Similarly for *Sur* (Surdas) Lord (*Krishna*) is like a mother who always forgives his mistakes:-

ਜੈ ਬਾਲਕ ਜਨਨੀ ਸੈਂ ਬਿਰੁਭੈ, ਮਾਤਾ ਟਾਕੈਂ ਲੇਝ ਮਨਾਝ ।  
 ਏਸੇਹਿੰ ਮੋਹਿੰ ਕਰੈ ਕਰੁਨਾਮਯ, ਸੂਰ ਸ਼ਯਾਮ ਜਯੈਂ ਸੁਤ-ਹਿਤ ਮਾਝ ।<sup>15</sup>

The son commits many mistakes but his mother does not hold them against him in her mind. Same way, God never counts the shortcomings of the devotee:-

13 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 4, p. 168.

14 Parmananddas, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Parmananddas*, p. 12.

15 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1595, Vol. 1, p. 474.

ਸੁਤੁ ਅਪਰਾਧ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ਜੇਤੇ ॥  
 ਜਨਨੀ ਚੀਤਿ ਨਾ ਰਾਖਸਿ ਤੇਤੇ ॥  
 ਰਾਮਈਆ ਹਉ ਬਾਰਿਕੁ ਤੇਰਾ ॥  
 ਕਾਹੇ ਨ ਖੰਡਸਿ ਅਵਗਨੁ ਮੇਰਾ ॥<sup>16</sup>

Except Kumbhandas all the *Ashtachhap* writers have used *Vatsalya-Bhakti* (mother-child relationship) to express their ideas. But Surdas and Parmananddas are incomparable in the use of this *Bhava*.<sup>17</sup> They kept themselves mostly in the place of *Yashoda* instead of *Nanda* because of mother's devotion to her child.<sup>18</sup>

In this connection Nikky Singh's observation is useful to quote, "Mother, the Infinite Matrix, and the Transcendent Reality are linked together by common attributes."<sup>19</sup> Feminists in the West have supported this view. For example Sallie McFauge says :

"There is simply no other imagery available to us that have this power for expressing the interdependence and interrelatedness of all life with its ground. All of us, female and male, have the womb as our first home; all of us are born from the bodies of our mothers. What better imagery could there be for expressing the most basic reality of existence that we live and move and have our being in God?"<sup>20</sup>

16 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Kabir Ji, p. 478.

17 Prabhu Dayal Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, p. 335.

18 Mayarani Tondon, *Ashtachhap Kavya Ka Sanskritik Mulayankan*, p. 515.

19 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 10.

20 Sallie Mcfauge, *Modles of God*, quoted in Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 59.

Thus, Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have idealized the love of a mother for her child and held it up as an example for a devotee to God.

Turning to wife-husband imagery (*Madhura Bhava*), one can see that human soul (*Jivatma*) is represented as the wife who is forever seeking union with her Husband (God). One can attain union with God by following the wife's example of loving devotion :

ਭਰਤਾ ਪੇਖਿ ਬਿਗਸੈ ਜਿਉ ਨਾਰੀ ॥

ਤਿਉ ਹਰਿ ਜਨੁ ਜੀਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਚਿਤਾਰੀ ॥<sup>21</sup>

Thus *Suhagan* of Guru Granth Sahib is the guide on spiritual path :

ਪਨ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਪਿਰੁ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜੀਉ ॥<sup>22</sup>

One is advised to go and ask the *Suhagan* how does she obtains her Husband Lord:-

ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੁਹਾਗਣੀ ਵਾਹੈ ਕਿਨੀ ਬਾਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥<sup>23</sup>

In Braj literature too, *Gopi* is accepted as the *Guru* of the *Pushtimarg*.<sup>24</sup> All the *Ashtachhap* writers have expressed their *Bhakti* through the image of *Gopi* but Surdas is best in it.<sup>25</sup> Nanddas' and Kumbhandas' writings are also important from this view.<sup>26</sup> Surdas by making *Gopika* as the guide of spiritual life announced that if

21 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 198.

22 *Ibid.*, Dhansari Mahala 1, p. 689.

23 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

24 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 90.

25 Prabhu Dayal Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, p. 336.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 334.

anybody, male/female, worship the Lord *Krishna* with *Bharta* (husband) *Bhava* will get salvation without doubt :

गोपी-पद-रज महिमा, बिधि भृगु सौं कही ।

..... ।

जो कोउ भरता-भाव हृदय धरि हरि-पद ध्यावै ।

नारि पुरुष कोउ होइ, श्रुति-ऋचा-गति सो पावै ।।

तिनकी पदरज कोउ जो, बृंदावन भू माँह ।

परसै सोउ गोपिका गति पावै संशय नाहिं ।।<sup>27</sup>

Nanddas in his work '*Siddanth Panchadhya*' says that *Gopis* have followed a new way which was based on loving devotion towards the Lord. The *Gopika's* way is followed even by the *Devatas* like *Sukhdev*, *Narad*, *Udho* and *Shivji*. Because of this he called *Gopi* as the prime preceptor of *Bhakti-Marga* :

गोपिन अपनो प्रेम-पंथ न्यारोइ दिखरायो ।।

..... ।

जिन गोपिन कौं प्रेम निरखि शुक भये अनुरागी ।।

..... ।

उद्धौ बुद्धि बिशुद्धनु सौ पुनि सो रज इच्छै ।।

संकर नीकैं जानत सारद नारद गानत ।

तातें सबै जगत-गुरु गोपिन गुरु करि मानत ।।<sup>28</sup>

Same view is expressed by Parmananddas. He stated that *Gopi* is the symbol of love. She has achieved *Gopala* (Lord *Krishna*) by sacrificing her mind, heart and wealth for the sake of Lord:-

27 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1793, Vol. I, pp. 523-24.

28 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 33.

गोपी प्रेम की ध्वजा ।

जिन गोपाल कियो बस अपने उर धरि स्याम भुजा ।।

सुकमुनि व्यास प्रसंसा कीनी ऊधौ संत सराही ।।<sup>29</sup>

All human beings are considered *Gopis* and the Lord *Krishna* as the only male.<sup>30</sup> Surdas says that all human beings are *Gopis* and the Lord *Krishna* is the only husband :

गोपिनि परम कंत हरि जान्यौ, लख्यौ न ब्रह्मा-प्रभात ।।<sup>31</sup>

Due to *Suhagan's* and *Gopi's* capacity to receive God, the writers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have identified themselves with wife imagery and expressed the ardor of their heart through her voice. Guru Nanak called the Lord only Husband :

ਸਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ ॥<sup>32</sup>

Guru Nanak says, "Our Husband-Lord is dear. We are the servants, the hand-maidens of the Lord; our Husband Lord is only True":-

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਹੈ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ ਸਹੁ ਖਰਾ ਪਿਆਰਾ ॥

ਹਮ ਸਹ ਕੇਰੀਆ ਦਾਸੀਆ ਸਾਚਾ ਖਸਮੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥<sup>33</sup>

Guru Amardas called himself the wife of the Lord :

ਮੈ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਕੰਤੁ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥<sup>34</sup>

Sant Kabir expressed the similar view. He stated, "The Lord is my Husband and I am the Lord's Bride":-

29 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 825, p. 289.

30 Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Granthawali*, Vol. VI, Rajkamal Parkashan, New Delhi, 1981, p. 135.

31 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1626, Vol. I, p. 483.

32 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.

33 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 729.

34 *Ibid.*, Bhairo Mahala 3, p. 1128.

ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਰੁ ਹਉ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਬਹੁਰੀਆ ॥<sup>35</sup>

Surdas called Lord *Krishna* his Husband, without whom nobody could remove his sorrows :

मेरे तो तुम पति, तुमहीं गति, तुम समान को पावै?  
सूरदास प्रभु तुम्हरी कृपा बिनु, को मो दुख बिसरावैं ॥<sup>36</sup>

In another couplet he prayed in the voice of *Gopi* to receive the Lord as husband :

‘सूर’ स्याम सुन्दर पति पावै, यहै हमारी आस ॥<sup>37</sup>

Krishandas also considered Lord *Krishna* as husband :

‘कृष्णदास’ प्रभु रसिकराइ पति गिरिधर नवरँग पिय सुसनेहि री ॥<sup>38</sup>

Equating with Guru Granth Sahib, Braj writers have also used word '*Kant*' and '*Khasam*' for the Lord. Kumbhandas called *Girdhar* (*Krishna*) as his *Kant* :

इहै समै मिलि गिरिधर नव कंत हिं ॥<sup>39</sup>

Parmananddas said that Lord *Krishna* is his *Kant*:-

मदन गोपाल मनोहर मूरति मिल्यो भावतो कंत ॥<sup>40</sup>

Krishandas and Parmananddas used word *Khasam* for God in their works through the voice of *Gopi*.<sup>41</sup>

These writers also think of themselves as being *Gopi* of Braj because of the *Gopi*'s capacity to achieve the Lord by her loving

35 *Ibid.*, Asa Kabir Ji, p. 483.

36 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 1/42, Vol. I, p. 13, also see Pad 10/1053, Vol. I, p. 328.

37 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1383, Vol. I, p. 418.

38 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 228, p. 82.

39 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 23.

40 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 381, p. 129.

41 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 171, p. 62, also see Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 702, p. 244.

devotion. In this connection Parmananddas is praying to the God that he should always be a *Dasi* to the *Gopi* :

नंदकुमार सदा वर मांगो गोपिन की दासी मोहि कीजै ।।<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, Nanddas in his work *Roopmanjari* guides the heroine (*Roopmanjri*) on spiritual path in the form of *Indumati*, by becoming female not male.

Being *Gopis* they are able to enjoy the *Madhura Bhava* in their *Sakhi* form which they assume at night.<sup>43</sup> Surdas is known as *Champaklata*, Parmananddas as *Chandrabhaga*, Kumbhandas as *Vishakha*, Krishandas as *Lalita*, Chhitsuwami as *Paga*, Govindswami as *Bhama*, Chaturbhujdas as *Vimla* and Nanddas as *Chandrarekha*.<sup>44</sup>

Sikh Gurus too, have used word '*Mahala*' to represent themselves as wives of God in their writings which are included in Guru Granth Sahib. Word '*Mahala*' is associated with *Sanskrit* word *Mahila* (woman) and indicated that the title manifests the Gurus understanding of their relationship with God in terms of wife and husband.<sup>45</sup> They considered themselves as the wives of God and thus used word *Mahala 1*, *Mahala 2*, *Mahala 3*, and so on. *Mahala* word is standing for the Guru and 1 Means Guru Nanak Dev, *Mahala 2* Means Guru Angad Dev and so on. However some scholars associate this word with *Arabic* word '*Mahala*' means 'palace' which refers to the

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42 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 576, p. 200.

43 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 90.

44 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. II, p. 509.

45 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of The Sikh Scripture*, p. 137.

Guru as the place where God resides and hence *Mahala 1, Mahala 2* and so on.<sup>46</sup>

Metaphor of *Suhagan* and *Duhagan* woman are also used there. *Suhagan* is metaphorically used to represent *Gurmukh* whereas *Duhagan* symbolically resembles with *Manmukh*. Thus *Suhagan-Gurmukh* is a woman who is the beloved of the Lord, whether in the body of a man or woman :

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਪਿਰੁ ਰਾਖਿਆ ਉਰਧਾਰਿ ॥  
ਮਿਠਾ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਨਿਵਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਸੇਜੈ ਰਵੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥<sup>47</sup>

*Suhagan* wins the favour of her Spouse and enjoys union forever:

ਧੰਨ ਸੁਹਾਗਣਿ ਜੋ ਪੀਅ ਭਾਵੈ ॥  
ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਫਿਰਿ ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, *Duhagan* is deprived of the union due to her ignorance of the Lord :

ਦੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਮਹਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਨੀ ਨ ਜਾਣਨਿ ਪਿਰ ਕਾ ਸੁਆਉ ॥  
ਫਿਕਾ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਨਾ ਨਿਵਹਿ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਉ ਸੁਆਉ ॥<sup>49</sup>

*Duhagan* is infact an ego-centered person (*Manmukh*) who being in illusion, remains away from God :

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਕੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਰੈਣਿ ਵਿਹਾਇ ॥  
ਗਰਬਿ ਅਟੀਆ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਜਲਹਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਦੂਜੇ ਭਾਇ ॥<sup>50</sup>

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Guru Granth Sahib, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 31.*

48 *Ibid., Asa Kabir Ji, p. 483.*

49 *Ibid., Asa Mahala 3, p. 426.*

50 *Ibid., Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 38.*



*Duhagan/Manmukh* craves only for the riches of the world and not for the company of her Lord :

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਨੀ ਜਾਸਨਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਭੁ ਹਾਰਿ ॥<sup>51</sup>

So, the life of *Duhagan* is pointless due to her inclination towards worldly pleasures :

ਸੂਰੈ ਵੇਸਿ ਦੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਪਰ ਪਿਰੁ ਰਾਵਣ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਪਿਰੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਮੋਹੀ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ ॥<sup>52</sup>

*Duhagan/Manmukh* always remain away from God because of her unapproved qualities :

ਅਉਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਗੁਣੁ ਕੋ ਨਹੀ ਬਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਈ ਅਵਗਣਿ ਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਦੂਰਿ ॥<sup>53</sup>

*Duhagan* is immersed in *Maya* due to her avariance, greed and pride. These are not the ways of meeting the *Shauh* (Husband) :

ਲਬ ਲੋਭ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਮਾਤੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

ਇਨੀ ਬਾਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਈ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਇਆਣੀ ॥<sup>54</sup>

*Duhagan* has great attachment to *Maya* but she does not care for Lord. So, she always remain away from Lord :

ਬਾਬਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਭਰਮ ਭੁਲਾਇ ॥

ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲੀ ਡੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਨਾ ਪਿਰ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥<sup>55</sup>

In *Ashtachhap* writings also, there is description of *Suhagan* and *Duhagan*. Surdas says that *Suhagan* has received the God :

51 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 3, p. 950.

52 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 785.

53 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 37.

54 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

55 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 60.

भई जाइ वै स्याम सुहागिनि, बड़भागिनि कहवावैं।<sup>56</sup>

*Suhagan (Bhakta)* of the Lord received him by forgiving the worldly things and pleasures:

मेरो कहयो तु मान सुहागिन अति सुंदर सुकुमार।<sup>57</sup>

Parmananddas writes that *Duhagan* does not feel happy on the sight of the beloved and is totally immersed in worldly pleasure :

कमल मुख देखत तृपति न होय ।

यह सुख कहा दुहागनि जाने रही निसा भर सोय।।<sup>58</sup>

The final stage of spiritual path, the state of eternal bliss in union with God, the mingling of light with light, is also defined through the image of *Gurmukh/Suhagan*, who attains the company of her husband:

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਵਰੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਨ ਕਦੇ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਵੀਆਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥<sup>59</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also explained that if a devotee of Lord *Krishna* approaches him with *Gopi Bhava* then that devotee enjoy the union with Lord *Krishna* :

कृष्णदास स्वामी बस कीन्हे प्रेम-पुंज की चोपी।।<sup>60</sup>

बहु नायक है बिलसत आपु। जाकौ सिव पावत नहीं जापु।

ताकौ ब्रजनारी पति जानै। कोउ आदरै, कोउ अपमानै।।<sup>61</sup>

56 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3023, Vol. II, p. 131.

57 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 50, p. 53.

58 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 726, p. 253.

59 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 4, p. 78.

60 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 302, p. 111.

61 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3093, Vol. II, p. 145.

Returning to the metaphor of *Duhagan* in Guru Granth Sahib, it is seen that *Duhagan* and *Maya* both are associated due to their ignorance of Ultimate Reality :

ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਧਰਕਟੀ ਨਾਰਿ ॥

ਭੁੰਡੀ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਕਾਮਣਿਆਰਿ ॥<sup>62</sup>

Woman is also compared with wealth. The fool loves gold and woman:-

ਕਨਿਕ ਕਾਮਨੀ ਹੇਤੁ ਗਵਾਰਾ ॥<sup>63</sup>

There is pleasure of gold and silver, pleasure of woman, the pleasure of the fragrance of *sandalwood*:-

ਰਸੁ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਰਸੁ ਰੁਪਾ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਰਸੁ ਪਰਮਲ ਕੀ ਵਾਸੁ ॥<sup>64</sup>

Because of this comparison some Western scholars pointed out that in Guru Granth Sahib, woman is often associated with *Maya*, "indicating its apprehension of the female as a barrier to the attainment of emancipation."<sup>65</sup>

It must be kept in mind that these are philosophical concepts which needed to be discussed in their context. Apart from wife there is also mention of mother, father, son and daughter in Guru Granth Sahib, as the objects which induce to forget God :

ਬੰਧਨ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥

ਬੰਧਨ ਸੁਤ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਅਰੁ ਨਾਰਿ ॥<sup>66</sup>

62 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bilwal Mahala 1, p. 796.

63 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 416.

64 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 15.

65 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 25.

66 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 416.

So, the definition of *Maya* is equally applicable to both man and woman as J.S. Grewal informed, “The husband is also a part of *Maya* and the woman is a dupe as well as a part of *Maya*”.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore some scholars objected that there are negative approaches towards woman in Guru Granth Sahib. Among these scholars one is Jakobsh who has represented Guru Ramdas as a high critic of woman on the basis of his one hymn<sup>68</sup> :

ਮਨਮੁਖਾ ਦੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਜੋਰਾ ਅਮਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਭਲਾ ॥  
 ਜੋਰਾ ਦਾ ਆਖਿਆ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਮਾਵਦੇ ਸੇ ਅਪਵਿਤ ਅਮੇਧ ਖਲਾ ॥  
 ਕਾਮਿ ਵਿਆਪੇ ਕੁਸੁਧ ਨਰ ਸੇ ਜੋਰਾ ਪੁਛਿ ਚਲਾ ॥  
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਆਖਿਐ ਜੋ ਚਲੈ ਸੋ ਸਤਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਭਲ ਭਲਾ ॥  
 ਜੋਰਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਸਭਿ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਇਅਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਖੇਲ ਸਭਿ ਖਿਲਾ ॥<sup>69</sup>

The view taken by Jakobsh is partial and therefore, misleading.<sup>70</sup> Guru Ramdas talks of the *Manmukh* in contrast with those who act in accordance with the Guru's instruction; the sinful and ignorant men are those who listen to their women out of lust as a moral weakness, and ignore the Guru's instruction.<sup>71</sup> Even in the end of the hymn it is clarified that both woman and man are the creation of God.

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67 J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs : Ideology, Institutions and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009, p. 209.  
 68 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 34.  
 69 Guru Granth Sahib, Gauri Mahal 4, p. 304.  
 70 J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs : Ideology, Institutions and Identity*, p. 209.  
 71 *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

In *Ashtachhap* writings, particularly in Surdas, woman is compared with *Avidya* (ignorance) which according to him is a form of *Maya* responsible for the sufferings of man :

तहाँ अविद्या नारि प्रधान ।<sup>72</sup>

Woman is also compared with wealth. Both of them are considered as waves of elusive passion. In the end these passions will slip from man's hands. Man is advised to take refuge in the Name of Lord before he leaves the world and lost to the flames :

अंतर गहत कनक-कामिनि कौं, हाथ रहैगौ पचिबौ ।

तजि अभिमान, राम कहि बौरे, नतरूक ज्वाला तचिबौ ।।<sup>73</sup>

Here it must be kept in mind that these references are contextual and needed to be understood in their context.

Another objection about the use of wife imagery in Guru Granth Sahib is that it allowed the masculine identity to God. Doris R. Jakobsh pointed out that the Ultimate Reality in Sikh scripture is most often conceived in masculine terms, as *Akal-Purakh*, *Karta-Purakh*<sup>74</sup> :

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ<sup>75</sup>

Further in the Sikh Scripture, it is stated that there is one Husband (Lord) and all other beings Its brides:-

72 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 4/406, Vol. 1, p. 121.

73 *Ibid.*, Pad 1/59, Vol. I, p. 17.

74 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 17.

75 *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.1.

ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਸਬਾਈ ॥<sup>76</sup>

or

ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਸਬਾਈ ਨਾਰਿ ॥<sup>77</sup>

There are so many brides of the One Husband (Lord):-

ਕੇਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਵਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਸਮਾਲਿ ॥<sup>78</sup>

Here it must be cleared that in Guru Granth Sahib both feminine and masculine imagery is used to comprehend the Ultimate Reality. God is addressed as mother, father, sister, brother and friend – thus as both male and female :

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧਪੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ ॥<sup>79</sup>

“God is our Mother and Father; we are God's children”:-

ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥<sup>80</sup>

Even in Guru Granth Sahib at one place, God's beauty is presented in terms, supposedly appealing to the woman – Her beautiful eyes and sparkling teeth, sharp nose and long luxurious hair, Her lustrous body cast in gold, Her necklace like *Krishan's*, Her pleasing gait, Her sweet voice, Her alluring youth, Her rhythmic movement and Her majesty. It is like the following water of *Ganges* :

ਤੇਰੇ ਬੰਕੇ ਲੋਇਣ ਦੰਤ ਰੀਸਾਲਾ ॥

ਸੋਹਣੇ ਨਕ ਜਿਨ ਲੰਮੜੇ ਵਾਲਾ ॥

76 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 3, pp. 591-92.

77 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 933.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 932.

79 *Ibid.*, Majh Mahala 5, p. 103.

80 *Ibid.*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 268.

ਕੰਚਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਸੁਇਨੇ ਕੀ ਢਾਲਾ ॥  
 ਸੋਵੰਨ ਢਾਲਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ ਮਾਲਾ ਜਪਹੁ ਤੁਸੀ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ ॥  
 ਜਮ ਦੁਆਰਿ ਨ ਹੋਹੁ ਖੜੀਆ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਮਹੇਲੀਹੋ ॥  
 ਹੰਸ ਹੰਸਾ ਬਗ ਬਗਾ ਲਹੈ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਜਾਲਾ ॥<sup>81</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib affirmed quite sincerely that It is God and God alone who has assumed the form of both man and woman for self-manifestation and self-realization :

ਆਪੇ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਨਾਰੀ ॥  
 ਆਪੇ ਪਾਸਾ ਆਪੇ ਸਾਰੀ ॥<sup>82</sup>

But, "the commentators, interpreters and translators of Sikh Scripture", as Nikky Singh points out, "have primarily elaborated the masculine principle; the feminine so powerful and eloquent – has been overlooked."<sup>83</sup> They have invariably referred to the One as "He" and kept the male image at the centre of their discussions.<sup>84</sup> Because of this tendency some Western scholars believe that Sikh scripture like other scriptures allow masculine identity to God. It must be kept in mind that although imagery is used to comprehend the Ultimate Reality yet Guru Granth Sahib does not consider God to be male or female. God in Guru Granth Sahib is *Nirguna* whose gender cannot be determined. God is *Ajuni* (unborn). It belongs to neither sex. In other words the Ultimate Reality is beyond gender :

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81 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 1, p. 567.

82 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1020.

83 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, 15.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

ਸੁੰਨ ਮੰਡਲ ਇਕੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਬੈਸੇ ॥

ਨਾਰਿ ਨ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਕਹਹੁ ਕੋਊ ਕੈਸੇ ॥<sup>85</sup>

While addressing to *Qazi's*, in one of his hymn Kabir said, “Holy Scripture says that *Allah* is True and *Allah* is neither male nor female”:-

ਸਾਚੁ ਕਤੇਬ ਬਖਾਨੈ ਅਲਹੁ ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ ॥<sup>86</sup>

As, God is beyond gender, so to avoid misconceptions, '**It**' is a better word to be used for God instead of 'He' as informed by Nikky Singh.<sup>87</sup> In this work also, word It is used for God of Guru Granth Sahib to represent Its *Nirguana* state. Guru Granth Sahib considered God *Ajuni*.<sup>88</sup> It has no form, feature and colour.<sup>89</sup>

As far as Braj literature is concerned these writers also called God mother, father, Guru, brother and friend :

ਤੁਮ ਸਾਤਾ ਤੁਮ ਪਿਤਾ ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੁ, ਤੁਮਹਿੰ ਸਹੋਦਰ ਬੰਧੁ ਹੇਰਾ ।<sup>90</sup>

God is the mother, father, brother and sustainer of the world.  
God forgives the mistakes of individual's:-

ਤੁਮ ਸਾਤਾ ਤੁਮਹੀਂ ਜਗ ਧਾਤਾ, ਤੁਮ ਭਾਤਾ ਅਪਰਾਧ ਚੁਮਾਝ ।<sup>91</sup>

Even the beauty of the Lord *Krishna* is explained in the terms specifically applied to the woman. Surdas writes that the Lord has

85 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Dhansari Mahala 1, p. 685.

86 *Ibid.*, Asa Kabir Ji, p. 483.

87 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of The Transcendent*, p.3.

88 *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.1.

89 *Ibid.*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 283.

90 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4837, Vol. II, p. 554.

91 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/595, Vol. I, p. 473.



taken the form of woman and worn *Sari* and applied make-up of flowers :

तब हरि भेष धरयौ जुवती कौ । सुंदर परम भाव तौ जी कौ ।।  
सारी कंचुकि केसरि टीकौं । करि सिंगार सब फूलनि ही कौ ।।<sup>92</sup>

In another couplet, he explained that the Lord has applied *Kajal* to eyes, filled vermillion with a string of pearls in the parting of hair and a bindi on the forehead. He worn *Dandni Sari* and by seeing Him in the disguise of a woman, *Radha* and *Gopis* are laughing:

ब्रज जुवती मिलि नागरि, राधा मै मोहन लै आई ।  
लोचन अँजि, भाल बेंदी दै, पुनि पुनि पाइ पराई ।।  
बेनी गूँथि, माँग सिर पारी, बधू बधू कहि गाई ।  
प्यारी हँसति देखि मोहनमुख, जुवती बने बनाई ।।<sup>93</sup>

These writers worship the Lord in *Yogul Rupa* (both as male and female).<sup>94</sup> They have made no difference between *Krishna* and *Radha*. They have asserted that *Radha* and *Krishna* are one and the same :

स्याम स्यामा स्यामा स्याम ।

..... ।

‘कृष्णदास’ प्रभु गिरिधर स्यामा, स्यामा स्याम रसिकता धाम ।।<sup>95</sup>

They have the same nature and qualities (*Svarupa* and *Guna*) :

एक ही वेष एक रूप गुण गिरिधर श्याम राधिका गोरी ।<sup>96</sup>

The two components of the Divine pair are said to be as inseparable as wave and water, as mirror and shadow :

92 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/3511, Vol. II, p. 246.

93 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/3497, Vol. II, p. 241.

94 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallab Sampradaya*, Vol. II, p. 599.

95 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 98, p. 34.

96 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 27, p. 63.

तुम वै एक न दोइ पियारी। जल तैं तरँग होइ नहिं न्यारी।।  
प्यारी मैं तुम तुम मैं प्यारी। जैसेँ दरपन छाहँ निहारी।।<sup>97</sup>

They are a single soul housed in two bodies :

तुम तैं प्रिया नैकु नहि न्यारी। एक प्रान द्वै देह तुम्हारी।<sup>98</sup>

Lord *Krishna* and *Radha* are the one and the same. They have one soul housed in two bodies without any doubt:-

एक प्रान द्वै देह हैं, द्विबिधा नहिं यामै।<sup>99</sup>

According to them, *Parm Purush Krishna* is the *Shaktiman* and *Prakriti*<sup>100</sup> *Radha* is the *Shakti* (power) of Lord by means of which *Shri Krishna Parabrahman* manifests the world for playing of his *Lila*.<sup>101</sup>

So, both of them cannot be separated :

प्रकृति पुरुष एकहि करि जानहु, बातनि भेद करायौ।।  
जल थल जहाँ रहौं तुम बिनु नहिं, बेद उपनिषद गायौ।  
द्वै-तन जीव-एक हम दोऊ, सुख-कारन उपजायौ।<sup>102</sup>

They considered that Lord *Krishna* is *Parabrahman* and he has the capacity to take form of both male and female :

सूर बने दोउ नारि पुरुष तुम, दुहुँ की अकथ कहानी।।<sup>103</sup>

Lord *Krishna* himself is the male, and he himself is the female:-

आपुहि पुरुष आपुहीं नारी। आपुहिं बानप्रस्थ ब्रहाचारी।।<sup>104</sup>

97 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3446, Vol. II, p. 221.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1719, Vol. I, p. 506.

100 Prakriti and Purush are the ancient male and female principles of Spirit and Matter.

101 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, pp. 90-91, also see Gajanan Sharma, *Bhakti Kaleen Kavya Mein Nari*, Rachna Parkashan, Allahabad, 1972, p. 215.

102 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2305, Vol. I, p. 661.

103 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/3377, Vol. II, p. 201.

104 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/4711, Vol. II, p. 512.

But it is very surprising that all the temples of *Vallabh Sampradya*, to whom *Ashtachhap* writers belong, are only of Lord *Krishna's* instead of *Yogul Rupa*.<sup>105</sup>

The use of female imagery to express *Bhakti* towards God is also extended to include females in the animal world. Guru Arjan in a hymn called himself fish and God water :

ਮੋਹਿ ਮਛਲੀ ਤੁਮ ਨੀਰ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਉ ਸਰੈ ॥<sup>106</sup>

Guru Nanak seeks to identify himself with the females of several species to express his yearning for union. He wishes to be a doe (*Harni*) living in the *jungles*, or a *Koel (Kokil)* singing in the mango grove, or a fish (*Machuli*) dwelling in the waters, or a she-serpent (*Nagin*) within the earth, in each case enjoying the proximity of the Lord :<sup>107</sup>

ਹਰਣੀ ਹੋਵਾ ਬਨਿ ਬਸਾ ਕੰਦ ਮੂਲ ਚੁਣਿ ਖਾਉ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਾਰਿ ਵਾਰਿ ਹਉ ਜਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥

..... ॥

..... ॥

ਕੋਕਿਲ ਹੋਵਾ ਅੰਬਿ ਬਸਾ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥

ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ਮੇਰੁ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਦਰਸਨਿ ਰੂਪਿ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥

ਮਛਲੀ ਹੋਵਾ ਜਲਿ ਬਸਾ ਜੀਆ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਸਾਰਿ ॥

ਉਰਵਾਰਿ ਪਾਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਹੁ ਵਸੈ ਹਉ ਮਿਲਉਗੀ ਬਾਹ ਪਸਾਰਿ ॥

105 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. II, p. 599.

106 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bilwal Mahala 5, p. 847.

107 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 93.

नागनि हेवा पर वसा मघदु वसै भुँ जगि ॥

नानक मदा मेरागही जिन नैती नैति मभाष्टि ॥<sup>108</sup>

Among *Ashtachhap* writers Surdas, who has composed a large number of couplets, expressed his *Bhakti* towards the Lord *Krishna* through the medium of cows of Braj.<sup>109</sup> He says that it is the good fortune of cows that they have achieved the Lord :

देखौ धन्य भाग गाइनि के, प्रीति करत वनबारी ॥<sup>110</sup>

In *Bhramargit Gopis* are informing *Udho* to tell *Krishna* that the cows of Braj are suffering extreme misery in his *Viyoga*. The water (tears) continuously comes from their eyes and they are repeating the name of the Lord *Krishna*. They are in the habit of going and smelling the places where *Krishna* has grazed them. In *Viraha* they become like fish without water :

ऊधौ इतनी कहियौ जाइ ।

अति कृस गात भई ये तुम बिनु परम दुखारी गाइ ।।

जल समूह बरषति दोउ अँखियाँ, हूँकित लीन्हे नाँउ ।

जहाँ जहाँ गो दोहन कीन्हों, सूँधित सोई ठाँउ ।।

परति पछार खाइ छिन ही छिन, अति आतुर हूँ दीन ।

मानहु 'सूर' काढ़ि डारी हैं, बारि मध्य तैं मीन ॥<sup>111</sup>

It may be said that the use of feminine imagery and female voice by both ideologies, is an indicative of the high regard that they have

108 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 157.

109 Vallabhdas Tiwari, *Hindi Kavya Ma Nari*, Jawahar Pustakalaya Parkashan, Mathura, 1973, p. 346.

110 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1231, Vol. I, p. 383.

111 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/4687, Vol. II, p. 506.

for woman. But some Western scholars pointed out that the use of feminine imagery and female voice in Guru Granth Sahib is certainly not a unique thing as many North Indian Saints have also used it.<sup>112</sup>

About this it must be said that the use of feminine imagery and voice is not only confined to North Indian Saints but also used by the Prophets of the Old Testament, Christian Saints and *Sufi Shaikhs*.<sup>113</sup> Michael Drayton, an English poet of medieval Europe, published the poem '*The Muses Elizium*' in 1630. In this poem nuptial celebration is associated with mystical union.<sup>114</sup> In the New Testament, the Church has also been designated as the Bride of the Christ.<sup>115</sup> The *Sufis* adapted the same model of the lover and beloved.<sup>116</sup> The beloved is male and the lover is female. In India one of the earliest examples of it is *Amir Khusro's* devotional poetry addressed to his preceptor, *Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya* in the form of love songs of a female.<sup>117</sup> However, the major works in *Sufi* poetry such as *Mulla Daud's 'Chandayan'*, *Malik Muhammad Jaisi's 'Padmavat'*, *Manjhan's*, *'Madhumali'* and *Shah Qasim's 'Hans Jawahir'* revert to the *Arabic-Persian* model of the male seeker and the female object.<sup>118</sup> But the vocabulary and the sense of this idea used by others differ in many respects from the form and

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112 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 26.

113 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 90.

114 Sayed Naqi Husain Jafri, *Essays on Literature, History and Society*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2010, pp.142-148.

115 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 90.

116 Sayed Naqi Husain Jafri, *Essays on Literature, History and Society*, p. 44.

117 G.S. Talib, *Indian Poetry : Sacred and Secular*, p. 20.

118 Sayed Naqi Husain Jafri, *Essays on Literature, History and Society*, p. 44.

essence of Guru Granth Sahib. It becomes clear by taking an example from Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature. Although Braj writers explained the spiritual path through the image of *Gopi* at philosophical level but practically woman is not directly related to God. She is secondarily related through the medium of her husband. Husband is considered as God for her and his service is advised to wife by *Ashtachhap* writers :

अव तुम भवन जाहु, पति पूजहु परमेस्वर की नाई।।<sup>119</sup>

Wife is advised by Surdas to do the service to husband by giving up her all pleasures:-

कपट तजि पति करौ पूजा, कहा तुम जिय गुनौ।<sup>120</sup>

Contrary to this, the wife image of Guru Granth Sahib devotes a very direct encounter between her and the Transcendent Groom. A passage from Nikky Singh's work is useful to reproduce here, "In many cultures, women do not stand in a direct relation to the Ultimate Reality and are connected to It secondarily, through the male. Western feminist scholars have voiced their regret over the structure of patriarchal law in the Old Testament, where only the male heads of family are addressed directly. On Indian soil also, we find patriarchy as the dominant motif : *Pandits* and *Priests*-the mediators between *Brahman* and the people in case of Hinduism – are invariably male. Ulema-the religious lawyers and theologian-play an analogous

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119 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1632, Vol. I, p. 484.

120 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1633, Vol. I, p. 485.

role in the Islamic world. Guru Nanak's bridal symbol suggests a freedom from patriarchal mediums; without anyone standing in between, the bride directly and passionately seeks to embrace the wholly other, her Transcendent Groom."<sup>121</sup>

To conclude this part it is said that Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have widely used the mother imagery, wife imagery and imagery of female species from the animal world to explain the spiritual thought. Guru Granth Sahib states that a devotee should have same attachment to the Lord just as a mother have for her child. Because of mother's devotion to her child *Ashtachhap* writers have mostly kept themselves in place of *Yashoda* instead of *Nanda*. Further, the mother image offers that just as a mother has care for her child, similarly God looks after Its devotee.

Wife imagery of the both ideologies states that one can attain union with God by following the wife's example of loving devotion. Thus, *Suhagan* of Guru Granth Sahib and *Gopi* of Braj literature are the Gurus (preceptors) on spiritual path. Due to *Suhagan* and *Gopi's* capacity to achieve God, the writers of both ideologies have identified themselves with wife imagery and expressed the ardor of their hearts through her voice. They called themselves the wives of the Lord.

The writers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature even include the imagery of female species from the animal world. Guru Nanak seeks to identify himself with the females of several species to

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121 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 99.

express his yearning for union. He wishes, he is a doe (*Harini*) living in the jungles or a Koel (*Kokil*) singing in the water or a she-serpent (*Nagin*) within the earth in each case enjoying the proximity of the Lord.

Among *Ashtachhap* writers Surdas also expressed his *Bhakti* towards Lord *Krishna* through the medium of cows of Braj. In *Bhramargit Gopis* are informing to *Udho* to tell *Krishna* that cows of Braj are suffering extreme misery in his *Viyoga*. They are in the habit of going and smelling the places where *Krishna* has grazed them. The water (tears) continuously coming from their eyes they are repeating the Name of the Lord *Krishna*.

On the basis of the hymns above cited it is authenticated that the spiritual path of living is defined through feminine imagery and female voice in Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature. But it is interesting to note that all the writers of both ideologies are male then why have they used female imagery? It is discussed in the next part of this chapter.

### **QUEST FOR FEMININE QUALITIES**

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have laid great emphasis on the *Bhakti* of Lord. '*Navdha*' *Bhakti* (devotion of nine types) is considered main source of worship. These nine types of *Bhakti* are *Srawan* (listening); *Kirtan* (singing in praise of God); *Simran* (remembering); *Pad-Sevan* (worship of feet); *Archana* (offerings); *Vandana* (prayer); *Dasya Bhava* (humility); *Sakhya Bhava* (friendship)



and *Atam-Nivedan* (sacrifice of self). *Navdha Bhakti* is mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib<sup>122</sup> and Braj literature.<sup>123</sup>

**Srawan** : It is the first type of *Navdha Bhakti*. Its method is to hear or listen to the greatness of the Lord :

ਸ੍ਰਵਣੀ ਸੁਨਣਾ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਉ ॥<sup>124</sup>

In *Ashtachhap* writings too, importance is given to listen to accounts of the life of Lord *Krishna*- as for example the accounts of Shri *Krishna's* life in Braj that are given in the Tenth Book of the *Bhagavata Purana* and in the *Padas* in *Braj Bhasha* composed by Surdas:<sup>125</sup>

जो यह कथा सुनै चित लाइ ।

सो भव तरि बैकुण्ठहि जाइ ।।<sup>126</sup>

**Kirtan** : It is also counted as a type of '*Navdha*' *Bhakti*. Guru Nanak called himself a singer (*Dhadhi*) who has been employed by God to sing Its praises:-

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥<sup>127</sup>

Guru Amardas specifically urged his followers to perform *Kirtan* of the hymns of the Gurus:-

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122 ਭਗਤਿ ਨਵੈ ਪਰਕਾਰਾ ॥ Guru Granth Sahib, Sri Raga Mahala 5, p. 71, also see Daleep Singh Deep, *Bhakti Lehar and Gurmat*, ed., Satinder Singh, *Comparative Indian Literature*, p. 302.  
 123 प्रेम-सहित नवधा बिस्तारै । Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 9/448, Vol. I, p. 153, also see Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. II, p. 557.  
 124 Guru Granth Sahib, Gujri Mahala 5, p 517.  
 125 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 83.  
 126 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/620, Vol. I, p. 209.  
 127 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 1, p. 150.

ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥<sup>128</sup>

During the time of Guru Arjan its importance grew apparently. The effect of *Kirtan* goes beyond life-related issues-it results in eliminating the fear of death and helps to attain liberation:-

ਹਰਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਈਐ ॥

ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਜੋਨੀ ਪਾਈਐ ॥<sup>129</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers have also explained the importance of *Kirtan* in *Bhakti*. *Kirtan* to them is the singing aloud the names and the virtues and the events in the *Lilas* of *Shri Krishna*. *Kirtan* is intended to fill the hearts of the *Bhaktis* with the emotional experience of the various *Lilas* which were performed by *Shri Krishna*. Kumbhandas stated, "My only wish is to sing the praise of *Girdhar* (Lord *Krishna*)":-

माई हों गिरधिर गुण गाउं ।

मेरो तो यह व्रत है निरंतर और न रुचि ऊपजाऊँ ॥<sup>130</sup>

The most famous *Kirtans* in the *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya* are those sung, together with musical accompaniment that is often excellent, before the Divine *Svarupa* at the periods of *Darshana* in the temples belonging to the *Sampradaya*.<sup>131</sup>

**Simran** : Great importance is given on the repetition (*Simran*) of Name of God. It is believed that with *Simran* all the sins are washed away and happiness is obtained:

128 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 3, p. 593.

129 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 5, p. 623.

130 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 64, p. 77.

131 Richard Barz., *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 83.

ਸਿਮਰਉ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਉ ॥<sup>132</sup>

or

हरि हरि हरि, समिरो सब कोई ।

हरि हरि सुमिरत सब सुख होई ॥<sup>133</sup>

It is stated that as the stained clothes become clean by washing with soap, same way, the mind which is stained and polluted by sin, cleans only by the *Naam Simran*:-

ਮੂਤ ਪਲੀਤੀ ਕਪੜੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਦੇ ਸਾਬੂਣੁ ਲਈਐ ਓਹੁ ਧੋਇ ॥

ਭਰੀਐ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ॥

ਓਹੁ ਧੋਏ ਨਾਵੈ ਕੈ ਰੰਗਿ ॥<sup>134</sup>

Krishandas stated that with *Naam Simran* all the the *Jivas* of *Kaliyuga* become pure:-

नाम सुमिरत भये पावन सकल खल कलि के जिया ॥<sup>135</sup>

**Pad Sevan** : *Pad-Sevan* has great importance in the field of *Bhakti*. *Pad Sevan* means, “the act of honouring or worshipping the feet”.<sup>136</sup> In *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya* it refers to the reverent service which *Bhakta* (devotee) performs before the *Svarupa* of *Shri Krishna*. With it all the wishes of devotee are fulfilled as Krishandas has informed:

अनन्य होइ चरनारविंद भजु सकल पूरन काम ॥<sup>137</sup>

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132 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 262.  
 133 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 2/348, Vol. I, p. 96.  
 134 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Japji, p. 4.  
 135 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1122, p. 465.  
 136 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 84.  
 137 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1090, p. 450.

Its importance is also explained by Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Arjan Dev stated, “I wash your feet, I massage and clean them; I give this mind to you”:-

ਪਾਵ ਮਲੋਵਾ ਮਲਿ ਮਲਿ ਧੋਵਾ ਇਹੁ ਮਨ ਤੈ ਕੁ ਦੇਸਾ ॥<sup>138</sup>

**Archana and Vandana** : *Archana* in *Vallabhacharya Sampradaya* means the act of worship of the *Svarupa*. Worship in the *Sampradaya*, as explained in second chapter<sup>139</sup>, differs from the type of worship done in an ordinary Hindu temple.<sup>140</sup> *Vandana*, the respectful paying of homage to the deity, is usually done with *Archana*.<sup>141</sup> With *Archana* (*Puja*) and *Vandan* a devotee of God can get the state of blissfulness :

ਪਦ-ਸੇਵਨ-ਅਰਚਨ ਤਰ ਧਰੈ ।<sup>142</sup>

*Archana* and *Vandana* are also mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Arjan stated, “O Divine Lord, I worship and adore you ; I bow down before you”:-

ਪੂਜਾ ਅਰਚਾ ਬੰਦਨ ਦੇਵਾ ਜੀਉ ॥<sup>143</sup>

**Dasya Bhava** : It is the devotional emotion expressed in the manner of a servant's attitude towards his Master. This is the prayer of your slave; please enlighten my heart:-

ਦਾਸ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੀ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਰਿਦ ਕਰਿ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥<sup>144</sup>

138 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sorath Mahala 5, p. 612.

139 See II chapter for the worship of Vallabhacharya Sampradaya, pp. 27-28.

140 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 84.

141 *Ibid.*

142 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 9/448, Vol. I, p. 153.

143 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 217.

144 *Ibid.*, Bilwal Mahala 5, p. 818.

In this type, the devotee emphasizes the glory and power of the Lord with deep humility :

बाम बाहु राख्यो गिरिनायक दासनि को सुख दीनों।<sup>145</sup>

**Sakhya Bhava** : In this form the devotee worship the Lord as a friend.

Guru Nanak stated that he has no other friend like the Lord:-

ਹਰਿ ਸਾ ਮੀਤੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੈ ਕੋਈ ॥<sup>146</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also used this form. They considered *Shri Krishna* as their friend who took the cows out to graze and he played games with other cowherds. Nanddas in his work '*Sudhama Charit*' informed that anybody who worships the Lord *Krishna* with *Sakhya Bhava* like *Sudhama* will achieve the final fruit:

परम चरित सुदामा नित सुनि । हृदय-कमल में राखौ गुनि गुनि ।।

‘नंददास’ की कृति संपूरन । भक्ति मुक्ति पावै सोइ तूरन ।।<sup>147</sup>

**Atam-Nivedan** : It means ‘self-dedication’. In this *Bhava* the devotee sacrifices everything and completely depends on God's grace :

ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਵੇਚਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਦੀਆ ਸਿਰੁ ਨਾਲਿ ॥<sup>148</sup>

Further complete surrender to God is stressed in Guru Granth Sahib. It is stated that one should give up selfhood and so obtain Husband Lord; other clever tricks are of no use:-

ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਈਐ ਤਾ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਅਉਰੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ॥<sup>149</sup>

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145 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 923, p. 364.  
 146 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1027.  
 147 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 188.  
 148 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 20.  
 149 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

Chaturbhujdas, one of the *Ashtachhap* writers, also explained its importance :

तन मन धन वारति हैं सब जसोमति नंदराई।<sup>150</sup>

By self-dedication *Vallabhacharya's* devotees give themselves up utterly to *Shri Krishna* and no longer take any thought of their own welfare, for they have placed themselves completely in *Shri Krishna's* protection.<sup>151</sup>

Apart from these nine types, there are two other forms of *Bhakti* i.e. *Vatsalya Bhava* and *Madhura Bhava* which are related to the two dominant female feelings of mother and wife. It has been seen in the earlier part of the chapter that in *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Braj* literature these two types are largely used despite of the fact that all the writers are male. Some scholars raised objections about the use of these two female imageries for comprehending Lord. Jakobsh concludes that 'addressing the Divine through the feminine voice allowed for the maintenance of masculine identity of God'.<sup>152</sup> Here it should be pointed out that female imagery and voice have been used neither to permit masculine identity to God, nor to place woman secondarily, but to showcase the qualities of woman. To achieve the Ultimate Reality, one should have the qualities of love, devotion, sacrifice, fear of God, patience, forgiveness, truthfulness and humility. As woman has these qualities in abundance, more than a man, so both ideologies (*Guru*

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150 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 36, p. 46.

151 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya*, p. 84.

152 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 27.

Granth Sahib and Braj Literature) considered these feminine qualities very helpful in the quest and the attainment of the Lord.

Guru Granth Sahib glorifies these feminine qualities and enjoins upon all humanity to cultivate them for comprehending Lord :

ਕਾਮਣਿ ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਏ ॥<sup>153</sup>

ਜੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਤਾ ਪਿਰੁ ਰਵੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਮੁੰਧ ॥<sup>154</sup>

It is stated that she charms her Beloved with her virtues and so obtains her Lord:-

ਗੁਣ ਕਾਮਣ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਕਰੈ ਤਉ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਕਉ ਪਾਵੈ ॥<sup>155</sup>

Woman is the one who has the qualities to recognize and achieve the God. She has the capacity to chart out the way that makes the Ultimate Reality accessible to human experience. Everybody asks her if she has ever seen the God :

ਕਬਹੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਭੈਣ ॥<sup>156</sup>

One is advised to go and ask the *Suhagan* by what qualities she pleases her Lord :

ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਤੁਸੀ ਰਾਵਿਆ ਕਿਨੀ ਗੁਣੀ ॥<sup>157</sup>

Further it is asked that by what qualities, words or rich jewels of speech and dress she has received the Lord:

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਮਣੀਆ ਮੰਤੁ ॥

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਸੋ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਜਿਤ ਵਸਿ ਆਵੈ ਕੰਤੁ ॥<sup>158</sup>

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153 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 3, p. 123.  
 154 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1088.  
 155 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 725.  
 156 *Ibid.*, Malar Mahala 1, p. 1257.  
 157 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 17.  
 158 *Ibid.*, Shloka Farid, p. 1384.

To the above question she responds by saying that three qualities are very essential to please the Lord; these are humility, forgiveness and sweet speech:

ਨਿਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਖਵਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਜਿਹਬਾ ਮਣੀਆ ਮੰਤੁ ॥

ਏ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਭੈਣੇ ਵੇਸ ਕਰ ਤਾਂ ਵਸਿ ਆਵੀ ਕੰਤੁ ॥<sup>159</sup>

Similarly, among *Ashtachhap* writers, Krishandas is asking to *Gopi* that with which qualities she has received Lord *Krishna*:

ਯਾ ਹੀ ਗੁਨ ਤੇਂ ਸੁਨੁ ਹੋ ਘਾਰੀ? ਤੂ ਮੋਹਨ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਹਿੰ ਭਾई।<sup>160</sup>

*Gopi* answered that with feminine qualities, she has achieved the Lord :

ਨਿਪੁਨ ਨਾਗਰੀ ਗੁਨਨਿ ਆਗਰੀ, ਧੀਤਾਂਬਰ ਗਹਿ ਲੀਨੀ।<sup>161</sup>

They have emphasized on feminine qualities because of the fact that man is often conceived as complicated and subtle whereas woman as plain and transparent:

ਸਕੀ ਭਾਵ ਸਹਜ ਹੋਯ ਸਜਨੀ ਪੁਰੂਭ ਭਾਵ ਹੋਯ ਭੰਗ।<sup>162</sup>

Krishandas has also laid importance to this idea by declaring that in the whole world nobody has the capacity and quality like Braj woman to comprehend God:

ਬ੍ਰਜ-ਬਨਿਤਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਮਤਾ ਕੋਂ ਤ੍ਰਿਭੁਬਨ ਮੇਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੋ ਹੈ।।<sup>163</sup>

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159 *Ibid.*

160 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 50, p. 18.

161 Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 74, p. 73.

162 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 837, p. 294.

163 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 364, p. 133.



Both ideologies believe that without feminine qualities True Lord cannot be achieved. Guru Nanak in feminine voice is saying that he is totally without virtue; he has no virtue at all. How can he meet his Husband Lord:-

ਸਭਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਮੈ ਗੁਣੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ ॥

ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਕੰਤ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਈ ॥<sup>164</sup>

In this regard Prabhjot Kaur rightly says, “Guru Nanak's message, that only and only by becoming a woman, i.e., by cultivating the spiritual qualities of a woman, one can have any spiritual experience; is not only revolutionary but totally out of sync with the religious temperament of those times.”<sup>165</sup>

Parmananddas also declared that if wife (*Jivatma*) does not have qualities then everything is useless :

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਨ ਅਖਰਨ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਫੀਕੇ ।<sup>166</sup>

**Love:** That woman (human being) whose mind is always absorbed in love of the Lord easily achieves God:

ਨਾਰੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਮਣੀ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

ਸੋਭਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਵਣੀ ਸਾਚੈ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਅਪਾਰ ॥<sup>167</sup>

That wife is called *Suhagan* who has love for the Lord. Love is the true wealth of her life and she experiences a kind of bliss in the company of her True Lord :

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164 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 750.

165 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, p. 55.

166 Prabhu Dayal Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, p. 344.

167 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.

ਨਾਨਕ ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁਹਾਗਣੀ ਜਿਨ ਸਹ ਨਾਲਿ ਪਿਆਰ ॥<sup>168</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers emphasized that to comprehend the Lord *Krishna* quality of love is foremost. God is received with love not with artificial and outward things :

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਹੀਂ ਤੈਂ ਪੈਏ ।

ਜਦਪਿ ਰੂਪ ਗੁਨ ਭੀਲ ਸੁਘਰਤਾ ਝਨ ਭਾਤਨ ਨ ਰਿਝੈਏ ।।<sup>169</sup>

Chhitsuwami also says that he received the Lord with the quality of love :

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਤੈਂ ਬਸ ਕੀਨੀਂ ।

ਊਰ ਅੰਤਰ ਤੇ ਝਾਮ ਮਨੋਹਰ, ਨੈਕਹੁ ਜਾਨ ਨ ਦੀਨੀਂ ।।<sup>170</sup>

Similar view is expressed by Parmananddas :

ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਕੇ ਬਸ ਕੀਨੀਂ ।<sup>171</sup>

Surdas and Nanddas choose the love of *Gopi* to express their ideas and thought in *Bhramargit*. In *Bhramargit*<sup>172</sup> the conversion between the *Gopi* and *Udho* is used to reveal the supremacy of '*Prem Bhakti*' over '*Gyan Bhakti*'. *Udho* has been made the mouthpiece of '*Gyan Bhakti*'. He tries to dissuade *Gopi* from the path of '*Prem*' by an appeal to her intellect. Contrary to this, *Gopi* is generally not inclined to enter into a logical discourse or intellectual inquiry. She said to *Udho* that her only concern is to love Lord *Krishna*:

168 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

169 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 17, p. 42.

170 Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 142, p. 108.

171 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 364, p. 124.

172 In *Bhramargit* Krishan sends *Udho* to Braj after he has gone to Mathura. *Udho* has taken the message of Krishan to *Gopi*'s. The *Gopi*'s in their distress and disorientation directed their laments to a passing bee by confusing both *Udho* and bee as messengers. Because of this these poems are called *Bhramargit*.

ऊधौ प्रीति नई नित मीठी।<sup>173</sup>

In *Bhramargit* Nanddas' *Gopi* is more logical than Surdas'.<sup>174</sup> She answered to the each question of *Udho* with logic. She answered to *Udho* that as there is no comparison between diamond and glass, similarly '*Prem Bhakti*' is more important than *Gyan* and *Yoga* :

ग्यान जोग सब कर्म तें परे प्रेम ही साँच ।  
हैं या पटतर देत हैं हीरा आगे काँच ॥<sup>175</sup>

Finally *Gopi* score a victory over *Gyan* and *Yoga* on behalf of her '*Prem Bhakti*':

देखि प्रेम गोपिन कौ ज्ञान गरब गयो दूरि ॥<sup>176</sup>

It is also explained in *Guru Granth Sahib* that God is not pleased by *Hatha Yoga*, not by various religious robes but only by loving devotional worship:-

ਹਠਿ ਨ ਪਤੀਜੈ ਨਾ ਬਹੁ ਭੇਖੈ ॥

..... ॥

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਮਨੁ ਪਤੀਆਇਆ ॥<sup>177</sup>

So, *Gopi* has followed her different path (of *Prem*) from *Gyan* and *Yoga* :

ज्ञान बिना नहिं मुकति इह जु पंडित गन गायो ॥

गोपिन अपनो प्रेम-पंथ न्यारोइ दिखरायो ॥<sup>178</sup>

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- 173 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4290, Vol. II, p. 424.  
174 Hazari Parsad Dwivedi, *Granthawali*, Vol. IV, p. 106.  
175 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 164.  
176 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4792, Vol. II, p. 514.  
177 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Dhansari Mahala 1, p. 686.  
178 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 33.

Guru Granth Sahib also explained that with *Prem* (love) God can be easily achieved by the devotee. It is said that a woman (devotee) who loves her Beloved, she is always good:-

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਹਿਨਿਸ ਸਦਾ ਭਲੀ ਪਿਰ ਕੈ ਹੇਤਿ ਪਿਆਰ ॥<sup>179</sup>

Finally it is stated that with Lord's love, true wealth (*Naam*) is obtained:-

ਜਾ ਕੈ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਤਉ ਚਰਣੀ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਈਐ ॥<sup>180</sup>

About the quality of love Prabhjot Kaur remarks, “The only metaphor Guru Nanak found suitable for the expression of his intense love for the Divine was the love of a wedded woman for her beloved husband.”<sup>181</sup>

Woman is so absorbed in love of Lord that she has left the ordinary world and its cares altogether:

ਅਕੁਲ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਸਿਉ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ਬਿਸਰੀ ਲਾਜ ਲੋਕਾਨੀ ॥<sup>182</sup>

In love *Gopi* abandoned her home, mundane occupations and care of her family reputation:

ਬਿਸਰੀ ਲੋਕ-ਲਾਜ ਗ੍ਰਹ-ਕਾਰਜ ਬੰਧੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਅਰੁ ਮਾਝੈ ।<sup>183</sup>

ਅਰੀ ਮੈਂ ਲੋਕਵਾਦ ਕੌ ਮਾਰਗ ਢਾँਡਯੌ ਮਾਤਪਿਤਾ ਕੀ ਲਾਜ ਰੀ ।।<sup>184</sup>

**Devotion and Viraha:** With love, quality of devotion is also necessary.

Both ideologies believe that the gap between the Divine Reality and the

179 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru Mahala 3, p. 1088.

180 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

181 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, p. 55.

182 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sarang Mahala 1, p. 1197.

183 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 34, p. 45.

184 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 415, p. 141.

individual is bridged by following the woman's example of loving devotion. Without the pain of separation love cannot grow:

बिरह दुख जहँ नाहिँ नैकहूँ, तहँ न उपजै प्रेम।<sup>185</sup>

In order to be sure of the sincerity of love for *Shri Krishna* the devotee, like the *Gopi*, must suffer period of *Viraha*:

कृष्णबिरह नहिँ बिरह-प्रेम अच्छलन कहावै।<sup>186</sup>

*Viraha* deepens her love and she suffers extreme misery in *Krishna's Viyoga*. *Gopi* is saying that where should she go to search her Lord (*Krishna*). She does not know where he has gone. She is searching her Lord by abandoning her home and wondering from place to place in search of her lover. She is searching him in forest (*Ban*), mountains (*Dongar*) and asking from every (*Darum*) and *Bal* but nobody has told her about him:

केहिँ मारग मैं जाउँ सखी री, मारग मोहिँ बिसरयौ।  
ना जानौँ कित दूँ गए मोहन, जात न जानि परयौ।।  
अपनौँ पिय दूँढति फिरौँ, मोहिँ मिलिबे कौँ चाब।  
काँटो लाग्यौ प्रेम कौ, पिय, यह पायौ दाव।।  
बन डोंगर दूँढत फिरी, घर मारग तजि गाउँ।  
बूझौँ द्रूम प्रति बेलि कोउ, कहै न पिय कौ नाउँ।।<sup>187</sup>

In *Guru Granth Sahib* also, true wife is shown ready to offer her everything to someone who tells about her Husband (Lord):

केਈ आहिँ मिलावै मेरा प्रीतमु पिआरा

185 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4030, Vol. II, p. 370.

186 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 35.

187 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1729, Vol. I, pp. 508-09.

ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਪਹਿ ਆਪੁ ਵੇਚਾਈ ॥<sup>188</sup>

In *Viraha* all things appear useless. Wife is ready to break her bangles and arms. She is even ready to burn her arms if they do not embrace the Lover:

ਚੂੜਾ ਭੰਨੁ ਪਲੰਘ ਸਿਉ ਮੁੰਧੇ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹੀ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹਾ ॥

ਏਤੇ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੇਦੀਏ ਮੁੰਧੇ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਤੇ ਅਵਰਾਹਾ ॥

ਨਾ ਮਨੀਆਰੁ ਨ ਚੂੜੀਆ ਨਾ ਸੌ ਵੰਗੜੀਆਹਾ ॥

ਜੇ ਸਹ ਕੰਠਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਆ ਜਲਨੁ ਸਿ ਬਾਹੜੀਆਹਾ ॥<sup>189</sup>

*Gopis* of Braj literature have lost their sense in *Viraha* and are not even able to make difference between conscious and unconscious things:

ਫੁੈ ਗੜੈ ਬਿਰਹੁ ਬਿਕਲੁ ਤਭੁ ਭੂਖਨੁ ਫੁਰਸੁ ਬੇਲੀ-ਬਨੁ ।

ਕੋ ਜੜੁ ਕੋ ਚੈਤਨੁ ਕਠੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਤੁ ਬਿਰਹੀ ਜਨੁ ।<sup>190</sup>

All natural changes appeared dangerous to her in separation:

ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਵੈ ਮਰੀਐ ਹਾਵੇ ਦਾਮਨਿ ਚਮਕਿ ਡਰਾਏ ॥

ਸੇਜੁ ਇਕੇਲੀ ਖਰੀ ਦੁਹੇਲੀ ਮਰਣੁ ਭਇਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਏ ॥<sup>191</sup>

Same view is expressed by Kumbhandas :

ਨਿਸਿ ਅੰਧਿਯਾਰੀ ਫਾਮਿਨਿ ਡਰਪਾਵਤਿ ਸੋਕੋਂ ਚਮਕਿ-ਚਮਕਿ ।

..... ।

ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ-ਸਮੀਪੁ ਭਵਨੁ ਭਯਾਨਕੁ ਅਕੇਲੇਂ, ਆਂਖਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ

ਚੌਕਿ-ਚੌਕਿ ਪਰੋਂ ਹਮਕਿ-ਹਮਕਿ ।<sup>192</sup>

188 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 4, p. 757.

189 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 1, pp. 557-58.

190 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 11.

191 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Tukhari Mahala 1, p. 1108.

192 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 192, p. 122.

The entire *Baramaha* in Guru Granth Sahib depicts month by month the sufferings of the lonely woman, which is metaphorically used for the yearning of individual soul, for union with God against the backdrop of the changing seasons.<sup>193</sup>

Among *Ashtachhap* writers, Nanddas in his work *Viraha Manjari* also wrote *Baramaha* which mentioned month to month sufferings of *Gopi* with the change of season:

द्वादसमास बिरह की कथा । बिरहिन कौं दुखदायक जथा ॥<sup>194</sup>

Ultimately that devotion and *Viraha* is responsible for her union with the Lord:

पै गोपिन के प्रेम अग्र अपने मुख हारे ॥

तब बोले पिय नव किसोर हम ऋनी तिहारे ॥<sup>195</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib also mentioned that because of the devotion of wife, Lord decides to come to her:

मेरा हरि पूबु सेजै आइआ मनु सुखि समाणा राम ॥

गुरि उठै हरि पूबु पाइआ रंग रलीआ माणा राम ॥<sup>196</sup>

This quality has great importance on spiritual path because without pangs of separation love cannot grow. In this regard G.S. Talib stated that woman's yearning for union and agony of her separation immediately enters into the soul and stir powerful vibrations there.<sup>197</sup>

193 See *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Baramaha Majh Mahala* 5, pp. 133-36.

194 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthwali*, p. 144.

195 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

196 *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Bilwal Mahala* 4, p. 844.

197 G.S. Talib, *Guru Nanak : His Personality and Vision*, Gurdas Kapur and Sons Publications, New Delhi, 1969, p. 185.

**Sacrifice:** Such a wife who is totally absorbed in devotion to Lord is ready to sacrifice everything in lieu of Lord. She sacrifices her body, mind and everything :

ਜਾ ਪਿਰੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਤਨ ਮਨੁ ਅਗੈ ਧਰੇਇ ॥<sup>198</sup>

Wife (devotee) is advised to act according to Lord's will and surrender her body and mind to the Lord:-

ਸਹੁ ਕਹੈ ਜੋ ਕੀਜੈ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੋ ਦੀਜੈ ਐਸਾ ਪਰਮਲੁ ਲਾਈਐ ॥<sup>199</sup>

*Gopi* of *Ashtachhap* writers also sacrifice her everything body, mind and wealth for the sake of her love to *Shri Krishna*:

ਲਾਜ ਸਕੁਚ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਜੋਬਨ ਸਰਬਸੁ ਫਰਿ ਤਨ ਦੀਯੇ ॥<sup>200</sup>

ਢੀਤਸਵਾਮੀ ਗਿਰਿਧਰਨ ਲਾਲ ਪਰ, ਤਨ-ਮਨ ਬਾਰਤ ਅੰਗ ਨ ਸੰਭਾਲ ॥<sup>201</sup>

She is ready to offer everything to that person who tells her about her Husband. She is ready to cut off her head to make a seat for that person and to serve him even without head:

ਤੈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਜਿ ਆਖੈ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਆ ਦੀਜੈ ॥

ਸੀਸੁ ਵਢੇ ਕਰਿ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਿਰ ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀਜੈ ॥<sup>202</sup>

So, she is ready to sacrifice everything i.e. her home, family, property, her body and mind for the sake of Lord :

‘ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾਦਾਸ’ ਸਵਾਮੀ ਕੌਂ ਪ੍ਯਾਰੀ ਸਰਬਸੁ ਦੇਤ ਨੇਂਕੁ ਨਹੀ ਖਟਕੀ ॥<sup>203</sup>

198 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 31.

199 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

200 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 154, p. 56.

201 Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 144, p. 96.

202 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Vadhans Mahala 1, p. 558.

203 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 270, p. 98.



Woman of Guru Granth is ready to surrender her mind, whole body, all her land and even her head to that beloved friend, who brings news of God:-

ਹਉ ਮਨੁ ਅਰਪੀ ਸਭੁ ਤਨੁ ਅਰਪੀ ਅਰਪੀ ਸਭਿ ਦੇਸਾ ॥

ਹਉ ਸਿਰੁ ਅਰਪੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਮੀਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੇਇ ਸਦੇਸਾ ॥<sup>204</sup>

About this quality of woman Prof. Puran Singh states, "Her spirit of self sacrifice is real and man is more or less dramatic and unreal".<sup>205</sup>

**Removal of Ego:** They considered removal of ego as an essential trait that is required for the union with Almighty God:

ਹਉਮੈ ਖੋਇ ਕਰੇ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥

ਤਉ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਸੇਜੈ ਰਵੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥<sup>206</sup>

Among *Ashtachhap* writers Govindswami and Nanddas have explained the necessity of this quality on the spiritual path. Govindswami's *Gopi* is saying that after seeing *Nandlal* her ego has gone :

ਸਾਨ ਛੂਟ ਗਯੋ ਰੀ ਨਿਰਕਤ ਸੋਹਨ ਵਦਨ ।<sup>207</sup>

Wife of Guru Granth Sahib forgets her identity and fixes her mind on God-Husband after removal of ego :

ਹਉਮੈ ਛੋਡਿ ਭਈ ਬੈਰਾਗਨਿ ਤਬ ਸਾਚੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਮਾਨੀ ॥<sup>208</sup>

Nanddas' *Gopi* also forget her identity after the removal of ego:

204 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 247.

205 Prof. Puran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1970, p. 35.

206 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.

207 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 54, p. 55.

208 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sarang Mahala 1, p. 1197.

केवल तनमय भई कछु न जानति हम को है ।<sup>209</sup>

After removal of ego wife has achieved union with Lord:

ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਈ ਤਾ ਕੰਤ ਸਮਾਈ ॥<sup>210</sup>

*Suhagan* knows the worth of her Husband Lord. She renounces ego and enjoys peace and pleasure:-

ਸਹ ਕੀ ਸਾਰ ਸੁਹਾਗਨਿ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

ਤਜਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ਸੁਖ ਰਲੀਆ ਮਾਨੈ ॥<sup>211</sup>

*Gopi* after removing her ego has achieved *Shri Krishna*:

मान त्यजवो री नंदलाल सों।<sup>212</sup>

**Fear of God** : Guru Granth Sahib states that along with quality of love, fear of God is also essential on the spiritual path:

ਕਹਤੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੈ ਭਾਵ ਕਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥

ਸਦ ਹੀ ਸੇਜੈ ਰਵੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥<sup>213</sup>

Woman should adorn herself with fear (*Bhai*) and devotion (*Bhava*) to become a *Suhagan* of God:

ਭੈ ਕੀਆ ਦੇਹਿ ਸਲਾਈਆ ਨੈਣੀ ਭਾਵ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੋ ॥

ਤਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਲਾਗੀ ਜਾ ਸਹੁ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੋ ॥<sup>214</sup>

There is not any mention of this quality among *Ashtachhap* writings.

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209 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 12.  
 210 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 740.  
 211 *Ibid.*, *Suhi Bhagat Ravidas*, p. 793.  
 212 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 34, p. 48.  
 213 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.  
 214 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

**Patience:** Feminine quality of patience is also necessary in the pursuit of Ultimate Reality:

ਸੀਲ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਆਗਿਆ ਮਾਨੈ ॥  
ਤਿਸੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨ ਜਮਾਨੈ ॥<sup>215</sup>

That wife, who has this quality, is loved by God-Husband and is called *Suhagan*:

ਸਹਜਿ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਕਰਿ ਆਵੈ ॥  
ਤਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਜਾ ਕੰਤੈ ਭਾਵੈ ॥<sup>216</sup>

In *Ashtachhap* writings, *Gopi* and *Radha* who are in eager desire to see Lord *Krishna*, advised by the writers to keep patience because without this quality, it is not possible to receive the love of Lord:

ਦੇਖਿ ਸਧੁਰ ਮੁਸਕਾਨਿ ਲਾਲ ਕੀ, ਕਾਹੇ ਨ ਧੀਰਜ ਰਾਖਹਿ ।<sup>217</sup>

**Truthfulness:** Quality of truth is also emphasized. If the wife has the quality of truth then God-Husband never goes away from her.

ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਪਲੈ ਸਚੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਿਰ ਭਾਏ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਨਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਏ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਏ ॥<sup>218</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib emphasized that Lord can be achieved only with feminine qualities of truthfulness and patience.<sup>219</sup>

**Humility:** Wife (devotee) must be humble and modest before the God-Husband :

215 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 185.

216 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 740.

217 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 413, p. 152.

218 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 764.

219 Kiranjeet, *Guru Nanak Di Bani Vich Istari Da Sankalap*, Ph.D. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 47.

ਹੋਇ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਤਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਮਨਿ ਪਿਆਰੀ ॥<sup>220</sup>

In Braj literature *Gopi* is also depicted having the quality of humility:

हा हा करों और पाँड़ लागों सुनहि बीनती मेरी।<sup>221</sup>

Anybody who remains humble like wife achieves the ultimate goal of life :

ਹੋਚੈ ਤਾਣਿ ਨਿਤਾਣੀਆ ਰਹਹਿ ਨਿਮਾਨਣੀਆਹ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਕਾਰਥਾ ਜੇ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗ ਮਿਲਾਹ ॥<sup>222</sup>

The second line is very important in which Guru Nanak seems to pray to God that he may be given the spiritual touch of woman whose soul has become God's beloved.

Women leaders of the liberation movement, fighting for equality with men at all levels, too, at times, appear to corroborate the idea of humility on the part of women. Simone De Beauvoir, an internationally known French existential philosopher and one of the pioneers of feminist thought in her famous work '*The Second Sex*', speaks of this ideal in her chapter on 'The Independent Woman', "Such couples allow undemanding generosity a condition for perfect equality. It may even be then the man acts as a devoted servant, but for the most part is the woman who has to bear the cost of domestic harmony."<sup>223</sup> Here Simone endorses what Guru Sahib said hundreds

220 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 5, p. 377.

221 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 171, p. 62.

222 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Shloka Mahala 1, p. 85.

223 Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Vintage, London, 1997, p. 703.

of years ago.<sup>224</sup> Woman protagonist in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, a free being, creates conditions for perfect equality with her qualities of undemanding generosity, humility, love and contentment.<sup>225</sup>

**Sweetness of Tongue:** It is connected with humility. A devotee, who like wife remains humble and speaks sweet, achieves the Lord:

ਮਿਠਾ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਨਿਵਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਸੇਜੈ ਰਵੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥<sup>226</sup>

Gurus advocate the qualities of sweetness and humility. These qualities make life worth living at home front and make woman even superior to man as she has these qualities in abundance, more than a man.<sup>227</sup>

**Forgiveness:** This is essentially considered as feminine quality especially of mother. Mother always has the capacity to forgive the mistakes of her child. This quality is equally important in the pursuit of the Lord:

ਖਿਮਾ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਤਨਿ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਰਾਵੈ ਲਾਲ ਪਿਆਰੀ ॥<sup>228</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers have hardly paid attention to this quality.

**Obedient:** Whatever God does should be welcomed and God's command should be obeyed:

ਜੇ ਧਨ ਖਸਮੈ ਚਲੈ ਰਜਾਈ ॥

ਦਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਮਹਿਲ ਬੁਲਾਈ ॥<sup>229</sup>

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- 224 Prabhjot Kaur, "Significance of The Role Women in Society", *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, October-December, 2002, p.52.  
 225 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, p. 57.  
 226 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 31.  
 227 Prabhjot Kaur, "Woman-As Gurmat Portrays Her", *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, January-March, 1996, p. 34.  
 228 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 359.  
 229 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Shloka Mahala 3, p. 85.

Wife never objected the doings of God-Husband. She obeyed God's command without objection :

ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰੇ ਸੇ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨੀਐ ਹਿਕਮਤਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਈਐ ॥<sup>230</sup>

*Gopi* of *Ashtachhap* writers is ready to obey the will of the Lord *Krishna*:

ਜੋ ਕਠੁ ਕਰਤਿ ਸੁਖ-ਬਿਲਾਸ ਲੇਤਿ ਰਸਹਿ ਮਾਨਿ ।<sup>231</sup>

*Gopi* is saying to *Shri Krishna* that she is prepared to live according to his command and ready to eat what he will provide to her without any objection:

ਜਯੈਂ ਤਯੈਂ ਰਾਖੈਂ ਤਯੈਂ ਰਹੂੰ ਜੋ ਦੇਹੁ ਸੈ ਖਾਂਤ ।<sup>232</sup>

Such an obedient *Suhagan* (*Gurmukh*) enjoys the company of Lord :

ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ ਸਦਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਆਪ ਮੇਲੀ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਪਿਰੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਦਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਨਾਰਿ ॥<sup>233</sup>

One thing that deserves special mention here is that while feminine qualities are recommended for a woman (devotee) the masculine qualities like chivalry and cleverness have not been overlooked. A woman is not expected to be a spineless creature without having an independent personality of her own. Boldness and chivalry are essential attributes of an ideal woman of Guru Granth Sahib.<sup>234</sup> *Mai Bhago* is an example of it. Even *Mata Sundari* not only

230 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

231 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 263, p. 95.

232 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

233 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 785.

234 Prabhjot Kaur, "Woman's Liberation Movement And Gurmat", *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, April 1997, pp. 78-79.

took keen interest in Sikh polity, but also successfully guided the destiny of the Panth in a crucial time.

Above mentioned hymns authenticate that both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) have considered the feminine qualities very helpful in the attainment of God. Guru Granth Sahib considered these feminine qualities as very helpful in the quest and attainment of Lord.<sup>235</sup> Even Social Scientist today have started realizing that feminine qualities like patience, humility, love and self-sacrifice can pave the way for a better social climate. World famous Psychologist Dr. H.B. Danesh in his work, '*Violence-Free Family*' states, "But the scales are already shifting-force is losing weight and mental alertness, intuition and spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence, the new age will be less masculine and more permeated with feminine ideals-or to speak more exactly, will be an age in which masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more properly balanced."<sup>236</sup> Thus Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature glorifies the feminine qualities and enjoins upon all humanity to cultivate these qualities, which in words of Dr. Danesh, will banish violence from the family and society. So, Suhagan of Guru Granth Sahib and Gopi of Braj literature is one's

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235     Tripat Kaur, *Aadhi Granth Vich Istari Da Sankalp*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 2004, p. 168.

236     Dr. H.B. Danesh, *Violence-Free Family*, quoted by Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, p. 80.

guide on the path of spirituality. These ideologies have raised the status of woman by making her the symbol of Divine love.

Here it must be kept in mind that though the content of both ideologies is common but the effect is not quite the same. There is a dichotomy in *Ashtachhap* writer's behaviour about the salvation of woman. On one side they define the spiritual path through the voice of *Gopi* and declare that for salvation there is no difference between man and woman:

भजै जिहिं भाव जो, मिलैं हरि ताहि त्यों, भेद भेदा नहीं पुरुष-नारी।<sup>237</sup>

or

प्रीति बस स्याम है राव के रंक कोउ, पुरुष के नारि नहीं भेद कारी।<sup>238</sup>

On the other side, they agreed about the dependent position of woman and her obligation to serve her husband loyally and faithfully without question. Her salvation lies in the service of her husband :

कपट तजि पति करौ पूजा, कहा तुम जिय गुनौ ।।

कंत मानहु भव तरौगी, और नहिं उपाइ।<sup>239</sup>

She is advised by them to worship and serve her husband who is considered as only source for her salvation.

तजि भरतार और जौ भजियै सो कुलीन नहिं होइ।<sup>240</sup>

or

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237 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1626, Vol. I, p. 483.

238 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/2635, Vol. II, p. 55.

239 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1634, Vol. I, p. 485.

240 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1635, Vol. I, p. 485.



ਧਹੈ ਮੈਂ ਪੁਨਿ ਕਹਤਿ ਤੁਮ ਸੀਂ, ਜਗਤ ਮੈਂ ਯਹ ਸਾਰ।  
 ਸੂਰ ਪਤਿ, ਸੇਬਾ ਬਿਨਾ ਕਯੋਂ, ਤਰੋਗੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ।<sup>241</sup>

Contrary to it Guru Granth's message maintained that woman and members of lower castes are not in any way barred from attaining salvation.<sup>242</sup> Its goal of emancipation is equally open to woman as much as to a man.<sup>243</sup> As on the platter lie arranged three delicacies truth, contentment and contemplation... She/he who eats them, she/he who savours them obtains liberation<sup>244</sup> :

ਥਾਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਤਿੰਨਿ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਈਓ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਵਿਚਾਰੋ॥  
 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਾ ਪਾਇਓ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਸਭਸੁ ਅਧਾਰੋ॥  
 ਜੇ ਕੋ ਖਾਵੈ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭੁੰਚੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਉਧਾਰੋ॥<sup>245</sup>

At spiritual level woman has been bestowed with a special status when Gurbani calls her the best of the best :

ਸਭ ਪਰਵਾਰੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਰਸੇਟ॥<sup>246</sup>

*Bhai Gurdas*, the great Sikh scholar says, "of all the *Vedas* knowledge and all other virtues, it is the woman who can best guide man to the gates of salvation."<sup>247</sup>

Further *Ashtachhap* writers classified woman into different categories. This classification can be, specifically seen in the works of

241 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1634, Vol. I, p. 485.

242 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 24.

243 J.S. Grewal, "A Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak", ed., Kiran Pawar, *Women in Indian History*, p. 147.

244 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 9.

245 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Mundavani Mahala 5, p. 1429.

246 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 5, p. 371.

247 Prabhjot Kaur, "Woman as Gurmat Portrays Her", p. 32.

Surdas<sup>248</sup>, Nanddas<sup>249</sup> and Krishandas.<sup>250</sup> Nanddas in his writing *Ras Manjari* classified woman into *Swakiya*, *Parakiya* and *Samayana* according to religious ethos. Each of these three further divided into *Mugadha*, *Madhya* and *Parora*. These are further divided into many categories.<sup>251</sup> On the other side Guru Nanak and his successors have not done this type of classification of woman anywhere in their writings.<sup>252</sup>

Another difference also interesting to note is that Ashtachhap writers, specifically Surdas, repeated some common prejudices against woman. He compared woman to *Kali Nagini* :

भामिनि और भुजंगिनि कारी, इनके बिषहिं डरैये ।।<sup>253</sup>

In another couplet he calls woman worst than *Nagin*<sup>254</sup> :

सुकदेव कह्यौ, सुनौ हो राव । नारी-नागिनि एक सुभाव ।।  
नागिनि के काटैं बिष होइ । नारी चितवन नर रहै भोइ ।।<sup>255</sup>

On the other side, the deprecation of woman is totally alien to Guru Granth Sahib. It is said that Guru Arjan rejected the composition of Chhaju as being too derogatory to woman.<sup>256</sup> In this connection Theodra Foster Carroll rightly says, "Nanak consistently

248 Vallabhdas Tiwari, *Hindi Kavya Ma Nari*, pp. 357 to 60.

249 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 96.

250 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ka Kavi Krishandas*, pp. 42-43.

251 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 96.

252 Kiranjeet, *Guru Nanak Di Bani Vich Istari Da Sankalap*, p. 33.

253 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3444, Vol. II, p. 215.

254 Shyam Bala Goyal, *Bhakti Kaleen Ram Aur Krishan Kavya Ki Nari Bhavana : A Comparative Study*, Vibhu Prakashan, Sahibabad, 1976, p. 128.

255 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 9/446, Vol. I, p. 149.

256 C.H. Loehlin, *The Sikhs and Their Scriptures*, Publishing House, Lucknow, 1964, p. 32.

praised women, denounced their oppression, strongly rejected suggestions made by his followers that women were evil or unworthy and refused to make additions to the Adi Granth that would have reviled women."<sup>257</sup>

In *Ashtachhap* writings, one may note some signs of eroticism. At some places their descriptions become erotic especially of Nanddas in his *Roop Manjari*<sup>258</sup> :

तामैं सेज सुपेसल ऐसी। आल बाल रति-बेली जैसी।।  
 कछु छल कछु बल कछु मनुहारी। लै बैठे तहँ लालबिहारी।।  
 मन चह रग्यो चहै तन भग्यो। कामिनि के इक कौतुक लग्यौ।।  
 ..... ।  
 प्रथम समागम लज्यति तिया। अचल पवन सिरावित दिया।।  
 दीप न बुझहि बिहँसि बर बाला। लपटि गई पिय उरसि रसाला।।  
 ..... ।  
 सब निसि के जागे अनुरागे। रंचक सोय गय डर लागे।।  
 ..... ।  
 जागी कुँवरि अपने घर आई। अपने गौने कुँवर कन्हई।।<sup>259</sup>

Contrary to this Guru Granth Sahib does not have any description of this type. It refutes and rejects this view by declaring that uncontrolled passions are gateway to sorrow and disease. And

257 Theodra Foster Carroll, *Women, Religion and Development in the Third World*, New York, 1983, p. 33.

258 Krishandev Jhari, *Ashtachhap Aur Nanddas*, pp. 103-104.

259 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, pp. 124-25.

the end product of servility to senses is invariably sickness and trouble :

ਰਸ ਭੋਗਣ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੀਆ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਸੰਘਾਰਾ ॥<sup>260</sup>

Noticing these differences, one must agree with J.S. Grewal that Guru Nanak created a larger space for woman, perhaps in the whole range of Indian literature springing from devotional theism.<sup>261</sup>

Spiritual philosophy of both ideologies about woman is equally relevant in social sphere which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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260 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1008.

261 J.S. Grewal, "A Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak", ed., Kiran Pawar, *Women in Indian History*, p. 157.

## Chapter – 4

### DEPICTION OF WOMAN : THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Woman in the medieval Indian society was regarded as inferior to man; her position, at any rate, was subordinate to his. The practice of polygamy, child marriage and *Sati* was prevalent at that time.<sup>1</sup> Women were secluded for fear of dishonour. Their spiritual, intellectual and physical development was obstructed and social status curtailed.<sup>2</sup> The social laws and customs which came to be evolved in the changed set-up, stamped women with the stigma of mental deficiency and created in them a profound sense of inferiority complex.<sup>3</sup> Thus due to the growing sense of insecurity and social upheavals which followed the *Muslim* expeditions and loot, plunder and massacre, the *Hindu* women in Northern India lost their high social status.<sup>4</sup>

Turning from spiritual to the social context, one finds the depiction of woman as girl, wife, widow and mother in both ideologies. *Ashtachhap* writers have provided a vivid picture of woman in her social milieu. They authenticate the presence of child marriage, dowry, *Purdah*, *Sati* and miserable condition of a widow in the society during

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- 1 J.S. Grewal, "A Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak " ed., Kran Pawar, *Women in Indian History*, p. 141.
  - 2 B.N. Luniya, *Life and Culture In Medieval India*, quoted in Harbans Kaur Sagoo's, *Guru Nanak and the Indian Society*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 131.
  - 3 K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of People of Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1970, p. 167.
  - 4 Harbans Kaur Sagoo, "Position of Women in Indian Society as Reflected in Guru Nanak's Hymns", p. 25.

the period under study. But they neither opposed these social vices nor raised a voice against them. Thus, it may be argued that regarding social condition of woman, *Ashtachhap* writers merely echoed the traditional views and could not protest against social inequalities towards woman due to the social pressure of their society.

On the other side, in Guru Granth Sahib these social evils are strongly opposed for the upliftment of woman. The composers of Guru Granth Sahib have taken revolutionary steps to eradicate these social vices. Guru Nanak is the first to have championed the cause of womanhood in the Indian society. He has, particularly pointed to the orgy of dishonouring of womenfolk by *Babar's* soldiers near *Saidpur*, later on called *Eminabad*.<sup>5</sup> He wrote in *Raga Asa* that the beautiful women whose foreheads were beautifully arranged with hair plaits and painted with the sacred vermilion mark, had their tresses clipped with the sword of *Babar* and dust was thrown on their shaven heads and dishonoured necks :

ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ ॥

ਸੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁੰਨੀਅਨਿ ਗਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਵੈ ਧੂੜਿ ॥<sup>6</sup>

This portrayal of suffering is universal and it includes the plightful condition of all women whether belonging to *Hindu*, *Muslim*, *Bhatti* and *Thakur* denomination :

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5 Jasdeep Kaur, "The Role and Position of Woman in Sikh Religion", *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. XII, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi, 1993, p. 39.

6 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 417.

ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਰਕਾਣੀ ਭਟਿਆਣੀ ਠਕੁਰਾਣੀ ॥<sup>7</sup>

Women's state of suffering is defined in three ways : suffering due to dishonour; suffering by physical death and suffering due to emotional stress :

ਇਕਨਾ ਪੇਰਣ ਸਿਰ ਖੁਰ ਪਾਟੇ ਇਕਨਾ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਸਾਣੀ ॥

ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਬੰਕੇ ਘਰੀ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਰੈਣਿ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ ॥<sup>8</sup>

Seeing such a pitiable condition, Guru Nanak felt need to give woman a proper place in the society. Thereafter the status of woman in the society remained his deep concern. In this connection Upinder Jit Kaur rightly remarks :

“Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh faith, raised his voice for justice to women and provided the Scriptural basis for equality which was not to be found in the Scriptures of other Indian born religions. It is noted that he pleaded, the cause of women and strove for their liberation in the Fifteenth century, whereas the women's emancipation movement in Europe started much later, in the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth century.”<sup>9</sup>

During medieval period the birth of a male child was welcomed and that of a daughter was looked down upon as misfortune. Both the *Hindus* and the *Muslims* accorded a preferential treatment to the male members of the society. A female member was considered to be inferior in all respects—a son was always preferred to a daughter. An

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7 *Ibid.*, p. 418.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Upinder Jit Kaur, *Sikh Religion and Economic Development*, p. 308.

earnest desire for a male offspring was quite intense even among the Mughal Emperors as Babar was anxious to have a male child. Gulbadan Begum refers to this in her work *Humayun-Nama*.<sup>10</sup> Mughal Emperor Akbar has resolved that if Almighty God should bestow a son on him, he would go on foot from Agra to *Muin-ud-din Chishti's* mausoleum, a distance of about 140 kos.<sup>11</sup> While noticing this kind of preferential longing for a boy in contemporary society Guru Granth Sahib refers to the pleasure on the birth of a male child where it is said that the strained relationship between husband and wife can become better with the birth of a son :

ਗੋਰੀ ਸੇਤੀ ਤੁਟੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥

ਪੁਤੀ ਗੰਢੁ ਪਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥<sup>12</sup>

Noticing preference given to boy and a special treatment to him in the society, Guru Granth Sahib authenticates that people at that time considered a son to be the binding link between the parents:-

ਮਾਇ ਬਾਪ ਕੋ ਬੇਟਾ ਨੀਕਾ ਸਸੁਰੈ ਚਤੁਰੁ ਜਵਾਈ ॥<sup>13</sup>

Here it must be kept in mind that these references of Guru Granth Sahib only occur to authenticate the preference given to boy in the contemporary society not to support this view.

*Ashtachhap* writers also mentioned about the joy and pleasure at the birth of a male child :

आज गोकुल में बजत बधाई ।

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10 Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun-Nama*, tr., A.S. Beveridge, Delhi, 1972, p. 9.  
 11 Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangir*, Vol. 1, tr., H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1978, pp. 1-2.  
 12 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 1, p. 143.  
 13 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 1, p. 596.



नंद महर के पुत्र भयो है आनन्द मंगल गाई।।<sup>14</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers referred to a special tradition among Braj people where they celebrated the birth of a boy by sprinkling a mixture of milk and turmeric and dancing at the same time:

पूत जायौ रानी जसोदा, देत हैं मुदित असीस री।।  
आँगन कींच मची दधि हरदी, नांचत अपने टोल री।<sup>15</sup>

In *Ashtachhap* writings, there is also mention of celebration on the birth of a girl. *Dr. Hargulal* has informed that in the contemporary society the birth of a girl was equally a source of happiness like boy.<sup>16</sup> People were also in habit of going to congratulate the parents of a girl after her birth :

कुंवरी जनम तिहारे सुनिकें हौं उठिधायों वेग।<sup>17</sup>

On the birth of *Radha*, who in general represents a female child, there was great pleasure in her house. *Dhadhi* and *Dhadhian* had come to sing songs of joy and *Radha's* mother gave them 'Dan'

कुंवरी परगटी गान गावत ढाड़ी ढाड़िन आए।  
कीरतिजू की कीरति सुनि हम बहु जाचक पहिराए।।<sup>18</sup>

Those mothers who gave birth to capable daughters were praised by the society at that time :

ताकैँ इक कमनीय सुकन्या। जिहि अस जनी जननि सो धन्या।।<sup>19</sup>

14 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 3, p. 2.

15 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 838, p. 327.

16 Dr. Hargulal, *Madhya Yugeen Krishan Kavya Mein Samajik Jeevan Ki Abhivayakti*, Bharti Sahitya Mandir, Delhi, 1967, p. 202.

17 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 10, p. 51.

18 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 161, p. 53.

19 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 105.

Nanddas mentioned that those mothers who gave birth to capable girls were praised by people during the period under study.

भाग बडे कीरति रानी के ऐसी कन्या जाई।।<sup>20</sup>

But in general the birth of female child was considered inauspicious so the deplorable custom of female infanticide was practised in most parts of Northern India during Mughal period. It was chiefly practised among *Rajputs*. It was also practised among the upper classes of both the *Hindus* and *Muslims*.<sup>21</sup> Different methods were adopted to put an end to the life of an infant girl. *Warish* Shah, a medieval *Qissakar*, describes stifling, poisoning and drowning as some of the methods of infanticide.<sup>22</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib strongly opposed this evil. According to Guru Granth Sahib it is sinful to slaughter a *Brahman* or a cow or a daughter as it has curse for millions of evils :

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਕੈਲੀ ਘਾਤੁ ਕੰਵਕਾ ਅਣਚਾਰੀ ਕਾ ਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਫਿਟਕ ਫਿਟਕਾ ਕੋੜੁ ਬਦੀਆ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥<sup>23</sup>

In this regard the observations of Prabhjot Kaur are worth mentioning, "Sikh Gurus stood for a healthy balanced society with equal rights for all members, girls as well as boys; a society where every human could live a life of dignity, free from all kinds of fear;

20 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 896, p. 355.

21 Bhagat Singh, "Condition of Women in the Early Nineteenth Century", p. 357.

22 S.K. Bajaj, "Status of Women in the Pre-Modern Punjab", *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference*, 18th Session, 1983, p. 138.

23 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Shloka Mahala 3, p. 1413.

where no one was denied as basic right as to be born. Something needed to be done to put the unhealthy trends in the reverse gear".<sup>24</sup>

It is surprising to see that in *Ashtachhap* writings there are not any mention of this evil.

There is also reference to the kind of life which an unmarried girl is expected to lead in her parental house. In both ideologies word *Iani Bali*<sup>25</sup> is used for girl child. After the age of twelve some restrictions were put upon girls. They were not allowed to move out of their houses. They were advised by their parents to stay at home under their protection :

बार बार जननी समुझावति ।

काहे कौं जहँ-तहँ डोलति, हमकौं अतिहिं लजावति ।।<sup>26</sup>

Girls had less freedom as compared to boys at that time. Chaturbhujdas' *Gopis* were saying to Krishna that nobody asked him if he went late to home but if they were late their mothers became angry with them:-

तेरौ कोऊ कहौ करेगौ! हमें घर खीजेगी माई ।।<sup>27</sup>

*Radha's* mother was advising her that as she was now grown-up, so she should not wander here and there :

अब राधा तू भई सयानी ।

24 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation: The Sikh Vision*, p. 92.

25 *Ibid.*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722, also see Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 160, p. 59, Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 122, p. 100.

26 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2250, Vol. 1, p. 649.

27 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 30, p. 44.

मेरी सीख मानि हिरदय धरि, जहँ तहँ डोलति बुद्धि अयानी ॥<sup>28</sup>

The relation between the father and the daughter is of great affection as Guru Granth Sahib records :

बाल कंनिआ कॅ बाप पिआरा डाएी कॅ अडि डाएी ॥<sup>29</sup>

If a girl was abused by her mother, she would complained against her mother to her father :

भली बात बाबा आवन दै ।

कान्ह लगाइ देति मोहिं गारी, ऐसे बड़े भए कब तैं वै ।<sup>30</sup>

It is also mentioned in Braj literature that unmarried girls pray to God and subject themselves to some severe practices in order to get good husbands :

ब्रज-बनिता रबि कौं कर जोरैं ।

..... ।

गौरी-पति पूजतिं, तप साधतिं, करत रहितं नित नेम ।

..... ।।

हमकौं देहु कृष्ण पति ईश्वर और नहीं मन आन ।<sup>31</sup>

or

पूरव पुन्य कौन व्रत कीन्हौ? बर पायौ जु गोपाल ।<sup>32</sup>

On the other side, Guru Granth Sahib emphasized only on the service of the Guru for achieving good husband :

28 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2334, Vol. 1, p. 667.

29 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sorath Mahala 1, p. 596.

30 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2335, Vol. 1, p. 667.

31 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1400, Vol. 1, p. 422.

32 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 57, p. 21.

ਜੇ ਲੋੜਹਿ ਵਰੁ ਕਾਮਣੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਤੇਹਿ ॥<sup>33</sup>

Child marriage had become a common feature of the social life at that time. The girls were married at an early age. Surdas saying that a girl of twelve was considered to be of marriageable age, bears a testimony to this :

सूर मुख पट देति काहैं न, बरण छ्दादस भारि ॥<sup>34</sup>

Kumbhandas in his work writes about the engagement of *Radha* and *Krishna* immediately after the birth of *Radha*.<sup>35</sup> From this it becomes clear that there was child marriage in the contemporary society.<sup>36</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib there is also a reference to the child marriage. Word *Iani Bali* and *Ianariey*<sup>37</sup> are used for a child bride. Guru Granth Sahib does not favour the idea of child marriage but it only explained the tradition of early marriage in the contemporary society. Further it seems to show sympathy for such girls who are married long before they could understand the meaning, rights and duties of a married woman:

ਇਆਣੀ ਬਾਲੀ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ਜਾ ਧਨ ਕੰਤ ਨ ਭਾਵੈ ॥<sup>38</sup>

Emperor Akbar seems to have disliked child marriage and he tried to check this practice as far as possible. Abul Fazl writes:

33 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 935.

34 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2333, Vol. 1, p. 667.

35 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 10, p. 35

36 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 35.

37 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

38 *Ibid.*

He abhors marriages which take place between man and woman before the age of puberty. They bring forth no fruit and His majesty thinks them even hurtful; for afterwards, when such a couple ripens into manhood, they dislike have connection and their home is desolate.<sup>39</sup>

Akbar fixed the age of marriage for boys and girls. Girls were not to marry before the age of fourteen. It is also obvious from *Ain-i-Akbari*, “Boys were not to marry before the age of sixteen, nor girls before fourteen, because the offspring of early marriage is weakly”.<sup>40</sup>

Some parents married their daughters only at the adult age. Guru Granth Sahib authenticates the presence of adult marriage. There are references of adult girls in Guru Granth Sahib who were still unmarried :

ਭਰ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਮੈ ਮਤ ਪੇਈਅੜੈ ਘਰਿ ਪਾਹੁਣੀ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ॥<sup>41</sup>

It seems that there were no intercaste marriages in the society. From the references available in *Ashtachhap* writings it appears that the marriage generally took place between boys and girls of the same caste :

ਅਬ ਗੋਕੁਲ ਕੀ ਜੈਬੀ ਢਾਂਡੀ, ਅਪਜਸ ਹੂ ਨ ਅਘਾਤਿ ।

ਤੂ ਬ੍ਰਧਮਾਨੁ ਬਡੇ ਕੋ ਬੇਟੀ, ਤਨਕੈਂ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਪਾੱਤਿ ।।<sup>42</sup>

39 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. 1, tr., Blochmann, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, rpt. 1977, p. 287.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

41 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 763.

42 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1708, Vol. I, p. 666.

Even in Bani of Guru Granth Sahib there is not any reference to the inter-caste marriage.<sup>43</sup>

Abul Fazl also supports this view. He says :

“In the present *Kali Yuga* no one chooses a wife out of his own caste, nay, each of these four being subdivided into various branches, each subdivision asks in marriage only the daughters of their own equals.”<sup>44</sup>

Marriage of a daughter was a thing of great consideration by the parents. They were mainly worried to find out a suitable match for their daughters. In Nanddas' work '*Shyam Sagai*' when *Yashoda* came with the offer of *Radha* and *Krishna's* marriage, *Kirti* (*Radha's* mother) did not become agree immediately but answered after some thought :

रानी उत्तर द्यौ, सु हौं नहिं करौं सगाई ।  
सूधी राधे कुँवरि, स्याम है अति चरबाई ॥<sup>45</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib considered marriage a spiritual nuptial rather than only a physical relation. It is stated that they are not said to be husband and wife whose bodies merely come together, rather they alone are called husband and wife, who have one soul in two bodies :

ਧਨ ਖਿਰੁ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ॥  
ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਖਿਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ ॥<sup>46</sup>

43 Harbans Kaur Sagoo, *Guru Nanak and the Indian Society*, p. 135.

44 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, tr., H.S. Jarrett and revised by J.N. Sarkar, Delhi, rpt., 1978, p. 339.

45 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 170.

46 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 788.

It is a spiritual bond of souls as God Itself unites wife and husband :

ਧਨ ਪਿਰ ਮੇਲੁ ਭਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਆਪਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥<sup>47</sup>

Married life, *Grihasta*, is celebrated in Guru Granth Sahib to restore to woman her due place and status equal to a man in life. Celibacy which by implication negates this equality is denied. It is said that a person can attain liberation even living with progeny and wife :

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਐਸੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥

ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥<sup>48</sup>

One can achieve salvation even by living a joyful life comprising of playfulness, enjoyment, of dressing and eating :-

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟਿਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥<sup>49</sup>

Husband and wife are complementary to each other, so a man should not leave woman who is his other half :

ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਕੀਏ ਤੁਰਕੁ ਜੇ ਹੋਇਗਾ ਅਉਰਤ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੀਐ ॥

ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੀ ਰਹੀਐ ॥<sup>50</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also realized the importance of married life (*Grihasta*) and woman in family life. They go to an extent of saying that, without woman in home husband and children can not survive.

So, she is an essential part of home:

47 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 3, p. 439.

48 *Ibid.*, Dhansari Mahala 1, p. 661.

49 *Ibid.*, Gujari Mahala 1, p. 522.

50 *Ibid.*, Asa Kabir Ji, p. 477.



घर में जुवती धर्महि फबै ।  
ता बिनु सुत पति दुःखित सबै ।<sup>51</sup>

Here it must be kept in mind that among them Surdas, Parmanaddas, Nanddas, Krishandas and Govindswami did not follow the path of *Grihasta*.<sup>52</sup> They remained unmarried for whole life.

*Ashtachhap* writings witnessed the presence of dowry in contemporary society. Surdas informed about the practice of offering of dowry by the parents of daughter at the time of her marriage :

और बहुत दायज दीन्हे उन, करि विवाह ब्यौहार ।<sup>53</sup>

Nanddas in his work '*Bhasha Dasham Sakand*' informed that on the marriage of *Devaki* and *Vasudev* (parents of *Krishna*), father of *Devaki* offered a handsome of dowry:

भयौ बिबाह परम रंग भीनौ ।  
देवक बहुत दाइजौ दीनौ ।।<sup>54</sup>

The marriage of a girl sometimes became a serious affair due to rigorous observance to this system. Even the suitability was sometimes disregarded by the parents at the cost of a heavy dowry. The nature of dowry varied according to the economic standard and the social status of the families concerned.<sup>55</sup> Sometimes for the sake of dowry a young man would marry older woman than himself. In Guru Granth Sahib dowry was condemned as mere show of one's ego

51 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1798, Vol. I, p. 527.

52 Deen Dayalu Gupta, *Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya*, Vol. II, p. 542.

53 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/4808, Vol. II, p. 542.

54 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 193.

55 K.P. Sahu, *Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life (1000-1526 A.D.)*, Manohar Publications, Calcutta, 1973, p. 195.

and riches. It is stated that material dowry is false, egoist and a vain show, whereas the real dowry is the blessing of Lord's Name:

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ਗੁਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦਾਨੁ ਦਿਵਾਇਆ ॥  
 ਖੰਡਿ ਵਰਭੰਡਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਹੋਈ ਇਹੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਨ ਰਲੈ ਰਲਾਇਆ ॥  
 ਹੋਰਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦਾਜੁ ਜਿ ਰਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਹਿ ਸੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਕਚੁ ਪਾਜੋ ॥<sup>56</sup>

Further it is stated that real dowry was not the material possessions but the inculcation of virtues, which was the permanent asset of a human being :

ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਮੈ ਦਾਜੋ ॥  
 ਹਰਿ ਕਪੜੋ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਵਰੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਕਾਜੋ ॥<sup>57</sup>

After marriage, the girl lived in the joint family of her husband, where mother-in-law exercised control over her and her commands were to be carried out. If the bride failed to come up to her expectations, her life became miserable :

ਸਾਸੁ ਬੁਰੀ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਵੈ ਪਿਰ ਸਿਉ ਮਿਲਣ ਨ ਦੇਇ ਬੁਰੀ ॥<sup>58</sup>

She had to live under the strict supervision of mother-in-law :

ਬੀਸ ਬਫਯੋ ਘਰ ਸਾਸ ਰਿਸੈ ਹੈ ਚਲ ਨ ਸਕਤ ਏਕ ਚਾਲ ।।<sup>59</sup>

Apart from mother-in-law other members of family i.e. father-in-law and brother-in-law, sometimes also exercised control over her:

ਸਸੁ ਵਿਰਾਇਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਉ ਸਸੁਰਾ ਵਾਦੀ ਜੇਠੇ ਪਉ ਪਉ ਲੂਹੈ ॥<sup>60</sup>

56 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 4, pp. 78-79.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 355.

59 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 727, p. 253.

60 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 5, p. 963.

*Ashtachhap* writers also approved the existence of strained relations between wife, mother-in-law and sister-in-law :

सासु ननद घर त्रास दिखावै।<sup>61</sup>

or

जाने सास ननद बैरिन सब, बन में आजु ने भटकौ।।<sup>62</sup>

In fact she has to please each and every member of her husband's family by rendering every possible domestic service:

सबसे रहे अधीन टहल वह सबकी करती।

सास-ससुर और भसुर-ननद देवर से डरती।।

सबका पोषण करै सबन की सेज बिछावे।<sup>63</sup>

To make her free from these inequalities, Sikh Scripture honoured the womenfolk as the symbol of domestic harmony and happiness, social cohesion and unity. She is considered the noblest in all the family. She is the counselor of her husband's younger and elder brother. Blessed is the house, where in-she has appeared:

ਇਛ ਪੁਰੇ ਕੰਤ ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥

ਸਗਲ ਸੰਤੋਖੀ ਦੇਰ ਜੇਠਾਨੀ ॥

ਸਭ ਪਰਵਾਰੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਰਸੇਟ ॥

ਮਤੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਰ ਜੇਸਟ ॥

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੀ ਆਇ ॥<sup>64</sup>

61 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2538, Vol. II, p. 37, also see Pad 10/3501, Vol. II, p. 243.

62 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 374, p. 127.

63 *Ibid.*, cited by Suman Sharma, *Madhya Kaleen Bhakti Adholan Ka Samajik Vivchan*, p. 215.

64 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 5, p. 371.

Sometimes, such an able wife became successful to overcome the control of her husband's family then she did not care of mother-in-law and sister-in-law:

सासु ननद हारी दै गारी। सुनति नहीं कोउ कहति कहा री।।<sup>65</sup>  
तजी सीख सब सास ससुर की लाज जनेऊ जारे।।<sup>66</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib also states that when wife moved away from the dominating influence of her mother-in-law then she had large power in the management of the household:

मामु दिवानी घादरी मिर ते मंख टली॥<sup>67</sup>

At that stage a wife had no fear of brother-in-laws and not even of mother-in-law :

देवर नेठ भुष्टे दुधि मसु का डरु किसु॥<sup>68</sup>

Husband also exercised a good deal of control over wife. Sometimes she had to bear the anger of her husband :

परमानंद त्यों हठ मंडयो ज्यों घर खसम गुसैया।।<sup>69</sup>

She had to remain under her husband's supervision. Chaturbhujdas seems to support this view by concluding that it was unsafe to allow her to remain out of house after night fall :

चतुर्भुज प्रभुगिरिघरन अवारी वन क्यों रहै अकेली अबला।।<sup>70</sup>

65 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2834, Vol. II, p. 94.

66 *Ibid.*, 10/4184, Vol. II, p. 385.

67 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 931.

68 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 1, p. 642.

69 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 702, p. 244.

70 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 14, p. 59.

Other *Ashtachhap* writers especially Nanddas and Kumbhandas had used word '*Abla*' (weak) for the wife :

तुम अबला अज्ञान हमारे चरित न जानो ॥<sup>71</sup>

or

अबला बुधि सुनि डरि गई बली डरैं जग माहिं ॥<sup>72</sup>

Wife had to take the permission of husband for going outside. This is made clear when *Krishna* questioned *Gopi's* about their coming out of homes when their husband's were still back there.

तुम कुल-बधू भवनहीं नीकी, रैनि कहाँ सब आई ।  
अपनैं अपनैं घर पति-जन सौ, कैसें निकसन पाई ॥<sup>73</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib negates the traditional view that wife should live in the custody of husband. Its a remarkable step as no one condemn this view from *Manu's* time. Husband and wife both are according to Guru Granth Sahib, complementary to each other. So, husband should not exercise control over wife. Guru Granth Sahib believes that male and female both are created by Almighty God, so, there is no difference between them:

ਨਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਭ ਨਾਰੀ ਸਭੁ ਏਕੋ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥<sup>74</sup>  
ਪੁਰਖ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਬੁਝਹੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ॥<sup>75</sup>

Surdas also expressed the similar view :

परकृत एक नाम है दोऊ, किधौं पूरुष किधौं नारि ॥<sup>76</sup>

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71 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 26, p. 62.  
72 Nanddas, *Nanddas Grathawali*, p. 158.  
73 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1799, Vol. I, p. 533.  
74 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Nat Mahala 4, p. 983.  
75 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 879.  
76 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3389, Vol. II, p. 203.

Married women were advised to cover their head. *Muslim* women observed the *Purdah* with greater rigidity than the *Hindu* women. *Purdah* is a Persian word which literally means 'a curtain'. This *Purdah* was something to screen off the women from the view of the males.<sup>77</sup> Referring to the *Purdah* among *Muslims*, De Laet says "the Mohammadan women do not come out into public unless they are poor or immodest; they veil their heads and draw the hair forward in a knot from the back."<sup>78</sup>

All the *Ashtachhap* writers throw light on the practice of *Purdah* in the contemporary society. A milder and less elaborate form of *Purdah*, commonly known as *Ghoonghat* appears to have been observed by Hindu women :

दूधट-पट ओट बबाकी टेढी बांह धरावै ।<sup>79</sup>

Further it is stated that after seeing Lord *Krishna gopi* has cast off veil:-

दूधट में न समात, नयन दरसन-मदमाते ।<sup>80</sup>

At some places these writers seem to support this custom. This becomes clear from the following couplet of Parmananddas:

मैया मोहि ऐसी दूलहिन भावै ।

..... । ।

..... ।

77 Dr. Bhagat Singh, "Social Milieu of Guru Amar Das", *The Punjab past and Present*, Vol. 13, October 1979, p. 453.

78 De Laet, *Description of India and Fragment of Indian History*, p. 81.

79 Chaturbujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 7, p. 36.

80 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 61, p. 23.

कर अंचल पट ओट बाबा कों ठाड़ी ब्यार दुराबै ।।<sup>81</sup>

This custom does not permit woman to mix freely with other members of family. Guru Granth Sahib openly condemned *Purdah*. It is compared to suppression and emphasis is given to cast it off:

ਲਾਜ ਮਰੰਤੀ ਮਰਿ ਗਈ ਘੁਘਟੁ ਖੋਲਿ ਚਲੀ ॥<sup>82</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib *Purdah* word occurred. It is stated that in the end false *Purdah* will not help :

ਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਜਬ ਲੇਖਾ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਤਬ ਕਉਣ ਪੜਦਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਢਾਕੈ ॥<sup>83</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers specifically Surdas, to some extent also condemned this custom and supported the view to cast off veil:

नाच कछयौ तब घूँघट छोरयौ ।

लोक-लाज सब फटकि पछोरयौ ।।<sup>84</sup>

or

घूँघट ओट तजी सरिता ज्यौं, स्याम सिंधु कै सन्मुख आए ।।<sup>85</sup>

Further Guru Granth Sahib declared that there is no merit of wearing *Ghoonghat* or *Purdah*. False pride has been attached to the *Purdah* by the people :

ਘੁਘਟੁ ਕਾਢੇ ਕੀ ਇਹੈ ਬਡਾਈ ॥

ਦਿਨੁ ਦਸ ਪਾਂਚ ਬਹੁ ਭਲੇ ਆਈ ॥<sup>86</sup>

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81 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 312, p. 104.  
 82 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 931.  
 83 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 5, p. 616.  
 84 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2279, Vol. I, p. 655.  
 85 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/3008, Vol. II, p. 128.  
 86 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Kabir, p. 484.

The *Purdah* which is worn only for public show is in vain. Real *Purdah* means to fix your mind on one Lord. Body may wander from place to place :

ਘੁੰਘਟੁ ਤੇਰੋ ਤਉ ਪਰਿ ਸਾਚੈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਇ ਕੂਦਹਿ ਅਰੁ ਨਾਚੈ ॥<sup>87</sup>

Guru Amardas expressed his strong disapproval of the *Purdah* when he exhorted the *Rani* of *Haripur* against it when she came to the *Sangat* with a veil on. *Mahima Prakash* relates a story that not caring of the Guru's proclamation against *Purdah*, the queen of ruler of *Haripur* visited him in *Purdah*. Spontaneously the words fell from the Guru's mouth; why has this mad woman come here? And actually when the woman went out, she became mad.<sup>88</sup> This shows Guru's strong dislike for the *Purdah* system.<sup>89</sup>

Here it should be noted that the vast masses of women did not wear any veil of a specific kind. There are references of such women in Guru Granth Sahib where a woman, carrying a pitcher full of water is depicted without any veil.<sup>90</sup> Similarly we get numerous instances of such women in Braj literature who went out of their houses.<sup>91</sup>

During medieval Period, the practice of polygamy was prevalent in the society. Abul Fazl informs us that Akbar had seraglio of 5000

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87 *Ibid.*

88 Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, cited in G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. I, New Academic Publishing Company, Jalandhar, 1960, p. 141.

89 Bhagat Singh, "Social Milieu of Guru Amar Das", p. 453.

90 See, *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 325, 333, 347, 393 and 1331.

91 See, Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 672, p. 74.



women supervised by a separate female staff.<sup>92</sup> A large *harem* was a privilege of aristocracy, the prerogative of chieftains and fashion of the age.<sup>93</sup> It was common among the *Hindus* and *Muslims*. *Ashtachhap* writers authenticate the presence of practice of polygamy in society. One can see the mention of word 'Sot' in their writings :

ਧਹ ਕਹਿ ਸੁਖ, ਮਨ ਸੋਚੜੈ, ਭੜੈ ਸੈਤਿ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥<sup>94</sup>

or

ਸੂਰਜ-ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕੀ ਬੜੀ ਸੁਹਾਗਿਨਿ, ਤਪਜੀ ਸੈਤਿ ਬਜਾੜ ॥<sup>95</sup>

They informed that in a home where there were two wives, there was always dispute:

ਜਾਕੈਂ ਗ੍ਰਹ ਛੈ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੈਂ ਤਾਹਿ ਕਲਹ ਨਿਤ ਹੋੜ ॥<sup>96</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib also informed about the presence of this custom in society at that time. In Sikh Scripture word 'Sokan' is used for other woman apart from wife:

ਮੀਠੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਪਿਰ ਕੀ ਲਾਗੀ ॥

ਸਉਕਨਿ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਕੰਤਿ ਤਿਆਗੀ ॥<sup>97</sup>

It is mentioned that with the coming of the second wife, the importance of the earlier one was lessened in the family. Many a times old wife was given in marriage to other person:

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92 Kirpal Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib : Historical-Socio Economic Perspective*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2012, p. 79.  
 93 *Ibid.*  
 94 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2819, Vol. II, p. 91.  
 95 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1851, Vol. I, p. 551.  
 96 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/4828, Vol. II, p. 551.  
 97 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 5, p. 394.

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜਬ ਲਹੁਰੀ ਆਈ ਬਡੀ ਕਾ ਸੁਹਾਗੁ ਟਰਿਉ ॥  
ਲਹੁਰੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਭਈ ਅਬ ਮੇਰੈ ਜੇਠੀ ਅਉਰੁ ਧਰਿਉ ॥<sup>98</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib not only authenticates the presence of this custom but also condemned it. It is stated that if a man has physical relation with a large number of women, he has to born again and again. He can not get rid off from transmigration :

ਜੇ ਲਖ ਇਸਤਰੀਆ ਭੋਗ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਵ ਖੰਡ ਰਾਜੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥  
ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਸੁਖੁ ਨ ਪਾਵਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੋਨੀ ਪਾਹਿ ॥<sup>99</sup>

Bhai Gurdas states that a man should marry only one woman in his whole life.<sup>100</sup>

Nanddas also emphasized to maintain relation only with one's wife :

ਨਿਤ ਹੀ ਤਿਯ ਕੇ ਰਸ ਬਸ ਰਹੈ ।  
ਅਭਰ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਸਪਨ ਨ ਚਹੈ ।<sup>101</sup>

Both ideologies throw light on the existence of adultery in society during medieval period. There were women who had relation with other men apart from their husbands :

ਪਿਰੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਰ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥<sup>102</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also mentioned about those women who had relation with other men :

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98 *Ibid.*, Asa Kabir, p. 483.  
99 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 26.  
100 Tripat Kaur, *Adi Granth Vich Istari Da Sankalap*, p. 161.  
101 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 141.  
102 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahal 3, p. 89.

जैसैं नारि भजै पर पुरुषहिं, ताकैं रंग ढरी।<sup>103</sup>

or

इहि छल छतनि छिपावै जोई। परकिय सुरतगोपना सोई।<sup>104</sup>

Surdas says that if a woman has relation with another man she can not get salvation :

तजि भर्ता रहि जारहिं लीन। ऐसी नारि न होइ कुलीन।<sup>105</sup>

Men had also relation with other women part from their wives :

धन जोबन मद ऐंडौ-ऐंडौ, ताकत नारि पराई।<sup>106</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib condemns those men who indulge in adultery and have relation with other women:

ਕਾਮਵੰਤ ਕਾਮੀ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਪਰ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਜੋਹ ਨ ਚੁਕੇ ॥

ਦਿਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਕਰੈ ਕਰੈ ਪਛੁਤਾਪੈ ਸੋਗ ਲੋਭ ਮਹਿ ਸੂਕੈ ॥<sup>107</sup>

The man who has the habit to watch on other's wife will be punished at the time of his death:

ਲੈ ਫਾਹੇ ਰਾਤੀ ਤੁਰਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ॥

ਤਕਹਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਈਆ ਲੁਕਿ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਠਾਣੀ ॥<sup>108</sup>

Derogatory words like 'sinner' and 'blind' have been used for the man who has relation with other woman instead of his wife:

ਘਰ ਕੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਅੰਧਾ ॥

ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਸਿਉ ਘਾਲੈ ਧੰਧਾ ॥

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103 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2933, Vol. II, p. 114.  
 104 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 130.  
 105 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1798, Vol. I, p. 527.  
 106 *Ibid.*, Pad 1/328, Vol. 1, p. 90.  
 107 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Dhansari Mahala 5, p. 672.  
 108 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 315.

ਪਾਪੀ ਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਅਗਨੇ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

ਜਲਤ ਰਹੈ ਮਿਟਵੈ ਕਬ ਨਾਹਿ ॥<sup>109</sup>

Both ideologies emphasized on the sanctity of married relationship by declaring that anyone from husband and wife who has relation with other may suffer from physical diseases :

ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਕੀਏ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ॥

ਤਾਂ ਤਨਿ ਉਠਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਰੋਗ ॥<sup>110</sup>

ਤ੍ਰੁਣਾ ਕਰਿ ਕੀਯੈ ਚਾਹੈ ਜੋਗ। ਭੋਗ ਨ ਹੋਏ, ਹੋਏ ਤਨ ਰੋਗ।<sup>111</sup>

Either of them who played false to the other was an object of the disgust of the society :

ਧਿਕ ਸੋ ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰੁਖ ਜੋ ਤਿਆਗੇ, ਧਿਕੁ ਸੋ ਪਤਿ ਜੋ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਜੋਏ।<sup>112</sup>

On one side *Ashtachhap* writers demand fidelity both from husband and wife for the smooth running of relationship but on the other side they announced that a wife should not leave her husband if he has guilty of having relation with other woman :

ਬਿਰਧ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਨ ਭਾਗਠੁ ਕੌ, ਪਤਿਤ ਜੌ ਪਤਿ ਹੋਏ।

ਜੜੁ ਮੂਰਖ ਹੋਏ ਰੋਗੀ, ਤਜੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਜੋਏ।<sup>113</sup>

But Guru Granth Sahib suggests that fidelity is essential not only for a wife but for the husband too.<sup>114</sup>

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109 *Ibid.*, Bhairo Namdev Ji, pp. 1164-65.  
 110 *Ibid.*, Malar Mahala 1, p. 1256.  
 111 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 4/406, Vol. 1, p. 122.  
 112 *Ibid.*, 10/1015, Vol. I, p. 485.  
 113 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1614, Vol. I, p. 485.  
 114 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 933.

A woman was considered to have become impure and untouchable for certain number of days after delivery. It was known as *Sutak*. The word *Sutak* has been derived from *Parsut* which means impure.<sup>115</sup> The foreign travellers have noticed this strange custom. Manucci says,

“When she is in child-bed, she has a little liberty and during her periods she has to retire to a separate room kept for this special purpose. There no one approaches her. Her food is left at a distance, no one approaches her.”<sup>116</sup>

Alberuni also mentioned about this custom. According to him the days of impurity differed caste-wise, for the *Brahman*, these days were eight, for *Kashatriya* twelve, for *Vaishya* fifteen and for *Sudra* the days of impurity were thirty.<sup>117</sup>

This custom was also prevalent in *Japan* and *China*. *Japanese* literature dating back to the *Kojiki* mentions the segregation of women into parturition huts.<sup>118</sup> Even up till the early Twentieth century, the *Chinese* regarded the sight of a pregnant woman as offensive and her visit to temples as most irreverent.<sup>119</sup> Jews and Christians too believe in performing cleanliness rituals after childbirth. Christians draw on the imagery and symbolism of the purification of the Virgin. The

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115 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, p. 98.

116 N. Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, p. 147.

117 Alberuni, *Alberuni's India*, tr., Edward C. Sachau, Vol. II, cited in K.P. Sahu, *Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life*, p. 194.

118 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 33.

119 *Ibid.*

Jewish Law book states the law of impurity and ceremonial purification of women after giving birth which is double the number of days in case of the birth of a female child, there by meaning, that the birth of a female child caused double the pollution.<sup>120</sup>

It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that if one believes in the impurity of *Sutak*, then such impurity occurs everywhere. Inside the cow dung and wood are found worms. Not even one grain of corn is without life in it. Water itself is a living substance, imparting life to all vegetation. How may *Sutak* impurity be believed when even in the kitchen it is occurring? Impurity is not washed away by purificatory rituals, it is removed by true knowledge alone :

ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਮੰਨੀਐ ਸਭ ਤੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਗੋਹੇ ਅਤੇ ਲਕੜੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕੀੜਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਣੇ ਅੰਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਸੂਤਕੁ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਪਵੈ ਰਸੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਏਵ ਨਾ ਉਤਰੈ ਗਿਆਨ ਉਤਾਰੇ ਧੋਇ ॥<sup>121</sup>

The impurity of *Sutak* is condemned as mere superstition. It is said if birth causes impurity, then it can be found in water and on earth where the creation is going on incessantly. Impurity is attached to birth and also to death. All mankind by the superstition of impurity is ruined :

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120 Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation: The Sikh Vision*, p. 99.

121 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 472.

ਜਲਿ ਹੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਥਲਿ ਹੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਸੂਤਕ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਜਨਮੇ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਮੂਏ ਫੁਨਿ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਸੂਤਕ ਪਰਜ ਬਿਗੋਈ ॥<sup>122</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib do not approve of any superstition regarding who is polluted and who is not. For them, the only pollution is the impurity of mind which leads to the un-cleanliness of character that ultimately contaminates the whole society, leading to all the ills, the likes of which the Gurus had to work against throughout their lives, to make life worth living for the common people. *Ashtachhap* writers are silent about this custom.

Another superstition directed against women is the prevalence of taboos regarding menstruation, a natural biological phenomenon. In most of the cultural groups, a menstruating woman is considered unclean and inauspicious. Pliny in his *Natural History* says, “The menstruating woman spoils harvests, devastates garden, kills seeds, makes fruit fall and kills bees; if she touches wine, it turns into vinegar; milk sours...”<sup>123</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib strongly condemned this custom by declaring that impurity lies in the heart and mind of a person and not in the stained garment :

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥<sup>124</sup>

122 *Ibid.*, Gauri Kabir, p. 331.

123 Quoted in Prabhjot Kaur, *Women Liberation : The Sikh Vision*, p. 101.

124 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 1, p. 140.

The condition of that woman was very miserable at that time that had lost her husband. She had to burn herself with the dead body of her husband. This practice was known as *Sati*. Foreign travellers specifically Ibn Battuta, Alberuni and Manucci have described this custom in detail. But it is very surprising that it is only Surdas among *Ashtachhap* writers who has thrown light on this custom. All other writers are silent about it. Surdas may be seemed to support this view by announcing that a woman who had become *Sati*, would get rid off from transmigration and never born again :

जैसेँ सुभट खेत चढ़ि धावै । जैसेँ सती बहुर नहिं आवै ।।<sup>125</sup>

The act of burning was performed both with the dead body of the husband or without it. To burn along with dead body was one of the types of *Sati* called *Sahmarna* or *Sahgaman*. The second type of *Sati* was known *Anumarna* or *Anugaman* according to which on the receipt of information about the death of her husband in distant land, the wife would burn herself along with some symbols of her husband.<sup>126</sup> Abul Fazl divides *Sati* into a number of categories as : those who are forced to become *Sati*; those who burned themselves on account of their devotion; those who considered it necessary on account of family traditions and customs; and those who were dragged into fire against their will by the relatives.<sup>127</sup> Storia Do Mogor informed

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125 Surdas, *Sursagar*, pad 10/2834, Vol. II, p. 95, also see Pad 10/3800, Vol. II, p. 325.

126 Bhagat Singh, "Social Milieu of Guru Amar Das", p. 454.

127 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. 1, pp. 191-92.



that a procession was formed to take the woman to the place of cremation. The *Brahmans* and other relatives joined the procession and showered their profuse greetings on the widow with regard to the glorious fortune that she attained.<sup>128</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib strongly condemned the custom of *Sati*. It stood for the right of the widows to live as human beings in their own right after the death of their husbands. Guru Amardas says that they are not to be called *Satis* or the truly faithful ones who burn themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Those alone are true *Satis* who become lifeless with the very shock of separation from their husbands. Those are also known as *Satis* who spend life in noble conduct and look after their husbands well :

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮਤੀਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ ॥

ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹੰਨਿ ॥

ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮਾਲਿਨ ॥<sup>129</sup>

C.H. Payne rightly says, "Guru Amar Das is chiefly remembered for his vigorous crusade against the practice of *Sati*."<sup>130</sup> G.B. Scott acclaims Guru Amardas as 'first reformer who condemned the prevailing Hindi practice of *Sati*.'<sup>131</sup>

128 N. Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. III, p. 60.

129 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 787.

130 C.H. Payne, *A Short History of The Sikhs*, Language Department Publication, Patiala, IIIrd ed., 2002, p. 20.

131 Bhagat Singh, "Social Milieu of Guru Amar Das", p. 455.

Guru Granth Sahib throws light on the fact that all women did not become *Sati* willingly. They were compelled by their family and relatives to do so :

ਡਗਮਗ ਛਾਡਿ ਰੇ ਮਨ ਬਉਰਾ ॥

ਅਬ ਤਉ ਜਰੇ ਮਰੇ ਸਿਧਿ ਪਾਈਏ ਲੀਨੇ ਹਾਥਿ ਸੰਧਉਰਾ ॥<sup>132</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib the word 'Sati' has been used in different connotations, it implies truthful, immortal, disciplined, virtuous, generous and pure etc.

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤ ਸਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈਸੇ ਨਾਰਿ ॥<sup>133</sup>

Guru Arjan has also criticised this custom. He says that she who burn herself in the fire under the pressure of her mind does not attain union with her husband and wanders through many births. On the other side, a woman who obeys the will of God with contentment and good conduct, suffers no pain from the *Yama* :

ਜਲੈ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਰਾਮ ਸਨੇਹੀ ॥

ਕਿਰਤਿ ਸੰਜੋਗਿ ਸਤੀ ਉਠਿ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਦੇਖਾ ਦੇਖੀ ਮਨ ਹਠਿ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਈਐ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ਬਹੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਭਵਾਈਐ ॥

ਸੀਲ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਆਗਿਆ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨ ਜਮਾਨੈ ॥<sup>134</sup>

Thus, Guru Granth's message gives a new meaning to the word of *Sati* and tries to improve the condition of widow in the

132 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Kabir, p. 338.

133 *Ibid.*, Gauri Kabir, p. 328.

134 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 185.

contemporary society. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that some of the Mughal Emperors, particularly Akbar also tried to ban this practice. He is said to have issued an order that a woman should not be forced to become a *Sati*.<sup>135</sup>

But it is very surprising that apart from Surdas no other *Asthachhap* writer informed about the prevalence of this cruel custom nor raised a voice against it. Surdas' reference about this is very short.

Society looked down upon that widow who did not perform *Sati*. She was advised to lead her remaining life in a particular manner. She was asked neither to sing nor to listen to music; nor to desire to be honoured by anyone. She should not play jokes with anyone, should not eat anything with warm effect; should not take cold water, nor apply oil to her hair or body; should not take part in any game; should not sleep on a cot; should bathe in cold water and not seek after hot water; should not take sweet dishes; should not put on ornaments on feet or toe; should live a life of truth or *Dharma* by thought, word and deed; should try to have control over her senses by undertaking austere fasts and should live in obedience of her son. She was advised to wear rough and coarse clothes:

ਸੁਭਰ ਕਪੜ ਭੋਗ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਿਰੀ ਵਿਹੁਣੀ ਤਤੀਆ ॥<sup>136</sup>

ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਸੁ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਹਾਗਣਿ ਰਾਂਡ ਨ ਮੈਲੈ ਵੇਸੇ ॥<sup>137</sup>

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135 Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India*, p. 134.

136 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru Mahala 5, p. 1102.

137 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 763.

Thus Guru Granth Sahib authenticates the bad condition of widow in society :

ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਲਤਣਿ ਰਾਡੇਪਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰੁ ਧਨ ਕੁਮਲਾਈ ॥<sup>138</sup>

A widow had to spend all her life as a neglected creature as widow remarriage was not allowed.<sup>139</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib favoured the idea of widow-remarriage in order to prevent a widow from becoming a victim to temptation.<sup>140</sup> Although there is no direct reference to widow remarriage but one of the hymn state that a wife can get satisfaction only from her husband and from none else, it can be said that Guru Granth Sahib favoured the idea of widow remarriage so that a widowed woman could lead a normal and socially respectable life :

ਜਿਉ ਤਨੁ ਬਿਧਵਾ ਪਰ ਕਉ ਦੇਈ ॥

ਕਾਮਿ ਦਾਮਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਪਰ ਵਸਿ ਸੇਈ ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਹੋਈ ॥<sup>141</sup>

The profession of prostitution has been in vogue in India since the time immortal. A hymn of Guru Granth Sahib has confirmed the existence of prostitution in Ancient times :

ਬੇਸੁਆ ਰਵਤ ਅਜਾਮਲੁ ਉਧਰਿਓ ਮੁਖਿ ਬੋਲੈ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਨਰਹਰੇ ॥<sup>142</sup>

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138 *Ibid.*

139 K.P. Sahu, *Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life*, p. 200.

140 Harbans Kaur Sagoo, *Guru Nanak and the Indian Society*, p. 143.

141 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 226.

142 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 4, p. 995.

During the *Muslim* rule the evil appears to have spread far and wide.<sup>143</sup> Guru Arjan Dev informed that people had no scruple in visiting prostitutes :

ਚਿਤਵਤ ਪਾਪ ਨ ਆਲਕੁ ਆਵੈ ॥

ਬੇਸੁਆ ਭਜਤ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਹ ਸਰਮਾਵੈ ॥<sup>144</sup>

The father of a prostitute's child cannot be recognized due to this practice:

ਜਿਉ ਬੇਸੁਆ ਪੂਤ ਬਾਪੁ ਕੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਤਿਉ ਫੋਕਟ ਕਾਰ ਵਿਕਾਰਾ ਹੇ ॥<sup>145</sup>

Among *Ashtachhap* writers Nanddas also mentioned about this practice :

गनिका-गज-गीध रटत, गौतम की नारि रटत ॥<sup>146</sup>

Those who were in the habit of visiting the prostitutes did not care to realise the feelings of their wedded companions. Guru Nanak has portrayed in the following hymn the feeling of a young lady whose husband visits a prostitute:

ਚੁੜਾ ਭੰਨੁ ਪਲੰਘ ਸਿਉ ਮੁੰਧੇ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹੀ ਸਣੁ ਬਾਹਾ ॥

ਏਤੇ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੇਦੀਏ ਮੁੰਧੇ ਸਹੁ ਰਾਤੋ ਅਵਰਾਹਾ ॥<sup>147</sup>

Another hymn also refers to this practice where it is stated that thieves, illicit lovers, prostitutes and touts keep company together, as do irreligious men, who eat out of the same bowl. They do not know the praise of True Lord and evil abides within them :

143 Kirpal Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib : Historical-Socio Economic Perspective*, p. 80.

144 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bhairo Mahala 5, p. 1143.

145 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1029.

146 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 279, also see p. 66 & 91.

147 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Vadhans Mahala 1, pp. 557-58.

ਚੋਰਾ ਜਾਰਾ ਰੰਡੀਆ ਕੁਟਣੀਆ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ॥  
 ਵੇਦੀਨਾ ਕੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਵੇਦੀਨਾ ਕਾ ਖਾਣੁ ॥  
 ਸਿਫਤੀ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣਨੀ ਸਦਾ ਵਸੈ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ॥<sup>148</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib not only authenticates the presence of this evil in society but also condemned this practice. It is stated that these women were good in talking but their actions were always bad. They were looked beautiful but their hearts were uncleaned :

ਗਲੀ ਅਸੀ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਅਚਾਰੀ ਬੁਰੀਆਹ ॥  
 ਮਨਹੁ ਕੁਸੁਧਾ ਕਾਲੀਆ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਚਿਟਵੀਆਹ ॥<sup>149</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib declared that not only women were prostitutes but the men's who were morally degenerated were also like prostitute:

ਜਿਨਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੋਪਿਆ ਆਪਣਾ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਬੁਰਿਆਰੀ ॥  
 ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਨਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਪਾਪਿਸਟ ਹਤਿਆਰੀ ॥  
 ਓਹਿ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਕੁਸੁਧ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਉ ਧਰਕਟ ਨਾਰੀ ॥<sup>150</sup>

So, Guru Granth Sahib equally applied word prostitute to both woman and man. Apart from the evil of prostitution there was trade of women on the frontier area. G.S. Chhabra informed, "On the frontiers of Punjab, there was an open trade in women where they were measured and sold under different standards."<sup>151</sup> In Guru Granth

148 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 790.

149 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 85.

150 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 3, p. 651.

151 G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, p. 16.

Sahib there are references to the practice of offering women in charity at pligrimage places :

ਅਸੁ ਦਾਨ ਗਜ ਦਾਨ ਸਿਹਜਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਭੂਮਿ  
ਦਾਨ ਐਸੋ ਦਾਨੁ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤਹਿ ਕੀਜੈ ॥<sup>152</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib does not appreciate this practice. It is stated as a useless practice. One is advised to purify oneself and worship the Name of Lord to achieve liberation instead of performing these types of rituals :

ਆਤਮ ਜਉ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲੁ ਕੀਜੈ ਆਪ ਬਰਾਬਰਿ  
ਕੰਚਨੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਸਰਿ ਤਉ ਨ ਪੂਜੈ ॥<sup>153</sup>

Whatever might have been the position of woman as a girl and wife but as a mother great importance is given to her in both ideologies. Mother exists as a person upon whom depends creation and nutrition in Guru Granth Sahib. Conception and birth are from mother. A hymn of Guru Granth Sahib refers to the indispensability of woman as a mother. It refers, infact, to her indispensability for procreation. The hymn states that it is from woman, the condemned one that we are conceived and it is from her that we are born. It is the woman who keeps our race going. It is the woman who is sought when one loses one's previous wife. It is she with whom we establish our social ties. Then why denounce her from whom even Kings, great men

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152      Guru Granth Sahib, Ramkali Namdev, p. 973.

153      *Ibid.*

and commoners are born? From woman is born another woman, without woman there is none :

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ, ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥<sup>154</sup>

Further it is stated that only God (who is according to Sikh Scripture is *Nirguna*) is free from woman :

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥<sup>155</sup>

On the other side, *Ashtachhap* writers as they believed in *Saguna* form of God, declared that even God is not free from woman. In their writings they have praised mother *Devaki* as she has given birth to the Lord:

तब देवकि आस्वासित करी। तुम सी को है भागनि भरी।।

जाकी कूख विषै भगवान। जो साच्छात पुरान पुमान।।<sup>156</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib stated that in the warmth (of mother's womb) we are inseminated :

ਅਗਨਿ ਬਿੰਬ ਜਲ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਨਿਪਜੇ ॥<sup>157</sup>

In this connection Nikky Singh rightly says, "In the Sikh world view the mother is thus crucial to the origin of life. She is the matrix out of which everything that is originates and evolves."<sup>158</sup>

154 *Ibid.*, Asa di Var Mahala 1, p. 473.

155 *Ibid.*

156 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 198.

157 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 156.

158 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 56.



Further Guru Granth Sahib explained that the nutrition of child depends upon the mother. Child's first attraction is to the mother's breast milk. Second, to the recognition of the mother and the father :

ਪਹਿਲੈ ਪਿਆਰਿ ਲਗਾ ਬਣ ਦੁਧਿ ॥

ਦੂਜੇ ਮਾਇ ਬਾਪ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ ॥<sup>159</sup>

At the first stage of its existence, child takes to the (mother's) milk :

ਪਹਿਲੈ ਪਹਰੈ ਰੈਣਿ ਕੈ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਬਾਲਕ ਬੁਧਿ ਅਚੇਤੁ ॥

ਖੀਰੁ ਪੀਐ ਖੇਲਾਈਐ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਹੇਤੁ ॥<sup>160</sup>

These verses of Guru Granth Sahib indicate the physical and psychological reliance of the child upon mother. From the mother's milk child fulfill its physical need as well as breast milk is its primal psychological experience, which then leads on to recognition of the mother and the father.

*Ashtachhap* writers also explained the physical dependence of child upon mother by explaining feeding activity:

मुख चुंबन स्तनपान दे लाल ले बैठारति गोद ॥<sup>161</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib explained that if a person is great it's credit goes to his/her mother who has given birth to him/her:

ਕੁਲੁ ਉਧਾਰੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਧੰਨੁ ਜਣੇਦੀ ਮਾਇਆ ॥<sup>162</sup>

159 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 1, p. 137.

160 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 75.

161 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 79, p. 64.

162 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Majh Mahala 2, pp. 138-139.

A person is asked to take advise of her/his mother in difficult times because it is believed that mother has the capacity to solve all the problems of a child :

ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਬੇਦਨ ਸਾ ਕਿਸੁ ਆਖਾ ਮਾਈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਜੀਉ ਨ ਰਹੈ ਕੈਸੇ ਰਾਖੈ ਮਾਈ ॥<sup>163</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib mother has been given equal place at par with Guru:

ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਮਾਤਾ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਿਤਾ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸਵਾਮੀ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰਾ ॥<sup>164</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib by recognizing importance of mother compares *Mati* (wisdom) to her :

ਮਾਤਾ ਮਤਿ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ॥<sup>165</sup>

or

ਮਤਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਸਰਿ ਸੁਹਜ ਸਮਾਯਉ ॥<sup>166</sup>

So, a person should recognise *Mati* (wisdom) as mother and should work according to it.

In *Ashtachhap* writings mother is depicted as a very loving person. This is exemplified through the *Yashoda* who showers all love, care and consideration on her child, *Krishna*:

ਜਨਨੀ ਦੇਖਿ ਢਲਿ, ਭਲਿ ਜਾਤਿ ।

ਜੈਸੈਂ ਨਿਧਨੀ ਧਨਹਿੰ ਪਾਏਂ, ਹਰਭ ਦਿਨ ਅਰੁ ਰਾਤਿ ।।<sup>167</sup>

163 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 990.

164 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 262.

165 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 151.

166 *Ibid.*, Swayya Mahala 4, p. 1397.

167 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/689, Vol. I, p. 232.

Being mother, *Yashoda* is ready to give her everything to anybody who make her child learn how to walk :

सर्वसु ताहि देउंगी जो मेरे नान्हरे गोविंद पौ पौ चलन सिखावै ।।<sup>168</sup>

She makes efforts so that her child may learn how to walk and how to dance by clapping her hands:

सिखवति चलन जसोदा मैया ।

अरबराइ कर पानि गहावत, डगमगाइ धरनी धरे पैया ।।<sup>169</sup>

आँगन स्याम नचावहीं, जसुमति नँदरानी ।

तारी दै-दै गावहीं मधुरी मृदु बानी ।।<sup>170</sup>

*Yashoda* is so much absorbed in love of her son that she says to other ladies to allow her son to take what he want, in return she will pay double price :

माई लैन देहु जो मेरे लाल हि भावै ।

दधि मांखन चौगुनों देउंगी या सुत के लेखें जाकी जितौ आवै ।<sup>171</sup>

To conclude, it may be said that both ideologies depicted woman playing different roles as a girl, wife and mother. Braj literature only authenticates the presence of social evils i.e. *Purdah*, *Sati*, child-marriage etc. in society whereas in *Guru Granth Sahib* these social evils are strongly opposed for the upliftment of woman. In Braj literature woman's position is subordinate to her husband. But in

168 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 5, p. 35.

169 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/733, Vol. I, p. 244.

170 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/752, Vol. I, p. 248.

171 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 5, p. 35.

Guru Granth Sahib she exists as an independent person. The Sikh Scriptural message is not the subjugation of the female to the male.<sup>172</sup>

Literature under study is full of numerous references to the dress, ornaments, make-up and activities of a woman which is the subject matter of the next chapter.

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172 Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, *Sikhism An Introduction*, I.B. Tauris, New York, London, 2011, p. 110.

## Chapter – 5

### DEPICTION OF FEMALE DRESS, MAKE-UP, ORNAMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Regarding female dress, her make-up, ornaments and activities numerous references are found in Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature under study. In Guru Granth Sahib female dress, her act of applying make-up, wearing ornaments and her activities have been described with spiritual significance. Whereas in Braj literature this account only brings into focus her social status in the society.

In Guru Granth Sahib female dress has a symbolic meaning. Female devotee asks her friend that what type of dress she should wear to receive the Lord :

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਸੋ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਵਸਿ ਆਵੇ ਕੰਤੁ ॥<sup>1</sup>

Her friend answered her to wear such a dress with which the True Lord becomes accessible:

ਜਿਨੀ ਵੇਸੀ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸੇਈ ਵੇਸ ਕਰੇਉ ॥<sup>2</sup>

Without *Hari* the beautiful dress does not attract the devotee-wife :

ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਨੀਦ ਭੁਖ ਕਹੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਕਾਪੜੁ ਤਨਿ ਨ ਸੁਖਾਵਏ ॥<sup>3</sup>

Woman is advised to wear the symbolic dress of love; her clothes are decorated with God's love:-

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1 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Shloka Farid, p. 1384.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 1383.

3 *Ibid.*, Tukhari Mahala 1, p. 1108.

ਸਾਚੁ ਧੜੀ ਧਨ ਮਾਡੀਐ ਕਾਪੜੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>4</sup>

Those who are busy in dressing themselves in silken robes but do not appropriate *Harnam*, cannot attain peace :

ਪਾਟ ਪਟੰਬਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹਢਾਵਉ ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਉ ॥<sup>5</sup>

So, the red robe which is only worn for the sake of outward lovely appearance is useless:

ਗਣਤ ਗਣਾਵਣਿ ਆਈਆ ਸੂਹਾ ਵੇਸੁ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ॥<sup>6</sup>

Such type of dress is considered false. It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that false is the body, false are the clothes; false is incomparable beauty:-

ਕੂੜੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਪੜੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਰੂਪ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥<sup>7</sup>

During the period under study ladies were very conscious about their dress. But Guru Granth Sahib declares that one should not give much attention towards worldly robes. Only those are liked by God who do not care for outward dressing :

ਸੂਹਵੀਏ ਸੂਹਾ ਵੇਸੁ ਛਡਿ ਤੂ ਤਾ ਪਿਰ ਲਗੀ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

ਸੂਹੇ ਵੇਸਿ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਦੁਝਿ ਮੁਈ ਗਾਵਾਰਿ ॥<sup>8</sup>

Without the God beautiful dress is considered useless. Guru Granth Sahib states that without the Name, all food and clothes are worthless; cursed is such spirituality, and cursed are such miraculous powers:-

4 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.

5 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 225.

6 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.

7 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 468.

8 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 787.

ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਖਾਣੁ ਸਭੁ ਬਾਦਿ ਹੈ ਧਿਗੁ ਸਿਧੀ ਧਿਗੁ ਕਰਮਾਤਿ ॥<sup>9</sup>

So, with the advise of Guru female-devotee freed herself from attractive worldly dresses :

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਸੁਹਾ ਵੇਸੁ ਗਇਆ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਮਾਰਿ ॥<sup>10</sup>

With the advice of the Guru she abandoned the red robe and in turn worn the robe of humility and forgiveness:

ਹਰਿ-ਹਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਬਨਾਵਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਹਰਿ ਕਾਪੜੁ ਪਹਿਰਹੁ ਖਿਮ ਕਾ ॥<sup>11</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib mentioned that the true wife (devotee) of God-Husband discards all her red dresses and wears the ornaments of mercy and forgiveness around her neck:-

ਸੁਹਾ ਵੇਸੁ ਸਭੁ ਉਤਾਰਿ ਧਰੇ ਗਲਿ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਖਿਮਾ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>12</sup>

It is stated that one should only wear clothes which do not distress the mind and body, all other wear ruins bliss:

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਪੈਧੇ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥<sup>13</sup>

Further it is said that one should not wear clothes as fine as air:

ਵਾਊ ਸੰਦੇ ਕਪੜੇ ਪਹਿਰਹਿ ਗਰਬਿ ਗਵਾਰ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਚਲਨੀ ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਹੋਏ ਛਾਰੁ ॥<sup>14</sup>

From the writings of *Ashtachhap* writer's detailed information can be gathered about the dress of a woman in the contemporary

9 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 3, p. 650.

10 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 787.

11 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 3, p. 650.

12 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 786.

13 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 16.

14 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 318.

society. *Sari* was the most common wear used by the ladies. Apart from *Saris* they made use of *Langha*, *Choli*, *Angiya*, *Salwar*, *Chunni* or *Dupatta*.

During that period women mainly used *Sari* to cover their bodies. From *Ashtachhap* writers it becomes clear that many kinds of *Saris* were used at that time. *Kausambi Sari* was in trend during that period. This becomes clear from the fact that all the *Ashtachhap* writers mentioned about it :

नवधन नववन नवपिक चातक नवल कसूंभी सारी।<sup>15</sup>

Kumbhandas in one of his hymn imagined that *Radha* has worn *Kausambi Sari* (named after the plant of *Kausam* which also known as Ceylon oak) on her beautiful body:-

पहेरे सुभग अंग कसूंभी सारी।<sup>16</sup>

*Thigni Sari*, *Dandhi Sari*, *Tansukh Sari*, *Chunri Sari*, *Jhoomk Sari* and *Patori Sari* are different types of *Saris*. Surdas and Parmananddas mentioned about *Thigni Sari* which was an embroidered one :

ये तो लाल ढिंगन की ओढ़े है काहु की सारी।<sup>17</sup>

Surdas mentioned that ladies were used to wear *Thigni Sari* of red colour along with *Odhni (Chuni)* of yellow colour at that time:-

लाल ढिंगनि की सारी ताकौं, पीत उढ़नियाँ कीन्ही।<sup>18</sup>

*Cotton Sari* was commonly used by all women. It was known as *Tansukh Sari* at that time :

15 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 74, p. 82

16 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, pad 6, p. 51.

17 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 666, p. 232.

18 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1312, Vol. I, p. 403.



तनसुख सारी तन सुकुमार।<sup>19</sup>

Krishandas imagined that *Radha* has worn *Tansukh Sari* on her lovely body. This description indicated that *Tansukh Sari*, which is of cotton, is commonly used by ladies at that time

तन तनसुख सारी तनु पहिरेँ राजति राधा गोरी।<sup>20</sup>

*Jhoomak Sari* was studded with golden and silver small balls and bells. Almost all the *Ashtachhap* writers mentioned about it:

लहँगा लाल झूमक की सारी।<sup>21</sup>

Govindswami mentioned that ladies at that time used to wear *Jhoomak Sari* which is studded with balls and bells (*Ghungru*): -

गावत राग मलार भामिनी, पहिरे झूमक सारी।<sup>22</sup>

A *Sari* which was woven in golden thread was known as *Dandhi Sari*. It was also used during the period under study:

पँचरँग बरन पाट की डाँड़ी, अतिहीं सौँज बनाई।<sup>23</sup>

*Chunri Sari* was also used. Savitri Chandra Sobha informed that it was of *Rajasthani* style i.e. prepared in many colours, first tying and then dying in different colours.<sup>24</sup>

गोरे बदन चूनरी सारी, अलकैँ मुख बगराई।<sup>25</sup>

Woman also used *Patola* silk *Sari*. This was known as *Patori Sari*:

19 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3228, Vol. II, p. 171.

20 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 979, p. 393.

21 *Ibid.*, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 50, p. 19.

22 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 159, p. 106.

23 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3455, Vol. II, p. 227.

24 Savitri Chandra Sobha, *Samaj Aur Sanskriti*, cited from Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)*, p. 119.

25 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2065, Vol. 1, p. 599.

पुनि पट-पीत पटोरन पोंछत।<sup>26</sup>

*Langha* was also worn by ladies of that period. All the *Ashtachhap* writers specifically Surdas, Nanddas, Kumbhandas, Parmananddas, Chhitsuwami and Krishandas mentioned about it.

पगनि जेहरि लाल लहंगा।<sup>27</sup>

Nanddas mentioned that yellow *Langha* along with yellow *Choli* used by the ladies to make themselves beautiful at that time:-

लहंगा पीत, कंचुकी पीत सोहै तन गोरे।<sup>28</sup>

Krishandas has mentioned about yellow *Langha* along with red *Chunri*:-

पीत लहंगा लाल चूनरि स्याम कंचुकि बाँही।<sup>29</sup>

*Choli* is basically the cloth worn with *Langha* on the middle part. It is mentioned along with *Langha*:

नील लहंगा जाल चोली कसि, केसरि अंग सुरगनौ।<sup>30</sup>

*Angiya* was also worn at that time. Abul Fazl informed that *Angiya* was a jacket without a skirt.<sup>31</sup> *Ashtachhap* writers also mentioned about it :

अटपटे भूषन रगमगी अँगिया अलकावलि बिथुरी।<sup>32</sup>

Chaturbhujdas mentioned about *Angiya* along with red *Langha*

तेरी सौधे सनी अँगिया उरजनि पर अरु कटि लहंगा लाल।<sup>33</sup>

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26 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 336.  
 27 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1661 Vol. 1, p. 491.  
 28 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 325.  
 29 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1043, p. 429.  
 30 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/3450, Vol. II, p. 224.  
 31 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, , Vol. III, p. 342.  
 32 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 787, p. 304.  
 33 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 51, p. 74.

*Salwar* was also worn at that time. It was the garment worn on the lower part of the body also known as *Pajama*<sup>34</sup> :

सूथन लाल फोंदना फबि रहयौ यह छवि ऊपर तन मन वारत ।।<sup>35</sup>

or

सूथन जँघन बाँधि नाराबँद ।<sup>36</sup>

*Duppata* was also known as *Chunri*, *Chuni*, *Cheer* and *Odhani*. It was basically used with *Langha* to cover the head :

नयौ पीतांबर, नई चूनरी, नई-नई बूँदनि भीजति गोरी ।<sup>37</sup>

Krishandas mentioned that ladies worn *Odhani* (*Chunri*) of five colours (*Panchrang*):-

पचरंग सिर ओढनी बनाई ।<sup>38</sup>

Nanddas imagined that *Radha* is looking very beautiful by wearing *Cheer* of multi colour:-

तैसोई चीर-लहरिया पहिरैं सोभित राधा-प्यारी ।<sup>39</sup>

At that time women were fond of wearing dark colour *Saris* like red, green and blue etc. :

गावत चढी हैं हिंडोरे सूही सारी सोहै ।<sup>40</sup>

लहैंगा लाल गुलाल रंग ।<sup>41</sup>

नील सारी पहिरै तन ।<sup>42</sup>

34 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 342.

35 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 16, p. 42.

36 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1672, Vol. I, p. 493.

37 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1303, p. 400.

38 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 50, p. 19.

39 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 322.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 324.

41 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 919, p. 329.

42 Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 178, p. 125.

Next to dress was **make-up** which mostly occupied the attention of the ladies. In Guru Granth Sahib word *Sigar* is used for it :

ਕੁਆਰ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਜੈਸੇ ਕਰਤ ਸੀਗਾਰਾ ॥<sup>43</sup>

All the *Ashtachhap* writers authenticate that ladies spent much of their time in doing *Sigar* (make-up):

ਕਰਿ ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਚੰਚਲ ਮ੍ਰਗਨੈਨੀ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਕਸੂੰਭੀ ਚੋਲੀ ।।<sup>44</sup>

Chaturbhujdas mentioned that after wearing beautiful dresse ladies of that time spent much time in doing *Sigar*:-

ਸਾਜਿ ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਪਟਭੂਭਨ ਨਖ-ਸਿਖ ਅੰਗ-ਅੰਗ ਅਭਿਰਾਮਿਨਿ ।<sup>45</sup>

All women have interest in adoring themselves at that time. Guru Granth Sahib mentioned that all women decorate themselves:-

ਸਗਲੀਆ ਕਰਹਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>46</sup>

There is also mention of sixteen embellishments of woman in a hymn of Guru Granth Sahib. Fifth Guru mentioned in the feminine voice, “I have embellished myself with the sixteen decorations and applied the mascara to my eyes”:-

ਸੋਲਹ ਕੀਏ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਕਿ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਪਾਜਿਆ ॥<sup>47</sup>

All the sixteen items of *Sigar* found mention in *Ashtachhap* writings too :

ਸਕਲ ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਸਾਜਿ ਮ੍ਰਗਨੈਨੀ ।<sup>48</sup>

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43 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Kabir, p. 792.  
 44 Krishanddas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 405, p. 149.  
 45 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 40, p. 47.  
 46 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.  
 47 *Ibid.*, Phunhay Mahala 5, p. 1361.  
 48 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 50, p. 18.

सोरहु सिंगार किये कर में माला सो लिये।<sup>49</sup>

Surdas mentioned about the sixteen items of *Sigar* along with

*Sari*:-

पहिरि सारी सुरँग, पँचरँग, षट-दस सिंगार।<sup>50</sup>

Abul Fazl mentioned these sixteen items as 1) bathing 2) anointing with oil 3) braiding the hair 4) decking the crown of her head with jewels 5) anointing with sandal-wood unguent 6) the wearing of dresses 7) sectarian marks of caste, and often decked with pearls and golden ornaments 8) tinting with lamp-black like collyrium, 9) wearing of ear-rings 10) adorning with nose-rings 11) wearing ornaments around the neck 12) decking with garlands of flowers or pearls 13) staining the hands 14) wearing a belt hung with small bells 15) decorating the feet with gold ornaments 16) Eating pan.<sup>51</sup> He seems to mix *Sigar* items with the ornaments. *Ubtan, Manjan, Missi, Snan, Subasan, Keshvinyas, Maang Bharna, Anjan, Mahawar, Bindi, To Put Til, Mehandi, Gandh* (scents), *Aabushan, Phulmala* and *Pan Rachna*<sup>52</sup> were the sixteen items used for *Sigar* by the woman in medieval times.

**Ubtan** : Before taking bath ladies rubbed unguents on their body :

केसरि कौ उबटनौ बनाऊँ, रचि-रचि मैल छुड़ाऊँ।<sup>53</sup>

49 *Ibid., Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 557, p. 208.

50 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1447, Vol. I, p. 437.

51 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, pp. 342-343.

52 Bindu Mattoo, *New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)*, p. 126.

53 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/803, Vol. I, p. 263.

**Snan** : After applying *Ubtan* to the body they were used to take bath. Before it they made water fragmented by using *Chandan* and *Kesar* etc. :

उष्ण सीतल अन्हवाय खोरजल चन्दन अंग लगाऊंगी ।।<sup>54</sup>

Nanddas mentioned that ladies used to take bath with the water which was fragmented by fragrance of eight types:-

अषट गंध उसनोदक सों असनान कराये ।।<sup>55</sup>

**Keshvinyas** : They parted their hair and twisted it behind their head. They often made rolls of hair on one side and made it in tresses. Flowers and ornaments were used to decorate their hair. They made *Beni* (plait) of the hair :

बेनी लटके पीठ पर हंसि दोरि घिरि मिलि जाय ।<sup>56</sup>

Surdas has mentioned about *Beni* along with *Sheeshphul*:-

बेनी गूँधि, माँग मोतिनि की सीसफूल सिर धारति ।।<sup>57</sup>

**Maang Bharna** : After *Keshvinyas* vermillion (*Sindur*) was applied between the parting of the hair by the married ladies :

मुख मंडित रोरी रंग, सेदुर माँग छुही ।<sup>58</sup>

Guru Nanak states in *Babur Bani* that women adorned their hair into lovely plaits and painted the parting of their hair with vermillion :

54 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 608, p. 212.

55 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 178.

56 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 25, p. 59.

57 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2116, Vol. I, p. 614.

58 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/642, Vol. 1, p. 217.

ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ ॥<sup>59</sup>

Guru Nanak mentioned that ladies have woven their hair into lovely braids and saturated their partings with vermillion:-

ਮਾਠਿ ਗੁੰਦਾਈ ਪਟੀਆ ਭਰੀਐ ਮਾਗ ਸੰਧੂਰੇ ॥<sup>60</sup>

There was also trend of using a string of pearls in the parting of the hair :

ਕੰਚਨ ਖਾਰ ਸਾਜਿ ਲਿਏ ਕਰ ਮੇਂ, ਮੋਤਿਨਿ ਮਾਂਗ ਸੰਕਾਰੀ ।<sup>61</sup>

So, different methods were used to beautify *Maang* :

ਓਹ ਮਾਂਗ ਸਵਾਰੈ ਬਿਖੈ ਕਉ ਓਹ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥<sup>62</sup>

**Anjan** : *Anjan* (collyrium) was used to beautify the eyes :

ਦੇਖਿ ਅੰਜਨ ਨੈਨ ਗਯੋ ਮਨਮਥ ਲਾਜਿ ।।<sup>63</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib advised to apply the collyrium of fear of God to darken the eyes :

ਭੈ ਕੀਆ ਦੇਹਿ ਸਲਾਈਆ ਨੈਣੀ ਭਾਵ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੋ ॥<sup>64</sup>

The *Anjan* that she uses to darken and beautify her eyes is to be interpreted as *Gyan* (knowledge) :

ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਦੀਆ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਧੇਰ ਬਿਨਾਸੁ ॥<sup>65</sup>

As the *Anjan* of knowledge is gently put on, the pitch-heavy darkness of ignorance disappears :

ਤਿਮਰ ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥<sup>66</sup>

59 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 417.

60 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 1, p. 558.

61 Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 28, p. 55.

62 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Shloka Kabir, p. 1373.

63 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 47, p. 49.

64 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.

65 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 293.

66 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 4, p. 573.

It was also known as *Kajal* :

काजर रेख बनी नैननि में प्रीतम कौ चित चोरें ।।<sup>67</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib states that one should make the patience the parting of her hair and apply the collyrium of enlightenment which is imbued with the colour of the sword of Lord Krishna:

पीरनु पड़ी घंटावै काभहि मीरंगु सुरभा देष्टी ॥<sup>68</sup>

**Mahawar** : There was also fashion of applying *Mahawar* to the feet. It imparted red colour to the feet. On the birth of *Krishna*, *Mahawar* was applied to the *Yashoda's* feet:

नाइनि बोलहु नव रंगी (हो), ल्याउ महावर बेग ।<sup>69</sup>

**Bindi** : To beautify one's forehead *Bindi* was applied :

सिर सीमंत जड़ाव की बेदी दिए लिलार ।<sup>70</sup>

Surdas mentioned about *Bindi* along with *Beni* and *Anjan* :

बेनी माँग, भाल बेदी छवि, नैननि अंजन रंग ।<sup>71</sup>

Sometimes *Kajal* was used by ladies to make *Bindi* or *Tilak* on their forehead:

काजल तिलक दियौ नीकी विधि रचि रचि माँग सँवारी ।<sup>72</sup>

*Sindur* is also used for this purpose :

गोरें भाल बिदु सेंदुर पर ।।<sup>73</sup>

67 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 1040, p. 427.

68 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 359.

69 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/658, Vol. I, p. 224.

70 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 25, p. 58.

71 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2771, Vol. II, p. 82.

72 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, cited in P.D. Meetal, *Ashtachhap Parichay*, p. 108.

73 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2116, Vol. I, p. 614.



**To Put Til :** To make them beautiful, women were also in habit of making *Til* on their chin during that period :

नासा तिल-प्रसून बेसरि छवि, मोतिनि माँग भरी है।।<sup>74</sup>

**Mehandi :** *Mehandi* was also used to dye their hands and feet :

अचल सुहाग भाग्य की लहरें हस्त हैं मैहेदी दागे।।<sup>75</sup>

**Gandh :** Sweet-scented pastes were rubbed on body and scented clothes were put on after bath :

चोवा, चंदन छिरकति भामिनि।<sup>76</sup>

or

चोवा चंदन अगर कुंकुमा झारत फिरत सकल अंग अंग।।<sup>77</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib also mentioned that women used *Sandalwood* to make their bodies fragrant :

ਚੰਦਨੁ ਮੋਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਮਾਂਗ ਸੰਧੁਰੁ ॥<sup>78</sup>

If she apply scents to her body but do not appropriate God's Name then she cannot attain peace :

ਚੋਆ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਅੰਕਿ ਚੜਾਵਉ ॥

..... ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਉ ॥<sup>79</sup>

She is advised to gather the knowledge of *Chandan* like God in her conscious mind and live in the temple of inner consciousness:

74 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/1672, p. 493.

75 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 919, p. 329.

76 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 342.

77 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 92, p. 88.

78 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri. Raga Mahala 1, p. 19.

79 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 225.

ਚੰਦਨੁ ਚੀਤਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਦਸਵਾ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥<sup>80</sup>

**Phulmala** : Ladies also used *Phulmala* to make themselves attractive :

ਧੋਰੇ ਕੜੇ ਕਰ ਫਾਥਨ ਸੋਫੇ, ਸੋਫੇ ਗਲ ਫੂਲਨ ਹਾਰ।<sup>81</sup>

Govindswami mentioned that bracelets (*Kara*) were looking beautiful in hands and string of flowers (*Phulmala*) in the neck:-

ਫੂਲਨਿ ਕੇ ਫੋਂਦਾ ਰਚਿ ਗੁੰਥੇ ਫੂਲਨਿ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਮਾਲ ਬਨਾਏ।<sup>82</sup>

**Pan Rachna** : To redden the lips and imparting sweet smell ladies used betal leaf (*Pan*) :

ਅਧਰ ਕਾਜਰ ਨਯਨ ਰੱਗਸਗੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਪੋਲਨ ਧੀਕ।<sup>83</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib her embellishments are assigned spiritual value. Her cosmetic does not only enhance her physical appearance, but also contribute to her intellectual strength. The true wife bedecked herself with the *Gyan* (knowledge) of the Lord :

ਗਿਆਨ ਅਪਾਰ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਸੋਭਾਵੰਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ॥<sup>84</sup>

First of all *Suhagan* should please God-husband and then she should apply the make-up :

ਕਾਮਣਿ ਤਉ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਾ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੰਤੁ ਮਨਾਇ ॥<sup>85</sup>

If a woman adorn herself with all the sixteen items of *Sigar* but she does not adore the master of the world all her make-up is useless:

ਖੇੜ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਕਰੈ ਅਤਿ ਪਿਆਰੀ ॥

80 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.

81 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 10, p. 39.

82 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 61, p. 77.

83 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 606, p. 212.

84 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 3, p. 426.

85 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 788.

ਬਿਨੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਭਜੇ ਨਿਤ ਖੁਆਰੀ ॥<sup>86</sup>

Without the spouse who bedecks herself, all her beauty is vain.  
All her decoration is like the 'empty' wind and she never enjoys the  
company of the spouse :

ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਕਰੇ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥

ਦੁਹਚਾਰਣੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਿਤ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥<sup>87</sup>

With this false make-up she cannot be accepted in the home of  
the Lord :

ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਧਨ ਸੀਗਾਰੀਐ ਜੋਬਨ ਬਾਦਿ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥

ਨ ਮਾਣੇ ਸੁਖਿ ਸੇਜੜੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਬਾਦਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>88</sup>

Those who are busy in doing worldly make-up and do not have  
concern with the Lord, all their make-up is in vain:

ਮੁੰਧੇ ਪਿਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਕੀਆ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>89</sup>

*Duhagan (Manmukh)* of Guru Granth Sahib decorates herself,  
but Lord- Husband is not pleased:-

ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਕਰੇ ਪਿਰ ਖਸਮ ਨ ਭਾਵੈ ॥<sup>90</sup>

So, one is advised to apply such make-up which is liked by the  
Lord. Such a wife is embellished by the Lord Itself :

ਜੇਹਾ ਕਰਾਏ ਤੇਹਾ ਕਰੀ ਸੀਗਾਰ ॥<sup>91</sup>

God adorns her with Its grace :

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86 *Ibid.*, Gauri Mahala 1, p. 225.  
87 *Ibid.*, Malar Mahala 3, p. 1277.  
88 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 58.  
89 *Ibid.*, p. 18.  
90 *Ibid.*, Maru Mahala 3, p. 1047.  
91 *Ibid.*, Bhairo Mahala 3, p. 1128.

ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵਨਿ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਅਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਲੈਹਿ ਸਵਾਰਿ ॥<sup>92</sup>

She should adorn herself with the *Sabad* of True Guru and dedicate her body and mind to the Lord :

ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਸੀਗਾਰੀਆ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਕੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥<sup>93</sup>

Guru Amardas also advised to wife (devotee) to do the decoration of the *Guru's Sabad*:-

ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਬਣਾਵੈ ॥<sup>94</sup>

She should deck herself in the *Sehaj* of the Lord and apply the make-up of *Guru Sabad* :

ਪਿਰ ਕੇ ਸਹਿਜ ਰਹੈ ਰੰਗ ਰਾਤੀ ਸਬਦਿ ਸਿੰਗਾਰੁ ਬਣਾਵਣਿਆ ॥<sup>95</sup>

Only that woman is liked by the Lord who applied the make-up of *Sehaj*:

ਸਹਿਜਿ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਕਰਿ ਆਵੈ ॥

ਤਾ ਸੋਹਾਗਣਿ ਜਾ ਕੰਤੈ ਭਾਵੈ ॥<sup>96</sup>

One is advised to give up worldly make-up and instead of it *Sigar* of fear is advised to do :

ਕਹਤੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਭੈ ਭਾਵ ਕਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>97</sup>

True wife (*Gurmukh*) is advised to make the True Word of the *Sabad* her red dress, and let the fear of God and the love of God, be her ornaments and decorations:-

ਸਬਦਿ ਸਚੈ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਭੈ ਭਾਇ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਬਣਾਇ ॥<sup>98</sup>

92 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.

93 *Ibid.*

94 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 3, p. 363.

95 *Ibid.*, Majh Mahala 3, p. 129.

96 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 750.

97 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.

98 *Ibid.*, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 786.

Stress is also given to deck oneself with inner qualities in Guru Granth Sahib. As, when ego passes away from body then the *Sigar* is liked by God :

ਹਉਮੈ ਖੋਇ ਕਰੇ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥  
ਤਉ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਸੇਜੈ ਰਵੈ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥<sup>99</sup>

So, one is advised to deck herself according to the will of God :

ਪਿਰ ਕੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਸਦਾ ਚਲੈ ਤਾ ਬਨਿਆ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>100</sup>

One is advised to do the make-up of God's Name :

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਬਨਾਵਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਹਰਿ ਕਾਪੜੁ ਪਹਿਰਹੁ ਖਿਮ ਕਾ ॥<sup>101</sup>

This type of make-up is liked by the Lord; such lover is dear to the Lord:-

ਐਸਾ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਮ ਕਾ ॥<sup>102</sup>

**Ornaments:** In Guru Granth Sahib, her ornaments or jewelry is related to her mental state. A wife should make good deeds her ornaments and her mind the thread. She should be able to string the diamond of *Naam* which is beyond all price.

ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਮਣ ਜੇ ਥੀਐ ਜੇ ਮਨੁ ਧਾਗਾ ਹੋਇ ॥  
ਮਾਣਕੁ ਮੁਲਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਲੀਜੈ ਚਿਤਿ ਪਰੋਇ ॥<sup>103</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib is of the view that a wife who wears all ornaments and applies make-up on her body but do not recite *Naam*

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99 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.  
100 *Ibid.*, Sorath Mahala 3, p. 651.  
101 *Ibid.*, p. 650.  
102 *Ibid.*  
103 *Ibid.*, Vadhans Mahala 1, p. 557.

then all these things are useless. These are responsible for transmigration :

ਕਨਿਕ-ਕਨਿਕ ਪਹਿਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਕੰਗਨਾ ਕਾਪਰੁ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਬਨਾਵੈਗੋ ॥  
ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਭਿ ਫੀਕ ਫਿਕਾਨੇ ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਆਵੈਗੋ ॥<sup>104</sup>

During medieval period ladies used different types of ornaments from head to toe to beautify themselves. *Ashtachhap* writers throw light that these ornaments were made of different metals. Ornaments made of diamond were in use at that time:

ਆਭੂਣਨ ਹੀਰਾ ਕੇ ਪਹਿਰੈਂ ਲਾਲ-ਪਾਟ ਤੇ ਪੋਛੇ ।<sup>105</sup>

Gold ornaments were expensive:

ਸੋਨੇ ਕਟਿ ਭੂਣਨ ਪਹਿਰਾਏ, ਹਾਥ ਸੁਹਾਰੀ ਲਾਝੈ ।।<sup>106</sup>

Ornaments of pearls and flowers were also in trend

ਭੂਣਨ ਸਭੈ ਮੋਤੀ ਮਾਂਗ ਸਿਥਿਲ ਅਭੈ ।<sup>107</sup>

Nanddas in his work *Granthawali* also mentioned about ornaments and dress of flowers:-

ਫੂਲਨ ਕੇ ਆਭੂਣਨ, ਫੂਲਨ ਕੇ ਬਸਨ ਬਿਰਾਜਤ ।।<sup>108</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib states that false is gold, false is silver and false are those who wear them :

ਕੂੜੁ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਰੁਪਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਪੈਨਣਹਾਰ ॥<sup>109</sup>

**Ornaments For Head :** In their hair ladies used the *Sheeshpul*, *Chandrawali* and *Champkali* :

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104 *Ibid.*, Kanara Mahala 4, p. 1308.  
105 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 321.  
106 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 887, p. 350.  
107 *Ibid.*, Pad 714, p. 275.  
108 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 328.  
109 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 468.

सीस-फूल सीमंत किसोरी आपुन दीनो।<sup>110</sup>

मृग-मद आड़ सुदेस करी चन्द्रावलि नीकी।<sup>111</sup>

Married ladies along with vermillion (*Sindur*) used a *Tika* in the parting of the hair :

गोरैं भाल बिदु सेंदुर पर, टीका धरयौ जराउ।।<sup>112</sup>

**For Forehead :** *Latkan* is the ornament for the forehead. It was worn on the centre of forehead after tying it with hair. It was studded with diamonds and round in shape from lower edge:

लटकन चलत जुवती-सुखदानी।<sup>113</sup>

On the other side, Guru Granth Sahib maintains that such a woman is beautiful who bedecks her forehead with the jewel of love :

नारी अंदरि सौहरी मसतकि मही पिआरु॥<sup>114</sup>

**Ears :** *Karnaphul*, *Khubhi*, *Khuthila*, *Jhumka*, *Tatank* and *Kundal* were the ornaments for ear. *Karanphul* was a tassel-like ornament made with silver chains and little balls :

करनफूल कर लिएँ सँवारति।<sup>115</sup>

*Khubhi* was worn in the lobe of the ear and named after the plant of this name because of its shape resembling to this plant :

कहा कहो अंग अंग की शोभा खुभी न परसत चारु कपोल।<sup>116</sup>

110 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 333.

111 *Ibid.*

112 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2116, Vol. 1, p. 614.

113 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 20, p. 41.

114 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.

115 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2807, Vol. II, p. 89.

116 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 137, p. 105.

*Khuthila* was a small ornament like a nail tapering in shape. It was worn with *Khubhi* :

खुटिला खंभी हीरा जडे हो ।<sup>117</sup>

*Jhumka* was another ornament worn in the ear :

मुक्तमाल के झूमक सोहैं ।<sup>118</sup>

Kumbhandas has mentioned about the *Jumkas* of pearls:-

कंचन मनि के खंभ बनाए मोतिन झूमक लोरे ।<sup>119</sup>

Another ornament, a kind of earing worn in the lower part of the ear is known as *Kundal* :

वाम कपोल कुंडल की सोभा मंदहास जीते कोट मदन भय ।।<sup>120</sup>

*Tatank* or *Taryona* is an ornament resembling the leaf of the tar tree :

फूलन के तरौना, कुंडल लसैं फूलन के ।<sup>121</sup>

**Ornaments of Nose :** For the nose the woman used *Besari*, *Nath* and *Bulak* :

नासिक नथ जनु मनमय पासी ।<sup>122</sup>

Krishandas has mentioned about the *Besari* of pearls:-

नैन कमलदल नकवेसरि मुक्ताफल ।<sup>123</sup>

*Bulak* was hung from a small hole in one of the nostrils :

कटि किंकिनि पग नूपुर बाजै नाक बुलाक हलै रे ।<sup>124</sup>

117 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 804, p. 312.

118 *Ibid.*, Pad 1035, p. 425.

119 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 7, p. 51.

120 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 4, p. 37.

121 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 328.

122 *Ibid.*, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 108.

123 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 466, p. 173.

124 Surdas, *Sursagar*, 1/11, Parishisht, Vol. II, p. 587.



**For Neck:** For neck different kinds of necklaces were used. These were *Kanthsiri*, *Motsiri*, *Muktamal*, *Hamel* and *Tauki*.

*Kanthsiri* was commonly used by ladies at that time :

कंठसरी और मुक्तसरी विच जंगाली पोती।<sup>125</sup>

Chhitsuwami has also mentioned that ladies at that time used *Kanthsiri* to beautify their neck:-

कंठ कंठसिरी सोहै।<sup>126</sup>

*Motsiri* and *Muktamal* were also used for neck :

बार बार कहैं कुँवरि राधिका, मोतिसरि कहाँ गँवाई।<sup>127</sup>

Guru Nanak in *Babur-Bani* also mentioned about *Motsiri*. About the invasion of *Babur* and atrocities of his soldiers on women it is stated that their strings of pearls were broken and ropes were put around their necks:-

ਤਿਨੁ ਗਲਿ ਸਿਲਕਾ ਪਾਈਆ ਤੁਟਨਿ ਮੋਤਸਰੀਆ ॥<sup>128</sup>

Kumbhandas mentioned about another ornament know as *Muktamal* used by the ladies

मुक्तामाल कंठ उर ऊपर पंगति है बग गन की।<sup>129</sup>

*Hamel* was a fairly heavy silver ornament and was generally used by village women :

हुमेल हार फूलन के।<sup>130</sup>

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125 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 127, p. 88.  
 126 Chhitsuwami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 120, p. 98.  
 127 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2587, Vol. II, p. 46.  
 128 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 417.  
 129 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 31, p. 65.  
 130 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 328.

*Tauki* also known as *Hansuli* was shaped as a solid collar of gold or silver :

सूथन बनी अनार रंग की हुंसली ग्रथित मन धीरा।<sup>131</sup>

*Padak* is another ornament of the neck:

मणि कौस्तुभ हृदय पदक विराजत कंठबनी गजमोतिन की लर।<sup>132</sup>

String of pearls was also used by woman to beautify her neck:

स्याम-हृदय बर मोतिनि माला।<sup>133</sup>

*Har* of flowers were also used:

फूलन के उर-हार।<sup>134</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib mentions string of pearls as:

ਇਕਤੁ ਤਾਗੈ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਗਲਿ ਮੋਤੀਅਨ ਕਾ ਹਾਰੁ ॥<sup>135</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib has advised to wear the necklace of qualities :

मिलि प्रीतम सुखु पाइआ सगल गुण गलि हारु ॥<sup>136</sup>

A woman (devotee) should wear the garland of *Naam* around her neck:

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਾਰੁ ਕੰਠਿ ਲੇ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਦਾਮੋਦਰ ਦੰਤੁ ਲਈ ॥<sup>137</sup>

**For Arms and Wrists:** *Bajuband*, *Kangan*, *Churi* (bangle), *Chura* and

*Tad* were the ornaments for arms and wrists:

बलय कंकन बाजुबंद हीरा-जटित।<sup>138</sup>

131 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 5, p. 38.

132 *Ibid.*, Pad 117, p. 80.

133 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1243, Vol. 1, p. 386.

134 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 328.

135 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 58.

136 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 937.

137 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 359.

138 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 48, p. 18.

सोहति हाथनि चारि-चारि चुरियाँ ।<sup>139</sup>

नूपुर चूरा रतन खचित ।<sup>140</sup>

For arms *Kangan* is also used :

रूनक-भुनक कर कंकन बाजै, बाहँ डुलावति ढीली ।<sup>141</sup>

At that time bangles of glass were commonly used:

लीली ब्रज बनिता अति सुंदर लीली चूड़ी करण में सारी ।<sup>142</sup>

There is a mention of bangles in Guru Granth Sahib. One is advised to wear true bangles and should break the false one because in spite of her adornment, *Shauh* is enjoying others :

चूडा भँठु पलंथ सिउि मुंये सहु बगही सहु बगहा ॥

ऐते वेस करेदीऐ मुंये सहु राते अवरगहा ॥<sup>143</sup>

She should wear the bracelet (*Kangan*) of the doership of Absolute One God :

कर करि करता कंगन पहिरै ऐन बिधि चितु परेਈ ॥<sup>144</sup>

**Ornaments of Fingers:** For fingers various types of rings were used :

अँगुरिनि मुंदरी पहुँची पानि ।।<sup>145</sup>

तब कर काढ़ि अँगूठी दीन्हीं, जिहिं जिय उपज्यौ धीर ।<sup>146</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib states that she should wear the ring of *Madhusudhan* (Lord Krishna).

139 *Ibid.*, Pad 90, p. 31.

140 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 333.

141 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/917, Vol. 1, p. 291.

142 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 11, p. 40.

143 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Vadhans Mahala 1, pp. 557-58.

144 *Ibid.*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 359.

145 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1798, Vol. I, p. 530.

146 *Ibid.*, Pad 9/530, p. 179.

ਮਧੁਸੂਦਨ ਕਰ ਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਟੁ ਲੇਈ ॥<sup>147</sup>

**Ornament for the Waist :** Around the waist, they wore *Kshudra-Ghantika*, *Kardhani* and *Kinkini*, which consisted of gold bells, strung together on gold wire and twisted around the waist :

ਤਾਂਟਕ ਮਨਿ ਜਟਿਤ, ਕਿੰਕਿਨੀ ਕਟਿ ਤਟਿਤ।<sup>148</sup>

ਊਢ੍ਰਘਟਿਕਾ ਕਟਿ ਲੱਠਗਾ ਰੰਗ ਤਨ ਤਨਸੁਖ ਕੀ ਸਾਰੀ।<sup>149</sup>

ਤਨਕ ਕਟਿ ਪਰ ਕਨਕ-ਕਰਧਨਿ, ਈਨ ਊਬਿ-ਚਮਕਾਤਿ।<sup>150</sup>

**For Feet :** *Bichuwa* (toe rings), *Paizeb*, *Nupur*, *Jehar* and *Ghungru* were the ornaments for feet. *Bichuwas* were an ornament for the instep shaped like a half bell :

ਪਗ ਜਾਕਕ ਬਿਊਆ ਬਾਜਨੇ ਹੋ।<sup>151</sup>

*Nupur* was the ornament of the toe with small bells:

ਊਘਟਿ ਸਭ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਸਵਾਮਿਨੀ ਨਿਰੀਤਿ ਪਗ ਨੂਪੁਰ ਬਜਾਏ।<sup>152</sup>

*Payal* or *Paizeb* was the ornament of the ankle made with chain and pendants of silver set with a fringe of small spherical bells which produced an agreeable jingling sound when the wearer moved out :

ਚਮਕਿ ਚਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲੀ ਪਾਯਲ ਪਾਯ ਬਜਾਏ।<sup>153</sup>

*Ghungru* was another ornament consisting of small golden bells, usually six on each ankle :

ਘੁੰਘਰਿ ਦਿਸਨਿ ਦੇਖਿ ਭਯ ਬਠੀ।<sup>154</sup>

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- 147 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 359.  
 148 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 54, p. 20.  
 149 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2116, Vol. I, p. 615.  
 150 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/184, Vol. 1, p. 263.  
 151 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 804, p. 311.  
 152 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 24, p. 63.  
 153 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 25, p. 59.  
 154 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 116.

or

चलत गति कटि कुनित किंकिन घूँघुरू भनकार ।<sup>155</sup>

*Jehar* was also an ornament for the ankle consisting of three gold rings :

जेहर तेहर पायन सों अनवट कुंदन हीरा वलिता ।<sup>156</sup>

*Jehar* was another ornament which was used for feet at that time:

जेहर, तेहर पाँय बिछुवन छवि उपजायल ।<sup>157</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib states that she should convert her mind into a pearl of Divinity and Make an ornament of spiritualism out of it by threading it with a creative spirit of dynamism:

ਮਨੁ ਮੋਤੀ ਜੇ ਗਹਣਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਉਣੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੂਤ ਧਾਰੀ ॥<sup>158</sup>

Because worldly make-up and ornaments are considered useless :

ਹਾਰ ਡੋਰ ਕੰਕਨ ਘਣੇ ਕਰਿ ਥਾਕੀ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥<sup>159</sup>

Woman played a major role in the daily life of the society during the period under study. Both ideologies have provided valuable information about her day to day activities. Early in the morning she used to churn milk which becomes clear from following couplets :

प्रात समें दधि मथत ग्वालिनी ।<sup>160</sup>

Parmananddas also mentioned that ladies used to churn milk early in the morning during the period under study:

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- 155 Surdas, Sursagar, pad 10/1674, Vol. I, p. 494.  
 156 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagr*, Pad 919, p. 329.  
 157 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 333.  
 158 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.  
 159 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 937.  
 160 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 285.

दधि मथति ग्वाल गरबीली री।<sup>161</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib this female activity of churning milk and obtaining butter is symbolically used for meditating on the Holy Name and obtaining *Amrita*, the Divine elixir :

ਭਾਂਡਾ ਧੋਇ ਬੈਸਿ ਧੂਪੁ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਤਉ ਦੁਧੈ ਕਉ ਜਾਵਹੁ ॥

ਦੁਧੁ ਕਰਮ ਫੁਨਿ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਮਾਇਣੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਰਾਸ ਜਮਾਵਹੁ ॥

ਜਪਹੁ ਤ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮਾ ॥ ਅਵਰਿ ਨਿਰਾਫਲ ਕਾਮਾ ॥

..... ॥

ਰਸਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਤਬ ਮਥੀਐ ਇਨ ਬਿਥਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪਾਵਹੁ ॥<sup>162</sup>

Nikky Singh has given a nice description of this hymn. According to her, First of all the vessel has to be cleaned and all dirt should be removed, giving a domestic image for the cleansing of the heart from the five lower passions i.e. '*Kama*', '*Krodha*', '*Lobha*', '*Moha*' and '*Ahankara*'. Then, the vessel is to be touched with fragrance which is the consequence of one's virtuous deeds. The milk is then received into the pot.

In the second line, an analogy has been drawn between milk and action. Here the culture requires to make yoghurt from milk before it can be churned, has been rendered as *Surati*, which can be translated as awareness or consciousness. It is the culture which the woman, in a state of utter desire less ness (*Nirasa*), puts in the milk, thus bringing about its perfect jelled state of yoghurt. In a way, the

161 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 136, p. 45.

162 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 728.

yoghurt is not different from the milk, but the minuscule "epistemological" ingredient of culture transforms the milk into yoghurt, which is essential for the butter to be churned.

Finally, the yoghurt in the pot is churned, and this churning is related to the tongue (*Rasna*) reciting the Name of One (*Eko Nama*). What comes up is butter. The metaphorical churning up of the butter—the envisioning of the transcendent – is the most important deed, for all others are worthless, literally fruitless (*Niraphal*). The fact that the most important action is illustrated through a feminine occupation (the churning of butter every morning) through her product (butter), through her faculty (*Surati*), indeed through herself. This brings into relief the significance attached to the feminine principle in the Sikh envisioning of the Transcendent.<sup>163</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers have also used milk and milk products to the level of spirituality. They compared 'Goras'<sup>164</sup> to the *Rasa* of senses i.e. pleasure achieved or enjoyed by senses.<sup>165</sup> It is the prime duty of the devotee to sacrifice the pleasure of senses to achieve God. It is explained by *Ashtachhap* writers in '*Dan Lila*' where the Lord Krishna demanded from the *Gopis* to give him Dan in form of 'Goras' which indirectly is a demand to sacrifice pleasure of senses:

हमारो दान देहो गुजरेटी ।

बहुत दिनन चोरी दधि बेच्यो आज अचानक भेटी ।<sup>166</sup>

163 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in The Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, pp. 75-76.

164 'Goras' Means milk and milk products i.e. curd and butter etc.

165 Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 24.

166 *Ibid.*, Pad 23, p. 57.

Women also went to fetch water from wells and rivers for drinking and other purposes:

ਆਕਤ ਹੀ ਜਸੁਨਾ ਖਰਿ ਪਾਨੀ।<sup>167</sup>

Furhter it is mentioned by Nanddas that the *Panihari* of *Gokul* is going to bring water:-

ਗੋਕੁਲ ਕੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ, ਪਨਿਯਾ ਖਰਨ ਚਲੀ।<sup>168</sup>

In *Guru Granth Sahib* there is also mention of *Panihari* i.e. women water carriers:

ਕੂਅਟਾ ਏਕੁ ਪੰਚ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥<sup>169</sup>

It is also mentioned that the young girl in the city takes a pitcher, and fills it with water, she laughs, plays, and talks with her friends, but she keeps her attention focused on the pitcher of water:

ਆਨੀਲੇ ਕੁੰਭੁ ਭਰਾਈਲੇ ਉਦਕ ਰਾਜ ਕੁਆਰਿ ਪੁਰੰਦਰੀਏ ॥

ਹਸਤ ਬਿਨੋਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ ਕਰਤੀ ਹੈ ਚੀਤੁ ਸੁ ਗਾਗਰਿ ਰਾਖੀਅਲੇ ॥<sup>170</sup>

In this couplet the pitcher of water is metaphorically used for reciting God's Name. A true devotee of God can achieve salvation even by living a joyful life comprising of playfulness and enjoyment but by fixing his/her mind to God's Name.

After bringing water ladies used to prepare food for the whole family:

ਕੋਤੁ ਜਯੈਨਾਰ ਕਰਤਿ, ਕੋਤੁ ਬੈਠੀ, ਕੋਤੁ ਠਾਫੀ ਹੀ ਖਾਸ।<sup>171</sup>

167 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 305.

168 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

169 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Kabir, p. 325.

170 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Namdev, p. 972.

171 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/1611, Vol. 1, p. 480.



It was expected that wife should be expert in cooking skill during that period :

मया मोहिं ऐसी बहुरिया भावै ।

करि करि पाक रसोई आछी मोकों परोसि जिमावै ।<sup>172</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib informed that she prepares and offers to her family all sorts of sweet delicacies and dishes of all flavours:

ਜਿਉ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਘਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੈ ਅਤਿ ਲੋਚੈ ਭਗਤੀ ਭਾਇ ॥

ਬਹੁ ਰਸ ਸਾਲਣੇ ਸਵਾਰਦੀ ਖਟ ਰਸ ਮੀਠੇ ਪਾਇ ॥<sup>173</sup>

After cooking food, she served it to all family members :

नाना बिधि जेवन करि परस्यौ, पुरुष जिंवाकत त्याग्यौ ।<sup>174</sup>

So, she had to remain busy in her work for the whole day. After cooking she had to mud-plaster the floor and sweeps the house.

In leisure she would spin for making garments. Embroidery was also included in her working sphere. This activity is imbued with spiritual significance in Guru Granth Sahib. If a woman makes embroidery of the Holy Name and wears such a frock; than she is the true bride; she should look after her home, taste not evil, then she could have her Lord's love :

ਕਵਿ ਕਸੀਦਾ ਪਹਿਰਹਿ ਚੋਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ ॥

ਜੇ ਘਰੁ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਬੁਰਾ ਨਾ ਚਾਖਹਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਕੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ॥<sup>175</sup>

172 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 7, 36.

173 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Shloka Mahala 3, p. 1413.

174 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/999, Vol. I, p. 481.

175 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Basant Mahala 1, p. 1171.

In this hymn the female activity of making embroidery is symbolically used for reciting the Holy Name whereas the word home is used for keeping oneself away from the five lower passions i.e. 'Kama', 'Krodha', 'Lobha', 'Moha' and 'Ahankara'.

As mother, she takes care of her children while they are in cradle:

ਕਹਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਉ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਤਿਲੋਚਨ ਬਾਲਕੁ ਪਾਲਨ ਪਉਢੀਅਲੇ ॥<sup>176</sup>

While she does work inside or outside the house, she holds her child in her thoughts:

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕਾਜ ਬਿਰੂਧੀ ਚੀਤੁ ਸੁ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਰਾਖੀਅਲੇ ॥<sup>177</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also supposed her main activity as mother to take care of her child :

ਲੈ ਲੈ ਗੋਦ ਖਿਲਾਵਹਿੰ ਜਸੁਮਤਿ ਮਹਤਾਰੀ ॥<sup>178</sup>

To provide food to her child and gave swings to him/her is also included in her duties:

ਕਹਤ ਜਸੋਦਾ ਸਖਿਯਨ ਆਗੇ ਪਰੋਸਿ ਧਰੀ ਹੈ ਥਾਰੀ ।

ਭੋਜਨ ਆਯ ਕਰੋ ਦੋਠੁ ਭੈਯਾ ਬਾਲਕ ਸਹਿਤ ਮੁਰਾਰੀ ॥<sup>179</sup>

ਪਲਨਾ ਝੂਲਤ ਗਿਰਿਧਰਲਾਲ ।

ਜਨਨੀ ਜਸੋਦਾ ਬੈਠੀ ਝੂਲਾਵਤਿ, ਨਿਰਖਿਤ ਵਦਨ ਰਸਾਲ ॥<sup>180</sup>

Here it must be mentioned that woman at that time played an important role in the economic life of the society. They sold goods of daily use, carrying them on their heads from one place to another

176 *Ibid.*, Ramkali Namdev, p. 972.

177 *Ibid.*

178 Krishandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 872, p. 348.

179 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 104, p. 36.

180 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 57, p. 74.

place. Their functions were often specialized and were confined to a particular locality. *Ashtachhap* writers mentioned that women used to go to sell 'Goras' i.e. milk and milk products like curd and butter :

देखी जाइ आजु गोकुल मैं घर-घर बेचति फिरति दही री।<sup>181</sup>

She used to go to sell milk and milk products in *Gokul* and *Mathura*:-

गोरस बेचन ले चली गोकुल मथुरा बीच।<sup>182</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib depicted a milkmaid carrying the pitcher of milk on her head:

ਮੁੱਧ ਨਵੇਲੜੀਆ ਗੋਇਲਿ ਆਈ ਰਾਮ॥<sup>183</sup>

She used to sell milk and milk products from morning to evening:

प्रातहीं लै जाति गोरस, बेचि आवति राति।<sup>184</sup>

Word 'seller' has been used for these types of women:

सूर कहा ये हमको जानै, छाँछहि बेचन हारी।<sup>185</sup>

In Guru Granth Sahib one also finds reference to women who sold milk and milk products. Word *Gujari* has been used for them:

ਗੁਜਰੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਗਵਾਰਿ ਜਾ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਏ ਆਪਣਾ॥<sup>186</sup>

*Ashtachhap* writers also used this word for women who sold milk and its products at that time :

गुजरिया बावरी केई बेर गई दान मार।<sup>187</sup>

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181 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/647, Vol. I, p. 220.  
 182 Kumbhandas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 25, p. 58.  
 183 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bilwal Mahala 1, p. 843.  
 184 Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/2122, Vol. I, p. 616.  
 185 *Ibid.*, Pad 10/2136, p. 619.  
 186 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gujari Mahala 3, p. 516.  
 187 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 56, p. 55.

They also went out of their houses for selling fruits. The word '*Kacchan*' has been used for such woman :

ब्रज में काछिन बेचन आई ।

आन उतारी नंद गृह आँगन ढयोड़ी फलन सुहाई ।।<sup>188</sup>

She sold mangoes and ber:

कोउ माइ आँम बेचन आई ।<sup>189</sup>

कोउ माई बेर बेचन आई ।<sup>190</sup>

Even she sold all types of fruits :

पक्क खजूर जंब बदरी फल लेहो काछन टेरी द्वार ।<sup>191</sup>

To conclude, it can be said that both ideologies provide valuable information about the dress, make-up, ornaments and activities of woman during the period under study. Some information about her role in economic life of the society is also provided. Braj literature provides this information to highlight the social status of woman in the contemporary society. On the other side, in Guru Granth Sahib female dress, her make-up, ornament and activities all are depicted with spiritual significance. To quote Nikky Singh, "Female activities and accoutrements are assigned a high value, even a Transcendent value. The bride's necklaces, ribbons, jewels, clothes, cosmetics and her acts of dressing, applying make-up and overseeing the arrangements for the wedding all are imbued with spiritual significance."<sup>192</sup>

188 Parmananddas, *Parmanandsagar*, Pad 672, p. 234.

189 *Ibid.*, Pad 673, p. 234.

190 *Ibid.*, Pad 674, p. 234.

191 Govindswami, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 80, p. 65.

192 Nikky Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, p. 95.

## CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to highlight the portrayal of woman in the devotional literature of the *Bhakti* period. Most of the existing studies on woman for this period are largely based on the official sources. So, the present study is based on the devotional literature of the *Bhakti* as now a days literature is considered as one of the important sources of history as the scope of history is vast which is not only confined to past politics but also touches almost every domain of human life. This is as true of devotional literature as of literatures any other form. Devotional literature contains 'the religious writings that are neither doctrinal nor theological, but designed for individuals to read for their personal edification and spiritual formation'. Devotional writers do not particularly write on material matters yet as they are the product of the society, they give valuable information about the life of their age. It is in accordance with these views of literature that the study of *Bhakti* period devotional literature has been undertaken to analyse the condition of woman during medieval times. Undoubtedly the attempt for the present research work can not be substituted for the studies based on official sources but might provide help in giving direction to arrive at a more comprehensive idea of the condition of woman in different regions of India during the period under study.

Devotional literature of the *Bhakti* period contains the writings specifically poetry of *Nirguna* and *Saguna* devotees (*Bhakts*). *Nirguna*

devotees (*Bhakts*) believe in one formless God and have no faith in *Avtarvad* whereas *Saguna* devotees (*Bhakts*) worship the incarnations of God like *Vishnu*, *Rama* and *Krishna* and they considered Lord Krishna as of *Avtar* of God on earth. These *Bhakts* (devotees) wrote devotional poetry in praise of God in the vernacular languages instead of *Sanskrit*. Though they did not write purposely on material matters yet their writings by employing allegory throw valuable light on life around them.

For the understanding of the *Nirguna* exposition Guru Granth Sahib has been undertaken as the greatest unaltered and undiluted Text pertaining to medieval India. And for *Saguna* understanding contemporaneous Braj literature is used. Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj *Bhasha*. Braj *Bhasha* was the richest form of Hindi in the medieval age.

On the basis of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature this work compares the two famous categories of *Bhakti* (*Nirguna* and *Saguna*) to explore the feminine dimension pertaining to them. For this purpose, this study passes through two phases, spiritual and social. Spiritual phase is further divided into two parts. In first part an attempt is being made to explore how Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature relate the feminine imagery on the Divine level and second part makes it clear that why feminine imagery is used? Social phase clarify, whether their spiritual dimension is equally relevant in social sphere or not, whether both ideologies advocated for the equality of woman in

society too? In this phase woman is depicted as girl, wife and mother. Apart from it this phase provides detailed information about female dress, make-up, ornaments and her day to day activities during the period under study.

This work is divided into five chapters. I chapter is named as, **‘Woman in Indian Ethos’**. It traces the general condition of Indian woman from pre-historic time to medieval period. In the pre-Aryan India Matriarchal (mother dominated) social system was prevalent. This is evident from *Sankhya Shastra* which is considered a pre-Aryan work. The status of woman was very high in all walks of life at that time.

Vedic Aryans were Patriarchal (father-dominated) as becomes clear from *Rigveda*. Girls were less welcomed than boys but it did not lead to female infanticide during that period. Mention of *Brahmavadinis* indicated that discrimination in education on the basis of sex was unknown. Child marriage and seclusion of women was absolutely unknown. Despite of male dominance, the position of woman as wife and mother was held in esteem. Indeed, it may be argued that *Vedic* religion had an appreciation of both femininity and complementarily between husband and wife, albeit within a patriarchal structure.

Coming to the later-*Vedic* period in Indian literature, the desire for a male child becomes very strong as becomes evident from the *Brahmanas*, the *Upnishads* and the *Grihya Sutras*. At that time this

belief was established that sons alone were competent to redeem their parents from hell. Thus, it becomes obligatory for a man to marry again and raise son to himself if first wife failed to give birth to a son. This led to the practice of polygamy. There was a gradual decline in female education. Child marriage had not come into form by the *Grihya Sutra* period. In the *Grihya Sutras*, first time, a definite classification of different forms of marriage was given. There were eight types of marriage. These were *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Prajapatya*, *Arsha*, *Gandharva*, *Asura*, *Paisacha* and *Rakshsa*. *Sati* custom was rare and widow had the option of remarriage. But the proprietary rights of woman continued to be unrecognized.

The decline in the status of woman started with the writing of *Manu Smriti*. He favoured the idea of marrying girls at a tender age. Girls were considered incompetent to receive education and study *Vedas*. This incompetency of woman reduced her to an inferior status of *Shudra*. *Smritis* prescribed a subordinate social role to woman. *Manu* is of the view that it is the main duty of a wife to serve her husband because with the service of the husband she can get salvation. *Manu* discouraged the custom of *Sati* by equating it with suicide. The position of woman was improved in the sphere of proprietary rights in this period as *Manu* advocated that the widow should be recognized as an heir to her husband's property.

During *epic* period there was no female infanticide in the society as informed by *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Even there was evidence



of the adoption of girls by the parents who were not blessed with daughters. *Sita*, *Kunti* and *Sakuntala* all were adopted girls. Education was provided to girls and child marriage was prevalent. The practice of polygamy had been very widely prevalent and the practice of polyandry was also there in the *epic* period. The earliest reference to the practice of *Purdah* was found in the *Mahabhart*a. It was prevalent among the royal ladies. Prostitution had also prevalent in the society. The *Mahabhart*a also gave two instances of *Sati*. *Madri* immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her husband *Pandu*. The four wives of *Vasudeva* namely *Devaki*, *Bhadra*, *Rohini* and *Madira* burnt themselves with the body of their husband.

The Buddhist canonical literature, the *Jataka* books, the *Milindapanha* and the *Vinayapitaka*, particularly the portions of it known as the *Bhikkuni Khandhak* (that is the tenth and last *Khandhaka* of the *Cullavagga*) and the *Bhikkhuni-Vibhanga*, provided the information regarding the views of *Buddha* towards woman. Although *Buddha* allowed the admission of women into *Sangha* but his permission to woman was conditional. Women had to follow rigorous discipline than monks. Buddhist canons hold that the adoption of daughter is quite valid. There are no records of female infanticide in Buddhist literature due to the doctrine of non-violence. There is little mention of child marriage in the canonical literature. Monogamy prevailed at that time and the practice of polygamy was only limited to aristocracy.

*Jain* Texts were mostly written by monks who believed in the superiority of the celibate life to that of married life. *Digambara* sect believed that woman could not attain *Moksha* without rebirth as man as she could not be allowed to go naked. On the other side, *Swetamberas* believed that a woman could attain salvation. This sect is of the view that there is no harm to soul by wearing of white garments.

*Yogic* literature also stressed the need of renouncing woman for the attainment of salvation. They considered woman as the temptress who perpetuated miserable life. They used derogatory words for woman in their writings. They called woman '*Baghni*', and she-wolf, who robbed man of his youthful vigour.

During *Rajput* period woman suffered from several handicaps although their honour was dear to them. Female infanticide and the practice of '*Jauhar*' were widely prevalent among the *Rajputs*.

The coming of the *Turks* to India did not bring any good change in the position of woman. Female education was limited to the women of upper class. The custom of polygamy was also there as Muslim law allowed a man to keep four wives at a time. The practice of *Purdah* was widely prevalent as Muslim woman was not free for public appearance.

During *Mughal* period, who ruled India after *Delhi Sultanate*, female infanticide was continued in some sections of both *Hindus* and *Muslims*. Child marriage was also there. European travelers specifically *Tavernier*, *Manucci* and *Thevenot* had provided

information about this social evil. Manucci admitted the prevalence of the custom of dowry among *Hindus* and *Muslims* particularly in its richer and higher sections. *Manucci*, *Thevenot* and *De Laet* recorded that polygamy was also prevalent in the *Muslim* society. The practice of *Purdah* was also there. *Badauni* writers that in the time of Akbar *Purdah* was observed strictly. Foreign travel Johan Marshall observed that the rigour of *Purdah* was so strict that even male doctors were not allowed to see the ladies of princely and noble families. The plight of a widow was very miserable in medieval India. She had to commit *Sati*. Foreign travelers *Alberuni*, *Ibn Battuta*, and *Bernier* had described this custom in detail. *Alberuni* recorded that if a widow refused to become *Sati*, she was ill treated as long as she lived. *Ibn Battuta* noticed an example of *Sati* near *Pakpattan* and several others elsewhere in India. *Bernier* referred to the sad plight of *Hindu* widows.

Therefore, it was in such a scenario that the *Bhakti* movement started. It is divided into '*Nirguna*' and '*Saguna*' and more recently between *Vasihnava Bhakti* and *Sant* Tradition. The '*Nirguna*' and '*Saguna*' model was first popularized by Hindi scholars such as *Ramachandra Shukla*, *P.D. Barthwal* and *Parashuram Chaturvedi*. The last four decades have witnessed a surge of Western scholarly interest in medieval Saints. *Ramanujacharya*, *Ramananda*, *Vallabhacharya* and *Surdas* are the prominent *Saguna Bhakts* (devotees) whereas *Namdev*, *Kabir* and *Guru Nanak* are included among *Nirguna Bhakts*.

These writers wrote devotional poetry in praise of God in the vernacular languages instead of *Sanskrit*. Though they did not write purposely on material matters yet their writings by employing similes and metaphors throw valuable light on life around them. For the understanding of *Nirguna* exposition Guru Granth Sahib has been undertaken and for *Saguna* understanding contemporaneous Braj literature is used.

Guru Granth Sahib is the name given to the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs. It is the treasure of *Bhakti* literature poetry and spiritual elevation of mankind. The essence of its ideology is to integrate humanity, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. It was dictated by Guru Arjan to Bhai Gurdas. It consists the *Bani* of first five Gurus, Hindu *Bhakts* (devotees), Muslim *Sufis* and *Bhatts*. It had different names during different times i.e. *Pothi Sahib*, *Granth Sahib*, *Adi Granth* and *Guru Granth Sahib*. In this work the last name Guru Granth Sahib has been used in the title as well as throughout the work.

The tradition recognizes three main version of Guru Granth Sahib. These are '*Kartarpuri Bir*', '*Bhai Banno Vali Bir*' and '*Damdami Bir*'. By the end of Nineteenth century Guru Granth Sahib has been published by various organizations. All the printed copies of the Guru Granth Sahib are based on *Damdami Bir*. In the 1990s the Text of the Guru Granth Sahib also becomes available in a digital format published by a variety of individuals and organizations. In 2012 an

application Sikh World is developed from where the whole Guru Granth Sahib can be downloaded with commentary and English translation.

Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj *Bhasha*. Braj *Bhasha* was the richest form of *Hindi* in the medieval age. It was the language of Braj region. The Braj region located in the vicinity of *Delhi* and *Agra* and included the places like *Itawa*, *Aligarh*, *Mathura* and *Brindaban*. Braj language acquired a literary character during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth century when it received religious patronage through *Surdas* and other *Ashtachhap* writers. In Braj literature *Surdas*, *Parmanddas*, *Kumbhandas*, *Krishandas*, *Nanddas*, *Chaturbhujdas*, *Govindswami* and *Chhitsuami* are known as *Ashtachhap*. In this work the focus of Braj literature is primarily limited to the works of *Ashtachhap* writers as they are the contemporary to the Sikhs Gurus. Secondly the writings of *Ashtachhap* writers are the best works of Braj *Bhasha*. After these writers this language had lost its prestige and *Khadiboli Hindi* (Modern standard Hindi) began to supplant it.

On the basis of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature this work will compare the two famous categories of *Bhakti* to explore the feminine dimension pertaining to them. Their devotional poetry is marked by intensity and spiritual insight. Metaphor is the most important factor in their poetry. The metaphors create imagery. If there is no image, there will be no poetry because imagination

contains reality. Every poetic image serves mainly two purposes. It gives shape to poet's experiences along with depicting the world around him/ her.

Thus, the composers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have used a wider range of imagery in their writings. The abstract spiritual ideas and subtle thoughts are saved from becoming obscure and misty only through the use of poetic imagery. Both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) have used imagery to make the masses understand their higher spiritual experiences.

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have used images from nature, from indoor and outdoor life to explain their spiritual ideals. The writers of both ideologies have almost the same type of spiritual, social, political and intellectual experiences. Therefore, in their poetical compositions they repeated the same thoughts and applied the same imagery. Imagery of the clouds and lighting, of the weather and its changes, of mother-child love, of wife-husband love, of *Yogic* activities, of domestic activities and imagery of lives of animals and birds are some examples of common imagery used by both ideologies. This similarity of imageries is helpful to understand their views and thoughts.

**II Chapter 'Thought Content of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj Literature'** throws light on the fact that though Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature belong to the two different thoughts of *Bhakti* cult i.e. *Nirguna* and *Saguna*. But they are allied with each other on the

basis of certain shared emphases: recognition of the both states-*Nirguna* and *Saguna* of the Lord; believe in the fact that *Jiva* (creature) and world are the creation of God; about the influence of *Maya* on the individual's; the necessity of devotion; the repetition of *Naam*; importance of *Guru* and *Satsang*; condemnation of caste pride and stress on discountenancing *Yogic* practices.

Furthermore, the writers of both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) composed their couplets (*Bani*) in *Ragas*. The end of *Kartarpur Pothis* has table of contents which divides up the thirty *Ragas* into eight sections. This division has great importance. The only possibility could be that this division may have been related to eight *Pahirs* that make up the day, with each set of *Ragas* intended for one *Pahir*. This same principle forms the basis for the eight *Artis* (Prayers) performed throughout the day in *Vaishnava* temples. Braj writers have mentioned about these eight *Artis* performed in the temples of their *Sampradaya*. Further the *Kartarpur Pothis* begins with *Raga Sri*, a favorite *Raga* of the *Vaishnavas*, and its first section ends with *Raga Tilang*, a favorite of the *Sufis*. This placement of these *Ragas* in key points in the Sikh Text seems to indicate Guru Arjan's engagement with the two major religious groups i.e. *Vaishnavas* and *Sufis*.

Due to the effectiveness of Braj language during Sixteenth and Seventeenth century Guru Arjan Dev has used this language in *Sukhmani Sahib*, *Phunhay* and *Chaubolay*. *Sholkas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur are also in this language. On the other side, *Ashtachhap*

writers have also used Punjabi language in their works. Because of above similarities the couplets of two *Ashtachhap* writers i.e. Surdas and Parmananddas are included in Guru Granth Sahib. The above mentioned description is the reason to take Guru Granth Sahib and contemporary Braj literature (*Ashtachhap* writers) for comparative study without ignoring their theological differences.

Both ideologies have faith in the existence of **God**. Guru Sahib emphasized on the worship of *Nirguna Brahma* and do not have faith in *Avtarvad*. On the other side, *Ashtachhap* writers believed in the *Saguna* form of God and considered Lord Krishna as the *Avtar* of God on earth. Guru Granth Sahib believes that God created the *Avtars* by Its will. God is above the *Avtars* like *Rama* and *Krishna*. The *Nirguna* perception of *Krishna*, *Rama* and *Hari* is that of a non-incarnate formless and absolute Supreme Being.

Guru Granth Sahib holds the view that **Jiva** is the creation of the God. By the order of the True Lord the *Jiva* comes into existence. *Ashtachhap* writers believed that *Jivas* are not created but are manifested by *Brahma* out of himself. In *Jiva*, *Brahmas* 'Sat' (truth) and 'Chhit' (consciousness) *guna* (quality) remained. So, *Jivas* are part or fragments of *Brahma*. Vallabhacharya, the preceptor of *Ashtachhap* writer's divides *Jivas* into three categories i.e. *Pushti Jiva*, *Maryada Jiva* and *Pravaha Jiva*. *Pusti Jivas* are well-nourished, complete and have the *Anugraha* (grace) of Lord *Krishna*. *Maryada Jivas* are within the limits of the actions and live in expectations of the rewards that



the *Veda* promises in Heaven. *Pravaha Jivas* are those who crave riches and sensual pleasure on earth. *Pushti Jivas* are considered the best *Jivas*. Vallabhacharya considered that all *Bhakts* (devotees) are *Pushti Jivas* and that the *Bhaktimarga* is the *Pushtimarg*. The followers of the *Pushtimarg* are satisfied only with direct experience of the Divine body of *Shri Krishna*. Therefore Braj writers considered *Gopi* (female) as the Guru of *Pustimarg* who enjoyed physical love-play with Lord Krishna during his life in Braj on earth and who enjoy eternally the love of *Shri Krishna* in the endless *Lila* in *Goloka*.

As far as Guru Granth Sahib is considered no such division of *Jivas* can be seen. Guru Granth Sahib considered that creatures are of two types i.e. *Gurmukh* and *Manmukh*. *Gurmukh* is that *Jiva* who attain the company of the Lord. *Manmukh* is an ego-centered person who craves only for the riches of the world. *Gurmukh* resembles with *Suhagan* of Guru's thought. As *Gopi* of Braj literature, who is a *Pushti Jiva*, is the prime preceptor of *Bhakti*, similarly *Suhagan* of Guru Granth Sahib, who resembles with *Gurmukh* is considered guide on spiritual path.

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature believed that God is the creator of the **world**. *Ashtachhap* writers have explained the Ancient theory that *Brahma* has created the world, *Vishnu* is the sustainer and *Mahesh* is the destroyer of the world but they have established the unity of three of them with Lord *Krishna*. On the other side, Guru Granth Sahib states that Lord is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer

of the world. Earlier there was only One Lord there was no *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. In Japji it is mentioned that these three are born from One Divine Mother. *Ashtachhap* writers differentiated *Jagat* and *Sansar*. They believed that *Jagat* is the creation of the God and it consists of God's 'Sat' *guna*. *Sansar* is created by the ignorance of the *Jiva*. It is created by the *Avidya Shakti* of *Maya*, so it is false. There is no such classification of *Jagat* and *Sansar* in Guru Granth Sahib. Both ideologies have explained the creation of the world through the example of the bubble in the water. It is stated that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again, so is the world created from the God and it again mingled in God.

Guru Granth Sahib is of the view that **Maya** is not a separate ultimate reality. It has been created by the God. But the illusion of *Maya* takes an individual away from God. *Ashtachhap* writers divided *Maya* into *Vidya* and *Avidya Maya*. *Vidya Maya* is that *Shakti* or power of *Brahma* which creates and destroys this world with the *Ichha* of *Brahma*. This is under the control of *Brahma*. *Avidya Maya* brings out the misery of the *Jiva*. Because of its influence the individual forgets self nature as a part of *Brahma*. Guru Granth Sahib does not divided *Maya* into these two parts directly yet through the hymns like *Nanak Sachay Kee Saachee Kar* and through *Ha-umai-Maa-i-aa Mohnee Doojai Lagai Jaa-ay*, one can find references about *Vidya Maya* and *Avidya Maya*.

About **Yogic** practices both ideologies believed that instead of these practices a devotee should rely on the *Bhakti* and *Service* of the Lord. Guru Granth Sahib has used metaphors from the ideas and practices of the *Yogis* with its own orientation. Guru Nanak tells the *Yogis* in detail what *Yog* is not and what it should be. *Yog* does not consist in donning the cloak, holding the staff, or smearing the body with ashes. It does not consist in wearing the earrings, shaving the head, or blowing the horn (*Singi*). The real *Yog* is to live 'detached-in-attachment'. Similarly in *Ashtachhap* writings *Gopis* are giving a very different interpretation of *Yog* to *Udho*. They are saying to *Udho* that the *Yoga* which he is teaching to them they are the followers of that. Their hairs have grown as '*Sali*' (sacred thread) and their body burned by fire of separation from the Lord. Their heart is like horn (*Singi*) in the *Viyoga* of the Lord.

The literature under study even objected to the way of life of the *Yogis*. Guru Granth Sahib stated that some people wander as *Yogis* having put on ochre colored clothes, but within them there is much worldly thirst and desire for clothing and food. Similarly, Braj writers do not have sympathy for *Yogic* practices. It is stated that a *Yogi* puts on external marks, matted hair, pierced ears and ashes on his body. But the followers of *Shri Krishna* have actually suffered the burning of *Viraha* and show internal as well as external evidence of it in his/her devotion.

Both ideologies have no faith in **Sananyas** (renunciation). Guru Nanak Dev stated that one should live 'detached-in-attachment'. Braj writers also emphasized that one ought not to retreat from the world, but instead live gratefully within it as an active participant, as a householder. Parmananddas says that one should live in one's house just like a passer by. Guru Granth Sahib further states that those who have achieved the true *Sabad* they have become *Udasi* while living within their homes. Similarly *Ashtachhap* writer's say that in *Krishna's Viraha* the *Gopi* of the *Gokul* become *Udasi* by making forest (*Ban*) in her house.

Although both ideologies have emphasized on the necessity of **Guru** yet the Guru in Guru Granth Sahib is '*Sabad Guru*' which is its unique quality. Contrary to this *Ashtachhap* writers are the faithful devotees of Vallabhacharya and his son Vitthalnath. About this difference it may be concluded that in no *Sampradaya* of *Bhakti* '*Sabad*' is considered as Guru except Guru Granth Sahib.

For Guru Granth Sahib **Mukti** is the attainment of the lotus feet of the Lord. The state of bliss and joy at the feet of the Lord is inexpressible. On the other side, *Ashtachhap* writers have no desire for attaining *Mukti* and going to heaven. They considered *Gokul* better than Vaikuntha.

Both ideologies do not have faith in **caste pride**. But in spite of this it should kept in mind that *Ashtachhap* writers have completely dissociate themselves from *Muslim* and called them '*mlechchha*'. On

the other hand, the writers of Guru Granth Sahib apart from theoretical also took practical steps by starting '*Pangat*' to root out caste from society.

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have laid great emphasis on **Satsang** and company of the Saints. It is stated that *Satsang* is essential for a happy life and for spiritual enlightenment.

**III Chapter entitled, 'Perception of Woman : The Spiritual Context'** analyses the perception of woman in Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature. This Chapter is divided into two parts. In first part different feminine imageries are mentioned which both ideologies have used to comprehend God. In second part it is made clear that why these ideologies have used feminine imageries for God.

This analysis of perception passes through the three phases i.e. mother imagery, wife imagery and female species from the animal world. First phase deals with the idea that both ideologies used the imagery of mother-child love for depicting the love of devotee for God and of God for devotee. It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that as a mother loves and cares her child, same way, the devotee should have attachment to the Lord. Guru Arjan Dev says that as the mother is rejuvenated upon seeing her son, so is the Lord's humble servant imbued with Lord, through and through. Here Guru Arjan has used the imagery of mother son love, instead of mother-daughter, to explain the relation between God and devotee. The imagery is taken from daily life of the people. As during medieval period less importance is given

to girls as compared to boys in the society so Guru Arjan only to clarify his spiritual ideas to common people has used the imagery of mother-son love.

Because of mother's devotion to her child *Ashtachhap* writers have mostly kept themselves in place of *Yashoda* instead of *Nanda*. They believed that to achieve the Lord *Krishna* one should worship him through the image of *Mata Yashoda*. *Mata Yashoda* has received that '*Anand*' through her motherly devotion which is not even received by *Devatas*. Except Kumbhandas all the *Ashtacchap* writers have used imagery of mother-child love to express their *Bhakti*. Surdas and Parmananddas are excellent in the use of this *Bhava* to express their *Bhakti*.

Further, the mother image offers that as a mother has care for her child, similarly, God looks after Its devotee. Guru Granth Sahib states that as the mother loves to see her son eat, same way, the true Guru loves to put food in the mouth of *Gursikh* (devotee). *Ashtachhap* writers also believed that as a mother takes care of her child and protects her/ him, Lord Krishna also does the same for His devotee. As a child becomes annoyed with mother and mother makes the child joyful. Similarly Lord is like a mother to devotees who always forgives their mistakes. Guru Granth Sahib states that like mother, God never counts the short-comings of the devotee. Thus, both ideologies have idealized the love of a mother for her child and held it up as an example for a devotee to God.

Turning to wife imagery it is stated in both ideologies that one can attain union with God by following the wife's example of loving devotion. The human soul (*Jivatma*) is represented as the wife who is forever seeking union with her husband (Lord). Thus *Suhagan* of Guru Granth Sahib and *Gopi* of Braj literature are the guides on spiritual path. All the *Ashtachhap* writers have expressed their *Bhakti* through the image of *Gopi* but Surdas is best in it. Nanddas and Kumbhandas' writings are also important from this view. Due to *Suhagan* and *Gopi's* capacity to receive God, the writers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have identified themselves with wife imagery and expressed the ardor of their hearts through her voice. They called themselves the wives of the Lord.

The metaphor of wife is further extended to the *Suhagan* and *Duhagan* in Guru Granth Sahib. *Suhagan* is metaphorically used to represent *Gurmukh* whereas *Duhagan* symbolically resembles with *Manmukh*. Among *Ashtachhp* writers Surdas, Parmananddas and Govindswami has also used the metaphor of *Suhagan* and *Duhagan*.

Thus *Suhagan/ Gurmukh* is a woman who is beloved of the Lord, whether in the body of a man or woman. *Suhagan* wins the favour of her Spouse and enjoys union forever. On the other hand, *Duhagan* is deprived of union due to her ignorance of the Lord. *Duhagan/ Manmukh* craves only for the riches of the world and not for the company of her Lord.

*Duhagan* and *Maya* both are associated in Guru Granth Sahib due to their ignorance of Ultimate Reality. Because of this comparison

some Western scholars pointed out that in Sikh Scripture woman is often associated with *Maya*, 'indicating its apprehension of female as a barrier to the attainment of emancipation'.

Here, it must be kept in mind that these are philosophical concepts which needed to be discussed in their context. Apart from wife there is also mention of mother, father, son and daughter as objects of *Maya* in Guru Granth Sahib. Thus the definition of *Maya* is equally applicable to both man and woman. In *Ashtachhap* writings too, specially in Surdas', wife is compared with *Avidya Maya* and wealth. But these references are also contextual and needed to be understood in their context.

Another objection about the use of wife imagery in Guru Granth Sahib is that it allowed the masculine identity to God. Doris R. Jakobsh pointed out that the Ultimate Reality in Sikh Scripture is most often conceived in masculine terms, as *Akal-Purakh* and *Karta-Purakh*. Here it must be cleared that in Guru Granth Sahib both feminine and masculine imagery is used for comprehending the Ultimate reality. God is addressed as mother, father, sister, brother and friend-thus as both male and female. Even in some hymns God's beauty is explained in terms supposedly appealing to the woman. Further it is stated that only God has the power to assume the form of both man and woman for self-manifestation. But the commentators, interpreters and translators of Sikh Scripture have primarily elaborated the masculine principle and overlooked the feminine. They have used word 'He' for God in their translations which becomes



misleading for those who can not read the language of the Text. God of Guru Granth Sahib is beyond gender, so to avoid misconceptions **'It'** is a better word to use for God instead of 'He' as informed by Nikky Singh. In this work word 'It' is used for God of Guru Granth Sahib to represent Its *Nirguna* state.

As far as Braj literature is concerned these writers worship the Lord in *Yogual Rupa* (both male and female). They have made no difference between *Krishna* and *Radha*. They have asserted that *Radha* and *Krishna* are one and the same. According to them *Parm Purush Krishna* is the *Shaktiman* and *Prakriti Radha* is the *Shakti* (Power) of the Lord. But it is very surprising that all the temples of *Vallabha Sampradya*, to whom *Ashtachhap* writers belong, are only of Lord *Krishna's* instead of *Yogual Rupa*.

Third phase of the use of female imagery to express *Bhakti* towards God is extended to include females in the animal world. Guru Nanak seeks to identify himself with the females of several species to express his yearning for union. He wishes, he is a doe (*Harini*) living in the *jungles* or a *Koel (Kokil)* singing in the water or a she-serpent (*Nagin*) within the earth in each case enjoying the proximity of the Lord. Guru Arjan called himself a fish in a hymn to express his *Bhakti* towards God.

Among *Ashtachhap* writers only Surdas expressed his *Bhakti* towards Lord *Krishna* through the medium of the cows of Braj. In *Bhramargit*, *gopis* are informing to *Udho* to tell *Krishna* that the cows of Braj are suffering extreme misery in his *Viyoga*. They are in the

habit of going and smelling the places where *Krishna* has grazed them. The water (tears) continuously coming from their eyes and they are repeating the name of the Lord *Krishna*.

To conclude this part, it may be argued that the use of feminine imagery and female voice by these ideologies is an indicative of the high regard that they have for woman. But some Western scholars pointed out that the use of feminine imagery and female voice in Guru Granth Sahib is certainly not a unique thing as many North Indian Saints have also used it. The use of feminine imagery and voice is not only confined to North Indian Saints but also used by the prophets of the Old and New Testament, Christian Saints and *Sufi Sheikhs*. But the vocabulary and the sense of this idea used by others differ in many respects from the form and essence of Guru Granth Sahib. It becomes clear by taking an example from Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature. Although *Ashtachhap* writers explained the spiritual path through the image of *Gopi* at philosophical level but practically woman is not directly related to God. She is secondarily related through the medium of male. Contrary to this, the woman of Guru Granth Sahib devotes a very direct encounter between her and Ultimate Reality.

**IInd part of this chapter is ‘Quest for Feminine Qualities’.** In this part it is made clear that why these ideologies have used feminine imageries for God when all the writers of both ideologies are male. It has seen in the earlier part that both ideologies have largely used the

*Vatsalya Bhava* (mother imagery) and *Madhura Bhava* (wife imagery) to comprehend God despite of the fact that all the writers are male. Some scholar's raised objection about the use of these female imageries. Doris R. Jakobsh concludes that addressing the Divine through the feminine voice allowed for the maintenance of masculine identity to God. Here it should be pointed out that female imagery and voice have used neither to permit masculine identity to God and nor to place woman secondarily but to showcase the qualities of woman. To achieve the Ultimate Reality, one should have the qualities of love, devotion, sacrifice, fear of God, patience, forgiveness, truthfulness and humility. As woman has these qualities in abundance, more than a man, so both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) considered these feminine qualities very helpful in the quest and attainment of the Lord.

Guru Granth Sahib glorifies these feminine qualities and enjoins upon all humanity to cultivate them for comprehending Lord. One is advised to go and ask *Suhagan* that through which qualities she has achieved the Lord. Similarly, *Ashtachhap* writers have asked *Gopi* that with which qualities she has received Lord Krishna. Braj writers have emphasized on feminine qualities by conceiving man as complicated and subtle and woman as plain and transparent.

Guru Granth Sahib recorded that woman is the one who has the qualities to recognize and achieve the God. She has the capacity to chart out the way that makes the Ultimate Reality accessible to

human experience. Krishandas, one of the *Ashtachhap* writers, has laid importance to this idea by declaring that in the whole world nobody has the capacity and quality like Braj woman to comprehend Lord.

Both ideologies emphasized that to receive Ultimate Reality quality of **love** is the foremost. They believe that the gap between Divine Reality and the individual is bridged by following the woman's example of loving devotion. That wife is called *Suhagan* who has love for the Lord. Love is the true wealth of her life and she experiences a kind of bliss in the company of her True Lord. Surdas and Nanddas choose the love of *Gopi* to express their ideas and thought in *Bhramargit*. Through *Bhramargit* they have explained the superiority of *Prem* (love) over *Gyan* and *Yoga*. *Udho* has been made the mouthpiece of *Gyan Bhakti*. He tries to dissuade *Gopi* from the path of 'Prem' by an appeal to her intellect. Contrary to this, *Gopi* is generally not inclined to enter into a logical discourse or intellectual inquiry. She said to *Udho* that her only concern is to love Lord Krishna.

With love, quality of **devotion** is also necessary. Woman's yearning for union and agony of her separation (*Viraha*) immediately enters into the soul and stir powerful vibration there. The entire *Baramaha* of Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev and Nanddas, one of the *Ashtacchap* writers, is an example of it where the *Viraha* of a lonely woman is used for depicting the yearning of individual soul for union

with God. This quality has great importance on spiritual path because without pangs of separation love cannot grow.

**Removal of ego** is considered as an essential trait which is required for the union with Almighty God. Wife of Guru Granth Sahib forgets her identity and fixes her mind on God-Husband after removal of ego. Among *Ashtachhap* writers Govindswami and Nanddas have explained the necessity of this quality on the spiritual path.

Guru Granth Sahib states that along with quality of love, **fear of God** is also essential on spiritual path. Woman should adorn herself with fear (*Bhai*) of God to become *Suhagan*. *Ashtachhap* writers do not have mentioned this quality in their writings.

Feminine quality of **patience** is also necessary in the pursuit of Ultimate Reality. Both ideologies concluded that a wife (devotee) who has patience is loved by God-husband. Quality of **truthfulness** is also emphasized in Guru Granth Sahib. It is stated that if the wife has the quality of truth then God-Husband never goes away from her.

**Sacrifice** is also a necessary trait. Wife of Guru Granth Sahib and *Gopi* of Braj literature is ready to sacrifice her everything in lieu of Lord. She sacrifices her body, mind, wealth and everything for the sake of Lord.

Furthermore, Guru Granth Sahib informed that anybody who remains **humble** like wife achieves the Ultimate goal of life. *Ashtachhap* writers have also explained the importance of this quality on spiritual path. Women leaders of the liberation movement fighting

for equality with men at all levels, too, at times, appear to corroborate the idea of humility on the part of women. Simone De Beauvoir, one of the pioneers of feminist thought in her famous work *'The Second Sex'*, also speaks of this ideal and appear to corroborate this quality on the part of woman.

Humility brings quality of **obedience**. Wife (devotee) of Guru Granth Sahib never objects the doings of God-Husband. She obeys God's command without objection. *Gopi* of *Ashtachhap* writers is ready to obey the will of the Lord Krishna without any objection.

Apart from these qualities Guru Granth Sahib considered quality of forgiveness as an essential trait for the attainment of God. *Ashtachhap* writers do not have paid attention to this quality.

Even Social Scientist today has started realizing that feminine qualities like love, humility, patience and self-sacrifice can pave way for a better social climate. World famous Psychologist Dr. H.B. Danesh in his work 'Violence-Free Family' states that the feminine qualities of love and service are gaining ascendancy which will banish violence from the family and the society.

To conclude this chapter it can be said that both ideologies have considered above mentioned feminine qualities as very helpful in the attainment of God. One thing that deserves special mention here is that while feminine qualities are recommended for a woman (devotee) the masculine qualities like chivalry and cleverness have not been overlooked. A woman is not expected to be a spineless creature

without having an independent personality of her own. Boldness and chivalry are essential attributes of an ideal woman of Guru Granth Sahib. *Mai Bhago* is an example of it. Even *Mata Sundari* not only took keen interest in Sikh polity, but also successfully guided the destiny of the *Panth* in a crucial time.

Here it must be kept in mind that though the content of both ideologies is common but the effect is not quite the same. There is a dichotomy in behaviour of *Ashtchhap* writers about the salvation of woman. On one side, they define the spiritual path through her voice whereas on the other side they accept that her salvation lies in the service of her husband. Contrary to it, Guru Granth's message maintained that woman and members of lower caste are not in any way barred from attaining salvation. It's goal of emancipation is equally open to a man as much as to a woman. Even at spiritual level woman has been bestowed with a special status when *Gurbani* calls her the best of the best.

Further *Ashtachhap* writers classified woman into different categories. This classification can be specifically seen in the works of Nanddas, Surdas and Krishandas. Nanddas in his work *Ras Manjari* classified woman into *Swakiya*, *Parakiya* and *Samayana* according to religions ethos. Each of these three is further divided into *Mugadha Madhya* and *Parora*. These are further divided into many categories. Guru Nanak and his successors have not classified woman anywhere in their writings.

Third difference is also interesting to note that *Ashtachhap* writers, specifically Surdas repeats some common prejudices against woman. He compared woman to *Kali Nagini* and at another place she is called even worst than *Nagin*. These references of Surdas are contextual which needed to be discussed in their context. Some scholars objected that there are negative approaches towards woman in Guru Granth Sahib also. One of these scholars is Doris R. Jakobsh who represented Guru Ramdas as a high critic of woman on the bases of his one hymn. The view taken by Jakobsh is partial and therefore misleading. Guru Ramdas talks of the *Manmukh* in contrast to *Gurmukh*. The sinful and ignorant men are those who listen to their women out of lust as a moral weakness and ignore the Guru's instructions. Even in the end of the hymn it is clarified that both woman and man are the creation of the God. Thus the deprecation of woman is totally alien to Guru Granth Sahib. It is said that Guru Arjan rejectes the composition of Chhaju to include in Guru Granth Sahib as being too derogatory to woman.

In *Ashtachhap* writings especially in Naddas one may note some signs of eroticism. Contrary, Guru Granth Sahib does not have any description of this types it refutes and rejects this view by declaring that uncontrolled passions are gateway to sorrow and disease.

Noticing these differences one must agree with J.S. Grewal that Guru Nanak created a larger space for woman, perhaps in the whole range of Indian literature springing from devotional theism.



**IV Chapter is 'Depiction of Woman: The Social Context'.** One finds the depiction of woman as a girl, wife, widow and mother in both ideologies. Braj literature has provided a vivid picture of woman in her social milieu. It authenticates the presence of child marriage, dowry, *Purdah*, *Sati* and miserable condition of widow in society during medieval period. But it neither opposed these social vices nor raised a voice against them. Thus, it may be argued that regarding social condition of woman, *Ashtachhap* writers merely echoed the traditional views and could not protest against social inequalities towards woman due to the social pressure of their society.

Contrary to it, in Guru Granth Sahib these social evils are strongly opposed for the upliftment of woman. Guru Nanak is the first among the Saints of India who has championed the cause of womanhood in Indian society. He has pointed to the orgy of dishonouring of womenfolk by *Babar's* soldiers near *Saidpur* later on called *Eminabad*. He wrote about the suffering of Indian woman in *Raga Asa*. This portrayal of suffering is universal and it includes the plightful condition of all women whether belonging to *Hindu*, *Muslim*, *Bhatti* and *Thakur* denomination. Women's state of suffering is defined in three ways: suffering due to dishonour; suffering by physical death and suffering due to emotional stress. Seeing such a pitiable condition, Guru Nanak felt need to give woman a proper place in the society. Thereafter the status of woman in the society remained his deep concern. His successors have taken revolutionary steps to

eradicate social vices. They strongly opposed the evil custom of female infanticide, *Purdah*, dowry, *Sati* and *Sutak*. They do not favour the idea of child marriage. They favoured the idea of widow remarriage to improve the condition of widows in the contemporary society.

During medieval period the birth of a son was welcomed and that of a daughter was looked down upon as misfortune. Even Mughal Emperors like Babur and Akbar were anxious to have male child. Noticing this preference given to boy in contemporary society Guru Granth Sahib refers to the pleasure on the birth of a son and special treatment given to him in the society. This reference of Guru Granth Sahib only occurs to authenticate the preference given to boy in the contemporary society not to support this idea. *Ashtachhap* writers also mentioned about the joy and pleasure at the birth of a male child. They have referred to a special tradition among Braj people where they celebrated the birth of a boy by sprinkling a mixture of milk and turmeric and dancing at the same time. They have also mentioned about the celebration on the birth of a girl child. *Dr. Hargulal*, an eminent scholar of Braj literature, has informed that in the contemporary society the birth of a girl was equally a source of happiness like boy.

Female infanticide was prevalent in the society. Guru Granth Sahib strongly opposed this evil by announcing that it is sinful to slaughter a *Brahman* or a cow or a daughter as it has curse for millions of evils. But *Ashtachhap* writers are silent about it.

Braj literature also referred to the kind of life which an unmarried girl is expected to lead in her parental house. Chaturbhujdas has mentioned that girls had less freedom as compared to boys at that time. Surdas referred that after the age of twelve some restrictions were put upon girls. They were not allowed to move out of their houses. They were advised by their parents to stay at home under their protection.

Child marriage had become a common feature of the social life at that time. Surdas saying that a girl of twelve was considered to be of marriageable age bears a testimony to this. Guru Granth Sahib too, refers to the child marriage. Word *Iani Bali* and *Ianariey* are used for a child bride. Guru Granth Sahib does not favour the idea of child marriage. It has shown sympathy for such girls who are married even before they could understand the meaning, rights and duties of a married woman.

*Ashtachhap* writers specifically Surdas and Nanddas referred to the presence of dowry in society. They only mentioned about it. But in Guru Granth Sahib dowry is condemned as mere show of one's ego and riches. It is stated that material dowry is false, egoist and vain show, whereas the real dowry is the blessing of Lord's Name.

After marriage, the girl lived in the family of in-laws where mother-in-law exercised control over her and her commands were to be carried out. Guru Granth Sahib states that if the bride failed to come up to her expectations, her life became miserable.

Parmananddas also referred that she had to live under the strict supervision of mother-in-law. Even she has to please each and every member of her husband's family by rendering every possible domestic service. To make her free from these inequalities, Sikh Scripture honoured the womenfolk as the symbol of domestic harmony and happiness, social cohesion and unity. She is considered the noblest in all the family.

The practice of *Purdah* was prevalent in the contemporary society. *Ashtachhap* writers highlight that a milder and less elaborate form of *Purdah*, commonly, known as *Ghoonght* have been observed by *Hindu* woman. Guru Granth Sahib openly condemned *Purdah*. It is compared to suppression and emphasis is given to cast it off. Among *Ashtachhap* writers only Surdas, to some extent, condemned this custom.

Polygamy was also there. Guru Granth Sahib condemned this evil by saying that if a man has physical relation with a large number of women; then he has to born again and again. He can not get rid off from transmigration. Among *Ashtachhap* writers only Nanddas emphasized to maintain relation only with one's wife.

Both ideologies throw light on the existence of adultery in society during the period under study. There were men and women in the society who had relations with others apart from their partners. Derogatory words like 'sinner' and 'blind' have been used for man who has relation with other woman instead of his wife in Guru Granth

Sahib. Both ideologies emphasized on the sanctity of married relationship by declaring that anyone from husband and wife who has relation with other may suffer from physical diseases.

On one side, *Ashtachhap* writers demand fidelity both from husband and wife for the smooth running of relationship but on the other side they announced that a wife should not leave her husband if he has guilty of having relation with other woman. Guru Granth Sahib suggests that fidelity is essential not only for a wife but for the husband too.

A woman was considered to have become impure and untouchable for certain number of days after delivery and even during the menstrual period. It was known as *Sutak*. The foreign travelers like Manucci and Alberuni have noticed this strange custom. This custom was even prevalent in *China* and *Japan*. This custom is strongly condemned in Guru Granth Sahib. The impurity of *Sutak* is condemned as mere superstition. It is stated that impurity lies in the heart and mind of a person and not in the stained garment. *Ashtachhap* writers do not have mentioned about this custom in their writings.

The condition of widow was very miserable. She had to become *Sati*. Guru Amardas and Guru Arjan Dev strongly condemned this evil. In Guru Granth Sahib word '*Sati*' has been used in different connotations, it implies truthful, immortal, disciplined, virtuous, generous and pure etc. Among *Ashtachhap* writers only Surdas,

mentioned about this evil. He seemed to support this custom by announcing that woman who had become *Sati*, would get rid off from transmigration and she never born again. Although there is no direct reference to widow remarriage but one of the hymn states that a wife can get satisfaction only from her husband and from none else, it can be said that Guru Granth Sahib favoured the idea of widow remarriage so that a widowed could lead a normal and socially respectable life. Guru Granth Sahib favoured the idea of widow-remarriage in order to prevent a widow from becoming a victim of temptation.

Both ideologies have emphasized to follow the path of *Grihasta* (married life) to restore to woman her due place and status equal to a man in life. Guru Granth Sahib declares that a person can attain liberation even living with progeny and wife. *Ashtachhap* writers also realized the importance of wife in family. But all of them did not follow the path of *Grihasta*. Surdas, Parmananddas, Nanddas, Krishandas and Govindswami remained unmarried for the whole life.

During the Muslim rule the evil of prostitution appears to have spread far and wide. Guru Arjan Dev informed that people had no scruple in visiting prostitutes. Among *Ashtachhap* writers Nanddas also mentioned about this practice. It is stated that these women were good in talking but their hearts were unclean. Guru Granth Sahib not only authenticates the presence of this evil in society but also condemned this practice. It is also stated that not only women were

prostitutes but the men's who were morally degenerated also like prostitute. So, Guru Granth Sahib equally applied word prostitute to both woman and man.

Apart from the evil of prostitution there was trade of women on the frontier areas. Guru Granth Sahib referred to the practice of offering woman in charity at pilgrimage places. It does not appreciate this practice. It is stated as a useless practice. One is advised to purify oneself and worship the Name of Lord to achieve liberation instead of performing these types of rituals.

Great importance is given to woman as mother in both ideologies. In Guru Granth Sahib mother exists as a person upon who depends creation and nutrition. A hymn of Guru Nanak refers to the indispensability of woman as a mother. The hymn states that it is from woman, the condemned one that we are conceived and it is from her that we are born. It is the woman who keeps our race going. It is the woman who is sought when one loses one's previous wife. It is she with whom we establish our social ties. Then why denounce her from whom even Kings, great men and commoners are born? From woman is born another woman, without woman there is none. Only God (Who is according to Sikh Scripture is *Nirguna*) is free woman. On the other side, Ashtachhap writers, as they believed in *Saguna* form of God, declared that even God is not free from woman. They have praised mother *Devaki* for giving birth to Lord *Krishna*.

To conclude this chapter it may be said that in Braj literature a woman's position is subordinate to her husband as she is advised not

to leave him and to do service to him. Whereas Guru Granth Sahib negates the tradition ridden view that wife should live in the custody of husband. It is a remarkable step as no one condemned this view from *Manu's* time. Thus Sikh Scriptural message is not the subjugation of female to the male. Guru Granth Sahib states that man and woman are complementary to each other and there is no difference between them.

**V chapter named as ‘Depiction of Female Dress, Make-up, Ornaments and Activities.’** In Guru Granth Sahib, female dress, her act of applying make-up, wearing ornaments and her activities have been described with spiritual significance. Whereas in Braj literature this account only brings into focus the social status of woman during the period under study. *Ashtachhap* writers have provided detailed information about female dress. *Sari* was the most common wear used by the ladies. *Ashtachhap* writers have informed about different kinds of *Saris* used by ladies at that time *Kausambi Sari* was in trend during that period. *Thigni Sari*, *Dandhi Sari*, *Tansukh Sari*, *Chunri Sari*, *Jhoomk Sari* and *Patori Sari* were also used by ladies. *Cotton Sari* was commonly used by all women. *Langha-Choli*, *Salwar-Suit* was also worn by ladies of that period. *Duppata* also known as *Chunri*, *Chunni*, *Cheer* and *Odhani* was used to cover the head.

In Guru Granth Sahib female dress has a symbolic meaning. Woman is advised to wear the robe of love, humility and forgiveness. It is stated that those who are busy in dressing themselves in silken



robes but do not appropriate God's Name, cannot attain peace. The red robe which is only worn for the sake of lovely appearance is useless. It is stated that one should only wear clothes which do not distress the mind and body. Further, one should not wear clothes as fine as air.

Next to dress was make-up which mostly occupied the attention of the ladies. All the sixteen items of *Sigar* found mention in both ideologies. *Ashtachhap* writers have provided information about the use of *Ubtan*, *Snan*, *Keshvinyas*, *Maang Bharna*, *Anjan*, *Mahawar*, *Bindi*, *Mehandi*, *Gandh*, *Phulmala*, to put *Til* and to redden the lips by ladies to beautify themselves.

Woman embellishment is assigned spiritual significance in Guru Granth Sahib. Her cosmetic does not only enhance her physical appearance but also contribute to her intellectual strength. She should adorn herself with the *Sabad* and *Gyan* of the True Lord. The *Anjan* that she uses to darken and beautify her eyes is to be interpreted as *Gyan*. It is stated that if a woman adorn herself with all the sixteen items of *Sigar* but she does not adore the master of the world all her make-up is useless. One is advised to give up worldly make-up and instead of it *Sigar* of fear is advised to do. Only that woman (devotee) is liked by the Lord who applied the make-up of *Sehaj*.

*Ashtachhap* writers have furnished information that different types of ornaments were used by ladies from head to toe at that time.

These ornaments were made of diamond, gold, pearls and flowers. *Sheesphul* for head, *Latkan* for forehead, *Khumbhi*, *Karnaphul*, *Khuthila*, *Tatank*, *Kundal* and *Jhumka* for ears, *Besari*, *Nath* and *Bulak* for nose, *Kanthsiri*, *Motsiri*, *Muktamal*, *Hamel* and *Tauki* for neck, *Bajuband*, *Kangan*, *Churi* and *Chura* for arms, rings for fingers, *Kshudra-ghantika*, *Kardhani* and *Kinkini* for waist, *Bichuwa* and *Nupur* for toes and *Paizeb* and *Jehar* for the ankle were used.

Guru Granth Sahib takes jewellery in different connotations. Female ornaments are related to her mental state. A woman should make good deeds her ornaments and her mind the thread. She should be able to string the diamond of *Naam* which is beyond all prices. She should wear the garland of *Naam* around her neck and *Kangan* of the doership of Absolute One God. It is stated that a wife who wears all ornaments and apply make-up on her body but do not recite *Naam* then all these things are useless. These are responsible for transmigration.

Woman played a major role in the daily life of the society during the period under study. Both ideologies have provided valuable information about her day to day activities. Early in the morning she churned milk. In Guru Granth Sahib this daily female activity of churning milk and obtaining butter is used as a symbol for meditating on the Holy Name and obtaining *Amrita*, the Divine elixir. The metaphorical churning up of the butter, the envisioning of the transcendent is the most important action (meditating on Divine

Name) illustrated through a feminine occupation (the churning of milk every morning) in Guru Granth Sahib which is a symbol of the significance attached to the feminine principle in the Sikh Scripture.

*Ashtachhap* writers have also used milk and milk products to spiritual level. They compared 'Goras' (milk and milk products) to the *Rasa* of senses. It is the prime duty of the devotee to sacrifice the pleasure of senses to achieve Lord. It is explained by *Ashtachhap* writers in '*Dan Lila*' where the Lord Krishna demanded from the *Gopis* to give him *Dan* in form of 'Goras' which is indirectly a demand to sacrifice the pleasure of senses.

Woman went to fetch water for drinking and other purposes. Word *Panihari* is used for woman water carriers in both ideologies. Woman had to prepare and serve food to the whole family. After then she had to sweep and clean her house. Embroidery is also included in her working sphere. This activity is also imbued with spiritual importance in Guru Granth Sahib. If a woman makes embroidery of the Holy Name and worn such a frock; then she is the true bride. In this hymn the female activity of making embroidery is symbolically used for reciting the Holy Name. The word home is used for keeping oneself away from the five lower passions i.e. *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha* and *Ahankara*.

It must be kept in mind that women at that time played an important role in the economic life of the society. They sold goods of daily use carrying them on their heads from place to place. Both

ideologies have mentioned about the women who used to go to sell milk and milk products to nearest places. Word *Gujari* has been used in both ideologies for those women who sold milk and milk products at that time. They also went out of their houses for selling fruits and other goods of daily use.

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that both ideologies provide valuable information about the dress, make-up, ornaments and activities of woman during the period under study. Some information about her role in economic life of the society is also provided. Braj literature provides this information only to highlight the social status of woman in contemporary society. On the other side, in Guru Granth Sahib female dress, her make-up, ornaments and activities all are depicted with spiritual significance.

After analyzing both ideologies from feminine point of view, it can be concluded that Guru Granth Sahib creates a larger space for woman as compared to contemporary Braj literature. But the Sikh community has yet to fully appreciate the feminine views pertaining to Sikh Scripture to mitigate the gap between theory and practice. According to the theory of Sikhism there is gender equality but it is not reflected in the practices and customs prevalent in the Sikh community due to the dominance of Punjabi culture. The hold of Punjabi culture on the Sikh religion has resulted in Sikh practices and customs being more reflective of Punjabi norms than of Sikh spiritual values.

This type of study which is based on devotional literature has its own merits. Although it does not directly provide information about materials matters yet by employing allegory it provides valuable information about life around it. The official sources contain only one version of the reality. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to know the other side also before arriving at a definite conclusion. It has been found that religious literature, after examining it with its limitations reinforce historical evidences further.

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## ABSTRACT

### WOMAN IN GURU GRANTH SAHIB AND CONTEMPORANEOUS BRAJ LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

This study is an attempt to highlight the portrayal of woman in the devotional literature of the *Bhakti* period. The attempt for the present research work cannot be substituted for the studies based on official sources but might provide help in giving direction to arrive at a more comprehensive idea of the condition of woman in different regions of India during the period under study. Devotional literature of the *Bhakti* period contains the writings specifically poetry of *Nirguna* and *Saguna* devotees (*Bhakts*). *Nirguna* devotees (*Bhakts*) believe in one formless God and have no faith in *Avtarvad* whereas *Saguna* devotees (*Bhakts*) worship the incarnations of God like *Vishnu*, *Rama* and *Krishna* and they considered Lord Krishna as of *Avtar* of God on earth. These *Bhakts* (devotees) wrote devotional poetry in praise of God in the vernacular languages instead of *Sanskrit*. Though they did not write purposely on material matters yet their writings by employing allegory throw valuable light on life around them.

For the understanding of the *Nirguna* exposition Guru Granth Sahib has been undertaken as the greatest unaltered and undiluted Text pertaining to medieval India. And for *Saguna* understanding contemporaneous Braj literature is useful. Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj *Bhasha*. Braj *Bhasha* was the richest form of Hindi in the medieval age. On the basis of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature this work compares the two famous categories of *Bhakti* (*Nirguna* and *Saguna*) to explore the feminine dimension pertaining to them. For this purpose, this study passes through two phases, spiritual and social. Spiritual phase is further divided into two parts. In first part, an attempt has been made to explore how Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature relate the feminine imagery on the Divine level and second part makes it clear that why feminine imagery is used? Social phase clarify, whether their spiritual dimension is equally relevant in social sphere or not, whether both ideologies advocated for the equality of woman in society too.

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## ਅਬਸਟ੍ਰੈਕਟ

### ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਰੀ : ਇੱਕ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ

ਇਹ ਖੋਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਭਗਤੀ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੇ ਚਿਤਰਨ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਖੋਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਸੋਚਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਖੋਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਔਰਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਹੁਪੱਖੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਾਭਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਭਗਤੀ ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਭਗਤ ਇੱਕ ਰੱਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਵਤਾਰਵਾਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਦ ਕਿ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਭਗਤ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਅਵਤਾਰਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ, ਰਾਮ ਅਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਭਗਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਆਮ ਬੋਲ-ਚਾਲ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਿੰਬਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਸ-ਪਾਸ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਭਗਤੀ ਸਾਖਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਰਗੁਣ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਈ ਸਮਕਾਲੀਨ ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਲਿਖਤੀ ਸੋਮੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਮੱਧਕਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਉਪ-ਬੋਲੀ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਾਖਾਵਾਂ (ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਗੁਣ) ਦਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਨਣ ਲਈ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਖੋਜ-ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ। ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਿੰਬਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਖਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਹਾਮੀ ਭਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

### ਸੁਪਰਵਾਈਜ਼ਰ

ਡਾ. ਕੁਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਢਿੱਲੋਂ  
ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ,  
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

### ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥਣ

ਗਗਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ

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## **DECLARATION**

It is certified that the research work titled "**Woman in Guru Granth Sahib and Contemporaneous Braj Literature: A Comparative Study**" is an original work of the student and is being submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the Doctorate of Philosophy in History at Punjabi University, Patiala. This work has not been submitted earlier either to the University or to any other University/Institution for the fulfillment of the requirement of a course of study. The work has been undertaken under my supervision and guidance. The work is based on the original research of the student.

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## PREFACE

In this work an attempt has been made to study the manner in which woman is portrayed in the devotional literature of the *Bhakti* period. Most of the existing studies on woman for this period are largely based on official sources. These sources contain only one version of the story but it is of paramount importance to know the other side also before arriving at a definite conclusion. So, the present study is based on the devotional literature of the *Bhakti* period. As now a days literature is considered as an important source of history.

Devotional literature of *Bhakti* period contains the writings specifically poetry of the *Nirguna* and *Saguna Bhakts* (devotees). *Nirguna Bhakts* believe in one formless God whereas *Saguna Bhakts* worship the incarnations of God like *Vishnu*, *Rama* and *Krishna*. These *Bhakts* wrote devotional poetry in the praise of God in vernacular languages instead of *Sanskrit*. Though they did not write purposely on material matter yet through the similes and metaphors, in their writings, they throw valuable light on the life around them.

For the understanding of *Nirguna* exposition, Guru Granth Sahib has been undertaken as the greatest unaltered and undiluted Text pertaining to medieval India. And for *Saguna* understanding contemporary Braj literature is used. Guru Granth Sahib believes in the worship of *Nirguna* God and does not have faith in Avtarvad whereas Braj writers considered *Shri Krishna* as the Avtar of God on

earth. Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj *Bhasha* which was the richest form of *Hindi* in the medieval age. In this work the focus of Braj literature is primarily limited to the works of *Ashtachhap* writers as they are contemporary to the Sikh Gurus. Furthermore their works are the best writings of Braj *Bhasha* as after them this language had lost its prestige and *Khadiboli Hindi* (Modern standard Hindi) began to supplant it.

On the basis of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature this work compares the two famous categories of *Bhakti* (*Nirguna* and *Saguna*) to explore the feminine dimension pertaining to them. To achieve this objective this study has passed through two phases:- spiritual and social. In first phase an attempt has been made to explore how Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature relate the feminine imagery on the Divine level. Secondly it is made clear that why feminine imagery is used to comprehend God when all the writers of both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) are male? Social phase deals with the condition of woman in society. In this phase an attempt has been made to highlight that whether their spiritual dimension is equally relevant in social sphere or not, whether these ideologies have advocated for the equality of women in society too? Another objective of this study is to clarify some misconceptions among scholars about feminine conception of Guru Granth Sahib.

This type of study which is based on devotional literature has its own merits. Undoubtedly the attempt for the present research work can not be substituted for the studies based on official sources but it has been found that religious literature, after examining it with its limitations reinforce historical evidences further.

Comparison is the main tool of research as far as methodology is concerned. This comparison passes through the theoretical and practical analysis of both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature). An attempt has been made to consult the available primary and secondary sources for the completion of this work. Foreign traveler accounts have also been consulted to substantiate some views. Large number of research articles and unpublished thesis have also been examined. Due care has been taken to acknowledge these works in the foot-notes wherever consulted.



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