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# EVOLUTION OF THE KHALSA

## VOL. I

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE SIKH PANTH

# EVOLUTION OF THE KHALSA

## Vol. I

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE SIKH PANTH

BY

INDUBHUSAN BANERJEE, M.A.

PREMCHAND ROYCHAND SCHOLAR, MOUAT GOLD MEDALLIST

LECTURER IN HISTORY, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY




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To

THE REVERED MEMORY

OF

SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

*" There are ideal series of events which run parallel with the real ones. They rarely coincide. Men and circumstances generally modify the ideal train of events, so that it seems imperfect, and its consequences are equally imperfect. Thus with the Reformation ; instead of Protestantism came Lutheranism."*—NOVALIS.

## PREFACE

As the title of the work shows, in it I have set myself the task of tracing the evolution of Sikhism till Guru Gobind Singh introduced his reforms and brought the Khalsa into existence. For the sake of convenience I have split up the work in two volumes, the present volume covering the period till 1604 when the Granth Sahib was compiled and the peaceful evolution of Sikhism practically came to an end. I have been teaching Sikh History in the Post-Graduate classes for a period of over 15 years and the present work is the outcome of my endeavour to solve some of the difficulties that constantly confronted me. How far I have succeeded it is not for me to say but I shall consider myself amply rewarded if my book, in some measure, pave the way to further discussion and clarification.

I have never believed that there is much sense in any pedantic insistence on diacritical marks and therefore I have avoided them wherever I conveniently could. In transliteration I have followed the Gurumukhi spelling and pronunciation and consequently Veda appears in the text as Ved, Yogī as Jogī and so on.

My obligations are many and some of them have been noted in the footnotes. But I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the assistance that I received from my Gurumukhi teacher, Bhai Ajmer Singh. At the same time I would like to make it absolutely clear that the Bhai Sahib is in no

way responsible for the views expressed in this work. My sincerest thanks are due to my friend and colleague, Mr. Sailendranath Mitra, who very kindly saw through the proofs, though, needless to say, the responsibility for any errors or faults of expression is entirely mine. For the Index I am indebted to the courtesy of my pupil and friend, Mr. Anadicharan Banerjee. I would also take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Mr. A. C. Ghatak, the Superintendent of the Calcutta University Press, and his Staff for the ready assistance that I always received.

I have supreme pleasure in dedicating the book to the revered memory of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, at whose instance I took up investigations in Sikh History My debts to him cannot be expressed in words.

SENATE HOUSE: INDUBHUSAN BANERJEE
CALCUTTA

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# EVOLUTION OF THE KHALSA

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

The history of Sikhism presents several features of exceptional interest. Originally Sikhism belonged to the great family of popular religions that made their appearance in India in the 15th and 16th centuries. All preached the same message of love and truth, the same message of peace and emphasised, with the same sureness of accent, the great panacea of the *Name*. Ramananda and Kabir, Chaitanya and Nanak, all agreed as to fundamentals, though, no doubt, there were differences in detail. But whereas the other schools developed, more or less, on traditional lines, and after short periods of fruitful activity, quieted down into narrow, hide-bound or at best mystical sects, Sikhism went off at a tangent and ultimately evolved what has been called a church-nation. A simple monotheistic faith which found its first utterance in the hymns of Guru Nanak and which had its origin in an unostentatious attempt at social emancipation and religious uplift, became, in course of time, political in its aims and military in its methods. It evolved in turn a military theocracy, a confederation and a monarchy and its votaries exist to this day as one of the best disciplined of the minority communities of India. Further, as Carpenter points out, " starting

with a Puritan quietism which repudiated outward rites as in themselves meritorious, and conceived the life of the believer as a continued communion with God, it developed temple and service, and observances of ceremonial piety. Rejecting every kind of violence and enjoining the completest forgiveness of wrongs, it protected itself by military organisation, made disciples into warriors and turned the devotee into the soldier-saint. It announced religion in the broadest terms, broke down all barriers of caste and race, and then imposed the obligation of the sword with a rite of initiation which drew the tightest of limits around the semi-national church fellowship." [1]

Broadly speaking, we can thus trace a twofold development in the evolution of Sikhism. On the one hand, Sikhism found it increasingly difficult to maintain the catholicity of its original ideals and the simplicity of its primitive form ; on the other, the whole character of the movement changed as a peaceful sect was gradually turned into a military order and the devotee developed into the soldier-saint. For a religion to maintain the simplest of forms and at the same time retain its popular character is, more or less, impossible and it is not difficult to see that, as it progressed, Sikhism was bound to react to its environment and evolve ideals of a more circumscribed and sectarian character with forms to correspond. Further, as Wayman Bury points out, " there is no easy road or short cut to collective spiritual progress.....the uplift of a race, a class, or even a congregation cannot be done by a sort of spiritual legerdemain based on

[1] Estlin Carpenter, *Theism in Mediaeval India*, p. 488.

hypnotic suggestion. Individuals may be so swayed for the time being, and, in a few favourable cases, the initial impetus will be carried on, but most human souls are like locusts and flutter earthwards when the wind drops."[1] Necessarily, idealistic principles have to undergo limitations when they are to accommodate themselves to the paradox called Life. This can very easily be illustrated from the history of almost every religion which could claim votaries beyond an intellectual and exclusive group. Even the Buddha had to make allowance for the limitations of popular intelligence and formulate a *Lokiya* or practical standpoint and the inevitable result was that " the rules, laws, formalities, conventions from which he recoiled in theory, followed one another in uniform succession until a complete code, the Patimokkha, came into existence."[2] Thus it is not difficult to understand how Sikhism also evolved conventions of its own, though it had its origin in an extreme reaction against conventionalism of all kinds.

But the other feature, *viz.*, the transformation of Sikhism into a military theocracy, presents a more complex problem and is much more difficult to understand. In tracing the history of the transformation of Sikhism we can discern two distinct stages of development. From the days of Guru Nanak down to the year 1604 when the compilation of the *Granth Sāhib* was completed, the movement ran on peaceful lines. Sikhism gradually detached itself from Hinduism, developed ideals and institutions of its own, and

[1] Wayman Bury, *Pan-Islam*, p. 197.

[2] Barua, *Prolegomena to a History of Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 28.

the Sikh Panth [1] came to acquire a more or less definite meaning. And Sikhism had no quarrel either with Islam or the established State but at the very outset of the second period, which may be said to have extended from 1605 to 1699, when the Khalsa was brought into existence, we have the execution of Guru Arjan and the sudden transition to militarism under his son and successor Hargobind, which, after some moderate successes, received a set-back and then again emerged triumphant under Guru Gobind Singh. And it is interesting to note that the more thorough militarism of the tenth Guru was preceded by another execution, *viz.* that of Tegh Bahadur. It may thus appear that Sikhism retained its peaceful character so long as the State did not interfere and that it was only as a reaction to the martyrdom of Guru Arjan that Hargobind resorted to the policy of armed resistance. Under Hargobind's successors the new policy relaxed and Sikhism was possibly relapsing to its earlier path when again the execution of Tegh Bahadur brought in its train the more disciplined militarism of his successor. In other words, the transformation of Sikhism might thus be explained primarily on the ground of Muslim persecution.

But though it would certainly be a great mistake to belittle the significance of the martyrdom of two of the greatest leaders of Sikhism, such a simple statement of the matter can hardly be regarded as adequate. It leaves unexplained what made it possible for Sikhism to react to the Muslim persecution in the manner it

[1] *Panth* means a path, a way, and hence, a religious denomination.

did, and we have perforce to take a broader view of the affair.

Almost all previous writers, who have given more than a passing attention to the subject, have laid stress on certain peculiarities which distinguished Sikhism from the other reform movements. Cunningham writes, "in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Hindu mind was no longer stagnant or retrogressive, it had been leavened with Muhammadanism, and changed and quickened for a new development. Ramanand and Gorakh had preached religious equality, and Chaitan had repeated that faith levelled caste. Kabir had denounced images, and appealed to the people in their own tongue, and Vallabh had taught that effectual devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. But these good and able men appear to have been so impressed with the nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man's social condition unworthy of a thought. .....They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their sects remain to this day as they left them. It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor Gobind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality." [1] This passage has so frequently been quoted by subsequent writers,[2] who, in our opinion, have accepted its propositions rather carelessly, that it is necessary to submit it to a close

[1] Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs* (Garrett's Edition), p. 38.

[2] Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 8; Teja Singh, *Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism* (Third Edition), p. iii.

examination. It seems that Cunnigham's first contention is that the other reformers had no programme of social amelioration. But later on he himself says about Nanak that "it is neither probable, nor is it necessary to suppose, that he possessed any clear and sagacious views of social amelioration or of political advancement. He left the progress of his people to the operation of time." [1] The absence of a social programme cannot therefore be said to have constituted much difference. Indeed, it cannot be too strongly insisted that the method of these teachers were entirely different from those of the so-called social reformers of our days. They were concerned, more or less, with fundamentals, knowing fully well that, once these were accepted, society would be compelled to readjust itself.

In the second place, Cunningham's statement that the other reformers were thoroughly impressed by the nothingness of the world seems to have developed in the hands of later writers into the belief that another great distinguishing mark of Sikhism lay in its reconciliation with secular life.[2] Indeed, one recent writer has gone to the extent of saying that "so strongly were they impressed by the nothingness of this world, that they advocated total renunciation." [3] There is, however, no evidence to support such a position and it seems to us that the whole thing has been misunderstood. It is no doubt true that the hymns of Kabir or the writings of the followers of Chaitanya frequently

[1] Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[3] Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 5.

give the impression that their message was of an other-worldly character but such ideas can be found in plenty in Guru Nanak's hymns as well. This is as it should be and must not be allowed to cloud the issue. That the religion of Chaitanya was not in any way inconsistent with secular life is proved beyond doubt by the fact that Nityananda, who had been a *sannyāsī* from his very boyhood and who had been the principal instrument in the propagation of Chaitanya's message, married late in life and settled as a householder,[1] and the numerical strength of the lay votaries of most of these sects unmistakably shows that the position of these later writers is wholly untenable. It is one thing not to prohibit renunciation and quite another to advocate renunciation and the fact of the matter seems to be that this distinction has not been kept in view. The only difference between Sikhism and the other sects in this respect arose under the successors of Nanak when the door to renunciation was barred and Sikhism became essentially a religion of householders. And possibly Guru Nanak himself prepared the way for this when he refused to nominate his eldest son, Sri Chand, as his successor because of the other-worldliness of his character.

It has also been claimed that another great peculiarity of Sikhism was its non-sectarian character.[2] Cunnigham says, "instead of the circumscribed divinity, the anthropomorphous God of Ramanand and Kabir, Nanak loftily invokes the Lord as the one, the sole,

[1] D. C. Sen, *Chaitanya and His Companions*, p. 46.

[2] Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

the timeless being." [1] It is undoubtedly true that one of the greatest merits of Nanak's teaching was that he sought to strip religion of mythology and history, but the same may possibly be said about Kabir as well and it is certainly unfair to the latter to say that his God was anthropomorphous. This view arises primarily from the fact that Kabir called his God by the name of Rām. But this by itself proves nothing, as we find that the Sikh Gurus also very often use the same word to denote the Supreme Being. We venture to hope that anybody who reads carefully the hymns of Kabir cannot but realise that his Rām was something not much different from the Rām of the Sikh Gurus. His followers, no doubt, fell off from his ideal and admitted most of the personifications of Hinduism but it cannot possibly be denied that Kabir himself adhered strictly to his explict profession of monotheism. Most of the other sects, however, could not rid themselves of, or soon reverted to, mythology and tradition, and thus it appears that Sikhism stood distinguished from the sectarian schools in general by the simplicity and spiritualistic character of its worship and especially by its moderation in regard to mythology.[2] This comparative freedom from the shackles of tradition undoubtedly made it more mobile and more at liberty to readjust itself as circumstances required.

But these differences which we have been able to trace so far hardly justify Cunningham's remark that the other reformers merely perfected forms of dissent whereas Guru Nanak alone planted the germs of a

[1] Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[2] Barth, *The Religions of India*, p. 248.

nation. The point is somewhat involved and it is necessary to have it absolutely clear. It goes without saying that the future Sikh nation grew on the foundation provided by Nanak and it is thus clear that he had planted the germs of a nation. But Cunningham's contention seems to be that the system of Nanak had some such original distinctiveness which alone could provide the basis of a nation and which was wholly absent in the other reform movements. Such a position, however, seems hardly tenable.

Some later writers have gone further and they would have us believe that the full-fledged Sikh nation of the future had already been contemplated by Guru Nanak and that his successors merely turned that contemplation into a reality. The only evidence that these writers adduce to show that Guru Nanak had political ideals is some of his hymns wherein he deplores the barbarities practised by Babur's soldiers in connection with the capture of Sayyidpur and the inhumanities perpetrated by the Muhammadan rulers of the day. It is said that the Guru's heart melted at the spectacle but he was helpless as he had no nation at his back. "He and his successors had to create it. But he did not sit down in impotent rage and utter idle jeremiads. Being a practical man, he set about doing as much as the circumstances would permit." [1] But all these are pure

[1] Teja Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 4; see also Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 6, f. n. Teja Singh's view is that Nanak deliberately set himself to the task of creating a nation and that under his successors "a whole nation was on the anvil, and all the teaching and action was designed to contribute

assumptions and hardly require any refutation. The plain fact is that a man of Guru Nanak's temperament and character could not but be deeply struck by such brutalities and he gave vent to his feelings in his characteristic manner. These instances show how difficult it has become to study the history of the earlier phases of Sikhism in their true historical setting and perspective and how the later political and military successes of Sikhism have added largely to the difficulties of the student. Since Browne wrote his *India Tracts* many have been the writers who have sought to enrich Sikh studies one way or another but it cannot possibly be denied that most of the writings on the earlier phases of Sikhism have been coloured, more or less, by the reflected glory of its later days.

Whatever that might be, it appears that Sikhism started with a certain plasticity of character and it is also probable that "though he did not make it the subject of a formal prohibition, Nanak had dissuaded his disciples from renouncing active life." But these features were, by no means, entirely unique and could not by themselves have meant much. Guru Nanak, however, nominated a successor just before his death and this was, no doubt, a measure of far-reaching consequences. The significance of this memorable step has been fully discussed in its proper place and without anticipating matters it would be enough to say

to the making of its character (p. 2)." He proceeds to show how each successive Guru contributed some essential trait till at last under Guru Gobind Singh the full-fledged nation came into being. But such a view of the matter, postulating for Sikhism a deliberate and more or less conscious development, suffers from over-simplification and can hardly be regarded as historical.

that it gave Sikhism a definite leadership which could not but be of supreme importance in the history of its evolution. The Guruship came to acquire in Sikhism a meaning quite its own and the predominant personality of the Guru supplied a nucleus around which the Sikh *Panth* could gradually arise. Nanak's successors effected a separation between the Sikhs and the *Udāsis*, or the followers of Sri Chand and Sikhism became essentially a religion of householders. It was given something of a 'social character in addition to the religious ties that held it together' and a temporal character was added to the Guruship, faint and indirect though it no doubt was. Moreover, under the wise guidance of the successors of Guru Nanak Sikhism developed that unique spirit of organisation that made it so definite in its practical results. The compilation of the *Granth Sāhib* completed the separation from mythology and tradition and by the time of Guru Arjan Sikhism had come to acquire, primarily through its *Sangats* and *Masands*, a far-flung and, at the same time, a centralised organisation. And the strength of that organisation, together with the high intensity of the religious ideals of Sikhism, gives us the measure of its reaction to Muslim persecution.

That reaction expressed itself in a sudden transition to militarism, but the militarism, in the first instance, was of a purely defensive character. "Arjan had seen clearly that it was impossible to preserve the followers without the aid of arms; and his last injunction to his son and successor, Hargovind, was to sit fully armed on his throne and maintain the largest military force he could muster." The tolerant days of Akbar were no

more and the first bitter experience which the Sikhs had had at the very beginning of the new regime must have convinced them that harder days were ahead. It was mainly as a precaution against future contingencies rather than with any idea of revenge that Guru Hargobind took to arms. His career seems to show that he was careful to avoid, as far as practicable, any conflict with the State and, for a time at least, he was friendly with the Emperor Jahangir and even assisted the Mughal administration in the Punjab. His three battles against the Mughals were all of a defensive character and except in the second case, where we have a very dubious story of his having forcibly rescued two horses from the Emperor's stable at Lahore, none of these was of his own seeking. And when he found the odds all too heavy he retired to the hills and lived in retirement till his death.

It is not difficult to see that in the circumstances, when the Mughal Empire was in the heyday of its glory, a more vigorous line of action was out of the question and the successors of Guru Hargobind were careful to pursue the same policy and avoid quarrels with the Government, though it must be said to their infinite credit that they never allowed the question of safety to get the better of duty and justice. Har Rai, who succeeded Guru Hargobind, continued to live in the hills and though as a precautionary measure he maintained an army about 2,000 strong and his court displayed 'the pomp and magnificence of a semi-independent military chieftain,' he devoted himself almost solely to the peaceful organisation of his followers. But, for once at least, he did not hesitate to

give up his peaceful policy at the call of friendship and the demands of hospitality. He is said to have helped Dara Sukoh when the latter fled to the Punjab after his defeat at the hands of Aurangzib. A period of stress and difficulty immediately ensued and when after the death of the boy-Guru Har Krishan, Tegh Bahadur came to be recognised as the legitimate Guru, he retired further into the hills and settled at Makhowal in the hill state of Kahlur. But owing to the undisguised hostility of the disgruntled Ram Rai, who had never ceased to conspire against the legitimate Gurus since his father nominated his younger brother Har Krishan to the Guruship in preference to him, and of other Soḍhi Khatris, notably Dhir Mal, the elder brother of Guru Har Rai, Tegh Bahadur found his position insecure even at Makhowal and, for a time, went out on travels. On his return to the Punjab, however, he found it impossible to stand by when he found how the proselytising zeal of the Emperor was working havoc among the peaceful Hindu population. His lofty religious ideals compelled him to throw all caution to the winds and he openly espoused the cause of the Brahmans of Kashmir against the Emperor. And for this he was taken to Delhi and publicly executed.

The reaction was tremendous. The Sikhs realised that the Emperor's avowed policy of religious persecution was threatening them with extinction root and branch, and that the limited militarism of the days of Guru Hargobind no longer sufficed. In other directions as well the situation had changed. The Emperor had alienated the Rajputs and his long and arduous quarrel

with the Marathas soon began to undermine his resources. In the midst of these preoccupations of the Mughals a more vigorous policy had much greater chances of success and Sikhism was fortunate in having at this juncture a great leader of vision and courage who could restate it in terms of the changed environment. And the Khalsa or the Sikh military theocracy came into being.

The foregoing review gives us, in bare outline, the main stages in the evolution of the Khalsa and some idea as to the forces, internal and external, that conditioned the development. A very important consideration, however, has been left out. It is, more or less, an admitted fact of history that religious systems undergo modifications as they pass from people to people or from country to country, and it cannot possibly be denied that these variations are primarily to be attributed to racial and environmental causes. Speaking of Buddhism in Japan, Bertrand Russel says, "What the Japanese made of Buddhism reminds one in many ways of what the Teutonic nations made of Christianity. Buddhism and Christianity, originally, were very similar in spirit. They were both religions aiming at the achievement of holiness by renunciation of the world. They both ignored politics and government and wealth, for which they substituted the future life as what was of real importance. They were both religions of peace, teaching gentleness and non-resistance. But both had to undergo great transformations in adapting themselves to the instincts of warlike barbarians. In Japan, a multitude of sects arose, teaching doctrines which differed in many ways from

Mahayana orthodoxy. Buddhism became national and militaristic ; the abbots of great monasteries became important feudal chieftains, whose monks constituted an army which was ready to fight on the slightest provocation. Sieges of monasteries and battles with monks are of constant occurrence in Japanese history." [1] And as Rhys Davids says, in the making of Mahayana Buddhism itself the national character of the Scythians and Kushan Tartars was no negligible factor.[2]

The history of Islam in Persia affords another striking illustration of the phenomenon in question. As Sir William Muir says, " With the rise of Persian influence the roughness of Arab life was softened ; and there opened an era of culture, toleration and scientific research.....To the same source may be attributed the ever-increasing laxity at Court of manners and morality ; and also those transcendental views that now sprang up of the divine Imāmat or spiritual leadership of some member of the house of 'Ali as well as the rapid growth of free thought." [3] The reaction was thus widespread and made itself felt in a variety of ways but it was possibly most striking in the field of religion. Opinions differ as to the nature and extent of Persian influences on such developments as the Mutazila heresy with its doctrine of free will and its rejection of the orthodox view that 'the Koran is uncreate,' or the idealistic and pantheistic mysticism of the Sufis, but at the same time there can be little doubt that there

[1] Bertrand Russel, *The Problem of China*, pp. 91, 92.

[2] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 320.

[3] Sir William Muir, *The Caliphate, Rise, Decline and Fall*, p. 434.

arose many outward Muhammadan heresies that embodied and revived in new forms pre-Muslim and non-Muslim ideas. And most of the ultra-Shi'ite sects "do but reassert the same essential doctrines of Anthropomorphism, Incarnation, Re-incarnation or Return and Metempsychosis, which doctrines appear to be endemic in Persia, and always ready to become epidemic under a suitable stimulus. In our own days they appeared again in the Babi movement, of which, specially in its earlier form, they constituted the essential kernel." [1] Whether in all these or in some at least we can detect 'the reaction of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion imposed upon it by force' is difficult to say and must be left to experts.

This question of 'race and religion,' however, has of late received some attention in psychological and socio-anthropological studies and attempts have been made at a scientific and precise statement of the processes involved. McDougall says, "We may in fact regard each distinctive type of civilisation as a species, evolved largely by selection, and the selective agency, which corresponds to and plays a part analogous to the part of the physical environment of an animal species, is the innate mental constitution of the people." He then goes on to suggest that 'these principles are illustrated, perhaps, most clearly by the spread and modification of religious systems among peoples of different races' and as an example of modification he takes the distribution of the two great divisions of the

[1] Edward G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, pp. 308, 311.

Christian religion in Western Europe. We are told that among all the disputes and uncertainties of the ethnographers about the races of Europe it is possible to distinguish a race of northerly distribution and origin, characterised physically by fair colour of hair and skin and eyes and mentally by great independence of character, individual initiative, and tenacity of will. This is known as the *Homo Europæus* or the Nordic type. The rest of the population of Europe, with certain exceptions in the extreme north and east, are chiefly derived from two stocks, the *Homo Alpinus* which occupies chiefly the central regions, and the *Homo Mediterraneus* in the south. Both are of dark complexion and mentally they differ from the Nordic type in having less independence and initiative and a greater tendency to rely on authority. "Now we find that the distribution of the Protestant variety of Christianity coincides very nearly with the regions in which the fair type predominates ; while in all other regions the Roman Catholic or Greek orthodox churches hold undisputed sway. North and South Germany illustrate the point. And Motley's account of the Netherlands shows how closely the line between Protestant Holland and Roman Catholic Belgium coincides with the line of racial division." McDougall concludes, "It would be absurd to hold that this coincidence is fortuitous. It is clearly due to the assimilation of the form of the religious and ecclesiastical system to the innate tendencies of the people. The northern peoples have given the system a turn compatible with the independence of spirit which is their leading racial quality ; the peoples among whom the

other racial elements predominate have developed and maintained a religion of authority." [1]

But such an 'over-simplification of extremely complex matters' could hardly be acceptable and, as Hankins says, 'this interesting speculation could never advance beyond a hypothetical probability, although it won the adherence of various writers.' In the first place, 'any final solution of the racial history of Europe is as yet impossible, but so far as authentic data exist they warrant the view that all simplistic solutions are delusions; secondly, the so-called 'innate tendencies of a people' is a very complex affair and though the rôle of race as a factor in cultural evolution is certainly to be admitted, 'every thoroughly scientific student of the matter must confess that we have not yet devised a technique of investigation which can isolate the relative weight of the hereditary traits and the social conjuncture in the evolution of a given culture.' [2]

[1] William McDougall, *The Group Mind*, pp. 113-115.

This theory of a close correspondence between race and religion is as old as the eighties of the last century when Carl Penka is said to have formulated it in his works on the origins of the Aryans. It was then advanced in connection with the so-called Aryanism and have since never ceased to find acceptance particularly among the Nordicists. (See Hankins, *The Racial Basis of Civilisation*, pp. 56, 57.)

[2] Hankins, *ibid*, p. 236. See also pp. 233-34. Hankins says, 'these allegations were extensively discussed a generation ago and rejected after careful analysis by painstaking anthropologists and social statisticians.' It is really the question of heredity *vs.* environment of the evolutionists, of Weismannism *vs.* Lamarckism, transferred to the realm of socio-anthropology. For our purposes, however, it does not make much difference if both factors are essential though it may be that 'environment is clearly more important for some things and heredity for others.'

Leaving aside these technical discussions, which are clearly beyond our province, and taking a middle path between the so-called Nordicists on the one hand and the race egalitarianists on the other, we may yet say broadly, that the innate characteristics of a people are a very important factor in the modification of religious systems. We have already seen how certain phases of the history of Buddhism and Christianity, as well as that of Islam, afford striking illustrations of the fact in question and it seems that the history of Vaishnavism provides another example, though, perhaps, of a more limited character. Rajagopala Chariar observes, " In the North, Vaishnavism first affected the lower strata of society and proceeded upwards in its conversions. In Bengal, Sāktaism had taken deep root among the Brahmins..... In Benares and Western India the Brahmins were gradually enlightened Advaitees to whom the cult of devotion had no attractions. Hence the first converts to Vaishnavism were the lower castes. It was, therefore, inevitable that the habits and customs of the converts should react on the religion newly adopted and present phases of it which are alike strange and inexplicable to the earlier adherents of the same faith in the South." [1] Though it may be doubtful as to whether Vaishnavism in the North proceeded, in all cases, upwards in its conversions, it cannot be denied that here it was more popular and widespread and thus amenable to reactions, which were, more or less, absent in the South.

Such instances can be multiplied but we think that enough has been said to show that in this view of the

[1] T. Rajagopala Chariar, *Vaishnavite Reformers of India*, p. 143.

matter we have a line of approach which cannot be entirely ignored. It should also be noted that, besides what we may call the racio-cultural complex, 'climate and terrain have also a marked influence on the form religion takes in its human manifestation.' Wayman Bury gives several very interesting examples of this phenomenon from the history of Christianity in Egypt and Arabia. "The marked cleavage of hermit-like asceticism and gross sensuality which rock-bound deserts and the lush Nile valley wrought in Egyptian Christendom has been described by every writer dealing with that subject, and Arabian Christianity drooped and finally died in the arid pastoral uplands of Jauf and Nejran long before it succumbed in fertile, hard-working Yamen." [1] We are further told that Islam derived its austere and sensual features from the fact that it was a religion of desert and oasis [2] and we may add that the different forms that Vaishnavism assumed in different provinces of India were probably due, partly at least, to geographical factors, but here again it is important to remember that it is impossible to isolate one factor from another, though the broad fact itself is not likely to be disputed.

Coming back to Sikhism we find that, like the Vaishnavism of Northern India Sikhism, too, had its converts primarily from the lower classes. Sir George Campbell remarks, 'it is curious that, intimately connected as the Khatris always have been and still are with the Sikh religion, only 9 per cent. of them should belong to it,' and 'a Khatri when a Sikh, is ordinarily

[1] Wayman Bury, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
[2] *Ibid.*

a Sikh of Nanak, rather than a devotee of Guru Govind.' [1] The truth seems to be that the democratic ideas inculcated by Sikhism could not but make it unpopular with the higher classes who valued their 'pride of birth' above everything else and necessarily Sikhism had to fall almost solely upon the Jats for swelling its ranks. Guru Arjan is said to have converted almost the entire Jat peasantry of the Manjha tract and there can be little doubt that by the time of Guru Hargobind the Jats formed by far the preponderant element in the Sikh community. Like the Vaishnavism of Northern India Sikhism also could not escape a similar reaction and the character of the Jats imperceptably modified the system, as it was bound to do. It seems to us that the correspondence between certain preponderant traits in the Jat character and some of the later developments associated with the Khalsa are remarkably close and that the transformation of Sikhism thus affords a more or less striking example of 'the assimilation of the form of the religious system to the innate tendencies of the people.' But at the same time it is important to remember that we are dealing with a very complex affair and we should take guard against any tendency towards over-simplification lest we perpetrate what has been called 'the fraud of history made easy.'

[1] *Glossary of the Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II, p. 507.

# CHAPTER II

## The Age of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak was born at Talwandi in the district of Lahore in 1469 when Bahlol Lodi was reigning at Delhi, he saw the subversion of the Lodi dynasty at Panipat by Babur in 1526, and he died in 1538 just on the eve of that temporary eclipse of Mughal authority before it was finally re-established on a surer foundation. Guru Nanak thus lived and worked in an age of transition when Northern India was moving towards a new re-adjustment and the old Sultanate of Delhi was making way for a new imperialism of a somewhat more enlightened character. It was necessarily an age of disintegration, the central authority was weak and the centrifugal tendencies were, more or less, paramount. The Lodis, no doubt, had effected a considerable improvement in the situation and the almost total anarchy of the Sayyad days was a thing of the past, but the authority of the Sultan still rested on precarious foundations as the Afghan nobles "were accustomed to regard the prince, as their chief, not as their master —as the representative of the national force, raised to power and maintained in it by their support." [1] The unsatisfactory character of the Sultan's authority became clear when Ibrahim Lodi attempted to define the claims of his prerogative more rigidly and was met

[1] Erskine, *History of India under Babar and Humayun* Vol. I, p. 411.

with open opposition. As Erskine points out, the Lodi possessions, though extensive, had no very strong principle of cohesion. " The monarchy was a congeries of nearly independent principalities, jagirs and provinces, each ruled by a hereditary chief, or by a zeminder or delegate from Delhi ; and the inhabitants looked more to their immediate governors, who had absolute power in the province, and in whose hands, consequently, lay their happiness and misery, than to a distant and little known sovereign."

This unsatisfactory state of affairs was due primarily to the " appalling atrocities " of Timur's invasion. Since the death of Firoz Tughlak the Sultanate of Delhi had been gradually decaying in prestige and power. The provinces were falling off one after another and at the capital the later Tughlaks, who were, without exception, weak, incompetent and inexperienced, found themselves helpless amidst the machinations of rival factions and unscrupulous chiefs. The weakness of the Government and the proverbial opulence of Hindusthan must have been enough to fire the cupidity of Timur, who was a man of insatiable ambition and had great confidence in his own tested strength, but the wanton violence of his horrible raid can never be fully realised if we forget that neither conquest nor plunder was the principal object of his expedition.[2] The destruction of the infidels, their idols and temples was Timur's primary aim and his fanatical policy was carried out with a ruthlessness

[1] Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

[2] Ishwari Prasad, *Mediaeval India*, p. 291.

which has led some to characterise him as a monster in human form.[1]

After the departure of Timur "all semblance of Government was destroyed in Upper India" and the extent to which the Punjab suffered during the prevailing anarchy may be gauged from the fact that when Mubarak Shah, the second Sayyad monarch, entered Lahore in 1421 he found the city in ruins, "in which no living thing except the owl of ill omen had its abode."[2] This Sayyad monarch appears to have been a man of some ability but the circumstances were against him and he failed totally to stem the tide of disruption. Besides the Mewatis, who held the tract between Delhi and Agra, and the Hindu Zemindars of Kateher and the Doab, the Turkbachas of Sarhind kept up a continuous opposition and the situation in the Punjab was made hopeless by the constant intrigues of rival governors, the machinations and adventures of Jasrath Khokar and the raids of Shaik Ali of Kabul. This Jasrath Khokar, whom Yahya bin Ahmed calls "an impudent rustic,"[3] had his headquarters in the hills at Tekhar and as soon as the news of the death of Khizir Khan reached the Punjab, he crossed the Beas and the Sutlej, plundered the country from the town of Ludhiana to Rupar and marched towards Jalandhar. "Intoxicated with

[1] Dr. Sachau calls him a monster and Prof. Dowson agrees. Elliott, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. IV, p. 560.

[2] Elliott, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 56. This is no doubt an exaggeration but the extent of the exaggeration gives some measure of the truth.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 54.

victory and elated with the strength of his forces, he began to have visions about Delhi." His designs failed in the end but his intrigues and adventures made the Punjab a hotbed of endless strife. Again and again he descended from his hill retreat, now attacking Jalandhar and now investing Lahore, time and again harrying the open country and carrying the peaceful inhabitants away as prisoners, and he continued in this manner till Bahlol Lodi ascended the throne.

On the other hand, " Shaik Ali, the lieutenant of the prince, the son of Sar 'atmash " [1] invaded the province and for some time his raid became almost an annual affair. The local authorities were so very impotent that Malik Sikandar, the Governor of Lahore, gave Shaik Ali two thousand rupees annually to keep him off. The continued rebellion of Pulad, the Turkbacha leader of Sarhind, who invited Shaik Ali more than once to his assistance, strengthened the hands of the invader and he seems to have met with little effective opposition in his deliberate game of harrying and plundering. His methods were so ruthless that even the Muhammadan historian of the period is constrained to call him an infidel. At Tulamba " he gave his accursed followers permission to take possession of the fort. Next day, all the Mussalmans became the prisoners of the unclean ruthless infidels. Although many good men of the place were *imams*, Saiyids and Kazis, no respect for the

[1] Elliott, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Firishta says that he was a Mughal chieftain in the service of Sharokh Mirza, Governor of Kabul; Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India*, Vol. I (R. Cambray, 1908), p. 517.

Mussalman religion, no fear of God, could restrain that accursed wretch, devoid alike of feeling and shame. Women, youths and little children were all dragged to his house." [1] On another occasion at Lahore " the accursed Shaik Ali made all the Mussalmans of the city, both men and women, prisoners. This wretched graceless fellow had no better object or occupation than to lay waste the seats of Islam and to make Mussalmans captive." [2] If such had been the fate of the Mussalmans, what the Hindus suffered at his hands can easily be guessed. Firishta says that on one occasion, after having received two lakhs of tunkas from Pulad, the Turkbacha leader, for the service he rendered in compelling the royal army to abandon the siege of Sarhind, Shaik Ali recrossed the Sutlej and realised by plunder 'one hundred-fold beyond the value of what he had received from Pulad.' He continued his depredations in the districts of Lahore and Depalpur 'insomuch that 40,000 Hindus were computed to have been massacred, besides a great number carried away prisoners.' Even making due allowance for possible exaggeration it is not difficult to realise the extreme wretchedness of the plight in which the inhabitants of the Punjab found themselves during the so-called Sayyad regime.

With the assassination of Mubarak Shah the little vigour that still characterised the Sultanate of Delhi disappeared and under his successor 'the business of the state day by day fell into greater confusion, and affairs came to such a pass that there were *amirs* at

[1] *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 73.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 76.

twenty *kos* from Delhi who shook off their allegiance, and made pretensions to independence.' In 1441 the Sultan had conferred the country of Depalpur and Lahore on Bahlol Khan and sent him against Jasrath Khokar, ' who made peace with him and flattered him with hopes of the throne of Delhi.' Bahlol now virtually made himself independent of Delhi and calling together the Afghans from all directions organised a strong party. His first attempt failed but with the accession of Alauddin the Sayyad power was weakened still further and finally in 1451 Bahlol Khan Lodi seized Delhi and declared himself Sultan.

The situation immediately improved. Bahlol succeeded in subduing the eastern kingdom of Jaunpur, which had always been a thorn on the side of the Sayyads and " he may be said to have recovered a certain amount of control extending from the foot of the mountains to Benares and as far south as the borders of Bundelkhand." [1] But as we have said before, the Lodis could only stem but not turn the tide of disruption. Under Bahlol and his successors the Afghans of the Lodi, Fermuli and Lohana tribes naturally held the principal jagirs and chief offices of trust, ' which, from the habitual modes of thinking of their race, they considered as their own of right, and purchased by their swords, rather than as due to any bounty or liberality on the part of the sovereign.' Bahlol Khan Lodi was too clever a man not to realise the situation and he was tactful and sagacious enough to adopt a policy that kept the Afghan nobles friendly and, more or less, attached to himself. He is said to have

[1] Vincent Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 258.

maintained a brotherly intercourse with all chiefs and soldiers. " In his social meetings he never sat on a throne and would not allow his nobles to stand ; and even during public audiences he did not occupy the throne, but seated himself on a carpet."[1] This ingenious policy of disengaging the suspicion and jealousy of the Afghan nobles was eminently successful. It is remarkable that inspite of the traditional impatience of the Afghans of a controlling authority and Bahlol Khan's own preoccupation with the King of Jaunpur for a number of years, the Afghan nobles gave him very little trouble save some minor disturbances, here and there.

Sikandar Lodi, the son and successor of Bahlol, began well and he even extended his kingdom by annexing Behar, the last of the Shurki possessions, in the east, and Dholpur, Chanderi and Gwalior in the west. But he failed to manage the Afghan nobles and governors as successfully as his father had done. " The Afghan nobles chafed and fidgetted under the restraints that had to be imposed upon them in the interests of good government, and it was with great difficulty that Sikandar was able to hold in check their turbulent and factious spirit." This was clearly illustrated in the attempted rebellion of several Afghan chiefs, who wanted to place Prince Futeh Khan, the Sultan's brother, on the throne when Sikandar attempted to interfere too closely with them. The attempt fizzled out but ' the tendency to revolt was so common that the Sultan found it impossible to secure the

[1] *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 436-37.

permanent loyalty of his Muslim vassals, to say nothing of the Hindu chiefs ' and the last years of Sikandar were spent in suppressing ' Rajput revolts and the infructuous attempts at independence made by his own governors.'

The precarious foundation on which the Lodi kingdom rested is thus evident. But we have not seen the whole of it yet. Sikandar Lodi completely alienated the sympathies of the Hindus, who formed by far the majority of his subjects, by his fierce religious persecution. Of Sikandar's love of justice the Muhammadan historians are full of unqualified praise. " Sikandar never omitted to devote a certain time to hear complaints in public, and he has been frequently known to sit at business the whole day long, even after his appointed time for meals and rest." [1] The author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* gives him a very high character. " Sultan Sikandar was a most illustrious monarch and of a benevolent disposition ; he was famous for his liberality, honour and politeness ; he had no affection for pomp and ceremonies and cared not for processions and magnificent dresses. No one who was a profligate and a bad character had access to him ; he always associated with men of religion and the virtuous, and was both inwardly pious and outwardly handsome ; he did not give way to his desires, and was exceedingly God-fearing and benevolent to the people. He was very just and courageous, his equity beheld the weak and the strong with the same eye, and he was constantly employed in balancing evidence, deciding suits,

[1] Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 585, 586.

arranging the affairs of the Empire, and trying to render his subjects happy ; he personally assisted the wretched." [1] But Sikandar's benevolence and sense of justice had very serious limitations. They stopped short with a section of his subjects, his own co-religionists. Under him " the State once more assumed a theocratic character and officially imposed Islam upon the Hindus," so that inspite of what the Muhammadan writers say about Sikandar's justice, we need not be surprised at Guru Nanak's complaint that in his age " Justice hath taken wings and fled."[2] The Guru in one place directly refers to the practice of bribery that tainted the administration. We are told :

" Compassion is not exercised by merely beholding a suitor,
There is no one who receiveth or giveth not bribes,
The king dispenseth justice when his palm is filled." [3]

And Bhai Gurdas also speaks of the almost universal vice of bribe-taking of which very few of the Kazis were free.[4] But apart from these considerations, the fierce bigotry of Sikandar Lodi makes all talk of his sense of justice a cruel mockery.

Even before his accession, Prince Nizam Khan, as Sikandar was then called, had given unmistakable proof of his blind intolerance. It is related by the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* that on one occasion " when a crowd of Hindus had assembled in immense numbers at Kurkhet, he wished to go to Thanesor for

1 Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 445.
2 Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, p. 170.
3 *Ibid*, p. 5
4 Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 30.

the purpose of putting them all to death." Even when Miah Abdulla, the Maliku-l Ulma, assured the prince that it would be very improper to destroy an ancient idol temple and that he ought not to forbid the accustomed rite of performing ablutions in the tank, as the custom was very ancient and had been left unmolested by the previous Muhammadan sovereigns, it was with difficulty that the Prince could be dissuaded from his intended project. He placed his hand on his dagger and exclaimed, "You side with the infidels. I will first put an end to you, and then massacre the infidels at Kurkhet." Unperturbed the Mian replied that he had given an answer in conformity with the precepts of the Prophet and if the Prince had no reverence for them, it was useless to ask questions like these. At last the Prince's wrath was appeased and the project was given up.[1] It can easily be seen what the Hindus might expect when such a prince wielded the sceptre of the realm and many illustrations are available to prove that throughout his reign one of the most cherished aims of Sikandar Lodi was the extirpation of Hinduism.

Firishta says that "Sikandar was firmly attached to the Muhammadan religion, and made a point of destroying all Hindu temples,"[2] and we read in the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* that "he was so zealous a Mussalman that he utterly destroyed diverse places of worship of the infidels, and left not a vestige remaining of them... Every city thus conformed as he desired to the customs

[1] *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 439, 440 ; see also Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 587.

[2] Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 586.

of Islam." [1] In 1504 Sikandar captured Mundril. The Hindu temples in the place were immediately destroyed and mosques were built in their stead.[2] In 1506 Hanumantgarh was captured, the Rajput garrison was put to the sword and the Hindu temples shared the same fate as at Mundril.[3] In the same year Sikandar marched against Nurwar, a strong fort in the district of Malwa, then in possession of the Hindus. After the capitulation of the garrison the Sultan remained at the place for six months, 'breaking down temples and building mosques. He also established a college there, and placed therein many holy and learned men.' [4] But the greatest havoc that was wrought by the Sultan's fanaticism was in the ancient Hindu city of Mathura. The celebrated temples of Mathura were all destroyed and the Hindu places of worship were turned into caravanserais and colleges. Mosques and bazars were built opposite the bathing-stairs leading to the river and the Sultan ordered that no Hindu should be allowed to bathe there. "Their stone images were given to the butchers to serve them as meat-weights, and all the Hindus in Mathura were strictly prohibited from shaving their heads and beards, and performing their ablutions.....and no Hindu, if he wished to have his head or beard shaved, could get a barber to do it." [5]

But even these atrocities seem mild and moderate in comparison with the execution of the Brahman

1 Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 447.

2 Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 578.

3 *Ibid*, p. 580.

4 *Ibid*, p. 581.

5 *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 447. See also Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 586.

Budhan. The sole offence of the Brahman was that he had declared in the presence of some Muhammadans that 'the religions of both the Moslems and Hindus, if acted on with sincerity, were equally acceptable to God.' Two of the local Kazis 'gave fatwas which did not coincide respecting the merits of the case' and consequently the matter was referred to the Sultan who caused all the wise men of note to assemble. The Brahman and the two Kazis were also brought in and after some disputation the Ulama determined that the Brahman should either embrace Islam or suffer execution. He refused to apostatise and was consequently put to death.[1] If this was justice, Guru Nanak might very well say that 'Justice hath taken wings and fled.' After this incident it is needless to refer to the case of Ahmed Khan, the Governor of Lucknow. It is said that this man had become a convert to the Hindu doctrines and that as soon as the Sultan heard of this he ordered that Ahmed Khan should immediately be relieved of his government and sent a prisoner to court.[2]

[1] Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 464, 465; Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 576, 577. The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* says that the name of the Brahman was Laudhan, who dwelt in the village of Kaner. Kazi Piyara and Shaikh Badr, who resided at Lakhnauti, gave fatwas. Azam Humayun, the governor of the district, sent them to the Sultan's court. Firishta says that the name of the Brahman was Budhan and he was an inhabitant of Kataen, near Lucknow. See also, Ishwari Prasad, *Mediaeval India*, p. 482.

[2] Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 582. There may be something in the suggestion that the Brahman Budhan belonged to the school of Kabir and in that case his incident might very well be the foundation of the story of Sikandar's meeting with Kabir, which involves an obvious anachronism. The case of the Lucknow Governor may also perhaps be attributed to the same influence.

The Hindus had, therefore, no cause for gratification at the restoration of order by the Lodi sovereigns. The 'peace and security' which they now, to some extent, enjoyed was more than counterbalanced by the fierce religious persecution to which they were subjected. But, as we have seen, the sovereignty of the Lodis was based on very weak foundations and on Ibrahim's accession the situation immediately became worse. Ibrahim lacked that tact which had enabled his father and grandfather to keep the greedy and factious Afghan nobles, more or less, in check. The first two Lodis were content to enjoy the reality of power without caring too much to limit its claim to definition but Ibrahim was a man of a different mould. "At a very early period, contrary to the custom of his father and grandfather, he made no distinction among his officers, whether of his own tribe or otherwise, and said publicly, that kings should have no relations nor clansmen, but that all should be considered as subjects and servants of the State; and the Afghan chiefs, who had hitherto been allowed to sit in the presence, were constrained to stand in front of the throne, with their hands crossed before them."[1] The result was soon perceptible in the conspiracy of a group of Afghan nobles to set up Prince Jalal Khan, a brother of Ibrahim, in independent possession of Jaunpur. The conspiracy was crushed but the Afghan nobles were alienated for ever, and the rest of Ibrahim's reign was, more or less, occupied in subduing successive rebellions in different parts of his kingdom. The Sultan soon made himself

[1] Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

an object of almost universal distrust and the climax was reached when Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of Lahore, invited Babur to invade Hindusthan and place himself on the throne of Delhi.

Even before this Babur had led several expeditions into the Punjab. Babur says in his *Memoirs* that ever since he came to Kabul it had been his intention to move on Hindusthan but a variety of reasons had hitherto prevented him from carrying out his plan.[1] However, in 1519 he found his hands sufficiently free to make a sudden move towards Bhira, 'the borderland of Hindusthan.' The tract was then in the possession of Ali Khan, the son of Daulat Khan Lodi. Babur's object seems to have been to take possession of the country, if possible by peaceful means, and an order was accordingly issued to his soldiers to the following effect:—"Do no hurt or harm to the flocks and herds of these people, nor even to their cotton ends and broken needles."[2] A sum of 400,000 *shahrukhis* was agreed on as the price of peace and collectors were appointed to realise the amount. When the news was brought to Babur that "the soldiery were behaving without sense and were laying hands on Bhira people, persons were sent who caused some of those senseless people to meet their death-doom, of others slit the noses and so led them round the camp."[3] On this occasion Babur also sent an envoy to the Afghan Court 'asking for the countries which from of old had

[1] *Memoirs of Babur*, Beveridge's Translation, sec. II, p. 377.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 380.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 383, 400,000 *shahrukhis*, nearly 20,000 sterling. See Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 238, f. n. 2.

depended on the Turk.' But the envoy was detained by Daulat Khan at Lahore and returned unsuccessful. Nor did Babur remain long in Hindusthan. After having subdued a Kahar chief he made some arrangements for holding Bhira and the adjoining districts and then retraced his steps to Kabul.

But he returned soon afterwards. His second expedition seems to have been rather unimportant and his activities on this occasion were, more or less, confined in the frontier tract. In his third expedition, however, Babur advanced far into the heart of the Punjab and his objective seems to have been Lahore. 'He made a demonstration in force to strengthen his position in Bhira,' and then marched right up to Sialkot. The inhabitants submitted without resistance but not so the people of Sayyidpur.[1] But the attempted defence proved abortive. The garrison was put to the sword and many of the inhabitants appeared to have been carried into captivity. A very interesting sidelight is thrown on this incident by the Sikh *Janam-sākhīs* and some hymns of Guru Nanak incorporated in the *Granth Sāhib*. At the time of the capture of Sayyidpur by Babur, Guru Nanak and his servant Mardana appear to have been near about the scene of occurrence and from the Guru's hymns we get some additional details about the incident. It is a significant fact that as Babur's ultimate object was dominion and not merely plunder, he conducted his Indian campaigns with as much restraint as possible. We have already seen how he punished his soldiers for

1 The present city of Eminabad in the Gujranwala district. See Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 48.

having taken undue liberty with the Bhira people. It is further stated that when, during his fourth invasion, on Daulat Khan Lodi's surrender at Mulwat, the gates of the fort were opened and the soldiers rushed in without orders, Babur even used violence to prevent outrage. "On the spur of the moment he killed by accident an officer of rank, of his son Humayun's retinue, with an arrow; and though he lamented the circumstance, it is certain his presence alone saved the honour of Daulat Khan's family." [1] In his third expedition Babur seems to have anticipated an easy march to Lahore and the unexpected resistance of the people of Sayyidpur must have upset his balance. The inhabitants, in this case, were given no quarter. Guru Nanak says, "it was death disguised as a Mughal who made war on us." There appears to have been a general massacre of the people and 'houses, mansions and palaces were burnt.' Even the women were not spared. Says the Guru,

> "The wealth and beauty which afforded them pleasure have now become their bane,
> The order was given to the soldiers to take and dishonour them."

And again,

> "There were the wives of Hindus, of Turks, of Bhattis, and of Rajputs.
> The robes of some were torn from head to foot; the dwellings of others were their places of cremation."

[1] Briggs, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 42.

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

> " When there was slaughter and lamentation didst not Thou, O God, feel pain ?
> Creator, Thou belongest to all.
> If a tyrant slay a tyrant, one is not angry;
> But if a ravening lion fall on a herd, its master should show his manliness."

And the Guru also saw clearly that by neglecting to take proper steps for the defence of his subjects against the onslaughts of Babur, the Lodi sovereign of Delhi was preparing the way for his own ultimate ruin. " The dogs of Lodi have spoiled the priceless inheritance, when they are dead no one will regard them." [1] And very soon circumstances took such a turn that the Guru's prognostication was literally fulfilled.

By this time Ibrahim had made himself completely odious to the majority of his nobles and soldiers. Daulat Khan Lodi was summoned to Delhi but he suspected treachery and accordingly sent his son Dilawar instead. This angered Ibrahim, Dilawar was badly received and ' was shown a ghastly exihibition of disobedient commanders.' [2] Dilawar fled to Lahore and reported

1 For the Guru's comments on the incident at Sayyidpur, see the two hymns in *Āsā*, Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 115, 119.

2 A number of these had been kept hanged in a room and Dilawar was shown their skeletons. Elliot, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 23.

matters to his father. Daulat Khan became now convinced that no further reliance could be placed on Ibrahim and sent Dilawar Khan to Babur. Alauddin Alam Khan Lodi, the uncle of Ibrahim, also joined in the invitation and Babur marched for the fourth time into Hindusthan. He easily came up to within 10 miles of Lahore when he encountered Bihar Khan Lodi, who had been sent by Ibrahim against Daulat Khan. The latter had fled on the approach of Bihar Khan, who now came face to face with Babur. Bihar Khan was put to flight and 'Babur's troops followed his fugitive men into Lahore, plundered the town and burned some of the bazars.' Depalpur was next 'stormed, plundered and put to the sword,' but Babur's projected advance on Sarhind had to be given up because of the defection of Daulat Khan Lodi. He was dissatisfied because Babur had not restored him to his old possession of Lahore. He cleverly kept his designs concealed but his son Dilawar betrayed him and Babur put him under arrest. He was, however, soon released and placed in charge of Sultanpur but he fled to the hills and there awaited his chance. This made Babur's position difficult and compelled him to abandon his intended advance. He made arrangements for the government of the Punjab and retired to Kabul.

On Babur's retirement Daulat Khan immediately came down from the hills, 'seized his son Dilawar, took Sultanpur, gathered a large force and defeated Alam Khan at Depalpore.' Next he won over a part and broke up the rest of the army that Ibrahim had sent for the reconquest of the Punjab. Upon this Alam Khan fled straight to Kabul and Babur was

easily persuaded to undertake his fifth and last invasion of Hindusthan. Before the climax was reached Daulat Khan died and Babur had an easy passage till he reached the field of Panipat where the final battle was fought. Ibrahim was defeated and slain, Babur entered Delhi in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor of Hindusthan. But the Mughals had yet to suffer another eclipse and Upper India had still to wait more than two decades before it got the blessings of a settled and efficient administration.

Such, in outline, was the political history of the age of Guru Nanak. He says, 'the Kal Age is a knife, kings are butchers,'[1] and it seems that his statement is hardly exaggerated. The Guru lived in an age of almost constant strife and what little the Lodis gave of order and security was, as we have seen, more than counterbalanced by Sikandar's inhuman religious persecution. If the situation is reviewed more closely the details would appear sickening. Loyalty to a cause, even to a family or person, was rarely to be found and everybody seemed to work for his own individual aggrandisement. Shameless opportunism and unscrupulous greed seem to have been the order of the day and the light-hearted manner in which pledges were given only to be broken at the earliest opportunity[2] bespeaks a moral decadence which was keeping pace only too well with the political disruption from which the country had been suffering. Guru Nanak's castigation of his contemporaries is thorough

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 170.

2 A typical illustration of this is found in Bahlol Lodi's dealings with the Shurki sovereign.

and unqualified. "Men nowadays are men only in shape and name: in action they are dogs," [1] says he.

The moral degradation in which the people were steeped becomes more clear when we attempt to get into closer grips with their religious and social life. It has been said that 'rules which human society devises for its protection and conservation soon become fetters which hamper its development and ensure its degeneration,' and nowhere, perhaps, is this more true than in the field of religion. Formalities and observances are always the means to an end. In almost all cases they are imposed with a view to the creation of a frame of mind favourable to the reception of high spiritual truths. But, as almost always happens, the object behind them is gradually forgotten and they become ends in themselves. The mind is securely bound within the limits of a close circle and free thinking disappears. This has happened again and again in the history of Hinduism but fortunately at each crisis, it had enough vitality left to produce men who again put the house in order by emphasising the relative value of things in matters religious. That in Guru Nanak's days such a crisis had come is true beyond any possibility of doubt. Even a casual reader of the Guru's hymns can see that in his days form had totally supplanted spirit.

On the other hand, the advent of Islam had shaken the Hindu society to its very foundations. It is well known how the Muhammadan conquerors raised pyramids of human heads as they went on in their victorious career from one place to another and how,

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 75, 76.

on the conquest of a new city, the temples therein were turned into mosques and the Hindu inhabitants, in many instances, indiscriminately put to the sword. " Fight for the cause of God " is a Koranic injunction, and it has been said that " Islamic theology tells the true believer that his highest duty is to make exertion in the path of God by waging war against infidel lands till they become a part of the realm of Islam and their populations are converted into true believers." [1] What the original teachings of the Koran, in this respect, were, it is not for us to decide.[2] The believers are often asked to fight against the infidels, but we read in the Koran itself that infidels were not to be attacked unless they had themselves been the aggressors.[3] As regards forcible conversion, it is to be noticed that though some passages of the Koran seem to support it, yet ' Let there be no compulsion in religion ' [4] is also a Koranic injunction, and we

[1] Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 249.

[2] " Fight for the cause of God; and know that God is He who heareth, knoweth."—*Koran* (Rodwell's translation), II, 245.

" Make war upon such of those to whom the scriptures have been given as believe not in God, or in the last day, and who forbid not that which God and his apostle have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of truth until they pay tribute out of hand, and they be humbled."—*Koran*, IX, 29.

"And when the sacred months are passed, kill those who join other gods with god wherever ye shall find them; and besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush."—*Koran*, IX, 5.

[3] " And fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you: but commit not the injustice of attacking them first; God loveth not such injustice."—*Koran*, II, 186.

[4] *Koran*, II, 257.

know that " the Arab conquerors notably in Sind, followed the wise and profitable policy of leaving the shrines and religious practices of the non-Moslem population practically undisturbed." [1] But with the advent of the Turkish hordes of Central Asia the more intolerant and iconoclastic tendencies became paramount and 'the destruction of temples and the slaughter of Hindus sanctified every war of aggression.' Even when the invaders settled in the country and established a government of their own, this spirit of intolerance remained the same and humiliations of all sorts were imposed upon the Hindus in order 'to hasten the day of their enlightenment.' The poll-tax, the pilgrim tax, public degradation in dress and demeanour, suppression of religious fairs and processions, prohibition of the building of new temples and the repairing of old ones, systematic repression of the Hindu leaders of society and religion, besides 'rewards in the form of money and public employment offered to apostates from Hinduism' were some of the means adopted by the Government to exterminate the Hindu people.[2] It is clear that in a regime like this the Hindus had every reason to consider life in a very serious aspect. The Punjab, moreover, was particularly unfortunate in this respect. If the Muslim Government was firmly established anywhere, it was in the Punjab and 'the wave of proselytism had there spread with an overwhelming force.' It should also be noted that 'equality for all,' that Islam preached, could not but have a great influence on the Hindu

[1] Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 253.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 254.

mind, specially among the lower classes, to whom conversion seemed to offer a panacea for all their grievances.

Generally at such crises two different parties arise who seem to work for the same purpose, *viz.*, self-preservation, but with methods that are entirely different. The conservative become more conservative, more particular about every detail of social life and attempt to save themselves and society by making it scrupulously exclusive and tabooing every little lapse as unpardonable heterodoxy. Intolerant, uncompromising and necessarily irrational in spirit, excommunication remains the only weapon of such a class, and society, the preservation of which is the motto of the party, becomes more stagnant and sterile through the loss of all those elements that make for reform and progress. The other party is the party of reform who wants to move in conformity with the demands of the Time spirit and give up all those stale institutions that cannot withstand the onrush of new ideas. At the time of which we have been speaking, this latter party had not as yet made its appearance in the Punjab. It is undoubtedly true that Nanak did not come alone but that he was the member of a family, the great family of religious teachers who arose in the 15th and 16th centuries. India, at that time, became the scene of a great religious revival, popular in its methods and simple in its characteristics. But we do not know anything definite about the precursors of Nanak in the Punjab, and though it has been suggested that the echo of Kabir's teachings had reached even the land of the Five Rivers and that for many of his ideas Nanak

was indebted to that great teacher, it is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that at the time of Nanak's advent the party of uncompromising conservatives still held the sway and society suffered from all the evils that are generally associated with the activities of such a party. Their only care was the preservation of the social system and forgetting totally that the system existed for the man and not the man for the system, they 'fortified the walls of caste and took shelter behind them.'

But even within these narrow limits that they thus set to themselves, they were neither consistent nor sincere. The circumstances of the time, the fact that the Muhammadans were the ruling race, made such a policy of isolation impracticable and the majority, it seems, followed more or less a creed of convenience. Guru Nanak had no mercy for such hypocrites. Says the Guru,

"You tax the cow and the Brahmin; you cannot be saved by the cow-dung.

You wear a loin-cloth, sacrificial mark, and a rosary; yet you earn your living from those whom you call *Malechhas*.

You perform the Hindu worship in private; yet, O my brothers, you read the books of Muhammadans and adopt their manners.

Those who devour men yet read the *Nimaz*;

Those who ply the dagger have sacred strings on their necks,

Even Brahmins, in such people's houses, sound their conches—

And enjoy their food as much as they themselves.

They trade in lies with the capital of falsehood, and earn their food by speaking lies.

With all their sacred marks on the forehead and their loin-cloths tucked in behind,

They are butchers of the world, with daggers in their hands.

They wear blue clothes in order to be acceptable to the ruling class,

They earn their living from those whom they call *Malechhas*; yet they worship the Puranas.

They eat meat of a goat killed in the Muhammadan fashion, with the unutterable words pronounced on it.

Yet they allow no access to their cooking squares.

Having smeared a place for cooking purposes they draw a line around it ;

And sitting within, false as they are,

They say, 'Touch it not! O touch it not!

Or this food of ours will be polluted.'

But their bodies are already defiled by their foul deeds,

And their hearts are false even while they rinse their mouths." [1]

This characteristic hymn brings us at once to the heart of the matter. Blind conventionalism was leading to hypocrisy and mammon-worship.

"There is a dearth of truth ; falsehood prevaileth ; the blackness of this age maketh men demons," [2] says the Guru. "The holy places in the world have fallen ; there is a tax on the shrines of the Gods ; the turn of the Shaiks hath come." [3] As Bhai Gurdas

1 Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, pp. 102-04.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 232.

3 *Ibid*, pp. 84, 117.

says, "Everybody thought he possessed knowledge but none knew in what knowledge or ignorance consisted. Men did what pleased themselves. Alchemy and thaumaturgy were professed, incantations and spells practised, and men indulged in strife, wealth and mutual jealousies."[1] This belief in miracles and incantations seems to have been, more or less, universal and it appears that it played its part even in high matters of state. The Guru tells us that when Babur invaded Sayyidpur, 'millions of priests tried by their miraculous power to restrain the emperor when they heard of his approach,' but

> "He burned houses, mansions and palaces; he cut princes to pieces and had them rolled in the dust.
> No Mughal hath become blind; no priest hath wrought a miracle."[2]

We come across an even more clear instance of the belief in incantations and their use in important political deals in connection with the attempted revolt of Jalal Khan, the younger brother of Ibrahim Lodi. It is said that when Ibrahim came to know of his brother's disaffection, he invited him to an immediate personal conference but Jalal Khan declined the invitation as he suspected treachery. Thereupon a deputation of three of the most eminent nobles of the court of Agra was sent to the Prince to persuade him to come and we are told that the deputation, 'among other expedients, resorted to the use of magical charms, in the efficacy of which they had a faith common in

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 115.

that age.' [1] It is no doubt true that this faith in magical charms and incantations may be found in a section of the people in all ages but that the evil was more universal and rather alarmingly real during the days of Guru Nanak and his successors is proved by the numerous instances in the Sikh records as to how the Gurus resolutely pitted themselves against it. It seems that in every walk of life men had gone astray. Guru Nanak says,

> "Greed and sin are ruler and village accountant; falsehood is master of the mint.
>
> Lust, his minister, summoneth and examineth men, and sitteth in judgment on them.
>
> The subjects are blind and without divine knowledge, and satisfy the judge's greed with bribes.
>
> Priests dance, play musical instruments, disguise, and decorate themselves;
>
> They shout aloud, sing of battles, and heroes' praises.
>
> Fools call themselves pandits and with tricks and cavilling love to amass wealth.
>
> Pretended religious men spoil their religious acts, and yet want the door of salvation;
>
> They call themselves continent, and leave their houses and homes, yet they know not the way.
>
> Every one is perfect to himself: no one admitteth himself wanting." [2]

This is, no doubt, the language of reaction and might very well be somewhat overdrawn and the same may also perhaps be said of the remarks of Bhai Gurdas

[1] Erskine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 408.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 232, 238.

who possibly depicts the background in a rather lurid light in order to give the coming of the Guru an advantageous setting. But even if we make adequate allowance for this possible exaggeration, the fact remains that the age of Guru Nanak was an age of ignorance and an age of strife. Bhai Gurdas says that forgetting that Truth was one, the *Sannyāsīs* of various denominations, *Jogīs*, *Jangams*, *Digambars* and the like, the representatives of the six different schools of philosophy, the four castes with the four *āśramas*, the Brahmans with their Purans and Veds which they did not understand, all followed their own separate paths, belief in incantations and thaumaturgy became widespread and ignorance reigned triumphant.[1]

The Muslims occupied themselves in pulling down temples and building mosques in their stead. They had their fast, their *Id* and their *Nimaz* but the empty formalities without devotion had become sources of bondage rather than of deliverance. *Pirs*, *Paigambars*, *Aulias* and others, each followed his own path but all ended in egotism and pride. Cows were slaughtered. People came to be grouped as the infidels, the faithless, the Armenians, the Rumis and the like, and there was eternal strife. The world was full of sin.[2]

The Hindus had their four castes, the Muhammadans their four *mazhabs*. The Hindus had their Ganges and Benares, the Muhammadans their Mecca and Kaaba ; the Hindus their frontal marks, the Muhammadans their *sunnat*. Although Ram and

1 Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 19.
2. *Ibid*, *Wār*, I, 20.

Rahim were one and the same, people pursued different paths. Forgetting the Veds, the people were misled by mammon and became enmeshed in worldly desires. Truth stood apart while the Brahman and the Maulana quarrelled.

And the extreme disgust that all true and sincere men must have felt at the ignorance and perversity of their contemporaries is thus pointedly expressed by Guru Nanak:

> "When I remain silent, they say I have no understanding in my heart;
> When I speak, they say I chatter too much;
> When I sit, they say I have spread my pallet to stay;
> When I go away, they say I have thrown dust on my head;
> When I bow down, they say I perform my devotions through fear.
> I can do nothing by which I may spend my time in peace." [2]

The *Granth Sāhib* affords us sufficient materials to develop the theme to an inordinate length but enough has already been said to show that at the time of Guru Nanak's advent, religion there was none. The spirit of both Hinduism and Islam was hidden beneath a mass of formalities and extraneous observances. Tyranny reigned supreme, the tyranny of might, the tyranny of forms and the tyranny of names. The unity of the Godhead was lost in the worship of

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 21.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 80.

numerous *avatārs* and divinities, pirs and *dargāhs*; pilgrimages and empty ritualistic practices had taken the place of the real devotion of the heart; blind faith and superstition had driven truth away. The Hindus and the Muhammadans quarrelled, the Brahman and the Mulla wrangled, social and political inequalities reigned rampant and there was strife, eternal strife, everywhere. All aspects of life, social, religious and political, presented the same spectacle, and well might Nanak cry out in despair, "how shall deliverance be obtained?"

## CHAPTER III

### The Life of Guru Nanak

It is almost a universal experience that the life-stories of religious teachers gradually become so inextricably mixed up with legends and myths that the real facts become obscured almost beyond recovery. Deification and sectarian enthusiasm soon bring about such a transformation that the human element recedes more and more to the background and the picture that emerges can hardly satisfy anybody outside the circle of the teacher's own devoted and blind admirers. The result has been that of the many striking personalities who have left their mark indelibly on Indian history we know very little worth the name of history or biography. Of course the main thing that mattered about them, *viz.*, their peculiar approach and their ideal of life, survived through their writings or those of their disciples but our understanding of them and their messages would certainly have been more complete if we stood on surer grounds as regards the details of their lives. But here, in almost every instance, the materials that we possess are scanty when reliable and unreliable when abundant, and any critical account on the basis of these is almost beyond possibility.

Even a cursory review of the materials that we possess for the reconstruction of a biography of Guru Nanak would, we hope, make the point absolutely clear. The oldest of these is most probably the *Janamsākhī*

of Sewa Das, which, according to Macauliffe, was completed in 1588.[1] The old *Janamsākhī* that Dr. Trumpp discovered in the India Office Library and which appears to be a copy of Sewa Das's work is placed by him, 'according to all external and internal marks,' in the latter part of the time of Guru Arjan or in the beginning of Hargobind's pontificate. Trumpp adds that 'we are enabled by the discovery of this *Janamsākhī* to distinguish the older tradition regarding Nanak from the later one, and to fix, with some degree of verisimility the real facts of his life.'[2] Macauliffe also makes the *Janamsākhī* of Sewa Das the basis of his account of Guru Nanak. Besides this old *Janamsākhī*, we have the first *Wār* of Bhai Gurdas, in which also a very scrappy account of Guru Nanak's activities is given. It cannot be definitely said when Bhai Gurdas composed his *Wārs*. He was the learned amanuensis of Guru Arjan and wrote out the *Granth Sāhib* at the latter's dictation. This work is said to have been completed in 1604. Now, it is stated in the Sikh chronicles that when the Guru was selecting the hymns for incorporation in the *Granth Sāhib* he highly praised Bhai Gurdas's works and 'offered to insert them in his Granth: but Bhai Gurdas said that they were not worthy of such honour. The Guru complimented him on his modesty and ability and said that whoever read the Bhai's writings should acquire spiritual profit and instruction and faith in the teachings of the Holy Gurus.'[3] It would thus appear that portions, at least,

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit*, Vol. I, p. lxxxvi.
[2] Trumpp, *Adi Granth*, Introduction, p. ii.
[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. III, pp. 63, 64.

of Bhai Gurdas's works were extant even in 1604 and, though internal evidence indisputably proves that some of the *Wārs* were written during the pontificate of Guru Hargobind, Macauliffe is probably right in thinking that Bhai Gurdas wrote his account of Guru Nanak not much more than sixty years after the latter's death.[1]

These are the two most reliable records on the life of Guru Nanak. If we leave out the few vague references in Guru Nanak's hymns to possible incidents in his life, we are faced with the fact that we possess no contemporary account of the founder of Sikhism, and the oldest that we have were written, one, half a century and the other, sixty years after his death. It is no doubt true that when Sewa Das and Bhai Gurdas wrote, 'some of Guru Nanak's contemporaries were still alive, and one of them at least retained the vigour of his intellectual faculties.' Macauliffe laments that 'Bhai Gurdas did not write a complete life of the Guru as its details could at that time have been easily obtained.'[2] At least we might hope that the fact that Bhai Budha, one of the most revered of the disciples of Guru Nanak, was still alive, would have acted as a powerful check on the introduction of doubtful and exaggerated details. But unfortunately, even in these early records, the formation of myths has already made considerable progress. The account of Bhai Gurdas, though extremely scrappy, is yet not entirely free from supernatural touches here and there. We come across a notable instance in connection with

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. lxxiii.
[2] *Ibid.*

Guru Nanak's adventures in Baghdad. Bhai Gurdas says that the Guru came to Baghdad with the rebeck-player Mardana and took his place outside the city. Guru Nanak shouted the call for prayer and at this a dead silence is said to have pervaded the whole creation. The city of Baghdad was no exception and the Pir Dastgir who lived there became very much astonished. By some super-conscious process he became aware of the presence of an exalted Fakir and came out to meet him. The Pir asked who the Fakir was and to what school he belonged. He was told that the name of the Fakir was Guru Nanak who had taken birth in this Kal Age to put an end to different schools and systems and to establish the one true path. The Pir said rather haughtily that he seemed to be a very great Fakir and had already given some proof of that in Baghdad, but let him give a further demonstration of his powers so that they might all know how great his achievements really were. At this the Guru is said to have taken the Pir's son by the hand and in the twinkling of an eye caused him to journey through hundreds of thousands of upper and nether worlds. Nay more, even a dish full of *karāh prasād* was brought from the nether world.[1] In Bhai Gurdas's account such instances are by no means rare. Indeed it is important to remember that the process that led to 'the gradual investiture of a simple fact with the gorgeous mythism of memory and imagination' has

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 35, 36.

*Karāh prasād* is Sikh sacred food. For the recipe of *karāh prasād* see Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 114. For 'dish' the word in the original is *kachkol*, which literally means a pot formed of half of the shell of the double cocoanut and which is used by devotees to collect their alms.

already commenced. As Cuningham says, " The unpretending Nanak, the deplorer of human frailty and the lover of his fellow men, becomes, in the mind of Gurdas and of the Sikh people, the first of heavenly powers and emanations, and the proclaimed instrument of God for the redemption of the world." [1]

The other work, *viz.*, the *Janamsākhī* of Sewa Das, though undoubtedly the most reliable of all the extant works about Guru Nanak, also falls much below the minimum we would require in studying the details of the Guru's life on historical lines. Besides the introduction of many stories which cannot be included in a critical analysis, the work suffers in another way. As Macauliffe says, " Several of the details of this and of all current *Janamsākhīs* appear to us to be simply settings for the verses and sayings of Guru Nanak. His followers and admirers found dainty word-pictures in his compositions. They considered under what circumstances they could have been produced, and thus devised the framework of a biography in which to exhibit them to the populace." [2] An illustration, we hope, will make Macauliffe's remark absolutely clear. Among the hymns of Guru Nanak incorporated in the *Granth Sāhib* we come across an acrostic on the Gurumukhi alphabet. Now, the *Janamsākhīs* state that this acrostic was uttered by Guru Nanak when at the age of seven he was taken to the village school by his father for the first time. It is said that the schoolmaster wrote the thirty-five letters of the alphabet on a piece of slate and asked Nanak to read. Thereupon the

[1] Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. lxxxvi

Guru uttered the acrostic referred to above. The Pandit was astonished and is said to have paid reverence to Nanak " because this is a perfect one." [1] In this instance there cannot be any doubt that the acrostic itself is the origin of the incident at the village school, or in other words, the story was devised in order to give a setting to the acrostic in question. As Trumpp says, no doubt the story was invented in order to account for the verses, as is evident from other cases of the kind.[2] Thus the position becomes almost desperate. If we leave out these details, as we certainly must, and those that savour of the mythical and supernatural, only a bare skeleton would remain which can hardly be regarded as even the necessary minimum.

The later *Janamsākhīs* are practically useless for our purpose and their chief interest lies in the fact that through them we can trace to its furthest development that process of 'gorgeous mythism' which had already made considerable progress in the days of Bhai Gurdas. Leaving aside Bhai Mani Singh's *Gyān Ratnāwalī*, which is primarily an expansion of the first *Wār* of Bhai Gurdas, we come next to the *Nānak Prakās*, a work written in 1823, nearly three centuries after the death of Guru Nanak. By this time imagination has assumed almost complete control. Taking his cue from the current tradition that Guru Nanak had visited Ceylon during his peregrinations, Bhai Santokh Singh coolly narrates how the Guru met Hanuman and Bibhikhan. [3] The Guru is further made to

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. viii.

[2] *Ibid*, p. iii.

[3] *Nānak Prakās*, Part II, xviii.

have had meetings with Prahlad, Dhruba and several other *bhaktas* of old and sometimes long dialogues are introduced in order to give a touch of reality to the narration.[1] In fact, imagination once let loose does not stop till it has effected a complete metamorphosis of the personality of Nanak and brought him into line with the legendary figures of old.

Most of the later *Janamsākhīs* seem to have been based on the work of Bhai Santokh Singh, wherein we are introduced for the first time to the story of the compilation of a *Janamsākhī* under the auspices of Guru Angad.[2] We read in the *Nānak Prakās* that there was a pious Sikh named Bala Sandhu who had been a direct disciple of Nanak. One day he thought within himself: who it was whom the Master appointed in his place to carry on the mission? On enquiry he came to learn that it was Guru Angad who had his residence at Khadur, and Bala thereupon came on a visit to Guru Nanak's successor. Guru Angad is said to have asked Bala whose disciple he was and what his religious convictions were. Bala informed Angad that he was a disciple of Guru Nanak and that he had been associated with the Master since his very childhood. On hearing this Guru Angad became exceedingly pleased and asked Bala to tell him all that he knew about the Master. Bala began with the circumstances of the birth of Guru Nanak and incidentally informed

[1] *Nānak Prakās*, Part I, lxxvi, lxxii.

[2] *Ibid*, Part I, ii. We are, however, told that "Miharban, Prithi Chand's son, wrote a janam sakhi of Guru Nanak, wherein he eulogised his father. It contains the first mention of Bhai Bala." (*Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. III, p. 104.) But as no details are vouchsafed we refrain from any comment on the matter.

Angad that a *janampatrī* or horoscope had been drawn up by a Brahman at the time of the Master's birth and it must have been with his father Kalu. Though Kalu was now dead it might not be improbable that the horoscope was still with his younger brother Lalu. Bala himself volunteered to go to Lalu to bring the *janampatrī* and went to Talwandi accompanied by a Sikh named Pannu Lal. Lalu appeared to have known nothing about the horoscope but he agreed to a search being instituted in the house and it is said that after five days of close and rigid hunt the horoscope was found at last. Angad was pleased beyond measure when the horoscope was brought to him, placed it on his head and heartily praised Bhai Bala for having in this manner put him in touch with his Master. However, on looking at the horoscope Guru Angad found that it was in Sanskrit [1] and as apparently none of those present knew the script, the Guru enquired whether some one could be found who might transliterate the horoscope into Gurumukhi. [2] At this a Jat, named Mahima Khaira, is said to have suggested that Paira Mukha Khaira of Sultanpur might be brought for the purpose. Mahima Khaira himself was sent to Sultanpur and very soon he came back with Paira Mukha. On the latter's arrival Guru Angad asked him to write out the *janampatrī* in Gurumukhi. Bhai Santokh Singh then gives a list of the more important

[1] *Sahas kṛti achar*, i.e., *Devanāgari* script.

[2] Relying on this incident Trumpp wrote that Guru Angad was altogether unlettered and could himself neither read nor write. (*Adi Granth*, Introduction, p. lxxviii.) But it proves nothing of the kind. All that can be said is that Guru Angad was ignorant of the script in which the horoscope was written.

Sikhs who were present there to hear the story, Bhai Budha, Bhai Jiwa and Amar Das among others. And then we are told that 'Bala narrated the story, Paira wrote it out and that Guru Angad caused it to be written for the edification of the world.'[1]

Trumpp was the first to draw attention to the incongruities of the story[2] and Macauliffe has effectively exploded this myth of a *Janamsākhī* compiled in the days of Guru Angad. As the latter points out, the popular *Janamsākhīs*, 'which no doubt have been compiled by altering some one original volume,' are written in the current Punjabi dialect whereas the *Janamsākhī* of Bala, if it ever existed, must have been written in the archaic language of Guru Angad's time. Moreover, with regard to Bhai Bala himself 'it is remarkable that Guru Angad, who was so well acquainted with Guru Nanak, knew so little of Bala that he is represented as having asked whose disciple he was.' If Bala had really been a close companion of Nanak, as he is represented to be, he must certainly have been known to Guru Angad. Finally, it is also remarkable that the list that Bhai Gurdas gives in his eleventh *Wār* of the well-known Sikhs up to his own time, as also the more complete list given by Bhai Mani Singh in his *Gyān Ratnāwalī*, does not mention Bala. It is thus extremely doubtful whether any *Janamsākhī* of Guru Nanak had been compiled in the days of Guru Angad and it would seem that the author of the *Janamsākhī*, upon which all the later ones are based, invented the fiction in order to gain credence for

[1] *Nānak Prakās*, Part I, II, 79.

[2] Trumpp, *op. cit*, p. v.

his narrative.[1] Indeed a careful study of the account of the compilation given by Bhai Santokh Singh leaves little doubt that the *janampatrī* is really the vital theme of the matter and that the story of the *Janamsākhī* has been super-imposed. It seems to us that the bringing of the *janampatrī* and its transliteration or translation into Gurumukhi were historical facts, which were seized upon by a later writer who added a *Janamsākhī* to the *janampatrī* and thereby gave currency to the fiction that a biography of Guru Nanak had been compiled under the auspices of Guru Angad.

The more recent *Janamsākhīs*, almost all of which profess to have been based on the work of Bala, need not detain us but this rapid sketch of the sources of information about Guru Nanak would hardly be complete without a notice of the *Dabistān*. The author of this work, who wrote under the pseudonym of Mohsin Fani, appears to have been a contemporary of the fifth, sixth and seventh Gurus and a personal friend of the sixth Guru, Hargobind, with whom he even occasionally corresponded.[2] The testimony of this writer must, therefore, be regarded as of special value, particularly as he is an independent witness. In the midst of the Sikh *Janamsākhīs*, with their cobweb of miraculous and absurd myths, this work brings in a welcome and refreshing relief, but it must be said that Mohsin Fani's account of Guru Nanak as well is, on the whole, disappointing. Though on several points the *Janamsākhīs* receive independent corroboration and a few details are added here and

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. lxxviii, lxxix.

[2] *Dabistān*, Translation by Troyer and Shea, Vol. II, p. 281.

there, most of it is concerned with mythical stories about the founder of Sikhism which Mohsin Fani had heard from the Sikhs of his day. Indeed, the *Dabistān* indisputably confirms what we said in connection with the work of Bhai Gurdas, *viz.*, that by the time of the fifth Guru deification had already made startling progress. Mohsin Fani tells us in one place that according to the belief of the Sikhs 'Baba Nanak is a god, and the world his creation.' He adds that Nanak reckoned himself merely as a servant of God, 'who is without a bodily frame.' But we are told that 'the Sikhs say that Nanak, in the same manner, had been without a real body, but visible by the power of his individuality.'[1] However, several of the stories that Mohsin Fani incorporates in his work seek to establish rather the divine character of the mission of Nanak than an actual identity between Nanak and God Himself. Learned Sikhs are reported to have told Mohsin Fani a story, the point of which appears to be that Guru Nanak had begun his work of deliverance from the Sat-Yug. When he was born in that age a large number of Sikhs assembled around him but a few only could pass the required test and the rest were told to wait till the next age, *viz.*, the Treta-Yug when they would meet the Guru again. This time also a few passed through, the same thing happened again in the Dwapar Age, till at last the Guru assumed his present birth to continue his work of emancipation.[2] It is also stated that "when Nanak died in the Sat-Yug, two roads opened before his soul: the one led

1 *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 253.

2 *Ibid*, pp. 268, 269.

to heaven, the other to hell. Nanak chose the latter, and having descended below, he brought all the inhabitants out of hell. The Lord God said to him: 'These sinners cannot enter heaven; you must return into the world and liberate them.' On that account Nanak came to this world, and his followers are the former inhabitants of hell; the Guru comes and goes, until that multitude shall have found their salvation."[1] We are further told that 'Guru Nanak, according to the belief of his followers, was in former times the rājā called Janak, and united the dignity of a king with that of a saint.'[2] These and other stories testifying to the eternal character of Nanak as a deliverer and the miraculous powers that he possessed form the bulk of what Mohsin Fani writes about the founder of Sikhism. Nevertheless, the little that remains is illuminating and must, circumstanced as we are, be regarded as invaluable.

Our position is thus a desperate one and it can be easily seen that though there might be a very interesting study on the *biographies* of Guru Nanak, we have hardly any material for a satisfactory biography on critical lines. Indeed, when the attempt is made 'to get rid of the fable mixed up with the Sikh legends, and to work the residue of fact into some sort of historical order,' difficulties crop up at amost every step. The only two dates about Nanak which we have known more or less definitely are those of his birth and death, and throughout the huge interval of about seventy years we have to grope in the dark as best as

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 269.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 268.

we can with the assistance of the dim, reflected light of one or two independent references. The hymns of Nanak do not help us in any way, for, so far as these are concerned, we may very well repeat what Carpenter says about the verses of Kabir: "His copious utterances may be classified according to their metres, but they cannot be arranged in dates. The clues to his spiritual history are lost, and the phases of his experience toss to and fro in his verses, lighting up his character and illustrating his moods, but obscuring his development."[1] The chronological difficulty arising out of the meagreness of fixed dates might have been to some extent obliterated if we had been more or less certain about the general sequence of events. But, unfortunately, here again the authorities do not always agree and it sometimes becomes very difficult to reconcile them with the few hints that we get indirectly from more reliable records. We would, therefore, preface the account that follows with the remark that in it an attempt has been made only to provide a broad framework and that very often quantity has been unhesitatingly sacrificed to quality.

The earlier part of Guru Nanak's life constitutes a well defined period and the main trend of events is comparatively easier to trace. From his birth at Talwandi [2] in 1469 down to his resignation of the

[1] Estlin Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

[2] Modern Nankana, 'a village situated on the river Ravi, 35 miles south-west of Lahor, in the Sarakpur sub-division of the Lahor district.' (Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 78.) Recently the place came very much into public prominence owing to the most cold-blooded massacre of a Sikh *Jāthā* perpetrated there by the Mahant Narain Das and his men. (The details of the tragedy may be read in the *Gurdwara*

office that he held under Daulat Khan Lodi, we can trace in him an intense inward struggle, kept alive by his constant association with Fakirs and culminating in a final enlightenment when at Sultanpur he made his first significant utterance that 'there is no Hindu and no Musalman,' and definitely took upon himself the rôle of a teacher of men. The *Janamsākhīs* give us the impression that from his very boyhood the Guru exhibited symptoms of an other-worldly temperament and that he soon proved himself an embarrassment and a disappointment to his more worldly-minded parents. They got him married and tried various expedients to bring him to a sense of the stern realities of worldly existence, but all their efforts proved fruitless. ' In the dense forests around Talwandi were to be found ascetics and anchorets who sought the extreme retirement of the locality for the combined objects of undisturbed prayer and escape from the persecution of bigoted Moslem rulers.' Guru Nanak preferred to pass most of his time in the company of these men and persisted in doing nothing 'useful' and it was possibly the intervention of Rai Bular, the owner of the village, who appears to have been one of the earliest admirers of the Guru, that prevented his father from going to unpleasant extremes. At last an invitation came

*Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, Lahore, 1922, pp. 220-239 ) It is one of the most important places of Sikh pilgrimage. " Besides *Janam sthan*, the house of Baba Kalu where Guru Nanak was born, there are several other places in the town associated with the different events of Guru Nanak's boyhood." There is also a place sacred to Guru Har Gobind who had come and tied his horse to a tree which is still preserved.' (*Ibid*, pp. 212-213.) See also *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 676, f. n. 2.

from Nanak's brother-in-law, Jai Ram, who was an officer of Daulat Khan Lodi at Sultanpur and through his influence Nanak was appointed a grain-factor. There he worked for some time, apparently to the satisfaction of his employer, but it is said that one morning he disappeared in the river and on his unexpected reappearance after three days, he threw away his appointment, distributed all that he had among the poor, wore the garb of a Fakir and, with Mardana as his companion, set out on travels.

The first important incident of Guru Nanak's life appears to have been his admission to the village school when he was seven years old. We have already noticed the story, how, according to the *Janamsākhīs*, Guru Nanak astounded his teacher by composing an acrostic on the alphabet as soon as the Pandit had written the characters on a slate for him to read. A similar story is told of the Guru's first meeting with his Persian teacher with another acrostic on the Persian alphabet to boot.[1] In short, the *Janamsākhīs* want to make it appear that Guru Nanak had little to learn from his teachers. As Macauliffe says, " The scholastic ignorance of the founders of great religions has been made the subject of many a boast on the part of their followers. The object, of course, is that the acquirements and utterances of the religious teachers

[1] *Nānak Prakās*, Part I, vii; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 11-15. " This composition is not found in the Granth Sahib. Some Sikhs deny that it is the composition of Guru Nanak." There can be little doubt that in the first instance the incident in the village school has been inspired by the acrostic, and in the second both the acrostic and the story by the earlier ones.

may be attributed solely to divine inspiration." [1] But there is satisfactory internal evidence in Guru Nanak's own compositions that he had become a fairly good Persian scholar and it has been said that he was introduced to Daulat Khan Lodi by his brother-in-law Jai Ram as an educated man.[2] There is thus no reason to think that Guru Nanak was practically an uneducated man as the *Janamsākhīs* seem to suggest.

The next important incident of Guru Nanak's life was his investment with the sacred thread when he was nine years old. On the basis of a composition that occurs in the *Āsā kī Wār*, the *Janamsākhīs* have woven a long story in connection with this incident.[3] As we have tried to show elsewhere, there can be little doubt that the details were invented later on and that the stanzas in the *Āsā kī Wār*, referred to above, suggested them. Five years later [4] Guru Nanak was married to 'Sulakhani, daughter of Mula, a resident of Batala in the present district of Gurdaspur.' In course of time Guru Nanak had two sons and possibly also daughters,[5] but his other-worldly temperament continued as before. 'He kept company with Fakirs, with any one else he did not converse.' Indeed, it seemed that he was becoming unfit for all secular occupation and it is no wonder that he was completely misunderstood. His actions were attributed to insanity and his spiritual ecstasies

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 10

2 *Ibid*, p. 33.

3 *Nānak Prakāś*, Part II, ix.

4 Bhai Mani Singh's *Gyān Ratnāwalī* (Gulab Singh and Sons) p. 103.

5 Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

confused with illness. His father Kalu first tried him in the capacity of a herdsman, then in that of a cultivator and finally attempted to turn him into a merchant but all to no purpose. The *Janamsākhīs* narrate these incidents in great detail, but it would be enough for us to know that in none of these did the Guru show any promise of worldly success. At last being thoroughly disgusted his father agreed to the proposal of Jai Ram that the Guru should be sent to Sultanpur and there enter government service.

We now come to the great turning-point in Guru Nanak's career. On Jai Ram's recommendation Daulat Khan Lodi appointed Nanak his store-keeper[1] and we are told that this time the Guru performed his duties to the entire satisfaction of his employer. The life of the Guru at Sultanpur is thus described by the old *Janamsākhī*: "The Khan was very much pleased. Whatever salary Guru Nanak got, of that he ate something, the rest he gave away for God's sake. By night he sang always praise to God. Afterwards Mardana, the Dum, came from Talvandi and remained with the Baba. To others, who came afterwards, he procured an interview with the Khan and a stipend, all got their bread by the favour of Guru Nanak. All were pleased and when the Baba's food was prepared, they all came and sat down. By night continually praise was said and when as yet a watch of the night was remaining, the Baba went to the river to bathe. When it became dawn of day, he put on his clothes, applied the tilak to his forehead, and having taken the account book in

[1] It seems that Guru Nanak acted as an assistant of his brother-in-law Jai Ram, who was in charge of Daulat Khan's granary.

the office he sat down to write."[1] But the Guru was not destined to continue long in this manner. We are told that one day, on going to the river to bathe, he stripped himself of his clothes and disappeared. A vigorous search was instituted but it proved fruitless, and Nanak was given up for lost. Three days later he miraculously reappeared. " Nanak entered his house ; giving away everything he removed his abode far off. He continued in silence for one day. The following day he rose and said: 'There is no Hindu and there is no Musalman.' "[2] Speaking historically, this was the first significant utterance of Guru Nanak and with it began his career as a religious teacher and reformer.

The *Janamsākhīs*, as usual, have loaded this incident with fables and myths, beneath which the real facts are almost irrecoverably hidden. Regarding Guru Nanak's disappearance in the river we are solemnly told that 'according to the order of the Lord, servants took him away to the threshhold of the Lord.' There the Guru had an interview with the Almighty Lord, who charged him with the mission of preaching the glory of his Name. Then came the order: ' Nanak on whom thy favourable look is, on him is also mine ; on whom thy benevolence is, on him is also mine. My name is: the Supreme Brahma, the Supreme Lord ; and thy name is: the Guru, the Supreme Lord.'[3] Then, according to the order of the Lord, on the third day Guru Nanak was brought back to the very ferry

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xi.
[2] *Ibid*, p. xii.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. xi, xii.

where he had disappeared and the Guru came out of the river. It is clear that this story has been introduced in order to establish a divine sanction for the mission of Nanak and in attempting this the author of the *Janamsākhī* has not hesitated even to seek an identity between him and the Lord in direct opposition to the Guru's own teachings. The utmost that this story can mean to a student of history is that at this time Guru Nanak felt an irresistible urge within himself, call it divine if you like, to proclaim the truth that he had inwardly realised.

Further, it appears that when on his return after his miraculous disappearance the Guru entered his house, he gave away not only his own belongings but also the property of his employer, Daulat Khan Lodi. The later *Janamsākhīs* develop this incident in great detail, and we are told that complaints having reached the ears of the Khan that the Guru was in the habit of distributing to the Fakirs things belonging to the State, he ordered an enquiry to be made into his accounts. But on investigation it was found that the Guru's accounts were not only correct but that money was due to him from the State.[1] The *Janamsākhīs* do not deny that Guru Nanak had actually given away to the Fakirs things belonging to the Khan but indirectly suggest that it was through a miracle worked by the Guru that inspite of this his accounts showed excess. But it seems almost certain that the truth of the matter is given in the following statement of the *Dabistān*: "A durvish came to Nanac, and subdued his mind in

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 42, 43; Bhai Mani Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 107ff; *Nānak Prakās*, Part I, xxix.

such a manner that he, Nanac, having entered the granary, gave away the property of Daulat Khan, and his own, whatever he found there and in his house, and abandoned his wife and children. Daulat Khan was struck with astonishment at hearing this, but recognising in Nanac the mark of a durvish, he withheld his hand from hurting him."[1] There is nothing improbable in the statement that in the fullness of his heart Nanak had given away the property of Daulat Khan Lodi. On the other hand, the *Janamsākhīs* are unanimous in stating that the Khan had always a very high opinion of Guru Nanak's work and character. Indeed, Bhai Gurdas seems to claim this very Daulat Khan as a *Sikh* of Guru Nanak.[2] Under the circumstances, it is not difficult to believe that Daulat Khan had willingly refrained from taking any steps against the Guru.[3]

The statement of Mohsin Fani brings in another very interesting question. His remark that the Guru's renunciation was due primarily to the influence exercised on his mind by a certain darvesh makes one naturally curious to know who this man was and what was the nature of his hold on Nanak. We have already seen that Guru Nanak passed most of his time

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, pp. 247, 248.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, XI, 13.

[3] Malcolm, however, states that Daulat Khan put Jai Ram under arrest but Nanak came forward and expressed his readiness to render the strictest account of all he had lost. "The Khan accepted his proposal; Jai Ram's accounts were settled and to the surprise of all, a balance was found in his favour on which he was not only released, but reinstated in the employment and favour of his master."—*Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 18

in association with Fakirs and anchorets and it can easily be conceded that he learnt much from them. But the Sikh records give us no indication that Nanak was specially indebted to any particular individual. To men who regarded Nanak as God the very idea of any earthly superior was absurd. It is no doubt true that in his compositions Nanak often speaks of his 'Guru,' but in these instances the word is generally taken in the sense of God, and Macauliffe actually says that 'Nanak's Guru was God.'[1] But the recent discovery at Baghdad seems to lend some support to the statement of the *Dabistān*. One of the Sikh commanders, who went to Mesopotamia during the last Great War, writing to the "Loyal Gazette" of Lahore in January, 1918, says that "he saw the place commemorating the visit of Guru Nanak to Baghdad. Outside the city to the south-west beside a grave-yard, there is an open room situated within an enclosure wall. In one corner of the room is a platform on which Guru Nanak is said to have sat, while he was conversing with Shah Bahlol who sat on another platform in the opposite corner. The present priest named Sayad Usaf, who is in charge of the place, described himself as the tenth in succession to the first incumbent of the place."[2] But the most important thing for our present purpose is the inscription in Turkish that was found on the wall behind the platform. The inscription may be translated thus:

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 54, fn. 1.

2 *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, pp. 1, 2, f. n.

"Guru Murad died. Baba Nanak Fakir helped in constructing this building which is an act of grace from a virtuous follower. 927 A. H."[1] Guru Nanak thus appears to have been a follower of Guru Murad and it may not be improbable that the latter is the person referred to by Mohsin Fani.

Whatever that may be, as we have seen above Guru Nanak had reached the supreme crisis in his career. His remark that 'there is no Hindu and no Musalman' at once brought him to the forefront at Sultanpur. Some, no doubt, regarded him with derision and attributed his remark to insanity but he could not be left alone for long. His remark was not only astounding but sounded offensive and the *Janamsākhīs* state that at last the Kazi prevailed upon Daulat Khan Lodi to call Guru Nanak to his presence. On being questioned as to the meaning of his utterance the Guru explained that both the Hindus and the Muhammadans had forgotten the precepts of their religions, and his words are said to have carried so much conviction that everybody was amazed. The amazement turned into reverence when at the time of the afternoon prayer the Guru told the Kazi and the Khan point-blank that their prayers had not been accepted by God because while they ostensibly performed divine service, the one had been thinking of a new-born filly which he had kept unbound at home and feared lest it might fall into the well within the enclosure, and the other of purchasing horses in Kabul. At this 'the Sayyids, the sons of the Shekhs, the Kazi, the Mufti, the Khan,

[1] For the translation of this inscription I am indebted to the courtesy of my colleague the late lamented Maulana Aga Muhammad Kazim Shirazi.

the chiefs and leaders were amazed,' and when the Guru uttered a hymn showing how salvation could be obtained, all became convinced that ' God was speaking through Nanak's mouth.' It is said that the ' Nawab, in an outburst of affectionate admiration, offered him a sacrifice of his authority and estate ' but the Guru was in no mood to care for worldly possessions and we are told that after a short stay with some Fakirs he went out on travels in the garb of an *Udāsī* [1] with Mardana as his companion. It is clear that much of the above story is unacceptable to a critical student of history and there is little doubt that portions of it have been built up on the basis of certain verses occurring in the compositions of Nanak. But the fact stands that on this occasion the Guru had made a great stir at Sultanpur.[2]

Our account of Nanak hitherto has, no doubt, been scrappy and unsatisfactory; nevertheless, we have been able to trace the general sequence and the main trend of events, more or less, accurately. But henceforward even this becomes difficult. Trumpp writes, " with the commencement of the wanderings of Nanak nearly all points in common cease and the old and the later tradition diverge in such a manner that they cannot be reconciled. This proves sufficiently, either that very little was known about them or that very little could be said about them, as the old *Janamsākhī*

[1] Literally, a man who has renounced the world. For the garb that the Guru took up on this occasion, see Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 58.

[2] For details see Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 34-43; *Nānak Prakās*, Part I, xxviii, xxx, xxxi.

testifies."[1] It is true that Trumpp took an unduly gloomy view of the matter. His theory that the story of the Guru's visit to Southern India and Ceylon ' is so mixed up with the miraculous, that it bears the stamp of fable on its front,' and his characterisation of Nanak's alleged journey to Mekka as ' an invention from beginning to end' [2] have been completely disproved by recent discoveries, but the fact still remains that even on the basis of the oldest *Janamsākhī* it is not always possible to give an outline, in the proper sequence, of the main incidents of Nanak's life posterior to his retirement from Sultanpur. The discovery of the inscription at Baghdad, no doubt, gives us a fixed date but this makes matters more complex. In the face of it the arrangement in the old *Janamsākhī* can no longer be accepted as true, though we hardly possess the requisite material to attempt a fresh one. It appears that after remaining in the Punjab and its vicinity for some time the Guru set out towards the east. He went as far as Kamrup, visited Puri and after various adventures returned to Talwandi, his birth place. It was now twelve years since the resignation of his office under Daulat Khan Lodi. The Guru is said to have halted in a forest about three miles distant from the village. He met his parents and relations there and then again set out on travels with his companion Mardana. It seems that the Guru now began a detailed tour throughout the Punjab. From Sialkot in the north to Mithankot in the south he visited almost every place of importance

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. v.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. v, vi.

and the Sikhs claim that he succeeded in making a good many converts. It was in course of this tour that he came in the vicinity of the city of Sayyidpur when that city was captured and pillaged by the soldiers of Babur. We know that this incident occurred during the third Indian expedition of Babur and must therefore be placed in the year 1524. Now, the difficulty is that the Baghdad inscription, referred to above, is dated 927 A.H., which is equivalent to 1520-21 A.D.[1] Guru Nanak, therefore, must have visited Baghdad in 1520-21 or some time previously. The difficulty is not obviated even if we postulate two separate visits on the part of Nanak to Baghdad. In any case, the arrangement of the *Janamsākhīs* cannot be accepted.

There is no hint anywhere as to the age of Guru Nanak when he became an *Udāsī* and went out on travels. It is stated in the *Gyān Ratnāwalī* that when the Guru was twenty years old he had been thinking of going out on pilgrimage and had actually asked Mardana if he would accompany him.[2] We are also told that just on the eve of his departure for Sultanpur the Guru reminded Mardana of the proposal and told him that they would go out on travels as soon as Mardana would be free to join him.[3] If there is any truth in these statements it appears that the Guru's renunciation could not have taken place later than his twenty-fifth year at the utmost. It is clear

[1] 927 A. H. begins on December 12, 1520 and ends on November 30, 1521.

[2] Bhai Mani Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 106.

that the Guru did not remain long at Talwandi after his initial proposal to Mardana and that his stay at Sultanpur was not a protracted one. The Guru having been born in 1469 this would bring us somewhere near the year 1495. The *Janamsākhīs* state that Guru Nanak revisited Talwandi twelve years after he had left Sultanpur. Having regard to the fact that there is a custom among *Sannyāsīs* of revisiting their birth-place twelve years after their initiation, this statement may be accepted as true and consequently it seems that the first period of the Guru's travels ended some time about 1507.

The *Janamsākhīs* call this first tour of Guru Nanak his ' travels in the east.' Many adventures are piously narrated, but if we leave out the miraculous and those details which appear to be simply " settings for the verses and compositions of Guru Nanak," very little remains besides a series of names of places which the Guru is said to have successively visited. According to the old *Janamsākhī*, ' taking Mardana with him he wandered about; they did not enter any village, they did not stop in any jungle nor on any river.' It appears that the Guru was performing great austerities particularly in the matter of eating and Mardana sometimes found it difficult to keep company with a man who required little or no nourishment.[1] Mohsin Fani says, " At first he took little nourishment ; afterwards he allowed himself but to taste a little cowmilk ; next a little oil ; then nothing but water, and at last he took nothing but air."[2] Bhai Gurdas also testifies

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xiii.

[2] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p, 248.

to the austerities observed by Nanak [1] and the difficulties of Mardana, alluded to in the *Janamsākhī*, must have been very hard as the Guru at first seems to have scrupulously avoided human habitations. However, the Guru met his first notable adventure when he came upon Shekh Sajan, a notorious robber. This man is said to have built a temple and a mosque for his Hindu and Muhammadan guests respectively and 'he otherwise ostensibly provided them with everything necessary for their comfort.' But this pompous hospitality was merely a cloak, for when his guests went to sleep he threw their bodies into a well and misappropriated their belongings. 'Next morning he took up a pilgrim's staff and rosary, and spread out a carpet to pray in the true spirit of an ancient Pharisee.' He attempted to play the same trick with Nanak but the latter proved too much for him, the incident ending in the complete reclamation of Shekh Sajan.

Hereafter really begins the Guru's wanderings in the east but the conflict among the authorities becomes so frequent that the details become more and more difficult of acceptance. According to the old *Janamsākhī*, the Guru next came to Panipat but the later works mention visits to Kurkhetar and Hardwar in between. The old record states that at this time the Guru practised wind-eating [2] and we have seen that all the more reliable authorities agree, but the later tradition has it that when the Guru was at Kurkhetar, 'needing refreshment he began to cook a

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 24.

[2] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xv.

deer which a disciple had presented to him.' The Brahmans are said to have expressed their horror at the sight, whereupon the Guru remarked:

"Man is first conceived in flesh, he dwelleth in flesh.
When he quickeneth, he obtaineth a mouth of flesh; his bone, skin, and body are made of flesh.
When he is taken out of the womb, he seizeth teats of flesh.
His mouth is of flesh, his tongue is of flesh, his breath is in flesh.
When he groweth up he marrieth, and bringeth flesh home with him.
Flesh is produced from flesh; all man's relations are made from flesh."

And so on.[1] As there can be little doubt that the original incident of the Guru's cooking a deer is an invention, we may reasonably conclude that this is an instance of what Macauliffe calls 'settings for the verses and compositions of Guru Nanak,' or in other words, that the whole story has been suggested by the verses that have been put here in the mouth of the Guru in reply to the disgust expressed by the Brahmans. It may very well be that another consideration also has been at work here. It was the sixth Guru Hargobind who first permitted animal diet to his followers; that it was not tolerated during the earlier days of Sikhism is clearly proved by the testimony of the *Dabistān*. Mohsin Fani says, "Having prohibited his disciples to drink wine and to eat pork,

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 47-49.

he (Nanac) himself abstained from eating flesh, and ordered not to hurt any living being. After him, this precept was neglected by his followers; but Arjunmal, one of the substitutes of his faith, renewed the prohibition to eat flesh, and said: 'This has not been approved by Nanac.'" [1] It may not be improbable that when meat-eating became common among the Sikhs this story was invented to find for it a precedent in the practices and precepts of Guru Nanak and the verses in question were brought under requisition, though in reality they neither support nor reject meat-eating but are a homily addressed to those who confuse religious purity with abstention from flesh. In this manner the later works, in most cases, make confusion worse confounded and it would be futile to expect in them any useful material for sober history. We are thus left almost exclusively to the old record for following up the subsequent adventures of Guru Nanak.

At Panipat the Guru is said to have met a Pir named Shekh Saraf with whom he had a long discourse, at the end of which the Shekh recognised in Nanak a superior being, 'kissed his hands and feet and went to his house.' Going next to Delhi the Guru revivified a dead elephant belonging to Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. After one or two unimportant adventures the Guru and Mardana came to Benares. Here lived a Brahman named Chatur Das with whom the Guru is represented to have entered into a long controversy, the Brahman being finally humbled as usually happened in all such cases. The details appear to be 'settings' and need not, therefore, detain us. We come

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 248.

next to the adventure at Nanakmata.[1] Here a huge pipal-tree of 'many a religious reminiscence' had long withered from age but it is said that 'a small smoking fire was kindled there by Nanak and it became green again.' The Jogīs who resided there became astonished and after a brief conversation paid him reverence. Unfortunately, from this point the *Janam-sākhī* abandons all seriousness and descends almost completely into the realms of phantasy. The Guru's encounter with a body of Thags who come to kill and rob him and are finally brought to their senses by being shown a funeral pyre where troops of Yama and Rama are found quarrelling; his journey to the Kauru country (Kamrup ?) where Mardana is transformed into a ram by a sorceress and is brought back to human form by the Guru's powers, and finding all her charms fail against the Guru, Nur Shahi, the head of the conjurers, falls down at Nanak's feet and becomes a worshipper of the *Name* ; his meeting with Kal Yug who comes to frighten him assuming a visible form; Nanak's journey to the city of ants where 'when they looked about, trees and shrubs, all appeared black' ; all these belong to the domain of fable and, indeed, it seems that it is not till we trace the Guru back to the Punjab that we can discern faint glimpses of possible facts. The only other incident during this

[1] Situated about 20 miles north of Pilibhit in the United Provinces. Macauliffe says that the place was originally called Gorakhmata but is now called Nanakmata in memory of the Guru's visit (see Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 59). As we shall see later on, it became a place of considerable importance in the history of Sikhism and Guru Hargobind is said to have actually led an expedition there in order to rescue it from the Jogīs who are said to have usurped the place.

first tour of Guru Nanak that we may notice is his meeting with Shaikh Brahm, the then incumbent of Shaikh Farid's shrine at Ajodhan.[1] It appears that 'Mardana had by this time had enough of travel, hardship and hunger' and became anxious to return home. The Guru also saw the propriety of once visiting his birth-place after twelve years of wandering and accordingly retraced his steps towards Talwandi.'[2]

The *Janamsākhīs* make it appear that the Guru now began a detailed tour of the Punjab but as we have already stated our reasons for thinking that the incidents connected with this tour must be placed later, we would come at once to 'the second retired life of the Guru passed in the South.' It is said that accompanied by two Jats named Saido and Gheho the Guru proceeded towards the south and reached the Dravidian country. On this occasion "he got his livelihood by filling his begging vessels with morsels; on his feet he had sandals of wood, in his hand a staff, on his head rolls of rope; on his forehead as Tilak the paint of a point."[3] But the whole narrative is so grossly overloaded with fabulous myths that it is difficult to blame Trumpp for having discredited its authenticity. In fact, excepting the story of the Guru's meeting with a Jain priest and some aspects

[1] According to the old *Janamsākhī* the Guru met Shaikh Farid himself but as the latter was long dead the then incumbent of his shrine must have been meant. See Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 84.

[2] Laying the later works under contribution Macauliffe gives a much fuller account but we have already stated, more than once, our reasons for omitting the additional details.

[3] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xxxiv.

of his relations with Raja Shivnath of Ceylon the whole thing appears to be a long excursion into the realms of the supernatural. Regarding the Guru's visit to Ceylon Trumpp wrote: "It is based on altogether erroneous suppositions, the king and the inhabitants of Ceylon being represented as common Hindus, the Sikh author being quite unaware of the fact that the popular religious belief there was Buddhism. That Nanak founded there a 'Sangat' (congregation), the order of whose divine service even is detailed, contradicts all history, and is an invention of later times, when Sikhism had commenced to spread to the south." [1] It cannot be said that these remarks are entirely uncalled for, but at the same time there can be little doubt that whatever the details might be, the main story of Guru Nanak's journey to South India and Ceylon has now been, more or less, definitely substantiated by the discovery of a manuscript at Dacca by Gurbaksh Singh. It purports to be 'the itinerary of a pilgrim to the Sikh temples in Southern India and Ceylon and it is clear that the writer lived long before 1675.[2] We are told that he found stray colonies of Batra Sikhs in Malayalam and at Sattur met Mayadaman, grandson of Shivnath. The substantial truth of the Guru's southern tour 'must therefore be regarded as established inspite of the pilgrim's exaggerations in his account of the victuals consumed at the daily *Yagya* in the principal temple in Ceylon.'[3]

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, pp. v, vi. [2] *Dacca Review*, 1916, p. 876.

[3] *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 687, fn. 4. It is further stated that "the name given in the Sikh books is Shivnabh and not Shivnath. .....It is quite possible that the name was changed

After his return from Ceylon Nanak is said to have passed a few days at Talwandi and then set out again 'to pass his third retired life in the northern region.' This time he was accompanied by Hassu, a smith and Sihan, a calico-printer. 'In this retired life he was eating the fruits and blossoms of the Akk-tree, but in a dried state. On his feet he had a skin and on his head also, his whole body was wrapped up. On his forehead he had a Tilak of saffron.' He went direct to Kashmir where he humbled the Pandit Brahm Das in such signal manner that many people became his followers. The Guru then proceeded further towards the north and 'having passed a lakh and a quarter of mountains he ascended Sumeru, where the residence of Mahadev was.' There Nanak is said to have come across an assembly of Sidhs. After the usual enquiries as to who he was and how he could come there the Sidhs asked Nanak how things were going on in the earth below. In reply Nanak said that "the moon of truth was completely enshrouded in the darkness of ignorance. Sin had devoured the world, religion was crying in distress. The Jogīs had given up the pursuit of knowledge and were engaged in besmearing their bodies with ashes. The Sidhs had taken their place in the mountain, there was none to deliver the world. Without the true Guru the whole world was drowned in ignorance." Thereupon the Sidhs attempted

on purpose and the Sikh books give it correctly as known at Jaffna. Another explanation is that Shivnabh in Persian character was misread as Shivnath by early chroniclers. Even in Gurumukhi Shivnabh is apt to be misread as Shivnath, the letters *b* and *th* being so alike."

to overwhelm Nanak by working a miracle but he stood the ordeal successfully and at last the Sidhs became convinced of the genuineness of the Guru's mission.[1] As Trumpp says, the Guru's visit to mount Sumeru and his discussion with Sidhs 'belong of course to the realm of fiction.'

Hereafter Nanak is said to have started towards the west and visited Mekka and Baghdad among other places. We are told that this time 'on his feet he had shoes of leather and trousers of leather; on his neck he had a necklace of bones, on his forehead a Tilak of a dot, his clothes were blue.' From the *Janamsākhī* it appears that on this occasion Guru Nanak travelled alone but Bhai Gurdas says that he was accompanied by his old attendant Mardana.[2] It is said that on reaching Mekka the Guru lay down to sleep stretching his feet in the direction of the Kaaba. On being admonished by the Kazi the Guru is reported to have said "Turn my feet in a direction in which God is not." Thereupon 'the Kazi Rukn Din turned the feet of the Baba round, but in whatever direction he turned the feet of the Baba, to that direction the face of the Mihrab was also turning.'[3] At this the Kazi was astonished and fell down at Nanak's feet. Macauliffe says that 'some understand this in a spiritual sense, and say it means

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 28-31.

[2] Mardana is mentioned in connection with the Guru's visit to Baghdad (*Wār* I, 35) and therefore he seems to have been with Nanak throughout his western tour.

[3] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xli; 'Mihrab' is the arched niche in a mosque, the front of which is always directed towards Mekka. (*Ibid*, f. n. 2.)

that Guru Nanak made all Mekka turn to his teaching.'[1] But leaving aside the miracle, it seems that what the Guru meant was that the fact of the 'God's house' being situated in a particular direction did not exclude the possibility of His being present in the other directions as well, for 'God is everywhere contained.' Whatever that might be, it seems probable that the Guru then retraced his steps and came to Baghdad. The old record does not mention this visit to Baghdad but we have it in Bhai Gurdas[2] and the recent discovery, already referred to, has placed it beyond dispute. However unacceptable the details might be, the main fact of the Guru's journey to the west must now be regarded as definitely established, though we are not quite sure that it is yet safe to say that 'while returning from Arabia Guru Nanak left a sangat of Mohamedan converts to Sikhism in Mesopotamia!'

We have already seen that this incident must have happened about 1520 and it seems that the Guru immediately returned to the Punjab and began an intensive propaganda, travelling through the province, almost district by district. The Sikh records, no doubt, say that having defeated the whole world in controversy the Guru made the wheel of the *Name* to revolve[3] and that wherever he went he converted thousands to his way of thinking, but it can be easily seen that very little had been done as yet by Guru Nanak in the way of building up a solid body of

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 175.
[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 35, 36.
[3] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 37.

followers. This work he now seems to have taken up in earnest and the *Janamsākhīs* state that the Guru first went to the country of Patan[1] and had another interview with Shaikh Brahm, the incumbent of the shrine of Shaikh Farid. The details of the interview are, as usual in such cases, very probably later settings and need not detain us. Next we follow the Guru through Depalpur, Kanganpur, Kasur and Patti to a village on the site of the present Goindwal where he cured a leper who became a votary of the *Name*. Nanak then travelled through Sultanpur, Vairowal, and Jalalabad and came to a place called Kiria (Kari Pathandi in the Amritsar district),[2] where he is said to have made many Pathan converts. Continuing his journey the Guru passed through Batala in the Gurdaspur district and arrived at Sayyidpur just on the eve of the capture of that city by the troops of Babur in 1524. That the Guru was near about the scene appears from his own compositions but the *Janamsākhīs* develop the theme further and introduce us to a personal interview between Nanak and Babur. It is said that the Guru and Mardana were imprisoned and placed under the charge of Mir Khan, an officer of Babur's army. Like the other prisoners these two were also condemned to do manual work but when Mir Khan found that the work entrusted to them was being smoothly performed without any effort on their part[3]

[1] Pak Pattan, the modern name of Ajodhan.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 108.

[3] "The Guru was condemned to carry loads on his head, and Mardana to do the work of a groom. Mir Khan saw that the Guru's bundle was raised a cubit over his head without any apparent support, and that the horse entrusted to Mardana followed him while he played

he became astonished and reported the matter to Babur. " The emperor replied that, if he had known the city contained such holy men, he would not have destroyed it " and then came on a visit to the Guru, with the usual result that he became convinced of Nanak's greatness and fell down at his feet. Suffice it to say that though a meeting between Nanak and Babur ' is not impossible, it is not very probable,' [1] and we would forthwith proceed to trace the rest of the Guru's adventures. It appears that from Sayyidpur the Guru went to Pasur and thence to Sialkot and finally came to Mithankot, in the present district of Dera Ghazi Khan, where the celebrated saint Mian Mitha had his abode. We are given a long discourse at the end of which ' Mian Mitha got up and kissed the Guru's feet.' Nanak then left Mithankot and, going along the bank of the river Ravi, came to Lahore, where he is said to have converted a Khatri millionaire named Duni Chand. Then the Guru proceeded to the north-west and finally took up his residence at a spot on the bank of the Ravi. A millionaire, who from a detractor had gradually turned into a great admirer of the Guru, founded a village there which came to be known as Kartarpur.

This brings us to the last aspect of the career of Guru Nanak. From this point his life seems to turn

sacred music on his rebeck." It is also stated that the Guru had been given a hand-mill for grinding corn and it was found that the mill revolved of its own accord. See Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 111, 113.

[1] There appears to have been a strong tradition that Nanak had something to do with Babur. Bhai Gurdas refers to this (*Wār* XXVI, 21) and Mohsin Fani speaks of a report that ' Nanac, being dissatisfied with the Afghans, called the Moghuls into the country ' (*Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 249).

in a new direction and it appears that henceforward he busied himself in the work of consolidation. Bhai Gurdas states that after his adventures in the west the Guru caused the glory of the *Name* to spread far and wide and coming to Kartarpur he finally gave up his *Udāsī* style. Nanak again wore the garb of a householder and took up his seat on the manji.[1] His family also appears to have joined him here [2] and thus it seems that the Guru now gave a practical demonstration of what he had asked of his followers, *viz.*, 'to abide pure amidst the impurities of the world.'[3] Of the Guru's life at Kartarpur we get several hints in the Sikh records. Bhai Gurdas says that the people there were continuously engaged in dissertations on truth and knowledge, the Sodar and the Arati were sung and in the early morning there were devotional songs. Indeed, the whole atmosphere resounded with the glory of the *Name*.[4] Apparently on the basis of the later works Macauliffe gives a more systematic account. "At Kartarpur, a watch before day, the Japji and the Asa ki War were repeated. Then followed reading and expounding of the Guru's hymns, until a watch and quarter after sunrise. This was succeeded by singing and the reading of the Arati. After this, breakfast was served. In the third watch there was again singing, after which in the evening the Sodar was read. Then the Sikhs all dined together. The repast

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 38.
[2] *Ibid*; Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xliii; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 135.
[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 61.
[4] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 38.

ended with further singing. After a watch of night had elapsed the Sohila was read, and every one then retired."[1] It thus appears that a Sikh society was already in the making and its divine services, more or less, clearly formulated. Guru Nanak had not remained satisfied by merely pointing out to his followers that singing the *Name* with true devotion was the very best of religious practices but attempted to give them something definite.

A notable incident during this part of the Guru's life was his visit to Achal Batala.[2] On the occasion of the Shivrat festival a large fair was held there and people from different directions assembled at the place. The Guru availed himself of the opportunity to preach his doctrines but he seems to have met with very serious opposition from a Jogī named Bhangarnath. The Jogī is said to have asked the Guru why he had given up his hermit's dress and had worn ordinary clothes. The Guru retorted that though Bhangarnath had given up the life of a householder he still went to the houses of family men to beg for alms. The Jogī abandoned his ground and abruptly asked the Guru to work a miracle whereupon Nanak replied that besides the *True Name* he had no other miracle.[3] Here at

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 136.

[2] Achal, about three miles from Batala, contains the shrine of Samkartik, son of Shiv. See Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 157, f. n. 2.

[3] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 39-43. bājhu saccā nām de hor karāmāt asāthe nāhī. It is to be noticed that there is nothing here about the *Sangat* as has been suggested in the *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 1. Macauliffe also apparently bases his account of the incident (Vol. I, pp. 157-58) primarily on the same source but we do not understand why inspite of the clear testimony of

last we get a glimpse of the real Nanak, the man fighting the mighty forces of ignorance and superstition with simple devotion, sincerity and truth. The only other occasion when the Guru left Kartarpur seems to have been when he paid a visit to Multan[1] and had a discourse with Pir Bahavadin, but the incident appears to be of no importance.

This practically finishes the story of Guru Nanak's earthly career. The date of the inscription at Baghdad and the fact that Guru Nanak was present near Sayyidpur at the time of the capture of that city by Babur, have led us to present the facts of his life in an altered sequence but it cannot possibly be denied that the whole thing has now become more consistent and clear. We can now divide the life of the Guru into three well-defined periods: the period of inward struggle and enlightenment, the period of travels and propagandism, and the period of consolidation. The first period ended with the resignation of his office under Daulat Khan Lodi ; during the second we find him undertaking arduous and extensive tours in the north, south, east and west, visiting the important centres of religious opinion, Hindu, Muhammadan and Buddhist, and ending his travels with a detailed tour in the Punjab ; then he settles down at Kartarpur and engages himself in consolidating his followers and propounding the essentials of his creed. It is thus no longer necessary to face the difficulty that after having settled down at Kartarpur and actully begun the

Bhai Gurdas that it occurred after the Guru's return from Mecca he places it just after his return from Ceylon.

1 Bhai Gurdas, *Wār* I, 44-45 ; Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xliv.

important work of consolidation the Guru again left it and set out on travels to such distant countries as Ceylon and Arabia.

However, at last the Guru saw that his end was approaching and appointed Angad to be his successor. The original name of the new Guru was Lahina, he was a Khatri by caste and a resident of the village of Khadur. This was the man whom Guru Nanak now entrusted with the charge of continuing his mission after his death. 'Nanak put five Paisa before Guru Angad and fell down at his feet; this became then known among his retinue.' After the initiation of Lahina to the Gurushipin this manner, a dispute is said to have arisen between the Hindus and the Musalmans as regards the disposal of Guru Nanak's body. The Hindus wanted to burn it, while the Musalmans were in favour of a burial. Then Guru Nanak said, "Put Ye flowers on both sides, on the right side put those of the Hindus and on the left those of the Musalmans. If the flowers of the Hindus will remain green to-morrow then they will burn me; and if the flowers of the Musalmans will remain green, then they shall bury me." The Guru next asked his followers to recite God's praises. As these songs were going on, Nanak fell asleep and his body was covered with a sheet. When next day the sheet was removed the flowers of both the parties were found green but there was nothing else. The body had disappeared.[1]

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xlv.

An almost similar tradition is current about Kabir; see Wilson's *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, p. 74. It is also given with a slight variation in the *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 191.

The story may be absurd but nevertheless it testifies to the wide tolerance that characterised the teachings of Nanak. The sweetness of his character and the simple truth behind his teachings made him an object of love to all and even today he is remembered as:

"Guru Nānak Shāh Fakir
Hindu kā Guru, Musalmān kā Pir."

## CHAPTER IV

### The Message of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak began his career as a teacher of men with the significant utterance that 'there is no Hindu and no Musalman.' The expression may no doubt be taken to mean, as has been done by Pincott,[1] that the Guru was hereby taking his stand on the eternal unity of humanity and that he was in reality saying that everybody was primarily a 'man,' and a Hindu or a Musalman afterwards; or, in other words, that here we have what may be called the gospel of the universal brotherhood of mankind. In the hymns and compositions of Guru Nanak such sentiments are by no means rare. Says Nanak, 'Regard all men as equal since God's light is contained in the heart of each.'[2] We are told:

> "Castes are folly, names are folly;
> All creatures have one shelter, that of God."[3]

And thus one might not be wrong if one took the expression in the abstract and said that Guru Nanak was preaching the gospel of universal brotherhood. Nevertheless, we would understand Guru Nanak's message better if we take his first significant utterance in a more concrete sense. Macauliffe says that 'the Sikhs interpret

[1] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 589.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 332.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 278.

this to mean generally that both Hindus and Muhammadans had forgotten the precepts of their religions.' [1] Considering the circumstances the Guru was called upon to face, it seems that the expression has to be taken more as a criticism than as a constructive pronouncement, as an assertion more negative than positive in its import. As Teja Singh says, " Guru Nanak saw that the real difficulty in making the people truly religious was not so much their want of religious spirit as the very peculiar turn of their mind, with which they would take those things as *ends* in themselves which were originally intended only as means." [2] He, therefore, began by launching an immediate attack on the blind conventionalism of his age and telling his contemporaries point-blank that there was no true Hindu and no true Musalman.

It has been seen that the age of Guru Nanak was an age of ignorance and an age of strife, and we may say at once that the message of Nanak was a message of truth and a message of peace. The positive side of Guru Nanak's teaching is simplicity itself. The True Lord is one, ' the primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age,' and He could only be reached by truth and sincere devotion. Singing the *Name* was the very best of religious practices ; indeed, without the spiritual condition that is obtained by a repetition of the *Name*, there is no salvation.[3] And it is solemnly laid down that it was only by submitting to the Guru that the wandering of the

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 37.

[2] Teja Singh, *The Japjī* (second edition), p. 2.

[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. I, p. 276.

heart was restrained. 'Men could not be saved by themselves, it was idle to say so.' But it was too much to expect that such a creed could be accorded an immediate acceptance. A good deal of spade-work was necessary before people could be made to comprehend its virtues, the field had to be cleared and made ready before the seeds of truth could be sown. Guru Nanak's message may thus be regarded to have been presented in a twofold aspect: he had first to make clear what religion was not, before he could hope to make people understand what it was. And in his very first utterance the Guru went straight into the heart of the matter.

The trouble lay, as we have seen, in a confusion of the means with the end, in a too ready pursuit of the form in utter disregard of the spirit. It was this empty formalism which Guru Nanak attacked when he said that there was no Hindu and no Musalman. On being called upon to explain what he meant, the Guru is reported to have told the Kazi:

"To be a Musalman is difficult; if one be really so, then one may be called a Musalman.

Let one first love the religion of saints, and put aside pride and pelf as the file removeth rust.

Let him accept the religion of his pilots, and dismiss anxiety regarding death or life;

Let him heartily obey the will of God, worship the Creator and efface himself—

When he is kind to all men, then Nanak, shall he indeed be a Musalman." [1]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 88.

The Koran, the Kaaba, the rosary, fasting and prayers, were all unavailing without the essential condition of surrender to God, for 'he is a Musalman who effaceth himself.' Nanak says, 'if thou make good works the creed thou repeatest, thou shalt be a Musalman.' Indeed, "worldliness and hypocrisy, the profession of religion and secret vice, sensual indulgence combined with the Hindu ascetic's long hair and ashes smeared upon his person, the Mohammedan judge telling his beads and taking bribes, these are lashed with unsparing scorn." The Sikh records give us many indications how the Gurus had to encounter very serious opposition in their work of propaganda and reform from the followers of Goraknath, generally styled Jogīs, who appear to have had several strongholds in the Punjab and its vicinity. The struggle became inevitable when Guru Nanak openly declared:

"This is not the age, there is no longer acquaintance with Jog; this is not the way of truth.
The holy places in the world have fallen; the world is thus ruined.
In this Kal age God's name is the best thing." [1]

This was, indeed, sufficiently serious but the matter was made more unpleasant for the Jogīs when the Guru said:

"He who effaceth wrath, avarice, and greed;
Who quencheth the fire of the five evil passions within his heart;
Who day and night flieth the kite

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 84.

By which divine knowledge is produced and evil inclinations depart:

Who cherisheth holiness, restraineth his evil passions

And repeateth no spell but the Guru's—

The habits of that good man are the best—

Nanak saith, these are the marks of a Jogi." [1]

And it must have passed beyond the bounds of endurance when the Guru further advised them thus:

"Meditate, O Jogi, on the Guru's instructions.

Consider weal and woe, union and separation of friends as the same.

Make the protection of God and the Guru earrings for thy heart." [2]

In short, the Jogīs were told plainly that a few external marks of holiness could not make them what they pretended to be, and that a staff, an earring, and a body besmeared with ashes were but poor substitutes for the qualities of head and heart which their name imported. As the earring or staff could not make a Jogī, even so the mere *janeū* could not make a Brahman, mere names like Bairagī, Khatri or Kazi did not count for anything, for 'names are folly' and 'it is the reality that is tested.' He is a Bairagī who abandoneth desires;[3] he is a Jogī who knoweth the way to God:[4] he is a Kazi who turneth away men from the world; [5]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 161.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 350.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 333.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 338.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 338.

he is a Brahman who knoweth God; [1] and only he could be called a Khatri, 'who is brave in good deeds and employeth his body in charity.' [2] Examples might be multiplied to show how the Guru was never tired of exposing the futility of mere forms and names without the essentials implied therein, for such empty forms and empty names inevitably meant blind conventionalism, cant and hypocrisy.

But the Guru's initial difficulties did not end here. It has already been pointed out that in his age the idea of the unity of the Godhead had practically disappeared. Avatārs and divinities, prophets and saints, pirs and dargāhs obscured the vision of men, dividing them into irreconcilable and often actively hostile groups and destroying the very bedrock of all true religious belief. In the minds of the Musalmans the Prophet had come to occupy a position almost equal to that of the Lord Himself and in practice even superior to His. Among the Hindus the worship of avatārs and divinities for centuries had practically destroyed all semblance of the unity of the Supreme Self. Herein Nanak detected one of the root causes of the ignorance and strife from which his contemporaries suffered. Indeed, it seems that in a sense religious quarrels have been the most unfortunate and unnecessary of world's tragedies. It can easily be seen that if Christians can be persuaded to think of God before Christ, and likewise the Hindus, the Muhammadans or the present-day Sikhs, much of our difficulties would automatically disappear. Guru

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 381.
[2] *Ibid.*

Nanak had realised this, that the unity was fundamental and eternal, and the differences only secondary and accidental. It is said that when the Guru visited Shaikh Brahm at Pak Pattan the latter asked:

> "There is one Lord and two ways;
> Which shall I adopt and which reject?"

In reply Nanak said:

> "There is but one Lord and one way;
> Adopt one and reject the other,
> Why should we worship a second who is born and dieth?
> Remember the one God, Nanak, who is contained in sea and land." [1]

The hymns and compositions of Guru Nanak are replete with this idea of the greatness of God and the comparative insignificance of everything else. "There are hundreds of thousands of Muhammads," says the Guru; "many Muhammads stand in his Court." [2] It is ridiculous to try to conceal the greatness of God by glorifying the deeds of Krishans or Rams." [3] These before God are not even like a tiny star before the mighty sun. The Guru says:

> "Nanak humbly asserteth, God is contained in sea and land, in the upper and lower regions;
> He is unseen, inscrutable, omnipotent, the kind creator.

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 102. The 'setting' may not be historically true but that does not affect our argument.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 121.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 305.

The Merciful alone is permanent ; the whole world beside is transitory.

Call him permanent on whose head no destiny is recorded.

The heavens and the earth shall pass away; He the one God alone is permanent." [1]

Thus did Nanak strive to transcend all transitory forms and take men direct to the ultimate reality. But men's obsessions were so varied and so numerous that the lesson had to be continually hammered upon them before any appreciable impression could be made. This is important to remember, for otherwise the frequent repetition of the same idea in the hymns and compositions of Guru Nanak as well as in those of his successors may lead us to conclude hastily like Trumpp that 'the Sikh Granth is incoherent and shallow in the extreme.' [2] As Macauliffe says, "It is intelligible that repetitions should be found in the sacred books of several religions, for the teachings of their prophets were orally addressed to crowds who clustered round them, and repetitions served to impress on the listeners the instruction accorded." [3]

Further, the Guru had to tackle the obsessions that arose from a blind adherence to sacred texts and the unintelligent pursuit of mechanical rites. Nanak was not the man to mince matters and his onslaught was direct. 'Ritualistic practices are of no avail,' [4] says he. 'The profit which is obtained from pilgrimages,

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 154.

[2] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. vii. See also, pp. cxxi, cxxii.

[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Preface, p. xvii.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 370.

repeating the Smritis and bestowing alms all day long is obtained in one ghari by remembering the Name that conferreth greatness." [1] The Pandit may say that 'by reading the Veds sinful inclinations are destroyed, but the reading of the Veds is a secular occupation. Without understanding this every one shall be disgraced.' [2] Indeed, 'God's secret is not found in the Veds or books of the Musalmans,' [3] and though 'the thousands of Purans and Muhammadan books tell that in reality there is one principle' none has discovered Him. Expressions like these might be multiplied almost indefinitely but it appears that the following verses give us in a nutshell all that we require in this connection and we need not pursue the matter further. Says the Guru:

"Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a Jogi's staff, or in ashes smeared over the body;

Religion consisteth not in earrings worn, or a shaven head, or in the blowing of horns.

Religion consisteth not in mere words;

He who looketh on all men as equal is religious.

Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation;

Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimages.

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way of religion." [4]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 117.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 345.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 362.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 60.

The Guru thus brings us to his own view of the matter ; he makes ' purity ' a supreme test of true religious life. But this ' purity ' had little to do with outward practice, it was primarily a matter of inward devotion. Intoxicated with avarice, covetousness and pride, men become absorbed in mammon. ' The blindness of the inward eye, the lust of the world, the great illusion of moral materialism ' hide the truth from them making them impure in word and deed. Guru Nanak recognises in egotism and pride[1] the root of man's troubles. In complete forgetfulness of the eternal presence of God man believes himself to be the ' sole ' maker of his destiny, the supreme controller of his actions, his success and unsuccess, his pleasures and sorrows, and becomes enmeshed in worldly desires, paying the price of his indiscretion in sufferings through repeated births. Impurity consisted in this chronic pride, in the refusal to recognise the supremacy of God's will, in the wanton pursuit of worldly desires. And purity, therefore, meant abandonment of egotism and abandonment of desires. But how can this be attained ? Where to find the antidote to this chronic disease ? Nanak says, in the *Word*, in the Guru's instruction, in the support of the *Name*. ' Efface thyself, what other art is there? '[2] says the Guru. ' The pious

[1] *Āsā kī Wār, Slok* vii. The word in the original is *hau* and sometimes *haumai*. Macauliffe renders them by ' pride ' which hardly gives the sense and Teja Singh's ' ego ' (*Asa di Var*, pp 75, 76) is a distinct improvement It appears to us that by ' *hau* ' the Guru probably means that sense of false individuality which is produced by worldly attachments under the instrumentality of *Māyā*.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 77.

who meditate on God receive nectar ; it is they who are pure.' [1] Nay, 'even the perverse who obtain divine knowledge under the Guru's instruction are pure.' [2] Thus the 'purity' which Guru Nanak speaks of is hardly distinguishable from inward devotion and a recognition of the supremacy of God's will, for

> "By His order man cometh ; by His order man goeth ;
> Before and behind us His order prevaileth." [3]

Thus we are brought to the very fundamentals of Guru Nanak's teaching. It has already been seen how the Guru attempted to dissipate the obsessions of his contemporaries by breaking through the shackles of conventionalism and proclaiming the unity and the greatness of God, making all else look insignificant in His mighty presence. The field is thus set: man is brought face to face with the Supreme Spirit. Nanak is never tired of preaching the glory and greatness of God. Self-created and self-existent, the Lord pervades everything and the whole creation moves in accordance with His will. The greatness of the Lord is beyond all human conception, His glory cannot be described. His praises, His mercy, His knowledge, His gifts, 'what He seeth and what He heareth' cannot be ascertained. 'Nobody knoweth His limits.' It is only the True One Himself who knoweth how great He is. But the Lord, who appears to be far is yet known to be near ; 'beside Himself he made Nature, wherein He has His seat ;' indeed, 'this world

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 81.
2 *Ibid*, p. 134.
3 *Ibid*, p. 78.

is the true One's house ; the true One lives in it ' and He also lives within us. In the *Āsā kī Wār* we are told :

" Real are Thy universes, regions,
Countries, and created objects.
Real are Thy works and Thy purposes,
Thy rule and Thy administration,
Thy orders and Thy edicts,
Thy mercy and the mark of Thy acceptance.
Hundreds of thousands, millions upon millions
Call upon Thee as the true Reality.
All energies and forces are from that Reality.
Thy praise and glorification is of real worth.
Thy laws of Nature, O true King, are real."[1]

Reality is thus ascribed to the Lord's creation as well but it should be understood in a limited sense. As Teja Singh says, ' according to Guru Nanak, Man and Nature form one grand truth or reality, not a reality final and abiding, but a reality on account of God's presence in it. Everything in its own degree is as real as God.' [2] In Guru Nanak's compositions we

[1] Teja Singh, *Asa di Var, Slok* II.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 128. It is also said that ' Real ' should be understood as " not simply true as opposed to false, but real as opposed to imaginary, delusive, and baseless as conceived in Vedantism." Teja Singh would have been more accurate if he had written Vedantism as interpreted by Sankara. We are also told that in presenting the double phase of the Supreme Being by combining immanence with transcendence ' the Gurus have avoided the pitfalls into which the people of both East and West had fallen.' We have no concern here with what the writer says about the Semitic peoples of the West. It is said that the Aryans of the East who believed in the immanence of God were not true monotheists but were either pantheistic or polytheistic or

are, therefore, to understand *Māyā* [1] not in the sense of metaphysical unreality but rather as the producer of that sense of false individuality which makes man forget God and his real Self and induces him to set up his own in antagonism to the Supreme Will. As we have already pointed out, this was the root of man's troubles and Guru Nanak offers us his great antidote—surrender to God and the love of His *Name*. As 'God is self-created ; so is His *Name*,' and 'by obeying Him man attaineth the gate of salvation.'

at best rigid monists (pp. 123-25). We cannot but point out that these remarks are absolutely without foundation. The Sikh Gurus cannot be given any credit for originality in this respect because the dual aspect, referred to above, is clearly presented in the system of Ramanuja. As Radhakrishnan says, 'To Rāmānuja, God is both the transcendent and the immanent ground of the world' (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 686). And Ramanuja is anticipated in still earlier works. (*Cf. Gītā*, x, 42 : viṣṭabhyāham idaṃ kṛtsnam ekāṃśena sthito jagat; *Kaṭha*, iv, 9 : ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarāttmā rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo bahiśca.) Indeed, it would serve no useful purpose to forget that the Sikh Gurus were simple men whose strength lay not in the originality of their philosophical conceptions but rather in that innate, wisdom and charm of personality that compel respect. For most of their ideas the Sikh Gurus, like the other teachers of the Medieval school, were indebted to the great Vaishnava philosopher Ramanuja, whose theistic idealism was the fountain that fed the *Bhakti* movement. The speciality of Sikhism did not consist in the novelty of its ideas but rather, as we have said before, in that unique spirit of organisation that made it so definite in its practical results.

[1] "Maya is that by which man forgets God, a false attachment is produced in him, and he begins to love something else in the place of Godr." *Ānand*, III, 29 : quoted by Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, p. 137. As we have indicated above, *Māyā* produces that "hau" which is the root of all men's troubles.

The glory of the *Name*[1] and the merit of singing it are also as enthusiastically and solemnly proclaimed as the glory and greatness of God. The Guru says:

"By hearing the Name truth, contentment, and divine knowledge are obtained.

Hearing the Name is equal to bathing at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage.

By hearing the Name and reading it man obtaineth honour.

By hearing the Name the mind is composed and fixed on God.

Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more." [2]

Pilgrimages, austerities, reading the sacred books, ritualistic practices and thousand other devices of the kind were all unavailing without the *Name*. Indeed, those who forget the *Name* are the falsest of the false and ever wander in transmigration. Salvation is for those who are immersed in the ambrosial nectar of the *Name* and walk in the path of obedience. We are told:

"By obeying Him man's path is not obstructed;

By obeying Him man departeth with honour and distinction;

[1] As Teja Singh points out, the word 'Name' bears various meanings. Sometimes it is used for God Himself; sometimes in the sense of 'God as revealed' and it also bears a third sense, 'the word as recorded in the Holy Scripture' (*Asa di Var*, pp. 126-27). In studying the message of Guru Nanak we might as well take it in the sense of 'the *Word* as revealed through the Guru.'

[2] *Japji*, X; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 200-201.

By obeying Him man proceedeth in ecstasy on his way;

By obeying Him man formeth an alliance with virtue—

So pure is God's name—

Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart."[1]

Thus the two essential requisites for a pure and virtuous life are the love of the *Name* and obedience to God, by which we should possibly understand 'the attuning of the individual to the Supreme Will.'

But this is not all. It is emphatically laid down that a man can never be imbued with a true love of the *Name* and a spirit of surrender without the Guru's instruction. Unequivocally Guru Nanak states:

"None has realised God without the true Guru; without the true Guru, none.

God has placed Himself in the true Guru, and has manifested and declared Himself through him."[2]

The True One, the Formless was incomprehensible and He could only be attained by faith and love. But how shall the love of the *Name* be instilled into one's mind? Nanak says, the Guru will show the way:

"Under the Guru's instruction God's word is heard; under the Guru's instruction its knowledge is acquired; under the Guru's instruction man learns that God is everywhere contained."[3] Through the

[1] *Japji*, XIV: Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 202.
Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, VI, pp. 74, 75.
*Japji*, V. Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. I, p. 198.

Guru's instruction it is known that God is in the heart [1] and men become absorbed in the love of the *Name*. How to scale the fortress without a ladder ? 'The Guru giving me God's name is my ladder, my boat and my raft.' [2] How to cross over this fearful ocean of the world, which has no shore or limit, no boat, no raft, no pole and no boatman ? 'The Guru has a vessel for the terrible ocean, and ferrieth over him on whom he looketh with favour.' [3] There could thus be no salvation without the Guru ; 'without a religious guide man would run riot in evil and haste to perdition.' [4]

But the question still remains, how could the Guru be found ? The answer is immediate :

> "Only that man finds peace, who meets the true Guru,
> And enshrines the Name of God in his heart ;
> And that too, Nanak, if God sends him Grace." [5]

The spiritual regeneration of man is thus made initially dependent on Divine pleasure. Here we have an echo of the old *Upaniṣadic* saying, 'only he gains Him whom the Self chooses for Himself.' [6] Like the doctrines of the unity of the Supreme Self and the indispensableness of the Guru this idea of Divine grace is also repeatedly stressed by Guru Nanak. 'The

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 297.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 262.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 270.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 296.
[5] Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, IX, p. 82.
[6] *Kaṭha*, II. 23.

greatness of the Name is bestowed according to Thy pleasure, O God,'[1] says he. 'The worshippers on whom God bestoweth kindness worship Him,' and 'by the Guru's instruction to his disciples this knowledge is obtained that the kind One saveth those on whom He looketh with favour.'[2] This theory of Grace introduces us to that implicit contradiction which we find broadcast in Guru Nanak's compositions. "The hymns of Nanak, like those of Kabir, contain two distinct currents, which frequently flow on side by side like the Rhone and the Saone, and hardly mingle." The dual aspect of the Supreme Self, as it is found in the Guru's compositions, has already been referred to. "He is the Absolute, raised above all differentiation, of whom nothing can be predicated, because he is eternal and immutable, without attributes (*nirguṇa*). But he is also the immanent God of the visible world, Maker of all beings, as fully contained in the ant as in the elephant, dowered with all the qualities of his boundless creation (*sarva-guṇa*).[3] Besides, there is that contradiction between what may be called free will and predestination, between man as the maker of his destiny and man as a helpless instrument in the hands of Fate. On the one hand, we are told that 'as man soweth so shall he reap.' Man's life is as his acts constrain him and each person is responsible himself for his actions, and shall have to settle his account himself. Men shall be judged according to their acts; an account of every *ghari* and moment shall be taken, and

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 20.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 57, 58.
[3] Estlin Carpenter, *ibid*, p. 485.

the soul shall obtain punishment or reward.[1] 'Here is an ethical demand, strictly encompassing the raptures of religious ecstasy, which recognised a sphere of independent action, and set up man as the maker of his own fate.' And the point is further emphasised by a description of the terrible fate that would await all sinners after death.[2] 'As sesame is heated and pressed, or cotton carded by means of a thong, so shall sinners be punished,' says the Guru. But, on the other hand, it is definitely laid down that 'what pleaseth God shall happen, there is nothing whatever in the power of His creatures.' Such destiny shall attend man as God's pen has recorded upon his forehead, and if it please God man crosses the terrible ocean, if it please Him he is drowned therein. 'It is the God Himself who acteth, no one else acteth.' The kind One saves those on whom He looks with favour and the holy have thus good fortunes written on their foreheads.[3] Here then we have an entirely different approach in which man appears helpless in the hands of inexorable Fate, receiving his share of preordained pleasure or pain. Carpenter says that "the implicit contradiction is partially solved by the incorporation of the moral order as realised by the Law of the Deed in in the Divine Will."[4] But this hardly goes to the root of the matter for it still leaves uncertain whether man is an entirely free agent so far as his actions are concerned. Another explanation may possibly be that

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 70, 90, 124, 133, 244.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 125.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 58, 66, 87, 100, 145.
[4] Estlin Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 487.

there is really no contradiction in Guru Nanak's utterances and that what appears to be such is due to the fact that these words were addressed in different times to different persons in different stages of spiritual development.[1] However, it appears to us that in practice the problem was solved in a more effective manner. Guru Nanak asks of his disciple a total surrender to the Guru, a resignation of his own wisdom so that he might be saved by the superior wisdom of the Guru. Thus it is evident that as soon as an individual came under the protection of the Guru, the contradiction, referred to above, disappeared so far as he was concerned, because henceforward the Guru alone acted, the disciple having no separate will apart from that of the former. His sole business was to walk in the path laid down by the Guru and carry out his wishes in implicit obedience.

This gives us in outline the main elements of the message of Guru Nanak. Three things stand out pre-eminently: The One True Lord, the Guru, and the Name. Salvation lay in the *Word* of God and the *Word* could only be known under the Guru's instruction. "Without the Guru all is darkness; without the Word nothing can be known,"[2] says Nanak. The Guru is thus the main link in the chain, the pivot on which everything else hinges. And the importance of this will become more and more evident as we trace the development of Sikhism through its various stages. But there is another aspect of the matter which requires

[1] This explanation has been suggested to me by my Gurumukhi teacher, Bhai Ajmer Singh.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 135.

immediate attention. From what has been said above it may well appear that Guru Nanak was a revolutionary who aimed at upsetting the cherished institutions of the society in which he was born, bringing about a social cataclysm and building a new order on the ruins of the old. It may seem that he had denounced in turn almost all the important usages and institutions that he found in vogue and that he had asked his contemporaries to follow a new path in absolute indifference to all past traditions and practices. Avatars and divinities, pilgrimages and ritualistic practices, the caste system and its usages were all swept aside and the religious observances on which Jogīs, Sidhs and others like them prided themselves were thrown against their faces as so many heaps of dust. In short, one might be inclined to think that Guru Nanak was not a reformer who wanted to remove the abuses that had crept into the old order and set it right by restating it in terms of newer environments but that his object was to cut himself adrift from the old moorings and set up an independent path by itself. If we have understood him aright, this seems to be the view of Macauliffe and there can be little doubt that the trend of modern Sikh opinion also lies in that direction. There indeed can be no question that Sikhism gradually developed on certain distinctive lines and at last stood clearly differentiated from the older creeds but the point with which we are at present concerned is—how are we to understand its start ? A close study of the question has convinced us that an immediate answer is no easy matter and that several important facts have got to be explained and

accounted for before one could accept the views of modern writers like Macauliffe and Bhai Kahn Singh.[1]

We would begin with the important question, the most important of all, *viz.*, the caste-system which formed the steel frame of the society in which Guru Nanak was born. The trend of modern opinion is that Nanak attempted its total abolition. Macauliffe is inclined to think that the Guru attacked the caste-system most vehemently and most successfully and Carpenter says that 'Nanak broke down caste restrictions in every direction.' Bhai Kahn Singh and Teja Singh also appear to be emphatic in their opinion that the Guru had no mercy for caste and its usages. This sweeping conclusion is based primarily on certain remarks of Guru Nanak about caste and its various obligations that we find in his hymns and compositions. But it appears to us that this sort of evidence should always be taken with a good deal of caution. In the first place, it should be remembered that the context is, in most cases, irrecoverably lost, the 'settings' attempted in the *Janam-sākhīs* being almost wholly unacceptable; secondly, the remarks themselves are not always consistent; and lastly, they often contradict indisputable facts. Indeed, it seems to us that their true import has not unoften

[1] In his well-known treatise, *Ham Hindu Nahin*, Bhai Kahn Singh seeks to establish that the Sikhs are not Hindus. It should be clearly understood that we have no concern with that question here. There cannot be any doubt that Sikhism gradually developed on certain distinctive lines of its own and particularly after the reformation by Guru Gobind Singh the Sikhs have stood clearly differentiated from every other community. But we are not so sure of the rise of Sikhism and its earlier days.

been misunderstood. A few examples, we hope, would make our position absolutely clear.

Vitally connected with the question of caste is the custom of wearing the sacred thread. Bhai Kahn Singh and others of his way of thinking would have us believe that Guru Nanak sought to abolish the custom altogether. The sole evidence on which the Bhai relies is that well known *Slok* on the sacred thread that is found in the *Āsā kī Wār*. It runs thus:

"Out of the cotton of mercy make threads of temperateness, and twisting them with Righteous Zeal tie in them the knot of continence.

The sacred thread thus formed will be for the soul,
If thou hast it, O Pundit, put it on me.
It will not break, or get soiled, or be burnt or lost.
Blessed is the man, O Nanak, who goes about with such a thread on his neck.

Thy thread is bought for four pies, and is put on in an outlined place.

With instructions whispered in the ear that the Brahmin has become the guru.

When the man dies, the thread falls off, and he goes away threadless." [2]

The *Janamsākhīs* state that when Nanak was nine years old his father Kalu made arrangements for investing him with the sacred thread and that the Guru uttered this *Slok* in remonstrance to the Pandit when the latter was just going to put the thread on his

1 *Ham Hindu Nahin*, p. 87 ; *Gurumat Prabhākar*, p. 492.
2 Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, pp. 98, 99.

neck.[1] There can be no doubt that this is a later setting and we would, therefore, turn immediately to the *Slok* itself. Now, apart from this dubious context, what does this *Slok* by itself prove ? Does it indicate that Guru Nanak wanted to do away with the custom of wearing sacred threads or is it a homily addressed to a Pandit who considered the wearing of the sacred thread by itself a ground of religious excellence ? Now, on another occasion the Guru says :

"They are not to be called pure who wash their bodies and sit at leisure.

Rather are they pure, Nanak, who enshrine the Lord in their hearts." [2]

Can this verse be taken to mean that the Guru is here attacking the practice of washing and bathing ? If the answer be in the negative, we would be hardly entitled to take the previous *Slok* as a diatribe against the custom of wearing sacred threads. And again, to come to a more pointed illustration, in a hymn in *Rāg Āsā* the Guru says:

"There is only one kitchen of the Lord and none other.

No other kitchen can work, nor can it remain long in the world,

The giver himself is merciful and the whole universe is at play,

He alone is competent to give and feed all.

He has given soul, life, body, wealth, flavours and delicious victuals. We ourselves cannot do anything, the Lord has preordained all,

[1] *Nānak Prakās*, Part I, ix ; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 16, 17.

[2] *Āsā ki Wār, Slok* XVII.

The Lord at the head of all is one, the Sidhs and Sadhs are helpless,

O Nanak, all are applicants, whereas the giver is the only one, the Creator."

It is said that this was the Guru's answer when Rai Bular offered him three wells for the maintenance of a public kitchen.[1] Whatever that might be, it is certain that this hymn cannot be taken to mean that the Guru was hereby rejecting the practice of maintaining *Langars* or free public kitchens, for we definitely know that in the earlier days of Sikhism the *Langar* was one of the most characteristic of its institutions. Indeed, it seems clear to us that in every one of these instances the Guru was warning the listeners against their persistent habit of confusing the means with the end by pointing out to them the limited utility of such practices as the wearing of the sacred thread, bathing and washing, or the maintenance of a public kitchen. Teja Singh thinks that the sacred thread was only a symbol of exclusiveness[2] but when rightly understood it was a constant memento to its wearer of the traditions of the family in which he was born and of the natural proclivities of the blood that was in him. What the Guru said was that it meant nothing more. He did not seek to abolish the custom of wearing the sacred thread but vigorously denounced the untenable claims advanced on the strength of the thread alone.

Indeed, if we do not take the Guru's utterances in this light several indisputable facts become difficult

[1] Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion* Part II, pp. 359, 360.

[2] Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, p. 27.

and almost impossible of explanation. Guru Nanak was not the man to advocate one thing and practise another and if it had really been his intention to abolish the custom of wearing sacred threads it becomes difficult to understand why he himself had worn it to the last.[1] There is no evidence to show that any of his successors had given it up; on the other hand, it appears from the writings of Bhai Gur Das Bhala, quoted by Malcolm, that "the family of Govin, proud of their descent, had not laid aside the Zunnar, or holy cord, to which they were, as belonging to the Cshatriya race, entitled."[2] Mohsin Fani speaks of a disciple of Guru Hargobind, Sadah by name, 'who was neither gladdened by good nor afflicated by bad fortune.' The author of the *Dabistān* goes on to say, "I was once his companion on a journey from Kabul to the Punjab. The belt of my coat broke; Sadah gave me immediately his Zunnar to serve me as a belt. I said to him: 'Why do you this?' He answered: 'To tie the Zunnar purports an engagement to serve another; as often as I render some service to friends, may I resign my Zunnar for it.'" This incident must be regarded as extremely important as it practically sets the question at rest. This Sadah was a man who was every inch a true disciple of the Gurus. Mohsin Fani says that on one occasion he did not stop even to see his dying son because that might delay the execution of the mission entrusted to him by the Guru. 'I went about the Guru's business and will not

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 249.

[2] *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 67, 68 f. n.

return,"[1] said he. Such a man also had not given up the *janeū* but he had no fetish about it and to him it was not a symbol of caste-pride and exclusiveness. Still another incident may be mentioned to show that there had been no abolition of the custom of wearing sacred threads. It is said that on one occasion Guru Gobind Singh asked for some thread to tie up his sword-belt. Daya Singh, the first of the Guru's disciples under the new system of initiation by *pahul*, was present there and he at once tore off his *janeū* and offered it to the Guru.[2] It thus appears that the sacred thread had not been given up even after the introduction of Guru Gobind Singh's reforms. The argument would possibly be advanced that a time-honoured custom like this could not be made to die out so soon and that these instances are to be taken as exceptions which rather prove the rule. But it should be remembered that we come across no example of the contrary type, and when we find that Guru Nanak himself had not given it up and that possibly the sons of Guru Gobind Singh himself had worn it and also that two ideal Sikhs like Sadah and Daya Singh had it on their necks, the conclusion is irresistible that no abolition of the custom had at all been attempted. Guru Nanak had merely emphasised the limited character of its utility and denounced the perversions that it produced in proud and hypocritical minds.

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, pp. 284, 285.

[2] It is said that the matter did not end here. Daya Singh did not take up the sacred thread again. The matter was then reported to the Guru on which the latter remained silent, and so on (*Sūraj Prakāsh, Rut*, III, 28). But this sequel has nothing to do with us at present.

This gives us a new view-point and compels us to look more closely into the whole question of Guru Nanak's attitude towards the caste-system. In the hymns and compositions of Guru Nanak there are, no doubt, several remarks which may seem, at first sight, to lead to the inevitable conclusion that the Guru wanted completely to brush it aside. On one occasion the Guru tells us:

> "What difference is there between a swan and a crane if God look kindly on the latter?
>
> Nanak, if it please Him, He can change a raven into a swan." [1]

And again,

> "Castes are folly, names are folly:
> All creatures have one shelter, that of God.
> If a man calls himself good,
> The truth shall be known, O Nanak, when his account is accepted." [2]

In the *Āsā kī Wār* as well the Guru speaks in the same strain:

> "Man's evil becometh known, O Nanak; the true One seeth all.
> Every one maketh endeavours, but it is only what the Creator doeth that taketh place.
> Caste hath no power in the next world: there is a new order of beings.
> They whose accounts are honoured are the good." [3]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 278.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid*, p. 223, *Slok* IX.

Teja Singh remarks that " the Guru most effectively refutes the reason or necessity of this institution (caste) by inculcating the belief in one God who fills all beings, whether high or low, and whose light reaches down to the lowest orders of beings."[1] We are not here in any way concerned with the reason or the necessity of the caste-system but our point is whether the passages referred to above indicate in any way that Guru Nanak wanted to abolish it altogether as some modern writers would have us believe. Indeed, after what we have seen about the custom of wearing sacred threads no question of abolition can at all arise, but even if we take the above remarks by themselves all that can possibly be said is that Guru Nanak was warning his listeners that exclusive reliance on caste was absolute foolishness. It was the work and mentality that really mattered because, ' high or low caste influenceth not God when He makes any one great.' If we want to understand the attitude of Guru Nanak it seems essenital that we should recognise a distinction which is very easily lost sight of, the distinction between caste and caste-pride. The Guru had no mercy for the latter. To the hypocritical and arrogant Brahman the Guru says:

" O Brahman, so meditate on God
That his name may become thy purification,
His name thy learning, and His name thy wisdom and good acts.
The sacrificial thread is only on thy body as long as thou hast life,

[1] Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, p. 9.

Make the remembrance of the Name thy loin-cloth and frontal mark,

And it shall abide with thee in this world and the next." [1]

And, as we have seen before, Jogis, Sidhs, Bairāgīs, Khatrīs, Kazis and Mullahs, all met with the same reception in his hands. He used his lash vigorously on the pride of caste and the pride of name but his remarks hardly entitle us to conclude that he wanted a total destruction of the entire social system.

In this connection much has been made of the remark of Bhai Gurdas that 'Guru Nanak had reduced the four castes into one.[2] But, do the facts as we know them lend any support to a literal interpretation of this remark? Is there any evidence to show that the Sikhs were ignoring the prohibitions of caste and forming themselves into a new brotherhood in which caste-usages had no place? We would have occasion hereafter to discuss the point in detail; for the present, suffice it to say that we know of no instances of intermarriage but, on the contrary, we have definite information that marriages even between Sikhs and non-Sikhs took place when the caste-considerations were favourable.[3] How are we then to interpret the remark of Bhai Gurdas? Having regard to the circumstances of the time of Guru Nanak and even that of Bhai Gurdas we are left no alternative but to take it in a figurative sense. All that Bhai

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 307.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 23. cār varan ik varan karāyā. See *Ham Hindu Nahin*, p. 81.

[3] For a further discussion of the question, see Appendix A.

Gurdas possibly meant is that Nanak had brought men belonging to all the four castes under the protection of the same true Guru and the *Name*. At any rate, his remark is not in the least conclusive regarding the attitude of Guru Nanak towards the caste-system.

In fact, there is no solid ground to contend that Guru Nanak had attempted the abolition of the caste-system. But at the same time it will not do for us to forget that the theistic teachers of the medieval school brought about a significant innovation. The Guru says:

> "No one calleth clarified butter or silk impure;
> Such is a saint in regard to caste." [1]

Here we have almost an echo of the well-known Vaishnava saying that even an outcaste with real devotion to God is superior to the Brahman.[2] It has already been pointed out that the medieval *Bhakti* movement owed its inspiration and most of its ideas to the system of Ramanuja but there was a remarkable difference. The glorious and blissful freedom that Ramanuja proclaimed to be the goal of man's spiritual endeavours had been reserved by him to the Twice-born of the first three castes. "Not for the Çudra is the grace of God available in this life. By dutiful conduct he may work his way up to another birth in which he may be admitted to the study of the Vedas which is indispensable for the saving knowledge." [3]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 120.

[2] The original in Sanskrit is "Caṇḍālo'pi dvijaśreṣṭhaḥ Hari-bhakti-parāyaṇaḥ."

[3] Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

This barrier was now broken through and the secret of the *Name* thrown open to all persons, irrespective of birth. But, as Carpenter points out, even in this respect the way had already been prepared by the doctrine of *prapatti* or surrender to God. 'Those who felt themselves helpless might seek the advice of a preceptor and resign themselves to the heavenly will,' and this path was open to all, irrespective of caste or colour or creed.[1] This doctrine was now given a more general and extended application and took the form of surrender to God and the Guru, and the love of the *Name*. And the historical reasons for this are not difficult to seek out. The political ascendency of Islam and its vigorous proselytism had shaken the Hindu society to its very foundations. The reaction, in its first phase, resulted in a strengthening of the forces of conventionalism and scripturalism but the futility of the attempt became soon evident. It became necessary to put forward an ideal, simple yet manly, popular yet vigorous, suitable to the masses yet unsuitable to none. Speaking historically, this was what teachers like Chaitanya or Nanak sought to achieve. But the new ideal grew out of the old, it was a development and

[1] Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 416. Radhakrishnan says, 'Prapatti is complete resignation to God, and is, according to the Bhāgavatas, the most effective means for gaining salvation. It is open to all, the learned as well as the ignorant, the high as well as the low, while the path of bhakti, involving as it does jñāna and karma, is confined to the three upper classes.' We are further told that while according to the northern school prapatti is one way of reaching the goal and not the only way, the southern school, which follows more closely the tradition of the Ālvārs, holds that prapatti is the only way to salvation (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 705, 706). There can be no doubt that the medieval teachers, in that respect, agree with the southern school.

not a new departure. Guru Nanak had not attempted a destruction of the old order but a reformation to suit the growing needs of the time.

Indeed, if we do not take Guru Nanak in this light it becomes difficult to understand his message. Leaving aside the question of caste for the present, we would try to illustrate the point by taking up an apparently more simple matter, *viz.*, Guru Nanak's attitude towards such customs as pilgrimages, ritualistic observances and the like. The writers, referred to above, have absolutely no doubt that the Guru had no mercy for such futile practices and that he had asked his followers to eschew them altogether.[1] It is undoubtedly true that in the Guru's hymns and compositions we come across many remarks that would seem to support this conclusion.[2] On one occasion the Guru pointedly observes:

> "Let Jogis practise Jog, let gluttons practise gluttony,
> Let penitents practise penance, and rub and bathe themselves at places of pilgrimages ;
> But let me listen to thy songs, O Beloved, if any will sit and sing them to me." [3]

These are strong words and one cannot be blamed if one thinks that the Guru was hereby advocating an unqualified rejection of these practices. But is there anything intrinsically wrong in such practices as pilgrimages, penance or charity ? Are we to believe

1 *Ham Hindu Nahin*, pp. 165-174; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. xxi.
2 *Supra*, pp. 101, 102.
3 Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 10.

that a man like Guru Nanak had denounced such virtues as mercy, alms-giving and self-restraint ? If not, we are bound to seek a different explanation of his attitude and fortunately there are enough indications in his own sayings for such an explanation. In the *Japjī* the Guru says:

"Pilgrimage, austerities, mercy, and alms-giving on general and special occasions

Whosoever performeth, may obtain some little honour ;

But he who heareth and obeyeth and loveth God in his heart,

Shall wash off his impurity in the place of pilgrimage within him." [1]

Here again it is clear that Guru Nanak was laying stress on the limited utility of these practices and the superiority of true inward devotion. We may even go further and say that without the latter the former were of no avail. The Guru had possibly this in mind when he said:

"Burnt offerings, sacred feasts, and the reading of the Purans,

If pleasing to God, are acceptable." [2]

The meaning obviously is that these things by themselves were of no value and that they could be helpful only when they were performed in a true spirit of devotion. In his satire on the Jains the Guru

[1] *Japjī*, XXI. We have preferred Macauliffe's to Teja Singh's translation (*The Japjī*, p. 36). It is not necessary, however, to discuss the respective merits of the two renderings because even if Teja Singh's interpretation be correct, the argument is not vitiated.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 28.

says that 'the gods appointed the sixty-eight places of pilgrimages, and holy days were fixed accordingly by their orders,' and he ridicules the Jains because they were granted no access to these places of pilgrimage. They are further censured because they had no sacrificial marks on their foreheads and 'did not give their deceased relations lamps or perform their last rites, or place anywhere barley rolls and leaves for them.' Macauliffe remarks that the Jains conformed in many ways to Hindu customs and the Guru here censures them for not being altogether consistent.[1] But this is more or less true of all sects that have arisen from within Hinduism including the followers of Guru Nanak himself and it becomes difficult to understand why the Guru should particularly select the Jains and censure them for the non-observance of certain customs which he himself regarded as of little or no consequence. In short, it seems to us that, as in the matter of the sacred thread, it is necessary that we should revise our judgment regarding Guru Nanak's attitude towards such practices as pilgrimage, penance, alms-giving and the like. The Guru says:

"The Ganges, the Jamna, the meeting of the three rivers at Tribeni, Priyag, the seven oceans,

Alms, charity, and worship are all contained in God's name. I recognise Him as the One God in every age.

Nanak, in the month of Magh, if I repeat God's name with great delight, I bathe at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage." [2]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 151.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 144.

With this, taken as a whole, nobody need have any quarrel but from this it would be a big jump to come at once to the conclusion that the Guru was hereby denouncing pilgrimage, alms-giving, charity and worship. Indeed, it cannot be too strongly insisted that the evidence of the Guru's sayings and compositions should be taken with a good deal of reservation. His was the language of reaction and his persistent endeavour to hammer the fundamental truth on his listeners gives a seemingly destructive tone to his sayings which may well mislead the unwary. The point appears to us so important that we make no apology for adducing a few examples. It is stated in the *Janamsākhīs* that when Guru Nanak's father Kalu represented to him that he required assistance in the cultivation of his land and asked Nanak to turn his attention to agriculture the Guru said:

> "Make thy body the field, good works the seed, irrigate with God's name ;
>
> Make thy heart the cultivator ; God will germinate in thy heart, and thou salt thus obtain the dignity of nirvan."

And again,

> "Make thy mind the ploughman, good acts the cultivation, modesty the irrigating water, and thy body the field to *till*,
>
> The Name the seed, contentment the harrow, and the garb of humanity thy fence :
>
> By the work of love the seed will germinate ; thou mayest behold happy the homes *of persons* who thus act."

It is said that Kalu then wanted his son to take up the occupation of a shopkeeper and the Guru replied:

"Make the knowledge that life is frail thy shop, the true name thy stock-in-trade;

Make meditation and contemplation thy piles of vessels; put the true Name into them.

Deal with the dealers of the true Name and thou shalt gladly take home thy profits."

Nanak was next asked to take up the occupation of a merchant and to deal in horses but he replied in the same strain:

"Make thy hearing of thy sacred books thy merchandise, truth the horses thou takest to sell;

Tie up virtues as thy travelling expenses, and think not in thy heart of tomorrow."

At last in despair Kalu asked him to take government service, whereupon the Guru remarked:

"Make attention thy service, faith in the name thine occupation;

Make the restraint of evil thine effort, so shall men congratulate thee." [1]

The story of the conversation between the father and the son may or may not be true but we are here concerned with the verses alone. It is clear that these utterances can, in no way, lead to the conclusion that the Guru was hereby denouncing the professions of cultivation, shop-keeping, trade or government service. Similarly, when the Guru says:

"Make kindness thy mosque, sincerity thy prayer-carpet, what is just and lawful thy Quran,

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 21-23.

Modesty thy circumcision, civility thy fasting, so shalt thou be a Musalman;

Make right conduct thy Kaaba, truth thy spiritual guide, good works thy creed and thy prayer,

The will of God thy rosary, and God will preserve thine honour, O Nanak," [1]

we would be hardly justified in thinking that Nanak is attacking Islam and rejecting its institutions and practices. Again, when the Brahman is told:

"Make the remembrance of the Name thy loin-cloth and frontal mark,

And it shall abide with thee in this world and the next.

Search for nothing but the true Name;

Make God's love thy worship, the burning of the love of wealth *thine incense*.

Look only on the one God, search for none other." [2]

we must not hastily conclude that the Guru is here denouncing the Brahman, the loin-cloth and the frontal mark. And this gives us a viewpoint which has got to be consistently applied if we wish to understand Guru Nanak aright. As we have said more than once, Nanak was primarily concerned in dispelling the illusion that arose from a confusion of the means with the end and his criticism of the means was concrete and not abstract. He had nothing to say against charity, penance, or pilgrimage as such but denounced them as he found them in actual practice. He attacked the perversions, not the customs themselves. When the Guru says, "the more one wandereth on pilgrimages, the more one

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 88.

babbleth,"[1] his criticism is directed more towards the man than the practice itself.

And further, it is admitted on all hands that Guru Amar Das had undertaken a pilgrimage to Kurkhetar, the Jamna and the Ganges. It is stated in the *Sūraj Prakās*, a work written nearly three hundred years after the event, that this was done in accordance with the advice of Emperor Akbar and that the object was to divert the wrath of the Hindus. This story may very well be of doubtful authenticity;[2] in fact, Bhai Kahn Singh ignores it altogether and takes his stand on entirely different grounds. In the first place it is stated in Jetha's account of the pilgrimage, which is incorporated in the *Granth Sāhib*, that 'the true Guru made the toil of pilgrimage in order to save all people,' and Bhai Kahn Singh remarks that the Guru's object in undertaking the journey was to preach the truth and thereby dispel ignorance. Secondly, attention is drawn to the fact that the Guru did nowhere perform the customary rites and consequently his was not a pilgrimage in the ordinary sense.[3] But there is another instance which Bhai Kahn Singh ignores and to which this explanation does not seem to apply. Guru Tegh Bahadur had also visited various places of pilgrimage and we are told by no less an authority than Guru Gobind Singh himself that when he came to Prayag,' he passed

[1] *Ibid*, p. 307.

[2] But it is important to note that the remission of the pilgrim-tax on the Guru and his party establishes a connection of the Emperor with the Guru's pilgrimage.

[3] Kahn Singh, *Hūm Hindu Nahin*, pp. 172-73.

his days in charity and other meritorious acts.'[1] The conclusion is obvious. Guru Tegh Bahadur at least had no prejudice about certain formalities which, in the opinion of several modern writers, had been denounced and abolished by Guru Nanak.

We venture to hope that the foregoing remarks have made at least this much clear that the question in hand is a complicated one and that any conclusion based solely on the utterances and compositions of Guru Nanak may very well be misleading. There are, however, several matters where, in addition to the Guru's own remarks, the history of Sikhism as well points invariably to only one possible conclusion: we may take, for instance, the question of Nanak's attitude towards avatārs and divinities and sacred texts like the Veds and the Koran. It has already been pointed out that one of Guru Nanak's constant themes was the glory and greatness of the One True Lord and the comparative insignificance of everything else; he was never tired of harping on the idea of the unity of the Godhead and his language is always strong and sometimes even violent. And there cannot be any doubt that Sikhism enjoined the worship of the One True Lord alone. Similarly, with regard to the sacred texts as well, the fact cannot possibly be disputed that Sikhism grew independently of these and that it recognised the authority of none but its own Gurus. The conclusion, therefore, seems obvious that in these matters at least Guru Nanak's attitude was

1 *Bacitra Nāṭak*, VIII, i. In Macauliffe's translation it is written that the 'Guru bathed at various places of pilgrimage' (Vol. V, p. 303) but there is nothing in the original about bathing. It runs thus:

jab hī jāt tribeṇī bha'e, punndān din karat bita'e.

destructive. But several considerations lead us to think that even this cannot be regarded as final ; here, as well, a qualification is necessary.

It is not difficult, even in this connection, to develop an argument on previous lines. But leaving that alone, we would concentrate our attention on one significant fact which appears to us more or less decisive. Besides the compositions of the first five Gurus and the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur together with a verse of Guru Gobind Singh which were added afterwards, the *Granth Sāhib* also contains hymns of several *Bhagats* or saints of various orders. Of these, Jaidev was indisputably a worshipper of Kṛṣṇa, Namdev adored the same deity as Vitthal, Ramananda worshipped Viṣṇu as Ramchandra, and Pipa, Sain and Rav Das were the latter's disciples.[1] Macauliffe is of opinion that probably the intention of Guru Arjan in incorporating the hymns of these saints was to enable the readers of the *Granth Sāhib* to follow the historical development of the Sikh reformation, 'for otherwise he could not have included in his compilation hymns quite opposed to the principles and tenets of his predecessors.'[2] But this is reading modern ideas in the mind of Guru Arjan and we are simply unable to accept this explanation. What was the *Granth Sāhib* ? It was the very embodiment of the Gurus, the incorporated *Word*, truth as revealed, 'even the Guru choosing for himself a seat lower than that of the Scripture.'[3] Is it conceivable that Guru Arjan had

[1] Kabir has been purposely omitted because the current view is that he, too, had denounced avatārs and divinities.

[2] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Preface, p. xxxii.

[3] Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, p. 19.

incorporated in such a work writings which were opposed to the principles that he advocated ? The conclusion must be that there is nothing in these hymns which is opposed to the principles and tenets of Sikhism, as Guru Arjan understood them.

Indeed, it seems probable that Macauliffe himself realised the difficulty of his position, for, further on, he remarks that 'the Hindu Bhagats for the most part began life as worshippers of idols, but by study and contemplation arrived at a system of monotheism which was appreciated by Guru Arjan.' [1] Again, speaking of the hymns of Namdev that are found in the *Granth Sāhib*, Macauliffe says that 'they belong to three periods of his life—boyhood when he was an idolater, manhood when he was emancipating himself from Hindu superstitions, and old age when his hymns became conformable to the ideas of religious reformers at the time, and to the subsequent teaching of the Sikh Gurus. It is on account of his later and more matured opinions that his writings have been incorporated in the sacred book of the Sikhs.' [2] Although we think that this division is uncalled for and that there is a fundamental unity in the hymns taken as a whole which Macauliffe fails to perceive, we would content ourselves by pointing out that even this does not clear the position. Guru Arjan might clearly have stopped with the hymns of the third variety and he need not have gone out of his way to incorporate others, which, in the opinion of Macauliffe, are definitely antagonistic to the fundamental tenets of Sikhism. There

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 1.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 40.

can thus be little doubt that we have got to seek a different explanation for the fact in question. And that seems simple enough if we could only, for a moment, lay aside our preconceptions and relax our attention to details. With his lofty spiritualism Guru Arjan had no difficulty in perceiving that the main thing that mattered was sincerity of purpose, earnest devotion and the spirit of surrender, and he had catholicity enough to appreciate these qualities wherever he found them. It is the selfsame spirit that made Chaitanya "as devout in a temple of Çiva as in one of Viṣṇu. Whatever form or emblem had acquired sanctity served to remind him of the object of his love. This was not the result of a crude Pantheism. It was the recognition of the value conferred by the devotion of others on objects which had aided them (however incongruous they might seem) to approach the Deity." [1] The parallel is not exact for, in the first instance, it is the devotion itself that matters, whereas in the second we are concerned with the objects of devotion. But the spirit is the same. Guru Arjan asked his Sikhs to worship and to sing the praises of the One True Lord alone but, at the same time, he taught them to respect earnest devotion and the spirit of surrender, irrespective of the object of adoration. This would explain why he incorporated in the *Granth Sāhib* several hymns which, at first sight, seem opposed to the most vital tenet of Sikhism. Thus the worship of the avatārs and divinities were not entirely valueless if it could be performed in the right spirit of devotion and surrender.

[1] Estlin Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

But at the same time it must be distinctly understood that the hymns of Guru Nanak as well as those of his successors lend absolutely no support to the theory of incarnation. It may not be improbable that the statement of Mohsin Fani, whose remarks are almost always refreshing, gives us a clue to the real attitude of Guru Nanak in this respect: "Nanak praised the religion of the Musalmans, as well as the Avatars and the divinities of the Hindus; but he knew that these objects of veneration were created and not creators, and he denied their real descent from heaven." [1] In fact, Guru Nanak does not deny the missions of prophets and holy persons. On one occasion we are told that many such came into the world, started many religions, served the one Lord who is the God of all and departed after playing their respective parts.[2] And, as regards the divinities, we should not forget that Guru Nanak does not reject them altogether. In the *Japjī* we are told:

> "One Maya in union with God gave birth to three acceptable children.
>
> One of them is creator, the second the provider, the third performeth the function of destroyer."

This is the Hindu Trinity *in toto*; but, at the same time, the Guru makes it clear that these are no independent agencies because 'as it pleaseth God, He directeth them by His orders.' [3] Again, in emphasising the glory of the *Name* and recounting the profits

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, pp. 248, 249.
[2] Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 411.
[3] *Japjī*, XXX.

that one could obtain by its repetition, the Guru says that ' by hearing the Name man becometh as Shiv, Brahma, and Indar.' [1] It thus appears that what Guru Nanak did was to place the divinities in their proper positions in relation to the One Supreme Lord ; his attack is directed not towards the divinities themselves but rather to those who allowed them to obscure the vision of the Lord and worshipped them exclusively in utter ignorance or disregard of the True One Himself.

And it appears to us that with regard to the sacred texts as well, the position is not dissimilar. So far as Guru Nanak is concerned Bhai Kahn Singh quotes only one verse from his hymns to support his theory that the Guru had rejected the sacred books.[2] A few others might possibly be added [3] but, apart from the defective nature of the evidence furnished by them, it is so difficult to reconcile them with several explicit utterances of the Guru on the matter that we have little doubt that their true import have been misunderstood. In the *Japjī* the Guru says:

" Men have grown weary at last of searching for God's limits ; the Veds say one thing, that God has no limit.

The thousands of Purans and Muhammadan books tell that in reality there is but one principle.

If God can be described by writing, then describe Him ; but such description is impossible." [4]

[1] *Japjī*, IX. In both the instances we have followed Macauliffe's translation. Teja Singh's renderings are different and give, in each case, a considerably altered sense and they are hardly borne out by the original. See Appendix B.

[2] *Ham Hindu Nahiṇ*, p. 60. [3] *Supra*, p. 102. [4] *Japjī*, XXII.

This is a position which none need dispute, and if this be construed into an attack on the sacred books it should be remembered that the criticism would apply with equal force to the *Granth Sāhib* as well. In the Sodar we read:

> "The Pandits and the Supreme Rikhis, reading their Veds, sing Thee in every age.
>
> The jewels created by Thee with the sixty-eight places of Hindu pilgrimage sing Thee." [1]

And in the *Āsā kī Wār* we have what seems like a justification of the Veds.[2] Indeed, in one place the Guru distinctly says:

> "The four books and the four Veds, which were promulgated in the world,
>
> Came down from high under the orders of the Lord God." [3]

Further, it is important to note that the Guru asked his father to make the reading of sacred books his merchandise and he advised Mian Mitha thus:

"Act according to the Quran and thy sacred books." [4] Utterances like these are difficult to reconcile with the theory that Guru Nanak had advised a wholesale rejection of the sacred books. But we think that the apparent inconsistencies would automatically disappear if we could once

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 250, 251.
[2] *Slok* XIII.
[3] Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
[4] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 23, 123.

realise the difference between an attack on Scripturalism and one on the Scriptures themselves. Guru Nanak had no mercy for men who had no real devotion and piety but still prided on their knowledge of the sacred texts, for those who considered the reading of those texts by itself a greatly meritorious act. Such persons were told plainly that 'the reading of the Veds was a secular occupation.' It does not seem improbable that the following verse of Kabir, which is found in the *Granth Sāhib*, gives us a clue to the real attitude of Nanak in this respect:

> "What availeth thee to read the Veds and Purans ?
> It is like loading a donkey with sandal whose perfume he valueth not." [1]

Again, it is significant that Bhai Gurdas attributes, partially at least, the ignorance and superstition prevalent in the world on the eve of Guru Nanak's advent to the fact that the people had forgotten the Veds. Thus, the perversity was there not because of the Veds but rather owing to the fact that the Veds had ceased to function. Further, the same author remarks that the Veds are 'the warehouse of the Guru' which enables a man to cross the ocean of worldly desires, but they could not be understood without the true Guru.[3] This is

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 247.

[2] *Wār*, I, 21.

[3] *Ibid*, I, 17. For 'warehouse of the Guru' we have in the origina 'guru haṭ.' The meaning probably is that the Veds were the store house of the Guru's instruction. It should, however, be noted that in I, 25, Bhai Gurdas writes in a somewhat different strain, for he says that nothing about 'love' is found in the Veds.

in effect what Kabir tells us in the following verse:

"The words of the sacred texts are as seas of milk ;
For that ocean let the Guru be churning-staff." [1]

It thus appears that the theory of the rejection of the sacred texts is by no means so obvious. On the other hand, it seems that Guru Nanak had merely pointed out the inutility of relying on scriptures without the saving grace of devotion and piety. Again, to speak in the words of Kabir:

"Say not that the Hindu and Musalman books are false ; false is he who reflecteth not on them." [2]

And to this we might add that false are those who parade their knowledge of the sacred texts without understanding their spirit, who confuse learning with wisdom, and who, in their hypocrisy and arrogance, prefer blind scripturalism to devotion and piety. As the Guru himself says:

"A man may load carts with books ; he may load men with books to take with him ;
Books may be put on boats ; pits may be filled with them.
A man may read books for months ; he may read them for years ;
He may read them for life ; he may read them while he hath breath—
Nanak, only one word, God's name, would be of account ; all else would be the senseless discussion of pride." [3]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 219. [2] *Ibid*, p. 277.
[3] *Asā kī Wār, Slok* IX; Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. I, p. 229.

Here again, it is not difficult to understand that the Guru's objective is the man and not the books themselves.

And the fact, that in the subsequent development of Sikhism the sacred books played little or no part, is easy to explain. So long as the appeal had been, more or less, to the intelligentsia the old texts had sufficed. Only re-interpretations had been necessary from time to time and Sanskrit was adequate to serve as the medium. But the advent of Islam had changed the whole situation ; the masses had now to be taken into confidence and the teaching administered in a language intelligible to them. This was why the teachers of the medieval *bhakti* school took up the Vernaculars as the medium of their instruction and propaganda. It is interesting to note that the contemporary political movement of our country provides us with an instructive parallel. Herein as well, so long as the intelligentsia alone were concerned, English had conveniently served the purposes of political agitation but, as the movement filtered down and reached the masses, the question of a *lingua franca*, other than English, has come prominently to the forefront. Thus, the circumstances pressed the Vernacular in, and its use by Guru Nanak does not by itself prove anything regarding his attitude towards the old Sanskrit texts.

We thus find it extremely difficult to follow the lead of the writers referred to above. It appears that there is no satisfactory evidence to contend that Guru Nanak denounced almost everything that he had found in existence and that it was his object to build an

entirely novel structure on the ruins of the old. On the contrary, the materials at our command lead us to think that he left almost everything alone and that it was his primary concern to provide his contemporaries with a new viewpoint and a detachment which would enable them to understand the relative value of things in matters religious and to distinguish the fundamental from the secondary. In fact, it has been made sufficiently clear that the message of Guru Nanak's hymns can never be understood aright unless they are approached in an altered perspective. The apparent inconsistencies would then automatically disappear and we would begin to appreciate the true significance of the Guru's utterances. How else, for instance, are we to explain a hymn like the following ?—

"The demigods in order to behold Thee, O God, made pilgrimages in suffering and hunger.

Jogis and Jatis go their own ways, and don ochre-coloured garbs.

For Thy sake, O my Lord, the darweshes are imbued with love.

Thy names are various, Thy forms are various, the number of Thy merits cannot be told.

Men leaving houses and homes, palaces, elephants and horses go abroad.

Priests, prophets, holy and sincere men leave the world to obtain salvation.

They abandon good living, rest, happiness, and dainties;

They doff clothes, and wear skins.

Imbued with Thy name they in anguish and pain become darweshes at Thy gate.

They don skins, carry begging bowls, staves, and wear hair-tufts, sacrificial threads, and loin-cloths." [1]

We make no apology for having quoted this hymn *in extenso* because it appears to us that it is, more or less, decisive and practically sets the question at rest. It will be seen that here the Guru makes it perfectly clear that Jogīs and Jatis going their own ways; priests, prophets, holy and sincere men who become *udāsīs* in order to obtain salvation; and persons practising austerities of various kinds, may 'become darweshes in God's gate' if they are imbued with the love of the *Name*; and that the wearing of ochre-coloured robes, loin-cloths, sacrificial threads, or hair-tufts: the abandonment of worldly life, and the carrying of begging bowls and staves are not, in any way, inconsistent with true devotion and piety. In short, the Guru says that the thing that really mattered was sincere devotion: without it all else were fruitless, and very often became impediments to spiritual progress. But where devotion was earnest and sincere, everything changed its colour and even impediments became useful auxiliaries. Guru Nanak had realised the truth, but it was not a truth that cut its way aloft in supreme indifference to all around: it was rather that which revitalised everything by its magic touch and encompassed all in one wide synthetic sweep.

Sikhism, no doubt, had its start in a protest but it was a protest against conventionalism and not against Hinduism. In Nanak, perhaps, the reaction

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 93, 94.

reached its limits and thus gave a poignant tone to many of his utterances which at first sight give the impression that his was a destructive and revolutionary ideal. But there is no satisfactory evidence to show that he intended to overturn the social order. At the same time, it should be noted that he was not a reformer of the modern type who wants to improve matters by piecemeal reformation, taking the abuses one after another. He had realised that the ignorance and strife from which his contemporaries suffered was due primarily to the fact that form had supplanted spirit. This was what he sought to remedy and he went straight into the heart of the disease, leaving the symptoms to take care of themselves. He knew that if people could be persuaded to regard things in the right spirit all that were unmeaning and unhealthy would automatically disappear; and the senseless disputes that troubled society were also bound to lose much of their venom and bitterness if men could be convinced that all that they were quarrelling for were, after all, immaterial. It is an admitted fact that in the medieval *bhakti* movement the supreme impulse of 'love' dominated everything else but, unfortunately, its implications have not unoften been misunderstood. It has been rather too readily taken for granted that as 'love' implied equality the main assault of the movement was directed against the caste-system. But as we have seen, at least so far as Guru Nanak is concerned, facts speak otherwise. He had the vision to perceive that any unnecessary attack on time-honoured institutions and practices would only intensify the prevailing bitterness and

strife and thus defeat his own object of extending the spirit of equality and fellowship. We must not forget that 'love' also implies toleration and that it can synthesise without destruction. The message of 'love' need not necessarily be one of uniformity; it may as well be that of unity in diversity. This is how we have understood the teaching of Guru Nanak. He was out not to kill but to heal, not to destroy but to conserve [1]. However, it was idle to expect that all would accept his diagnosis or his remedy and a new order consisting of the followers of Guru Nanak grarually came into being. How that came about is the enquiry that we intend to pursue in the following pages.

[1] This is a subject which can hardly be treated adequately in a single chapter. There are some other aspects of it which we have not brought under review for want of space; for instance, we may mention the very interesting questions that are raised by the following statement of Carpenter: "The movement of Nanak, which culminated in the formation of a kind of church nation, was fed from two sources, and attempted to establish a religion combining the higher elements of Hinduism and Islam alike" (*op. cit.*, p. 489). Our treatment of Nanak's message will show that this is a view with which we can hardly agree. However, for the present, we leave the discussion out as we intend to return to the whole question in a separate monograph.

## CHAPTER V

### The Foundation of the Sikh Panth

The nomination of Angad to the Guruship is a fact of the profoundest si gnificance in Sikh history. When Guru Nanak had stressed the indispensableness of the 'Guru' he was making no new departure, because this had been recognised by almost all the teachers of the medieval school. But the really vital moment came when he appointed a successor. As Trumpp says, 'the disciples of Nanak would no doubt have soon dispersed, and gradually disappeared, as well as the disciples of many other Gurus before Nanak, if he had not taken care to appoint a successor before his death.'[1] Whatever might have been the object of Nanak, whether he intended to found a separate path of his own, or whether, as Narang says, 'it was simply to leaven the social and religious thought of the Hindus, and to improve the general tone of their moral and spiritual life,'[2] it is clear that under the circumstances some sort of a cleavage was inevitable. It can be readily believed that Guru Nanak's propaganda had given many of his contemporaries a rude awakening but at the same time it should not be forgotten that the number of those who had come, directly or indirectly, under the Guru's influence and accepted his teachings must have been insignificant in

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii.

[2] Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

comparison with those who had not ; and if Nanak's message was not to prove a cry in the wilderness it was ess ential that his followers should unite and fight for the principles that their Master had preached. Looked at from this standpoint the nomination of Angad was a matter of supreme importance as it placed the movement under the guidance and control of a definite and indisputable leadership and gave it a distinctive turn at the very out set of its career.

As we have tried to show before, Guru Nanak had practically left the details to take care of themselves and had concerned himself more or less with the fundamentals. In fact, there had been very little of direct innovations, at least so far as social usages were concerned, and as yet there was not much to distinguish the followers of Nanak from the general Hindu mass. It is no doubt true that the Guru had clearly pointed out the uselessness of mere formalities and observances when they are divorced from the spirit that should animate them, but this was not enough and the supreme need of the moment was to clothe the Guru's message with some distinctive emblems which might give it an individuality of its own. Moreover, certain peculiar characteristics of Hinduism made such a course all the more imperative. It is important to remember that Hinduism has no cut-and-dried creed and that it never prescribes the same mode of worship for everybody. Broadly speaking, *adhikāra* or aptitude has always been regarded as a factor in the prescription of Hindu religious duties and opinions have generally been tolerated almost to any extent provided certain social usages were not wantonly violated. Under the circumstances

it was not at all difficult for Hinduism to accommodate the followers of Nanak within its folds and absorb them totally in time. As the acutely infective period of a religious movement does not last long and as, in the large majority of cases, the form has a tendency to get the better of the spirit, it is quite conceivable that Guru Nanak's efforts might easily have been dissipated. 'In order that the influences started by Nanak might continue to work, it was essential that those influences should be perpetuated,' and paradoxical as it may seem, new forms forged in order that the spirit might not disappear. The appointment of Guru Angad to the Guruship was the first great step in that direction and others were soon to follow.

Guru Angad or Lahina, as he was called before his nomination to the Guruship, was a Khatri of the Tihun [1] clan and was born in A.D. 1504. His father Pheru who was a trader by profession lived in the village of Matte di Sarai but later on removed first to Harike and then to Khadur 'now a famous Sikh town in the Tarn Taran sub-collectorate of the Amritsar district.' It appears that the people of Khadur were devoted worshippers of the goddess Durga, and Lahina, who from his very boyhood was of an intensely religious

[1] The Tihuns or Trihuns belong to the Barā-Sarīn group of the Khatris (*Nānak Prakās* gives the name as Tihaṇ, Part II, xlvii, 3). The Bedi, the Tihun, the Bhalla and the Soḍhi became sanctified by the births of the various Sikh Gurus to them. Nanak was a Bedi, Amar Das a Bhalla, and Ram Das and his successors, Soḍhi. 'In each case the section, as a whole, appears to have acquired a sacred character by the birth of the Guru within it, and it is not merely his descendants who possess that character.' (*Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II, p. 512.)

temperament, ' organised a yearly pilgrimage of devout Hindus to Jawalamukhi, a place sacred to Durga in the lower Himalayas, where fire issues from the mountains.'[1] But Lahina's religious life suddenly took a new turn when one day he heard a voice that stirred the innermost depths of his being. There was a Sikh at Khadur whose practice it was to recite the hymns of Guru Nanak and it was this that Lahina had heard. The Sikh told him all about Guru Nanak who lived at Kartarpur on the bank of the Ravi and at whose feet he had obtained peace and contentment. Lahina's mind was soon made up and he determined to pay a visit to the Guru at the earliest opportunity. At the time of the next annual pilgrimage to Jawalamukhi Lahina visited Guru Nanak on the way and was so overwhelmingly impressed by the latter's personality and the charm of his discourses that he parted company with his villagers and stayed on with the Guru. In due time he got initiation and soon became the most devoted of the Guru's followers.

All authorities agree that Lahina was of the very essence of obedience and of his career as a disciple of Nanak prior to his nomination to his Guruship we know little else. The various incidents narrated in the *Janamsākhīs* are all calculated to show the depth of Lahina's devotion and the implicit character of his surrender to Nanak. Indeed, the Guru is reported to have said, " Thou hast performed excessive devotions. Between thee and me there is now no difference. None of my Sikhs hath such faith and confidence in me as thou, and therefore I love thee most of all. Thou

[1] *Nānak Prākāś*, xlvii, 12, 13; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 1.

art verily Angad a part of my body. I congratulate thee." [1] It is no wonder, therefore, that when Guru Nanak, in various ways, tested the devotion of the Sikhs Lahina alone could stand the trial and he finally obtained the Guruship 'as a reward of devotion and service.'

It can be easily surmised that Angad's nomination to the Guruship was not likely to be looked upon with favour by Nanak's family at Kartarpur and one of the first acts of the second Guru was to remove his seat to Khadur. In fact, the Coronation Ode distinctly states that the sons of Guru Nanak did not obey his words and had become rebels,[2] so it was idle to expect that they would now give their allegiance to their father's nominee. We are also told that almost immediately after his removal to Khadur Guru Angad kept himself concealed in a room in the outskirts of the village. The room was locked upon him and his whereabouts were known only to a Jat girl, named Nihali, who brought him a pot of milk every day. The Guru remained in this manner for six months till at last his retreat was disclosed to the Sikhs through the supernatural knowledge of Bhai Budha. As we shall see later on, a similar story has been current about Guru Amar Das as well. It is said that when Angad's son Datu attempted to usurp the Guru's office, Amar Das retired to a secret retreat in his native village and in this instance as well it was Bhai Budha who found out the Guru's retreat. If these stories have any factual basis it seems probable that the object of these

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 9.
2 *Tikke di Wār*, II, Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 26.

temporary retirements might as well have been the same in both cases. On the analogy of the case of Amar Das we may surmise that Guru Angad's object in thus resorting to a secret retreat was possibly to test the devotion of the Sikhs and incidentally bring home to the sons of Guru Nanak the futility of disputing their father's decision.

Whatever that might be, Guru Angad soon resumed his proper place among his followers and the Sikh chronicles undeniably give the impression that he worked unswervingly in the path chalked out by his Master. The details, however, are more or less legendary and do not offer us much on which we can build a framework of sober history. There are the usual stories of the Guru's disputations with Jogīs and Tapās or penitents, the point of which all seems to lie in Guru Angad's strict adherence to the simplicity of his Master's teachings and his ceaseless efforts, by precept and example, to keep his spirit alive.[1] There is again the very doubtful story of Humayun's visit to the Guru after his defeat at Kanauj [2] and there are others of a more or less apocryphal character. But one incident there is which is extremely interesting and at the same time important because to it, perhaps, we owe the *Tikke di Wār* or the Coronation Ode, which throws such a flood of light on many points of early Sikh history. We are told that the two minstrels of Guru Angad, Satta and Balwand, suddenly took it into their heads that all the Guru's glory was really due to their own skill as musicians and in their conceit attempted to bring home

[1] *Sūraj Prakās, Rās* I, xxi-xxiii.
[2] *Ibid, Rās* I, x. 29-63.

to the Guru the sense of their indispensableness by keeping away for some time. Inspite of the Guru's requests to attend the *Sangat* they persisted in their attitude of defiance and at last Angad finished with them and made his own arrangement. The two minstrels soon realised the folly of their action and made repeated attempts to get reconciled with the Guru. But Angad refused to relent because the minstrels, in their arrogance, had not spared even the memory of Guru Nanak. They had suggested that even the latter's court would not have been known without the music of Mardana. Guru Angad refused to entertain any further representation on behalf of the minstrels and declared that "he would have the beard and moustaches of any man who again spoke in their favour cut off and his face blackened, and he would have him mounted on a donkey and led in disgrace through the city." In their extremity Satta and Balwand went to Bhai Ladha of Lahore, who possessed great influence with the Guru. Bhai Ladha took up their cause and "having shaved his head, blackened his face, and mounted a donkey with his face turned to the tail, went round the city of Khadur, and finally arrived in the Guru's presence." Being asked as to what he meant by this extraordinary guise Bhai Ladha said that he was merely obeying the Guru's order and prayed for the reinstatement of the minstrels. The Guru could not refuse and the minstrels were sent for. They arrived and fell down at the Guru's feet. They are then said to have composed and sung the well-known Coronation Ode, which, with subsequent additions, was incorporated in the *Granth Sāhib* by

Guru Arjan. But even of this incident there are different versions and some state that the whole of the Coronation Ode was composed during the days of Guru Arjan.[1]

It is thus clear that the details of Guru Angad's pontificate are generally vague and uncertain and we are given the impression that it was more or less uneventful. But it was not unimportant. On the contrary, we can trace here the first signs of those developments that gradually marked the Sikhs out as a distinct community by themselves. Inspite of the unsatisfactory character of the Sikh records it is possible to trace one or two notable developments that took place under the auspices of Guru Angad. Of these undoubtedly the most important was the invention of the Gurumukhi alphabet, which the Sikh chronicles unanimously attribute to Guru Angad.[2]

[1] Santokh Singh places the entire incident in the pontificate of Guru Arjan (*Sūraj Prakās, Rās.* III, xliii-xlv). Bhai Gurdas also lends some support to the *Sūraj Prakās*: he makes Bhai Ladha parupkārī live in the time of Guru Arjan (*Wār*, xi. 25.). Macauliffe says 'It does not, however, follow that Bhai Ladha did not live in the time of Guru Angad also. The statement that the circumstance occurred in the time of Guru Arjan is totally negatived by the internal evidence of the composition itself, if it be carefully examined. It was written by the minstrel Balwand to make his peace with Guru Angad. Satta afterwards, as we shall see, added three pauris to it in the time of Guru Arjan when the apotheosis of the Guru had become complete' (Vol. II, p. 24 f. n.). It may be pointed out, however, that Bhai Budha lived up to the days of Guru Hargobind but Bhai Gurdas does not place him in the days of any of Nanak's successors and, as regards the internal evidence of the composition itself, there may be room for difference of opinion.

[2] Bhai Gyan Singh, *Panth Prakās*, p. 65; the *Tawārikh Guru Khālsā* gives the exact date (Sambat 1597, Baisakh sudi panchmi) on which the invention was made (p. 294).

But this claim has been disputed by more than one writer on grounds that would seem insuperable. It has been pointed out that in *Rāg Āsā* of the *Granth* is found the *patti* or the thirty-five verses by Guru Nanak, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet. "The letters are exactly the same 35, as are now found in the Gurumukhi Alphabet even including the letter (ṛ) which is peculiar to Gurumukhi, thus proving that the Gurumukhi Alphabet existed before his time and was not invented by the second Guru, Angad, though the name Gurumukhi may have replaced its original name." [1] The *Sikhan di Rāj di Bikhiā* seeks to evade this difficulty by suggesting that the *patti* in question was the composition of Guru Angad [2] but as the verse occurs in *Mahala I*, which is the place assigned to the compositions of Guru Nanak, there can be no doubt that the compilers of the *Granth* took it to be of Nanak. Besides, there are other difficulties. Trumpp says, "Guru Angad was altogether unlettered and could himself neither read nor write. The later tradition, which makes him the inventor of the Gurumukhi letters, is therefore without any foundation." In fact, B. Gurbuksh goes so far as to suggest that "the tradition that the second Guru invented the Gurumukhi alphabet is based on a misreading of the spurious book called the Janamsakhi of Bhai Bala. Guru Angad only secured the Janampatri or horoscope of Guru Nanak from his uncle Lalu." [3] However, this last suggestion seems hardly acceptable.

[1] *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 677, f. n. 1.

[2] Court's Translation, p. 13.

[3] *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 681, f. n. 1.

We ourselves think that the story of the *Janampatrī* might very well have led to the story of the *Janam-sākhī* but that it was responsible for the tradition about the invention of the alphabet is certainly far-fetched. And we have shown elsewhere that Trumpp's contention that Guru Angad could neither read nor write does not follow from the passage on which he relies.[1] But the *patti* seems really insuperable. In fact, Macauliffe gives up the claim of 'invention' and says that 'Guru Angad, deeming that the compositions of Guru Nanak were worthy of a special written character of their own, adopted and modified a Panjabi alphabet, called Gurumukhi, to give expression to what fell from the Guru's lips.' And he also gives a hymn which he found in an ancient manuscript at Khadur and which is said to have been composed on the occasion of the adoption of the new character.[2] It should be noticed that the tradition that Guru Angad was the originator of the Gurumukhi characters is very strong and we think that the difficulty about the *patti* also considerably disappears if we take the view that Guru Angad 'modified and adopted' a script already in existence. This is really what Grierson suggests. " The true alphabet of the Punjab is known as the Laṇḍa or 'clipped.' It is connected with the Mahājanī character of Northern India, and resembles it in having a very imperfect system of vowel sounds. Vowel sounds are frequently omitted. It is said that in the time of Angad, the second Sikh Guru (1538-1552) this Laṇḍa was the only alphabet employed

[1] *Supra*, p. 59, f. n. 2.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 56-57.

in the Punjab for writing the Vernacular. Angad found that Sikh hymns written in Landa were liable to be misread, and he accordingly improved it by borrowing signs from the Devanagari alphabet (then only used for Sanskrit manuscripts) and by polishing up the forms of the letters, so as to make them fit for recording the scriptures of the Sikh religion. Having been invented by him this character became known as the Gurumukhi, or the alphabet proceeding from the mouth of the Guru. Ever since this alphabet has been employed for writing the Sikh scriptures, and its use has widely spread, mainly among the members of that sect." [1] Indeed, it is certain that the question cannot be dismissed so lightly as Trumpp and B. Gurbaksh have done. A tradition cannot be ignored simply because it is a tradition, when we have nothing positive against it. The only difficulty, that of the *patti*, can be explained on the very reasonable supposition that it had originally been composed by Guru Nanak in the Landa script and that it was subsequently transliterated into Gurumukhi with necessary emendations. It is important to remember that Guru Angad had not invented any entirely new script but had merely 'adopted and modified' one already existing, and given it a characteristically Sikh name together with the seal of religious sanctity.

If this view of the matter is correct, and we have little doubt that it is, it must be said that it was a very remarkable achievement. As Narang points out, 'The very name of the new script reminded those who employed it, of their duty towards their Guru,

[1] *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. IX, Part I, p. 624.

and constantly kept alive in their minds the consciousness that they were something distinct from the common mass of Hinduism.' [1] The use of the Vernacular and that too through a script which was peculiarly their own could not but deal a blow at the domination of the priestly class, whose influence mainly rested on their knowledge of Sanskrit, which had hitherto generally been the language of religion. The appeal of the hymns was certainly more direct because it came in a language which all could understand, and the new script made it doubly so because it served as a constant memento to the followers of the Guru of their distinctiveness and solidarity. Guru Angad possibly had been led to the adoption of Gurumukhi by the necessity of inscribing the hymns of his predecessor in a suitable and convenient form but he had forged a weapon which proved to be of unforeseen possibilities in a variety of other ways.

According to the later Sikh chronicles, the next great achievement of Guru Angad was the compilation of a biography of Guru Nanak. As we have shown elsewhere,[2] there can be little doubt that this claim is entirely unfounded. But it is practically certain that the work of collecting and compiling the hymns of Guru Nanak had already commenced. Indeed, this was the reason which had led to the modification of the Landa into Gurumukhi. It appears that this work was earnestly continued during the days of Guru Amar Das. The latter is reported to have said that "to make a careful collection of the

[1] Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[2] *Supra*, p. 60.

Guru's hymns and give them to the Sikhs in God's name " was a highly meritorious act [1] and the result of this exhortation is to be seen in the fact that when Guru Arjan conceived the plan of compiling the hymns of his predecessors and of himself in one grand volume he got the materials, at least so far as the hymns of the first three Gurus were concerned, more or less ready. Thus it appears that the credit of initiating the work that finally led to the production of the *Granth Sāhib* is also due to Guru Angad.

Lastly, we come to the characteristic Sikh institution of the *Langar* or the free kitchen. It is said that ' the system had already been set on foot by Nanak and was simply enlarged and expanded by Angad.' Guru Nanak had said that ' those who eat the fruit of their own labour and *bestow something* will recognise the right way ' [2] and we know that presentation of offerings to the Guru was regarded as one of the most essential duties of the Sikhs. But Nanak had, at the same time, characterised offerings as ' poison which could not be digested ' and so truly had Guru Angad imbibed the spirit of his Master's teaching that he is said to have earned his living ' by twisting the coarse twine made of *munj*,' though there was no dearth of offerings from the faithful. In the earlier days of Sikhism these were wholly utilised for the maintenance of the *Langar*.[3] ' The institution

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 85.

[2] *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 374.

[3] The Coronation Ode says that Angad's wife Khivi ' distributed the Guru's wealth in his kitchen—rice boiled in milk and ghi tasting like ambrosia.' (Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. II, p. 27.)

proved a powerful aid in the propaganda work.' Besides serving as an asylum for the poor it also became a great instrument for advertisement and popularity and 'it gave a definite direction to the charities of the Guru's followers.' It served as a great bond of union among the Sikhs and also helped to mitigate caste prejudices to some extent, as all those who came to have their food in the *Langar* had to take it together, irrespective of caste or creed.

It may not thus be unreasonable to say that Guru Angad 'had succeeded in giving a sort of local habitation and a name to the mission of Nanak.'[1] The need of the moment was to save the followers of Guru Nanak from 'total absorption by the Hindu mass.' A distinction had to be created in order that the prevailing apathy and ignorance might not get the better of the influences which it had been Nanak's mission to bring into being. The efforts of Guru Angad contributed considerably to this end. Besides the Guru, whose position as the sole and supreme religious leader was in itself a great source of unity and solidarity, the Sikhs had now the Guru's hymns inscribed in their own Gurumukhi and the *Langar* maintained by their joint efforts and sacrifices. They could now claim an individuality of their own, however imperfect as yet it might have been.

But the initial difficulties that beset the Sikh movement did not end here. Besides the danger of 'absorption' there was the further possibility that the followers of Nanak might gradually 'narrow down into a sect of quietists.' It is undoubtedly true that

[1] Narang, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 20.

Guru Nanak had solemnly declared the possibility of the attainment of salvation by a householder and his emphasis on the necessity of labour for the maintenance of one's own livelihood seemed for ever to preclude the possibility of any of his followers adopting the life of a recluse and preferring the silence of the forest to the hurry and bustle of worldly life. Says Nanak,

> "Better to live by honest labour than by begging ;
> They who eat the fruit of their labour and bestow something,
> O Nanak, recognise the right way."

Offerings, as we have seen, were to be regarded as poison which could not be digested. 'When man performeth scant ceremony and dependeth on offerings the effect on him is as if he hath taken poison.'[1] Guru Nanak had clearly pointed out the advantages of domestic devotion,[2] and with regard to *Udās* he had said : "to make use of all things in this world and not to deem them one's own, but only God's property, and ever to possess a desire to meet Him is *Udās*." In fact, he had pronounced the distinct injunction—"Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world, so shall you succeed." [4] Thus it would appear that in Nanak's system there was no room for asceticism. Yet, it is perhaps equally true that Nanak's hymns and compositions afforded sufficient materials for the

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 45.
2 *Ibid*, pp. 319, 103.
3 *Ibid*, p. 106.
4 *Ibid*, p. 60.

rise of a sect of quietists who would renounce the world and seek refuge in isolation and meditation. Nanak says:

> "Were I to become a monarch on my throne and raise an army;
> Were revenue and regal revenue mine—O Nanak, they would all be worthless."[1]

And again,

> Look to truth alone and know that the world is false;
> They who think that the world is true shall die confounded."[2]

Many similar expressions might be quoted which would tend to show that Nanak regarded the world as false and several aspects of his own life seemed to give further countenance to this view of his teaching His wanton indifference to all worldly affairs from his very boyhood and his answers to his father's entreaties asking him to return home, might be made to show that after all Nanak discarded the life of a householder. Indeed, we even find in Nanak's compositions justification for a wandering life.[3] There can be no doubt that Guru Nanak had clearly indicated which way his sympathies lay by appointing Angad, a householder with wife and children, to be his successor and we also know on the reliable authority of Bhai Gurdas that when the Guru finally settled down at Kartarpur he resumed his family ties, but still the fact remains that

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 80.
2 *Ibid*, p. 14.
3 *Ibid*, p. 291.

by careful selection and emphasis Guru Nanak's life and writings might be made to yield an ideal of asceticism. We ought not to be surprised therefore to find that an influential body of opinion arose under the leadership of Nanak's eldest son Sri Chand, who discarded the world and sought consolation in the undisturbed meditation of the True One in the solemn silence of the forest or the hill. The *Udāsīs*, as the followers of Sri Chand were called, ' also *prima facie* possessed the same credentials and claimed the same amount of sanctity as Sikhism proper.' Besides celibacy and asceticism 'the other tenets of the sect were the same as those of Sikhism and it regarded Nanak with the same veneration as the Sikhs did.' It was thus clearly essential that the fundamental character of Sikhism was determined once for all as the whole future of the movement depended upon it. A prompt decision was all the more imperative as the Indian mind has generally put a premium on asceticism and even to this day the life of a recluse is regarded as the most honourable of all human existences. We do not know of any definite measure taken by Guru Angad to avert this danger, unless his active preaching and exposition of the hymns of Guru Nanak be so construed. It is said, however, that his successor, Guru Amar Das, authoritatively declared that "the active and domestic Sikhs were wholly separate from the passive and recluse *Udāsīs*" and thus preserved the infant faith from disappearing as one of the many sects that have arisen and vanished within the fold of Hinduism.[1]

[1] Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 50; Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 22; *Glossary of*

The result of this separation from the *Udāsīs* was to give to the Sikhs 'something of a social character in addition to the religious ties that held them together.' The followers of Guru Nanak could no longer be a mere fraternity holding advanced views on religion and attempting to work their ideals through some recognised institutions of their own but their outlook had perforce to be broadened and made to take in its purview all important aspects of social life. Sikhism had become essentially a religion of householders and to preserve the identity of its votaries social innovations had necessarily to be created, exactly as new religious institutions had been brought into existence in the attempt to perpetuate the influence of Nanak. Thus we can henceforward trace two parallel developments in Sikhism. On the one hand, the work begun by Guru Angad was earnestly continued and new religious ties were added one after another; on the other, there was a gradual drifting away from the orthodox Hindu society and attempts were made through innovations to bring into existence a new brotherhood, social as well as religious, self-sufficient and independent. It has been said that from the outset Sikhism stood distinguished from other reform movements by its reconciliation with secular life.[1] But, as we have seen, it is certainly going too

*Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 681. It should be pointed out, however, that there is no clear evidence for attributing this measure particularly to Guru Amar Das. Mohsin Fani merely says that 'the Sikhs established that an *audasi*, or one that has abandoned the world, is not to be esteemed higher than any other man (Vol. II, p. 271). Only Malcolm states distinctly that Amar Das made this separation (*Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 27).

[1] Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

far to suggest that the schools like those of Chaitanya or Kabir had no room for householders. In fact what Sikhism really did was to bar the door to asceticism and thus to make the influence of Nanak available not only for religious uplift but also for social regeneration.

The pontificate of the third Guru Amar Das clearly illustrates the truth of what has been said above. It is not always easy to follow the details of the Guru's career through the supernatural myths and the anticipatory legends that abound in the Sikh chronicles but, on the whole, the few sober facts that emerge are sufficient to enable us to understand the importance of his leadership. The career of Amar Das previous to his nomination to the Guruship reveals throughout the sincerity and consistency of his religious efforts. He was a Khatri by birth and belonged to the Bhalla tribe. His father Tej Khan was an inhabitant of the village of Basarka near Amritsar and there the future Guru was born in A.D. 1479. It is said that Amar Das grew up to be a zealous Vaishnava and his whole life was one of assiduous devotion and sincere piety. But he was always tormented by the thought that he had not been able to place himself under the protection and guidance of a spiritual preceptor. His anxiety on this score became almost intolerable when one day a monk expressed great concern because he had eaten food cooked by Amar Das, who had no guru. Amar Das felt very much distressed and fervently prayed to God for a guru 'as will possess the alchemic power of turning dross into gold.' When he was in this anxious frame of mind one morning he heard "the dulcet chanting of the Guru's hymns." The song made a great impression on

his mind and on enquiry he learnt that it had been sung by Bibi Amro, Guru Angad's daughter, who had been recently married to a nephew of his. From Bibi Amro Amar Das learnt all about Guru Angad and the rest followed as a matter of course. Accompanied by her he went to pay a visit to Guru Angad. On beholding the Guru his joy knew no bounds and, in his ecstasy, he fell down at Angad's feet.[1] For several years afterwards he devotedly served the Guru in a spirit of complete self-surrender and was rewarded with the Guruship on Angad's death in 1552.

The pontificate of Amar Das began in stress and trouble. He had foreseen that his appointment to the Guruship would not be accepted without a struggle by the family of his predecessor and had accordingly retired to Goindwal in the foundation of which he himself had been mainly instrumental.[2] But even there he was not left alone. It is said that Datu, the son of Angad, who had usurped the Guru's gaddi at Khadur, derisively called Amar Das a servant of his family and declared himself to be the rightful successor of his father. When he found that inspite of this

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 30, 31; *Sūraj Prakās, Rās* I, xv.

[2] The place was originally named Gobindwāl after a man named Gobind, who, it is said, 'had been involved in a law-suit with his relations and vowed that if ever he were victorious he would found a city in honour of the Guru.' He gained the suit and true to his vow obtained the lease of an open plot of land on the Beas from the Emperor and laid the foundations of the city. It seems that his relations created difficulties and Gobind sought the assistance of Guru Angad who sent Amar Das to his rescue. The work was then finished without any further difficulty. The name of the town was later changed to Goindwal. (Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. II, p. 34; *Sūraj Prakās, Rās* I, xviii, xix).

proclamation people flocked around Amar Das and saluted him as the true Guru, Datu proceeded to Goindwal and is said to have kicked Amar Das off his *gaddi*. In a spirit of perfect non-resistance the Guru forbade retaliation and retired to a secret retreat in his native village Basarka. The subsequent story is wrapped up in legends but this much appears clear that Datu could not make good his claim as the Sikhs would not accept him and at last went back to Khadur. The storm having blown over, Amar Das returned to Goindwal and reseated himself on his rightful throne.[1]

The Guru was now free to devote himself to organisation and reform. The work already begun by Guru Angad was earnestly continued and the *Langar* in particular considerably increased its activities. The Coronation Ode says 'Ever in thy kitchen, O Amar Das, are clarified butter and flour to eat.'[2] The Guru, as before, lived on coarse food purchased by his own scanty earnings and observed the most ascetic habits. The offerings which had now largely increased in quantity, went entirely to the maintenance of the *Langar*. 'What he daily received was daily spent, and nothing was saved for the morrow.' We have already seen that the *Langar* knew no caste distinctions and a further blow was now given to caste prejudices inasmuch as all his visitors were to eat from his kitchen before they were allowed to behold him.[3] On the other hand, there is evidence

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 64-66; *Sūraj Prakās*, *Rās* I, xxxiv-xxxvi.

[2] Macauliffe, *ibid* p. 59. [3] *Ibid.*

to show that the work of collecting and compiling the hymns of the Gurus went on vigorously. Amar Das is said to have declared that 'to make a careful collection of the Guru's hymns and give them to the Sikhs in God's name' was a highly meritorious act [1] and his followers were not slow to act up to this exhortation. It is said that Sant Ram, the son of Mohan, compiled the hymns of Guru Amar Das in a volume which is believed to be still extant,[2] and we are further told that when Guru Arjan made known his desire of compiling the hymns of the Gurus in one grand volume, Amar Das's son, Mohan supplied him with copies of the first three Gurus' works.

But the Guru had now to take a much wider view of his responsibilities and the expedient of binding the Sikhs by a few religious ties no longer sufficed. The increased activity of the *Langar* clearly shows that the Sikh movement was daily gaining in strength and popularity and the Sikh records piously narrate how by active preaching and propaganda, and often by exhibition of miraculous power the Guru increased the votaries of the new faith. In one instance a corpse is said to have risen to life again through the Guru's power but generally his intercession took the form of blessings of offsprings to barren couples.[3] Leaving these legends apart, there can be little doubt that Sikhism made a considerable headway during the pontificate of Amar Das. We

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 85.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 131.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 76, 79, 80.

are told that several Muhammadans even embraced the new faith and of these the most important seems to have been Alyar, who, under the name of Ala Shah, settled down at Dalla, where a concourse of pious Sikhs gathered around him.[1] But the clearest indication of the spread of Sikhism during the days of Amar Das is provided by the introduction of what has been known as the *manji*-system. That the Sikhs had grown rapidly in number and lay scattered throughout the province is evident from the fact that Amar Das found it necessary to devise some means for administering to the local needs of his followers. It was now impossible for the Guru to offer instruction to all his followers in person and the *Sangat* or Sikh congregation that daily met around him no longer sufficed. Guru Amar Das, therefore, 'divided the Sikh spiritual empire into 22 bishoprics,' or *manjis*[2] as they were called. A pious and devoted Sikh was placed in charge of each and the Sikhs were thus provided with convenient local centres. A great step was in this manner taken towards giving the Sikhs an organisation of their own but the Guru was not less careful about his duties at the centre. His own person no doubt provided a strong binding force but the cohesion was

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 77, 78. Bhai Gurdas also testifies to the fact that Dalla had become an important Sikh centre, though in his account of the more notable Sikhs of that place no Muhammadan names appear. (*Wār*, XI, 16.)

[2] Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 151; *manjis* literally mean 'couches on which the Gurus used to sit and communicate instruction to their audiences.' The word in the singular is *manjā*. See also *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 681.

further strengthened by the creation of a central place of pilgrimage.[1] The story of the foundation of the *Bawali*, or well with descending steps at Goindwal has been embellished with much imaginative fancy by the later Sikh chroniclers. It is said that one day Amar Das fell into a trance when 'he saw Guru Nanak appear and order him to make a place of pilgrimage where God alone should be worshipped.' Thereupon the Guru purchased some land and with due religious ceremony the work commenced. The Sikhs enthusiastically joined in the work and for some time the progress was satisfactory. But soon they found large stones hindering further progress. When the obstacle proved insurmountable ' the Guru inquired if there were any of his Sikhs sufficiently courageous to drive a peg into its base with the object of removing the obstruction. At the same time the Guru warned his hearers that the operation involved great peril. The man who performed it must be able to stem the current which would issue from the aperture formed by the peg ; otherwise he would be drowned.' The Sikhs were dismayed and remained silent. At last a young man named Manak Chand volunteered. The peg was duly driven and the *Bawali* was overflowed with water but inspite of his strenuous efforts Manak Chand was drowned. Next morning the lamentations of Manak Chand's mother and wife drew the Guru to the *Bawali*. He assured the two ladies that the young man was not really drowned and called him by name. It is said that thereupon the body at once rose to the surface and when the Guru

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 87, 95, 96.

touched it with his feet ' Manak Chand walked forth from the water in the full possession of life and vigour.' How far and how lamentably had the inventors of these stories strayed away from the straight path laid down by the Gurus, whom they claimed to follow ! No praise can be too high for the spirited and ardent manner in which the Gurus disclaimed all miraculous power and strenuously fought against the exhibition of all those 'clever tricks' that were bound to lead to spiritual sterility and hypocrisy. But such a besetting weakness is the love of the miraculous, particularly in the writers of religious records, that even the honest and ardent Sikh Gurus have not been spared. Measures have been attributed to them the like of which they had repeatedly denounced in no uncertain terms, the Sikhs of a later age entirely failing to perceive that they were only belittling the men whom they intended to glorify thereby.

But to return to the *Bawali*, the foundation of which marked a very important step in the history of Sikhism. The well was provided with eighty-four steps and Amar Das is said to have decreed that 'whoever should attentively and reverently repeat the Japji at every step, should escape from wandering in the wombs of the eighty-four lakhs of living creatures.' It soon developed into a very important place of Sikh pilgrimage and the prestige and prosperity of Goindwal enormously increased. The story of the healing virtues of the waters of the *Bawali* might very well be a pious afterthought but there can be little doubt that pilgrims from far and near visited the place and a 'busy traffic' went on. Indeed, Sikhism was

no longer an obscure creed professed by a select band of religious enthusiasts and nothing would have testified more clearly to the increasing popularity of the new faith if we could accept without cavil the statement that Amar Das succeeded in claiming some votaries even from among the chieftains of the hills. [1] However, to crown all came the visit of the Emperor Akbar in person. On his way to Lahore the Emperor came to the Guru's residence at Goindwal and being very much impressed by the saintliness of his character and the purity of all around him requested the Guru to accept a favour. Amar Das politely but firmly refused and at last the Emperor made a grant, in the name of the Guru's daughter Bibi Bhani, of several villages, in and around which the city of Amritsar subsequently grew up.[2] But apart from the material gain which was by no means unimportant, the visit of the Emperor enormously increased the fame and prestige of the Guru. We are told that the visit of the Emperor made such a profound impression that 'crowds of converts were brought to the fold of Sikhism.' [3] And the new faith was further raised in the general estimation of the people when the Gurus, as we shall see, utilised their friendship with the Emperor for the relief of popular distress.

But these successes had not been achieved without struggle and opposition. There were of course the

1 The Raja of Haripur is said to have accepted the Guru's teachings. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 262; *Panth Prakās*, pp. 73, 74; *Sūraj Prakās*, *Ras* I, xxxii.) Subsequent events, however, show that this is extremely doubtful.

2 Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 97; *Panth Prakās*, p. 77.

3 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

inevitable Jogīs, who, as usual, were worsted in disputation but this time their discomfiture appears to have been more severe. We are told that two Sikhs named Phiria and Katara, of the neighbourhood of Delhi, took possession of a monastery belonging to the followers of Gorakhnath. This made such a profound impression that 'several persons were gradually converted, Jogīs' monasteries were destroyed, and in their places imposing Sikh temples reared to the glory of God and true religion.' [1] These stories may very well be greatly exaggerated and even apocryphal, but their frequent recurrence in the Sikh records leaves little room for doubt that in their work of emancipation and uplift the Gurus had to encounter very serious opposition from the Jogīs. Again, we hear of a second Tapā who resided at Goindwal and who had made it his business to slander the Guru. He was in reality a worthless hypocrite given to inordinate greed. As a contemporary observes, 'he will not approach the place where he seeth little wealth; where he seeth much there he forfeiteth his faith.' [2] But his greed proved his undoing and he was soon found out. The same observer remarks that 'when he sitteth outside among the village elders he is called a penitent; when he sitteth at home he is committing sin; God hath disclosed his secret sin to the elders.' But apart from these familiar incidents of Jogīs and Tapās, of which there is no dearth in the Sikh chronicles, it appears that Amar Das had to face troubles of a more serious character. It is said that early in his career

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 140.

[2] Guru Ram Das in *Gaurī kī Wār*; Macauliffe, *ibid*, pp. 99, 100.

at Goindwal the Guru and his Sikhs had to suffer a good deal of annoyance and oppression from the Muhammadans who had settled there. The Guru met them with stoical forbearance but still the insolence of the Muhammadans daily increased. Particularly did their wrath fall on those Sikhs who went to fetch water for the Guru's kitchen. Their earthen vessels were broken with pellets and clods, and when, in accordance with the Guru's advice, they began to use goatskins, the Muhammadans pierced them with arrows. At last the Sikhs substituted the goatskins by brass utensils but these also were knocked off their heads with bricks and stones. But still the Guru would not move. When the Sikhs asked him how long they were to suffer this tyranny of the Muhammadans the Guru replied, 'as long as you live. It is not proper for saints to take revenge.' The chronicler hastens to add that a divine chastisement soon overtook the tyrants. A body of armed *Sannyāsis* arrived at Goindwal and a quarrel broke out between them and the Muhammadans in course of which many of the Guru's enemies are said to have been killed. The authenticity of this story may be somewhat doubtful but there is nothing improbable in it and it may be pointed out that even armed *Sannyāsis* were by no means rare in those days.[1] Moreover, this incident very clearly illustrates the spirit of earlier Sikhism and the narrative is at least unlike others 'in which subsequent principles and events

[1] For instance, the *Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh* refers to a severe fight between one such band and some Mussalman Fakirs near about Batala. We are told that the Emperor Akbar personally intervened and settled the matter (Zafar Hasan's edition, p. 425).

are anticipated, insensibly throwing back their light and colour upon the tissue of tradition.' Whatever that might be, more serious trouble was in store for Amar Das. Indeed, his solid successes, one after another, could not but raise enemies against him. The new faith soon became important enough to excite the jealousy of the Brahmans, who had perhaps hitherto looked upon the endeavours of the Sikh Gurus with indifference. The Khatris also made common cause with the Brahmans and a Marwaha[1] among them is said to have taken a leading part in the campaign against the Guru. To these were also added the men from whom the Guru had purchased the land for the *Bawali*, who now falsely complained that the Guru had not paid them its stipulated price. The confederates then drew up petitions detailing their grievances against Amar Das and went on a deputation to the Emperor. The petition of the Marwaha Khatri was summarily rejected but the Emperor is said to have

[1] Marwaha or Merwaha—a Khatri clan belonging to the Sarīn group and claiming a central Asian origin. "Their earliest traceable settlement is at Govindwal or Gondwal, in Amritsar, which they say was made into a large place by one Baba Govind Rai, a devotee. This man was granted lands in *jāgīr* for giving food to a Mussalman king, who came to him hungry during a hunting expedition. Afterwards one Guru Bhala, with whom the Marwahas had quarrelled, cursed them for refusing to allow his followers to drink from the same well. Thereupon, large numbers of them settled elsewhere" (*Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II, p. 524). It seems to us that in this Marwaha tradition we have an echo of the quarrel between the Sikhs and the Marwaha Khatris for supremacy at Goindwal. It is interesting to note that the Sikh chronicles also state that the place had been founded by a man named Gobind and the Guru Bhala referred to above might very well be Guru Amar Das, who, as we know, belonged to the Bhalla tribe of the Khatris.

summoned the Guru in order to confront him with the Brahmans. Amar Das excused himself on the score of age and sent Jetha to Delhi to deputise for him. The latter had no difficulty in explaining away the frivolous charges levelled against the Guru and the Emperor had no hesitation in giving a decision wholly favourable to the Guru and his cause. However, as a matter of friendly advice the Emperor sent a request through Jetha to Guru Amar Das to make a pilgrimage to the Ganges in order to divert the wrath of the Hindus and promised that he would issue an order to the effect that no pilgrims' tax should be levied on the Guru's party.[1] But these details should be scanned thoroughly before they are accepted as history. It must not be forgotten that the main authority for most of these stories is the *Sūraj Prakās*, a work written about three hundred years after the days of Amar Das and in this particular instance we cannot also entirely ignore the possibility that the Emperor's well-known patronage of the Guru might easily have led to fanciful embellishments on the part of later writers. But at the same time it should be clearly understood that for two items at least of the above narrative we have got contemporary evidence. The deputation of the Marwaha Khatri and the remission of the pilgrims' tax on the Guru's party are testified to by two hymns, the first in the *Gaurī kī Wār* and the other in the *Tukhārī Chant*. However, from the first hymn it only appears that 'the perverse man,' as the Marwaha is called, had sent his servant somewhere with a complaint

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 108.

against the Guru but was completely thwarted in his designs. But there is no hint as to whom the complaint was made or what it was about. The discomfiture of the man is described in some detail and the hymn concludes with the warning—'Him who slanderath the perfect true Guru, the True One punisheth and destroyeth.'[1] There is thus nothing in the record which entitles us to say that the Marwaha had sent a deputation to the Emperor or that he had been in league with Brahmans and other Khatris. Further, although we are quite conscious of the limitations of what is known as *argumentum ab silentio*, it seems rather strange that Jetha left no record of what has subsequently been described as a combined move against the Guru and in discrediting which he himself played the most conspicuous part, particularly when we find that he deigned to notice even the very insignificant incident of the Tapā at Goindwal. It may not thus be improbable that the narrative about the deputation to the Emperor is compounded of fact and fiction, the genuine statements of Jetha supplying the foundation and the Emperor's friendship the motive for the later embellishments.

But the other story about the Guru's pilgrimage stands on much surer grounds. The motive for this, as suggested in the narrative discussed above, may be unacceptable but there is little difficulty in accepting the plain statement of Jetha that 'the true Guru made the toil of pilgrimage in order to save all people,' or in other words, that it was undertaken with the object of preaching the message of Sikhism. Inspite of

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 104.

apparent exaggerations here and there, Jetha's account of the pilgrimage is, on the whole, a sober document and may be safely followed. It appears that the Guru and his party first visited Kurkhetar. It was an auspicious time and a fair had assembled at the place. Many *Sannyāsis* and Jogīs, as also the representatives of different schools of thought had come there on the occasion and with these the Guru entered into disputations. On the whole, he made a profound impression at the fair and then went to the Jumna. Here an interesting thing happened. The toll-collectors made no difficulty in allowing the Guru and his party to pass but many others also escaped by taking the Guru's name. The same story repeated itself at Hardwar which Amar Das next visited. There also every one escaped under the cover of the Guru's name and 'the toll-collectors by their skill and cleverness saw it was best to close their boxes and go away.' In other respects also the Guru's triumph was complete and it is said that 'the leading men of the city went in a body and took shelter in the true Guru."[1] The last remark might very well be of the nature of a pious wish but there can be little doubt that the remission of the pilgrims' tax on the Guru and his party and the fact that others also could escape under the cover of his name marked him out as a person of special sanctity and privilege and greatly redounded to the glory and prestige of the faith he represented.

Henceforward the Guru passed his days in comparative ease and there is little outstanding to record. But as has been hinted above, with the definite split

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 112-114.

with the *Udāsīs*, or gradual dissociation with their ideals and principles as the case might be, the social aspect of Sikhism became at once a vital question. Sikhism had become or was becoming exclusively a religion of householders and in order to save its votaries from absorption it now became necessary to supplement the work of religious organisation by social reforms. This aspect of the work of Guru Amar Das would now demand our attention. The Sikh records state that the Guru proclaimed that gatherings of Sikhs should be held on the first days of the months of Baisakh and Magh and on the day of the ancient festival of the Diwali. The Sikhs were thus provided with opportunities of coming in contact and fraternising with one another and this must have resulted in the strengthening of their sense of brotherhood. And, as Macauliffe suggests, the Guru's object might as well have been to wean his followers away from the Hindu practices associated with those particular days of the year.[1] But though this step was not without its social implications its main interest was religious and the Guru's attempt at social reconstruction is best illustrated in his attempted reform of the ceremonies in vogue at marriage and death. In view of the unsatisfactory character of most of the Sikh chronicles abounding in anticipatory legends of various kinds, it would no doubt have been uncomfortable if we had to depend on them alone but there are two references, of a more or less authentic character, which lead us to think that something had been done though it might not have been as sweeping

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 79, f.n. 1.

and decisive as the later writers suggest. In the first place, it is said that at the request of Guru Arjan, Sundar Das, a great-grandson of Guru Amar Das, wrote an account of the death of the third Guru. Now, in the '*Sadd*,' as the composition is called and 'which is now sung by Sikhs on all occasions of mourning,' we read:

> "Final ly, the true Guru spoke, 'After my death sing God's praises.
>
> 'Call God instead of a pandit and, for the Garar Puran, read God's word;
>
> 'Read God's word, hear God's name; the Guru desireth, God's love instead of a lofty bier,
>
> 'Barley rolls, bread on leaves, *Hindu* obsequies, lamps, and throwing his bones into the Ganges.'"[1]

Here we have a clear hint that Guru Amar Das desired that at least in his own case his followers should dispense with the elaborate Hindu ceremonies connected with death. The point may no doubt be raised that Sundar Das was certainly not an eye-witness of what happened at the time of his great-grandfather's death[2] and that his statement might easily have been coloured by subsequent developments, but the fact that Sundar Das wrote not more than thirty years after the death of Amar Das when several of the latter's contemporaries were still living and that his statement obtained a ready acceptance considerably weakens the above objections. In fact, there seems

[1] *Sadd*, v: Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 153.

[2] Sundar Das was the son of Mohri's second son, Anand, who himself was born possibly towards the middle of Guru Amar Das's pontificate.

to be little doubt that in the *Sadd* we get a genuine hint as to the views of Guru Amar Das regarding the Hindu obsequies, though it is quite possible that he merely attempted a mild discountenance and not a prohibition by positive enactment. Secondly, the hymn of Guru Ram Das in the *Sūhī Chant*, which has now become a Sikh epithalamium and in which is described the spiritual significance of the *Lāwān*,[1] indirectly shows that some change had been introduced in the marriage ceremony as well. The statement that this hymn was composed on the occasion of his own marriage by Guru Ram Das may or may not be true but that hardly affects its significance. It clearly appears that the Guru was commenting on a custom already in existence and we may as well accept the Sikh tradition that the change had been introduced by his predecessor.

Moreover, it has been said that Guru Amar Das prohibited the practice of *Satī* or the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands. As far as we are aware, the only authority for this statement is the following hymn of the third Guru:

> "Women are burnt in the fire with their husbands:
> If they appreciate their husbands they undergo sufficient pain by their death.

[1] "*Lāwān* is that part of the marriage ceremony which consists in tying together the upper garments of the bride and bridegroom, and causing them to go four times round the *Granth Sāhib*, while this hymn is repeated by the Sikh priest." (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 334, 335). It should be noted, however, that this is a common Hindu practice, though the number of the rounds is generally seven and the *Granth Sāhib* is, of course, absent. The Sikh rite was thus merely an adaptation. We do not know what the exact Hindu practice was in the

Nanak, if they appreciate not their husbands, why should they be burnt ?

Whether the husband be alive or dead such women will flee far away from him." [1]

As Cunningham remarks, this was rather a very mild discountenance ' leading the way to amendment by persuasion rather than by positive enactment.' [2] And the same remark would possibly apply to the following hymn of Guru Amar Das which sounds like 'an order to abstain altogether from wine.' Says the Guru :

" One man bringeth the full goblet, another cometh and filleth the cup.

The intellect of him who drinketh departeth, and intoxication entereth his brain.

He distinguisheth not between mine and thine, and is buffeted by his master.

If possible, drinknot at all the false wine,

By which man forgetteth God and receiveth punishment at His co urt." [3]

This is all that we know of the work of Guru Amar Das as a social reformer. The changes he desired to introduce in the very important ceremonies connected with marriage and death struck at the very root of the influence of the priestly class, and though in such a matter, where long-standing customs and cherished practices were concerned, success must necessarily have been slow, the ball had been set rolling

days of Ram Das. If the number of the rounds had been four, evidence supplied by this hymn would become at once doubtful.

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., p. 228.

2 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 50. 3 Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 2

and Sikhism put on the way of gradual dissociation from Hinduism and consolidation into a separate sect.

The pontificate of Guru Amar Das may thus be regarded as a turning point in the history of Sikhism in more ways than one. Starting in an attempt to reform and restate, Sikhism, like other similar movements in all ages and climes, met with a tardy but progressive response and much more vigorous opposition. It was soon found that even the perversions and abuses of the old had staunch adherents who far outnumbered the advocates of the new message and thus a breach arose which at every step became more wide and at last almost irreparable. This is a phenomenon common enough in religious history and it is the innate conservatism of human nature in matters religious that makes the dividing line between reform and revolution so thin and unsteady, and so difficult to comprehend. Whatever that might be, the original mission of Sikhism had perforce to be circumscribed and now it only remained for it to force its own way as best as it could. It had to forge its own weapons, hedge itself behind newer forms and customs, in short to develop an individuality of its own. And, as we have seen, the split with the *Udāsīs* made it incumbent that the followers of Nanak were not merely to be a religious fraternity but a separate community with its own social customs and ideals. From what has been said before it would appear that Guru Amar Das had almost unreservedly accepted this position and worked strenuously to give reality to it. Under his auspices the name of the infant church spread far and wide, rudiments of a separate organisation were given to the Sikhs, and new forms and practices were introduced to

supersede the old and bind the neophytes more closely together. Guru Angad had, no doubt, done something to give the Sikhs an individuality of their own but it was under Amar Das that the difference between a Hindu and a Sikh became more pronounced and 'the Sikhs began gradually to drift away from the Orthodox Hindu society and form a class, a sort of new brotherhood by themselves.'

Guru Amar Das was succeeded by his son-in-law Ram Das, a Khatri of the Soḍhi tribe, whose father Hari Das was an inhabitant of Lahore, where the future Guru was born in A.D. 1534. From his very boyhood Ram Das appears to have been of a religious bent of mind and exceedingly fond of the society of holy men 'to whom he gave whatever he received from his parents.' When still rather young Ram Das is said to have fallen in with a company of Sikhs who were on their way to Goindwal. He accompanied the party and on his arrival at Goindwal unhesitatingly prostrated himself before the Guru. The latter, on his part, was so favourably impressed by Ram Das's sincerity and devotion, as also his handsome exterior, that he married his younger daughter Bibi Bhani to him. Contrary to the usual custom, he continued to live with his wife at Goindwal and soon became the most conspicuous figure there, as is clearly shown by his nomination to the Guruship by Amar Das on the eve of his death in 1574.

In the *Sadd* we read:

"As the true Guru spoke, so his disciples obeyed his wishes. His son Mohri became obedient to him, and fell at Ram Das's feet.

Then all fell at the feet of the true Guru into whom Guru Amar Das had infused his spirit.

Any person who through jealousy did not bow before him was brought by the supernatural power of the true Guru, and made bow before him." [1]

Here we get a clear hint that Ram Das's succession was viewed with disfavour by at least one person and there can be little doubt that the recalcitrant was Mohan. Of the two sons of Guru Amar Das, Mohri readily accepted Ram Das as the legitimate Guru but Mohan thought otherwise. His opposition, however, was by no means so insolent as that of Datu who did not spare Amar Das even when he had retired to Goindwal and it appears that Mohan bowed to the inevitable, though with evident reluctance. In the Sikh records we come across several statements which seem to show that the reconciliation was never sincere [2] and this must have been one of the main reasons which led Guru Ram Das to build a new place for himself away from Goindwal. In fact, on the authority of

[1] It is said that Jetha was of an other-worldly temperament from his very boyhood and though his parents desired that he should turn to some occupation for his livelihood Jetha himself thought otherwise. We are told that on one occasion Jetha's mother boiled some pulse, put it in a basket and gave it to her son to sell. There was a poor neighbour who made his living by selling boiled pulse and this gave Jetha's mother the idea. But instead of going to the bazars and streets for sale Jetha went with his basket to the river Ravi, where he came across a company of holy men to whom he gave the whole contents of his basket and returned home. It is to be noted that similar stories were current about Nanak as well and it may not be improbable that the present one had been inspired by them. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 88)

[2] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. II, p. 258; Vol. III, p. 56.

the *Sūraj Prakās* Macauliffe says that Guru Amar Das had anticipated this difficulty and had accordingly advised Ram Das to build a house in the lands assigned by the Emperor and 'then excavate a tank to the east of it as a place of Sikh pilgrimage.'[1] The work appears to have commenced during the lifetime of Guru Amar Das and continued for some time after Ram Das's accession. But for some unaccountable reason it was left alone and the Guru began to excavate another tank, which he called *Amritsar* or the tank of nectar. by enlarging a pool the water of which is said to have possessed miraculous efficacy. "While the tank was being excavated dwellings arose in the vicinity for the accommodation of the Guru's Sikhs, visitors and workmen; and in time a beautiful city was constructed which was at first called Ramdaspur." But in fact Ram Das only laid the foundations of the tank as well as of the city and the work was completed by his son and successor Guru Arjan.[2]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 141.

[2] The whole question is involved in some complexity and we have in the main followed Macauliffe. A notable miracle connected with the pool that formed the nucleus of the 'tank of nectar' is represented in the *Sūraj Prakās* to have occurred in the time of Guru Arjan. This would tend to suggest that the excavation of 'the tank of nectar' really commenced in the days of Guru Arjan and that Ram Das had nothing to do with it. Macauliffe says that 'it is not likely that Guru Ram Das would have neglected to carry out the work which he himself had begun under the order of his beloved father-in-law, the third Guru.' But as this statement also is based on the authority of the *Sūraj Prakās* it cannot be regarded as conclusive. All that we can say is that this throws a doubt on the narrative of the *Sūraj Prakās* (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 226-270). The other argument adduced by Macauliffe seems to be more convincing. The fact that the city of Amritsar in its early days was known as Ramdaspur 'furnishes an

The excavation of this tank, which too was left incomplete, has been the only outstanding record of the pontificate of Ram Das. Bhai Gurdas says:

> "The Soḍhi king Ram Das sat on the throne, and was called the true Guru.
>
> He dug a perfect tank, and awakened the light of divine knowledge in Amrisar." [1]

Bhai Gurdas's account of the successors of Nanak is, no doubt, hopelessly meagre and often practically useless but it appears that in this instance at least he has not failed to record the central and the most outstanding fact. It is true that the credit of laying the foundations of the city of Ramdaspur is also due to the fourth Guru but it can be easily seen that this

additional proof that Guru Ram Das continued the work he had begun under his predecessor' (*ibid*, p. 276, f.n.). We may add that Mohsin Fani's description of Ramdaspur as a place 'where the Gurus Ramdas and Arjun-mal had built great edifices and dug tanks,' further strengthens Macauliffe's conclusion (*Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 275).

On the other hand, some writers say that the grant of the villages by the Emperor had been made to Ram Das (Forster's *Travels*, Vol. I, p. 258; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 50; *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 682). The *Amritsar Gazetteer* (1883-84, p. 61) states that the site of Amritsar was first occupied by Ram Das. 'It was marked by a small natural pool of water, which is said to have been a favourite resort of Baba Nanak. On the margin of this pool Guru Ram Das erected himself a hut. Soon afterwards, in 1577, he obtained a grant of the site, together with 500 bighas of land from the Emperor Akbar on payment of Rs. 700 *akbari* to the Zemindars of Tung, who owned the land.' If this is true the statement of the *Sūraj Prakās* that Guru Amar Das had asked Ram Das to build a place for himself in the land granted by the Emperor is obviously wrong. But as the *Gazetteer* gives us no hint as to the source of these statements we cannot say anything about their authenticity.

1 Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I. 47.

was, more or less, a bye-product of the main business of excavating the 'tank of nectar.' The Sikh chroniclers, no doubt, add many other details and several stories about Jogīs and Tapās reappear as usual, but it seems to us that the only other matter that deserves more than a passing notice is the statement that Ram Das earnestly took up the work of propagandism and sent preachers to different parts of the country to spread the new faith. It is said that Bhai Gurdas himself was sent to Agra to preach the Sikh religion there. He became a famous and successful preacher and 'sent several of the Agra Sikhs to the Guru, who taught them the advantages of human birth and the necessity of working out ultimate salvation therein.' Sikhism spread by rapid strides during the days of Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas himself refers to a very prosperous Sikh *Sangat* at Agra. It may not be improbable that the initial impetus that led to these results had been given by Ram Das but still it appears to us that his regime was more or less uneventful and 'though he is among the most revered of the Gurus, no precepts of wide application or rules of great practical value or force, are attributed to him.'

Guru Ram Das died in 1581 and was succeeded by his youngest son Arjan, who was then 18 years of age having been born in 1563. The eldest son Prithia had enraged his father by constant intrigues to discredit Arjan whom he knew to be the Guru's favourite and the second son Mahadev 'was a religious enthusiast and heeded not sublunary affairs.' It is stated in the Sikh chronicles that, on one occasion, Sahari

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 264, 271.

Mal, a first cousin of Guru Ram Das, came from Lahore and invited the Guru to grace his son's marriage with his presence. The Guru excused himself on grounds of heavy responsibilities at home but promised to send one of his sons. Ram Das first asked Prithia to go to Lahore to attend the marriage ceremony but Prithia refused. We are told that " Prithia had two motives of his own for refusing. He was in charge of the offerings, and was able to furtively set aside much wealth for himself. If he went to Lahore this illicit gain would fall to some one else. The time, too, was approaching for the selection of a Guru in succession to his father and he apprehended supersession during his absence." Absorbed in his own religious pursuits Mahadev also positively refused to have anything to do with the affair but Arjan, who was all humility and obedience, unhesitatingly agreed and forthwith proceeded to Lahore. It was arranged that after the wedding was over Arjan would remain for some time at Lahore and look to the affairs of the *Sangat* there. It is said that after some days Arjan felt the pangs of separation from his father and wrote him a letter requesting his recall. Prithia intercepted this letter and the Guru could know nothing about it. From what Arjan heard from his messenger he could easily guess what had happened and he addressed a second letter but with no better result. This time, too, Prithia got hold of it and kept his father in the dark. Therefore Arjan sent another letter and took the precaution of writing No. 3 on it, so that the Guru might know that two other letters had been previously written. The messenger also was duly instructed to deliver the

letter personally to the Guru and this time Prithia failed to play the same old trick. The letter was delivered to the Guru and Prithia's deceit was immediately found out. The two previous letters were discovered in Prithia's room hidden inside a coat and his discomfiture was complete. Arjan was immediately sent for and on his arrival 'the Guru sent for five paisa and a cocoanut, placed them before Arjan, and descending from his throne seated him on it in the presence of the whole assembly. Bhai Budha affixed the tilak or mark of spiritual sovereignty to Arjan's forehead, and he was publicly proclaimed Guru amid universal manifestations of delight.' [1] But Prithia positively refused to submit and adopted an attitude of open defiance. He declared that the Guru had acted improperly and vowed that he would yet seize the Guruship by force. Prithia did not hesitate even to insult his father again and again till at last the Guru could bear it no longer. He drove Prithia out and said, 'Thou art a Mina; my Sikhs will not obey thee, and will never associate with thee.' [2]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 281. The ceremony of initiation was strikingly simple. The old *Janamsākhī* states that in the case of Angad Guru Nānak merely 'put five paisa before him and fell down at his feet' (Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p xiv). In later cases a cocoanut also seems to have been laid before the successor. Further the *tilak* or coronation mark was affixed on the successor's forehead. Bhai Budha, a Jat disciple of Guru Nanak, performed this with regard to five of his successors. We are further told that "the significance of the *tilak* is well known. It is often if not generally affixed by a dominant or autochthonous agricultural class and in this instance the choice of Bhai Budha represented the Jat recognition of the Guru's chiefship" (*Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol I, p. 680).

[2] *Sūraj Prakās, Rās* II, xix-xxii; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 276-284. Macauliffe says that 'this word originally meant a tribe of

Though it is quite possible that much of the above story is a later setting and that the details about the blackness of Prithia's character have been somewhat overdrawn, the fact stands that Prithia quarrelled with his father about Arjan's nomination to the Guruship and could never reconcile himself with that decision. The two hymns of Guru Ram Das that Macauliffe quotes, leave absolutely no doubt that Prithia's bickerings embittered the last days of his father. In the first the Guru gently admonishes his son not to quarrel as 'it is a sin to quarrel with him who begot thee and reared thee' and in the second the Guru proclaims soberly but emphatically the irrevocability of his decision and the utter futility of all slanderous protestations. Says the Guru:

> "God in the beginning bestowed on his saints the ambrosial storehouse of saintship.
>
> The fool who trieth to rival them, shall have his face blackened both in this world and the next.
>
> They are saints, they are worshippers to whom God's name is dear.

Hindu robbers of Rājputānā. In the Panjāb the name is now applied to a villain with a smiling face' (Vol. II, p. 284, f. n.). It appears, however, that the tribe is almost invariably criminal in the Punjab though in Alwar and Jaipur, where their original home lies, this is not the case They are professional thieves and the boldest of the criminal classes in the Punjab. (*Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II, pp. 102, 103. It is thus quite conceivable that the word *mīṇā* became a vile term of opprobrium. In *Wār* XXXVI, Bhai Gurdas gives a long discourse on the *mīṇā* and, though one might be tempted to connect the verses with Prithia and his followers, it seems clear that the word is used in the sense of *kapaṭī* or deceitful. But though the story that Guru Ram Das called Prithia a *mīṇā* and drove him out is only to be found in the later Sikh records, it seems that the application of the name to Prithia's followers is as old as the *Dabistān*. (Vol. II, p. 273.)

God is obtained by their service ; ashes shall be thrown on the slanderer's head.

In the case of the four Gurus none hath ever obtained the Guruship by revilings ; it is by God's service the Guruship is obtained." [1]

It seems clear that though in none of these hymns Prithia is mentioned by name, they undoubtedly refer to him and his doings.

Under the circumstances, it was hardly to be expected that Prithia would take Arjan's accession to the Guruship in the light of anything but usurpation. In fact, he regarded the Guruship as his by right and remained the bitterest enemy of Guru Arjan practically till the closing episode of the latter's career. We are told that immediately after the accession of Guru Arjan Prithia entered into intrigues with Sulahi Khan, a revenue officer of the province of Lahore, and complained to the *Chaudhris* of Amritsar that he and his second brother Mahadev had been left without maintenance. On a representation being made to the Guru 'he granted certain taxes and house rents to Prithia, the customs duties of Pasian ka Chauk (a ward of Amritsar) to Mahadev, and merely reserved for himself the voluntary offerings of the faithful.' [2] This compromise appears to have worked more or less satisfactorily for several years and left Guru Arjan free for a time at least to devote his energy to more vital matters.

The first task to which the new Guru set himself was to complete the work left unfinished by his prede-

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 283, 284.

[2] *Sūraj Prakās, Rās* II, xxix; Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 2.

cessor. It has already been seen that Guru Ram Das had begun the construction of the city of Ramdaspur within the limits of which he had dug the tank of nectar 'which was already climbing up into rivalry with the sacred Ganges in the eyes of the Sikhs.' But death cut him off before the work could be finally completed. There was further another tank called *Santokhsar* which, too, had been left unfinished. It appears that during the first eight years of his pontificate Guru Arjan was busily occupied with this threefold task and he further extended the scope of the undertaking by projecting the *Har Mandar* or the temple of God, which he built in the midst of Ram Das's 'tank of nectar.' From a remark in one of the Guru's hymns that 'the creator stood in the midst of the work, and not a hair of any man's head was touched' [1] it seems that the work went on smoothly and when it was finally completed, Guru Arjan, in his characteristic manner, attributed everything to the mercy of God. "God Himself came, and stood up to do the work of the saints. He did it whose work it was; what is wretched man?" said the Guru.[2] In the fullness of his heart the Guru proclaimed:

"He who here below singeth a song of rejoicing over this work,
Shall obtain the fruit his heart desireth.
He who while meditating on his God
Cometh to bathe here shall be made safe and whole.
He who batheth in the saints' tank
Shall obtain final salvation." [3]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 12.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 11.

It can be easily seen that the result of this declaration was to make Amritsar, as the city now came to be called, the most important place of Sikh pilgrimage. Guru Arjan also finally removed his residence there and made it the centre of Sikh activities.[1] 'This was of the greatest importance for the firm establishment of Sikhism, for the Sikhs obtained thereby a fixed central place of worship, where the disciples annually assembled round their Guru and performed their ablutions in the nectar tank.'

It was also possibly in this connection that Guru Arjan introduced what has since been known as the *masand*-system. We have seen how under Guru Amar Das Sikhism had been thoroughly reconciled with secular life and how the disciples had been told 'to worship God in their own homes and not to go to the wilderness to find Him.'[2] The Gurus were never tired of hammering this idea upon their followers. 'The life of the hermit was of no avail'[3] and 'leading the life of a householder by which somebody may gain was better than putting on a sectarial dress.'[4] And 'the best use to which money could be applied would be to fill the Guru's kitchen with corn and supply the necessities of pilgrims.'[5] The

[1] But it appears that the Guru still continued to reside off and on at Goindwal as is evident from the fact that Jahangir describes him as an inhabitant of that place. (*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Rogers and Beveridge, Vol. I, p. 72.) As we shall see later on, the visit of Akbar to Arjan also took place at Goindwal.

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 193.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 214.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 87.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 90.

Sikhs were 'to give a tithe of their substance to God' [1] and the result of this teaching was to convert the Sikhs into a body of householders, one of whose most essential duties was to offer something of their substance to the Guru. Offerings came in profusion and the Guru's *Langar* daily increased its activities. A change seems to have been made during the days of Guru Ram Das, who is said to have sent agents throughout the country for the purpose of collecting contributions from his followers for the excavation of the tanks he had planned.[2] But as yet the contributions were absolutely voluntary though it was becoming difficult to allow things to continue in this irregular manner. The Gurus had considerably widened the range of their activities and their enterprises in building and excavation required a more steady flow of resources. On the other hand, 'the number of the Sikhs had immensely increased and as they were scattered over all parts of the Punjab, from Peshawar to Delhi, the collection of these gifts was very difficult and very often they did not find their way into the treasury of the Gurus.' Nay, the Sikhs had even spread to provinces far distant from the Punjab [3] and it can be easily seen that a change in the method of collection had become imperatively necessary. The

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 71.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 271.

[3] Mohsin Fani says 'the number of these sectaries increased everywhere, so that, in the time of the Guru Arjunmal it became very considerable, and at last there was no place in any country, where Sikhs were not to be found.' (*Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 270.) Bhai Gurdas's account of Sikh *Sangats* in his XIth *Wār* also clearly shows how Sikhism had widely spread by his time.

Sikh records are more or less silent about the matter but fortunately the *Dabistān* tells us how Guru Arjan sought to meet the difficulty. Mohsin Fani says, "Before the fifth period no tribute was exacted from the Sikhs, but presents were given by them according to their own discretion to their Gurus. Arjunmal sent in his time a person to the Sikhs of each town in order to collect a tribute; in that manner, the Sikhs accustomed themselves to the government of a masand or deputy." [1] It will be seen that the voluntary contributions of the faithful were now made compulsory and arrangement was made for their collection through authorised agents, who came to be known as *masands*.[2] This innovation was, more or less, revolutionary in character and far-reaching in its consequences. As Narang points out, 'the Guru could now arrange his budget with much more certainty, as the dues of the Gurus were paid more readily and unfailingly than even the Mughal revenues' [3] and, on the other hand, 'the Sikhs were gradually accustomed to a kind of government of their own, and began to

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 271.

[2] Macauliffe says that 'in the time of the Afghan Kings, nobles were styled Masnad i-Ali. Hence, the word masnad was employed as the ordinary appellation of courtiers. From its frequent use it was changed in the mouths of Sikhs into masand. The Guru was called Sacha Padshah, or the true king, so his agents were styled masands.' (Vol. II, p. 271.) See also *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 271.

[3] Narang, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 35. Narang says that 'masand seems to be a corruption of masnad, shorter form of masnad-i-Ali or His Excellency, the title of Mughal governors. This is another proof of the rising power of the Sikhs. When the Guru became the true King his Viceroys must of course be their Excellencies."

feel themselves as a firmly organised and strong party within the State.' [1]

But these successes proved too much for Prithia, who now threw over the compromise and began anew his intrigues against the Guru. The position appears to have become so serious that the Guru thought it best to leave Amritsar alone for some time and go out on a tour of propaganda. This was indirectly of the greatest importance in the history of Sikhism. Guru Arjan appears to have undertaken a rather detailed tour in the Manjha country and as a result of his efforts the hold of Sikhism over the tract in question was henceforward indisputably established. The Sikh records give us many details, some of which at least are hardly acceptable but, on the whole, it is not difficult to trace the Guru's progress in this tour of propaganda. He first visited Khadur and Goindwal, places sanctified by two of his predecessors, and then passing through the villages of Bhaini and Khanpur, arrived at Khara where, ' the prospect around him—the flowering woods and glades, the limpid water, and the fresh and exhilarating atmosphere ' appears to have made such a profound impression on his mind that he forthwith procured land from the villagers and laid there the foundation of a city, which came to be known as Tarn Taran.[2] The tank which the Guru planned could not be completed owing to the interference of a local Muhammadan official but a good beginning had been

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxi.

[2] The place appears to have been founded in 1590. ' The name Tarn Taran means a raft to take men across the world's ocean.' (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 25.)

made and the place forthwith gained ground as an important resort of Sikh pilgrimage. We have already seen that Sikh tradition claimed miraculous healing powers for the waters of the sacred tank of Amritsar ; a similar and even more insistent declaration seems to have been made in the case of Tarn Taran as well, and there may be something in the suggestion that 'the mythical powers of the water of the tank in the cure of leprosy would appear to have been pronounced by Guru Arjan with the object of getting rid of persons afflicted with that loathsome disease from the sacred precincts of the temple at Amritsar.' [1] At least this much is certain that many lepers were in past times drawn there by the reputation of the place and a large quarter of the town is now inhabited by lepers.[2] However, the foundation of this city was of great importance in the history of Sikhism. 'Tarn Taran is the capital of the tract of country known as the Manjha or middle land, which extends from the Ravi to the Bias, the nursery of the chivalry of the Native Army, and the home of a sturdy and strong race of agriculturists.'' [3] The people of this tract have always formed the backbone of the Sikh community and this fact may very well be attributed to the propaganda work of Guru Arjan and the foundation of the city of Tarn Taran in the very heart of their country.

It appears that the Guru then crossed the Bias and went over to the Jalandhar district where he is said

[1] *Amritsar District Gazetteer*, 1883-4, p. 76.

[2] *Ibid.* 'About a mile from the town there is an asylum for the reception of indigent lepers from all parts of the province.'

[3] *Ibid.*

to have laid the nucleus of another city which he called Kartarpur and which has since risen to considerable spiritual and temporal eminence. The Guru next passed through a network of villages, preaching everywhere with success and making many converts, and at last arrived at Lahore. Here he made arrangements for the construction of the Guru's *Bawali* at Dabbi Bazar and then proceeded to the Gurdaspur district. He visited in turn the shrine of Guru Nanak at Dehra Baba Nanak and the *Udāsī* Srichand at Barath and finally returned to Amritsar.

The next important incident in the Guru's career is the birth of his son Hargobind at Wadali in 1595 A. D. It seems that the tour of propaganda had lasted about 5 years and it was possibly about 1594 that he returned to Amritsar.[1] The Sikh records state that the Guru's long absence had not, in the least, soothed the feelings of Prithia who continued to annoy him as before. Indeed, this enmity of Prithia proved such a great obsession with the Sikh chroniclers that they have mixed it up even with the circumstances of the birth of Hargobind. It is said that Prithia's jealousy was continually fanned by his wife Karmo but Prithia consoled her with the assurance that as Guru Arjan had no issue their son Mihrban was bound to succeed to the *gaddi*. This conversation, we are told, was overheard

[1] Macauliffe says that it was in 1589 that the Guru laid the first brick of the masonry foundation of the Har Mandar (*op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 10). We are told that the construction of Tarn Taran began in 1590. It thus seems that the Guru must have started on his tour about the end of 1589. From the Sikh records it also appears that the Guru returned to Amritsar at least a year before the birth of Hargobind which happened in 1595.

by the Guru's wife Ganga who became forthwith anxious for a child and prayed of her husband to grant her the boon of a son. The Guru thereupon sent his wife to Bhai Budha, an ancient Sikh of Guru Nanak's time who dwelt in a neighbouring forest, to pray for the desired boon. The mission to Bhai Budha, however, proved unsuccessful as he seems to have been perturbed by the display of the Guru's wife who had gone to him in great state, 'taking with her as her attendants the wives of the headmen of Amritsar.' Bhai Budha is said to have humbly represented to her that he was merely a grass-cutter and servant of her house. He disclaimed all powers of intercession and told her that it was the Guru alone who fulfilled every one's desires. Ganga returned disappointed to her husband and reported the failure of her mission. Guru Arjan told her that the saints and the true Guru never liked display and that if she wished to succeed she must go to Bhai Budha in an attitude of humility and supplication. She did as she was told and this time Bhai Budha blessed her and said that she would have a son who would be 'very handsome and brave, possess spiritual and temporal power, become a mighty hunter, ride on royal steeds, wear two swords, be puissant in battle, and trample on the Mughals.' [1]

It is clearly unnecessary to bring in the jealousy of Karmo to explain Ganga's very natural desire for a son. From Guru Arjan's own hymns it appears that he had become very anxious for a son and when he got one he wrote in the fulness of his heart: 'The True

[1] *Sūraj Prakāś, Rās* III, i-iii; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 29-32.

Guru hath granted me what my heart desired.' And it is possible or even probable that the prophecy about the character and achievements of Hargobind had been put into the mouth of Bhai Budha by a later chronicler. But the story of Bhai Budha's having had some connection with the birth of Hargobind cannot be altogether brushed aside. Besides the fact that we have a very strong Sikh tradition to that effect we have to take into account the hymns composed by Guru Arjan on the occasion of the birth of his son, which contain distinct references to a saint. The Guru says that 'everybody hath been making his own remarks,' or in other words, people had been saying that he would have no children but 'that the words of holy men are immutable is apparent to all.' [1] Further on the Guru adds—' The saint hath been merciful, and all my family is delighted.' [2] There can thus be little doubt that Guru Arjan himself believed that the birth of Hargobind was due to the kindly intercession of a holy man, presumably Bhai Budha.

Hargobind, however, was not born in Amritsar but at a village called Wadali about seven miles distant. We are told that at the instigation of Prithia a revenue officer of the district named Sulahi Khan prepared to attack Amritsar under the pretence of levying tribute and anticipating the troubles and annoyance the Guru retired to Wadali where he remained for two years. His stay there seems to have been, more or less, uneventful, excepting the part that he is said to have played in amicably settling the disputes between Wadali

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 33.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 36.

and the neighbouring villages.[1] The Sikh records, however, state that even in his retirement he was incessantly troubled by the intrigues of Prithia. The birth of an heir to Guru Arjan had proved too much for Prithia and his wife and it is said that they planned to murder the child. They got hold of an old nurse of the family, and persuaded her, on promise of a reward of one hundred rupees, to go to Wadali and poison the child. 'The deceitful nurse went home, applied poison to the nipples of her breast, mixed some more in a medicine called gurhti given to infants in the East and proceeded to Wadali.' It so happened that Hargobind was at that time suffering from some temporary illness and refused to suckle. Ganga was very much pleased at the coming of the old nurse at this crisis and, deceived by her specious words, entrusted the child to her. The nurse at first tried the medicine but the child would not take it. Then she opened her breast and offered it to the child but it was refused again. Thereupon the nurse fainted and fell backwards. When she regained her senses she was so much overwhelmed with terror that she gave out the designs of Prithia. It is further stated that the Guru's brother next got hold of a snake-charmer and persuaded him to kill Hargobind by exposing him to a cobra. But the plot failed again. When the snake was let loose Hargobind is said to have taken it in his hand and killed it immediately.[2] These stories clearly illustrate how in the later Sikh chronicles incidents of doubtful authenticity have been freely

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 34.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 36-39 ; *Sūraj Prakāś, Rās*, III, VII.

introduced into the body of the narrative, making it sometimes almost impossible to get at the facts. But of this more anon.

Guru Arjan returned to Amritsar in 1597 when Hargobind was two years old but he was not destined to remain in peace. It appears that soon after Hargobind was attacked with small-pox and the hymns written by the Guru on the occasion show the intense anxiety of the father and, at the same time, his implicit reliance on God's name at this hour of crisis. Guru Arjan says:

> "I have ever and ever repeated God's name,
> And God Himself hath preserved my child.
> The small-pox is stayed ;
> Our troubles are removed by God's name." [1]

And in the fulness of his heart he attributes the child's recovery entirely to the grace of God. We are told:

> "God hath protected the honour of His servant.
> The Guru gave the medicine of God's name, and all the fever hath departed.
> God of His mercy hath preserved Hargobind." [2]

But as soon as this calamity was over Prithia engineered another plot to ensure the succession of his own son to the *gaddi*. This time he is said to have entered into a conspiracy with Hargobind's 'male nurse' who was a Brahman by caste. We are told that the nurse succeeded in putting some poison into a cup of milk intended for the child but he could not persuade

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 43.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 44.

Hargobind to drink it. When he persisted in his attempt the child began to cry and this brought Guru Arjan to the scene. He suspected foul play and gave a portion of the milk to a dog which instantly died. At this discovery the Brahman is said to have been seized with colic. He confessed his intention of poisoning the child at Prithia's instigation and soon afterwards expired. This incident also, no doubt, in some respects resembles the previous attempts of Prithia to murder Hargobind but it stands on an entirely different footing. In one of his hymns Guru Arjan notices it and there can thus be little doubt about its basic truth. The Guru says:

" The poison produced no impression whatever on him ;
The evil Brahman died of the colic.
The Supreme Being Himself preserved his servant,
The sinner died by the Guru's power." [1]

It may not, therefore, be improbable that the stories of the female nurse and the snake-charmer were later embellishments reared on the edifice supplied by the remarks of the Guru, particularly as it is not difficult to trace therein the influence of *Kṛṣṇaite* legends.[2]

However, the discovery of this outrageous project must have put Prithia in a very uncomfortable position and we are told that in order to anticipate any charge that the Guru might make against him he set out with

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 47.

2 *Cf.* the legends of the nurse Putanā sent by Kaṁsa to kill Kṛṣṇa and also the story of Kṛṣṇa's having saved the life of Nanda by killing a serpent. (*Bhāgavata Purāna*, X, 6, 34.)

his family for Delhi. In vain did Mahadev, the Guru's second brother, remonstrate with him and equally fruitless was the attempt at reconciliation made by Guru Arjan himself who sent Bhai Gurdas to Hehar where, on his way to Delhi, Prithia had gone on a visit to his friend Sulahi Khan.[1] In due time Prithia and Sulahi Khan went to Delhi and a memorial is said to have been presented before the Emperor. Akbar 'decided in first place that he would not interfere in the affairs of religious men, and secondly that the memorial was false.' In a hymn of his the Guru seems to refer to this incident though the Emperor is not expressly mentioned. He attributes the discomfiture of Prithia to the grace of God 'who himself showed the memorial to be false,' and adds that 'Prithia is involved in the consequences of his own acts.'[2]

This proved a crushing blow to Prithia and he seems to have been so much disheartened that, at least for some time, he ceased to annoy the Guru. This respite was of the greatest importance as it enabled the Guru to turn once more to that wholesome work of consolidation which he had begun with such promise during the earlier part of his career. And the work that he now commenced may very well be regarded as the crowning achievement of his life. This was nothing less than the compilation of the *Granth Sāhib*. Macauliffe says, "Guru Arjan now felt the necessity of laying down rules for the guidance of his followers in the performance of their daily religious duties and

1 *Sūraj Prakāś*, *Ras.* III, xviii-xxv.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*; Vol. III, p. 49.

expiatory rites. This course would reduce his religion to consistency, and hinder divergent tenets and rituals. That consummation, however, could only be attained when the exact words of the Gurus were permanently recorded in one grand volume." [1] It is further stated that information reached the Guru to the effect that Prithia had begun the compilation of a *Granth* in which he was trying to pass his own compositions as those of Guru Nanak and steps to meet this arrogant encroachment could no longer be delayed. But apart from these considerations an authoritative compilation of the hymns of the successive Gurus had become a matter of vital necessity. In the practical side of Sikhism the most obvious religious exercise enjoined on the followers had been the singing of hymns in praise of the True One and it had also been laid down that only the real hymns of the Gurus should be used for the purpose. For instance, Guru Amar Das says:

> "Come, ye disciples, beloved of the true Guru, sing a true song.
> Sing a song of the Guru, the song of songs.
> Saith Nanak, ever sing this true song."

And he adds:

> "Without the true Guru every song is false,
> Every song is false without the true Guru.
> They who utter it are false, they who hear it are false, and false is its author." [2]

And we have already seen that the work of collecting and compiling the hymns of the Gurus had made

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 55.
[2] *Ibid* (*Anand.* xxiii, xxiv), p. 124.

considerable progress during his pontificate. But this had necessarily been incomplete and were now practically inaccessible to the generality of the Sikh public. The compilation that Guru Arjan now planned was thus clearly a desideratum and its completion furnished the coping-stone to his strenuous work of organisation.

Naturally Guru Arjan's first object was to secure the previous compilation which, he knew, was in the custody of Mohan, one of the sons of Guru Amar Das. It appears that the Guru sent Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Budha, one after another, for the purpose but they both failed and then Guru Arjan went to Mohan in person. The Sikh writers have enshrouded the story in a veil of mystery but it seems that the failure of the two emissaries had shown the Guru that a little diplomacy was needed and after some initial difficulties he did at last succeed in getting the object of his desire. In the ecstasy of his delight the Guru wrote:

"I am wealthy and fortunate in the true name.
I sing God's praises with composure and love.
When I opened and saw my father and grandfather's treasury of *sacred books*
My soul was enriched.
My store-houses were filled with gems and rubies
Inestimable, inexhaustible, and unweighable.
O my brethren, let us eat and spend this wealth together." [1]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 58. We are told that this manuscript is still found at Goindwal and that the order of the *Granth Sāhib* was at least in part suggested by it. Guru Arjan is said to have used another manuscript which 'was seen by Gyan Singh with a woman who lived in *Katra* Mahan Singh at Amritsar.' Further, on the authority of the *Tavarikh-Khalsa* Mohan Singh saysth at " in response to a general

To these were now added Guru Arjan's own compositions, which were very numerous and formed by far the major portion of the entire collection when it was finally completed. Further, the Guru made selections from the compositions of various *bhagats* or saints, both Hindu and Muhammadan, whose teachings agreed with those of the Sikh Gurus in their fundamentals, and incorporated them in the *Granth*. Lastly we are told that "several bards who had accepted the Sikh religion appeared before the Guru, and offered him panegyrics of himself and his predecessors. The Guru graciously gave such compositions a place in the sacred volume." The huge amount of material thus collected was then written out by Bhai Gurdas at the dictation of Guru Arjan and after much arduous labour the work was at last completed in A.D. 1604. The *Granth Sāhib*,[1] as it came to be called, was placed in the Har Mandar with Bhai Budha in charge.

invitation issued by Guru Arjan Deb to the holders of *MSS.* containing the poetry of the previous four Gurus, one Bhai Bhakta, of Arora caste, belonging to Jalal Pur, in the *Paragana* of Hasan Abdal, produced a huge tome containing the *Bani* of the first four Sikh Gurus and much other poetry besides, which was duly used by Guru Arjan Dev, the said *MS.* having been finally returned to the owner. It is further stated that the *MS.* was a priceless heirloom in the family as it had been completed contemporaneously with the respective *Gurus* whose autographs were obtained. The signatures of the first four *Gurus* were shown to the fifth *Guru* who gave his own signature. The signatures of the other, later Gurus, are also said to be present in the *MS.* which was stated by Gyan Singh, the author of the *Tavarikh*, to be then in the custody of one Buta Singh *Pasari* of Rawalpindi. (*Kabir and the Bhagti Movement*, Vol. I, pp. 49, 79.)"

[1] It is also called the *Adi Granth* to distinguish it from the *Dasam Pātshāh kā Granth*, or the Book of the tenth King, *i.e.*, Guru Gobind Singh.

This closes the history of Guru Arjan's achievements as a peaceful organiser. But almost all modern writers state that Guru Arjan also did something to foster trade and industry among the members of his community. This is quite conceivable and there seems nothing improbable in it. The Sikhs had become purely a community of householders and the Gurus were never tired of emphasising the dignity of labour and of all honest avocations.[1] But the matter has been carried much further. Particular stress has been laid on the alleged fact that Guru Arjan encouraged his followers to engage in horse trade with countries beyond the Indus and one writer in particular has taken considerable pains to explain the importance and possible effects of this step. It has been suggested that

[1] Teja Singh very rightly emphasises this aspect of the Guru's work (*Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism*, pp. 29-32) but it seems that in his enthusiasm he has overstepped the limit. For instance, we are told that "the creation of an intelligent middle class was (as it still is) the crying need of the time. The society in India was so constituted as to give no scope to the development of arts and industries. The rigid caste rules had made it impossible for the men of higher castes to take part in the cultivation of arts and sciences. They stood aloof and left the sweating work to be done by the so-called lower castes." This is only another instance of the present-day tendency of attributing all the ills of India to the caste-system but facts speak otherwise. To say that the higher classes took no part in the cultivation of arts and sciences is to ignore plain facts and there is enough material in the Sikh records themselves to show that the higher classes, particularly the Khatris, were traders *par excellence* long before Sikhism made its influence felt. There might have been some apathy on the part of men of ability and talent to take to producing but, as Moreland points out (*From Akbar to Aurangzib*, p. 283), the chief reason for that was not the 'social constitution of India' but the revenue policy of the administration, which reacted unfavourably on production.

the Guru's motive was political and that 'it is likely that the trade, or at any rate a considerable part of it, was carried on with public funds of the community, and the major portion of the profits therefore went to the funds of the church.' [1] As Cunningham says, "Nor was Arjun heedless of other means of acquiring wealth and influence; he dispatched his followers into foreign countries to be as keen in traffic as they were zealous in belief, and it is probable that his transactions as a merchant were extensive, although confined to the purchase of horses in Turkestan." [2] In similar strain Trumpp says that the Guru engaged in trade in grand style [3] and he is almost echoed by Irvine. [4] But it appears to us that the matter has been treated rather carelessly and, so far as we are aware, there is no clear and reliable evidence in support of these contentions. Cunningham remarks that 'the ordinary Sikh accounts are to this effect' but it is evident that he does not attach any great value to these. He also refers to the *Dabistān*, but the passage which he undoubtedly means clearly refers to the *masands* and not to the Gurus, though the word 'guru' is used.[5] Moreover, there is nothing here about trade in horses or

1 Narang, *op. cit.*, pp 35, 36.

2 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

3 Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxi.

4 Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 76.

5 Mohsin Fani says that the Sikhs established that an *udāsī* or one that has abandoned the world, is not to be esteemed higher than any other man. 'On that account, some of their Gurus are inclined to agriculture, others to commerce, and to various trades and occupations' (*Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 272). Cunningham apparently deduced a dubious conclusion from this passage and it seems that all subsequent writers have followed him without looking closely into the matter.

Guru Arjan's participation in it. In another connection, not noticed by Cunningham, Mohsin Fani speaks of a Sikh named Sadah who had been sent by Guru Hargobind to bring horses from Balkh. He brought three beautiful Irak horses for his master but they were seized by a tyrant named Khalil Beg. [1] It should be noted that in this instance the horses were ordered to be brought for the Guru's own sake and there is absolutely no suggestion of any trade in the affair. Moreover, trade in horses was no new thing. It is stated in the *Janamsākhīs* that Guru Nanak's father Kalu had once asked him to be a dealer in horses and in his characteristic fashion Nanak replied:

> "Make thy hearing of the sacred books thy merchandise,—truth the horses thou takest to sell;
> Tie up virtues as thy travelling expense and think not in thy heart of to-morrow.
> When thou arrivest in the land of God, thou shalt obtain happiness in his abode." [2]

These verses clearly show that even in the days of Nanak trading in horses by men of his class was not an uncommon event and consequently a few isolated instances of later days cannot be regarded as in any way conclusive unless it can be shown by direct evidence that Guru Arjan had actually encouraged and himself taken part in the lucrative horse trade with Balkh and Irak.

But trade or no trade, Guru Arjan's achievements had been solid enough and we are told that during the

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 284.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 28.

closing years of his life his enemies again combined and made a determined attempt to bring about his ruin. The inveterate Prithia had in the meantime been greatly weakened by the accidental death of his friend and patron, Sulahi Khan. It is said that 'one day Prithia took Sulahi to admire some brick-kilns he had made. On arriving, Sulahi's horse started at the accidental flight of a bird from under his feet, and ran with his rider straight into a kiln in full blast. In a few minutes horse and rider became a mass of cinders.' [1] But this loss was more than made up by an unexpected recruit of a much more formidable character to the ranks of the Guru's enemies. This was Chandu Shah, an imperial Dewan, who appears to have been an inhabitant of Lahore but whose official duties necessitated his residence at Delhi. The story runs that he had sought the hands of the Guru's son Hargobind for his daughter Sada Kaur but the Guru refused the alliance primarily because his Delhi Sikhs were averse to the proposal. It is said that the proposed alliance was not at all to Chandu's liking as he considered the Guru to be a person of inferior status, particularly as he was dependent on offerings for his subsistence. But the

[1] In a hymn in *Bilāval* Guru Arjan refers to this incident Says the Guru :

"God preserved me from Sulahi.

Sulahi by no means succeeded; Sulahi died unclean.

God drew forth his axe and smote off his head and in a moment he became ashes.

He was consumed ever meditating evil; He who created him thrust him into the fire."

(Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 86.)

See also *Sūraj Prakās*, *Rās* IV, xviii.

importunities of his wife proved too much for him and he at last gave his consent. However, it seems that Chandu's offensive remarks had reached the ears of the local Sikhs who became very much annoyed and immediately sent a messenger post-haste with a letter to the Guru requesting him urgently to refuse the alliance. The result of the whole matter was that Chandu's proposal was rejected and in the very presence of his emissaries Hargobind was triumphantly betrothed to a daughter of Narain Das and next to that of Hari Chand. This was an insult [1] which Chandu took seriously to heart and henceforth he became the deadliest enemy of the Guru. And, according to Sikh tradition, it was not long before he was sought out by Prithia and his friends and a grand combination against the Guru arranged.[2]

It is said that Prithia succeeded in persuading the Kazis and Brahmans to lay a complaint against the Guru on the ground that the *Granth* compiled by him blasphemed both the Hindus and the Muhammadans and through the influence of Chandu the memorial was duly placed before the Emperor. At the Emperor's order the *Granth* was brought before him together with Bhai Budha and Bhai Gurdas who deputised for the Guru. After some discussion the Emperor became convinced that the complaint against the Guru was totally groundless and the deputies were dismissed with dresses of honour for themselves

[1] Narang says (*op. cit.*, p. 40, f.n.) that "under a mistaken notion of honour, a noble Khatri could not brook to marry his daughter to any one else, after a bridegroom for her had been once selected."

[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 81-82.

and their Guru. And we are further told that the discomfiture of the conspirators became complete when the Emperor next paid a visit to the Guru and in compliment to him remitted the revenues of the Punjab for that year.

This is the Sikh tradition as we find it embodied in the later Sikh chronicles but the story in all its details can hardly be acceptable unless we find it corroborated by some independent and more reliable testimony. The stories of these deputations to Akbar are by no means few and we must not ignore the possibility that some at least might have been inspired by Akbar's well-known toleration and his predilection for saints and fakirs. But it must be pointed out that with regard to Akbar's alleged visit to Guru Arjan we possess some independent evidence. Macauliffe says, "Badaoni states that on another occasion, namely, the thirteenth of the month of Azur (Jamadi ul sani), Akbar, with a gorgeous military retinue, crossed the Bias and went to Goindwal to visit Guru Arjan, whose teaching and character he appreciated."[1] This seems to establish the visit and the *Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh* says distinctly that a small portion of the revenues was also actually remitted at the request of Guru Arjan. Sujan Rai states that "when Akbar left Lahore and reached Batala he came to know that a fight had taken place between Musalman Fakirs and Sannyāsis. He went to the spot and put to prison the Musalman Fakirs who had done injustice and had broken some of the temples. He ordered the temples to be repaired and from there he

1. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 84.

crossed the Bias and visited the house of Guru Arjan, a disciple and successor of Baba Nanak and he was very much pleased when he recited some of the poems of Baba Nanak about the unity of the Godhead. The Guru expressed his obligation to the Emperor for his visit and at the time of his departure represented to him that in the Punjab the price of corn had gone up and the people found it difficult to pay the revenue. The Emperor accepted his request and issued orders to his officers to reduce the revenue by one-tenth or one-twelfth."[1] The Sikh tradition is thus substantially corroborated though, as we have pointed out before, it is difficult to accept it in its entirety.

Looked at from the secular point of view this visit of the Emperor and his partial remission of the revenues at the Guru's request must be regarded as the highwater-mark in Arjan's career. But almost immediately afterwards his fortunes set on the ebb and brought his career to a tragic and lamentable end. That incident, however, was the first of a series of events that brought in a new phase of development and belongs more properly to the history of the transition to militarism under Guru Arjan's son and successor, Hargobind. We have been concerned till now in tracing the history of the development of the Sikh *Panth* since Sikhism was first brought into being by the bold and unequivocal declaration of Guru Nanak that 'there is no Hindu and no Musalman'; and the first phase may be said to have ended in 1604, the year in which the *Granth Sāhib* was compiled.

[1] *Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh* (Zafar Hasan's edition), p. 425.

and placed in the Har Mandar. The progress hitherto had been almost entirely peaceful with practically no interference from the established state, which, on the contrary, had on occasions been friendly and helpful. In the new epoch that was about to commence circumstances entirely changed, methods became openly violent and the state stood out in determined opposition. But it is needless to point out that the new was based on and conditioned by the old and before we pass on to the new epoch it is thus necessary that we should take stock of what had already been achieved and acquaint ourselves more thoroughly with Sikh ideals and institutions.

## CHAPTER VI

### Ideals and Institutions

Tradition affirms that towards the close of his life Guru Nanak began a systematictrial of his followers. His object, no doubt, was to discover the person who was qualified above all others to bear the burden of the Guruship after his death and we are told that the trial generally took the form of apparently unreasonable commands at unseasonable times by Guru Nanak to those around him. Thus, on one occasion, in a winter's night when heavy rain was falling, a part of the wall of the Guru's house was demolished and he expressed his desire that it should be immediately repaired. His sons very naturally said that that was not the proper time for doing the work and that in the morning they would call masons and labourers and have the wall repaired. But Nanak would not hear of it ; he said that the Guru's work must be performed by his Sikhs and that there was no necessity to wait for masons and labourers. At this reiterated command of the Guru ' everybody was silent except Lahina (afterwards Angad) who at once stood up and began to repair the wall. The Guru's sons and other Sikhs went off to sleep.' But for Lahina this was only the beginning of his trial. After some time the Guru came to inspect the work, expressed his dissatisfaction and asked Lahina to pull it down and begin again from the beginning. This was

repeated several times till at last the Guru's sons could hold their patience no longer and told Lahina plainly that 'he was a fool to obey unreasonable orders.' In all humility Lahina replied that 'a servant should make his hands useful by doing his master's work.'[1] There the matter apparently ended and it is needless to state that the point of the story lies in its illustration of the virtue of implicit obedience to the Guru.

There are several other stories of the kind but we would content ourselves by noticing only one other, wherein we are given the traditional explanation as to how the name Lahina was changed to Angad and which we find incorporated in the oldest *Janamsākhī*. The story runs that one day Gorakhnath,[2] who by the way was dead several centuries back, came to Guru Nanak and congratulated him on 'the wide diffusion of his name.' The Guru said that Gorakhnath would soon see how many of these alleged votaries really belonged to the Guru and then a very extraordinary thing happened. Guru Nanak came out of his house with the alleged 'votaries of the *Name*' as well as Gorakhnath and proceeded in a certain direction. In the meantime the ground, at successive stages, had been strewn by the order of the Lord with copper, silver and gold coins and at the first stage when they reached the place with the copper coins scattered broadcast many of the votaries took the coins and went away. The silver and the gold coins proved too much for most of those who had still

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 6.

[2] Evidently the founder of the sect of the Jogīs is meant.

been in the party till at last when they reached a funeral pyre two only of the votaries remained. Upon the funeral pyre 'four lamps were burning, a sheet was spread over it, under which a dead one was lying, but a stench was coming from him.' Guru Nanak asked the two disciples whether any of them was ready to eat the corpse. One of them turned his face and left the place in disgust and then Lahina, who alone had stuck to the last, asked the Guru: 'O Sir, from which side shall I apply my mouth ?' On being told to begin from the side of the feet, Lahina lifted the sheet when he found that Guru Nanak was lying there asleep. Thereupon Gorakhnath said: 'O Nanak, he is thy Guru, who will be produced from thy body,' and the name Lahina was changed to Angad.[1] The story may be absurd and even ridiculous but it is interesting to note the points that the chronicler wants to make

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, pp. xliii-xliv.

Apart from these stories, the main fact that Guru Nanak had actually tested his followers in order to find out the man who was best qualified to succeed him is testified to by the Coronation Ode. It says that 'Lahina obeyed the orders of Guru Nanak whether necessary or unnecessary' and further that 'Lahina obeyed what the Guru had ordered him, and earned the reward of his acts.' We are also told :

"He tested his Sikhs and his sons, and the whole sect saw what he had done.

It was when Lahina was purified that Guru Nanak consecrated him."

And we also get clear hints as to why the name Lahina was changed to Angad. *Angad* literally means "of the body" and the Coronation Ode says, 'A scion of Guru Nanak exchanged bodies with him and took possession of his throne,' and that Guru Nanak's light blended with Guru Angad's, and Guru Nanak became absorbed in him. The idea no doubt is that Angad was the same in essence as Guru Nanak. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol, II, pp. 26, 27.)

out. Here again Angad alone comes out of the ordeal and the test that he is put to is the implicit and unconditional surrender to the Guru.

Coming next to the nomination of Amar Das to the Guruship we are again introduced to several incidents of the type narrated above. But we would notice only one which is said to have finally confirmed Guru Angad in his determination to nominate Amar Das to the Guruship. It was again a dark rainy night, 'cold winds blew, lightning flashed, and every human being was glad to find shelter in his house and go to sleep.' On such a night as this, when three hours were still to pass before daylight could be expected to break, the Guru called out for water. Nobody heeded him. The Guru then awakened one of his sons and asked him to fetch water but he showed no inclination to obey. At this Amar Das came forward and cheerfully volunteered to go to the river to bring water for his master. The Guru objected on the ground that Amar Das was too old a man for such service but the objection was waived and the devoted disciple put a pitcher on his head and started for the river. After some adventures in the impenetrable darkness of the night Amar Das returned with the pitcher of water all right and it seems that the very next day he was invested with the insignia of Guruship.[1] Thus it is clear that, according to Sikh tradition, the *sine qua non* of eligibility to the Guruship, or in other words, the essential requisite of an ideal Sikh was implicit surrender to the Guru, 'sacrificium intellectus' as Trumpp would call it.[2]

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 42, 43.

2 Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii.

In the case of Ram Das tradition shifts its ground. The old point is not abandoned. It is stressed as before and we are told that ' Jetha performed such unremitting service day and night that he allowed himself no repose of mind and body.' But the point that now comes to the forefront is the outstanding fact that the Guruship became hereditary in the line of Ram Das. This required explanation as well as justification and we are introduced to several interesting stories and legends for the purpose. These are independent of one another but in different ways all seek to explain the fact of hereditary succession. The first story begins in the old style and exhibits in full the extreme devotion and obedience of Ram Das to his Guru. It is said that one day Guru Amar Das ordered each of his two sons-in-law, Rama and Jetha, to build a platform by the side of the *Bawali*. When the platforms were completed the Guru went to inspect them and exactly as Guru Nanak had done with the wall of Lahina, expressed his dissatisfaction and asked them to pull the platforms down and build them anew. With great reluctance Rama built his for the second time and when he was again told that the work was not satisfactory he flatly refused to obey any further what he called the Guru's whims. But Jetha continued to break and build seven times in succession till at last the Guru was satisfied and blessed him in the following terms: " Obeying my order seven times hast thou built the platform, so seven generations of thine shall sit on the Guru's throne." [1]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 142, 143.

As we have said, the story is in the old style but the denouement is new.

In the second instance, the matter is approached in a different manner and the hereditary succession is made to appear as the reward of the wholehearted service and devotion of Jetha's wife Bibi Bhani. The story runs that one day as the Guru was absorbed in deep meditation Bibi Bhani entered his room and saw that one of the legs of the Guru's couch was broken and might give way at any moment. She at once put her hand under the broken leg and kept the couch level so that the Guru might not be disturbed in his meditation. When he awoke the Guru expressed great satisfaction at what she had done and invited her to ask a reward. Bibi Bhani is said to have implored that the Guruship should be made hereditary in her family and the request was granted but the Guru added that she had dammed the clear flowing stream of the Guruship and consequently great trouble and annoyance would result ; no doubt a prophecy *ex eventu*.[1]

It will be seen that in both the above cases the Guruship is still the reward of devotion and obedience, only that now the distinction is made hereditary whereas in the cases of Angad and Amar Das it had been merely personal. But the legend that we are now about to narrate goes deeper into the hoary past and presents the matter in a setting in which contemporary events and personalities play practically no part. Moreover, this legend appears to be the oldest of the series as we find a clear hint regarding it in

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 144.

Bhai Gurdas and the story is fully developed by Guru Gobind Singh in his *Bacitra Nāṭak*. Speaking of the nomination of Ram Das to the Guruship Bhai Gurdas remarks:

> "What he previously received must be restored, and descend to the line that owneth it.
>
> The Sodhi king Ram Das sat on the throne, and was called the true Guru."

And again,

> "The Sodhis will not allow it to depart; no others can endure the unendurable thing.
>
> What belongeth to the house shall remain in the house." [1]

It appears that both the verses hint at some previous arrangement or something of the kind, though what that might be is by no means clear. We are, however, inclined to think that in his usual cryptic manner Bhai Gurdas is here referring to the well-known legend which is narrated in great detail in the *Bacitra Nāṭak*. The origin of the Soḍhi family is traced to the time-honoured line of Raghu to which belonged the celebrated hero of the Ramayana. Lahu and Kusu (Lava and Kusu), the two sons of Rama are said to have built the two cities of Lahore and Kassur, which were named after them. The descendants of these two kings continued to wield sceptres for a long time and lived in harmony till the days of Kalket and Kalrai. Kalket (descended from Kusu) is said 'to have possessed peerless strength' and had no difficulty in expelling Kalrai (descended from Lahu) from the city.

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 47.

The latter fled to the Sanaudh country where he married a king's daughter. To him a son named Soḍhi Rai was born and the Soḍhi race began from that time. The Soḍhis gradually became independent and influential, conquered many countries and at last invaded the Punjab. The descendants of Kusu were defeated, and, in their turn, fled to Benares where in course of time they became the readers of the *Veds* and came to be known as the Vedis. Another turn in the wheel of fortune came. To patch up past differences the Soḍhi king of the Punjab wrote a conciliatory letter to the Vedi chief and invited him and his followers to come back to the Punjab. The Vedi chief complied with the request. On the arrival of the Vedis the Soḍhi king asked them to recite the *Veds*. They obeyed. The king was very much pleased, gave all his possessions to the Vedis and assuming the garb of a Rikhi retired to the forest to become absorbed in God's love. The Vedi chief blessed the Soḍhi king, saying, "When I come in the Kali Age under the name of Nanak I will make thee worthy of worship in the world. And thou shalt attain the highest dignity." And the blessing was fulfilled when Guru Amar Das gave the Guruship to Ram Das Soḍhi, in whose line it became hereditary.[1]

The fundamental ideal of surrender and service is absent here and the sole concern of the legend is to provide a sort of historical justification for succession to the Guruship on grounds of heredity. The Guruship

[1] *Bacitra Nāṭak*, II-V. The Sanaudh country is said to be near Benares. According to Macauliffe, 'its inhabitants, the Sanaudhis, were afterwards called Sodhis' (*op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 291, f.n.).

is now declared to be an inalienable dignity which of right belonged to the Soḍhi house and the prophecy of Bhai Gurdas that 'the Soḍhis will not allow it to depart' was, as we know, literally fulfilled. That hereditary succession had become a settled and unalterable practice is also clearly shown by a hymn which Guru Arjan evidently wrote on the birth of his son Hargobind. The Guru makes no secret of the fact that he had been most earnestly desiring the birth of an heir and he is profuse in his gratification that God had at last granted him the favour. But the point with which we are more particularly concerned is the fact that he regards this birth of a son as a momentous event in the history of Sikhism. "God hath erected the machinery of the faith," [1] says he. The Guru's satisfaction was no doubt, to some extent, due to the fact that Prithia's chances had now become remote. Arjan's being childless had considerably facilitated Prithia's intrigues and we have seen that the birth of Hargobind had so completely upset him that he did not hesitate to stoop even to murderous designs. On the other hand, the Guru's remarks leave little doubt that it was now too late in the day even for him to think of alienating the succession by nominating to the Guruship a devoted and ideal Sikh, a person, for instance, like Bhai Gurdas, to whose writings he had even offered the honour of incorporation in the *Holy*

[1] *Āsā*, Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 35. We have in the original '*dharamkalā Hari bandhi baḥālī.*' Trumpp renders '*dharamkalā*' by 'lustre of religion' (*op. cit.*, p. 557). It seems that Trumpp takes *kalā* as in sixteen *kalās* or phases of the moon and hence derives 'lustre.' But as *kalā* is also used in the sense of a machine Macauliffe's rendering seems more accurate.

*Granth* and which the latter had, only in his extreme humility, refused. The Guruship had become the inalienable privilege of the house of Ram Das and that is why Arjan equates the birth of Hargobind with 'the erection of the machinery of the faith,' or in other words, the continued existence and progress of Sikhism.

It thus appears that the circumstances attending successive nominations to the Guruship can no longer be regarded as affording infallible clues to our comprehension of the characteristics of an ideal and perfect Sikh. The rule of primogeniture, no doubt, was never strictly followed and, it still remained the practice to nominate the best available man.[1] Further, the Sikh records claim that the fundamental ideal of surrender and devotion continued to play throughout the same prominent part in this all-important matter of nomination to the Guruship but, as the field from which the choice was to be made had been narrowed down to a single family and it is not in the least unlikely that the characters of the disgruntled candidates were unjustly blackened in the Sikh records, this line of approach has now perforce to be abandoned.

But fortunately for us this would make no material difference. The one point that we have been able to pick up so far, *viz.*, the ideal of surrender and devotion, is sufficiently attested by other and more reliable

[1] As Narang says, 'it is remarkable that even when succession became hereditary the best available men were appointed to the Masnad of Guruship.' Even the child of eight, Guru Harkrishan, 'made the best choice, passing over his own brother and uncle' (*op. cit.*, p. 65, f.n.).

evidence. It has already been pointed out that in Nanak's system the Guru formed the pivot on which everything else hinged. The disciple was asked to walk in the path of God, to remain ever content with His will and to obey His commands. But in these matters, as in everything else, the Guru was to point out the right path, he was to interpret the will of God and the commands of the Almighty were also to issue forth through the medium of his ordinances. The Guru, therefore, was to be implicitly obeyed. In the *Granth Sāhib* this is emphasised again and again. Guru Nanak says:

"If thou desire to play at love with me,
Come my way with thy head in the palm of thy hand.
Put thy feet on this road ;
Give thy head and regard not human opinion." [1]

Here is a demand for complete self-sacrifice. In the same strain Guru Amar Das asks his disciples to entrust body, soul and wealth to the Guru and obey his order if they really wanted to succeed.[2] Guru Ram Das says:

Sikhs of the Guru and friends, walk in God's way.
Faithfully obey what the Guru preacheth ;
Hear, servants of God and brethren, serve the Guru very promptly.
Tie up service to the Guru as thy travelling expenses to God ;
Think not of to-day or to-morrow." [3]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 382.
[2] *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 120.
[3] *Ibid*. p. 325.

Such verses might be almost indefinitely multiplied. We may take it therefore that the ideal of absolute surrender to the Guru was one of the fundamental principles of Sikhism. As Bhai Gurdas graphically puts it—'To be a Sikh was to be dead.' He was to regard himself as a purchased slave fit to be yoked to any work that may serve the Guru's purpose.[1]

And this was no idle precept. Sikh tradition is eloquent on the subject and many are the instances of single-minded devotion that are remembered and honoured with just and reasonable pride. But apart from that the point is very clearly illustrated by several anecdotes preserved by Mohsin Fani in his *Dabistān*. We have already noticed the case of Sadah who had been ordered by the Guru to bring horses from Irak and when he was still only a day's journey from home he was informed that his son was dangerously ill and requested to go back and see him. Sadah answered: "If he should die, there is wood enough in the house to burn him; I went about the Guru's business and I will not return." The son died but he did not return.[2] This Sadah we may take as the type of what a Sikh was expected to be. The other instances recorded by Mohsin Fani are of a more extreme type and show that this ideal of implicit obedience was often carried to illogical lengths. We are told that there was a Sikh named Jahandas 'who was high and proud in his speeches, not agreeable to any, indifferent to good and bad that might happen to him.' One day the Guru noticed a wound in his foot and asked Jahandas not to

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, III, 18.

[2] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 284.

envelop it too much and keep it raised. Jahandas kept his foot uncovered and suspended for three months and he gave up the practice only when he met the Guru again and the latter assured him that the order had been intended only as a precaution against the wound in his foot. On another occasion the Guru went into a garden and asked Jahandas to remain at the door. By accident the Guru returned by another door and Jahandas remained three days on his feet till at last the Guru was informed of it and called him away. Another day the Guru said to him: 'Tell the Sikhs to bring wood into the kitchen, that they may gain some remuneration.' The next day Jahandas did not appear. Suspecting some derangement of his brain the Guru and his Sikhs went out in search for him and found him with a bundle of wood on his shoulder. The Guru said: 'I have not ordered you to bear that.' Jahandas replied: 'You gave your orders to the Sikhs, a Sikh am I, and know not to be anything higher than they are.'[1] This Jahandas was evidently a man of unsound temperament and we need not take his eccentricities seriously. But the last case which we would now take up is of a more serious character and exhibits a perversion of mind which it is difficult to justify. One day the Guru expressed a passing fancy for a speaking parrot and it is said that a Sikh at once rushed to the owner of the bird and bartered his wife and daughter to secure it and present it to the Guru.[2] "The perversion of moral judgment," says Sarkar, "and the ignorance of the relative value of things, illustrated

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, pp. 282, 283.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 286.

by this anecdote and another that I have omitted for the sake of decency, are extreme ; but so too is the spirit of devotion among the followers of the Guru." [1] Whatever that might be, there can, however, be little doubt that the ideal of implicit obedience to the Guru was a reality and not a mere text-book precept.

It is thus a matter of paramount importance to understand what the 'Guru' meant in Sikhism and what it stood for. It has already been seen that Guru Nanak had unequivocally declared that without the Guru there could be no salvation and on the whole it appears that in Nanak's compositions the 'Guru' is to be taken as the vehicle of communion between God and man, the medium through which the *Word* and the grace of God are made available. The Guru is in possession of the immortal wealth and he alone can give it.[2] Without the *Word* none could be saved and it is the Guru who communicates the *Word*. The Guru is a 'boat of salvation,' a ladder to reach one's home, a key to open the lock, a unifier of man with God and so on. He is thus an agent but he is the sole agent, for

> "Man shall not be emancipated without the Guru's instruction ; even though man performed hundreds of

[1] *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 357.

We also cannot include the story for the same reason. Sarkar says, "It shows that the Sikhs of the middle 17th century held the same views about women that the Anabaptists of Munster did." It seems to us that to condemn the whole Sikh community on the strength of two anecdotes preserved by a writer whom Cunningham characterises as 'a garrulous and somewhat credulous Mahomedan' (p. 27, f. n. 2) is, to say the least, uncritical and unjust.

[2] *Mājh kī Wār, Mah.* I, *Slok* I.

thousands of ceremonies, all would still be darkness without the Guru." [1]

But, at the same time the 'Guru' is presented in a rather impersonal aspect and it is probable that in certain instances 'God' is meant. In the *Japjī* we read:

"The Guru is Shiv; the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma; the Guru is Parbati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati." [2]

Bhai Kahn Singh says that this verse is to be taken to mean that there are no other gods or goddesses besides the Guru, who, in his own being, comprises them all.[3] There are several other verses in which Nanak seems to speak of God as the Guru and Macauliffe [4] and Bhai Kahn Singh [5] have brought these under requisition to show that the founder of Sikhism recognised no earthly superior and that his Guru was God. Further, in another verse Nanak says that the Creator Himself possesses all knowledge and that He Himself spoke the *Word*.[6] This again is a

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 302.

2 *Japjī*, V.

3 *Gurumat Prabhākar*, p. 326, f. n. But it seems that the verse may also be taken to mean that the divinities named are merely different manifestations of the one true Guru.

4 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 54, f. n 1.

5 *Gurumat Prabhākar*, pp. 355, 356. Besides the verse in *Soraṭh, Mahala* I, to which Macauliffe refers, Kahn Singh adds two others: *Mārū, Mahalā* I—Hari guru murati ekā vartai, Nanak Hari guru bhāiā; *Sūhī Astapadi, Mahalā* IV—satguru merā sadā sadā, nā āvai nā jāi, uha abinasīpurakh hai, sabh mahi rahiā samāi.

6 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

fresh viewpoint and it seems that here we have in germ the theory of the divine origin of Nanak's mission, a theory which, as we shall see, assumed considerable importance under his successors.

Thus, at the very outset, the Guruship was invested with a mystical halo and with the progress of time the mystery increased. But the original conception of the Guru as the mediator between man and God never lost ground. Guru Angad says:

> "The Guru hath the key of the lock, the heart is the store-room, the body is its roof;
>
> Nanak, without the Guru the doors of the heart cannot be opened, since nobody else hath the key." [1]

The Guru is thus indispensable but he is not an end in himself but only a means, though the sole means, for the attainment of salvation. In the *Ānand* Guru Amar Das writes:

> "Whoever turneth away from the true Guru, shall not obtain salvation without him;
>
> Nor shall he obtain salvation elsewhere—go inquire of persons of discrimination—
>
> He shall wander in many births, and not obtain deliverance without the true Guru;
>
> But he shall at last obtain deliverance by attaching himself to the feet of the true Guru who will communicate to him the Word.
>
> Saith Nanak, thoroughly reflect on this—There can be no deliverance without the true Guru." [2]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 53.
[2] Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 124.

Here again the Guru is the communicator of the *Word*, through which alone deliverance can be obtained. Ram Das compares the Guru to a wholesale merchant who deals in the *Name* and ferries across the retail dealers, *i.e.*, the disciples by means of the *Word*.[1] The Guru is the mediator or the intercessor [2] and 'without the true Guru God's name is not found even though one perform hundreds of thousands and millions of ceremonies.'[3] It does not seem necessary to pursue the matter further ; suffice it to say that even Bhai Gurdas, in whose hands the apotheosis of the Gurus almost reached its culmination, does not forget to lay stress on this aspect of the Guruship, though the idea of the intercessor is almost always mixed up with that of the founder of the true path and the saviour of the world.[4]

But this was nothing new, nor was it a special characteristic of Sikhism. The conception of the Guru as the mediator and the belief in his indispensableness are as old as the days of the Upaniṣads, if not older still, and they are stressed with equal emphasis by the various other teachers of the medieval school. The difference arose in other ways till at last the Guruship in Sikhism assumed a unique character. In the first place, it is important to note that most of the other sects of the medieval school, notably the *Kabir Panthīs*, allowed freedom of choice and inculcated the greatest care in the selection of a Guru.[5]

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 311.

2 *Ibid*, p. 309.

3 *Ibid*, p. 287.
Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, XVI, 13; XXIV, 2.
Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II, p. 546.

There was thus room in them for the simultaneous existence of a number of 'Gurus,' each exercising undisputed sway over his own immediate disciples but the position in Sikhism was radically different. The question of selection or choice did not arise at all as each successive Guru was nominated by his predecessor.[1] The Guru, moreover, came to occupy the position of a sole and supreme religious leader. Like the Roman Catholic Pope, the Islamic Khalif or the Tibetan Dalai Lama he was without a rival.

Secondly, we come to the peculiar Sikh conception that the Gurus were one and the same, there having been no change of spirit but only a change of image. It is stated in the old *Janamsākhī* that when Guru Nanak finally resolved to make Lahina his successor 'he put five Paisa before Guru Angad and fell down before his feet.'[2] In the *Tikke di Wār* or the Coronation Ode we are told that 'Guru Nanak in *bowing* to Guru Angad reversed the order of things.'[3] If this was really so, if Guru Nanak had actually bowed down before Guru Angad, it must be regarded as a very significant fact. It shows that from the very beginning the impersonal character of the Guruship was recognised. The personality of the Guru was

[1] Forster suggests that the Sikh Gurus were elected (*Travels*, Vol. I, pp. 259, 260) and Mohsin Fani also says that 'the Guru is chosen at the discretion of his followers' (*Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 271). But Sikh tradition is unanimous that the Gurus themselves nominated their respective successors. The only approach to something like an election was in the case of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur.

[2] *Supra*, p. 92.

[3] *Tikke di Wār*, IV; Maçauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 27.

detached from the spirit of the Guruship, which was to be regarded as one, indivisible and continuous. Further, the fact that the name Lahina was changed to Angad must be regarded as equally significant. Speaking of the nomination of Angad to the Guruship the Coronation Ode says, 'He had the same light, the same ways, the king merely changed his own body.' [1] The idea is stressed again and again in the Sikh writings and must be regarded as one of the cardinal doctrines of the Sikh faith. The Guruship was something apart from the personality of the Guru and this would explain how the successive Gurus could be regarded as identical. To quote again from the Coronation Ode, 'The wise being Guru Nanak descended in the form of Amar Das,' [2] and of Ram Das it is said, "Thou art Nanak, Thou art Lahina, Thou art Amar Das, so I deem thee." [3] In Bhai Gurdas we find this idea stressed again and again, though in almost all cases he goes further and seeks an identity between the Guru and God.[4] Mohsin Fani says, "they (the Sikhs) believe that, when

[1] *Tikke di Wār*, II; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 25.

[2] Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 59.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 254.

See also Bhai Kahn Singh's *Gurumat Prabhākar*, pp. 357, 358. *Rāmkalī, Mahala* I, dīpak te dīpak pargāsiā, tribhuvan jot dikhāī.

[4] *Wār*, I, 45, 48; XIII, 25; XX, 2. At the very beginning of his *Kabits* Bhai Gurdas seeks to identify Guru Nanak with God, Angad with Nanak, Amar Das with Angad, and so on up to Guru Hargobind in whose time the book was evidently written. The relevant verses are as follows: pārbrahm pūran brahm satguru Nānak dev; guru Angad mil ang sang mil sang udhāras; satguru Amarpragās mil anmrit anmrit bha'e; and so on.

Nanac expired, his spirit became incarnate in the person of Angad, who attended him as his confidential servant. Angad at his death transmitted his soul into the body of *Amar das* ; and this Guru, in the same manner, conveyed his spirit into the body of *Ramadas* ; whose soul transmigrated into the person of *Arjunmal* ; in short, they believe that, with a mere change of name, Nanac the First became Nanac the Second, and so on, to the Fifth in the person of *Arjunmal*. They say, that whoever does not recognise in *Arjunmal* the true Baba Nanac, is an unbeliever." [1] In their hymns and compositions all the successive Gurus styled themselves 'Nanak' and from Mohsin Fani's remark that in a letter written to him Guru Hargobind had actually signed as 'Nanak' [2] it appears that they followed this practice also in their private correspondence. It is interesting to note that in the *Bahadur-Shah-nama* the tenth Guru is called 'Guru Govind Nanak' [3] and lastly, we may point out that in the *Bacitra Nāṭak* Guru Gobind Singh emphatically declares that the Gurus were one and that without understanding this perfection could not be obtained. Says the Guru:

"Nanak assumed the body of Angad,
And made his religion current in the world,
Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das,
As one lamp is lit from another.

* * * *

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, pp. 253-55.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 281.
[3] Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 90.

The holy Nanak was revered as Angad,
Angad was recognised as Amar Das,
And Amar Das became Ram Das.
The pious saw this, but not the fools,
Who thought them all distinct ;
But some rare person recognised that they were all one
They who understood this obtained perfection.
Without understanding this perfection cannot be obtained." [1]

There can thus be no room for doubt that in Sikh view the Guruship was impersonal, indivisible and continuous.

The Guruship, moreover, reveals other features when it is studied in relation to the *Word* and the *Name*. The meaning of these latter conceptions is by no means clear and there can be little doubt that in Sikh literature they have often been used in different senses. Teja Singh says, ' the *Name* is a term, like logos in Greek, bearing various meanings.' Sometimes it stands for God Himself, sometimes it means God as revealed or His manifestation, and in a third sense the *Name* is ' the word recorded in the Holy Scripture.' [2] It might be added that apart from these theoretical interpretations the *Name* also stands for a more or less definite course of religious practice as in the well-known Sikh formula ' *nām, dān, isnān.*' And instances may be found where it is used in the ordinary sense of the name of God as Sat, Hari and the like.[3]

[1] *Bacitra Nāṭak*, V, 7-10. (The translation is Macauliffe's.)

[2] Teja Singh, *Asa di Var*, pp. 126, 127; *The Japji* (Second Edition), pp. 77-79.

[3] Bhai Kahn Singh, *Gurumat Prabhākar*, p. 471.

Similarly, the *Sabad* or the word lends itself to various interpretations. In its primary signification *Sabad* appears to mean the instruction communicated by the Guru to the disciple at the time of his initiation and in this sense it may be regarded as the equivalent of what is known as *mantra*. As Guru Amar Das says, a man can only be saved by attaching himself to the feet of the true Guru who will communicate the *Word* to him.[1] *Sabad* is thus communicated truth, and, in the first instance, more individualistic than communal in its scope and significance. This idea is never wholly lost but it is soon mixed up with others of a wider import. The *Word* soon comes to mean the essentials of Sikhism as propounded by Guru Nanak and his successors and finally its own concrete embodiment, *viz.*, the *Granth Sāhib*.[2] The *Sabad* and the *Nām* thus in a sense merge in the *Bānī* or the hymns of the Gurus. But the process does not stop here. In the next place, the *Word* is identified with the Guru[3] and it is well known in what great reverence the incorporated *Word* has always been held in Sikhism, 'even the Guru choosing for himself a seat lower than

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 124.

[2] Bhai Kahn Singh, *Gurumat Prabhākar*, p. 151 ; Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. III, p. 122.

[3] As Guru Ram Das says,

'The Word is the Guru and the Guru is the Word ; in the Word is the essence of ambrosia' (Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 339). Bhai Gurdas says that *Sabad* is the very image of the Guru (*Wār*, XXIV, 25; guru mūrati guru sabad hai; see also *Wār*, III, 4; VII, 20; XI, 2). It seems, however, that Bhai Gurdas goes farther and seeks an identity between the *Word* and God. (*Cf. Wār*, IX, 1, pārbrahm guru sabad hai satsang nivāsī.)

that of the Scripture.' The impersonal character of the Guruship is thus again emphasised and the creation of a sort of mystical identity between the *Guru* and the *Word* foreshadows the possibility of the abolition of the pontifical Guruship by Guru Gobind Singh.

Further, the Guruship was regarded as of divine origin, having its inauguration in the will of God. We have already pointed out how in the hands of Bhai Gurdas Guru Nanak becomes a divine instrument for the redemption of the world and it has also been seen how the idea is stressed even in the oldest *Janamsākhī*, as also in several of the stories recorded by Mohsin Fani in his *Dabistān*.[1] It can be traced in the writings of the Gurus as well and is developed in great detail in the *Bacitra Nāṭak*. Guru Ram Das says,

> "O Guru's Sikhs, know that the true Guru's hymn is most true; the Creator Himself hath caused him to utter it." [2]

And again, Guru Arjan writes,

> " God gave Baba Nanak the word as an inexhaustible wealth to use and spend." [3]

Other verses might also be quoted to show that in Sikh view it was God who sent the Guru to comfort the world and that it was by His grace that the Guru's

[1] *Supra*, pp. 62, 63, 69.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 305
[3] *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 444.

instruction had been promulgated.[1] Guru Gobind Singh narrates in detail the circumstances leading to his birth in this world and directly claims a divine sanction for his mission, though it is not quite clear as to whether he claims the same for his predecessors as well.[2] But this is nothing unusual ; some such idea is found more or less in almost all religious systems. And the other development, which may as well be regarded as its counterpart, *viz.*, the apotheosis of the Gurus, is also not a very rare occurrence. The idea of identity between God and the Guru is advanced in several verses of the *Granth Sāhib* and it reaches its culmination in the writings of Bhai Gurdas. It appears to us, however, that the matter is not always set forth in the same way and in the same sense. Guru Ram Das says,

> " I have churned the ocean of the body ; I have seen a rare thing come to view.
>
> The Guru is God and God is the Guru ; Nanak, there is no difference between them, my brethen." [3]

It should be noted that the identity spoken of here is not in the ordinary but in the ultimate sense and the Guru is careful to characterise its apprehension as ' a rare thing.' Similarly when Guru Arjan says that the revered Guru is the creator, or that he is the Supreme Brahm, the Supreme God,[4] it should be

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 119-20; see also Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 23.

[2] *Bacitra Nāṭak*, V, VI.

[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. II, p. 312.

[4] This is found in *Gaurī, Bāvanakharī, Mahalā* V. The whole of the first *slok* where it occurs appears to us extremely important as it

understood that here again the identity is one of ultimate essence and can have no reference to the Guru as a person, a man of flesh and blood. And the verse of Ram Das, quoted above, also makes it clear that the unity is of a mystical character which could only be perceived in moments of spiritual or religious ecstasy. The equation is between the Guru as an abstract principle of truth and enlightenment and God who is of the very essence of truth, enlightenment and bliss. But this idea was too abstruse for ordinary minds and there can be little doubt that it led to misconceptions, thereby lending colour to the charge that Sikhism was infected with man-worship.[1] It was soon forgotten that it is one thing to identify the 'Guru' with God and another to identify Guru Nanak or Guru Angad with Him and even in the writings of

very clearly elucidates the point we have been trying to make out. We quote below some of the more relevant of the verses :

gurudev mātā gurudev pitā gurudev suāmī param'esurā,
gurudev sakhā agiān bhanjan gurudev bāndhab sahodarā,
gurudev kartā sabh pāp hartā gurudev patit pavit karā,
gurudev ādi jugādi jug jug gurudev sant Haṛi jap udharā,
gurudev satguru pārbrahm param'esur gurudev Nānak Hari namaskarā.

It can be easily seen that some of these verses would become meaningless if the word 'guru' is not taken in an ultimate sense and it is possibly for that reason that Macauliffe renders the expression 'gurudev' by 'divine guru.' But 'gurudev' is clearly like pitṛdev or mātṛdev and is rendered more accurately by 'revered guru.' (For English version of the verses, see Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 168-69.)

[1] Sarkar's assertion that 'the pure monotheism of Nanak was afterwards infected by man-worship and that the later gurus came to be worshipped as superhuman beings whose acts cannot be judged by the standard of human reason' was followed by a very interesting discussion a short note on which is given in *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 321.

Bhai Gurdas the distinction is obscure, if not entirely absent. Many are the occasions on which Bhai Gurdas refers to this notion of non-difference between God and the Guru [1] and on the whole, it cannot be denied that in his mind the divinity of the Gurus was both abstract and concrete. This was, indeed, a deplorable falling off from the high ideal of the Gurus because it indirectly lent support to the theory of incarnation which they had resolutely discountenanced. Guru Gobind Singh's unequivocal warning to his followers that all who would call him the Supreme Being shall fall into the pit of hell and that he was merely a servant of God, sent to this world to behold the wonders of creation,[2] leaves little room for doubt that this idea of non-difference between the Guru and God had been carried to illogical lengths, far beyond the implication of the Gurus themselves.

In Sikhism, therefore, the conception of the Guru was somewhat complex but we have not yet exhausted its contexts. The Guruship lends itself to further elucidation when it is studied in relation to the other great development in Sikhism, *viz.*, the ideal of the Sikh brotherhood. A man of supreme religious gifts and of wide toleration, Guru Nanak had asked his followers to regard all men as equal since everybody had the same shelter, *viz.*, that of God, and since God's light was contained in the hearts of all.[3] And applied to life this idea readily translated itself into love of

1 Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 17; VI, 19; VII, 19; IX. 1; XII, 5; XIII, 25; XVI, 18, XXIV, 21, 24.

2 *Bacitra Nāṭak*, VI.

3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 332.

mankind and service to humanity. At the start the idea is rather obscure, more or less a corollary of the main implications of Nanak's teaching, indefinite and vague in its import. But in the hands of Guru Nanak's successors it gradually became more definite and practical, and developed into one of the most vital and eloquent principles of the Sikh faith. The wide catholicity of the original idea had, no doubt, to undergo limitations as the principle became more and more communal in its import but at the same time the gain to Sikhism was immense. The sense of solidarity among the Sikhs was considerably strengthened and they were made more fit to play the part that was in store for them in the future as they became accustomed to live their religion and not merely to profess it.

In the first place, it should be noted that the development of the Sikh ideal of brotherhood is intimately bound up with the history of the gradual consolidation of the Sikh *Panth*, which we traced in the previous chapter. Circumstances compelled a gradual but definite departure from the orthodox Hindu fold and the Sikhs were welded together into a new community, united by common ties of privilege and duty. It has been seen that in this work of gradual separation and consolidation the Gurus had to face considerable opposition and that particularly during the pontificate of Amar Das it had been a rather uphill task. Naturally there could not but be a corresponding reaction in the Sikh attitude and the intensity of that reaction is clearly discernible in some of the hymns of Guru Ram Das. Opposition begot opposition and the estrangement became wider and wider. In short, the Sikhs soon came

to regard themselves as a brotherhood of the elect, the specially favoured of God and all those who were outside the charmed circle were characterised as 'accursed of God and accursed of the whole world.' Thus, Guru Amar Das says that the Guru's was the best of all religious systems as true disregard of the world could only be obtained by his system.[1] 'Curses on the lives, curses on the habitations of those who worship strange gods,' and 'they who turn their faces from the true Guru shall find no house or home; they shall wander from door to door like divorced women of bad character and evil reputation.'[2] In a more intense strain Guru Ram Das says:

> "They who leave the Guru, who is present with them, shall find no entrance into God's court.
>
> Let any one go and meet those slanderers, and he will see their faces pale and spat upon.
>
> They who are accursed of the Guru are accursed of the whole world, and shall ever be vagrants.
>
> * * * *
>
> Whoever goeth to meet those cursed by the true Guru shall lose the remnant of his honour.
>
> They who are cursed by the Guru become leprous; whoever meeteth them shall catch the leprosy." [3]

The Guru further remarks that 'he who denieth the Guru is base' [4] and 'him who slandereth the perfect

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 190.
2 *Ibid*, pp. 217, 221.
3 *Ibid*, p. 305.
4 *Ibid*, p. 302.

true Guru the Creator will punish.' [1] And he winds up with the assurance that

> "God Himself is the protector of the true Guru, and will save all who follow him.
>
> Him who meaneth evil to the true Guru the Creator Himself will destroy.
>
> This is the word of the true God's court: the slave Nanak uttereth this prophecy." [2]

Sikhism, which was of divine origin, was thus also under divine protection and the Sikhs formed a special class by themselves, unique in their saintliness and their exceptional privileges. Indeed, it seems to us that one of the main purposes of the writings of Bhai Gurdas is to establish this position for Sikhism and its votaries. He loudly proclaims the superiority and the excellence of the system promulgated by the Gurus,[3] who are now directly identified with the Supreme Being Himself, a divine sanction is openly claimed for Sikhism [4] and the difference between the *gurmukh* and the *manmukh* is repeatedly stressed.[5] The

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 301.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 308.

It appears to us that the violence of these hymns of Ram Das and several others that we find in the *Gaurī kī Wār*, gives us the measure of the strenuous opposition that Guru Amar Das had to face.

[3] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 45; V, 9; XVI, 13; XXVIII, 19; see also Macauliffe; *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 242.

[4] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 23; XXIV, 2; Bhai Gurdas claims Nanak to be *kali tāran* and *jagat guru*.

[5] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, V, 15-19; XXX, 2-5; XXXI, 11.

It is needless to say that *gurmukh* is he who surrenders himself to the Guru and follows his instructions and all others are *manmukh*. (See Bhai Kahn Singh's *Gurumat Prabhākar*, p. 359).

former is extolled in all possible ways, whereas the latter is compared to a slave, or a beast in a man's frame and consigned to perdition. The *gurmukh* is likened to a piece of bright silken cloth which can be dyed in any colour and is fit to be used by all on occasions of solemnity and the *manmukh* to a coarse, black blanket which refuses all hues. The point is emphasised in various ways so that in Bhai Gurdas's hands the Sikhs are resolved into a 'chosen few' under the special protection and beneficence of the Lord and incidentally a blow is given to the catholicity of the original idea of equality of all men.

But there is nothing unusual here and some such ideas can be traced in the literature of almost every school of religious thought. It was the simultaneous inculcation of certain other principles that made the position different in Sikhism. The Sikh had become a privileged person but that was not all. He had also become a philosopher's stone and was capable of communicating holiness to others. 'He had saved himself and his family, and he shall save twenty-one generations, yea, the whole world.'[1] Even he who met the Guru could confer salvation on others and, therefore, every one of the Guru's followers was something of a saint and was to be served and respected as such. Guru Ram Das said that he was 'a slave to the slaves of those disciples of the Guru who perform his work'[2] and we are told that when three Sikhs

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 292.
[2] *Gaurī kī Wār*, Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 307.

named Bishan Das, Manak Chand and Puru went to visit the Guru and begged him to give them instruction for their own salvation, and that of their families, Ram Das bade them serve the Sikhs and induce their relations to do likewise.[1] Bhai Gurdas says that every Sikh was a saint and 'where there are two Sikhs there is a company of saints, where there are five Sikhs there is God.' A Sikh, therefore, was to love and respect a fellow Sikh ; 'he is to search out the Guru's Sikhs and haste to do them favour.' [3] He is even asked to drink the water in which he has washed the other's feet.[4] And the profit that was to be derived from such service is depicted in glowing terms. Not to speak of other things, even salvation could be obtained by such service.

It would thus appear that as, on the one hand, love of mankind was narrowed down to love of the followers of Nanak, on the other, service to the Guru was expanded into service to Sikhs in general, and the Sikh brotherhood was ushered into being. As we have indicated above, in Sikh view every member of the brotherhood was a person of special sanctity but the matter did not stop here. The individual Sikh was further exalted to a position almost equal to that of the Guru himself. Ram Das says:

> " To those who obey the will of the Guru, I am ever a sacrifice;

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 274.
[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, XIII, 19.
[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 244.
[4] *Ibid*; see also Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, I, 8.

I am ever a sacrifice to those who have served the Guru." [1]

And tradition affirms that the Gurus proved the sincerity of their profession by their willing deference to the wishes of their followers even in questions that concerned their own household alone. Thus, when Chandu Shah, the Emperor's financial minister, offered his daughter in marriage to Hargobind, the son of Guru Arjan, the Guru refused the alliance mainly, as he said, on the ground that his Delhi Sikhs were averse to the proposal though he was fully alive to the dangers of incurring the displeasure of a person of the position of Chandu Shah. The threats and entreaties of the financial minister were equally unavailing and Guru Arjan finally said: "It is the Guru's rule to comply with the wishes of his Sikhs. Their words are immutable. When they once reject, it is not proper again to accept.' [2] Thus we have arrived at a very interesting position. On the one hand, we have the unconditional surrender of the Sikh to the Guru; on the other, the almost equally unconditional deference of the Guru to the will of his disciples. But the climax was reached when the Sikh was identified with the Guru himself and when Guru Hargobind told his disciples, 'Deem the Sikh who comes to you with the Guru's name on his lips as your Guru.' [3]

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 329.

[2] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. III, p. 80. The point of the Guru's deference to the wishes of his followers is also brought out in the following statement of Guru Ram Das: "The Guru lives within his Sikhs and is pleased with whatever they like" (*Gaurī-kī-Wār*).

[3] Macauliffe, *ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 219.

We are thus brought to another aspect of the Guruship, *viz.*, a sort of mystical union between the Guru and the Sikh. Guru Ram Das says, 'the Guru is Sikh and the Sikh who practises the Guru's Word is at one with the Guru,' [1] and Bhai Gurdas asserts again and again that 'the Guru is the Sikh and the Sikh is the Guru,' [2] there is no difference between them. That this was no idle precept is clearly proved by the statement of Sujan Rai of Batala that 'the Sikhs have such a regard for their Guru that any stranger who may come to their house and take the name of Baba Nanak is received as a friend.' [3] The point is brought out more clearly in a very interesting anecdote recorded in the *Dabistān*.[4] Mohsin Fani begins by stating that 'whoever takes the name of Guru is received in the house of a Sikh.' A thief thus introduced himself into the house of a Sikh. When the man went out, the thief killed the wife and decamped with her jewels. But on his way he met the Sikh who forcibly brought him back. When they came home everything was discovered, but the Sikh made a present of the jewels to the thief and urged him to go away. He told his neighbours that his wife was ill, then that she was dead and finally burnt her. This illustration may not seem entirely apposite because the point of identity between the Guru and the Sikh is rather obscure. But it cannot be denied that the anecdote exemplifies to

[1] *Āsā Chhant.*

[2] *Wār*, III, 11; IX, 8, 9; XIII, 1; XV, 16.

[3] *Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh*, p. 70.

[4] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 286.

some extent the dictum of Guru Hargobind that 'whichever of the Sikhs comes to your house under the name of the Guru, him you may take for yours.' [1]

It will be seen that the most important point that emerges out of the foregoing discussion with regard to the nature of the Guruship in Sikhism is its impersonal character. It primarily stands for the principle of truth and enlightenment that made itself manifest through the persons of the successive Gurus. Looked at from this standpoint the doctrine of its indivisibility and continuity becomes easier to understand and the several equations, which we have tried to develop in some detail, also lose much of their obscure and mystical character when it is remembered that the identification is really between principle and principle and has little reference to their concrete embodiments. If we can comprehend this impersonal aspect of the Guruship aright, the doctrine of its identity with the *Name* and the *Word*, the main instruments for the propagation of truth, would cease to perplex us ; even the apotheosis of the Gurus would no longer strike us as a regrettable lapse into man-worship, and the theory of the identity of the Guru and the Sikh would also become clearer and easier to grasp. And finally some of the most fundamental of the reforms of Guru Gobind Singh, his abolition of the personal Guruship and his dictum that the Khalsa is the Guru, would be seen in their proper perspective and would no longer appear to be either accidental or cataclysmic.

And it has also been made clear that the Sikh brotherhood as well was already a reality and its most

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 285.

striking characteristic was that it tried to live up to its professions ; the ideals of surrender and service were not mere text-book maxims. The demand of Guru Amar Das that

> " As the elephant offereth his head to the goad, as the anvil offereth itself to the hammer,
> So should the disciple put his soul and body before his Guru, and stand and wait on him " [1]

may appear fantastic but enough has been said to show that the spirit of devotion among the Sikhs did not fall much short of this high and exacting ideal. And the extent to which a Sikh could go for a brother Sikh, or even for one who falsely attempted to pass off in that guise, is almost without parallel. We have seen that the Sikhs had been asked to lead a life of what Bhai Gurdas calls '*māyā vich udās*,' [2] or renunciation in the midst of worldly occupations, and the several examples of almost complete self-sacrifice that we have been able to pick up so far leave little room for doubt that, at least in some instances, this too was not an empty precept.

Coming next to a more detailed and practical view of Sikhism we are at once reminded of the well-known Sikh formula '*nām, dān, isnān.*' In several of the contexts in which the expression is used by Bhai Gurdas it appears that the trio stands for the entire message delivered by Guru Nanak for the uplift of mankind [3] and Bhai Kahn Singh also is of opinion

[1] Macauliffe, Vol. II, p. 222.
[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, XII, 18; see also XII, 6; III, 2; XV, 21.
[3] *Ibid*, I, 14 ; V, 18 ; XI, 3 ; XII, 16.

that the formula gives in a nutshell the essentials of Sikhism.[1] It has already been pointed out that the word *nām* or *Name* can be variously interpreted but we cannot be far off the mark if we say that in this formula *nām* stands for devotion to God and His worship. *Dān* ordinarily means charity and we get here the idea of service, and from *isnān*, which means bathing, we can deduce the conception of purity. '*Nām, dān, isnān*' would thus stand for devotion to God, service and purity and it cannot be denied that these are of the very essence of Sikhism. But attempts have been made to elaborate the formula in greater details. Bhai Kahn Singh says that *nām* implies the exhortation that one should always remain conscious of God and save himself from the wiles of worldliness by remembering His omniscience and omnipresence. And further that a Sikh should always follow unhesitatingly the orders of the Almighty that have come down to him through his Gurus. By *dān* a Sikh is asked to equip himself in such a way by education as well as physical culture that he may prove to be of assistance to the community and the country, and may never be under the necessity of asking for any aid, pecuniary or otherwise, from anybody else. And lastly, *isnān* stands, on the one hand, for the cleanliness of a man's body, clothes, house, etc., so that diseases might be kept off, and, on the other, for the purity of the intellect which enables one to understand the true path and its implications.[2] While with

[1] Bhai Kahn Singh, *Gurumat Sudhākar*, p. 157.
[2] *Ibid.*

most of this nobody need have any quarrel, certain remarks seem somewhat overdrawn and particularly in the matter of *dān* the interpretation is undoubtedly far-fetched.

However, by the time of Guru Arjan these ideas had become more or less closely associated with certain definite practices. Of worship the only recognised form was the practice of the *Name* [1] but, as the *Sabad* and the *Nām* had already been merged in the *Bānī*, this came more particularly to mean the singing of the hymns of the Gurus and meditation on them. The wider context was not entirely laid aside and the Sikhs were still asked 'to repeat God's name under the Guru's instruction and at every breath meditate on God,' but, at the same time, a detailed and a somewhat formal scheme of daily observances was already evolved. As Bhai Gurdas says, a Sikh was to rise from his bed during the last watch of the night and have his bath in the river or the tank. He would then repeat the *Name* as instructed by the Guru in silence and absolute concentration. His next duty would be to go to the *Sangat* and there recite and listen to the hymns of the Gurus with deep reverence. At sunset he was to recite the *Sodar* and at night after reciting the *Sohalā* he was to distribute sacred food. The Sikh was thus given a simple and well-ordered scheme for the practice of the *Name*. Moreover, he was asked to observe certain ceremonies and

[1] Mohsin Fani states that the Sikhs had neither idols nor temples of idols (*Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 246) and Sujan Rai says that the followers of Baba Nanak always recite his poems during their worship. (*Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh*, p. 70.)

cultivate certain disciplines. He was to be pleasing in his words and practise humility in his conduct. He was to sleep little, eat little and talk little and associate primarily with persons of his own way of thinking. And above all, he should be unceasing in his devotion and service to the Guru.[1]

And with regard to *isnān* as well we can detect a similar development. Though the idea of purity in the abstract was never wholly lost, special sanctity was attached to bathing in particular places and *isnān* came more particularly to mean ablutions in holy tanks. It has already been seen how bathing in the waters of the *Bawali* was declared to be a highly meritorious act and how pilgrims constantly visited the place from far and near.[2] But the well of Goindwal was soon eclipsed by 'the tank of nectar' and it was authoritatively declared that 'bathing in this tank is equal to bathing in the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage, to the bestowal of alms, and the performance of great purifications.'[3] It was further said:

"By bathing in the tank of Ram Das
All the sins that man committeth shall be done away.
And he shall become pure by his ablutions,
The perfect Guru hath given us this boon." [4]

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Wār*, VI, 3; XII, 2; XI, 11; XI, 4.

[2] *Supra*, p. 170. The *Bawali* has 84 steps and 'it is a general belief among the Sikhs that whoever bathes on these steps, one by one, on the same day, repeating the Japji with sincerity to the last step shall be saved from the 84 lacs of transmigratory forms and go direct to heaven.' (*Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 682.)

[3] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 11.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 13.

Nay more, 'he who batheth in it shall save his family; his own soul too shall be saved.' [1] In the matter of 'the tank of nectar,' therefore, the ideas of bathing and purity were combined and *isnān* came to stand for something very definite.

Similarly, in course of time *dān*, too, no longer implied merely a general injunction to practise charity. The idea inherent in it is that of service and it has already been shown how it developed in Sikhism on intensely practical lines and was carried sometimes even to a questionable degree. Moreover, it appears to us that the exhortation implied in *dān* was primarily responsible for the custom of presenting offerings to the Guru and the maintenance of *Langars*, and later on became more particularly associated with what is known as *Dasvandh*.[2]

This brings us to the question of the Sikh organisation as it developed in the hands of Guru Nanak's successors. Teja Singh says, 'It is the glory of Sikh history that the Gurus had in mind the duties of a nation as much as the duties of an individual.' Though, as we have seen, it is difficult to conceive that the successors of Nanak were consciously engaged in evolving a nation, evidence is by no means lacking to show that they were anxious to develop a sense of social

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 12.

[2] It has already been seen that Guru Arjan was the first to appoint *masands* and systematise the collection of offerings from the faithful. But there is no indication as to the proportion of the Guru's share. In later works like the *Tankhā Nāmā* we come across the definite injunction of paying *dasvandh* or one-tenth of one's income. (See Bhai Kahn Singh's *Gurumat Sudhākar*, pp. 457, 466).

obligation in their followers. The Sikh was gradually made to realise that his concern was not merely his own individual salvation but that he was a member of a community as well and, as such, had a dual set of responsibilities and duties. The ideal of service, as we have seen, became intimately bound up with the conception of the Sikh brotherhood.

But it should be noted that the ideal of service was by no means a monopoly of Sikhism. Almost all the medieval teachers inculcate it insistently and we are told that Chaitanya even went to the extent of saying that 'service to a Vaishnava was superior to the service of God.' [1] Moreover, it is not difficult to see that the ideal of service might very well be merely individualistic in its implication without in any way involving a sense of corporate responsibility. A corporate sense could only arise if certain obligations could be made definite and universal and given the character of a corporate liability. This distinction is extremely important to grasp because it explains the speciality that arose in Sikhism. It shows why, inspite of the fact that the ideal of service and the inculcation of a spirit of brotherhood were equally significant features of almost all the schools of religious revival in contemporary India, it was in Sikhism alone that a sense of corporate unity gradually evolved. As we have seen, [2] in Sikhism, from its earliest days, one such corporate obligation was the maintenance of the *Langar*, the responsibility for which rested on the entire Sikh community. The position at first is, no doubt, vague but it was gradually clarified

1 *Chaitanya Bhāgavat* (Atul Krishna Goswami's edition), p. 420.

2 *Supra*, p. 158.

and with the inauguration of the reforms of Guru Arjan the obligation in question became precise and definite, though perhaps somewhat wider in its import. At the same time, certain instruments were created which ensured its proper discharge.

Of these instruments the two of pivotal importance were the *Sangat* and the *Masand*. In the case of each it is possible to trace a distinct line of development till at last the two converged in the reforms of Guru Arjan. The original idea with regard to the *Sangat* appears to have been that of *sat* or *sādh sangat*, *i.e.*, association with the pious. The advantages of such association are described in glowing terms and in the *Sukhmanī* Guru Arjan devotes many verses to impress on his followers the fundamental fact that *sādh sangat* was the very basis of all true religious life. [1] Guru Nanak had defined *sat sangat* as 'that society where the name of one God alone is mentioned' [2] and, as Sikhism developed, *sat sangat* came to mean association with the *gurmukh*, or to speak plainly, the Sikhs. Hence arose the idea of the Sikh congregation which came to be known as the *Sangat*. In describing the advantages of *sādh sangat* Bhai Gurdas makes it clear that of all such associations the most fruitful was that with the Guru's Sikhs, who were the holiest of the holy. [3] He compares *sat sangat* to a river and says that just as water from any source may ultimately lose itself in the sea by reaching a river, similarly by associating with

[1] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 218-21.
[2] *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 278.
[3] Bhai Gurdas, *Kabit*, 57.

the *Sangat* one might lose oneself in the Guru.[1] The *Sangat* was the image of the Lord, it was *Sāch Khand* itself, the very abode of piety.[2] It will thus be seen that as with '*nām, dān, isnān,*' so with *sādh sangat* the original idea soon finds a concrete embodiment and *sādh sangat* comes particularly to mean participation in the Sikh congregation that daily met around the Guru, mostly for religious purposes and sometimes to discuss matters of common interest. The virtues of such participation are proclaimed in highly laudatory terms and it soon becomes one of the obligatory features of the Sikh discipline.

So long as Sikhism was in its infancy and the Guru could offer instruction to his followers in person the single *Sangat* sufficed. But Sikhism gradually grew in popularity, its votaries daily increased and soon a situation arose when it became necessary to provide the Sikhs with convenient local centres. As we have seen, it was to meet this contingency that Guru Amar Das introduced the *manji*-system.[3] It can easily be surmised that these *manji* were the earliest Sikh *Sangats* and, in all probability, in each and every one of them a *Langar* was set up, for in later days we invariably find that the *Sangats* were 'not merely places of worship but also wayside refectories which gave food and shelter to indigent wayfarers.'[4] Properly speaking, the *Langar* and the *Sangat* were not two distinct institutions but rather the two component parts of one

1 Bhai Gurdas, *Kabit*, 63.

2 *Ibid*, 124, 125, 126.
*Sāch Khand* is the Sikh paradise.

3 *Supra*, p. 168.

4 *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 687.

single institution which generally went by the name of the *Sangat*. And it is important to note that the obligation to maintain the Guru's *Langar* was thus extended in scope and meaning, though it seems almost certain that the maintenance of the local *Sangats* was made a charge on the local people.

Circumstances compelled a steady multiplication of these institutions and by the time of Guru Arjan and his successor not only was there a network of *Sangats* strewn broadcast throughout the Manjha tract but they had spread even far beyond the borders of the Punjab. Bhai Gurdas gives us a list of the more important *Sangats*[1] and it appears that *Sangats* had grown up even in such distant places as Kabul in the west and Dacca in the east. Further, "in an old manuscript copy of Guru Granth Sahib, written in 1675, is found the story of a Sikh's travels in the Deccan, called Hakikat Rah Mukam, from which we gather something about the Sikh Sangats and temples scattered over Southern India and Ceylon."[2] The discovery of a few letters and manuscripts at Dacca by Gurbaksh Singh has clearly established that by the year 1666 "prosperous Sangats flourished at Sylhet, Chittagong, Sondip and Lashkar, besides the one at Sutrapur or Sangattola quarter of Dacca," and that by the time of Guru Gobind Singh Dacca had earned the title of 'the home of Sikhism.'[3] It may also be mentioned that "Sikh

[1] Among others Bhai Gurdas mentions *Sangats* at Dalla, Sultanpur, Lahore, Kabul, Kashmir, Thanesar, Delhi, Fatehpur, Agra, Dacca, etc. (Wār, XI, 14-81.)

[2] *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 3.

[3] *Sikh Relics in Eastern Bengal*, Dacca Review, 1916, pp. 225, 228.

temples still exist at Rameshwar, Salur, Bhaker and Shivakji in Madras and Colombo in Ceylon Old temples also exist at Burhanpur, Surat, Bombay, Amraoti, Nirmal (District Adilabad in the Nizam's dominions). Manuscript copies of the Granth Sahib are to be found at Burhanpur and Surat and another old copy with one Bolaji Tripathi at Lonovala (Poona)." [1] Gurbaksh Singh says that the Khatris were the 'Marwaris' of those days and while the Aroras went north to Kabul and Kandahar, Balkh, Bukhara and even Russia, the Khatris monopolised the markets of Eastern and Southern India. Khatri settlements naturally grew up throughout these wide tracts and as many of these Khatris had accepted the teachings of Nanak, Sikhism also spread together with them. But the point with which we are concerned is that, though some of these developments are, no doubt, subsequent to the days we have been discussing, they unmistakably show how the *Sangat* habit had become a vital part of Sikhism. Wherever a Sikh might be, he was brought under a *Sangat* and through it made to realise that a "Sikh is not only to look to his individual character but is also to shoulder his responsibilities as a part of the corporate body of the Panth."

But it is important to remember that these *Sangats* were not so many loose, incoherent units. The reforms of Guru Arjan had moulded them into a closely knit system. Enormous projects like excavation of tanks and erection of temples had considerably increased the corporate liability of the Sikhs and Guru Arjan made that liability precise so far as individual Sikhs were

1 *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, pp. 687, 688.

concerned. Further, the *Sangats* were placed under authorised *Masands* 'whose duty was to preach religion and be responsible to the Guru for the Sikh organisations in his diocese.' The *Sangats* were primarily centres of instruction and propaganda and we learn from the *Dabistān* that the *Masands*, on their part, appointed deputies [1] and through these multitudes were converted to Sikhism. On the other hand, it seems clear that with the introduction of Guru Arjan's reforms ' the *manji*-system underwent a change and the bishops did not remain purely spiritual guides but became collectors of tithes as well.' The duty of the *Masand*, in this respect, was to collect the offerings from the Sikhs of his diocese and transmit them to the Guru. It was the general rule for the *Masand* not to depend in any way on these offerings for his own subsistence, 'the principle being not to pollute the body,' [2] and it was expected that he should earn his living by engaging himself in some sort of remunerative occupation. In the month of Baisakh the *Masands* assembled in the court of the Guru, apparently to render account of the offerings received and report on the affairs of their respective *Sangats* with such of the Sikhs as might wish to accompany them. And we are told that at the time of taking leave each and every one

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 271. It is said that these deputies were called *meorās*, a term borrowed from Akbar's system. We also sometimes here of '*sangatias*,' which probably means heads of *Sangats*. (See *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p 683, f.n.)

[2] Offerings, as we have seen, were to be regarded as poison and dependence on them for subsistence was tantamount to polluting the body.

of them received a turban.[1] The *masand*-system was thus a far-flung and at the same time a closely centralised organisation. Many are the instances which show that at least during several decades the system worked smoothly and worked well, ensuring a steady flow of resources to the Guru's treasury,[2] and the strength of the organisation may be gauged from the fact that even when it had deteriorated to such an extent that Guru Gobind Singh was seriously thinking of its abolition, the distant *Sangats*, where the spirit of faction was still absent, were thoroughly loyal and 'Dacca actually took part in the work of reformation and uplift undertaken by Gobind by supplying first class war elephants, men and munitions.' [3]

It seems that the only rift in the lute was provided by the earlier of those shrines that are known as *Gurdwaras*. A *Gurdwara* means a temple built on a place visited by a Guru and by the time of Guru Arjan several of these had already come into existence. The *Dharamsala* of Guru Nanak at Kartarpur, the shrine at Khadur, the *Bawali* of Guru Amar Das at Goindwal,

[1] *Dabistān*. I take this opportunity of acknowledging the assistance that I received from my colleague Maulavi Muhammad Ishaque in comparing Troyer's translation with the Persian text of the *Dabistān*.

[2] We get many instances of this in the Sikh records. To take only one among many that are available, it appears that the Gurus received a substantial income from the *Sangat* at Kabul. The beautiful horses that afterwards became the cause of collision between Guru Hargobind and the Imperialists are said to have been presents from a *Masand* of Kabul. We are also told that Sujan, a *Masand* of Kabul, amassed for the Guru great wealth from tithes and offerings. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 38.)

[3] *Dacca Review*, 1916, p. 227.

the *Har Mandar* or the now famous Golden Temple of Amritsar, and the tank of Tarn Taran excavated by Guru Arjan himself were growing up into important centres of Sikh pilgrimage. But in the case of some of these shrines the cohesiveness that characterised the *Sangats* appears to have been absent. During the earlier days of Sikhism, when the Guruship was not yet hereditary, we notice a very significant fact. Every one of the first three successors of Nanak, or rather those who had been nominated Gurus before the hereditary principle was established, left the place of his predecessor and sought out a new one for himself. Guru Angad left Kartarpur and removed to Khadur, Guru Amar Das left Khadur and established his seat at Goindwal, and Guru Ram Das, in his turn, left Goindwal and laid the nucleus of the city of Amritsar. These facts can only be explained on the supposition that each of these Gurus found the place of his predecessor extremely uncomfortable owing to the undisguised hostility of the latter's descendants. As we have seen, after the death of Angad his son Datu usurped the Guru's *gaddi* at Khadur and refused to recognise Amar Das.[1] Similarly, Amar Das's son Mohan always remained hostile to Ram Das. Though Mohri, the eldest son of Amar Das, recognised Ram Das as the legitimate Guru, the hostility of Mohan alone seems to have been sufficient to induce him to leave Goindwal. It does not seem improbable that the control of the *Bawali* was thereby left to Mohan, as the *Dharamsala* of Kartarpur had already been left to the *Udāsīs*.

[1] *Supra*, pp. 165, 166.

But these difficulties were by no means serious and the Guru's control over the entire Sikh organisation of the *Sangats* through his *Masands* ensured the solidarity of Sikhism. At the same time Guru Arjan is said to have 'changed his mode of living so as to suit the present condition of the society over which he presided.' Trumpp says, 'Guru Arjun was the first Sikh Guru who laid aside the garb of a Faqīr and kept an establishment like a grandee.' [1] That this is not wholly an exaggeration is proved by the Sikh chronicles themselves. The Guru's *darbar* is said to have displayed so much splendour and magnificence that even the agents of the Emperor's financial minister were astonished at the regal state and retinue of the Guru.[2] 'The Emperor and kings bow before him. Wealth ever cometh to him,' so remarked Karmo, the wife of Prithia when she tried to instigate her husband against Guru Arjan.[3] It is thus clear that apart from its spiritual aspects the Guruship was also becoming a symbol of material power. Moreover, it is significant to note that Mohsin Fani had heard from the followers of Nanak that the Guru 'was in former times the raja called Janak and united the dignity of a king to that of a saint.' [4] This seems indirectly to indicate that the Sikhs had begun to regard their Guru not only as a spiritual but also as a temporal ruler. Indeed, Latif says that the establishment of the hereditary principle

[1] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxi.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 72.
[3] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 28.
[4] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 268.

of succession changed the character of the Guruship and 'materially contributed to the growth of Sikh power, for henceforward the Guru was looked upon by his disciples not only in the light of a spiritual guide but also as a worldly lord and a ruling sovereign.' [1] And we learn from the Sikh chronicles that Guru Arjan's son and successor, Hargobind, openly avowed this position by wearing two swords, one signifying spiritual, and the other temporal power.[2]

Narang says that, in this manner, "A state, peaceful and unobtrusive, had been slowly evolved, and with the Guru at its head as *Sachcha Padshah*, the Sikhs 'had already become accustomed to a form of self-government within the empire.' Their power and prestige had increased, and they were fast becoming a factor in the political life of the province." [3] This position, however, does not seem to be fully accepted by modern Sikh opinion. Guru Nanak had said that 'only those like to rule over others, who are either stupid or uninstructed,' and it is claimed that the Gurus could thus have no intention of ruling over others. We are further told that "it is wrong to say that by the time of the Fifth or the Sixth Guru the ideal of Sikhism was lowered and the Guru came to be called *Sachcha Padshah*, his seat a *takht* or throne, and the assembly of his followers a *durbar* or court. It will appear from the writings of the early Gurus, and especially from those of the bards who began to write in the time of the Second Guru, that these

[1] Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 253.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 4.
[3] Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

terms were not later innovations, but had been used from the beginning. They are eastern euphemisms used in respect of all revered faqirs." The question as to whether the ideal of Sikhism was lowered or not is really beside the point and it may also readily be conceded that the use of expressions like *Sachcha Padshah, takht* or *darbar* does not by itself indicate the development of a political ideal. It may also be quite true that ' the ideal of simplicity was kept up even in the midst of circumstances of comfort ' and the bards whose compositions are incorporated in the *Granth Sahib* might have been quite justified in praising this ' balance of character, called *Raj Yog*, maintained between asceticism and prosperity ; ' [1] in short, the Sikh might not as yet have been conscious of his political destiny and the motive force behind the movement might still have been purely religious, but looked at from the point of view of the established state the new community was already reaching a position when it could no longer be treated with indifference. The *masand*-system was gradually familiarising the Sikhs with a kind of self-government of their own, and the Guru at the centre with his unchallenged authority, his magnificent *darbar*, and his control over the entire organisation of the *Sangats*, was to them a symbol of unity and of something mystical, beyond all ordinary considerations. A community with such definite leadership, with such high ideals of discipline and self-sacrifice and institutions that gave practical meaning to those ideals could not but react

[1] *The Gurdwara Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, pp. 19, 20.

on the government of the day. To the Sikh all these developments might have seemed perfectly natural and to have been inspired by nothing but purely religious motives but, at the same time, their effects on others might be different. For instance, the Sikhs had been accustomed to call their Gurus *Sachcha Padshah* and to them its connotation was purely religious, but it was liable to assume a different meaning in other minds, as is proved by the fact that one of the charges against Guru Arjan when he was called to the presence of Jahangir was that he had called himself *Sachcha Padshah* or the true king. Thus a situation was arising in which a conflict between the forces of the state and those of Sikhism was becoming more or less inevitable. The state could not but regard the Sikh organisation as one of immense possibilities, which might at any time become a rallying point of disaffection, and for the Sikhs too, there could be no getting back, no reversion to a line of policy less liable to be misunderstood.

# APPENDIX A

## Guru Nanak and the Caste-system

From the brief discussion in Chapter IV it would appear that so far as Guru Nanak is concerned there is no satisfactory evidence to contend that he had attempted an abolition of the caste-system. But what does the history of Sikhism under his successors reveal ? As we have indicated above, there is a very strong body of opinion to the effect that Sikhism had no mercy for caste and its usages and various bits of evidence from the subsequent history of Sikhism have been requisitioned to prove the contention. But we want to make it clear at the very outset that such evidence as there is must be used with caution for they may cut both ways and, whatever might be their value regarding the subsequent developments in Sikhism, they may not be at all conclusive regarding the attitude of Guru Nanak. Examples would make the position clear.

When Forster visited the Punjab in 1783 he saw that 'the Sikhs formed matrimonial connections only in their respective tribes and that the only aliment used in common by them was the pursaud or sacred bread.' [1] It does not require any imagination to perceive that it might be entirely wrong to rely on this evidence and come to a decisive conclusion regarding the attitude of Guru Gobind Singh towards caste and its usages. On the contrary, it might only be an

[1] Forster, *Travels*, p. 256.

illustration of the fact that the caste and tribal predilections were so firmly rooted that they soon gained the better of the liberal principles of Sikhism. In fact we are told that ' in the east of the Punjab conversion has absolutely no effect upon the caste of the convert. The Musalman Rajput, Gujar or Jat is for all social, tribal, political and administrative purposes as much a Rajput, Gujar or Jat as his Hindu brother. The fact is that the people are bound by social and tribal custom far more than by any rules of religion.'[1] The point that we would like to emphasise is that Forster's evidence cannot be relied upon to determine the attitude of post-Khalsa Sikhism towards the caste system and that its real meaning can only be grasped when it is examined in relation to other relevant historical factors.

We would next take up an example of a contrary type, an example which has been made much of by modern Sikh writers. Mohsin Fani speaks of a man named Pertabmal who is said to have been a *Jnani* or a wise man. " When Pertabmal saw that his son wished to adopt the faith of the Musalmans, he asked him: ' Why dost thou wish to become a Musalman ? If thou likest to eat everything, become a Guru of the Sikhs, and eat whatever thou desirest.' "[2] This story has been regarded as a proof positive that Sikhism did not recognise any restriction of eating and drinking.[3] Now, this Pertabmal appears

[1] Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, p. 14.

[2] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, p. 286.

[3] *Ham Hindu Nahin*, pp. 145, 146; Teja Sing, *Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism*, p. 21, f. n.

to have been a man of grim humour and apparently did not entertain a very high opinion about the Sikhs and Sikhism. Mohsin Fani says that there was a Sikh named Davārāh who, it seems, was a *masand* of Hargobind. Pertabmal became his disciple and declared himself as his adherent. " Davārāh washed his feet and the water thereof was drunk by all the present followers of the faith, which they did to everybody whom they have gained over to their religion. At last, a dispute arose between Pertabmal and Davārāh; the latter said to the other : ' But yesterday I washed thy feet (that is made thee my disciple), and to-day thou makest war upon me ? ' Pertabmal answered: ' Oh weak-minded man ! the Jats always wash my feet as thou hast done: my own hand never touches my feet.' " We are further told: " It is an established custom among the followers of Nanak to present, when they pursue a desire, a few direms to the chief of their master, or to their master, and solicit his favour. Pertabmal offered some direms to Kabeli, who was a religious chief appointed by Hargobind ; he said with his hands joined: ' I wish to convoke for prayer, according to their custom, all the followers of Nanak ; let that be granted.' Kabeli before giving his agreement asked: ' Thou wishest perhaps to see Hargobind ? ' Pertabmal said: ' I wish something more precious.' Kabeli asked: ' What is this ? ' The answer was: ' I wish the arrival of all the buffoons, dancers and musicians from Peshawar to Kabul, that we may see their actions, arts and tricks.' " [1] Such a man was

[1] *Dabistān*, Vol. II, pp. 112, 118.

Pertabmal and it seems that we need not take his remarks at their face value. It is, however, an admitted fact that Guru Hargobind permitted animal diet to his followers, most probably as a necessary and almost inevitable concession to the traditional habits of the Jats, who had been entering Sikhism in ever increasing numbers, and it is quite conceivable that the Sikhs had become comparatively free in matters of eating and drinking. But, as we have already seen, we learn from the *Dabistān* itself that this was not the practice during the earlier days of Sikhism.[1] Guru Hargobind had thus brought about a clear innovation which was possibly pressed in by circumstances, and the fact in question can thus in no way be accepted as evidence regarding the original intentions of Sikhism. It is important to bear in mind that as Sikhism progressed it was bound to react to its environment and develop new forms and tendencies, but these latter are almost always mixed up with unforeseen historical factors and should therefore be closely analysed before they are made to throw light on the original message of Sikhism.

The two essentials of caste are the prohibition against intermarriage and eating in common. As we have already seen, the *Langars* of the Gurus knew no caste distinctions [2] but this cannot be said to prove anything, this way or the other, as examples of relaxation of caste rules regarding sacred food distributed from a public sanctuary are to be found even among

[1] *Supra*, p. 80.

[2] *Supra*, pp. 159, 166.

the most orthodox of Hindus.[1] As far as we are aware, there is no other evidence as regards inter-dining during the earlier days of Sikhism. But far more vital to caste is the prohibition against inter-marriage and here, too, there is hardly any evidence to show that intermarriage was practised or even encouraged. On the contrary, we get little bits of information, here and there, which seem to show that the prohibition was still regarded as important. For instance, it is said that when Amar Das's wife selected Jetha as a very suitable match for their daughter Bhani, the first question that the Guru asked Jetha when he was called to him was : ' My dear boy, who art thou ? ' and when Jetha answered that he was a Sodhi Khatri Amar Das felt greatly relieved. Trumpp regards this story as ' very significant as to the observance of caste by the earlier Sikh Gurus,' [2] and it would have practically set the question at rest if we could be sure of its authenticity.

Examples, moreover, are available to show that in some instances the Sikhs placed caste even above their faith, or in other words, they did not hesitate to enter into matrimonial connection even with non-Sikhs if the caste considerations were favourable. One single incident, which has already been referred to, is, to our mind, conclusive. We have seen that Chandu Shah, the emperor's Dewan, sought the hands of Hargobind for his daughter but Arjan refused. After Arjan's execution Chandu again came forward

[1] Among others may be mentioned the case of the temple of Jagannath at Puri.

[2] Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxix.

with his proposal but Hargobind sternly turned him back. Now, the point to notice is that Arjan refuses the alliance on the ground that his Delhi Sikhs were against the proposal and Hargobind tells Chandu plainly that he could not have anything to do with his father's 'murderer.' Chandu is indignantly described as a 'haughty man' who had used 'injurious expressions regarding the Guru' but not for once the point is raised that he was a non-Sikh and therefore no matrimonial alliance was possible with him. The fact that both the families, the Guru's and Chandu's, were Khatri, was obviously considered sufficient. In fact, we know of several cases which show that marriage between Sikhs and non-Sikhs actually took place. We have seen that Bibi Amro, a daughter of Guru Angad had been married to a nephew of Amar Das and that the marriage had taken place long after Lahina had adopted Sikhism and some time before Amar Das's conversion.[1] The daughter-in-law of the redoubtable Chandu Shah himself is said to have been the daughter of a pious Sikh,[2] and we are told that the Sikh wife of Rai Jodh, the owner of the village of Kangar, visited Guru Hargobind and prayed him to make her husband a Sikh.[3] But with the changes that Guru Hargobind introduced a new situation arose. The anecdotes about Pertabmal that we discussed above show that there were persons who did not approve of these changes, and that such persons were, by no means rare even among the Sikhs themselves

[1] *Supra*, p. 165.
[2] Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 97.
[3] *Ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 153.

is proved by Bhai Gurudas's remarks in his XXVIth *Wār*.[1] The result was that the Sikhs were boycotted and found it difficult to marry, the implication clearly being that the boycott came from the other side and that the Sikhs had no scruples in the matter.[2]

All these facts have got to be dispassionately considered if we wish to arrive at a correct view regarding the attitude of Sikhism towards the caste-system. No useful purpose can be served by ignoring them altogether or summarily rejecting them as mere exceptions. The only explanation that can in any way be consistent with the view that Sikhism aimed from the very beginning at a destruction of the social system would be that in such a difficult and vital matter the Gurus had perforce to proceed in a very careful and cautious manner and that they therefore aimed at a gradual corrosion at successive stages, rather than a sudden overhauling of the old order. But the difficulty is that there is no evidence to support such an explanation. The only thing that can possibly be advanced in its favour is the gradual relaxation of caste rules in the *Langar*, which, as we have already pointed out, cannot by itself be regarded as conclusive. On the other hand, we know that in the matter of animal diet there had been a definite turning back. As we have seen, Mohsin Fani distinctly states that Guru Nanak had ordered abstention from flesh. This precept, however, appears to have been neglected under his successors and Guru Arjan renewed the prohibition.

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 76, 77.

2 This is said to be proved by one of the manuscripts discovered by Gurbaksh Singh at Dacca. (*Dacca Review*, 1916, p. 378.)

So that it does not appear that even in this matter there was a progressive realisation of the alleged object in view. But apart from all this, it is important to remember that there is hardly any evidence to show that the Sikhs practised intermarriage or that Sikhism encouraged it. Indeed, it seems clear to us that Sikhism in the beginning did not seek the abolition of the caste-system and that the changes that we come across at a later stage were due to historical factors which had nothing to do with the original enunciations of Sikhism. At any rate, it can be safely asserted that nothing in the history of his immediate successors can be made to show that Guru Nanak had intended the destruction of the caste system.[1]

The point may possibly be raised that when we find that even Muhammadans were converted to Sikhism it is futile to argue that they still adhered to caste restrictions. In the Sikh records we come across several such instances. "Sewa Das in his Janam Sakhi mentions many places like the Kiri of Pathans, where a large number of Mohammedans became Sikhs. From the list of Sikhs given by Bhai Gurdas in his eleventh Var we find among others such names as Mardana, the rebeck-player, who accompanied Guru Nanak in his journeys, Daulat Khan Pathan who became a Sikh Saint, Gujjar a blacksmith who was a Sikh of Guru

[1] It seems to us that the following statement of Barth expresses the essence of the position: "Nanak even did not break in an absolute way with caste, which he tolerated as a civil institution, and of which the sect, inspite of attempts afterwards made in the direction of its complete abolition, has always preserved some traces." (*The Religions of India*, p. 248.)

Angad and preached Sikhism in his village, Hamza and Mian Jamal the happy, who remained constantly in the presence of Guru Hargobind."[1] It is further said that 'from history we gather many names of Mohammedans who became admirers of Sikhism.' Some of these claims may very well be dubious and we have reasons to be sceptical when we are told that Daulat Khan Lodi had become a Sikh or that 'Dara Shukoh was persecuted by his brother Aurangzib for being a convert to Sikhism,' but at the same time it cannot be denied that many Muhammadans had come under the influence of Sikhism. This is clearly established by Jahangir's own remark in his *Tuzuk* that many foolish Muslims had been fascinated by Guru Arjan's ways and teachings.[2] But it should not be ignored that there is a fundamental difference in the position of these Muslims in post-Khalsa Sikhism and that in its earlier days. In later history we come across instances where Muslim converts were fully absorbed within the community by being allowed to marry in genuine Sikh families and there are cases where such Muslims served as even *Mahants* of *Gurdwaras*,[3] but such was by no means the position at the time we have been discussing. The conclusion we arrived at can only be shaken if it can be shown that these Muslims who had come under the influence of Sikhism were fully assimilated within the community

1 *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 21.

2 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Rogers and Beveridge, Vol. I, p. 72.

3 *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, pp. 31, 32. It may not, however, be improbable that most of these were cases of reconversion.

by being allowed free intermarriage with other sections of the Sikhs or allowed to interdine with Sikhs in general even outside the *Langar*. Unless such evidence is forthcoming the position remains that these Muslims formed a class apart within the community, if they had at all become Sikhs in the truest sense.

## APPENDIX B

### Hindu Divinites in the Japjī

In Chapter IV we had occasion to refer to two passages from the *Japjī* which seem to throw some light on Guru Nanak's attitude regarding the divine personifications of Hinduism. The first passage in the original runs thus:

ekā māī jugati viāī tini cheļe parvāṇu
iku sansārī iku bhandārī iku lā'e divāṇu
jiv tisu bhāvai tivai chalāvai jiv hovai phurmāṇu

Teja Singh translates:

"It is generally supposed that the Divine Mother by a mysterious scheme conceived and gave birth to three deities:

One that creates, the second that supports, and the third that adjudges destruction.

But in reality it is God, who directs the world according to His will, and no other." (*The Japji*, p. 45.)

It will be seen that the expressions 'it is generally supposed,' 'but in reality,' and 'and no other' have nothing in the original to support them. Such additions are, no doubt, often necessary but they are hardly permissible when the text readily yields itself to a satisfactory interpretation without them. In fact, the verses appear clear enough and there can be little doubt that Macauliffe's translation is truer to the text.

The second passage is as follows:

suṇiai isaru baramā indu ;
suṇiai mukhi sālāhaṇ mandu,
suṇiai jog jugati tani bhed ;
suṇiai sāsat simriti ved.

The two renderings are:

1 "By hearing the Name man becometh as Shiv, Brahma and Indra.

By hearing the Name even the low become highly lauded.

By hearing the Name the way of Jog and the secrets of the body are obtained.

By hearing the Name man understandeth the real nature of the Shastras, the Smritis and the Veds."

(Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 200.)

2 "Next this instruction will make the disciple realise the true significance of the powers represented by Siva, Brahma and Indra;

And he will begin to dislike the offering of praise to them.

He will come to know the secrets of physical nature and the unifying spirit working behind ;

And in the light of that knowledge he will be able to correct his views about the Shastras, Smritis and Veds."

(Teja Singh, *The Japjī*, pp. 27, 28.)

It seems clear that Teja Singh's is not a translation but rather an interpretation according to his own lights and that, too, is hardly acceptable. We do not see how his second line can at all come in. It is, no doubt,

the most difficult in the original and Macauliffe suggests the following rendering as an alternative—'By hearing the Name one is praised by high and low.' 'Sālāhaṇ mandu' may possibly be made to yield something like what Teja Singh writes but then the word 'mukhi' is left out of account. Further, we are at a loss to understand how 'jog jugati tani bhed' can mean 'the secrets of physical nature and the unifying spirit working behind.' The sentence seems clear enough and further it is to be noted that 'tani bhed' or 'tanu bhed' appears to be a technical *yogic* expression like 'ṣaṭ chakra bhed.' Again, we have to prefer the translation of Macauliffe to that of Teja Singh.

In justice to Teja Singh it should, however, be pointed out that his difficulties arise from the fact that in his view Guru Nanak had preached an uncompromising monotheism and consequently he felt it necessary to provide an explanation for the passages in question consistently with that fundamental postulate; and it can, on no account, be denied that Sikhism had enjoined the worship of the One True Lord alone. At the same time verses of the above type and several other considerations would seem to indicate that Nanak's attitude towards the divinities was not one of total denunciation. He merely pointed out their limited and secondary character but his emphasis on the unity of the Godhead was so pronounced and insistent that these could have no chance of survival in Sikhism. And those who are even superficially acquainted with the philosophical basis of Hinduism will not possibly deny that the position there is not fundamentally different.

Most of the difficulties about interpreting the message of Guru Nanak arise from the fundamental assumptions that he had brought something entirely novel and that all the later developments in Sikhism were implicit in his teachings. It can easily be seen that to insist on the latter contention is to take a view of history which can hardly be historical and as regards the former it can be shown that of the various features of Sikhism, taken separately, there are not many which we do not come across in the past history of Hinduism. What Guru Nanak did was that he selected certain aspects and put an almost exclusive emphasis on them, with the result that the whole, as it emerged, appeared, more or less, new. It can also be shown that in this matter of selection and emphasis he follows, in most of the characteristic details, the line previously adopted by the *Bhāgavatas* and that in its metaphysical aspects Sikhism preached the Vedanta of the Vaisnavite brand.[1] We have no space here to illustrate the details but there can be no room for doubt that no interpretation of Guru Nanak's message is likely to be adequate without a critical consideration of this positive background.

[1] It is interesting to note that an *Udāsī* named Amar Das wrote the commentary called *Maṇiprabhā* on the *Sikhāmaṇi*, which again is a commentary on the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*. The *Udāsī* apparently regards Guru Nanak as an exponent of the Vedanta. (See *Maṇiprabhā*, p. 1, Nirṇaya Sāgar Edition. For this reference I am indebted to my late lamented friend and colleague Dr. Prabhatchandra Chakravarti.)

## APPENDIX C

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. Gurumukhi

*Ādi Granth or the Granth Sāhib.*

It may be called the Bible of the Sikhs and is admittedly the greatest authority on Sikhism. Its main interest, no doubt, is religious but, as we have seen, references to historical incidents are also found here and there, and having regard to the paucity of records on the history of the Gurus, these must certainly be regarded as invaluable. Besides, the work can also be of very great interest to students of literature and philology.

The story of its compilation has already been discussed and we would here only add a word or two about its arrangement. As is well known, the work begins with the Sikh invocation to God and the place of honour is given to the *Japjī*. Then follow in succession the *Sodar*, the *Sopurakh* and the *Sohilā*. The rest of the work is, in the first place, arranged under *Rāgs* and these again are sub-divided into *Mahalās*, *Mahalā I* being assigned to the hymns of Guru Nanak, *Mahalā II* to those of Guru Angad and so on. It will thus be seen that in the *Granth Sāhib* we are given a long list of notes and measures then current in India and this together with the other list that we get in the *Āin-i-Ākbari* (Gladwin's Translation, pp. 728-30)

cannot but be of considerable value to persons interested in the history of Indian music.

The original compilation of Guru Arjan consisted of the hymns of the first five Gurus and those of several *bhagats* and bards. The *bhagats*, whose hymns are incorporated in the work, are as follows : Jaidev, Namdev, Trilochan, Paramanand, Dhanna, Sadhna, Ramanand, Beni, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Ravi Das, Farid and Bhikan. Of these the last two were Muhammadans. Narang says Bhikan is of unknown caste but Macauliffe is definite that he was a Muhammadan. (See Narang, *op. cit.*, Appendix I, p. 1 ; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 1.) Narang gives a list of the bards and states on the authority of the *Panth Prakās* that they were all Brahmans* (*ibid*, p. *ii*). Although we do not know anything definite about the sources from which Guru Arjan procured the hymns of the *bhagats*, it can easily be seen that their occurrence in a work of which the date is definitely known is of considerable importance. For instance, Guru Arjan's collection of the hymns of Kabir is older than most of the other anthologies that have come down to us and might very well be a more authentic record. In fact, there can be absolutely no doubt that the *Granth Sāhib* is a work of momentous importance and our regret is that it has not attracted the attention of more competent scholars and indexed on critical and scientific lines. What a great aid that might be to Indian scholarship is not difficult to understand.

*Janamsākhi*, by Sewa Das.

See *supra*, pp. 53, 56, 57.

*Wārs* and *Kabits*, by Bhai Gurdas.

As we have seen, Bhai Gurdas was the learned amanuensis of Guru Arjan and wrote the *Granth Sāhib* to the latter's dictation. He was the first cousin of the mother of Guru Arjan and came into prominence even during the pontificate of Guru Ram Das, who is said to have sent him to Agra to preach the Sikh religion there. His importance in the Sikh community is also proved by the fact that when Guru Arjan required an emissary to go to Mohan and persuade him to hand over to the Guru the old collection of the hymns of the first three Gurus Bhai Gurdas was selected for the purpose. He lived till 1629, half through the pontificate of Guru Hargobind, and died in full glory and prestige.

Bhai Gurdas must have written a substantial portion of his works before the compilation of the *Granth Sāhib* in 1604 but it is also evident that sections were added later on during the pontificate of Guru Hargobind. The interest of Bhai Gurdas's works is, no doubt, predominantly religious and the *Kabits* in particular contain merely 'the Sikh tenets and a panegyric of the Gurus' but it is important to note that they mark a definite landmark in the evolution of Sikhism and should thus be regarded as extremely valuable.

*Bacitra Nāṭak.*

The work was written by Guru Gobind Singh himself and was later on incorporated in the compilation known as *Dasam Pādshāh Kā Granth*. The work is one of supreme importance and is undoubtedly the greatest authority regarding the Guru's mission and

his earlier relations with the Hill chieftains. It also incidentally throws some light on the history of the Guru's predecessors.

*Gyān Ratnāwalī*, by Bhai Mani Singh.

See *supra*, p. 57.

*Nānak Prakās*, by Bhai Santokh Singh.

See *supra*, pp. 57-61.

*Sūraj Prakās* or *Gur Partāp Sūraj*, by Bhai Santokh Singh.

This book, although written so late as 1843, is the main source from which we get the details of the pontificates of Guru Nanak's successors. It is a big, ponderous work consisting of several volumes and was recently republished with annotations from Amritsar. Macauliffe's opinion about the work is highly unfavourable. He says that Bhai Santokh Singh was a man with strong Hindu tendencies. He possessed a fervid imagination "which was largely stimulated by copious draughts of bhang and other intoxicants in which he freely indulged" and which led him to invent many stories discreditable to the Gurus. "Some of his inventions are due to his exaggerated ideas of prowess and force in a bad as well as a good cause, a reflex of the spirit of the marauding age in which he lived." It is extremely doubtful whether Bhai Santokh Singh had any reliable authority before him and "his statements accordingly cannot often be accepted as even an approach to history."

It is an extremely interesting fact that in spite of these strictures Macauliffe has been compelled to make the *Sūraj Prakās* the primary basis of his "Lives" of the Gurus, particularly of the earlier Gurus. In fact,

he had no other alternative and so long as more reliable records are not forthcoming this work will remain, more or less, indispensable, though, no doubt, it should be used with great caution and restraint.

*Prachīn Panth Prakās*, by Rattan Singh.

The account of the Gurus is extremely brief though it is of considerable importance regarding later affairs.

*Sri Guru Panth Prakās*, by Bhai Gyan Singh Gyani (1880 A.D.).

The author has made a laudable attempt in this work to clear the history of the Sikhs from some of the exaggerations and absurdities of Bhai Santokh Singh. The history of the Gurus is fairly detailed but it appears that the author himself sometimes introduces details which have hardly any basis in fact. It should be used with caution.

*Ham Hindu Nahin*, by Bhai Kahn Singh.

A very interesting book but not of much historical value.

*Gurumat Prabhākar*, by Bhai Kahn Singh.

The work is practically an index to the *Granth Sāhib* and is thus extremely useful. It can rightly be regarded as a source book of early Sikh history.

*Gurumat Sudhākar*, by Bhai Kahn Singh.

A collection of extracts from the writings of Guru Gobind Singh and various other Sikh authors. An interesting book and serves as a guide to further reading.

Several other works exist in Gurumukhi, *e.g.*, the *Itihās Guru Khālsā* or *the Tavārikh Guru Khālsā* but these are rarely of any practical assistance.

*Guru Shabad Ratnākar Mahān Kosh*, by Bhai Kahn Singh.

This is an Encyclopedia of Sikh literature and a work of the highest importance.

## II. Persian

*Tuzuk-i-Jāhāngiri.* English translation by Rogers and Beveridge.

In this work there is only one significant passage in which Jahangir explains the reasons which led him to order Guru Arjan's execution. For the period covered in the present volume it is of no material assistance.

*Dābistan-i-Mazahab*, by Mohsin Fani. English translation by Troyer and Shea.

The author who wrote under the pseudonym of Mohsin Fani was a contemporary of the 5th, 6th and 7th Gurus and appears to have been a personal friend of the 6th Guru Hargobind. Cunningham characterises the author as 'a garrulous and somewhat credulous Mahomedan' and the light-hearted manner in which anecdotes of various kinds are woven into the body of the narrative no doubt gives some countenance to this view of the great historian of the Sikhs. But when all is said, the fact remains that scrappy though it is, it helps us considerably to distinguish the earlier from the later tradition and must thus be regarded as invaluable.

*Khulāsatu-t-Tawārikh*, by Sujan Rai of Batala (1695).

The references to Sikh history are few and far between but nevertheless they are important.

*Siyar-ul-Mutāqherin*, by Ghulam Hussain Khan, (about 1780 A.D.).

Of no practical value for the period covered in this volume.

## III. Urdu

*Tārikh Makhzan-i-Punjāb*, by Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Qureshi (1887).

Not of much practical use.

*Tārikh-i-Punjāb*, by Kanhayya Lal (1881).

It gives a history of the Punjab from the rise of the Sikhs to the Mutiny together with an account of the State of Jammu. The account of the Gurus is full of legendary myths and is of very little historical value.

## IV. English

*India Tracts*, by Browne (1788).

Browne resided at Dehli as the East India Company's representative to the Court of Shah Alum. He there met two learned Hindus of Lahore who had in their possession some Hindi accounts of the Sikh Gurus. On the basis of these accounts a Persian manuscript was prepared which Browne translated into English and published as his 'Tract.' The value of the work, so far as early Sikh history is concerned, would become apparent if we quote the author as our authority for stating that Guru Arjan was succeeded by Ram Rai and that in 1662 a son, named Tegh Bahadur, was born to Harkrishan.

*A Journey from Bengal to England*, by Forster (1798).

Forster travelled through the Punjab during the years 1783 and 1784 and incorporated in his 'Travels' a short sketch about the Sikhs. Though he claims that he noticed only such parts of the story 'as are either founded on received tradition or on those legends which have the least exceptionable claims to credit,' his account of the earlier phases of Sikhism is of little practical value.

*Sketch of the Sikhs* by Malcolm (1812).

The work was first published in the *Asiatic Researches*. When he was with the British Army in the Punjab in 1805 Malcolm succeeded in securing a copy of the *Adi Granth* and several historical tracts in Gurumukhi. His friend Dr. Leyden supplied him with translations of several other tracts and these formed the basis of Malcolm's work. The records that Malcolm used are thus older than the *Sūraj Prakās* and this gives a peculiar value to his work. But unfortunately Malcolm's book appears to have been written carelessly and does not help us much.

*History of the Sikhs*, by Macgregor (1846).

Macgregor's was the first attempt to write a connected history of the Sikhs. The work is now hopelessly out of date.

*History of the Sikhs* (Wm. H. Allen & Co., London, 1846).

This work was compiled from the papers of the late Captain Murray. The earlier chapters were written by the Editor himself. But these chapters appear to have been based on Malcolm and are thus not of much use.

*History of the Sikhs*, by Cunningham (1849).

Still the standard work on Sikh history but the earlier chapters are now in many places out of date and require revision.

*Adi Granth*, by Trumpp (1877).

Trumpp prepared his work under the auspices of the India Office and took seven years to elaborate the volume. Macauliffe is of opinion that Trumpp's translation was "highly inaccurate and unidiomatic, and furthermore gave mortal offence to the Sikhs by the *odium theologicum* introduced into it. Whenever he saw an opportunity of defaming the Gurus, the sacred book, and the religion of the Sikhs, he eagerly availed himself of it" (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Preface, p. *vii*). It cannot be said that these remarks are unjustified but, at the same time, it should be noted that Trumpp's Introductory Essays, particularly his translation of the old *Janamsākhī*, are still useful, though, no doubt, they should be handled with caution.

*History of the Punjab* ; by Syed Muhammad Latif.

The chapter on the Sikh Gurus is hopelessly inadequate and often marred by an anti-Sikh bias.

*The Sikh Religion, its Gurus, Sacred Writings and their Authors*, by Macauliffe (1909).

This is a monumental work and marks an epoch in the history of Sikh studies.

In the Preface to his great work Macauliffe wrote "one of the main objects of the present work is its endeavour to make some reparation to the Sikhs for the insults which Trumpp offered to their Gurus and

their religion." This reparation has been rendered in full but I feel bound to say that in doing this Macauliffe has not been always fair to Hinduism and the Hindus. I say this with great regret because my indebtedness to Macauliffe's great work cannot be adequately expressed.

There is one other matter which I think necessary to mention. Macauliffe makes it clear in the Preface that his intention has been, "in fulfilment of his promise to the Sikhs, to write this work from an orthodox Sikh point of view, without any criticism or expression of opinion of his own." The result has been that his accounts of the Gurus have suffered greatly in consequence. There has been no attempt to discriminate between fact and fiction, contemporary and infinitely more reliable evidence has been mixed up with later myths and, on the whole, the accounts have emerged, more or less, as a jumble in which legendary matter predominates. It seems to me a matter of great regret that Macauliffe chose the method that he did because nobody was more competent than he to attempt a critical account of the Gurus after a careful discrimination between the old and later traditions.

*Transformation, of Sikhism* by G. C. Narang (1912).

Interesting in its own way but superficial.

*History of Aurangzib, Vol. III*, by Sir J. N. Sarkar.

The account of the Sikh Gurus is not very well-informed and often unnecessarily offensive to Sikh sentiment.

*History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion,* by Khazan Singh.

Full of details but absolutely uncritical.

*A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province,* compiled by H. A. Rose.

A mine of information on all sorts of topics. Sections on the Sikhs and Sikhism are interesting and useful.

*The Japji,* by Teja Singh.

An English translation of the Japjī with a very ingenious Introduction.

*Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism,* by Teja Singh.

A very interesting account of the growth of the Sikh community under the ten Gurus but the main thesis of the book is hardly acceptable.

*Asa di Var* by Teja Singh.

An English translation of the *Asā di Vār.* The introduction is important and traces in some detail the growth of the Sikh organisation.

*The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening.*

The Introduction is very interesting and gives some new details about the earlier phases of the history of Sikhism.

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| *Page* | *Line* | *For* | *Read* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 11 | were | was |
| 21 | 17 | are | is |
| 63 | 26 | amost | almost |
| 91 | 29 | actully | actually |
| 118, fn. 2: | *add* | Malcolm is apparently making a confusion regarding his authority. | |
| 121 | 20 | essenital | essential |
| 145 | 12 | grarually | gradually |
| 168 | 18, fn. l. 5 | *manjis* | *manji* |
| 184, fn. 1: | *read* | Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 153 *for* the paragraph given therein and *transfer* the latter to page 183 and *read* it in relation to ' to whom he gave whatever he received from his parents ' (ll. 15, 16). | |
| 201 | 14 | suckle | suck |
| 216 | 2 | systematictrial | systematic trial |
| 260, fn. 1 | 3 | here | hear |
| 268 | 25 | Guru of the Sikhs | Sikh of the Gurus |
| 273 | 1 | Gurudas | Gurdas. |