

# **SPIRIT OF THE SIKH**

**PART II  
VOLUME TWO**

**PURAN SINGH**

## INTRODUCTION

Attention has briefly been drawn to the history of the composition of *Spirit of the Sikh* in the introductory notes to Part I and to Volume One of Part II of this book. Professor Puran Singh both in his English and Punjabi writings maintains a uniform style of expression, whose prominent features are a vehement lyricism and formation of sentences which because of the almost breathless passion which is at their basis, tend often to go out of hand. The reader has to learn to live with this trait in this writer, which with an overwhelming play of imagination and emotion, helps constantly to throw out passages that are sublimely lyrical. This quality of his style, which has long ceased to be the ruling style in English writings, and has mainly characterized the idealists and visionaries like Carlyle, Emerson and Ruskin, is as a matter of fact as much the result of the author's own characteristic quality of mind as of the strong influence on him of Carlyle, his favourite author. In many places his writing indicates half-conscious echoes of Carlyle. The other great writer favoured by Puran Singh is Walt Whitman, whom he has quoted more than once. The author's contact with his contemporary writing is again remarkable. He has more than once referred to *Adelphi*, a literary magazine of the time and to John Middleton Murry. He has also quoted in full Markham's *Man With the Hoe*, a contemporary poem of the time, later deservedly famous, and echoing the passionate plea for socialism, then a recent phenomenon. No less contemporary is the author's gushing enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution, imperfectly understood by him though, as by most intellectuals of the West and the East then. All this indicates the author's voracious reading and his almost insatiable hunger to keep himself abreast of such thought and literature as according to him, would aid and supplement his own idealistic vision of Sikhism.

In the present volume, the matter is cast in the form of separate and distinct theme headings, elucidating the idealistic vision of the Sikh faith, along with illustrative translated renderings from Sikh sacred literature. The total quantum of such literature quoted and entered in this volume is less than in the earlier. That is because of the scheme that is formulated in this, which is to make it the collection of nearly a score of essays pertaining to Sikhism, couched in a highly lyrical style. The earlier volume is of the nature of a running lyrical passage, with the chapters marking only the successive steps of this total lyrical experience. Following on this lyricism, there are long and copious excerpts from Gurubani in English rendering, which as has been pointed out in the introduction to that volume, is extremely soulful and imaginative.

The overwhelming emphasis in these writings, as in all others from Puran Singh, is on the spirit of devotion (Nam and Simrin) in Sikhism, its underlying message of sacrifice and love. In the middle chapters, those entitled *War, Ethics, Aesthetics, At the Feet of the Lord* and *Sikh History, Religion, The Worker and Love*, the various idealistic aspects of the Sikh creed are brought out in deeply felt tones, which invest the practice of Religion with a romantic fervour. Puran Singh's Sikhism is, as would be obvious, not the adoption of a creed in a mindless way by birth only, or by the practice of ritual and formalism. His is a passionately held conviction, in the spirit of the Sikhs of old, to whom their Keshas (long unshorn hair) symbol of Sikhism, were dear as breath itself. There occur in the course of these essays, eloquent passages on the Keshas. Another of Puran Singh's loves is Buddhism, the creed which he adopted and later left for the creed in which he had been born. Buddhism, standing in the effulgence of its spirit against orthodox Brahmanism, to which Puran Singh appears to be allergic for its quietism, he praises ecstatically in one of the earlier chapters. Towards the close are two chapters, unparalleled for their lyrical exposition of the Sikh spirit and the qualities of the Sikh people—one entitled *The Sikh People* itself and the other, *Guru Gobind Singh the New Gita Himself*. None else has ever expressed himself with such fervour of devotion to the Tenth Master as Puran Singh here, though of course, devotion all through is the inspiring force in his writings.

To draw attention to some of the most striking features of this remarkable work, the like of which on Sikhism or on religion for the matter of that, is rare, depending on the mystical vision in the writer. In the chapter *Guru Gobind Singh the New Gita Himself* already referred to, is brought out the essence of the nishkām karma philosophy of the Gita as it manifested itself in the life-long endeavour of Guru Gobind Singh to establish by the force of self-sacrificing and ascetic heroism, justice and right, of which the Gita and later, Guru Gobind Singh's own *Bachittar Natak* have given the splendid vision. This part is highly creative, though of course, the entire work is imaginative and creative to a high degree. In the chapter *The Sikh People* is presented the idealized image of the Sikh—a simple peasant and worker, devoted to the Guru's teaching, sacrificing himself and in the course of his life eschewing the inanities of the speculative gossamers for which India is famous, but which often find mention here in pejorative terms. The much misunderstood Sikh in this chapter, and in these volumes as a whole, will find his way of life held up for admiration and justification.

One other chapter to which particular attention may be drawn, and which present-day critics of Punjabi may take note of, is that entitled, *The Sikh-Muslim School in the Punjab*. This school is a mystico-cultural tradition that after the message of the Gurus was delivered and percolated to the masses, caught on among the Muslim Sufi poets of the Punjab. They spoke in a terminology, composed of elements Indian and at the same time tinged with the hues of Punjabi Sufism, which the Gurus themselves had fashioned to give expression to their own message, meant for the simple rural masses, Muslim no less than non-Muslim. That this message was the expression characteristically of the soul-force of the Punjab, with its freedom from acrimonious dogmatism, Brahmanical or Muslim, is further proved by the fact that it found such loving echoes in the songs and lyrics of the Muslim Sufi poets of the Punjab, such as Bullah Shah, Shah Hussain and others. Earlier, such a school may be said to have begun in the shabdas and slokas of Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj, whom the holy Gurus made an inalienable part of the Sikh tradition by incorporating his Bani, brief though, in the pages of the holy Granth Sahib. It is to be regretted that this chapter, so pregnant with meaning and insight, is so brief and leaves the reader craving for more.

Before closing, a few passages, rich with the high gifts of imagination and eloquence may be referred to. These are meant only as brief instances, to whet the reader's appetite for more, which he will find scattered all over the work. These come suddenly upon the reader's attention, like a sublime vision behind a tuft of trees on a hill, leaving him almost reeling with the 'inebriation' of ecstasy. One such may be taken from one of the earlier chapters, *Nam and Simrin*, a theme as central as it was dear to the author's heart. On the emancipating quality of Nam and Simrin thus opens this paragraph: "In these dark regions of the spirit-world live all the desire-bound beings, who do not let man go safe beyond. In these dark regions are the slums of those who have violated their purity. Here is man, self-fettered by his own violent deeds which have been suicidal to him in as much as they created a "curvature" in his soul, and he cannot be freed even after physical death. Unless one has by luck been introduced to the higher regions of absolute freedom, men rot in their own desires for centuries, in their own violent crimes, in their own filth and more of sin that sticks to them even beyond death. A Sikh saint of Simrin (whom I have seen) told us one day that there are souls that by their own heaviness sink into the earth, others live on its surface. Very few rise up and they are caught by their earthly relatives who died before them—mothers and fathers and uncles and grandfathers. Then there are men gurus, the mental hypnotists and charlatans who crushed men here by their mental power. Many a soul like that of "Lilith" flutters like birds caught in the noose of someone's mental powers. Many souls are rotting in the eternal prisons of unilluminated dungeons of the minds of those occults, divines, those who passed as great saviours of men, by the excitement of their intellect here on earth. Both masters and disciples are fettered to each other. And there are innumerable soul-worlds where many such live. The Yogis who make on earth tremendous effort to be something extraordinary, live eternally in their own little cocoons. They have no power. After

death, they come to know that their best religions and best efforts were their undoing. They become prisoners of self”.

On the evil in the heart, a piece expressive of deeply penetrative psycho-ethical insight is this: “A murder committed is not so injurious as a murder plotted, as in *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth is more sinful than Macbeth. After death she will be still endlessly doing that horrible murder and shivering exactly as on that night. It is in that sense that all violent volitions of anger, lust, greed, jealousy, possession bind the soul in self-created chains for centuries in an after-death existence. In Sikhism ethics have psychic foundations and spiritual justifications, not metaphysical or philosophical. Such souls as Lady Macbeth’s are branded and self-cursed. One has to be free of all these obsessions for the sake of keeping the soul whole. We always commit suicide, there is no punishment from God. Only the compassion of a truly spiritual disciple of Simrin and Nām can give such souls their freedom. Light pleasures, foamy and frothy, little cups of wine, as of the flowers for the bee, the sipping of a honey-drop by an all too volatile soul are for man as innocent and non-violent as the shaking of leaves on the loftiest branch of a tall manhood with the passing breaths of breeze, excited by kisses of the setting sun and the rising moon. The fountain that has sprung is allowed its natural leap and dance, and death. Light pleasures of life do not wound the soul, only violent crimes. Violence done to one’s own soul is the real Satan. Goodness is the highest form of kindness of one’s self.”

A chapter, which in its entirety is a gem, is that entitled ‘Love’. Its opening is: “In Guru Granth, Love is not any philosophical abstraction; it is the incessant breathing of the spirit of God, and a life informed of universal sympathy. Love is an ever-flowing inebriation of the Deep through a Guru-transmuted man. Love is the simple, inmost state of life which depends on no outward conditions of life. As the seed is to the pine-tree, love is to the true man. The latter is the whole of it in study of growth, leafage, blossom and fruitage. Love has hands and feet and it works. Love is fully passionate and has the colours and ruby lips that quiver with ‘Naming Him’. The Guru’s colour is of the rose; perfumes are emitted by his very flesh. His words are visions. Guru Nanak is opposed to the analytical descriptions of the great spirit.”

In this collection too appear some renderings from the Sikh sacred literature. These are, from *Jaitsari-ki-Var* of Guru Arjan Dev, some of Guru Gobind Singh’s compositions, some excerpts from the Vars of Bhai Guru Das. Later, are inserted some slokas of Baba Farid, with the complementary visions provided by the holy Gurus. In these renderings, the ubiquitous quality of Puran Singh, his creative but ‘distant’ art is visible. These renderings, all over these volumes, are a valuable addition to the exposition of Sikh literature in English. With their characteristic ‘distance’, they nevertheless help bring Gurubani to the reader’s soul, even though his intellect may demur, seeking closer literal parallels.

While a number of valuable books, exegetic, and historical have been written about the teaching and ideals of Sikhism, to my mind *Spirit of the Sikh* remains unique in Sikh literature for its high lyrical tone, its fervour of devotion and its matchless poetry of expression. While it is a fit *finale* to the poet’s earlier works of devotion, such as *Book of the Ten Masters*, *Sisters of the Spinning Wheel*, *The Spirit Born People* and *The Spirit of Oriental Poetry*, it is qualitatively above them all for its sublimity and range of the experience explored. It remains a great Sikh (and human) document in the style of Carlyle and Emerson, and in the free humanistic spirit of Walt Whitman. Never has a writer come closer to the Spirit of the teaching of the holy Gurus; never has the fervour of devotion, sacrifice and humanitarianism of Sikhism been so adequately expressed. The experience of Sikhism, implicit of course, in its teaching, is given here superb expression by a writer who lived it each moment of his life.

It is hoped that Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike will study these volumes as a great document of the human spirit, a testament of faith and a guide to the fullness and richness of a life of dedication.

In its Puran Singh Centenary Project the Punjabi University has moved commendably to include *The Spirit of the Sikh* for publication, which has already awaited publication these fifty years. But for the approach of this event and the vision to rise equal to it, these noble volumes might still have mouldered in some secluded corner.

**PATIALA**

**GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB**

## CONTENTS

### PART II, VOLUME TWO

Introduction	v
I. Guru Nanak and Divine Grace	3
II. The Guru's Word	12
III. Ultimate Knowledge is Feeling	19
IV. The Law of Karma	27
V. Conduct of Life	38
VI. Brahmanism, Buddhism and Sikhism	48
VII. Nām and Simrin	66
VIII. Selections from Bani of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Gobind Singh	76
IX. Bhai Guru Das on Sikhism, Brahmanism and Islam	93
X. A Unique Prayer of the Soul—Ardās (Prayer of the Khalsa)	123
XI. Vistas—Directions from Guru Granth	126
XII. Reality and the Gurus	138
XIII. Vision of the Beautiful	149
XIV. Society and God	161
XV. Love	170
XVI. On Death	197
XVII. War	204
XVIII. Ethics	219

XIX. Aesthetics	224
XX. At the Feet of the Lord	229
XXI. Sikh History, Religion, the Worker and Love	233
XXII. Resemblances	257
XXIII. The Sikh-Muslim School in the Punjab	261
XXIV. Sikhism and Brahmanism	269
XXV. Genius and Mere Words	273
XXVI. The Ideal of Spiritualization in Sikhism	286
XXVII. Yoga Practices	291
XXVIII. Guru Gobind Singh the New Gita Himself	303
XXIX. The Sikh People	311

## CHAPTER I

### GURU NANAK AND DIVINE GRACE

Guru Nanak rose with tumultuous moral indignation, but unperturbed himself. And he rose as a new genius of Heaven, a spontaneous Buddha-personality the Handicraft of Creation. In his mind, there is at last no *kafir*, there is none who stands in need of anything but God's mercy. The Guru says that Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh all are in great need of becoming true men. All the need of the great sympathy of that one cosmic spirit which pervades this creative Nature and Nature's creation is He in person, whom we can touch flesh to flesh, and not a dead machine that merely revolves.

Guru Nanak condemns false creeds and crooked politics and the unjust social order. He condemns the hollow scriptures and *isms* of the times; he condemns barren pieties, asceticisms, trances, sound-hearing yogas, bead-telling, namazes' fasts, and all the formal vagaries of religious and political hypocrisies. He condemns them without sparing any, for it was all darkness in the world and men.

True Islam had declined long ago—a great spiritual momentum has already produced a communal cohesion of a great mass of men who did and thought as they chose, mostly like the old conquering Aryans and Brahmins. Islam then established in India as a religion had become a tyranny. It was just lip-profession as in the case of the Hindu and the Christian. Lip-profession covers the bestiality of man in his social of political tyranny.

Guru Nanak takes up, like a giant, the long-rooted conventions of Hindu and Muslim on the palm of his hand and pitches them into the sea. Off with cant. Away with nonsense. Down with lies.

This calmness of Guru Nanak is superhuman; this is the power of the New Presence of God revealed through him.

Luther's melodrama of burning the papal bulls is the wrath of a mere man, it is the small theatrical show of an extraordinary human power. The true power of the Infinite is never agitated like that. It never seems so extraordinary, so out of the way, so theatrical. It is the powerful calm of unfathomable depths.

Here, in the Punjab, was the wholesale destruction of all such systems in a glance, in a smile, in a presence. Down with the dead form and the evil minded social order. Down with false Islam, and false Hinduism; take to the true creeds. He filled the people with Himself.

The people forgot their past errors. Here was a man at last, their friend, their God, on whom they, like animals in distress, had been used to call in their distress and sorrow, as taught by those rare hidden nameless wanderers that came and sat under their trees with them, who were inexplicably happy and begged food at their poor doors.

God came to them suddenly from nowhere. And he was so human, yet inscrutable in his strange, wondrous miraculous "natural supernaturalness." And they were face to face with Him on whom they used to call as "*Hari, Krishna*", "*Krishna*", "*Rama*", but here was He, a man!

Great was the joy of the people. They merged all other names in Him, all scriptures in His speech. The soul of a whole people suddenly rose to its inner sovereignty. Pundits and scholars may now read the word of the Guru as their learned treatises might assist them, but to the seekers of



truth, the people, then and now it is as simple as the rising of the sun on their mud huts. It was the cure for their suffering. It is the end of their dark night. And His Word on their lips can mean only one thing—it is the Guru, His love, His Mercy, His Help. To the disciples of the Buddha of Kapilvastu, all scriptures were resumed in name Buddha. To the disciples of the Christ, the whole of human history gathered in and shone before their loving gaze in ‘Christ’. The Sikhs of the Punjab forgot all the past in the new light that flooded their hearths and homes, that illuminated them; they saw it was God’s Universe. Death is not the goal; the body of flesh and its dead rotten finalities are not the end. The people understood this one thing—call on Him when you are in difficulty, as the child calls on the mother and the Guru comes to your aid. There is He.

This is all the meaning of the Guru’s song to the people. To sing His praise, to love Him—this is essential, what else is needed?

Jesus Christ, the Buddha of Palestine, had added the Passion to the Nirvana of the Buddha of Kapilvastu, and Guru Nanak, the Apostle of Nankana, added to the *Nirvana* and Passion *the love of men, Sadh Sangat* in which there was no ‘Kafir’ and no castes. Man and his God are one. In Guru Nanak all the former prophets are fulfilled and completed.

The Name “Guru” the teacher, or the Dispeller of Darkness, “The Logos-in-body”, “The Infinite-in-person”, he passed on to his successor. He could not live without the people, the disciples. He must sing and there was his minstrel, Mardana. He must gather crowds of angels round him, he was happy seeing great congregations happy and free in that great inner love which no one can name, and no one can say he knows it not, as Goethe puts it. He added simple home life to the individual, freedom to man and made him responsible to a society of the gods. Man was made out of his inner goodness, spontaneously responsible to Love. Happily responsible to himself and not to the legislature! In the society of man, as conceived by Guru Nanak, came the resurrection of the individual as well as his sweet death.

“God harden me against myself,  
This coward with pathetic voice  
Who craves for ease and rest and joys,  
Myself arch traitor to myself.  
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,  
My clog wherever I go,  
Yet one there is can curb myself,  
Can roll the strangling load from me,  
Break off the yoke and set me free.

The soul ripens in the company of the Guru’s devotees. He has become now multitudes.

Guru Gobind Singh—in Him, Guru Nanak’s sword is unsheathed. The Buddha had stood between the doe and the huntsman, the Christ between the people and the tyrants, the rulers, the kings. It is here too the same mercy, the same compassion. The Guru tore humanity into no sects. Hindus and Muslims met round him as Disciples. The word ‘Sikh’ means learner.

And the feeling of every new Buddha exhausts the one pattern of its expression forever. With the Guru, Heaven unsheathed its sword to save the people from both religious and political oppression—the fanatic, savage oppression of the oppressors. This feeling has yet to work in spontaneous progress of man till Humanity ripens, and the visible proof of His sword being the sword of self-sacrifice, as was the Cross of the Christ, and being but the symbol of his compassion, is marked on the face of his people, these Sikhs, his disciples. Far away, separated from the Guru,

for more than two centuries, after Guru Gobind Singh's time persecuted, hunted, tortured—the Sikh, humanly speaking, has borne untold suffering. Yet here he is. When, in 1923, he was mercilessly beaten by the iron-shod, blind lathis of the police at Guru-ka-bagh, near Amritsar, beaten unconscious and felled, he again rose and went towards the “Door of the Guru”; again he was beaten unconscious, he fell and rose again with the same direction in his soul, the Sikh in him still unbeaten. There shone the light of the Guru on his face. It is a shame if we the Sikhs blame the oppressors. Blaming is the way of cowards, those gone degenerate.

In the times of Guru Gobind Singh there shone the same light on the horseback of the Khalsa. No! The Sikh did not end in the barrack-room, as says Tagore, the poet who is not intimate with the inner animal in the Sikh, the animal that lifts its dumb eyes to His Guru, his God. They certainly do not know him, who say so.

If the Guru and his disciples took up the sword, it was not with the hands of a Lenin or a Napoleon; it was rather as a Joan'd Arc or like the wives of the Inca, when caught unawares by the barbarous Spaniards. Mere cries of a blind history should not be able to hide the sun of Truth; that Guru Gobind Singh waged war is a myth.

The Sikh when beaten at Gūru kā Bagh was not alone; he was not an individual, he was like his Guru, whole multitudes; he was the people, even as today.

There were women on the roadside chanting the name of the Guru and giving their brothers the milk of affection to sip before they went onward to be beaten to death. No victor was received with greater honours, no king was ever given a more sincere welcome. This is the *Sadh Sangat* of the Guru, there is the spirit of his self-sacrifice for the people, infused forever into a whole people. And here is no Kafir in the true Sikh consciousness. If the Sikh is still ignorant of the great humanity of his Guru, if he gets small and miserable at times, and is ferocious like the lion, it is the exhibition of his own vexation, not of his Guru. All evil about him is thick darkness; but great is the spark that shines therein. It is only the spark that we should see. Darkness is everywhere in this world—a wholly unsatisfactory world—if the spark be lacking.

Guru Gobind Singh's noble feeling is as divine as of the Buddha, as passionate as of the Christ, and as intensely human as of Muhammad. And he is the Guru, the God-personality which has a myriad facets.

He did not save his sons, nor his wife or mother or father. He lived and died as one who gave his all to the people. He sacrificed the propagation of his religion too, if the people could be saved. He did not call the people to any kingdom—he called them to death, to affliction. It is the summons of the Guru that still calls the people and they die hearing his voice. This intense love of the people for him is an expression of his feeling for them, not so much of their feeling for Him.

Not that Guru Gobind Singh felt not the pangs of a man and a father; he felt as the Buddha felt when Rahula asked him for his patrimony. See Guru Gobind Singh in Lakhi jungle after Chamkaur when he asks, in the extreme poignancy of that human feeling, that someone should go and get the news of his other two Sons who had gone to Sirhind side; two were lost before his eyes in the battle of Chamkaur from where he came to Lakhi jungle. The messenger had gone; Sirhind is many miles away, and he asks them, “Has he returned, what news?” “No, Sire! not yet”, they say. “Ah! go and get on a high tree and look out; he must be coming.” Such is the father in Guru Gobind Singh. This man of keen, affectionate feeling as a man, a son, a father, a husband, gives away his all for those whom he loves so intensely—in the service of the people; and he loves the people as no one ever before him did. He tails them of his own blood, The Khalsa, the Beloved child of Guru Gobind Singh. The disciples become the children of God, of His Blood. There is the feeling of Buddha in the breast of Guru Gobind Singh, the same renunciation, the same Nirvana,

the same goodwill for all living beings, and yet it no more wears the “Yellow Robe”. A wholly new shape, long tresses knotted on the crown of his head, a soldier’s dress, a sword by the side, and riding on his bay charger. He liberates the slaves of centuries from the horrors of persecution and the idle speculation of metaphysics; puts the strength of gods into their muscles, makes them men, and they despise death and go riding like kings, these very grass-cutters, howers of wood and drawers of water. And he asks soldiers to die to make human misery less and human happiness more. In vain does his disciple breathe who does not live and die for His great divine pain for his fellow beings.

Religion was purified by the compassion of the Thathagata, the Buddha; human love by the mercy of Jesus Christ, and it is the Guru’s great love of the people that is now filling all the noble tendencies of mankind. Now, is needed the compassion of the Buddha, the love of Jesus the Christ. Now appears in addition the divine brotherhood of Sadh Sangat of the Guru, and all the previous Buddhas fulfilled in the Guru. All religions must take it up, all political creeds must bow down to it, science must work for it, so hath the Guru willed. Modern politics has been purified by the Guru and social reconstruction ushered in, which shall be now the universal tendency of the whole future struggle of man. The law of love is to dominate all spheres of human activity. False justification of human tyranny as the law of Karma is to be extinguished by the Law of forgiveness.

The Buddha of Nankana and Anandpore has risen and He is to be fulfilled in every individual man as the past Buddhas and in one Universal Human Society in a lyrical divine fellowship with its face towards God<sup>1</sup>. In Guru Nanak, in ‘Guru Gobind Singh the true democracy of humanity is to be realized. All previous tiger-history is to be put away and all nations have to open their bibles and read the sweetness of human love in their soul and heart, their speech and service. Such is the new future of man, to be realized in the Guru’s City of Joy.<sup>2</sup>

Footnotes:

1.This is a rendering of Gurumukh.

- Editor.

2.Anandpore (Anandpur) is the City of Joy.

- Editor.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GURU'S WORD

The design of the Guru's word is as infinite and inscrutable and as simple as Creation. As the different prophets saw Creation and wondered and uttered Truth as they felt, so is the Guru's word. All the past prophets and poets of the future come singing. Mere word-weavers, mere music-makers are of no consequence here: they are still paddling in very shallow waters on the shore. It is as the Guru's golden temple of the human soul; no one is absent, all live in it, cannot but live in it or are driven to live in it. It is the Song of Life. As man cannot escape the sky and the earth, so in the Guru's word, man cannot but come and find himself. It is as personal as everyone's own self, and as impersonal as the sky and the earth. As creation defies all analysis, so the Guru's word is more open to the eye of feeling in its original beauty than to the carping gaze of a surface-dwelling intellect.

As in creation, so in the Guru's word, there resound that inaudible, unheard Music of the soul, (the Anhat, the unstruck) whose gamut is the infinite. Herein come the waves of the infinite and strike on the heart of man and man becomes the whole universe in his soul and breaks at the feet of the infinite in a liquid beauty of feeling for Him. Anhat is not that ghostly siren that shuts up the mind in its sweet lullaby; it is the silent storm of the spirit that makes man infinite, by wrapping him in the wonder of this great poetic creation. The music of the finite growing forever infinite and of the infinite forever becoming finite is in its full glory in the Guru and His word or soul. The form is but the fashioning of the confused surroundings of the infinite into the exquisite model of beauty.

What is the little desire of man beating in his blood, but the form of music with the potentiality of the very Infinite? The little desire of man is, in fact, infinite as long as it is unfulfilled. It is a note of music quivering with the lyrical sweetness of a divine hymn. It is like a tune oozing out of the strings of a zither singing with an infinite plaintiveness, but dead as soon as it is all-sung. The very lust of man is virtue if it has in it the largeness of the infinite: so is his anger and greed. All these much condemned things which are of soul, are beautiful when they are flowing lilt, full of a longing for the beauty of the infinite. But they are all the dark coloured vices of man, if finitised. His virtue is also but vice if it has not the music of the Infinite singing through it. On the other hand, the music of the infinite loses all its harmony if the finite is not of the divine desire of the infinite. God is most beautiful when He is the perfected man before us, or a little child. When in the shape of man He flits before us as a flash of Beauty. He keeps us forever fascinated in a sweet memory of that happy union with Himself. In this music of the Guru both the finite form and the infinite formless are the inner meanings and sweetness of each other.

Without this music of the soul, man but lives a worm's life on this earth. Like the ant he is carrying his own grain in his mouth for himself; each one for himself, and all his social self-sacrifices consist of a dead insect-habit, stopping on the way and talking to another ant coming from the opposite direction and both going their own way, holding secure in their mouths their separate grain, to be hoarded by each for the rainy day. This is his social civilisation. He cannot, so, far, see that all his treasures must be heaped up for all and all must have an equal morsel of the gathered grain. The selfishness of the insect is in the human laws of property and the old insect-selfishness is in all his social institutions.

The Hindu looks at the hungry and the poor and the naked and brings in religious justifications with what he calls karma; this mere physical inequality he sees with an unmoved heart—others dying for what he holds for himself. Go and see the ryots of Hindu Bihar, the Hindu Ganges valley, Hindu

Bengal, where the rich Hindus have not allowed a middle class to exist. Abject squalor, hunger and nakedness, dirt and filth lies about the most magnificent palaces of the Hindu zamindars.

Karma: The most shameful justification for this insect-like cruelty ever manufactured is this doctrine of Karma. While as a thing of the soul and memory it may have some relevant meaning, it is madness when applied to the cruelties of a brother born of the same mother, with the same sorrows and joys. Human ignorance rising and condemning the anger, greed, and lust of man as the causes of his physical suffering, calling it Karma, the very things which are the ingredients of his soul, shows how the music of the infinite has been buried dead in the archives of these ethics and theological concepts. The beauty of the lotus is beautiful in the face of the human child that can more articulately say "I". This saying "I" by the child of man is the most beautiful speech: it is the word of God fully pronounced. But this "I" is the source of all inequalities and physical miseries on this earth. The beauty is not in eradication of it, as ethical systems say, but in making music of the infinite issue out of it. Moral death is going out of the song of the infinite and not in the possession of senses and faculties. The Guru calls upon man to be infinitely large, to be a song of the soul trembling out of the little body and thus, in the song's lilt, become infinite. No other purification is necessary. In his heart, there is a little flame with which all the woods of life can be set on fire: that is love. The Guru does not condemn man; the poet condemns not the flower nor the bee. The Guru only calls upon him to be dignified, at least as much as the flower on the twig swaying freely with the winds that blow, singing the song of its fragrance in spite of everything.

And the Guru says, thus it is to be with God, with the infinite also. It is immoral for God, for the infinite, not to swing in itself with the music of the beauty of form and name. Shapelessness of the infinite is to us of no interest whatever; it is His myriad-form that constitutes His purity to us. All divinity is in the beauty of the Name and form. The infinite becomes personal only in form and name. The infinite flings out of itself the infinity of forms and they rise and sink in Him, like a myriad summers and springs of leaves and flowers out of the perennial roots of life. Such is the song of creation: the Infinite forever becoming the plurality of finites and the finites forever rising to be blossoms on the tender twigs reaching to the musical unity of the infinite. This rhythm heard by the poet and the prophet is endlessly fascinating and is forever new, as the soul of man is new to himself: or as Spring, that is more beautiful in its endless repetition and recurrence on this earth of ours.

And the Guru says that all the distress of man is in having cheated himself of the presence of this great soul-music. The song of life clings pathetically to evanescent forms, as the floods of music flow out of the throat of a skylark. The form is a miserable little thing, a mere dream, an illusion, but, alas, says the Guru, without it there is no song, no soul no God. We cannot name Him without this Akār-The manifested form.

So if you ask the Guru—Is man God? he makes no parley with you, only he sings on. If you ask him, where is God then, he leaves it to you to answer and to make any adjustments with the Eternal that might suit you and make you free. Freedom is your first concern as soon as you have seen the Guru, as also after having seen Him. The Hindu tries to break open the universe, and dissolve his body into the infinite, thinks of form and name as an affliction, and grown sick of Creation which he thinks is an Upadhi – an unnecessary disturbance in the Infinite, the Creation is a mere illusion of the sense, and as such must be somehow got rid of, and thinks that liberation is in not-being "this". He is logical, but he cheats himself of truth by his too sure logic. Such a person sickens at human limitations and at the helplessness in which some tyrant of a creator has thrown him, and all his life, he thinks, is the helpless struggle of a prisoner to get out of a prison. The Guru has no patience with this inanity. According to the Guru, man is a song, free forever, according to scale, in its own restraint, in its own limitation. The freedom is in the infinity of his own sweetness, in his own spontaneous rapture. The Guru dives deep into the music of the beauty of creation, of

the bliss of the touch of the beloved in all formed shapes, into the joy of simple being, and he in his own person and soul hushes all impertinent enquiries.

Accordingly, the Guru's ethics are based not on any mundane laws of morality based on the doctrines of Karma and Dharma, but on the harmony of the great unstruck music of life. He says, "These foolish hypocrisies of Karma and Dharma that man is undergoing in the name of religion shall be robbed at death's door by death's minions, and beyond death nothing but his own soul shall go with him". Those who sing are holy, are good, their souls shall shine bright there. Feeling is the knowledge of God. Burnt be all the scriptures of man, burnt be all fanes and all holiness if man has not sung His name. The Name is beautiful, the Name is form, the Name is God; nothing else. All freedom is in this soul-song of the name of the infinite. The whole creation and the universe, to the Guru is the presence of that Great Songster who sings out in the heart-throbs of every being. There come to him rare thrills of the soul of Love seated everywhere. The Guru feels soothed by the very thorns. The touch of stones to him is as warm as the bosom of a mother to the babe. The flesh of creation touching the Guru's flesh at all points and at all hours of day and night is an unending and unutterable joy to Guru Nanak. It is constant union with the Beloved in constant separation. All is love, all is beauty, all is joy, all is song. When it is so ravishing, when the soul like the bee slumbers wrapped in the petals of that Lotus, it is folly to talk of aught else. Here is life, here is freedom, hush. Sleep thou Soul of man: in the infinite rapture of being.

### CHAPTER III

#### ULTIMATE KNOWLEDGE IS FEELING

Whether the great questions end in solutions, the very questioner remains an eternal mystery, not only for this plane of existence but for all planes. The questions of one plane are undoubtedly the answers in the next world, but the mystery must needs prevail in the Nowhere also and in the No-time too, and the real question is always being answered. Hence the real nature of knowledge is more in the way of feeling than any intellectual comprehension. And also that the end of the quest of Knowable is disgust, fatigue, despair, an ignorance-complex, still more involved; old difficulties removed and still greater difficulties to be faced. The quest of the Unknowable ends in vague, confused feeling of some kinship with the mystery, some wonder of the secret of Him that made all this or is all this. True knowledge, therefore, pertains to the domain of the Unknowable Reality and not to the spheres of what is Knowable by the application of the “transmuted”, “biologically converted food”—“intellect”—which is all the reason man has. The misery of intellectual knowledge is the limit it sets to itself. It kills dashing us against a stone wall. And in subjectivity true knowledge all is as felt not known, yet the felt is truly for ever un-understood. The thought-out and experimentally proved is certainly miserable inanity.

Guru Nanak starts his Emancipation of Man by feeling. Man is not emancipated if his house is lighted by the electric arc lamp, but when he lights the darkness of his house with a tiny earthen oil lamp to welcome Him as a guest with the whole ardour of his soul.

“I have naught but a bare floor,  
And an earthen lamp to welcome  
My beloved.  
Will he come and grace me?”

Man is not emancipated as surrounded by all the knowledge that his sciences or religions can give him, but he is free when he embraces God as man and gathers the miserable to his bosom and makes them happy with the joy of being. In sweet humanity are the windows ajar for him to fly out to the infinite rapture of freedom; the cages of religion might be of black iron and the cages of scientific knowledge of gold. But knowledge as given by both is his bondage, not freedom. Man is not a single being, but multitudes. The karma of multitudes is his Karma, he is not an isolated individual in this respect. He is a moral and mental complex. Karma is the sense of violation of the beauty of one's complex. Karma in the sense of violation of the beauty of one's memory and personality is admitted, but the effects are universal, not merely local. There can be no peace for man as long as his life is founded on analytical finalities or the knowledge gained by the reason which is visibly working merely on the surface of his mind. This rational knowledge of himself and things about him is surface-knowledge and an untrue one. It cannot but lead to a more complex ignorance of each other; more discord, and a wholly shallow, uprooted life ending in mere sensual pleasures, leading to more and more misery of soul.

The modern search into the working of the subliminal mind will give clues of far greater significance to man for husbanding his own powers, than what so far the surface-mind has given by way of scientific knowledge. Modern civilisation with its body-pleasures, its worldly tendency, has proved beyond doubt that man taken out of grand old fables and myths and superstitions, comes nowhere near any truer knowledge of himself. If anything, with all his knowledge he is more ignorant. All this is sickness. Sympathy is of the nature of true knowledge. Human sincerity whose live heart is stupefied by the bitterness of experience of the so-called facts of life of sordid realism, and is thereby turned cold and calculating by the intellectual reasoning over life, is automatically changed quantitatively into hypocrisy. Who said every man is a scoundrel after forty? Sincerity and knowledge and love and sympathy are all one and fully and wholly

comprehended in the word "Feeling". The freshness of feeling,, that spring-like flow of soul into a kind of poetic living, Sikhism.

Man without love is a corpse. Here is the Guru, a veritable man, who insists on the dignity of manhood. He thus starts a movement for the emancipation of man which is fundamentally based on the knowledge which is of the domain of feeling, rather than of the domain of religion so-called or science. The law of love announced by the Guru denies the truth of the knowledge of things and of God, as obtained by a drunken little reason of the surface mind, by the mere blind understanding that can partially consider just the body of creation, not its soul, whether this understanding of the body of creation may come of experience and experiment or of religious superstition and beliefs. True knowledge belongs to the flash of inspiration, of feeling, and so those who live in feeling live truth. The whole life of the knowers is a lie, though they speak no lies, as thy say.

Friendship thus ends in enmity; human relationship in human despair. The modern businessman has to start with the formula, I am told, that all men are thieves till someone proves the contrary. Possibly, also the political administrator. Fie on such inhuman attitudes! It is better to be deceived a thousand times, than to cheat. Sadness must prevail in a society such as this. Selfishness must dominate and lead to an utterly mechanical social life in which man must be reduced to miserable little screws in this huge ignoble machinery. Society of tigers! Religious superstition in the hands of fools and fanatics, like all other things, led to the inquisition and burning of a few thousands martyrs, but it did always lead in some limited spheres and ways to a social reconstruction in which there were depths and feelings however crude, a fellowship which had all the time the odour of the goodness of some living man. But the scientific knowledge of facts and analysis of everything has uprooted man out of that mysterious feeling for the Infinite. Where are the roots of man now? All is machinery, man too. There is one mechanical law that pervades and man and woman are founded on the unity of an universal mechanical law and are rooted no deeper than in their own bodies and blood. Pleasure however obtained is all the soul. "The rose that once blows forever dies". The wine-cup is the only form of Reality. Philosophers like Carlyle have a truer ring in their voice than those who see that a little astronomy can cure human blindness.

The Guru builds the Temple of God for man in the heart of man, and he starts in it the music of the personal beauty of man, in the sweet harmony of which, the coarse and vulgar noise of facts and its auctioneer-owner, the carping intellect, must be hushed in infinite reverence to Truth.

The whole of Sikh history is that great music of the human soul which rings with the holiness of "I am Thine, I am Thine" —a whole adoration of God of Guru Nanak. We do not know whom Guru Nanak so loved, and who is the Guru's Beloved, but we know the Guru made the whole sky a salver, and the stars, little pearls embedded in the salver, the sun and moon the oil-lamps of the idol-worshippers, and with it he worshipped his beloved.<sup>1</sup> It is to Him that he sang "I am Thine" and went on weighing the whole world of matter and substance away.<sup>2</sup> The Guru knows him, not we. "Winds and waters and fires sing Him", says the Guru. The leaves of the forest murmur to the Guru, His name.

We really do not know the Guru's Beloved, but Guru Nanak appeals not to us as preacher about Him: preaching of one's Beloved is not in the lyrical nature of the Guru. He reminds us of the sweetness of our own soul-hymn—"I am Thine", which resounds in our souls and without which in one form or another, in one particular fraction of it or another, life is impossible. "I am Thine" is the soul-sound and as such more fascinating than the soul itself. The harp reaches its full significance in the song infinite that tremblingly issues from it. The human soul is in its song, in "I am Thine", and in this mute song of love, is its highest significance. We can realise the state of the song in which the Guru lived when we find the little human child crying to its mother. "I am Thine!" "I am Thine!" or when a lover cries to a woman, "I am Thine!" "I am Thine!"



Some might exist like “snakes breathing empty air”<sup>3</sup> in the misery of selfish, sensual, self-aggrandisement of a miserable kind. Sick men might live like tigers, but no one can live in the simple beauty of life and the joy of being, without singing in some way the Guru’s song, “I am Thine!” “I am Thine!” Be it to God or to man, matters little.

As the Guru’s teachings on Nam and Simrin define a sweet human attitude of the soul in an infinite posture of lyrical growth upward, Godward, so does his song of “I am Thine”. “I am Thine” is a state of feeling, of true knowledge—forever making man truly sincere and noble and true to his origin and self and soul. The man forever dedicated is without a vain breath and a vain step, living and vibrating with feeling, in it and for it. This is Truth, says the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh is the climax of this song of Guru Nanak. His whole soul blazes in a red song of life’s freedom and he is in prayer when a thousand shining edges of his sabres glisten in the sun. When the Guru calls to that kind of death, war itself is a song of “I am Thine!” “I am Thine!” in a higher and intenser pitch of feeling. Like Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh refined away all that was He and His, even all thought of spreading the thought of Guru Nanak to emancipate man. All was concentrated in the blazing song of “I am Thine,” “I am Thine”. Even the great song itself may rise or not in the poor breasts of his disciples that now have remained behind as scattered, persecuted, labouring people; but the earth shall be rent, and suddenly like the spring bursts of flowers on the dark bones of wonder-smitten trees. The Guru’s song of human emancipation will burst forth from every heart and the world will know and sing the anthem—“I am Thine!” “I am Thine!” of the great Guru Nanak. The higher the tops of human life of this earth will toss up in air, the deeper will the roots strike into the unknowable Infinite. And feeling, beautiful, sweet lyrical, incessant, like a silver fountain bubbling with joy of being, the pure humanity of feeling shall be the Guru’s humanity of the future, melting away for ever into the infinite—the Guru’s *Sat Sri Akal, Nirankar*.

Helping the poor and the helpless is true Christianity. The truer emancipation is through Nam and Simrin and Song of “I am Thine!”. “I am Thine!” of Guru Nanak: certainly a truer and nobler religion than that of rattling all one’s life the grandiloquent but empty rhetoric of the scriptures of the whole human race, and concentrating on theoretical universalities and unities of the supposed Law of Love. The flower of love rises out of every pore of the body, the freed fragrance is liberated like music out of the trembling harp. Man in his sweet, human selfishness is to burst forth into the presence of great Love as beauty universal. Difficult is this path, but the inspiration of Love makes it a royal road. And there is a passage for love to the heart of all creation. Bound to its own roots and glowing on its own bush, man is to be universal in his radiation of a life of sweetness and sacrifice. The fountain bubbling in his heart, the stremblets of Nām choring their music through his soul, bliss oozing out of his pores, a delectable giver-personality, like the snow-turbaned mountain—one who fascinates all his environment by the magnet concealed in his soul—such is the Sikh disciple and such the glorious humanity that the ten Gurus invoke in those heaven-high poems they composed.

Footnotes:

1. Refers to the hymn in Dhanasari: Gaganmai thal. - Editor.
2. Reference to Guru Nanak’s performance of duty as *modi* at Sultanpur when he kept uttering Tera, Tera. - Editor.
3. An echo of Gurubani. - Editor.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAW OF KARMA

The horrors that the Aryan conquerors perpetrated in India, the wanton injury they caused to men and animals, the brutality of human beasts led to one of the noblest moral revolts of man against those enormities. Religion was so made as to sanction the sacrifice of dumb animals to please the blood-thirsty gods, and it still continues in certain quarters. The Kali-worshipping Hindus of Bengal and the Allah-worshipping Muslims of India (the latter following the old Jewish traditions) persist still in thinking animal sacrifice a religious virtue. Such codes are still preached to minister to such forms of fanaticism. The light of mercy is not let into their hearts. To blast these excrescences from the body politic of man, the Buddha promulgated the Law of Karma, and ever since it has become the theme of universal discussion and acceptance. It has been fused into the poetry, religion and art of many nations. Language has coined innumerable proverbs: literature has contrived a thousand stories to publish it broadcast and to ingrain it into human consciousness. Today no sermon is complete without an exposition of the Law of Karma. Christ broke the fetters of Karma for many a soul; and Guru Nanak says that in the protection of the saviour, the Gurmukh, Karma no more injures man. Both the Guru and Christ point out, there liberation is by Heaven's Grace and at the feet of the favoured ones the wheel of Karma lies shattered. And so does Buddha promise deliverance to those who through good Karma have attained to the beatitude of Nirvana. The Prophet Muhammed, as pointed out by Carlyle, pictures this great law in his Heaven and Hell.

Today this Law of Karma seems to be the only rational basis of ethics; it is the Ether in which the moral thought of man works. It is the foundation of right moral conduct: It is the soul of the ethical advancement of humanity.

The Sakyamuni's Law of Karma is evocative and creative of a sweet Humanity. It is like the scaling of high mountains for reaching the heaven of beauty. And when the Guru speaks of Karma he specifies thereby the noble endeavour of man to reach his ripe Divinity. It is the spontaneous growth of life upward.

But the Law of Karma as devised by the subtle Brahmin is a justification more or less of the caste system, and condemns men to the various social and political positions in the society of man according to the Karma done in the past birth. It is not a moral path of life, but a theory explaining the human misery whether physical or moral, as due to one's Karma. It is supposed a man with a hoard of gold is superior to a man of intellect, as the former has done better Karma than the latter. Shameful ignorance of true moral values: And if one holds that the man of intellect is superior to a man of wealth, say a king, then it is the former who has done better Karma. It supposes that the variety in creation is due to an evil difference, and the difference is due to Karma. Some are happy, some miserable, and this difference is due to Karma. But if the notions of happiness and misery are changed into subjective perceptions which must vary as one takes them, or all is taken as a noble plan of creation, then the difference must vanish and the Hindu Law of Karma falls to the ground. This Hindu conception of the Law of Karma as a theory to explain imagined differences makes all ethical longings of man meaningless, utterly meaningless. There can be no significance of human charity, noble fellowship, feelings of brotherhood; for it is not these qualities of man that can interfere with the determination of man's fate by his own Karma. If a brother's love cannot relieve the social and political position of man in society, if human aid cannot relieve the suffering of man, the high motive of all moral action is taken away. Men suffer not only from their own ignorance, but from the ignorance of others; not only from their own selfishness, but more from the selfishness

of others who know no better. But if others knew better how to treat man, to help him, to befriend him, much of the misery of his position in life said to be caused by his Karma would not be there. King and peasant would meet in high human culture as brothers, as equals, and most of the rankling misery of difference in position would vanish. Most of my misery is caused not by my Karma, but by the Karma of others and so the doctrine of Karma applied to the individual is meaningless. If the State were differently constituted today, man's lot would be different. It is the immemorial injustice of ages that cheats the tiller of the soil of his hard labour and makes some few comfortable. This would not be tolerated for a moment in a truly cultured society How terrible is the picture in "The man with the hoe":

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans,  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages in his face,  
And on his back the burden of the world.  
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
A thing that grieves not, and that never hopes,  
Stolid and stunned; a brother to the ox?  
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?  
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?  
Whose breath blow out the light within this brain?  
Is this the thing Lord God made and gave  
To have dominion over sea and land.  
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power:  
To feel the passion of eternity?  
Is this the dream He dreamt who shaped the suns  
And pillared the blue firmament with light?  
Down all the stretch of hell to its last gulf  
There is no shape more terrible than this—  
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—  
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—  
More fraught with menace to the universe.  
What gulfs between him and the seraphim.  
Slave of the wheel of labour, what to him  
Are Plato, and the swing of the Pleiades?  
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,  
The rift of the dawn, the reddening of the rose?  
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look,  
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop:  
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,  
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,  
Cries protest to the Judges of the world,  
A protest that is also prophecy,  
O Masters, lords, rulers in all lands,  
Is this the handiwork you give to God—  
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?  
How will you ever straighten up this shape?  
Touch it again with immortality;  
Give back the upward looking and the light;  
Rebuild in it the music and the dream,

Make right the immemorial infamies,  
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?  
O masters, lords, rulers in all lands,  
How will the future reckon with this man?  
How answer his brute question in that hour  
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?  
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—  
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—  
When the dumb terror shall reply to God,  
After the silence of the centuries?

(Markham)

I must say at once that the Brahmanical idea of the Law of Karma which, unlike that of Lord Buddha's is not a starting of new *now* by the action of good Karma on man and society is not a path but only a philosophy, not a positive basis for the progress of human charity and growth of the culture of man-worship; it is the most mischievous argument for the justification of human tyranny ever manufactured by well-fed brains. The social and political state of man is open to improvement if men take to the path of charity and noble unselfishness. The present misery of inequality of human status of every man as an individual and a soul is not due to humanity, but to ignorant carnality; and it is nothing but a heinous lie, by way of pretentious philosophy, to perpetuate human injustice a day longer than the entire humanization of man. So far, civilizations have come and gone, religions have toiled, ethical systems have been tried but all in vain, as says Guru Gobind Singh; for man is not freed in the rapture of the Name of the Infinite. And till this entire humanization of man has been effected, till man lives as God on earth as He is in Heaven by "Naming Him", the Lord Buddha's Law of Karma is as powerful as the law of the land for thieves and cut-throats.

But that the Law of Karma is the determinator of differences which in reality are not differences, or of misery which in reality is not misery, the differences of faculties which in reality are more complementary than differential in creation, is, in a way, trying to accelerate the motion of the earth of a flea-bite on one's own back. Astronomically, what are the actions of a gnat on a hair of a donkey in relation to the motion of the earth and sun in the scheme of things, that they merit any notice beyond the pain caused to the donkey?

There are considerations which point to the utter irresponsibility of the ignorant, blind—folded man, who is as hopeless as an atom thrown in space, at the mercy of a thousand cosmic forces over which he has not the slightest control.

No one man's Karma, in such a universal storm of events, a storm of compelling, overpowering emotions and volitions can have any meaning, far less imposition of any responsibility in him. Even if I started as an I, now-born in the line of a thousand ancestries for centuries, of a million parents that have gone before me, there is nothing of the original 'I' in me now due to hereditary modifications over which I had no control. It is true to say that I am the result of the Karma of a million men rather than of myself. A thousand murders, and a million brutalities have gathered in my blood for which, before man and God, I am not responsible. As a physical being or as a moral being I confess I am not myself. At no time are men knowers of their own destinies, so it is impossible to fix up an illusionary me for reward or punishment. Except as a helper in the universal moral progress of man, the Law of Karma as an arbiter of my fate as an individual has little meaning beyond my social existence as a unit of a progressive society where one link of the chain does help make a chain, but in itself makes no chain. I am the new third born at every turn of the old two. And how can I be responsible for what I do when immemorial insanities and injustices have been infused into me from ages?

In Guru Granth, though the Law of Karma is pointed out as the-Law of good men, yet the human personality is better dealt with as His handicraft in creation rather than as a doer. Man is not the doer of any consequence; he is the expression of His will, goes whither He leads, does as He directs. And here it is that the acceptance and the denial of the Law of Karma by Guru Nanak is understood and reconciled in human social practice in this life and in the absolute beauty of creation and the absolute wisdom of the great Creator, *Kartar*, beyond it. In subjective sensations of beauty there can be no vicious difference: all difference is in the desire for its ignorance, as the Buddha says, is at the basis of all suffering. On the moral human side in the highest state of life there is no difference, no sorrow, no pain; all is the glory of His will, the charm of His soul, the beauty of His presence, the action of His compassion, where all is one, all differences and explanations thereof are things pertaining to carnality and its imperfections. And all is going on to make man perfect to build an image of God out of the shapeless clay.

In Guru Granth, we find at places very strong urges. Rise, O men, and charge again and again and strike for goodness: beware of the Law of Karma: what ye shall sow that alone shall ye reap. And at other places it is written, ye have gained those heights of Nirvana where no more the Law of Karma can touch you.

Some say the religion of the Gurus is as Buddhism in their repeated emphasis on Karma, while others declare it is near Christ's in entire acceptance of Grace which alone liberates man from the thralldom of ignorance. But it is clear as daylight that the Law of Karma as enunciated by the Lord Buddha is the law of the very being of the Guru's disciples. They cannot breathe without it. They must be good at the bayonet's point. In the Guru Khalsa State there can be no other Law but be good, do good, think good, live good. For goodness is the fragrance of the life of the spirit; mercy, charity, love, helping fellow beings, feeling miserable at the misery of others, washing the solid are the natural emanations of the life of the truly cultured man who is the embodiment of God on earth. Sympathy, omniscient sympathy, is the state of the life of the true disciples. The law of Karma has however, no absolute meanings determinator, for it is as true and only so far true as, in the lower social and political groups of man, yet not truly civilised and humanised, are the penal laws made by the ignorant and brutish legislators of the past and the so far still inhumane race of man.

When man will rise and wake and live, fully awakened to the truth and beauty of Creation and the spirit of the Creator pervading it, and when everyone shall realize the state of perpetual divine intoxication in which the Guru lived whether on horseback, fighting, or kissing his child, or pouring floods of life on the people, all laws shall cease to control him and so also the Law of Karma. Till then the Law of Karma shall for all regenerated men carry with it for them both the living and mechanical compulsion of the moral penal code. And by the Law of Karma and its inner terrors, it would be impossible for the striving man to think he hates me or I hate him; for hatred, he knows, never ceases by hatred, hatred ceases by love. The Law of Karma that the Guru includes in his hymns is thus finally identical with the Law of Love. It is easier there for man to be a thief than for him to think of stealing, easier to kill than to think of murder. The Law of Karma is the path of human ascent, though not any definite explanation of his descent. So it is in the Guru's House.

The Law of Karma is temperamental, local; it does not pertain to the soul, for the soul is but like a rainbow effect of being in the Creation made of shining pencil of His Rays of Love. The Soul is the immortal touch of the Creator's will. It is radiation of beauty of the Creator. In the infinite plan of creation there is no prison for the soul, no Karma binds, there is no difference in beauty, all is beautiful.

The Guru flowers up again and again into paeans of praise for the glory that he sees everywhere; it ravishes the Guru, it almost kills him with pleasure of his beholding Him, the Ineffable person of Nature. The trembling of colours in the sky is to the Guru the blushes of the cheek of that Beloved. Enough a single flash of Him to die in faith,—He is—for a whole little life

of man, and the Guru names life of man, and the Guru names Him and finds an exquisite solace of soul No greater knowledge of that creator he needs. And who needs more? Enough to live in that great ravishing glory of seeing Him drinking His presence everywhere. From the Guru's hands fall away all books. He utters "Glory! Glory!" and makes all those who name Him happy. In the shelter of the Guru is salvation from all mind-born ghosts self-created, the Law of Karma included. From him who has found the favour of the Guru, all Karma is ended. Ended for him is the sorrow of straying. It is Nirvana where no more the wheel of Karma revolves.

## CHAPTER V

### CONDUCT OF LIFE

The Guru's teaching is a beautiful contradiction in the infinite amplitude of his address to man, engrossed as man is in the myriad pursuits of senses. Under an infinite variety of temperaments and choices and compulsions, internal and external environment, man in essence is not visible; it is a mere stomach, or arm, or brain or sex-centre. Flesh, flesh, or excitement of sex or sense, or brain; as Bullah Shah of the Punjab puts it, "It is clay, it is clay, dancing, dancing, reeling, reeling. The bridegroom of clay, the bride of clay, the clothes, clay, clay". All pursuits good or bad, moral as so called, or immoral for the matter of that, or non-moral (unless there is elevation of higher planes of life come to the consciousness of man, and that inspirational elevation comes everywhere) causes, under certain conditions of physical or mental excesses whether of sinful pleasure of meritorious pain, the sickness of soul; different pursuits cause their own characteristic kind of suffocation, even death of the soul.

Men die, despite sensual pleasures and religious vigils. A few rare ones like Omar<sup>1</sup> get life-sparks by a dose of those very poisons. Shiva lives by drinking the poison churned out of the waters of the sea.

True life, to the Guru, is of the soul, not of the body, nor of the mind, which acts when well-fed. The cerebral activity of man is as the light in the tail of the glow-worm, mostly physiological. Will is the expression of the mind, thought of the body, and imagination of the soul. Inspired imagination is the builder of the soul, the raiments of a hundred-coloured light of the soul of imagination are made. The body that the soul wears is made of lightning-flashes. Imagination is the secret of all spiritual progress of man. In fact, it is the substance of all moral and material wealth of man.

What is all this but an imagination of reality? We are made of such stuff as dreams are made on. "From the soul's point of view, therefore, the conduct of life is to be of a wondrously beautiful rotation of moods and of the wondrous variety of the colour of its blossoming. To a true man, if he be man straight and sincere, the Guru addresses himself in different ways. He does not believe for all in one kind of conduct that truly makes a man, the inner moral and spiritual mode which is the real self-manifestation of man, as distinguished from the general restraint of himself for the social goodness and solidarity as a good citizen, as a good and natural servant of society, the inner man with that inner conduct by which a man is what he is to himself and to his God, what he is driven to be, what he is; the inner man with that personal inner quality which stands by him when he is in himself alone what he is in sleep, in soul, in the inner solitudes. To a man of true renunciation and sublime sadness, the Guru might say, better go and be tempted by the beauty of a woman-form, go and marry and live in the self-felicity that is the share of those who live such lives so nobly self-restrained and self-balanced. And at the same time, the Guru tells a selfish, hardened, dried up, all-body-and-no-soul householder—give up all, renounce the sense of property that is killing you, has killed you; give up all, nothing shall accompany you beyond death, O fool, in all this nothing is yours, if you have not gathered your own soul. If you have a home, attune it to the music of the soul and the verities of the infinitude of the soul; distributing all, tormenting no one, breaking no one's heart, all hearts are of God, the Beloved;<sup>2</sup> feed all, clothe all and be a giver, not a beggar. All hoarders of wealth, and worldly wisdom are the real murderers of the human soul. Less cruel are those who kill the bodies. You kill your soul, how great is your sin." You want to live in this world. If you have to do so, live as the lotus lives in the pond, as the waterfowls live on the lake.<sup>3</sup> Stupor induced by gluttony, sensual pursuits of fleshly pleasures, excitement of nerves and the dusty weary, stolid, humdrum routine as of the blindfolded oil-mill bullock going round and round in an unrelieved meaningless routine is certainly worse than death in your stupid home life of false courtesies, false shows of mosques and temples; then the death of the still more stupid anchorite in the

hapless wildness of his lonely and vain strivings after the divine. Stunning oneself to a nervous calm by starving, or by vigil, or by any other kind of anaesthetizing physiological processes is foolish beyond measure, when the spiritual *peace comes of itself*<sup>4</sup> in the infinite and natural growth of the life of the soul. And stunning one's finer susceptibilities and impressionability by hard and breathless pursuits of Maya is still worse.

To the king, the Guru says, Be poor. To the poor, Be kings. To those who live to eat, fast, starve; and to those who eat to live he says: Your direction of soul is right, feed yourselves well. Speech to the silent, and silence to the babblers. Avoid the disintegration of your soul occurring by whatever means. To those who are naturally so made as to conserve their energy physical or mental, the Guru says there is true godly rapture for such in a kind of self-spending. To those who are mad after self-spending, the Guru says, the soul becomes but a body, a corpse by burning away its divine substance like that. To those who die of the vow of non—violence and non-injury from within, the Guru says, Go and live on horse-back, sword in hand, and go fighting like the divine knights of God, defending the defenceless, sheltering the shelterless. Foolish is this death in the little hole of a “vow” and a “principle” like a seal: Rise and be heroic on this earth there is nothing so true as to be applicable to all states of life here. Sometimes by injuring, that merit is yours, which is never, yours by the vow of non-injury, for your perfection is yet to be, it is not yours here. To the imperfect, many are the ways that lead to perfection, and therefore no one can say which? And to the perfect, all is becoming. Go, fool of a non-injuring God, your own highest ideal and dream whatever it might be and of whatever kind it might be, will meet you there in the glitter of arms that save the neck of those who were to be tortured to death today, and God will come and kiss you when you lie bleeding there yonder on the battlefield, dying for defending even vainly, fruitlessly the outraged humanity.

If vegetarianism has gone beyond its due horizon of a living feeling and a divine nobleness of love and pity, you might be cured by a dish of meat. To those who are all kitchen, vegetables do cause a self-restraint which shows the path to the ideal humanity, thinking how inhuman it is to kill birds and animals for the man animal.

Society for the solitary is as vitalising as the *drawing-within* of the whole soul and sinking in one's own unknown depths. Prayers and chants suffocate the inmates of temples, while a mere idle loafing on a sunlit bed of white sands in the loneliness of the hill stream banks and idle listening of its meaningless song, is an effective and healing prayer for one who is sickened by the smoke of Society.

Men die of the excess of love and of faithfulness to a particular set of objects of life and love. A courtesan ean, at times, therefore, rise to an intensity of soul and spiritual eminence, apparently through her daring confessions of sin, as no ascetic can by his dull, dead routine of good deeds.

The Guru says all else of this and that kind pertains to the accidental and side-growths, or side stuntings of man. Only one thing is needful, that the tree of the human soul should shoot upward along its soul-axis aright, from roots springing in the dark, and raising its tops proudly aloft in the Infinite sunshine of life. There is a subtle balance of soul to which the Guru points out and in that balance everything pertaining to the growth of man, both virtue and vice as dead-weight get proper adjustments. The true moral tendency does not feed the side growths and side stuntings; it identifies itself only with the direction of the soul, with the axis of Creation.

As in the atom of matter, so in the human soul, the balance is life, in which it is weighed. It is an infinite variety of configuration of the so-called positive and negative particles of human qualities of thought and action, of will and imagination, and is in a similar balance of the positive and negative charges. The reality of life in the soul is an inconceivable balance of the imaginary streams of human “doings” forever rushing forward and backward, forever emitting life-forms, making and marking soul-centres.



All what you think and do, your religions, vows and vigils, and principles and systems, and sciences and arts, and schemes of moral uplift of man, aye your pleasures and plunders of freedom of men, women and races — all have a meaning and no meaning at all.

Be full of reverence *here*, for nothing is known, nothing can be known when the “whence” and the “whither” shall forever be unknown. And the “why” of this all shall remain for ever unanswered.

Hence, be full of Awe for this “awful un-nameable”. All is God and all is not God. The variety of human life of body and mind is comprehended, resumed and justified in the life of the soul as the Guru contemplates. On account of this there seems such a constant variation of affirmations in the music of the Guru Granth. In those cosmic storms of song, little consistencies of the worldly kind are as dried leaves being blown hither and thither as of no consequence. These words have no meaning, theories lose all significance only as music rings and makes the soul. God is made manifest by the Guru. His hymns have got one sole significance of shaping man into God.

In his mind, no aspect of human activity is lost, or rendered meaningless by prejudicial emphasis on any one particular aspect of such things and their everunentangled skein, as it usually is lost in the hands of immature inventors of some stray thoughts or overzealous experimentalists who for the first time experience any fraction of the soul-life. Little children are prone to emphasize their own views of creation and truth, for such is the final expression of a child-soul. In the Father, however, all children live with their quivering agility of limbs and with all their mischiefs of thought and action, and all are harmonised and reconciled in the infinite largeness of the Father’s heart. Their activities then have as meaning Creation, and Man finds the meaning of all his systems in the Guru’s soul. The Guru is full of the praise of him who kindles the stars by the light of His heart, from where the Guru sees and says, All is Good. God is good; all is beautiful, for He the Creator is beautiful. The enquiry after the First Cause ceases only in finding the Person of God in the bewildering expanse of the Impersonal, so fascinating grows the universe and this Creation that the very mind dies in the soul—enchancing wonder and in the song of His Praise. The person is discovered as the Beloved, and all complaints and sorrows are cured. The sky finds its beautiful meaning only when it forms the background of a million stars to shine. So call Him what you may, the Unknowable Great Soul of all finds its meaning, here at least under the circumstances and conditions in which life finds itself on this earth, in the souls burning with that very truth, in the shining good men of God. Where to find Him? The Guru says, He is in the shape and voice of the noble and good men. “God lives in the voice of His Saints”.

The true culture of man is of the soul, not of the mind, of feeling, not of thought. Thought is but a physical outgrowth under certain conditions of life and does always die of its own top-heaviness and impossibilities. Feeling is Soul: Thought is but a golden ass put on the throne for certain ceremonial purposes. In proportion as the culture of feeling predominates, man founds a society based on the peace of charity and love and innate nobleness of the human soul, where the individual spontaneously loses his outgrowth of selfishness in the service of his loving brothers and sisters, all, all verily so. In proportion, the culture of thought predominates, the social solidarity vanishes; selfishness poisons man, the soul degenerates into the mere body, a corpse. All religions, arts and literatures get out of their mystic depths of truth and reality, and lose also all the mystic heights of Grace and Beauty of the Formed Human soul. Surely it is not the degeneration of popes and prelates, the mere scum that a soulful society could part aside by the wave of its arm, that led to the Reformation in Europe and the downfall of Roman Christianity, but also the so-called Renaissance in literature in which men like Shakespears became to the mind of the people, greater than teachers of religion. The continuation of the human degradation from the wholeness of the soul, even after the degraded popes had successfully been dethroned, by small men like Luther, is due to an inordinate preference by the people thus induced, for intellectual excitement, for an inordinate restlessness of the senses as

the end all and be-all of life. This culture of thought as started and developed in Europe, has its own beautiful aspects of invention and discovery, but it has ruined the Home of Man, its electric light is insisting like a conqueror to light the tombs. Man's city of life has come to be a dead, mechanical, bizarre scene.

The Guru says, Come out O man! again, imbued with that old deep feeling for the mystery of Creation; for the Presence of the person of God in Nature. Renounce all running after the mirage of sense-desires. Filled with the melodies of soul, like an unfolded blossom on the tree of Truth, live in the spontaneous Rapture of noble kindness of everything. Every step of yours forthwith becomes a miracle, every breath a new discovery of enhancement of love. In short, be souls here, more than bodies. This is all the conduct of life. Look upto Him, the Guru is the Loving Father. He is merciful. All is well if you live looking upto Him. Fear and yet fear not. Nothing is demanded of you but a change of direction. Face the sun and go on. All shadows shall come following, aye flying behind you. Give up the mad chase of shadows, it is insanity.

Footnotes:

1. Omar Khayyam, the hedonist poet is meant. - Editor.
2. Echo of a sloka of Farid in the holy Granth - Editor.
3. Echoes of Gurubani. - Editor.
4. This is the path of Sahj commended in the Sikh faith. - Editor.

## CHAPTER VI

### BRAHMANISM, BUDDHISM AND SIKHISM

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

You: O Pundits! read the Vedas and study them. But the reading of the Vedas is a speculative occupation,

Without understanding this,  
Everyone shall be disgraced.

(Guru Nanak)

This Cosmos is a vision of God.  
It is the shape of God.  
I see it as God.

(Guru Amar Das)

This moving Cosmos is His Mansions.  
He lives in it

(Guru Nanak)<sup>1</sup>

A morning glory at my window satisfies me more  
that the metaphysics of Book.

(Walt Whitman)

We in India, so far, have failed to understand the new spirit of the Sikh. The India, whether anyone was Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh, he could not rise above himself to see that the gospel of Guru Nanak has in it suggestions for the future spiritual progress of man rather than a vague interpretation of the old Brahmanical thought as all the Eastern commentators and historians make it out be. This sickening process of the slow deadening of the message of Guru Nanak from within and without by taking the language in which it is written back to the times of the Upanishads and Vedas and finding nothing new in it beyond a Hindi or Punjabi equivalent of the Sanskrit scriptures, has been going on too long inspite of Bhai Guru Das's commentary, inspite of the evidence of Sikh history. How refreshing is the utterance of Davy Cunningham, the Western student of Sikh history and religion who, though he had not the critical interpretive genius of a Carlyle or a Goethe, yet was able to penetrate into the unique spirit of the Guru's mind through the evidence of Sikh history and the spirit of the Sikh people with whom he came in contact. And this evidence of a historian indicates that the song of the Gurus needs altogether a new environment to be properly understood in all its potential bearing. Says Mr. Cunningham:

“Thus in the beginning of the 16th century, the Hindu mind was no longer stagnant or retrogressive, it had been leavened with Mohammedanism and changed and quickened for a new development. Ramananda and Gorakh had preached religious equality and Chetan<sup>2</sup> had repeated that faith levelled caste. Kabir had denounced images and appealed to the people in their own tongue and Vullabha had taught that effectual devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. But these good and noble men appeared to have been so impressed with the nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man's social conditions to be unworthy of thought. They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priest-craft or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They formed pious associations of contented quietists, or they gave themselves upto contemplation of the futurity in the hope of approaching bliss rather than called upon their fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel and to arise a new people freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germ

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 and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political right as in religious hopes.”

Such is the verdict of an unbiased student of Sikh history and it is the original reflection of a modern mind on the historical materials before him. Cunningham had not the requisite atmosphere for a close study of Guru Granth, yet he goes back from the type of life created by the songs of the Gurus to the song itself and is driven to the only possible conclusion, that Guru Nanak could not have meant by the language he used what that language meant to the people before he came. Before he came, that language meant no freedom; with him and after him, its meaning becomes the freedom of the people and the divine simplicity of life. An altogether new appreciation of the Spirit of Truth comes to the people which never before him came to any group of Hindus. The Buddhists, too, though originally austere and pure, had to suffer from the reaction of their monastery and cloister life which, however spiritual to start with, became only a mental coercion of the senses later on and more so under the process of adulteration of pure Buddhism by the polytheistic Brahmanism, carried out by the Buddhist converts from Brahmanism. Cunningham thinks that Nanak adopts the Brahmanical philosophy, but in the popular sense and “by way of illustration only.” He says:

“But it would be idle to suppose that he (Guru Nanak) speculated upon being or upon the material world after the manner of Plato or Vyas. . . . .

“Thus Nanak extricated his followers from the accumulated errors of ages and enjoined upon them the devotion of thought and excellence of conduct as the first of duties. He left them, erect and free, unbiased in mind and unfettered by rules to become an increasing body of truthful worshippers.

“He left the progress of the people to the operation of time. . . His care was rather to prevent the followers contracting into a sect, and his comprehensive principles narrowing into monastic distinctions. This he effected by excluding his son, a meditative and perhaps a bigoted ascetic, from the ministry when he himself should be no more. . .”

Referring to the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan, who sang out the whole of *Guru Granth* to the people, Cunningham says:

“Arjan was perhaps the first who clearly understood the wide import of the teachings of Nanak and who perceived how applicable they were to every state of life and to every condition of society.”

About Guru Gobind Singh he says:

“Gobind was killed in 1708, at Nunderh on the banks of Godawari. He was in his forty-eighth year,<sup>3</sup> and if it be thought by any that his absence belied the promise of his whole life, it should be remembered that *The hand of man* is but tardy servant of the brain and follows with its leaden diligence. The fiery steps of Fancy that when Mohomet was a fugitive from Mecca, the lance of an Arab might have changed the history of the world and that the death of the Achilles of poetry, had left Troy untaken. The land of the Myrmidons destined to a short life and immortal glory, met an end almost as base as that which he dreaded when struggling with Simois and Scamander, and the heroic Richard of Eastern and Western fame whose soul was bent upon the deliverance of Jerusalem, veiled his face in shame and sorrow that God’s Holy city should be left in the possession of the infidels. He would not behold that which he could not redeem and he descended from the mount to retire to captivity and a premature grave. Success is thus not always the measure of greatness. The last apostle of the Sikhs did not live to see his own ends accomplished, but he effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty,

although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak. Gobind saw what was yet vital and he resumed it with promethean fire. A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people and the impress of Gobind has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames. The features and external form of a whole people have been modified and a Sikh chief is not more distinguishable by his stately person and free and manly bearing than a Minister of his faith is by a lofty thoughtfulness of look which marks the fervour of his soul and his persuasion of the near presence of Divinity. Notwithstanding these changes, it has been usual to regard the Sikhs as essentially Hindu, and they doubtless are in language and everyday customs, for Gobind Singh did not fetter his disciples with political systems or codes of municipal laws, yet in religious faith and worldly aspirations, they are wholly different from the other Indians and they are bound together by a community of inward sentiment and of outward object unknown elsewhere. But the misapprehension need not surprise the public nor condemn old scholars when it is remembered that the learned of Greek and Rome misunderstood the speech of those humble men who obtained new life by baptism. Tacitus and Suetonius regarded the early Christians as a mere Jewish sect — they failed to perceive the fundamental difference and to appreciate the latent energy and real excellence of that doctrine, which has added dignity and purity to modern civilization.”

To one who is merely an academic student of the evolution of human religious thought, both Christianity and Islam are of the Semitic culture, and Buddhism and Sikhism are of the Hindu culture. As space is related to the beauty of architecture, so is Hindu culture related to Buddhism and Sikhism. The latter cannot escape out of the skin in which they were born.

The Hindu culture is admirably summed up by Woodroffe:

“India has taught that the Universe is, in its ultimate ground, spirit; that what is material is the expression of the Eternal spirit in time and space; that Man is essentially either that self-same spirit or a part of, or akin to, it; that the universe is governed by a just law which is the very nature of its true expression; that all life is sacred. Morality is the Law of Humanity which is the master of its destiny and reaps only what it has sown; that the universe has a moral purpose and the social structure must be so ordered as to subserve it.”

And one cannot help agreeing with his critic Jameson that “as an exposition of part at least though not the most important part of Christian thought this might be accepted, with few changes and it is simply grotesque to put it forward as though it were an achievement of Indian thought alone.

In fact, all differentiations and exclusive right of honours to the Hindu or to any race for racial culture are grotesque. So many centuries have gone by and one knows not how many interfusions of culture have taken place, that the day is far advanced to claim any exclusive honour or credit.

From the standpoint of true culture of human fellowship, all cultures are one. All true culture, at all times, in all climes and in all races must be one. East and west are one, except in regions where the cultural sympathy is lacking on both sides. Culturally all humanity is one; certain outstanding features of Hindu and other cultures are now universally acknowledged and these ideals have been dissolved in the blood of man. To proclaim priority for any one of them is intellectual snobbery.

Efforts are made to identify Buddhism with Brahmanism, popularly known as Hinduism; but they are academic efforts only. The word ‘Hindu Culture’ has no meaning beyond an infinite space to hold myriad systems of thought, each in its own place having an infinite freedom to be where it is. It has the indifference or toleration of dead space. One cannot renounce what one truly and really loves to have; one renounces only those things which, by some means or other, through some

disgust of soul or mind, have come to mean little to him who renounces. In seeming toleration the Hindu is most intolerant when his pet ideas are actually interfered with as in the case of Buddhism, and he finds his very being endangered by better ones. He acknowledges truth only if no one disturbs him. He does not concede the right of Brahminism to any other. The low castes are always low, even if they think and act superior to the Brahmin. Hinduism was once intolerant to Buddhism; it is now intolerant to Sikhism because it threatens to change Hinduism vitally. Buddhism, though happening to be of Hindu culture, is independent of it. The very fact that the Brahmins resented Buddhism becoming a state religion in India and drove it out, shows that it was an essential departure from the Hindu practice of religion and philosophy as the Brahmins taught it, and its levelling influence was deeply resented. Brahmins like Shankaracharya never could accept it as superior to the Brahminical faith which is essentially polytheistic, aristocratic and dualistic in spite of the grand Upanishadic philosophy of unity and universal Peace. It is an eternally caste-breeding organism whose life-breath is worship of Lingas, images, anthropomorphic gods and goddesses, resulting in time-honoured hypocrisy and exclusiveness.

The sentiments from the recent writings of that ardent Buddhism revivalist Angarika Dharmapala would indicate what the Buddhists think of Brahminism. The Buddha when leaving this world expressed the desire that his followers should visit the four sites associated with his birth, the attainment of *Sambodhi*, the preaching of the first sermon and his final passing away. For 1,500 years the Buddhists of India obeyed his word, and they erected magnificent *viharas* in the places consecrated by His presence. The Great Emperor Asoka built the *Viharas* and set up stone columns at each of the four places and later monarchs embellished the sites by adding more *viharas*. Then came the Brahminical revival and the democratic Dharma of the Lord . suffered and Buddhism had to take a back seat in the political arena. Then came the excommunication of the millions of backward people in accordance with Brahminical Laws; hence the class of untouchables. The India that gave light to the Asiatic world, henceforward receded and the democratic spirit vanished from the hearts of the people and caste distinctions appeared, and the religion of loving kindness and universal brotherhood slowly disappeared from the land made sacred by the Buddha's love and there was hatred in the land because of the oppression of the lower classes by the Brahmin priesthood. Then came the invasion of the Arabs and India fell because of its caste differences. The low castes by the millions accepted the religion of the conqueror, and the victorious Arabs began forcibly to convert the high-caste Indians and the remnants of Buddhists went over to Islam after their *viharas* were destroyed and the half-Brahminical Bhikkus were massacred at the holy sites.

And again further on Angarika Dtiarmaphala says:

“Mr Har Dyal's suggestion was anticipated by me in 1891, but we could not get land to build the college near Buddha Gaya as the land was the property of the Saivite sanyasis. The Hindus recognize the Lord Buddha as the 9th Avatar of Vishnu, but they belong to the sect of Vaishnavas, while the Mahant in a Saivite, utterly opposed to the religion of Buddha Bhagavan.”

“The Hindus can allow the Muslims and Christians to do what they like in India, but the Buddhists being a small minority are not tolerated. So great is the spirit of animosity which they have towards the Buddhists.”

“Hinduism has allowed 65 millions of human beings to live like pigs and they are called untouchables. The Muslims and the Christians are converting the untouchables, but Brahminical orthodoxy is fighting tooth and nail to keep the untouchables in a state of degradation. Hinduism makes men of the non-Brahmin caste to stagnate and degenerate. The Brahmins dislike the Chinese, Tibetans and Burmese, because they eat meat, while the Muslims and Christians kill daily throughout India thousands of cows and calves and no protest is raised.”

“The fact of the matter is that the Brahmins dislike Buddhism because it preaches a spiritual democracy and softens the hearts of the savages to become gentle and tolerant.”

“For a thousand years Brahminism has gradually declined and Muslims are gaining converts from the Hindu fold. There is no hope for the masses under Brahminical supremacy. Pushyamitra, the Commander-in Chief of the Buddhist Emperor, turned traitor and assassinated his Master and began persecuting the Buddhists. The Brahmins think that the Asvamedha sacrifice is a greater achievement than the spiritualization of millions of people. Brahminism is only for the Brahmins, not for the Sudras. It is an oligarchy of priestly bureaucrats trampling down the rights of the people who do not belong to their caste. Brahminism crushed the spirit of the lower classes and the Muslim invaders subjugated India. The religion of Lord Buddha is absolutely needed if India is to become again great. The backbone of the nation is broken by the priestly class.”

“A thousand mahants can never make the Buddhists forget the holy site where the Prince Siddhartha became enlightened. The Christians were disallowed to own their holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and after 700 years they have secured the holy site. The Mahant and the British Government may make every effort to prevent the Buddhists from taking possession of their own holy shrine, but the time may come when they will see the righteousness of the claim of the Buddhists. Till then the Buddhists shall wait with patience.”

It is interesting to see how the intellectuality of the Hinduism passes off Buddhism as Hinduism, and the Brahmins the high priests tolerate even Vam Marg in India, but not sublime Buddhism. For the latter to co-exist with squalor of Brahminism is impossible; it is better gone wholly out of India.

Mr Okakura in his *Ideals of the East*, took for his thesis “Asia is One” and brought out the underlying unity of Asiatic Art Culture. To him, “Islam is Confucianism on horseback, sword in hand”. The splendour of Buddhistic art and thought of the Asoka period, however, is renamed in his otherwise excellent book as Hinduism, to save the pre-Buddhistic Hindu thought from its avowed polytheism, and the dualism of its practical life which till now is and was always unreconciled with the soothingly peaceful speculation of the Upanishads. Brahminism suffers from a “sublime” disregard of humanity. For a few individuals to run away with some kind of secret Truth to some kind of perfection which never was permitted to react on the masses is rank betrayal of man. Even today there is no visible relation between a Brahminical genius and the general run of humanity in India. It is a few towering geniuses that look down upon the burnt grass of a scorched moor. Vivekananda talks to a set of followers unmatched to his intellect. Tagore is a solitary Hindu poet and Gandhi is hopelessly above his own men, though essentially Gandhi is the greater Hindu Poet than Tagore, even without any poems, right in his naked flesh, from the Sikh point of view. In her brilliant introduction to Okakura’s book *Ideals of the East*, Sister Nivedita, who had become fond of the Hindu people on account of her infinite kind of personal sympathy with the views of the late Swami Vivekananda and who had heard from him that “Buddhism and Hinduism are one”, identifies Buddhism with Hinduism. Says Sister Nivedita:

“It is not, therefore, very surprising that India divorced from spontaneity by a thousand years of oppression, should have lost her place in the world of the joy and the beauty of labour. But it is very reassuring to be told by a competent authority that here also, as in religion during the era of Asoka, she evidently led the whole East, impressing her thought and taste upon the innumerable Chinese pilgrims who visited her Universities and Cave-temples and by their means influencing the development of sculpture, painting and architecture in China itself and through China in Japan.”

Exactly how these waves of Indian spirituality have worked to inspire nations it has been his object throughout the following pages (of *ideals of the East*) to show us. First understanding the conditions upon which they had to work, the race of Yamoto in Japan, the wonderful ethical genius of Northern China and the rich imaginativeness of the South, we watch the entrance of the stream of Buddhism, as it proceeds to overflow and unite the whole. We follow it here, as the first touch of the dream of a universal faith gives rise to cosmic conceptions in Science and the Roshana Buddha

in art. We watch it again as it boils up into intense Pantheism, the emotionalism of the Fujiwara and the heroic manliness of the Kambura.

For he holds that the great historic spectacle with which the world is necessarily familiar, of Buddhism pouring into China across the passes of Himalayas and by the sea-route through the Straits, that movement which probably commenced under Asoka and became tangible in China itself, at the time of Nagarjuna in the 2nd century A. D. was no isolated event. Rather was it representative of those conditions under which alone can Asia live and flourish. The thing we call Buddhism cannot in itself have been a defined and formulated creed with shut boundaries and clearly demarcated heresies, capable of giving birth to a Holy office of its own. Rather must we regard it as the name given to the vast synthesis known as Hinduism when received by a foreign consciousness. For Mr Okakura in dealing with the subject of Japanese art in the ninth century, makes it abundantly clear that the whole mythology of the East and not merely the personal doctrine of the Buddha was the subject of interchange. Not the Buddhizing, but the Indianizing of the Mongolian mind was the process actually at work, much as if Christianity should receive in some strange land the name of Franciscanism from its first Missionaries.

At another place she<sup>4</sup> asks what is that thing which expresses itself through Japanese art as a whole. And she replies, "It is the culture of continental Asia that converges upon Japan and finds full living expression in her art. And this Asiatic culture is inwardly divisible as it influences Chinese learning and Indian Religion. Not a few drawings of plum blossoms, but the mighty conception of the Dragon, not buds of flowers, but the worship of death; not a trifling realism, however beautiful, but a grand interpretation of the grandest theme within the reach of the human mind — the longing desire of Buddhahood to save others and not itself—these are the true burdens of Japanese art."

These powerful sentiments do credit to the ideal devotion of Sister Nivedita to the personality and thought of her master. But when this spirit of admiration for Hindu culture, culminating in the Roshana Buddha, is smuggled into a book of discrimination as a blind appreciation of caste-ridden, narrow-minded Brahminism that had all along effectively excluded the masses from the glorious secrets of Brahma Vidya or the methods by which Buddhahood could be possibly realized, for centuries, then one must adhere to the right descriptions of such great things.

Evidently Brahminism is a practice in which its highest aspects benefit a few individuals and crushes the masses. And if it ever did aught, it tightened the chains on their hands and feet. While Buddhism spurned Brahminism with a lofty disdain and freed the masses from the bondage of unreal devas and gods. God and metaphysical talk, that had become too idle and unreal, the Lord Buddha refused to answer impertinent questions about God and such things. He maintained a majestic silence, lest talking should lead the people back to their hair-splitting logic and dreary metaphysical discussion of Brahminical theology.

Shankara is certainly a great philosopher, but as a leader of the people, he threw the whole race back in the tangled mess of Vedic ritual, metaphysical speculation, and unrealities of a religious fancy, while Buddhist Japan and China have still in them the vital purity and the mass movement of the Buddha. And their labour is full of artistic beauty and honest application. These nations as a whole were elevated by Buddhism. They still love life and art and the pleasure and pains of life. Their sins, too, are light. They are lovers of liberty.<sup>5</sup> In the following paragraph from Fielding Hall's *The Soul of the People* how clear it is that Buddhism has gone into the soul of the Burmans. Unlike Brahminism, there might not be a word on their tongue but a living silence holds the soul. Nowhere has Brahminism so filtered into the life of the people; to *Vashitha* it is one thing, to the despised *pariah* quite another.

But do not suppose the Burmese are idle. Such a nation of workers was never known. Every man works, every woman works, every child works. Life is not an easy thing but very hard, and there is a great deal of work to be done. There is not an idle man or woman in all Burma. The



class of those who live on other men's labour is unknown. I do not think the Burman would care for such a life, for a certain amount of work is good, he knows. A little work he likes; a good deal of work he does, because he is obliged often to do so to earn even the little he requires. And that is the end. He is a free man, never a slave to other men, nor to himself.

As such I do not think they will ever make what we call a great nation. The Burmese will never try to be conquerors of other peoples either with the sword, with trade or with religion. They will never have a great will in the management of the workers. They do not care to interfere with other people; never believe interference can do other than harm to both sides.

They will never be very rich, very powerful, very advanced in Science, perhaps not even in Art though I am not sure about that. But however that may be, the Burman in his own idea always will be the greatest nation in the world, because it is the happiest.

The chief difference between Brahminism and this reactive Buddhism is that one is metaphysical, and speculative, while the other is artistic, realistic, imaginative, rapturous, truly idealistic. One is individualistic, the other is socially-oriented. Before Buddhism, never has Vedic Gyan (Jnan) or Upanishdic wisdom acted on any considerable mass of humanity. The individuals who were informed of it retired to the forests, oppressed by social dualism. Peace the few undoubtedly did attain, but they breathed it alone in the Himalayan caves. They sought refuge in a tiny spark of life, self-burning like a little lamp in the cave of the heart. Whether they realised the fancied absorption in the Infinite Brahman or not, they cut themselves off from society and tried to be dead to it. Buddhism saved nations. Its sentiments and thoughts moved continents. The renaissance of Art followed in its wake. The Buddha gave the first living democratic impulse that levelled caste and racial distinctions. Life was freed and allowed to grow with its face turned upward to the great example and Person of the Buddha. The Lord Buddha became their God, their Refuge. And man wanted to look at no higher God. No higher God was necessary. Japan, Burma, Ceylon and China flourished without the metaphysical concepts of Brahminism. This personal passion for the Buddha possessed millions and this was the secret of their freedom from the unreal devas of the Brahmin's mythological fancy. Buddhism is personal and its ecstasy, too, is the emanation of the personal. Brahminism is impersonal and its ecstasy a dream of the abstracted mind.

#### Footnotes:

1. In these excerpts it is not always possible to trace the precise original from Gurubani, but the views expressed are authentic. The one from Guru Amar Das is from *Anand*. - Editor.
2. That is, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal. - Editor.
3. The common tradition is forty-second. - Editor.
4. Sister Nivedita is implied. - Editor.
5. These judgements pertain to the twenties. - Editor.

## CHAPTER VII

### NAM AND SIMRIN

As 'Guru Prasad' is a whole phenomenon with the Guru, so Nam and Simrin in the Guru's house are laws of being. The embodied God has a name and form. Nothing can be without Him. Word is also form. Sound too is of the Form.

These words— Nām and Simrin— are the cornerstone of the gospel of the Bhaktas of medieval India. If the words mean exactly what they mean to them, then Sikhism, in this respect, would turn out to be nothing but a kind of mystic reverie which, in its ecstasy, seeks absorption into the Infinite, as a peace that shuts itself up and shrivels up evidently in all ordinary practice to a mere dead concept of-*all* is *one*. It would mean a modification of the doctrines of Yoga, which are condemned by all the Guru with great vehemence. The Nām mutterers roam by the thousand in yellow robes on the banks of the Jumna and Ganga even now to no purpose. Such peace ceases to be creative. Creativeness being the only critical test which differentiates living peace from dead peace, the Gurus did not mean by Nām and Simrin what these would signify in Brahminism. With the Guru Nām and Simrin is assuredly no attempt to die in the formless unknown Infinite, but is the peopling of the void with a thousand forms. It is living in a paradise of Beauties that subsist in name and form, by the Name.

"Whose Name"? "Simrin"-Remembrance of what? The *Japa* of *Pranava* or the repetition of *OM* as in the Upanishads has been the process of *Simrin*. The ancient Simrin has been the applied form of the Brahminical philosophy of the Absolute, and its end was a mental abstraction which ended in a so-called *Brahmgyani* on whom all the opposites had lost their effects and who was not embodied in action, an embodiment of uncreative peace of being. The springs of all action, thought and feelings, were allowed to get rusted and a state of bliss was reached which looked at life in a dazed way. This led the Hindu to look at his navel, expecting the whole universe to spring from there. It has not yet sprung. Thousands of names for God have been invented by the Hindus. And the process was in full activity before and after Guru Nanak. It had sunk deep into all the theological expositions of the Brahminical lore, that the mere muttering of names brings merit. The indolent people, having had no strength left in them for noble action, took to reciting names and called this meaningless muttering the end of all religious effort. In a few well-directed cases, it might have led to the development of some concentration, but as the whole process was alloyed with fundamental spiritual inanity, the results so far have been throughout wholly disastrous. Bhai Guru Das traces the kindship of ages upto the Sikh period of the true process of Nām and Simrin, but he says that its full development and true significance came with Guru Nanak. In different ages only the few attained to the intensive spirituality of Nām. Nām is inspiration, not a mechanical sadhana, or effort to be what one cannot be without inspiration. Yoga and its process may yield some strange accomplishment, but accomplishments, however, extraordinary, do not belong to the essential beauty of the soul.

It goes without saying that Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru should most of all, understand the message of Guru Nanak. If anyone could rightly interpret the language of Guru Granth, it was he. And undeniably so, because it was he, who after what interpretation of it he gave to the disciples called upon the latter to worship Guru Granth as his successor. He enthroned the Word, he crowned the song of the Guru as the King Eternal of the Khalsa. There is a soul in the great anthems of man, and the song of the Guru is he himself speaking to us, disciples, from a myriad throats. Simrin is more or less a spiritual planetary system of divine remembrance and

inspiration. Jesus Christ cannot die, nor Mary, nor Mary Magdalene. They are living much more than they could live here. To feel that those spiritual words of theirs are at our back, they watch us, and to have a spontaneous memory of them as we have of absent friends and relatives is Nām and Simrin in the spiritual sense, in which Guru Nanak uses these words. To have the consciousness of the Heavens at our back is to live in Nām.

In these dark regions of the spirit-world live all the desire-bound beings, who do not let man go safe beyond. In these dark regions are the slums of those who have violated their purity. Here is man, self-fettered by his own violent deeds which have been suicidal to him in as much as they created a “curvature” in his soul, and he cannot be freed even after physical death. Unless he has by luck been introduced to the higher regions of absolute freedom, man rots in his own desires for centuries, in his own violent crimes, in his own filth and mire of sin that sticks to him even beyond death. A Sikh saint of Simrin (whom I have seen) told us one day that there are souls that by their own heaviness sink into the earth; others live on its surface. Very few rise up and they are caught by their earthly relatives who died before them—mothers and fathers and uncles and grandfathers. Then there are men-gurus, the mental hypnotists and charlatans who crushed men here by their mental power. Many a soul like that of “Lilith” flutters like birds caught in the noose of someone’s mental powers. Many souls are rotting in the eternal prisons of unilluminated dungeons of the minds of those occults, divines, those who passed as great saviours of men, by the excitement of their intellect here on earth. Both masters and disciples are fettered to each other. And there are innumerable soul-worlds where many such live. The Yogis who make on earth tremendous efforts to be something extraordinary, live eternal in their own little cocoons. They have no peace, they have no power. After death, they come to know that their best religions and best efforts were their undoing. They become prisoners of the ego.

Higher, still higher; far, far away (to use this relative language of ours) are the regions of freedom where the Guru lives, where the Ten Gurus as Ten solar systems still shine. . And men who love them as their personal friends, as fathers, as guides, as gods, whatever the subjective relation one might find suitable for self-culture, provided the feeling is real and sincere, are but earning themselves a passage to that great kingdom of freedom-love, joy and song after death, aye before death. This spontaneous relationship with the great is Nām and Simrin of the Guru; it is inspiration of attachment to those stars. With a similar madness and inspiration as came once to the dreamy, The Maid of Orleans who actually heard voices of angles, without the spiritual gift of the prophet Muhammad, without the visionary poetic sensibility of Dante, without the intensity of an Hanuman or a Prahalad, without the majesty and glory of a Chaitanya’s emotion for Krishna, with which he throw away the idol of Krishna from the Hindu sanctuary and sat himself in the place of the stone—idol; without the devotion of a St. Theresa and without the full resolution to charge and scale the higher heights with the will of Napoleon, it is idle to think of the cosmic process of Nām and Simrin of Guru Nanak. It is unimaginable by uninspired beings. It cannot be a wearisome superstition to the uninitiated. Without this cosmic Guru-parshad religion, inspite of centuries of practice is tyranny.

Here is how Guru Gobind Singh interprets Guru Nanak in living words of clashing steel, shining sabres, and in the elevated fearless accents of the Universal dissolution of all that had gone before. Guru Gobind Singh starts a new world, a new Earth, a new Sky in his great epics. He wants the lightning to speak for him, the thunder to give his message, the floods of his soul to destroy all and to create again and afresh the natural manhood and equally supernatural natural Godhood of man.

Now there must be nothing in Guru Granth which should contradict this spirit of the Tenth Guru. And if the traditional meaning of words as the learned scholars both Hindu and Sikh, gave them is given, there is hardly what brings out this spirit. To bring in archaic, dead, non-creative

Sanskrit philosophy and Brahminical mythology and all the cock and bull stories as to how the universe was made, what is God, what is the beginning and end of this world, is assuredly to go against the undefinable spirit of music that sublimates life out of dead matter, the music which pervades the Guru's Song. The music of that Great Symphony of this Guru cannot be philosophized over in any particular manner.

Thus the Guru's "Nām" is the supernaturally natural function of a poetical genius who though in body, is at all times of day and night under the influence of the higher Soul-worlds of Freedom. It is a state of mind akin to the rapturous state of Swedenborg; it is a state of mind which came to the prophet Muhammad, it is that remembrance in which Christ remembered the "Father in Heaven" in the Son of Man. It is the state, omniscient state of a Prophet's consciousness. It is the pure subjectivity of love bursting up under the sole and invisible spiritual guidance from below the crusts of earthiness, from under the hard conditions of earthly life. The Sikh Saint of Simrin feels he is continuously and inwardly raised above the gross worlds of filth and dirt and desire and self, and he feels as light as if he had no body. The physical efforts of this state of mind are marvellous. He finds in himself, in his head above his forehead, a pool of nectar—his eyes are always pulled upward by this *continuous inebriation*. His inner and true religion is this continuous inebriation; this is His Nām and Simrin. The breezes of Heaven keep gently blowing on that inner Amritsar<sup>1</sup> of his. He is perfectly healthy when this magnetic attraction is on, but if anything happens to upset this balance, he loses power. When he is in this self-centre where so to say, the souls of the Regions of spiritual Freedom fill him with Grace, his wishes are kinetic. He can best do good to man from there. He can always do more from there than by running out of his centre and rendering physical help or mental sympathy. His altruism is of the spirit. Those who are of broken spirits, those who with all mental and physical self-expansion are despondent, are made whole by his wishes they become radiant with faith. All poets who have been so gloriously pessimistic were mental giants. They were sublimed Excitements, they had not yet realised the soul, the Nam, to which realization Guru Nanak points, without which he says life is but a process of burning.<sup>2</sup>

Mere children who are happy and innocent are greater than the poets of the earth in "spirituality" of the guru's Grace. "His devotees are in unbroken bliss" (Japuji). Ask such a one. He would not discourse on the why and wherefore, but would just reply, "I live in a state of life which is indescribable and when I live there, I feel I am in perennial contact with a world I cannot describe, and in this stream like contact I feel I am alive. Once broken from there, I feel I am dead". And he would tell you that "It cannot be taught, it cannot be described." Those whom "HE" favours, the lucky ones, get it. This is the message of Guru Granth. The discipleship is wholly of soul-consciousness. Nām and Simrin thus is this spontaneous condition of self-consciousness fully concentrated in the silvery stream of inspiration that united him with those masters who become his body and mind. He feels helpless, all is as He wills. The continuousness of his inspiration from on high takes this final form of love on earth. Spiritual character of man is the mere effect of this inflow of inspiration. It is as spontaneous and creative a surrender as of woman to man. And it has its levels of rise and fall. All living inspiration must rise and fall. Sometimes it is an undetermined melting away, melting away into the infinite. Sometimes it is as adamant as granite rocks, sometimes as bright as the sword flashing and destroying darkness. The dull academic unity of all things does not interest him; it matters little to a living man, whether the ultimate reality is one or many. The man of Nām and Simrin does not concern himself with metaphysical speculation. He thinks his brief life is cut still shorter by idle mental abstractions. This occasion of life is for learning the divine music of life; it means hard labour, it means some kind of artistic perfection.

Nām and Simrin thus become in the Guru's system, an effect of inspiration, not a speculation but a realistic attitude, towards the freedom of soul that one can find partly here, but wholly only in the life after death, realms where the Ten Gurus, their apostles and disciples now live.

It presupposes other worlds of freed life than ours which in unspatial space are right here with us. It establishes living relationships with the mighty saviours that live in that shining Unseen space and time, the Akal. It suggests a certain process of selection and sublimation at work in the swing of souls. We find the Guru saying that Nām is the Favour of God. “Some get it while fast asleep. He Himself comes, awakens them and puts the Holy Cup of Nectar to their lips, while others (who suppose themselves fully conscious of this scheme of things) get it not.”<sup>3</sup> Hence the Guru says the Gurmukh is one whose mouth is open for the reception of the nectar of the Guru.

This personality of the “Logos” embodied in flesh form is like the material yet immaterial magneto-electric point. It is the nucleus round which the play of creative processes goes on, like those in atoms and solar systems. One sees clearly in the biographies of all the Ten Gurus, that as men they themselves moved and behaved as disciples. They themselves revered the spirit of the Guru in individual, in groups of men, in song and in word. This is unique.

Like Buddhism, Sikhism is an art of living so that everyone might one day attain to Buddhahood, Guruhood, Life is conceived as artistic Action, as distinguished from the metaphysical concept of life, as something illusory that has no reality. The words Brahman (Brahm) and Para-Brahm also come in Guru Granth, but as Cunningham says, “by way of illustration only”. Similarly the names of all gods and goddesses of the Brahminical Pantheon.

In Bavan Akhari, Guru Arjan Dev Says: “This Large letter (Akhar) of Creation that we see is the pure Para Brahman.”

Simrin when accumulated, has an alchemical effect on the personality of man and even on natural objects. Acts of devotion gathered for ages and expressed in cathedrals and temples, in art and in charity make a nation glorious. Simrin, according to the Guru, is the feeling which gathers itself grain by grain and suddenly gives birth to the highest arts of celestializing nature and man.

#### Footnotes:

1. Lit. Pool of Nectar—Symbolizes the Self attuned to God. - Editor.
2. This affirmation is of Guru Arjan Dev. - Editor.
3. This is a Sloka of Guru Nanak Dev. - Editor.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SELECTIONS FROM *BANI* OF GURU ARJAN DEV AND GURU GOBIND SINGH

Guru Arjan Dev thus expresses himself on the Guru (God) in *Jaisri-Ki-Var*

“My mother, my father, my master,  
My supreme Ishvara,  
My friend, my ignorance-dispeller,  
The Beautiful One, my close Relative,  
The bounteous inspirer of Nām,  
The maintainer of my inspired state of Consciousness,  
My Paras, touching whom I have attained emancipation,  
Guru-Deva is my pilgrimage, the lake of ambrosia;  
He is the sun, bathing in whose light is pure knowledge,  
He is the beyond, the absolute mine:  
Guru-Deva is the Creator,  
He cleanses the sin-scorched consciousness and makes it whole;  
He lifts up the low and the fallen and the poor.  
The beginning-less beginning,  
And from age to age, man met him,  
And breathing His spirit of the Word was Humanity saved.  
Guru-Deva is the Sangat that I have met through His Favour,  
And in the mingling inebriation of group-holiness,  
We of the realms of ignorance and sin have  
Been ferried across the darkness of fear.”  
He again says:  
“I know not how to name that infinite, I only say “Hari”, “Hari”, Guru, “Guru”, that infinite  
for me is resumed in (Guru) Ram Das.  
He is Immeasurable, I measure Him in the Name.  
I know not what He is one like!  
Ah! I only pray, my Guru! save me,  
Tell me, who are ignorant of Him,  
Hearing whose Name a thousand Simrins have been kept.  
Those who have listened to Guru Nanak, and have beheld Him,  
Have transcended all struggles of vain birth and death on this earth!”.

### THE CHARGE OF GURU GOBIND SINGH TO THE DISCIPLES AS IN AKAL USTAT AND BICHITRA NATAK

As Guru Nanak in *Asa-ki-var*, as Guru Arjan in *Bawan Akhari* and other hymns, as Bhai Guru Das in his *Vars*, Guru Gobind Singh condemns most vehemently the spirit of false Religiosity. They drew man to the deep sincerity of simple human life and its ever-growing, ever-becoming Divinity. The spirit of false religiosity, and lip-worship as in most other religions is foreign to the Guru's mind and if his Sikhs still stick to it, it is due to the conquest of the Sikh by the Brahminical mind. Followers of several sects make a ritual of touching filth. The Guru says to them: “Pigs also

live on all kinds of filth.” There are many Bairagis and other mendicants also rub their body with ashes. To them the Guru says:

“The elephant and the donkey love to roll in dust. ”

To others who resort to the solitudes of cremation grounds, he says:

Jackals resort to places where the dead are cremated.

To those who take to living in Maths (dark caves) and those who take to vows of keeping silence.

“The oysters and worms live in the shells;  
and the deer in the forest,  
and the trees die with their  
silence unsealed by speech.”

To those who say that by leading a life of celibacy one attains to religious truth, the Guru says:

“Eunuchs are the best celibates.”

To those who do the Sadhana—self-inflicted suffering of going bare-footed for attainment:

“Monkey’s go barefooted all their life.”

“How” says the Guru, *“These fellows entangled in the charms of beautiful women, full of base desires, of anger and greed, these decayed and self-degenerated men, think of swimming across the sea of their ignorance without right knowledge?”*

To those who live only on milk-diet to be spiritual—

“All mammals live on a milk-diet.”

To those who wish for the physical impossibility of living on air, (like leaves of plants);

“Snakes are said to live on air. ”

To those who spread straw as bed, those who renounce the greed and lust for wealth;

“All cowherds live such life.”

To those who close their eyes to fix their mind on vacuity:

“The Fish-catching bird sits with his mind intent on catching fish in water.”

To those who long for powers to fly in air,

“Birds fly in the air naturally.”

To those who burrow holes in the earth to live therein and those who wish to fly in air!

“Insects live in burrowed holes,

“The sparrows fly, (without all those Sadhanas of these spirituality-mongers).”

To those who take to living exclusively on fruits—

“The Young ones of monkeys live on fruits and nuts.”

To those who can wander at will, or those who raise themselves above the laws of this physical space:

“Spirits roam after death, (dark spirits of matter-bound men.)”

To those who worship the sun and those who look up to the moon:

“The lotus blooms with the ray of the sun,  
loves the sun more than any man can;

The lily blooms with the beam of the moon”

God lives in waters they say, as the Lotus, unwetted by water;

To such the Guru says:

“The fish and the tortoise and alligators Are dwellers of waters. ”

They call Him the Lord of Gopikas, the cow-grazer; To them says the Guru:

“Milk-men are husbands of Gopikas still:  
cowherds still graze cows. ”

“Fools, Fools” —says the Guru

“The perverse fools are beating their breasts in anguish of ignorance.

They find not the depths of the secret of life,

And worship not Him by whose favour we breathe and live so divinely protected.  
The Death of the Universe, (*Vishva Kal*)  
The Death of the moving Cosmos, (*Jagat Kal*)  
And the sweet person withal who loves the poor, who favours the forlorn,  
who saves the living ones from its foes,  
The One who forever nourishes and sustains life,  
The One who is forever beyond the net of Death.  
In vain do the Yogis, the *Jatadharis* (those with matted locks)  
And the great vow-takers of self-immolation and the great celibates, for the sake of attaining to His  
*Dhyanam* go through the self-imposed suffering of the physical bodies.  
In vain do they go through *Neoli Karma*  
(Washing of the passages of human body and the intestines as the Hatha Yogis inculcate on their  
followers to practice).  
In vain they resort to water-edges;  
In vain light their sacrificial fires of Homa,  
In vain their sitting by the five fires.  
And how ridiculous other who lie with their faces buried in earth,  
In vain they wish to know the secret of Him whom neither the quest of man nor of gods could find,  
though they claim it, nor the Vedas and scriptures found beyond saying “not this” “not this.”  
In vain the theatrical posings of man for knowing His truth;  
For the peacocks dance so glamorously,  
And clouds impose upon the sky all their theatrical movings and thunderings,  
And the flashes of lightning make a hundred shapes of passing splendour.  
What man could discipline himself to a calmness sweeter and cooler than that of moonlight,  
What man could blaze brighter than the sun?  
What king could placate the world with greater majesty than Indra?  
What man could surpass Shiva in the practice of penances and Sadhanas and asceticism?  
What man can excel Brahma in the study of the Vedas?  
And what man can go further than Sanat Kumar in Tapsya, or (self-mortification for attaining to the  
secret of creation. )  
I tell you these gods are all mortals, and are subject to change and death.  
And they still are the wandering watchmen of the Time-cycles through which the created world  
passes.  
I tell you, there came many Shivas here, and many are gone away from here;  
And many were the Avtaras of Rama and Krishna;  
There are thousands of Brahmas and Vishnus,  
And many Ved-Vyasa have been, many more shall come and go.  
And many Puranas and legends run their race and die and are born again.  
There are many Ashvni Kumaras, and all these gods were caught in the net of Death,  
And pirs and Prophets beyond power of telling, rose out of the dust and into dust they fell.  
The Adepts, and Yogis, the Brahmacharins, and many men of glory whose umbrella of honour  
covered miles around.  
And many who sent usurping many an empire, and cutting down many a race.  
The great sovereign like Mandhata and Dilip who counted the strength of their arms, the large-  
hearted Drona and the petty Duryodhana all disappeared in this earth.  
The whole Human history thus is still on the quest and finds Him not, nor in mental absorption, nor  
in action, nor in human pride of self-aggrandisement and self-expansion, nor in self-denial and self-  
contraction.



Those who bow down to God five times a day, to them (the Muslims) the Guru says:  
Surely, bowing down of the head or the whole body, then, is no part of devotion.

If one buries his head in dust, so does even the sick man.

When the mind of man is not right, How can he realize the Lord? These unfreed men, enslaved, forever to their desires, and full of hypocrisy and deceit.

How can they realise God of Nature, the Lord of Creation,  
Except by feeling Him?

(To those who resort to the waving of heads, and the beating of breasts for religious merit): Those who get a worm in ears wave their heads.

And men beat their breasts in sorrow of their departed friends and sons.

(To those who abandon themselves into the life of Forest and Wilderness):

“What is it? Like the sheep to go wandering and rubbing their naked backs against the rough barked trees?”

These queer fellows, slaves of desire, full of lust and anger - how can they enter paraloka (the worlds of souls beyond the door of death) when they are devoid of sincerity?

(To those who take to sitting in one posture for ages or wandering from place to place).

“What? The rocks sit in the same posture for ages. The crows and the kites wander from place to place.

*Unless they cultivate purity of feeling.*

*Unless they cultivate knowledge.*

*Unless they have the grain of faith and are receptive (of inspiration).*

*Unless they cultivate the attitude of perpetual self—surrender—How can these men think at all of Swimming across?*

It is as the Actor changes dresses, now a Jogi, then a Bairagi, then a Sannyasi, now sitting with eyes closed and backbone straightened and legs crossed, and then swinging in blind pride intoxicated by greed and lust—the slave of desires thus dances frivolously.

How can such a show-man reach Brahmloka? (the higher worlds of emancipated souls beyond death)

To those who sought merit in dying by being sawn across under the sacred saw of Benares: All is in vain, this kind of self-immolation.

To those who put a noose round their neck and sink in the Ganga.

Why? Many find a similar death, being strangled with a band by the Thugs.

All such get drowned in the mid-current of Hell.

*Fools; Fools; without calm judgment that comes from right knowledge*

How do they discuss divine *knowledge*—“(Jnanam)” without-the spontaneous and simple act of devotion.

To those who mutter names of God and tell beads or if by repeating a certain sound one wishes to capture the soundless (Shunya)

“Why? What lies in mere muttering the name of the Unnameable?”

The tiny bird Pudna also cries “*You-boo*” “*youboo*” “*tu’-hi Tu-bi*” To those who think of burning themselves alive:

Why? the suttee woman-widow burns herself-all in vain.

But hate no one—be he a clean-shaven round-headed Sanyasi, or Yogi, or Brahmanchari, or Hindu, or Muslim or Sufi.

*Recognise humanity in all.*

*All mankind is one ;*

The “Karta!”, Creator, of the Hindu, the “Karim”, the merciful of the Muslim, is one and the same.

And Razik and Rahim—all such alien words call upon the one and the same Being.

There is no difference, no otherness; the geographical limits and alienness of different languages alone imposes difference on the face of Man.

Do not be under any delusion as to the Oneness of Mankind and its longing for God, who created all.

The Dehra (Shrine of the Hindu) and the Mosque embody that same one human yearning;

The worship-forms (Puja of the Hindus and the Namaz of the Muslim) expresses that same yearning.

The Gods (devas), the Non-Godly Beings, Yakhshas, Gandharvas.

The Muslims, the Hindus seem alien to each other, due only to the differences in their claims, countries and appearances and habiliments.

The eyes of Hindus differ in no way from the eyes of the Muslim, nor the ears, nor the Structure of the human frame, nor the speech of men.

All men are constituted of the same elements— earth, air, fire and water.

Their Qurans and Puranas differ not, nor their God.

One is their shape the same God has made them all.

FROM SAYING OF GURU GOBIND SINGH  
FROM SAWAIYYAS<sup>1</sup>

He in whose heart,

The flame of life burns singing day and night the Name of One Great Being,

And he who immersed in love of that Sole Being brings home the wandering soul and gathers-in himself in love of Him;

He who thus becomes Pure and Perfect is fully convinced of Truth;

He who freed from meshes of illusion wastes not his soul even by a stray mistake in the worship of graves, sepulchres, catacombs, Maths,

(Cells of brick and mortar in which the Yogis close themselves),

And he (the liberated man) who then takes no cognisance whatever of such vain things as pilgrimages, holy bathing, austerities, formal charities, ascetic control of senses—

Know by Him to be the Khalsa and the Pure Khalsa in whose heart burns the full Light of Love day and Night.

The Khalsa is the Temple of God where

His Great Lamp of Soul burns.

Without any dimming whatever.

Of Him the Vedas know naught,

The Siddhas in Sarnadhi comprehend him not.

They feel self-defeated after all Their efforts made to comprehend Him.

The Law books and holy scriptures think of Him in many ways,

This Katha (the story of Him) is of the beginning, and of the indescribable description.

This Love I name to you gave liberation to

Dhruva and Prahlada:<sup>2</sup>

The Ganika crossed the darkness of mind by this elevated feeling, this inspired “Naming Him”.

The same inspiration of Nam, the same feeling is the very sustenance of my soul too.

Some have thought the pebble-gods to be Him and have hung them in their neck,

And some call Mahadev God;

Some say He is in the Hindu Shrine,

And others that He is in the Mosque;

Some say He is Rama, some say He is Krishna, and thus they conceive different men as incarnations of him,

Forget all these fancied follies—know the Creator to be the maker of your soul, it is the Spirit of Love.

He is beyond conquest, beyond being cast with the womb:

How can then He be Rama, who entered Kaushalya's womb?

He who has no friend or foe,

Why did He as Krishna side with Arjuna and be his Charioteer?

Know then He is the Lord-Creator,

Whose secret no one yet could have understood nor shall ever understand.

They say Krishna is the ocean of compassion.

Why did he then kill the Hunter with his arrow?

He is said to have saved all clans.

Why was his own clan then destroyed?

They say their God is pure Being beyond enwombment;

Why was Krishna then born of the womb of Devaki?

They say He has had no father nor mother;

Why did Krishna call Vasudeva his father?

Why do they prattle of the Creator thus?

He is neither Krishna nor Shiva nor Raghunatha.<sup>3</sup>

By creating a pantheon of gods like this,

Sukdev, Viyas<sup>4</sup> all have falsified the imagination of the people,

And misled the people from the love of one to the love of many,

All these creeds are false,

I find the right fulfilment of all of them in the

One Great Love, which is God.

O why worship these stone-idols?

What God or super-God is there in them?

Worship Him as God and the Super-God, by worshipping whom you win liberation in this and the next world,

By breathing whose spirit of love, by Naming whom,

Your fetters are snapped, and your chains fall.

Love of Him alone is acceptable:

All other creeds that bow barren;

These bankrupt religions have borne no fruit though ages have passed.

And the ages have been lost in these fruitless processes by these men.

How can they be successful in their quest by touching these mere pebble-gods?

Such have only lost their strength and wasted life;

And they have not obtained the promised nine treasures (Nidhans) of bliss.

“The only time available for aught is “To day” “To day”—the Present.

That they have always lost, and their purpose remains still unfulfilled; and yet they feel no shame, you have not devoted yourselves to the Lord,

O you stocks and stones! (Your spirituality has been merely mental, merely speculative).

You talk on endlessly proving this to be that, and that to be this,

And make strange rigmarales of truths,

From cyclic ages, you are going through this perverse asceticism,

Till today those gods of stone have not smiled on you,

And their stone arms though lifted to bless you, have not granted any boon yet.

When did your gods save you, and how still you go on placing your trust in them?  
Know you, know you, perverse ignorant men!  
These false creeds that you are following are mere delusions.

FROM BICHI TRA NATAK

Of the Vedis of the Punjab came Nanak the King,  
He brought blessing to his disciples,  
And he comes still to their help whenever they in distress need him.  
In this dark age, he has shown the way of righteous living.  
And showed it to all the saints and sages of this age,  
Those who followed him, were from suffering freed,  
And were washed free of sin.  
They were blessed, the tortures of hunger and disease shall never visit them,  
And death lies low at their feet.  
Nanak installed Angad as the Guru,  
This is how he proclaimed his path of *Righteousness*.  
He was renamed in the third incarnation as Amar Das,  
Being lit as torch lights torch,  
When the time came for him to bless a fourth,  
Ram Das was proclaimed as the Guru.  
Amar Das bestowed on him the same boon.  
That Guru Nanak bestowed on Angad;  
And having bestowed it upon Ram Das, Amar Das left for the celestial Regions.  
Guru Nanak recognised Him in Angad;  
Angad saw Him in Amar Das,  
And Amar Das was renamed Ram Das.  
Others saw it not.  
All saw the different Gurus as different persons,  
Few were those who recognised the One Guru in all—  
Those who saw that one obtained the pure spiritual vision.  
Others found it not;  
Ram Das joined the Lord,  
And bestowed the Guruship on Arjan;  
And when Arjan passed on to *Prabhu Loka*, Region of the Lord,  
He changed his name as Har Gobind.  
Har Gobind departed to *Prabhu Desa*, the Land of the Lord,  
He then become Hari Rai, and he sat on the throne of spiritual sovereignty.  
Hari Krishan his son was the next,  
And from him came Teg Bahadur to this sovereignty, through whom the Lord saved the “Tilak<sup>5</sup> and sacred thread” of these people.<sup>6</sup>  
For the sake of Gods’ saints, Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his life,  
His head was severed, but not a groan did he utter.  
For the sake of righteousness he enacted this tragic episode.  
He gave up his head, but not his persistence do do the right.  
They asked him for miracles,  
The theatricality of miracles is not to the taste of God’s servants;  
And the devotees of the Lord feel ashamed of theatrical tricks to entertain.

Having broken his potsherd of clay on head of Delhi's monarch,  
Guru Tegh Bahadur went to the *Prabh Pur* (the city of the Lord).  
No one can excel the pure loftiness of what Teg Bahadur did;  
The world of men was in grief when he left this earth.  
But the world of the gods was filled with the joy of his great triumph.<sup>7</sup>

Footnotes:

*Note:* A elsewhere in Puran Singh's renderings of Gurubani, there is little literal correspondence, but an imaginative and ecstatic recreation of the substance of the original. There is also a good deal of mingling of texts, though the whole is true to the spirit and essence of Sikhism. - Editor.

1. Swaiyyas are quatrains or other short pieces composed in ornate and elevated style Guru Gobind Singh's Swaiyyas in Braji Hindi are a rich heritage of the Sikh people. - Editor.
2. Dhruva and Prahlad are famous devotees: Ganika a courtesan who for her subsequent devotion was 'saved'. - Editor.
3. Rama - Editor.
4. Two rishis. - Editor.
5. The Hindu paste-mark. - Editor.
6. The Hindus are implied. - Editor.
7. This is a moving account of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom in 1675 by a decree of the bigoted Aurangzeb. - Editor.

## CHAPTER IX

### BHAI GURU DAS<sup>1</sup> ON SIKHISM, BRAHMINISM AND ISLAM

Bhai Guru Das, the disciple-poet who collaborated with Guru Arjan Dev is compiling the Guru Granth is the best exponent of the new Sikh culture of Nam and Simrin. He lived in midst of Brahmin orthodoxy some 300 years ago. His writings cannot but be original exposition of the teachings of the Guru. He is the disciple poet who goes not to the Veda and Shastras, but to the creation of God and the objects lying about him to illustrate his meaning. It goes without saying that humanly speaking, he could not break clear out of the Brahminical idiom and language and, like even the Gurus, he uses the same phraseology “by way of illustration”; but he says definitely enough that the true meaning of the Guru’s system of human liberation lies more in the future progress of man, and less in the past; more in the ideal type of man created by the Guru, and even in its approximations than in the old scriptures; more in the conduct of life itself than in speculations thereon. Read today more than 300 years after it was put on paper, his interpretation of the Guru’s word is truly remarkable, as it is his prophetic vision of the Guru’s gospel that takes his mind so miraculously out of the current and traditional environment of the superstitious theology into something new to the Indian spiritual literature. The book I have used for reference is *Varan Bhai Guru Das* with commentary by Gyani Hazara Singh Si Pundit.<sup>2</sup>

Bhai Guru Das rejects in definite words the so called “spirituality” as generally conceived by the ancient archaic Hindu theology of Vedas and Vedantism as something not spiritual, as it does not react on the soul of the people. One feels refreshed at the candid modernity of Bhai Guru Das’s interpretation of the religion of the Gurus.

To him this cosmological, theological and philosophical speculation of Hindudom is merely a huge heap of abstract theoretical literature which has had no active bearing on the life of man.

Forms and ceremonies that bear no fruit in action are not marks of a living truth, but of dead dogma. There is but little thought of forms in the Guru’s Word, whose soul was full of love. It is when beliefs die and love has faded into indifference, that forms are necessary, for to the living no monument is needed, but only to the dead. Forms and ceremonies are but the tombs of dead truths, put up to their memory to recall those who have never known them, and who lived and died long ago.

A teaching that has been but a teaching or theory, a wave of the mind, seems to me of no value at all. For I have thought that what stirs the heart of man is religion, whether he call it religion or not. That which makes the heart beat and the breath come quicker, love and hate, joy and sorrow—that has been to me as worthy of record as thoughts of a future life. The thoughts that come into the mind of the ploughman while he leads his teams afield in the golden glory of the dawn; the dreams that swell and move in the heart of the woman when she knows the great mystery of a new life, whither the dying man’s hopes and fears are led—these have seemed to me the religion of the people as well as doctrines of the unknown. For are not these too, of the very soul of the people? (The soul of a people—T. H. Hall).

So much philosophic matter has been conceived in Hindu scriptures, even the Unity of Para-Brahma; but without the Sat-Guru<sup>3</sup>, no one has understood how to live it.

The doors of all the three Time-cycles<sup>4</sup> were locked, they were all describing and explaining and discussing, but the superstitions could not thereby be destroyed.

(Var I, Paur 21).

As the Vedas talked,

So did the six Shastras;  
All sang praises of their own opinions,  
They insisted on Karmakanda.

(Yajnas, etc)

And men were fettered in Karma.  
Without the Sat Guru, the darkness of doubt cannot be dispelled.  
Bhai Gurudas notices with remarkable appreciation the unique and equal recognition of the Guru in Angad, the Disciple, by Guru Nanak.  
Guru Nanak bowed down to Guru Angad “At the latter’s feet”.

(Var I, Pauri 23)<sup>5</sup>

Guru Nanak is the saviour of this Dark age. He planted the love of spiritual verity, whose Name is Truth. It is noticeable how the poet differentiates between the mental abstraction strongly called the life of the spirit—the result of penances and ascetic Sadhanas, and the Bakhshish “the grace-spirituality”—which spirituality, so to say, is like the very oceans flowing out of the Infinite into the Human personality, whose speech, action, all become those of the Immortals that live undiscerned in the back-ground of the life.

The Baba (Guru Nanak) first found the Door of the Great Divine Grace (Bakhshish)—and after he was Blessed, he toiled hard for it. On sands he slept. He *ate Akk* leaves. He slept on the roadside pebbles. He acquired humility, and great was his toiling. Good future favoured him. The Creative Powers sided with Him; the Baba got the robe of Honour from the Higher soul-worlds (Sachkhand). Heaven flowed into him, so great was his love, and yet he counted himself amongst the poor.

*Pauri Sidh Ghosht:*

On the Fair of Shivratri (at Batala),  
The Baba illumined the whole assemblage of the Yogis, all the six sects saluted Him.  
The Siddhas said:  
“Thy words are auspicious, blessed,  
Blessed is Guru Nanak.  
Great is thy achievement.  
A great Purusha (man) is born  
In the Dark Age; He has lit the firmament of humanity.

*Var 2*

As lives perfume in flowers, and the bees hover around sucking it,  
As mango blossoms conceal an aching attraction for the singing Koel,  
As the beauty of rain clouds is seen by the peacock and Chatrik,  
“Om” takes upon it the garment of clay, and is as (Guru) the *Embodied Om* (invisibly, visibly attracting the disciples).  
It is the same Infinite in this and in one soul both the seeker and the sought,  
Both the subtle difference and the subtle unity of the creative ache,  
Of love is in the attitude of the man truly alive—  
The Gurumukh who has adjusted himself properly to the personality of the Infinite—the Guru.

*Var 3*

The contact with the inspired saints of Guru Nanak is Simrin or Sadhu-Sangat leads to the realisation of Truth,  
And in Sadhu-Sangat is the accepted Home of the Disciples.  
“The Word of the Guru is the Guru”

Think of the Guru and Heis always standing at thy back,  
Call on Him always:  
To those who have recieved intimation of the Word, He is near, not far.  
In Sadhu-Sangat, he is self-effulgent,  
Before the effulgence of the company of truly spiritual personalities, a hundred suns and moons  
are dark;  
A millions Puranas and Vedas fade before the glory of the music of the soul that blossoms up in His  
praise, in his name.

*Var 4*

Om the Formless, the unmanifested embodied itself in winds, waters, and fires, (so is it Onkar: Om-  
in-Form)  
The Guru unlike the Upanishads dwells more on Om-in-form, or Onkar,  
Than the Om of Upanishadic philosophy.  
Service not self:  
Those Hands are Gurumukh which toil in the service of the sangat, in the service of the Guru;  
That fetch water, grind corn, hold the fan, wash The feet of the holy and sip the washings Thereof;  
Who write the speech of the Guru and strike the Music thereof,  
Who embrace the brethren,  
Who labour and seek to earn honest bread and distribute the same with a glad heart.  
Having touched the feet of the Guru those hands have been transmuted in there very quality, and  
thenceforward are rendered incapable of spreading themselves in lusting after possessions.  
The hands of the Guru's disciples serve the Guru's disciples.  
They are the hands of those who lost all consciousness of separateness from the brethren.

*Var 6, Pauri 13*

Blessed the feet that go the way of the Gurumukh,  
That go to the Door of the Guru and to the congregation of the Guru's saints,  
That run to do good to all,  
That seek and find the disciples of the Guru,  
That are palsied with sadnees if they get stuck in wealth's mud.  
Few and rare are such as realize His pleasure as their own,  
Who go round the disciples, fall at their feet and adore them

*Var 7, Pauri 19*

THE WORD OF THE GURU IS PARA-BRAHMAN

The word of the Guru is Para-Brahma (The Guru)

*Pauri 20*

Know the word of the Guru as Guru.  
Make the attitude of the disciple's mind (toward the Guru) Gurumukh; the concentrated mind the  
disciple.  
The Sadhu-Sangat<sup>6</sup> (the assembly of emancipated beings) is in Sach Khand (the Higher Realms of  
liberated beings),  
And in deep communion is the meeting of those celestials.  
The love of the Guru sprouts forth as seed from the tree and the tree again from the seed.

*Var 9, Pauri 2*



#### THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP IS SUBTLE

The spirit of discipleship is subtle;  
It is licking a tasteless rock with the tongue,  
Finer than a hair, sharper than the edge of the sword,  
Nothing comes up to it, even though we search the past, present and future for its value, all  
measures fail to measure it.  
In the spirit of discipleship, the one amongst many is realized.  
Here one forgets the why, wherefore, wherein, whither, and all the conceptual inanities of this and  
that and one and many,  
All other aches vanish in the one great ache for the inspiration of this great spirit of discipleship.

*Pauri 7*

#### THE GURU'S ROSARY IS MADE OF INSPIRED DISCIPLES

Rare, one amongst millions, is the disciple gifted with the celestial vision, gifted with the all-  
renouncing love the Guru.  
The valuer of the true gems can truly evaluate Him.  
The great mind of man as a pearl is strung into the Garland of the emancipated beings, Sat-Sangat.  
The personalities of such disciples are the true beads of the Guru, constituting His Rosary.  
Dead to physical life, resurrected, reborn to the life of the spirit, they attain to *Immortality in the flesh*.  
They are woven on the Loom of the Guru, in the warp and woof as beautiful patterns of love and  
life.

*Var 12, Pauri 5,*

#### GURU AND GOD ARE ONE

I fain would sacrifice myself at the feet of the disciples who know the Guru and God as one.  
I fain would sacrifice myself at the feet of those disciples who feel God and Guru as one, who make  
no such philosophic distinction in the wholeness of their feeling for the Guru.

#### RICHNESS OF FEELINGS IS ABOVE DETAILS AND PLANS

His love is great who sees imperfections as perfections.  
His feeling is rich who speaks ill of no one.  
I fain would be a sacrifice at the feet of the disciples who seem in the eyes of men so ignorant and  
simple as to let themselves willingly be deceived by others, rather than deceive any;  
He is great who finds true gladness in doing good to all.  
Strange are the receptions, in the court of the Akāl; the poor in spirit who are honoured here, are  
poor there.  
Perfect is the Guru,  
And those who are informed of the Guru and his world are perfected beings.

*Pauri 6*

I am a sacrifice at the feet of the disciples that have lost themselves in the Guru as soon as they meet  
him, the disciples who are imbued with the spirit of renunciation of this evanescent immortality of  
Maya;  
Who have fixed their minds on the shining feet of the Guru,  
Who having met the Guru bring about similar unions of others,

Who restrain their wandering mind; who hope and desire and yet be not as individuals.  
Who personify the teachings of the Guru.

*Bhai Guru Das' comment on the merely conceptual nature of much Brahminical thought is vivid in Pauri 7 of Var 12.*

*Var 12, Pauri 7*

Brahma they say is great, born of the Navel of the Lotus,  
A thousand cycles of time rolled off and he was not, he wondered that it was after all?  
He became learned by study of the Vedas, so much so as he got developed four different heads to  
chant the four Vedas.

*The Teacher of others*

But he Himself was fascinated by the physical beauty of the goddess Sarasvati, he sang and made  
others chant the Vedas.

But all ended in vanity and pride.

He felt defeated,

The inexpressible Tale of God he knew not;

He could announce the Infinite Personality only by saying “not this” “not this” endlessly. *Again, Brother Guru Das in a similar strain speaks of the Avtaras.*

*Pauri 8*

Vishnu assumed ten Avtaras and destroyed heroes each of whom had the power of ten thousand.

The Fish, the Tortoise, the Hog, the Lion, Krishna, the Dwarf, Parasuram, Rama and Kaliki (the one  
that is said to be coming) all were full of ‘I am’, “I am”, “I”, “I”, (glorified egos),

And out of these Parasuram destroyed the Kshatriyas twenty times over and over again with his axe.

And Rama in *Ramayana* fought bloody battles with Ravana.

Dualistic, full of amour, anger, and full of the un-cured “I”, “I” *aham, aham*, (they were all individuals  
distinct from the Pure Spirit, who lived saying “I am” “I am”) are they all;

They met not the Sat-Guru;

All their deeds were misdeeds done in “Aham” “Aham”, “I”, “I”.

*To Bhai Guru Das spirituality is of Love and Love's labour blessed by the Grace of Heaven and consequently the  
leavening culture of such as Bhai Guru Das centres always in the common weal.*

*Bhai Guru Das clearly says in Pauri 9 that Shiva by no means is truly spiritual.*

Shiva Mahadev turned an Avadhut<sup>7</sup> and revelled in Tamas,<sup>8</sup>

He knew not of the true union with the indescribable-“God!”.

He enslaved spirits like Bhairon, and ghosts and bid them carry out his behests.

He ate Dhatura, and lived in cremation yards.

He wore the skins of the elephant and the lion,

And he dazed others by the marvellous play of his hand-drum,<sup>9</sup>

He let himself be known as Lord of hosts.

He thus lived away from the true spirit of God,

He never became poor in heart to let the glory of God play its spontaneous music in him.

This strange dreadful God of Death brings about the dissolution of the world;

He is a *Tamasi*.<sup>10</sup>

He knows neither pleasures of the senses nor the bliss of union, nor the conduct of true life.

Not on his way walks the Gurumukh.

It is by becoming Gurumukh, that one obtains what Shiva is said to be trying to attain to by his  
*praxis*.

*Pauri 12*

*(Similarly Brother Guru Das speaks of Jatis)  
(celibates) Satis (men of vows), the Santoshis.  
(the contented).*

Satis, Jatis, Santoshis know not the true ways of Sat, Jat, and Santosh.  
The Siddhas and Naths have organised many sects and are intent on showing their extraordinary mental powers of the muscles, mind (miracles)—all this is of the modes of mental pride.  
All the four castes fight with each other and die in gross superstitions;  
The six sects expanded into twelve different sects and orders of the Yogis.  
The Gurumukh has no caste, no special colour of robe;  
In him all castes mingle indistinguishably,  
And there is the deep colour of love as the various ingredients coming together in betel-leaf produce the beautiful red on the lips;  
The Gurumukh comes now like the sunlight with its variety of different seasons of the year.

*Var 13, Pauri 1*

Difficult is the practice of disciples:  
Some rare one can undertake it.  
Guru Nanak is the Teacher of Teachers,  
(Pir of Pirs) and the Guru of Gurus;  
It is Guru Nanak who made his disciple Angad his Guru—  
This was an extraordinary happening in the moral Universe;  
He is the Guru, and he is the disciple too;  
The light blended with light,  
Life passed into life.  
Unique is the Guru and equally unique is the disciple.  
The disciple loved the Guru,  
And the Guru so blessed him.  
And unique was here the blending of love and Grace.

*Pauri 2*

The coming of disciples down from the Guru is so common,  
But the coming as the Guru perfected from the Guru is extraordinary.  
There is “God” where man’s mind is illumined with the indwelling of the Guru  
The disciple dwelling intensely on the  
Figure Beautiful of the Guru, is so transfigured that he becomes the very figure of the Guru,  
And his inner self thereby is filled with the “Logos” forever and ever.  
Filled thus with the gladness of the Guru’s Beauty and Glory, and the whole of his heart and soul in rapport with the Unseen Great congregation of the emancipated Beings (in yonder Realms beyond death) the disciple lives a transported, rapturous life.  
Thus does the Disciple ‘churn’ the song,  
Glory of the Guru bursts from within the disciple thus, (like a river flowing out of the inner recesses)  
This live flow is what washes away the “Aham” (egoistic individualism.)  
By forgoing the ego, the true self is obtained.

*Var 13, Pauri 6*

Mere talk of sweet things does not fill one’s mouth with sweetness;

The mouth still remains empty,  
And when the mouth is full of sweetness, how can the tongue be free to talk?  
Those who are immersed in the joys of Nam and Simrin and the Union in the deep, cannot open their eyes to see anyone else;  
The disciples drunk with Truth, their steps never miss the way, though they have no calculation, this is right and that is wrong;  
The steps of such inebriated ones are full of joy, and out of joy, even if they seem reeling and stumbling, are beautifully poised in their march to the goal;  
Unique is the path of the Guru.

The risen moon cannot be hidden under the cobbler's earthen pot turned upside down.

*Bhai Guru Das explains in Pauri 21 of Var 13 how the Sat-Guru is a unique trader of gems of Truth, and how the Sikh personality is unlike that of Shiva and Brahma—the Grace- personality, truly spiritual.*

All acquisitions by Yoga and Bhoga<sup>11</sup> are mostly the qualities of the physiological changes or of specialised Karma, while the spirit of God is beyond all that mental extraordinariness which man so loves to attain to by controlling and balancing consciously or unconsciously his inner physiological systems.

*Var 13, Pauri 21*

Perfect is the Tradesman, the Sat-Guru

Only one thing is sold in his Shop.

He is a hero amongst salesmen.

He takes the imperfections and defects of man and deals out to him perfections and beauties.

He loads the fruitless barren trees with fruits,

The sin-burnt, the mind-burnt man he touches and makes shining as gold;

Crows he transmutes into white swans,

And the dry bamboo he turns into fragrant sandalwood;

He fashions the shattered particles of dust into pearls,

And enlightens souls with the vision of the Infinite.

Beyond Vedas and Muslim Scriptures

Here is the ever- glorious Presence of the

Word in the Guru and the Guru in the Word.”

*The way in which the language used in Guru Granth is interpreted by Bhai Guru Das in Pauri 25 Var 13, indicates that the words as used by the Gurus overflow their traditional and dead literal meanings).*

*Var 13, Pauri 25*

Para-Brahma, Perfect Infinite Brahma is Guru Nanak Dev;

Guru Angad is born of His Limb, and He is in His word;

Guru Amar Das got the “immortal slate of life” from Guru Angad and this state of his was beyond comprehension and description.

From Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das attained this state

Which is forever beyond the imposition of the illusions of life, beyond the impositions of the dark shadows of unrealities.

From Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan obtained it-Unshakable, Undecayable.

Then Har Gobind had the state of life, that makes Him the cause of causes.

Thus does Bhai Guru Das differentiate, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the Sikh culture of Nam and Simrin is truly spiritual. And spirituality is an indescribable state of life in deep sympathy with the unknowable mystery of creation. Sincerity is of the truly spiritual being. Only that mind is

Gurumukh which works under the inspiration of love, and works under the light of Heaven, obeying its will as his own.

TEACHINGS OF GURU NANAK DEV  
ACCORDING TO THE BHAJI GURU DAS

*Var 1, Pauri 34*

The yogis asked Guru Nanak, "What miracle hast thou?  
Show to us too as Thou hast shown it to the whole world.  
Guru Nanak replied, "Revered Naths, I have seen no substance in the yogis.  
I have but the Guru, the *Sangat*, the Song and I lean on nothing besides.  
The Earth goes round at His Bidding even if I could make it obey me, what then? Great is God and mighty His gifts."

*At this the yogis fell at the Guru's feet. They saw that their occult powers could not succeed in the Guru's presense. Great is the Guru beyond all human values, All the yogis then sought his shelter.*

Guru Nanak said:

"Holy Naths; Listen to the song of the word that I sing.

I have put one miracle of Naming Him and I do not work what you call miracles.

If I were to wear clothes of fire and live in a house of snow in the Himalayas;

If I were to make iron my food and were to gain so much power as with it I may drive the Earth dont, as a farmer drives his oxen; if I were able to throw both the earth and the sky on the pan of my balance and weigh it all with an ordinary weight-measure,

And if I had as much power as to sublimate any piece of rock by my touch into the very soul of God-

Let me tell you, without devotion to Him,

Without Naming the truth, all this is as the shadow of passing clouds.

*Var 1, Pauri 44*

Thus spake Guru Nanak:

And in the midst of restlessness of magic there descended on the votaries of Yoga, the peace of soul in the Showers of Nām.

The Siddhas obtained the relish of peace,

The Guru conquered the whole Fair of Shivratri (at Batala);

And the six Orders bowed down to the Guru.

The Siddhas spoke the pure truth when they said, "Blessed art Thou, O Nanak;

Great is thy spiritual attainment.

Thou art The Great Purusha, made manifest in this Dark age;

Thou art the Light of the Age".

*Var 3, Pauri 1*

The disciple must die to himself;

Realization comes not by mere talking about it.

He is to be wholly fashioned anew in faith a martyr to the new realization of love,

Free of doubts and delusions.

He is to be as a bond-slave of the Guru, purchased as if in the open mart, his price fully paid;

It seems he has no hunger, no thirst, no sleep. For he labours in the Guru's service incessantly, untiringly:

He works at the quern and makes fresh flour; he fetches water for him, he washes His feet and in heat the disciple fans Him.

The servant of the Lord is solemn, song-strung. Earnest and serious, it seems he neither weeps nor laughs.

He turns himself into a beggar at His Door, happy to deluge his soul with his Love, wishing to be sunk in the rapture of His presence.

And finally, the disciple rises a completed man.

*Var 3, Pauri 19*

The disciple has not to soar, he has to sink into the very dust of His Feet. He has to forego himself. And yet he has to hover round His Presence as intensely attracted to Him (as the moths love the lamp)

With his back to the world as if dead to it.

With his face to the Guru as if resurrected from the dark regions of death and thus all-dead and all-alive, he lives with all other loves, self-renounced in the depths of pure attraction for the Guru.

The disciple wanders not, his mind is love-pierced and he reposes in the Shelter of the Guru;

He speaks not nor discusses, but drinks the cup of Pure Nectar (at His Hands).

He lives in pure humility of spirit, and attains to Immortality of His love.

The Disciple has divorced his Inner and outer sense-indulgences and lives still a natural life of spontaneous balance of his humanity.

He is all awake to the injunctions of the Guru, and follows in spiritual spontaneity the lead of the word of the Guru, and in this one centre his understanding is not blind.

It sees and realizes and senses the Truth.

And by this illumined understanding of the world, the Disciple of the Guru crosses the Dark Sea of Fear and Ignorance and Doubt.

*Var 3, Pauri 20*

He who goes and bows down to the Guru and puts his mind bee-like buried in the Honey of the Lotus of His feet,

And thus really worships Him in Love;

He who makes the will of the Guru his own and loves his elevated, nobler, diviner self in the Guru, and he whose is this state of love and faith and of losing himself in Him,

Spontaneously feels the will of the Guru as the fulfilment of his own will.

He who throws his soul into the exquisite sweetness of the Guru's word into the state of ecstasy, and experiences the pleasure of obedience to *His Hukam* (Consent Inscrutable),

He who has awful reverence for the *Sangat*, the inspired group of Disciples and attains to Self-Realization;

He who like the bumble-bee is immersed in the flower;

He who having obtained the chest of His love has fully seen and valued the gems lying therein —

The woman who has given birth to such a blessed disciple is the thrice-blessed Mother of a good man.

*Var 4, Pauri 2*

The earth lies low, and lowest of the low,

Under the feet of all it lies as the poor earth;

And is firm in the peace of 'saying naught,' 'desiring not', only loving to be in joy of someone's holy touch;

This earth is firm that by the rare touch of the Saint's footfall, some day, its dust-particles would rise as though they were stars.

It knows the hour when spontaneous blessing pours out of His Cup and blesses the earth with perfection of gladness.

It then obtains the glorious and pure pride of joy as the final fruit of its endurance. The poor earth having drunk the joy of His cup, realizes its great destiny,

And it experiences what heretofore it only believed.

So do the men of God wait for that moment, and know the peace of their total self-surrender,

And they are as the earth, full of silent submission.

Whatever anyone sows in it, he naturally reaps; the Saints of God are as substantial as the Earth, though they seem poor and low.

#### *Var 5, Pauri 4*

People seek their own kind of company:

Gamblers seek gamblers, idlers idlers;

The pious seek the pious;

And wags gather round the lovers of their wit;

The sorrowful seek the sorrowful—

So do the Disciples of the Guru live in the life-glow and joy of *Sadhu-Sangat*, the Association of Saints!

#### *Var 5, Pauri 15*

Those who turn their face to the Guru—the *Gurumukh* are admitted yonder to the freedom of the Higher World of the soul (Dargah).

Those who turn to their own senses of blind understanding, the *Manmukhs*, suffer torment of death.

The men of God have lost themselves in Him,

The men of Mammon burn in the fire of the ego; few are those surrendering in bondage to God.

#### *Var 5, Pauri 19*

The swans of Mansarovar cannot go away from these sacred waters,

But the Heron wanders about a thousand ponds; The Kokila sings on the mango branch only, but the crow caws everywhere;

The trees that stand in their own centre bear fruit;

The *Gurumukh* thus is wise in foregoing his ego and the *Manmukh* is foolish, for he thinks "I am".

The dualism of the sense of 'I' is death and misery and distress.

#### *Var 6, Pauri 2*

Guru Nanak is all-powerful;

But he willingly obeys the *Sadhu-Sangat*, the people inspired by God.

Guru Nanak's treasures are full, but he gives unto those to whom the *Sadhu-Sangat* so wills His gifts.

#### *Pauri 3*

*Gurumukhs* wake at early dawn and bathe in the fresh waters of running streams,

They in the spontaneous but inner attraction of the Guru think of Him and Name him, Praise Him and thus sit wrapt in deep rapture, chanting inwardly the Hymns of His Name.

And thus with their foreheads anointed with divine lustre they go and mingle in the divine presence of Sadhu-Sangat;

Absorbed in the love of Him, and lost in Him, they both sing and hear His Hymns in congregations. Ever in awful reverence of Him, they are full of restraint and justice and love; and thus do they in their own character celebrate the Guru and render service unto Him.

As Evening falls, they meet those souls, whose hearts beat in unison with theirs. And they sing together in assemblies of disciples the Guru's "Sodar",<sup>12</sup>

The song "What the Door?"

And at nightfall, they sing the Guru's "Nuptial Song", *Sobila*, and the song of Arati; and after the Songs distribute the song-suffused bread. The disciples thus partake of the Heavenly Manna of the Peace of Soul.

#### *Pauri 7, Var 6*

The disciples live as bees buried in lotuses: they are absorbed in the raptures of the Peace of His Presence.

#### *Var 6, Pauri 8*

The Sikh knows that all scriptures are for him, seen and learnt and realized in the vision of the Guru. His celestial eyes see the light of the Guru,

And it is the Guru that they see all-manifest in the Vedas and in life.

In All-knowledge of love he knows the gospel of the Guru.

The Disciples of the Guru respect womankind; live in deep union with their wedded love, and all others of her sex are to them as daughters, mothers and sisters.

They covet not the wealth of others.

The Sikh makes a home and lives above all theological trifles like the "sacred thread", the "sacred" cow urine.

The Disciple of the Guru knows, All is spirit, Soul, God, and the unceasing practice of this Presence; His Remembrance is what he knows as the True *Brahm-jnanam*— Divine knowledge. The Sinners and the fallen who seek this assembly of men regain the respect of their divine manhood.

#### *Var 6, Pauri 15*

The Guru-inspired Sikh lives in his home and with his world around him,

For such a Sikh is like the tree of *Bāvan Sandalwood*;

For he is like the *paras*<sup>13</sup> mingled with stones, and the *paras* has no fear of tuning into a stone.

The serpent with the jewel in his crest is also like all others of his kind in appearance;

The swans float on the waves and pick up the pearl-drops alone with their beaks;

As the lotus bursts out into the expanse of its blossom unwetted by waters, so does the Guru-inspired Sikh live in his elevated thought

In midst of the world.

Beyond all praise is the Sadhu-Sangat of such Saints.

#### *Pauri 16, Var 6*

Blessed, blessed is the Sat—Guru,

The man who embodies the Bodiless, Spirit the Soul of the Universe:

Blessed is the man who has sought the shelter of the Sat-Guru.

Blessed is the Path of the Guru, where individuals were uplifted by the contact of the *Sadhu-Sangat*, the Congregations inspired by the Guru's love.



Blessed are the Foot-touches of the Guru, blessed are the foreheads that have received these touches of God,  
The Guru plants the seed of Nam in the soul of the disciple.  
The Guru extinguishes the fire of dualism, the hatred due to the sense of “otherness”, and thus washes the consciousness of the disciple with the spread of His own Presence therein.

*Var 6, Pauri 17*

As unspun thread is man’s life-breath:  
Blessed are they who string into their thread of breath of gems of *Hari Nam*.

*Var 6, Pauri 18*

Men of God are sweet of speech;  
Their speech is Naming of Him;  
Their seeing is seeing Him;  
Their hearing is hearing His voice;  
Their journeying through this life is going round the Guru in holy sacrifice.  
They know the secrets of *Samadhi* and silence;  
They are men who create noble homes and yet have no lust, greed, anger of selfishness.  
They are above blessing or cursing any; they live wrapt up in joy of the Nām.  
They say the swan separates milk from water and no one has *taught* this virtue to the race of swans;  
They say the cranes cry to God when they leave their eggs in sand behind and thus remember Him and no one has taught this virtue to the race of the cranes,  
They say the tortoise knows concentration and thus lives thinking of Him, and indeed no one has taught this virtue to the race of tortoise,  
Rejoice! for the race of the Disciples is created by the Guru and by the miracle of His Creation, they have the virtue of the Swan, the Crane and the Tortoise in them, and it comes to them as spontaneously,  
As the tree bears fruit and the fruit has in it the seed of the tree;  
So the Guru is as the tree and the disciple as the fruit and the disciple bears in him the Guru.

*Var 6, Pauri 19*

The Guru-in-form is the Whole Brahm, and as the Sun radiates light in clouds, the Guru shines in all hearts;  
As the lotus blossoms with the ray of the Sun, so does the disciple love the Guru,  
The Nam of the Guru, too, is the shape of Para-Brahman to the disciple, and in its transcendent sublime repetition, there drizzles the shower of nectar drenching the soul with the waters of life.

*Var 7, Pauri 20*

O Disciple! know while living in the Word of the Guru, you are living in the Guru; The Word of the Guru is the Form of the Guru.  
He who follows the inspiration of His word, follows Him, loves Him and is His.  
Sadhu-Sangat lives in Sach Khand, the Regions of Truth (beyond death).  
And he who lives in the word meets these immortals in the Word.  
The Disciples sing His Hymns with the break of Dawn.

*Var 9, Pauri 1*

The Guru is the Perfect Brahman, the Absolute,  
His word is Para-Brahman and it lives in the Assembly of Saints, the Sadhu-Sangat,

Truth is Sadhu-Sangat, and love lives therein.  
All the four castes have been now initiated into this Dharma of Love,  
And the soul of the Guru is made manifest;  
This is God made manifest.

The man of God has lost himself in the Guru, he is but embodied prayer.  
In action's struggle, the Sikh lives in Maya, but is desireless in all his hopes and ambitions.  
(In Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs*, as quoted by Cunningham in his *History of the Sikhs*, Bhai Guru Das gives the lie to the myth which the text-books of history and the scholars following them repeat from mouth to mouth, that the religion of the Gurus was a poor kind of monotheism of a few wandering minstrels of medieval India, who blended the tenets of Islam and Hinduism. Bhai Guru Das prophetically integrates the revolutionary new spirit of Sikhism and puts Islam and Hinduism side by side as equally unacceptable:)

There were four races and four creeds<sup>14</sup> in the world among Hindus and Mohammads;<sup>15</sup>  
Selfishness, jealousy and pride drew all of them strongly;  
The Hindus dwelt on Banaras and the Ganges, the Mohammads on the Kaaba;  
The Mohammadas held by circumcision, the Hindus by the string and frontal marks.  
They called on Ram and Rahim, one Name, and yet both strayed from the right path.  
Forgetting the Vedas and the Koran, they were inveigled into the snares of the world,  
Truth remained on one side, while Mullahs and Brahmans disputed;  
And their transmigration was not ended.

(Var 1, Pauri 21)

God heard the Wail (of humanity) and Guru Nanak was sent into the world.  
He established the custom that the disciple should wash the feet of his Guru and sip the water;  
Par-Braham and Puran Brahm, in this Kaliyug, he showed were one;  
The four feet (of the bull sustaining the world) were made of faith; the four castes were made one;  
High and low became equal; the salutation of the feet (among disciples) he established in the world;  
Contrary to the nature of man, the feet were exalted above the head,<sup>16\*</sup>  
In Kaliyuga, he gave salvation; using the only true Name,  
He taught men to worship the Lord,  
To grant liberation in Kalyug, came Guru Nanak,

(Var 1, Pauri 23)

Footnotes:

1. He was a great scholar and poet and has left poetry in Braji and Punjabi which for its profundity was honoured by Guru Arjan Dev as 'Key to Guru Bani'. The year of his death is 1637. - Editor.
2. Maternal grandfather to the poet-scholar Bhai Vir Singh. - Editor.
3. The Holy Guru-Spiritual guide. - Editor.
4. The Yugas are meant. - Editor.
5. Var is the Epic, Pauri a Stanza. - Editor.
6. The holy congregation. - Editor.
7. Ascetic. - Editor.
8. The dark tendency. - Editor.
9. Dauru (damru). - Editor.
10. Characterized by Tamas. - Editor.
11. Enjoyment of pleasures. - Editor.

12. This is a stanza in Japuji as also the opening hymn is Rahiras, the Sikh Evening Service. - Editor.
  13. Philosopher's stone. - Editor.
  14. The four races of Saiyads, Sheikhs, Mughals and Pathans are here termed as four creeds and linked to the four castes and races of the Hindus. . . . . (Cunningham).
  15. The correct word for races would be castes (of Hindus) and the four 'creeds' or codes are prevalent among the 'Muslims. - Editor.
  16. This great revolution against Brahminism is so well noticed by Bhai Guru Das. In Brahminism, the low castes had no status. - Puran Singh.
- \* The accurate 'rendering would be; contrary to the way of the world, he established the practice of bowing at the feet of all. - Editor.

## CHAPTER X

### A UNIQUE PRAYER OF THE SOUL

ARDAS (PRAYER OF THE KHALSA)  
(PREAMBLE COMPOSED BY THE TENTH GURU)

All rise to prayer on all occasions; one reads aloud and others listen, all pass through the inspiration of the whole Sikh history on this occasion, and are thrilled and activated.

The moments of prayer for the Khalsa are solemn moments of transport to the Great Realm of the Spirit, where all the Ten Gurus still are watching, aiding, blessing the Khalsa. The prayer is a call to them.

We acknowledge the Great Unity of *EK ONKAR*, the spirit that is manifest in form and transcends all forms.

Contemplate the Great Sword;

Meditate then on Guru Nanak.

Meditate on Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das.

O Great Gurus, pray help us the Disciples;

Contemplate Guru Arjan Dev,

And Guru Har Gobind,

And the holy Guru Har Rai.

Meditate on Sri Harkrishna whose sight dispels all sorrow.

Remember Guru Tegh Bahadur whose name fills the homes of his disciples with the Nine Treasures;

Holy Gurus! help us on all occasions.

Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh protect us in all situations.

Contemplate the resplendent teachings of Guru Granth;

Contemplate the light of the Guru's word!

Contemplate the heroic deeds of the Khalsa.

Say, "Glory to the Guru" Wah-Guru!

Meditate on the Five Beloved Ones, the Four Princes<sup>1</sup> and the Forty liberated Martyrs.<sup>2</sup>

Say, "Glory to the Guru," Wah-Guru!

Contemplate the deeds of those who lived in the Spirit of the Guru, continuously repeating the holy Name!

Who used the Sword in defence of the oppressed and the poor;

Who distributed love and labour;

Who covered the sins of others and forgave others with the forgiveness of God;

O Khalsa! pass through our whole history and be inspired by it.

Say, "Glory to the Guru" Wah-Guru!

O Glorious Guru, grant us the gifts of Thy discipleship, of Thy grace and faith and Trust in the Supreme!

May the Sikh Choirs sing eternally Thy Name!

May the banners of the Khalsa wave forever, and may this be forever in Thy Glorious memory!

Victory to the panth, the Great Brotherhood of the Way Divine in all fields;

May the understanding of Thy disciples be full of reverence and humility, and their soul exalted with the Spirit Ascendant<sup>3</sup> of the Guru,

And may our soul be in Thy keeping. Say, "Glory be to the Guru" Wah-Guru".  
We your disciples gathered here offer this prayer in Thy presence and at Thy lotus feet,  
Pray forgive us our shortcomings and fulfil our lives.  
Wherever<sup>4</sup> be the Khalsa, there be over the head of each Thy protection.  
In the name of Nanak, grant us Sovereignty of the soul be forever soaring,  
Ascendant, unsubdued.<sup>5</sup>  
Holy Guru, we pray that good may be-fall all that live, so be it in Thy will, in Thy great consent.  
We the Khalsa are thine, Holy Guru! Glory be to Thee!  
Eternal Victory is Thine!  
Holy Guru, Glory be to thee, Wah-Guru.

Footnotes:

1. Sons of Guru Gobind Singh. - Editor.
2. Mukte. - Editor.
3. Charhdi Kala. - Editor.
4. This refers to the Sikhs who were scattered in prisons, forests or in exile. It is remarkable in Sikh history that the brothers travelled in disguise to save brothers from the horrors of prison and exile or oppression. As far as distant Afghanistan went the intrepid Sikhs to rescue their fellow Sikhs, men and women, and brought them safe back to the Punjab. No case of apostasy is recorded. No Sikh was ever afraid of the worst happening to him. Death had no sting, nor the torturer's terror, for the brave disciple who had surrendered himself fully to the Guru.
5. Charhdi Kala.

## CHAPTER XI

### VISTAS - DIRECTIONS FROM GURU GRANTH

Everywhere we see ignorance, misery, struggle, distress, hunger, disease, death, treachery, deception and parasitism, the strong robbing the poor. In all conscience, to call this dark world something admirable, to be in any way thankful for, seems to be the height of human imbecility and impotence. To feel that we are cooped under the lid of the sky like the chicken brood destined for someone's food, is surely not a prospect pleasing to any serious contemplator of life.

What is it then that Guru Nanak opens up to the vision of Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan Dev that the whole of Guru Granth (the great record of their Lyrics) has virtually become an ocean of music full of unbreakable joy, and inextinguishable star-like burning faith. Transcendental passion with all the colour of sublimated love singing angust of the glory of the Spirit, indwelling Creation, whose Name is composed by the manifested objects, "the letters written by him"<sup>1</sup>—as if that spirit is a Person whom they touched, felt and embraced in their soul. And out of the union of these men of our own shape and form, peals forth the celestial delight to which there is no end. The very floors on which the Gurus sat retain the perfume of that transcendental passion. The very clay absorbed their inner splendour of life. These prophets sing of the passionate peace of loving Him, naming Him, singing Him, embracing Him. And they sing still, though the world tortures them, beheads them, wages war against them.

In the storm of such sufferings and martyrdoms such intensely reactive and challenging life that they lived, to keep their song in its full, unabated fire of infinite joy and patience, in its intense aching and glorious fulfilment, is the unique fearlessness, the true life of the Spirit.

In the religious history of India the first sight of the full life of the Spirit is seen here in the lives of these Ten Masters. Never before did it shine in such splendour and in such unique social significance.

To evolve concepts metaphysical or physical by mental concentration, to perform miracles, to have psychic abnormalities—all these are still of the earth, earthy. But to glow with passionate peace in this fatal storm of suffering, struggling matter, is true spirituality of the Great Spirit that pervades so effulgently the Beauty of all creation.

He feels disgusted at the stupidities of the prevalent religious practices in India. He is distressed at the tyranny of the ruling "wolves", but he allows no such *trivialities* to obstruct his vision of the Beauty of God. To him, the plan of the creation is so perfect, so beautiful. He is in a continuous trance of joy. He has no complaint to make. He is in loving sympathy with the creation as it is.

He sings of the Divine consent, the will inscrutable (Hukam). His is the cosmic soul-consciousness, it cannot be emptied of the Infinite Spirit and hence there can be no sadness, not even the highest, that poetic poignant despair of the lesser men of lower intellectual regions, the unillumined poets and philosophers so called.

The Guru beats down the winds, strikes the thunder dumb, and hides away his lightning flashes to see the working of the great Consent Divine<sup>2</sup> through all this. "This, too, is of Thy consent that men are stupid, that tyrants strike the poor and innocent and all this is to me, a mere man; so inscrutable; but Thou art Beautiful." O Lord, my heart yearns for Thee. I am fascinated by Thy Beauty. How can I complain of these things when Thou art? Thou hast created all this and in Thy own ways thou dost look after everything. I do not know, I do not judge.

Every page of the Guru Granth is full of this great renunciation of mere opinion and mind-born principles and mind-born blind complaints of man's plight and destiny here, and out of that deep renunciation, nothing but peals of music pour forth and the joys of life rain on the astonished Creation that listens to the voice of Guru Nanak.

The ecstasy of religion, Guru Nanak says, is rare and comes to a lucky man whose perfect moment has arrived. And few, few amongst men get its inspiration. So all the Gurus declare. All others of lesser calibre can but take the direction, the tendency.

Then what is it for, that they gather crowds round their song and knit them together with hoops of steel into a powerful people who reject all their past and start afresh from the Dhyanam of the Guru. Precepts are fuel, when old they must be burnt up like dry wood. The Guru gives new birth to the people from his own self. The Disciple is born of his limbs.

Practice of any higher truth is impossible without personal contact with Heaven, with the Mysterious Beautiful. And a spontaneous personal contact between God (Guru) and man is simple as the running of rivers and their confluences. Exactly in this simple allegory of the confluences of rivers, the Guru speaks of the confluences of men and gods: "Mela Sanjogi Ram" (We all meet by fortunate conjunction). So did it happen thus that the Guru met the people and they met the Guru. The stream of the Guru's lyrics started a new beginning of life for them. And the end of the beginning is not yet in sight. "My Sikh shall be a presence of love, of service, of feeling, of song, of an embodied aching for the Spirit present all over land and water, and he will literally be like the shade of a tree. And this provision of shade, this provision of service of bread and water to the roadside travellers, shall be all the preaching of my religion. It shall be education by personal contact, of sweet goodness in simple, spontaneous ways of all human affairs." "Open the gates, let floods of love from the personality of the disciple, let emanations from him of universal goodwill, love and deep sympathy with the Creator and creation, and an enlightened total self-surrender to His will, be all the signs to another of my religion of self-realized Humanity."

For the first time, preaching to proselytise as in Islam and Christianity was abolished and thus the lyrical spiritual stream of ages was unlocked again out of its enchained areas into the length and breadth of the very oceans. For this silent spiritual contact, for this silent suggestion of life, for this mere subtle gesture of the living man, the Guru met crowds in the singing Lyrical Humanity or Sadhu-Sangat, as he called it.

The joys of the "completed man" must be shared with man and nature. The Guru's emanations as said above, were actually caught by the leaves of the trees, the waves of the rivers, the clothes he wore, the spots he sat upon and the dust he trod. These subtle emanations do work as surely as any other form of higher energy does. It blows and all the buds that are ripe for opening burst forth. This lyrical silence preserved for generations transmutes men into beautiful gods. It moulds their features in the image of God; it make flesh resonant and fragrant.

And Sadhu-Sangat is not where "herds" collect, but where true aching for the presence in Nature (including man) unites all hearts in common love and in common labour, in one deep mystic sympathy with life and its upward struggles to God, to Truth, to perfection ever perfecting. "Sadhu-Sangat is where one passion of calling or His Name unites all," where man and nature are in perfect accord with the deeper music of life. For this realization, the Guru never thought of a new sect in a sect-torn humanity. The Guru aimed at a new society of men shaped by the Creator's nature, who will not allow themselves to be tormented with hair splitting theology, metaphysics or religion. No systems of speculation would be permitted to kill the people's spirit. For some time, at first the Guru wore the Seli, a black woollen thread. But Guru Har Gobind put away this. He wore two swords instead. In the time of Guru Arjan Dev, the Hari Mandir<sup>3</sup> was made, pools dug at Taran-taran and Amritsar, but all the other Gurus lived away from them. The Ninth Guru had his steps away from the Amritsar Temple. The idea of possessing them except as subjective visions was

absent in the Sikh consciousness. All these were great symbols through which the Guru took his disciples. They cannot belong they do not belong to the Sikh in any physical sense, as property, unless they belong as such to the whole world, unless they are universal visions. Cities like Amritsar were made into centres of trade and commerce and manufacture. Society does not eat stones; its soul needs song. The Guru wished Amritsar to be such a centre. He provided both bread and song to the people. And he left it to the people to manage them for their own spiritual existence as a free estate. The mystic reverie for the first time in Indian religious history was made to raise cities, increase trade and commerce, undertake monumental works for the general good of the people and be all the time a rapture of God's love.

The Gurus were called *padishahs*, *kings*, but they worked for the people like their servants. When a relative of Guru Arjan called on him, the latter's mother had nothing to feed him but a piece of coarse bread and a little sag, green leafy vegetable boiled. The king, the poet, the Guru, the God of the Disciples was so poor. In this great establishment founded on the song of the soul, representation was not by the vulgar vote, but by silent reverence due to these who exemplified the life of the disciple-spirit in their person. Those who were full of the Guru, His truth. His fire, were the true representatives of the people.

Guru Hari Rai though the quietest keeps up the hunting expeditions started by Guru Har Gobind. Guru Tegh Bahadur retires to the hills to afford time for the seeds of Guru Nanak to sprout, but Guru Gobind Singh, challenged by the powers of ignorance and bigotry, rises to burn all into a blaze of fire and asks the tongues of fire to sing Guru Nanak's Hymns through this dark eternity of the ignorance of man. He stops succession to Guru ship lest the "Guru" reverts in the wretched Indian environment to a superstition. The Ten Gurus by their lives had by themselves given enough sign of the spiritual Personality and they wished the disciples to come up to this new significance. Succession if continued, could not help further. It should have stopped; it was stopped. And yet it was not stopped. All this indicates that those who freed the human consciousness never intended that their followers should ever turn into a narrow sect, or die of spiritual starvation. It was more or less an indescribable state of inspiration which they invoked in the Disciples themselves. The myriad variety of conditions of life under which they maintained the high levels of the soul above the gravitation of all earthiness, gives new freedom to religious ideals in India.

Men on the same level are unable to elevate one another, a life of higher altitude must come down and help the low ones up. There is no such word anywhere in Guru Granth as "Follow me" or "us". That word "Me and Us" in Christianity has narrowed down the whole sense of the life of the spirit, though it was never intended to narrow that great love of the Messiah. And the human or divine personality of Christ is interpreted by the Christians literally as "Me". In Siddha-Goshti, the Yogis wish to draw Guru Nanak again and again to say who was his Guru, and his replies are repeated again and again, that it is a state of Higher inspiration, it is a mode of a religious genius, it is the truly Heaven-Inspired Man, a vehicle of the Spirit of God. The repetition of the same idea in Siddha-Goshti is thus significant; it was essential, as the darkness was so thick. Out of the Guru, the lightning flashes again and again. Thus Guru Nanak never identifies his clay embodying the Guru as Guru. While still in the body, he breathes "the Guru" into the clay of Angad, and calls him "Guru Nanak". So he starts, so to say, a planetary system in human associations. He puts the Gurumukh in the centre—a man of flesh and bones, living just like others --and lets a stream of illumination pour into them from Prabhu Des (The Land of the Lord); and the presence of the Gurumukh excites the aching for the Great Spirit-Presence - and they all together revolve round him and he revolves round the Guru. Thus starts the music of Nām and Sadhu-Sangat. The pure spirit thus grows pure. And "God" is ever in the process of self-transcendence. Glory becoming more glorious. The Song builds the planets. The whole Creation is the Word.



Guru Nanak dismisses the Upanishadic discussions, for there is and can be, no spirituality in such idle abstractions. He is a craftsman and he believes that there is some artistic activity functioning indescribably in the great consent of the cosmic Spirit-Being. The light of soul can only be of infinite velocity. And God is not a workless witness. He is a Creative person, Karta Purukha, a Craftsman. True Spirit is ever-active in its very Being of life. Life is speed. Life is a worker, fashioner. Guru Nanak puts a load of wet grass on the head of Guru Angad and makes him work in the fields. A life spent in spontaneously creative labour is true altruism, even in its crude selfishness. Theological and metaphysical thinking is mere inanity. Altruism becomes speculative and idle and worthless when man gives up his own centre in perfection and seeks the impersonality of the Universal vagueness of the service of man. The farmer ploughing and hoeing and sweating is a true philanthropist; all real philanthropy is of labour that is originally as creative as that of the farmer. A child cannot extinguish a volcano, nor a flower make an orphan happy. The only cure of misery is work, whereby to quicken the individual in his vital centres of life and loving “service of the saints” and of Sadhu-Sangat in the Guru’s House is the service of Humanity, for here in symbolic association with simrin, man’s selfishness will be “sponged off” automatically and once his selfishness is shed, he is already a servant of both God and man. The highest service of man and God is to be unselfish in love and love’s labour. The highest religion is active mercy, active love, active sympathy, however limited the space for a little automation of a man. Both the sun and the atom are equally the vehicles of the spirit, functioning as they must. Not by identifying all objects with God as God, as in the Vedic pantheism, but by sweetening your own personality with the honey of Nām, you can be truly beautiful, be of any good to any one. Without it, you are but a hay-rick burning to nothing. “Life without Simrin is but “burning,”-combustion” —Guru Arjan Dev.

This sweet absorbing of Nam honey in the self and then the consecration of all your labour and its fruits to your brothers increases the potential of your personality which unceasingly grows to be of any evergrowing effective goodness. Earning money first by crushing the poor and then making institutions to relieve their suffering becomes the goal of all philanthropy. Unfortunately, such is the universal vogue of modern civilisation. But the Guru’s faith in man and disbelief in wealth is fundamental. Money makes of a man a dead machine; sympathy makes of him a soul. Sympathy thus is better knowledge of man and God, than finding a thousand secrets of killing him by various intellectual devices.

Money cannot be the basis of true philanthropy, labour, love, sweetness of mutual service. Above all, the personality of a truly free man will be the only cure of human suffering and sorrow. A man of sympathy is a gem. Any other kind of impersonalized service of mankind service destroys eventually all the spirituality of human manners, all spontaneity of human virtue. Man baffled by the sense of area to be dealt with becomes a tramp, kicking dust behind him and filling his heart with the dust of the final ineffectuality of his lifelong efforts. Despair, weariness of soul and flesh, stunting of the imagination, dwarfing of one’s own soul, is the sad end of all mechanical perfection.

It is human arrogance to declare, I shall do this service to man and then get up to do it. It only shows such a person is not fit for it. If he were, he need have made no vows, no resolutions. “The winds move on the face of lands and waters in their own supreme speed. Saviours of man come with their special steps.” (*Bhai Vir Singh*). The very steps speak, the very breaths move and work and no one can bar or mar or deflect their course.

All these are however, just precautions against obstructing by our little wills—the working of his will through us. It does not mean that if positive obstruction is discountenanced, the negative obstruction of mere dull passiveness on the other hand is not equally ineffective. The intense personality reflecting God through itself is what the Guru calls Gurumukh. Continuous divine vibration of personality is the state of discipleship, the birds that work and sing and know no more. Spontaneity is its first attribute. It is made of “accomplishment” and “achievements” unless they are

as doctrines of a religious genius so made by the Creator, it is of no interest to the Guru. Love needs no continuous disciplines; it is a lightning spark that falls into the soul and the man is different.

No man is, however, allowed rest unless it is sweating, all rest in his incessant labour, labouring straining, doing. He is to aspire for becoming a vehicle of the consent inscrutable<sup>4</sup> of the cosmic spirit-being. It is the spirit of waiting for the acceptance of one's offering by God. Love is in quivering with nascent song and offering one's labour to him whom we call the Guru. To seek the end of love is to be wholly ignorant of that Divine Love. It is the act of loving, which is endless. Its endlessness is its Beauty. And the act of loving needs no accomplishment. It is simple feeling. Says Guru Gobind Singh: "Without this simple feeling, how can these men think of obtaining Him—the Lord of Creation?"<sup>5</sup>

Footnotes:

1. Echo of Gurubani. - Editor.
2. Hukam. - Editor.
3. This is now called the Golden Temple. - Editor.
4. This is *hukam* as rendered by the author. - Editor.
5. Rendering of *Jin prem kiyo tin hi Prabhu paiyo!* - Editor.

## CHAPTER XII

### REALITY AND THE GURUS

There has been a great deal of speculation on the nature of reality in the pre-scientific ages. A highly attenuated abstraction, the Brahman, is known as *Sat, Chit, Anand*—"I-ness, consciousness, and Bliss". To arrive at this "reality", the philosophers had to pass through a fantastic rigmarole of argumentation, which, however, interesting as nebulous philosophic thought, cannot be considered serious philosophy. Croce strikes a Sikh note in this that such philosophy as old religions evolved, and called it "spirituality," has become now an "inferior knowledge," much too inferior to be put side by side with theoretic activity of man, with his art, with his criticism and with his philosophy. The Guru, on the other hand, brings in the inspiration of a religious genius a culture with which the highest intellectual knowledge of man must need keep pace to keep the general state of human society in divine peace and rapture.

Brahman is a reality beyond illusion and Maya. By the same set of human apparatus, Maya is a sort of subjective hallucination in relation to the reality. And to see Brahman as the reality underlying the subject, beyond name and form is divine knowledge. Name is the symbolic assignment given to the perception we have of objects through the experience of the senses, as we see and touch them. All knowledge we have through our senses cannot be of reality. As in the rope seen in the dark, the knowledge of a snake is an illusion superimposed on us, so the knowledge of the objective world is an illusion superimposed on the Brahman. The whole beauty of Vedantic philosophy lies in this analogy. And to have some symbolic consciousness of the "reality" through such speculation is the philosophy of Shankacharya. As pure mental meditation it is fascinating and it still fascinates some great minds. To us of India, the age-long tradition breathes a perfume of holiness round these philosophic conceptions. But the fascination ends with the doctrine in the spheres of the mind. The beautiful illusion-philosophy has brought down Hindus and even Moslems in the scale of nations in their material struggle and the strength to wage struggle.

Every ochre-clad Sadhu only a decade ago used to expound this philosophy in all its beauty on the banks of the Ganges at Rishikesh and Utrakashi. No one can torture the texts to say it means "human love." Renunciation should not mean giving up home and hearth and wife. Broadly speaking, reality according to Vedanta is not the objective world that we see and touch. This seemingly eternal world of rocks and rivers and stars, according to Shankar's Vedanta, is an illusion of the senses. And it grows intoxicating and exhilarating if we think it so and practice mentally its conceptions. And in this system, the inner state of mind which is mostly the result of a satiated physical system and robust health, and which in a way, is a reaction produced by the knowledge of this sense-perceived objective world, is considered more real. "I", the chemical product of food assimilated by the child of man is considered the "subject." How much worthless attenuation of a logical thought is pressed forward in following this "I" that is functioning even in deep sleep! That "I" says, "I slept well." The mere "pronoun" is "reality," for what it does no one can say or comprehend. Nothing could be more clumsy, and yet has been brought forward endlessly as a great piece of divine knowledge. The objective world is an illusion, is unreal, but this "I" the subject, is real. Truly the dream lion is hunting the dream antelope! It could not have come out as a system of philosophy but from the power-drunk, free and conquering Aryan race. It is a kind of Brahminical autocracy in a subtler form. It is the result of a well-fed mental aristocracy. It has acted as a burden on the back of man and man is well nigh broken into two. Two people meet and they are happy, but according to this philosophy the men meeting, gazing into each other's eyes, are not real, but the

inward happiness produced by their meeting is real! Thus the attempt is to impersonalise personalities and to make a vague infinite to be real, while all knowledge born of the senses is considered “an illusion!” The Guru praises the human body; the Guru says, labouring is loving. The Guru in many places and in Asa-ki-Var, repeatedly and definitely says this universe is real, not an illusion.

Vedanta becomes certainly extremely fascinating as a kind of metaphysical speculation for well-fed, idle persons when it drives all reality out of the objective world and contemplates the whole cosmos as something subjective, and in this aspect it is a mental finality of human conception. Hegel and other subjectivists and absolutists present mere varieties of the Vedantic conceptions as such. As Deussen truly says, no philosophic speculation can go further and no mental glory surpass the grandeur of the Hindu Vedanta. But when attempts are made to make out of it the philosophy of art and labour of life, it becomes a kind of bathos. The modern Hindu’s new interpretations of his old literature are ludicrous, to say the least.

Guru Nanak does not take the Vedantic conceptions as real. He calls them dead matter and they are good only for the museum of human thoughts. They have no use in the field of life. He says, the sun is real, the earth is real; all we see and touch, meet and love and feel, and are happy or sorry about, is real. Only, it is a portion of the layer reality. It is not all reality here. More of it is in the beyond, Prabhu Des, as Gurti Gobind Singh calls it. It is only a part here—something we experience through our senses here, and more we shall see and meet hereafter. The earth is only one planet. There are planets beyond planets. This is only a passage to a higher life and the higher life to a still higher. There is no end, no finality to the shape of Beauty, nor to be purity of God. This earth, this mind, this language and our present thoughts are no occasion for discussing finalities and ultimates. It is no use attempting to describe what is beyond the power of language, the conditions and limitations of the earth, but as certain as we are here, we shall be hereafter as individual personalities, and more and greater shall be our vision of reality. This is made clear to the Sikhs: personality is the greater ideality in fact than impersonality. The former is the real birth of God out of the nameless, unformed infinite blue, and yet latter is but a modification of the mere grey matter enclosed in the little human skull. Man is the dream of Nature, it is in travail for him, and yet Hindu metaphysics calls it a curse! It must be immediately dissolved into the Formless infinite beyond birth and death; it is an affliction to the Hindu philosopher. Such conceptual impotence needs condemnation.

Our senses are not hallucinated, but they need a still greater amplification and quickening to see the spontaneous working of the cosmic person. Even an ant has its portion of reality. So we are not self-hypnotized as to the nature of reality. This world is the mansion where the king, the Being of Truth God, the Great Reality, lives.

Religion to Guru Nanak is a continuous and elevated state of consciousness in tune with the creation which labours upward through a lyrical and incessant activity. All hands must work. Animals work for themselves and their offspring. All creatures, plant, bird and beast work for bread and the pleasures of life. Let men work for their “God”, for the Beloved, for gathering of the great memories of life and the higher intenser spiritual pleasures of which the physical pleasures are only vague shadows, as it need must be as the pleasure of the plant, bird and beast, because man’s life is intertwined with them all. Service to man and God in its essence is an ampler expanse of the personality of the servant. He who labours for this good, truly labours for God. The rose on the bush perfumes the whole universe. Unlike the rose, man has legs and hands to move about; but he is to be rooted deep in the bosom of the Guru to be of any service to himself; and man uprooted from God and Humanity, based on his lifeless, isolated, abstracted intellect is only a bankrupt.

To be a good citizen of the world, one's cultivation of personality is the most essential self-equipment. To ask a child to extinguish a raging fire is as great a dissipation of human energy as it is to let a fireman snore when the city is burning.

There is a delightful proportion in human affairs that has to be kept, and maintaining that proportion is what the Guru calls *Sabaj Yoga*. Guru Nanak has not theorized on God. Again and again the Guru says that life is a dead chemical process of mere combustion if it is not allowed to grow its taproot deep into the bosom of the Guru. This living, moving, and having one's being in that great sympathy with the unseen is *Simrin*. Without *Simrin*, it is all death. However great the intellect, however fascinating the physical beauty, however noble the caste of man, however high his rank, however eloquent his discourse of Brahman and the "Divine knowledge", he is dead matter if he is not yet made alive with aching love for the great Divine presence in nature and in humanity. He is dead who throbs not with the love of God. This one affirmation from Guru Granth settles all the difference between Sikhism and the old faith of the Vedas and Upanishads.

So the question of the service of the blind leading the blind through dead institutions does not arise in the Guru's house. Let those who can help, help and they know how to help; and they are driven to help, they cannot live without doing their endeavour, for the fire of love within would take its own course like a river loosened and let out of the rocks. They are made to help. Aching with love for that Presence, as you ache for your imagined loves for the time being, for your wife and child, is *Paropkar*—is true altruism for all men, a virtue inherent in human nature. Only let it be perfected by sweet, reasonable, spontaneous practice and lyrical action. "Naming Him is true Altruism and true ability of man."

The Buddha rightly dismissed the philosophy of Atman, "I" as a mental fiction created by the autocratic Brahmans to rule over others mentally in the end, as they were much too tired by ruling over them physically. The Guru points out that the whole personality of man imbued with the inspiration of love glows with its individual light and colour, making, so to say, God more beautiful, more manifest on this earth. And this Beauty of personality carries its own fascination even for itself. This consciousness of blossoming within man is of the soul. And the dumb divine "I" of the full-blown blossom, though not saying "I" is the youthful beauty even of an "I." And the soul is only free when it realizes in full perfection its own individuality. In this sense, the little "I" dies, but the whole universe becomes his "I". "I" is the disease and "I" the cure, says the Guru.<sup>1</sup> One is a passing phase of a sensual development and the other is spiritual, the soul of man, the personality, the Entity-Name, which is light, fragrant and beautiful.

This personality of man the Entity-Name, has taken aeons to grow, till it is strong enough to stand alone in eternity. This is the Gurumukh soul, the man become immortal. The physical and mental capacities of men around, the spirit of Nature and its flashes of beauty, all are props for the gradual growth and final blossoming of the inner man. "The transmuted personality" is under the ministration of invisible beings of power and beauty. They support it, as the gardener supports his tender plants. All fellowships on earth are supports. All objects are props for the growth and emancipation of the personality. Life amidst the throng and society with its complex relationships is justified as the only way to the full growth of the individual. Society is for the development of the personality and "building up of one whole personality through the ages is the effort of Creation," says the Guru.

The birth of feeling in the human heart is like the bursting of a fountain in the desert, needing series of inter-connected geological changes in the whole creation. All nature is in travail to produce a man of emancipated soul. Seeing such a man, the Guru says, one feels soothed even on a bed of thorns. "Whom are you seeking?" asked the Siddhas in the Himalayas of the Guru. "I am in search of a man of Godward tendency."<sup>2</sup> Guru Gobind Singh says: "I have searched all these

houses of Siddhas and adepts and Yogis, all the Vedas and Vendantas. I find not the spark of love anywhere.”

Once a few Sannyasins came with a number of black oblong bowls to Guru Gobind Singh and said: “Sire, you are giving up the old ways of renunciation.” “Yes, renunciation is to be of the attitude of soul towards God and not of mental vows and resolutions. When we face God, we turn our back on all else. Instead of carrying gold secretly in bowls, my Sikhs carry it in their pockets. That certainly ought to make no difference in the attitude of the soul in its renunciation and self-sacrifice for the sake of God. My Sikhs are not attached to gold or silver; their souls like flowers of the morning, look upwards to the sun.”

When the Sannyasins began talking still more abstrusely, Guru Gobind Singh had the shellac melted off their bowl-lids and out came gold mohurs, about fifteen each, from under the lids of their bowls.

Guru Nanak never countenanced any attenuation of thought till it ended in a ridiculous absurdity. All human thoughts have certain limits of application beyond which they become absurd. The *Ahimsa*, non-injury, doctrine was made into an unhealthy superstition of life. So at the Kurukshetra fair Guru Nanak cooked a pot of meat. Guru Angad occasionally had mutton cooked in his kitchen. All had to partake of the food of the kitchen of Guru Angad before they could be permitted to see him. The Brahmins had based the partaking of food on the superior and inferior human hide and it was the Guru who founded a kitchen where the hungry might be fed first, before the song of the Guru was poured into their ears, and surely their kitchen superstition and doubts were immediately washed away by the delightful friendship of the Guru. Truly, the free and open kitchen is the best gospel of service for the people. In America and France, in Soviet Russia, true democracy is yet far away from the Guru’s ideal of free distribution of bread and raiment to Society by Society, this latter being the only true symptom of a true democratic feeling. When, it comes, it is Peace and Love. And where it comes, says the Guru, is my presence.

Physical health, bread, little pleasures of life, a proper measure to be dealt to each and all; and then while so provided, to live a simple life of active sympathy with the same human spirit throbbing in all hearts—such is the ideal.

And yet like soldiers, all were bidden again and again by the Guru to make forward charges, upward, onward to the scaling of the heights. It is for some purpose that we are here on this earth, and the Guru says, it is to undergo a travail like Nature for the birth of a true feeling of sympathy in us. All events of life are directed towards this great, rare birth. What use will it be for slaves to be made free, if they know not the rapture of their inner freedom? What is that academic, politically-voting democracy that has no personality of Man in it? Mere institutions, and organisations all so impersonal, are dead machines. They have no personal sweet sympathy of man. And how can such personal democracy of the Guru be established unless the individual has in his soul-consciousness the spontaneous overflow of the soul, where the true man of the Guru actually grows to be multitudes? What will it avail him to be introduced to a thing of beauty if man is not yet cultivated enough for its pure joy? The fate of Republics and Soviets is of the old Governments, still full of corruption. With altering the laws, men have not outgrown their natures. “Put into the fire the praise and the blame of these people who have not the information of the soul” (Guru Nanak). Empty Intellectualisation is a way of deadening things by culling abstract principles from life, which is always a complex. The Upanishadic wisdom is in a fossilized condition. Though it is highly interesting and at times exceedingly beautiful, it is all dead. So the Guru rejects it entire; in fact, he does not notice it. For, no serious thinker and true lover of humanity would palm off this fossilized mentality of a bygone age as a leaven for the future when in the past it has had no healthy reaction at all on the people.

Footnotes:

1. This is a reflection of a line in Asa-ki-Var. Its interpretation however, is different from what is stated above. - Editor.
2. Sadhu. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XIII

### VISION OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Guru Nanak, in his undying passion for the masses, emphasizes labour, sweating for winning one's bread by honest means and thereby instinctively and spontaneously being good and sweet and loving. This is being men, real men. He urges every man to kindle his eyes with the vision of the ever-present beautiful in everyday life and its suffering and thus let the inner rapture deluge all his work and all his sorrow and make it truly a worship. Look at the stars, how beautiful. Look at the child of man, how divine. This is his gospel in a nutshell and it is remarkably modern and free from the dead theological routine of life.

As said elsewhere, metaphysical language he uses by way of illustration only, but he dwells more on the aching love of Beauty and through aching love on the freedom of oneself and on making others free from the ennui of the mental prisons self-made by the ignorance of man; from the tyranny of desires, from the tyranny of one's surroundings. Merely being elevated with the light of His love is not enough, the Guru says: "Honoured are they who burn themselves with love, and light others with the same flame." "Renunciation by mental vows leads to wildness, sadness, lifelessness, indolence, anger and, an unbalanced temperament. And attachment to one's house and family ends in a similar ruin of personality by narrowness and mean-ness. He who with his eyes fixed on the Pure Spirit in continuous remembrance, lives like a simple man of God is one who deserves all honour" (Guru Arjan Dev). The Guru wishes man to live absorbing the Truth, swallowing Truth like the air, filling the Thugs and Kauda the cannibal, who strike him as saints in the bud. And he touches the buds to blow into full flowers.

The feeling of unlimited forgiveness makes man perfect. For his own highest realization of verity, he is to practice unlimited charity to others. Those who are freed have to feel infinite compassion for the fettered ones and give up their own freedom to free them too. It is the essential nature of the purity of spirit to be kind and loving. How can man be happy, till he makes all happy? And to make all happy, the only way is through the personal human qualities of his own heart and soul. The doctrine of Nietzsche of "herds" and the "superman" is in this sense a poisonous weed. The Guru calls forth the superman. But he may be concealed in the child of a Pariah! Nietzsche over-emphasises power and will to power of a set kind. Power itself needs a new transvaluation after understanding Nietzsche.

As man in his inmost nature is spiritual, he is to aid all struggling life out of matter, out of a darkness, out of grossness. Abraham Lincoln, one day saved a pig grovelling in the mud. The pig was in acute trouble. And when Abraham Lincoln was formally praised for this act of charity, he replied, it was no charity; he had found himself in the same trouble in which the pig was; so to give himself some relief he helped the pig out. So in order to maintain the pure realization of one's own spiritual destiny we have to save the "pig." The "herd is to be activated" by the Superman. The Guru did it.

But when you take these ethics and aesthetics out of life and reduce them to the chapters of a book, it is then that they become dead formulae. Otherwise life in its flow makes its own banks and its own waves and its own joys. No Manu is needed to make laws for it.

The Guru wishes life to be set free neither to be limited by others nor to limit others; neither to over-strain one's capacities, nor let them be relaxed—ever active, ever watchful, ever labouring, ever loving. He calls men obedient to nature's law gradually as little saplings which will one day become huge banyan trees. But till then the living man should progressively live in



spontaneous struggle in the patient case of an active progressiveness to approach the Divine. And no man can ever reach his perfect humanity without sympathy with the pure spirit. While joy is essential for life, it must keep clear of indolence, indifference, intellectual cynicism.

Guru Nanak is deeply concerned with making man alive with the spark of sympathy, with the pure spirit that one sees manifested through the inspired life of the *Gurumukh*. Without the Gurumukh's inspiration and leaven of inspiration, all is dead mentality, not spirituality. Here Carlyle, in his Gospel of "True King" and "great man", voices a gospel akin to that of the Gurus. The great man of Carlyle, who is gazing on the reality, is the Guru's Gurumukh. But all definitions are sectarian and narrow-minded. Even in the great nobleness of an active and living mentality, there may come the flood of spirituality and the whole of the so-called "spirituality" may be but a barren formality. So, again and again Guru Nanak says, those who are truly informed have the real gladness of the True Spirit. The Nanak-devotees are full of *Sada Vigas* (*Sada*, everlasting; *Vigas-vikas*, burst of blossom). Abstracting life's vital suggestions, and isolating them apart from life, and constructing out of mere philosophical principles so made, the theories of life and death, and then to think that we will be able to generate life-sparks out of such dead heaps of cerebral products, is human vanity and self-deception, which the Guru dismisses as puerile fatuity. It is life which gives subtle suggestions for the working out of a hundred philosophies and we ought to be concerned how to generate and advance the purposes of life and not keep hugging for centuries mere concepts and pet theories. "Life begets life." This clear cutting away from the past is truly marvellous.

The history of Vedantic philosophy in India, as regards its action on the teeming human life shows what caricatures of man it is capable of turning out. The Guru therefore, comes to the great conclusion that intellectual products, however shining, are dead matter without the great sympathy with the Being of Pure Spirit as manifested in life. Thoughts, as far as they are mere intellect-products, are dead matter. According to the Guru, feeling is a greater manifestation of pure reason than intellect, which is but its handmaid. Feeling is the master. Almost in the modern words of Goethe, "Feeling is all in all," we meet the Guru's vision on every page of *Guru Granth*. Live and let the Nam-flow adjust itself with the environment here and hereafter. The very robber's life interests Guru Nanak more than the empty-hearted reciters of Upanishads. Sajan's<sup>1</sup> mind was to be liberated from the thralldom of superstitions of ages, and to take its own course—its blossom must turn in the direction of the Sun. And this is effected by the presence of the Guru, by his intercession; this is when the Guru puts the yeast from his own life into the life of the aspirant. Guru Prashad or the Act of the grace of the Guru, in the Sikh system is a reaction; it is a phenomenon. Whenever a man is elevated, awakened, ennobled, inspired, it is through this reaction. It is only after this reaction that man at all starts as such. Without it, all his efforts to be a man are vain and soulless.

Without the Guru's touch, the mentality of man changes not. What makes the intellectual man so sad about the world, does not disturb a charitable disciple of the Guru. Bharthari Hari<sup>2</sup> renounces his throne when he finds (as they say) that a woman whom he loved with all his heart and soul loved another. She kept on deceiving him for a whole life. Such sadness for personal reasons in this vast scheme poisons all the meaning of renunciation. It is based on disgust with all ill-tuned home an ill-tuned society and a "sorry scheme of things" due to the fettering of human nature in desire and selfishness. The Guru says that to depend on love man and woman is to lean on frail reeds. Let a thing of beauty be a joy for you forever, irrespective of whether it be yours or not.

The sense of possession of darkness is inertia, mere matter. The Guru's ethics are identical with the aesthetics of the human soul. The Soul is inspired by rapture. Possession is the breeding-spot of all that is filthy and gross in human life, all that mostly keeps them enchained to dead rocks. The universe of beauty is there only to feed the flame of that life-giving feeling. And no true aesthete in the Guru's system of life would care to exhaust even a particle of his substance—love, or feeling, by wasting himself away in the chase of this strange phantasmagoria outside himself. Here

differs the aesthete of the Guru, from the aesthete of mere senses who, like a child, plays with fire because of its beautiful red colour. The Guru's aesthete, like the nightingale, lives on the glow-Worm life-sparks. The thrills and glorious sensations excited by beauty and truth are his daily food. He is inebriated and is sunk deep. He is not available for any other service of man, but as a reservoir of life-sparks. The jaded and the weary in spirit, the disappointed and the despairing waken to life, no thought assuages their sorrow, no intellect products brighten up their spirit, no discourse cheers up their soul (Surati). The dead and the half-dead— shall come to him and a glance, a touch, a smile, a piece of bread, a flower from those hands would galvanise them to life. The sick will then be healed. And so simple would be his blessing that few would feel it till it is lost again and replenished by a similar simple miracle of kindness. Few who know this great Servant of God will realise that one nod of his head overflowing with nectar releases an inexhaustible stream of power into those who open up their soul to him. The gifts of the servant of God are of invisible feelings. The simple Sikh sees a man in distress; he just turns his glance inward and a spirit of blessing immediately pervades the sufferer and thus he invisibly relieves the distress of the man who to him is a stranger. He is the invisible maker of the history of the human soul. The sufferer does not even know who relieved him. Such is a man dressed in rags, bare of limbs, labouring in the wheat-fields raising wheat and maize, and, and he is the true giver. This is the Ideal man of the Guru, he is His Disciple. You do not know him, because he is silent. Only, his eyes turn with calm and infinite patience.

Such a man has attained to the very nature of God in the quality of giving, while taking is of the passiveness of matter. The greater kings are not alive with the spark of the spirit, as they all take. The true servant of god has shed all desire of possessing. He has become invisible, except in his hard physical labour. To this world he is known as a labourer, to the gods and angels a liberator of men. This type of soul-comforting personality the world would yet take long to comprehend. Jesus Christ represents such a giving personality. It is such a personality that is described in Guru Granth. Let it, however, be understood that the Guru does not isolate it from the life environment, and make it a subtle abstraction, something too pure. The very fact that Guru Nanak himself had children and sweated and prayed for them indicated how life interested him more than abstraction. "He is amongst the householders the great householder, amongst the aesthetes, the greatest aesthete, amongst the Yogis the greatest Yogi, amongst the kings the noblest". (Guru Granth)<sup>3</sup>

One of the disciples of Guru Gobind Singh when he was near Agra brought him water to drink from the house of a barren woman of the priestly class and told the Guru that there being no children there, the water must be pure. Such were the obsessions of different kinds on the minds of men under Brahminical theology, even after having met the Guru. This one act of the disciple shows how the old Brahminical views still clung to the disciples. But the Guru threw away the water as impure and bade his disciple to go and fetch him water from a house full of children. Did the disciple understand the Guru?

In the case of such people the ordinary standards of judging personalities are confused. When they may be doing seemingly an act of self-assertion, in the spirit of things, it might be the noblest act of self-sacrifice, in their case, for every act of theirs is generative of an abundance of good. Christ allowing the Magdalene to pour perfume on his feet and to wipe them with her hair and Christ giving over his feet into her hands to comfort her soul is the noblest act of self-denial in the whole Christian history. It is perfect self-denial, though it seems God Himself has come into him to assert Himself.

Mortification of flesh is unnecessary when you have seen the spirit of God face to face, and it is still more unnecessary when you have not met 'HIM'. It was this aspect of the ascetic mentality that ruined Roman Catholicism by its reaction. To Tolstoy God Himself must be a miserable farmer, a sad ascetic. But God's stars and suns and flowers, and joys and pleasure of Creation must

forever confound these poor thinkers on such subjects. Such abnormal conceptions of life are bound to end in a reaction which wipes out everything in its angry flood. These people, like Tolstoy, make the love of humanity a mental process and vowed, forced practice, as bad . a fetish as Jams make of Ahimsa—non-injury. They think of abandoning themselves, the very thing out of which they wish to help others. Man kills himself with his doctrines and dogmas.

What worship of God can be greater than to be just a little flower in full bloom in the poor room of a wretched miserable man, scenting both his space and his soul?

The truly spiritual are not protesters. They draw Heaven to earth by their touch; they melt rocks by their humanity; they draw Heaven to earth by their own look upward. They do not say they are helpless, powerless to do anything they feel inspired to do. The Guru is more after the creation of true aesthetes than sad ascetics. The latter are dark denials of the pure spirit of being, and they are seriously in alliance with some illusions of their brains to alter “this sorry scheme of thing entire.” There is enough asceticism already in life’s labour and sorrow and suffering; it is aestheticism that is needed for the cure of the misery of the mind of man. And when he is soothed, his soul would bloom up. “*Sada Vigas*”, the eternal spring rolling in one’s soul is what the Guru describes as the state of the truly spiritual people. *Vigas* is the soul-in-blossom; pain and pleasure, sadness and happiness are only outward conditions which equally feed the flower-in-blossom Life-environment is soil for the flower of the human soul. Sublime grief and sublime joy are conditions of which the inner blossoming of the soul is forever independent.

Set amidst all dark physical tendencies, the hundreds of philosophies combine against man to declare he is defeated. The Gurumukh is still victorious. The heavens cheer him when he rises after death. Victory and defeat is a subjective feeling. All is as the rise and fall of the soul-consciousness, and the triumph of man is in his continuous spiritual tendency God-ward, Guru-ward.

True greatness is the inward elevation of Surati (soul) and all struggle is noble if the man knows that is to maintain that inner elevation. Faust is a study of “striving man,” but not yet of the man who studies the rise and fall of his own consciousness and watches the colour and state of his own inner blossom. A new Goethe is required to write the moment to moment biography of a man of Simrin. For such a man, the whole universe, heaven and earth are but shine and shadow as related to his spiritual state of life. God is He whose shadow imparts a fresh glow to the inner blossom, and the Devil he who dims it. He is bound by no other definition but the definition of the glowing of his own soul. The spiritual man must have omniscient sensitiveness which differentiates the individual effects of men and things, lights and shadows. The innocent Margaret feels the heaviness of Mephistophiles, but Faust as an intellectual Doctor must be under his illusive guidance. According to the Guru, the spiritual wisdom is with Maragret in those moments of lightness of soul. Intellect deceives, but the spiritual sense in man knows God as distinguished from Satan. The Guru’s wisdom is an experimental study o the effects of gods and men on his soul. Beyond these practical effects, beyond the indescribable spiritual inner states of man, the Guru has no other ‘names of God, a Satan and archangels. The Gurumukh never shrinks with fear, nor feels exhilarated. He keeps his position free from passing effects of the outer conditions of his life.

A murder committed is not so injurious as a murder plotted, as in *Macbeth* Lady Macbeth is more sinful than Macbeth. After death she will be still endlessly doing that horrible murder and shivering exactly as on that night. It is in that sense that all violent volitions of anger, lust, jealousy, possession bind the soul in self-created chains for centuries in an after-death existence. In Sikhism ethics have psychic foundations and spiritual justification, not metaphysical or philosophical. Such souls as Lady Macbeth’s are branded and self-cursed. One has to be free of all these obsessions for the sake of keeping the soul whole. We always commit suicide; there is no punishment from God. Only the compassion of a truly spiritual disciple of Simrin and Nam can give such souls their freedom. Light pleasures, foamy and frothy, little cups of wine, as of the flowers for the bee, the

sipping of a honey-drop by an all-too volatile soul are for man as innocent and non-violent as the shaking of leaves on the loftiest branch of a tall manhood with the passing breaths of breeze, excited by kisses of the setting sun and the rising moon. The fountain that has sprung is allowed its natural leap and dance and death. Light pleasures of life do not wound the soul, only violent crimes. Violence done to one's own soul is the highest form of kindness to one's self.

Footnotes:

1. A thug or murderer reformed by Guru Nanak. - Editor.
2. A medieval monk, formerly a raja. - Editor.
3. Gujari M. V. Ashtpadi 1. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SOCIETY AND GOD

The Guru declares most emphatically that no formation can be without a nucleus, neither of the individual nor of society. The nucleus is a little grain of the Name—ek *Kanika*—of His Love, a little grain of faith, *Kinka ek jis jiye basave Tanki mahima gani na awai*: On whomsoever he plants but one grain of his love, his spiritual glory is beyond description. *Kanika*, a particular of Num is a higher cosmic consciousness, like a grain of yeast plants in the unleavened mass of life. Once a learned Pundit asked Guru Arjan Dev why he had begun to talk of the great truths in the rustic simple language of the Punjab peasantry and not the great, sonorous, melodious smooth-worded, rhythmical, hallowed Sanskrit. “Sanskrit is like well-water, and the language the people speak and in which I speak to them is as the rain-cloud. Well-water can irrigate, with effort, some small piece of land, but the rain-cloud sends its showers everywhere”. The Guru does not think any man or society can be constituted or formed without a spiritual nucleus, and the life of the Spirit grows round the Word-in-flesh, the Guru. It forms there and grows from glory to glory like the emanations of light from a little atom-nucleus. The formation of Society, too, needs the nucleus of great men who die for setting them free. Emancipation from slavery, physical and mental, is the greatest service that anyone can render to others and such saviours of men are the veritable gods of liberated humanity. Without such objective gods men living on this earth cannot have a congregational aspiration for the life of the spirit, nay, not even the love of liberty. The latter, too, is planted in the hearts of men as little shining grains from the lives of the great heroes of nations.

For new social construction, the nucleus is to be of the Word-in-flesh, the Guru. No other god, but the Guru. The conduct of life is but personal passion for him and in the intense personal passion to surrender wholly, absolutely—one’s self-trusting implicitness in Him as the only Embodied Truth to which one has to entrust his all; and the individual is first lost in the Guru, then lost in society, lost in the divine pure, selfless individual Song as the call of the Beloved forever calling the disciple to incessant self-sacrifice; song also filling the individual with incessant rapture in which alone he could forget all injuries done to him—everyone a saint and also a soldier.

For practical purposes, a merely logic—deduced kind of mind-born God is a beautiful myth and nothing more. God is only made manifest in the Guru—the most artistic consciousness of God in the Universe. A beautiful story is related from the life of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak and Mardana<sup>1</sup> were travelling together and had to cross the sea. Guru Nanak asked Mardana to follow him, uttering “Guru! Guru!” Mardana did so and followed Guru Nanak. The Guru was walking on the waters and Mardana followed him. Then he heard that the Guru was saying “I am God! I am God!” Mardana thought the words, “I am God! I am God”, more potent words, and began repeating also “I am God” in place of “Guru! Guru!” Then he began to sink. Now the Guru looked back and said, Mardana, say “Guru, Guru”, not “I am God, I am God!” The story is a beautiful fabrication, but enshines a truth. For practical purposes, the mind-born God is useless, it cannot ever save us from drowning. The Guru can.

All those nations that wish to stay together in a banded whole, by mental speculation of some impersonal deity, fall further away from truth and from themselves. In spite of themselves, they degenerate. An amorphous individualism kills all social spirit. Indifference, neglect, cynicism, deaden all life. Islam is not interesting in its theory of Allah, but is intensely so in the binding of many nations together in the name of Muhammed. Allah always remains in the background, as he

was before Muhammed also. The reaction of Islamic history is due to the Prophet's cosmic consciousness, not Allah.

Thus Muhammed, one name is the nucleus round which the Islamic nations radiate and live on still, in fervour. The Hindu's Krishna and Rama, on account of vague Vedism and Vedantism and too much mental ferment around them are not such strong personalities as Christ and Muhammed for binding even one nation together; but still these names alone are shining truths glistening in the metaphysical miasma and one is delighted to find the poor naked, half-starved Bihari labourer uttering "Rama Rama!" to find his peace of soul. For man, there is no God but what he finds manifested in the Guru. This is the endless theme of Guru Granth. I do not think, the Guru talks of an Allah like the prophet Muhammed, or of God like the Hindu—he never slackens his emphasis even at the Cost of incessant repetition of his idea, that God is manifest as much in the Guru as in the Gurumukh. It is remarkable, the Guru says, God dwells in the voice of his Saints.

It is unfortunate, the Name is diffused into the impersonal Brahman and the outlines of the Hindu Rama and Krishna are faint and dim. So have the Christian nations weakened their foundations . n destroying the Name of Christ as it was spelt in Roman Catholic Christianity. Protestantism has reduced that name to the level of a man like themselves. Christianity ends there. The Buddhist races are safe, for the name 'Buddha' is still their God. It is an objective God, the real God and not a myth of anyone's mind, and it is the Name of such objective Gods that the Guru points out as the Saviours of man. This truth is seen in universal manifestations of life, whether in its fractions of little men or in its full effulgence of geniuses. Life revolves round cherished names. Society cannot breathe without its great men.

The Khalsa, in spite of the temporary regression of its attitude becoming more impersonal and not deeply personal in its prayer, still moves round the names of the Ten Gurus in all practical life, and happily, not in any great fascination round the unknown Name of some unknowable Infinite, deathless or Timeless impersonal Being, as is being now interpreted by the modern Sikh revivalists. Akal Purakha was with them before the Guru, and now even after him, but what moves them really is the name of the Guru. I hold this to be the kernel of the Sikh life.

The impersonalization of the personal Sikh prayer under the shadows of the all-surrounding Brahminical metaphysics is proof of the reconquest of the Sikh's mind by the Brahminical mind. Guru Granth as a book is dear to them because the Tenth Guru enjoined upon them to seek in its Word the promised presence of the Guru. The hymns are life giving because the Word, the voice of the saint, is Guru.

The Khalsa's love for Guru Granth because of the commandment of Guru Gobind Singh is significant. These Sikhs rejected Ram Rai of Dehra Dun, a great miracle-working Yogi, an adept at Raj Yoga, who was burnt alive by miscreants when he was in his cataleptic trance at Dehra Dun; who won admiration by his extraordinary powers of such a bigoted ruler as Aurangzeb, because the Guru had so bidden them. This realization of Truth in the Guru's bidding, this realization of his Word being law to them, not out of any coercion, but by love of Him and His love of them, is significant of the great living attitude of the Sikhs to the Reality of the Guru—their only approach to God. And this is the secret of their progressive spirit, that arouses the passion of the people for the person the Guru in its reverberatory flame.

For his Guru, the Sikh would endure anything, go through any fire, and live and die when challenged in the Guru's Name. This alone is the secret of making good, godly people. The Khalsa will be dead the day it impersonalises and "intellectualises" its heart and mind toward the Guru like the Hindu. Social construction is always to be round a person, a living person, and not round an abstract principle. Because of the impersonal nature of Brahman, neither the Hindu individual nor Hindu society has any nucleus. It is a mental nebula. Such oversoul, the Brahman, however, can

only lead to the scattering of human atoms; and so it has done. It cannot have any centripetal forces to make a solar systems out of the nebulous mass. All speculative idealism dies of itself. All religion— based on metaphysics die after a short—lived brilliance when they are brought into serious practice by any group of men. They must die. For such religions move not along the direction of spiritual progress, but out of it, either above or below it. And in both cases they soon degenerate.

When man rises like the tree on its axis to its flower and fruit, it need not uproot itself and go about in search of God. God is in its own sap flowing, in its own veins. All blood of life is God's. The seed provides a nucleus. Let the man-maker provide a nucleus and let life grow. He has only to watch it, water it now and then, bless it eternally, to grow. The act of blossoming is the same whether it be in a thorny thistle, or a magnificent blaze of red poppies.

The true gardener does not risk the life of the tiniest plant for any speculative process of growing it which has had not been tested. The last test of truth is the growth of life by it and in it. If life, social and individual, has not grown under a certain impetus, that impetus is not truly spiritual; it is not from "God"; it is not of God.

The Gurus repeat endlessly "Glory! Glory!" The music in Guru Granth rises in wave after wave singing "Glory! Glory!" And this immensity of repetition of His name is what paints the face of God on every page.

The highest music flows as common speech, the rhythm is broad and sweet like the calm flowing expanse of a river; one gets tired of formalized music, but never of such sweet and simple flow of the soul as the speech of the Beloved. The Guru's song is like the sound of the leaping fountains, it is like wafts of the blowing fragrance. People who love the Guru repeat it endlessly all their life and they yet can never have enough of it. It is as intrinsically woven into the very texture of the soul of a people as is the beauty of their faces, of which they never can get tired. And so they love to repeat the Guru's music in a thousand postures and shapes. It is all liquid feeling that washes and cleans, that nourishes and vitalizes the centres of life. Walt Whitman comes almost near to this passion of the Guru is his love of the people. Naming your Beloved is a song. The catalogue of mere names put down by Whitman is in the spirit of the Guru; it is this infinite sweetness of the sensations of beauty and the intoxication of names we love and live by. Names are great poems: the catalogues full of the wine of God, like bunches of grapes. This repetition is the highest poetry of the soul.

All attempts at translating the Guru's spirit, so far, in English, have resulted in bathos. Scholars like Macauliffe, Trumpp<sup>2</sup> and others who interpret words by the aid of lexicons, have only produced clumsy "clotted nonsense"; while the original is verily the life-giving music, the words, the physical touch of which consoles the afflicted, the bereaved, and make whole by mere repetition as life-giving as the touch of water to the thirsty. Perhaps Guru Granth can never be translated even in Punjabi itself except through the life of the "elevated inspired" personality of a blessed disciple. The music of soul is always sweet and simple as the face of a child; one finds it ringing in one's dreams and sleep and wakefulness. It accompanies the soul as its sound of life and love beyond death. And though portions of Guru Granth are scattered over all ages, in words of all prophets, yet its immense repetition in one place by the consciousness of the Guru creates and silhouettes a type of human personality on the page of Guru Granth. In broken pieces this might be dimly visible in the scriptures old and new, the personality that the Guru calls the Gurumukh, and for whom Nietzsche dimly and indistinctly gropes in his "Superman" and at such a tremendous cost of all human sweetness and goodness and mercy and love and service. The figure of that perfected man of the future floating in the songs of the Gurus—one can only see it, absorb it, and sometimes be it, but it cannot be translated except through the lives of the disciples of the Guru that may rise up in all nations on earth.

The Nām is the seed of this grain-like love; the new man of the Guru is to sprout like a tree growing upward. There is no past, but what begins from this small sprouting up out of this seed of God all is future. The spirit-born man, thus, unlike the ordinary religions man, is tied not to any past, but with the whole future.

If a pine seedling can have the wood, scent, leaf and the shape of an old gaunt pine, surely the child of the spirit-born man has all the perfection of the parent. There is an essential divine colour and quality of man which comes of itself in the child. Guru Nanak therefore impregnates the seed of Nām with Himself and scatters the seeds all over. The rivers take it. The winds spread it. This seed is the Khalsa, which may be seen in its glory. Men gathering on the banks of the Ganges, the Mississippi, the Thames and the Seine, will be reborn in the spirit of the Guru, with no past history to recount, but with the new and future Glory of the Mm inspiring them.

Footnotes:

1. The Muslim minstrel accompanying the Guru. - Editor.
2. M. A. Macauliffe, an Englishman, author of *The Sikh Religion*, 6 vols. Ernest Trumpp, a German. - Editor.



## CHAPTER XV

### LOVE

In Guru Granth, Love is not any philosophical abstraction; it is the incessant breathing of the Spirit of God, and a life informed of universal sympathy. Love is an ever-flowing inebriation of the Deep through a Guru-transmuted man. Love is the simple, inmost state of life which depends on no outward condition of life. As the seed is to the pine tree, love is to the true man. The latter is the whole of it in study of growth, leafage, blossom and fruitage. Love has hands and feet and it works. Love is fully passionate, and has the colour of ruby lips that quiver with "Naming Him". The Guru's colour is of the rose; perfumes are emitted by his very flesh. His words are visions. Guru Nanak is opposed to the analytical descriptions of the great Spirit, and all honest thought which has not stupidity in it must stand aghast, like Herber Spencer, at the real nature of all objects. Even the smallest blade of grass defies and defeats human reason to understand it or even to name it rightly. The mental attitude of Guru Nanak towards these objects is of wonder and worship which to him are "letters which compose so musically the Name of the Beloved". Creation is one great music for him. But the Name of the Beloved burns for him in every bush. He uses and exhausts all the known vocabulary in singing paean after paean of admiration of the personality of this Pure Spirit.

Metaphysical terms are not enough, all mythologies of the world are needed to fill his throat. All religions must come to trim the wick of the heart. He burns in the love of God. When the supreme passion of the Guru is there, the rest is all stubble to feed it. Passion burns all theories, all the past of India is mere ballast. His God is the bridegroom, and he His bride. His passion is natural, like that of a wedded woman, but it is one continuous song ringing day and night in his soul. Here is the spontaneity and natureless of the relationship of a wedded woman to her husband, not glaring and showy, nor what they may call "artistic" and demonstrative, but deep as the sea, eternal as earth and sky. To him, God is never impersonal. "O Infinite, how can I come to know Thy Nature, intoxicated with its Beauty? I fain would lay myself at its altar as a sacrifice; but am too poor to do my heart's desire, ah, even but once. Thy will, O Beautiful, is good.<sup>1</sup> Thy pleasure is all, O Formless One. Thou art for ever." Whenever he uses language which has been used in the past for this great spiritual presence in nature, he deliberately confuses his descriptions by saying. "So they all can speak, but one never can comprehend Thee". As the fish in water does not know how limitless is the sea, I am in Thee, Lord, desiring for Thee still.<sup>2</sup>

His invocations to Him are those of a woman to her beloved. His passion for God is rich and full-blooded. His love has the intensity of lightning, but he devours all the sparks and is inebriated with infinite hunger for Beauty.

Love is called "*Ajar vastu*", a thing that cannot be absorbed; it tends to overflow the banks of the heart. The Guru's man is he who is the great shock-absorber, spark-eater. Nothing but a half-closed inebriation, aye a small ripple of a smile that might reveal the great love to one who is familiar with such things. He calls all other thinking and intellectualising on the subject "dead". And to him, even life processes are mere "processes of combustion", unless the scent of this great spiritual Presence is in the breath of man.

Guru Nanak is fond of the Name as a spiritual Presence and he says, by this continuous inspiration of "Naming Him" by living, moving and being in it, one can be God-like. So much so, he says; the Presence is but the word, the song in ceaseless repetition is the soul-sound.

"If the tongue is touched with the dripping honey of this Hymn of praise, it becomes the throne of the great spiritual Presence", The Guru reduces the song of praise to the words "Glory to Him", "Glory to be Him".

This “Glory be to Him” is to be chanted with infinite spontaneity and comfort of a deep feeling, by speech, by breath, by the moving legs, by the eyes, by the heart-beats. In fact, “Glory to him,” the song, is to become the chief function of the subliminal self, till its singing is as natural and spontaneous as the growing of the hair, the coursing of blood, the functioning of the brain-instrument, rich and life-giving, till gladness tills the whole being of man and nothing can crush its glow of prayer while he works and labours and lives like a common man all the while. This live lyrical state of life, this suffusion of the noblest poetic feelings in the human vesture and soul, this colouring the very outlook of man, this “dyeing of the human soul with the red dye of His lips”—this, this, he says is the life of the spirit. This “Naming Him” is impossible without inspiration from the *Gurumukhs*, the Guru or the favoured saint, he who has the authority given unto him by the Guru as Christ gave to his disciples to give this yeast-like substance, this leaven of the spirit. So rare is this inspiration, and yet so common and simple, that it comes as certainly and as uncertainly as death to man. The uncertainty is not of chance, but of the fixed, yet unknown moment of perfection—it is to come to everything. The Guru says, when it will come, none can say.

Love is dead matter if it wastes itself and dissipates its glow, its passionate uprush, its sublime flights, its soul-felt exquisite thrills of life. Dante was, in our terms, in Simrin of Beatrice whose clove governed his soul”. That “I” of Dante remained so “pierced with sadness” is an aspect of Simrin. In his vision the Heaven of angels grows dark for Dante if the image of Beatrice fades in his mind’s eye. And yet Dante married Gemma. All his life is a poem “in memoriam”, The half-closed eyes, the ripe-red cheeks, the wave after wave thrilling one’s being, the very pores trembling with a soothing passion, the aching of the whole body mounting up in a stream of blood to the brain physically and trembling with an infinite variety of love-emotions of both pain and pleasure, is the devotee-picture sculptured in Guru Granth. It is overwhelmed with its own feeling. In its continuous elevation of love, it is Beauty itself. The transmuted disciple’s act of loving man and woman is an act of grace. It relieves the heavily-laden, imprisoned souls, that by it are set free. It is wholly spiritual. Whatever they might say from understanding the fundamentals of scientific discovery, there is, above the electric current, a super-electric human-divine current that by its touch, blesses and washes the heaviness of thought away and makes one feel bodiless, rich, inebriated, quickened and God-like. The Guru seems to have dwelt in Guru Granth on the absolute realism on the existence of the Spirit’s current that flows through man and nature, and those who know its fundamentals can alone bear witness to Guru’s word. None other, none other! we notice its effects in the life of Jesus Christ, in the transmutation of fishermen into angels, and gods, and Grace as distinguished from the conquests of mere brilliant intellect. The future progress of man alone would indicate the Guru’s miracle, in a day when man realizes God. At present, let us say crudely, God is a live current that flows by its own laws in all forms and most manifest in it is the shape of the Gurumukh, Carlyle’s “Great Man,” and without which it is not manifested unto the soul of man. God is life: So it is in the Guru’s song of godly life.

The filth that surrounds love while still struggling in physical and mental environment is all washed away by his touch, by the Guru’s gladness of love. The Gurumukh’s heart is the Heart of God. His love is the Love of the Perfect Ones, the Hidden Masters of Parloka (Durgah), the Realms beyond death where saviours of men live in a kingdom of Righteousness. The Guru does not describe the “Higher Realms” in this objective language which would make all such descriptions superstitions of a sort, but he says definitely in *Japuji* and everywhere in Guru Granth that there is a realm of Saviours and he does not evidently concern himself with the idle curiosity of the modern with the “lower worlds of spirits and dead ancestors”. The body of the Gurumukh is a mere physical vehicle for the spiritual impetus that comes from the “hidden Realms”. Transmuted men rise above the gravitational sphere of material attractions. And they are above temptations which act upon those who are still not elevated above the earth’s gravitational fields; though mentally they are unique as the Saints of God and servants of

the Lord. And if temptations do come in the way of the transmuted men, as everyone is not a Guru Nanak and a Buddha, who conquered the Maras, they come as reactions of the soul's elasticity which makes the saints of Simrin rebound higher and higher from the earth. And such is one amongst millions, may be amongst hundreds of millions. The rare few indeed, who only have attained to the pure spirituality of love—such men are nowhere common—neither here nor in the hereafter.

To have renounced all truly spiritual and truly aesthetic joys of life and to have taken to extreme penances in the name of love is not recognized by the Guru as the right attitude to the Divine. It is unjust to human nature and its natural spontaneous and balanced, gradual and easy development. But by the influence of the Guru, the transmutation takes place and love with full passion and pulse loses or begins to tend to lose all its lower smoke. The Guru has condemned the abnormal Yogis for their passing off a vacuity and stupor as religion and he has been thoroughly disgusted with the Jam ascetics. The Guru's meeting the disciple is a rare happy event, like the results of any other cosmic process seen at work in this world. And true religion is the function of a genius, while a contact with him is the inspired conduct of life for lesser men.

Man is fond of catching butterflies and running from bush to bush to catch that mysterious tantalizing, will-o -the- wispish beauty which is in its little shivering wings. But at one touch, the butterfly is dead. Great as its impulse is to run, the Guru is assure that as great and even greater is the impulse of human nature to return to a certain Level of inner sanity which instead of "interfering" with the freedom of others, prefers to absorb beauty and be absorbed in it, thus to keep thrilling the whole being of man continuously with intense sensations of the Beautiful. And the Guru is assured that man duly informed will resist the ignorant temptations of possessing Beauty. All is the Beauty of God, nothing excluded, whether in flower, leaf, snow peak, forest, or in sun or star or woman or angel. And all that attracts, fascinates and dreams the soul out of its clay-embodiment is fundamentally of the supreme fascination of the pure Spirit. All attractions, all achings are spiritual in essence and in verity. The soul goes out to beauty and beauty comes to meet the soul; the union takes place in utter disembodiment of both, somewhere outside man, somewhere inside Beauty, somewhere within the soul. This union is the point where the All—Beautiful throngs in "sensation," in which come and meet the visible and invisible worlds. No one can resist the temptations of going out to experience this joy. The Guru says this union must be, in the nature of things, creative of Simrin (Aching, continuous Remembrance) not only in the memory, but in its intense relish. A memory must be given by it to the very pores of the body. This is Simrin, this memory given to every cell of the human body the Guru calls Love, and it has its degrees of intensity, amplification, and subtle elevations. All human loves are expressions of Simrin. The Potiphar's wife<sup>3</sup> "aching for Joseph" has the same holy impulse in it, however clogged by matter, which Ananda had for the person of the Buddha, which Mary Magdalene had for the person of the Christ. The essence of purity of this feeling consists in its unbroken continuousness. The continuous aching, the continuous inarticulate remembrance of one we love is Simrin. Simrin has in it a transmuting quality. Selfishness spontaneously becomes unselfishness and active unselfishness, self-sacrifice on an unlimited scale.

The Guru takes delight in celebrating the marriage of his disciples; some of them he married away under his own blessing. And for the first time in Indian religious history, he makes woman truly free, because he grants her full liberty of soul by bestowing on her His discipleship, as freely as on man: Ananda alone, in early Buddhism, pleads for woman; but in Sikh history woman is self-realised. A Sikh woman stood up to disclaim the Sikhs who had returned home after repudiating their personal fidelity to Guru Gobind Singh; sisters disowned brothers, mothers their sons and wives their husbands. They shut the doors of their homes on the renegades. Mai (Mother) Bhago, the disciple-woman, led the forty Sikh martyrs to death if thereby they could wash away their temporary dereliction. And they did, those forty great Sikh martyrs whom we call the Emancipated.<sup>4</sup> Mai Bhago fought along with them like a soldier.

Sundari was the type of Sikh womanhood that lived in the forest with the Khalsa, nursing the wounded and attending the sick. Bibi Nanaki, the sister of Guru Nanak, was the very first disciple of Guru Nanak, who had the spiritual genius to understand the prophet in her brother. She has that homely sweetness of soul which attracts Guru Nanak again and again to return home. Bibi Amro, the daughter of Guru Angad was chanting Japuji while churning butter, and her melodious soulful chant fascinated Amar Das, the uncle of her husband, who eventually become the Third spiritual sovereign of the Sikhs.

The love of woman, hearth and home is in the spirit of discipleship. The Guru recognizes, we are men first and gods afterwards.

Many came and may come still to the Guru, with His unique Love in its perfection. There was the wholeness of the transference of his soul. In Guru Angad the feeling of love is wholly freed of matter and is glowing in its full spiritual splendour and stainless purity.

Bibi Bhani, the illustrious mother of the greatest and sweetest Singer of the holy word, Guru Arjan Dev, while a girl was offered a large sum of money by a faithful Sikh, as he was afflicted to see her dressed like a poor girl. While sweetly denying the offer, she repeated Guru Nanak's lines:

False is gold  
False is silver.  
False those who wear them<sup>5</sup>.

When Guru Arjan Dev was bidden by Guru Ram Das to go away from Amritsar to Lahore and stay there till he was called, Mother Bhani bade her son adieu in words which were afterwards strung into a song by Guru Arjan Dev. A poor translation of those charmed words may be made as below:

My son, Let this be the blessing of Thy mother;  
Forget Him not whose song renews our souls and makes it clean of all dust, whose love is our salvation,  
Let this be the blessing of Thy mother.  
May the Master be merciful to thee, and by his mercy, mayest thou always have the divine feeling filling thy heart,  
May His grace be thy raiment and His Nam thy food,  
And honour come to those direct from Him and bliss without end flow from Him in thy soul.  
And mayst thou drink nectar from the cup that is in His hands and the cup forever be thine;  
Let this be the blessing of thy mother:  
May no anxieties prey upon they mind and may His peace abide with Thee.  
And thou like a bee mayst abide at the Lotus of His Feet.  
My son, may this be the blessing of thy mother  
May thy attachment with the Beloved grow more and more everyday;  
May thy devotion prosper and thy soul shine with his glory.

(Gujari M.V, page 496)<sup>6</sup>

A Sikh's daughter, the daughter-in-law of Chandu (the demoniac torturer of Guru Arjan Dev, the Lahore minister of the Monghul Emperor Jahangir), comes to Guru Arjan Dev in the dungeon where he was being tortured to death and says, "I am the daughter of one of thy disciples, O Master! I happen at present, in this house, to be the slave-wife of this tyrant's son. I should never have been married thus, but my link with this family must be due to my bad Karma. I no more wish to live in this clay and see thee, O Master, being thus tortured. Thou hast taken nothing for days. I bring thee a cup of sherbet, and some poor repast. Have pity on me and take a little of this. I am the slave of thy slaves, O Master". And she was blessed by Guru Arjan Dev: "Great is thy devotion, daughter. Thou shalt, as thou wishest, accompany me

to Heaven. I cannot partake of the food and drink of Chandu's house. Go back, daughter! Tell no one what I have told thee".

Sahib Devan, the disciple, the dedicated, the nivedat -mother, the greatest woman who called herself the Bride of the Guru, as did St. Theresa call herself the Bride of Christ, brought the sweetness of divine womanhood and poured it in the sword-stirred water with which the Tenth Guru baptised the disciples. And the Guru pronounced the Khalsa her son. We now say: "Our Father is Guru Gobind Singh, our mother Sahib Devan", when we are initiated. We become hers.

Following the historic examples of heroic Sikh women, the womenfolk of the Sikhs today take equal part in the social affairs of the panth. It is certainly a great triumph of Sikh womanhood to get equal franchise with their brothers in the new Gurudwara Law of the Punjab.

And many are the effects of the Guru's love. All the senses of man are quickened by contact with the Guru. The disciple is a kind husband, a loving father, a brave affectionate brother, and a patriot who dies for his country before you can gauge the immensity of his love and his self-sacrifice. 'Behold, I do not give lectures, or a little charity; when I give, I give myself.' (Walt Whitman). So great is his attachment to his home, his heart, his soil and his native land. And he is universal in his sympathy. Like a cloud, he goes where the winds take him, and he rains when the Cloud-sender bids him to rain. True citizenship came in the Punjab in the wake of the Guru's education of the masses by bringing them in close contact with himself. His love for the people can be gauged from the fact that like a father, he loved to feed his children. To give to the people too much of spiritual gospel means always some want of genuine sympathy, surely some alienness. The Guru treats man's physical needs of life with human sympathy and he ignores human imperfections and loves the beauty of Perfection that nestles in him. Love in practice has not that grand colour which is given to it in books. It has the colour of the brown earth and it has the same rugged simplicity. Distribute your labour and the fruits of your labour all around you—feeding, clothing and making your brothers physically comfortable — this is the simple life of the Sikh. It is a poor life of love and feeling, it has no blind pride and vanity about it.

As the tree provides its shade, so is the Sikh to divide his bread and water with his brother and he has to share his clothes with his brother. The Sikh knows no "others." Brother Kanhaiya went with a goat-skin on his back providing drinking water to the wounded warriors on the battle-field. Brother Kanhaiya made no difference between friend and foe. He was taken to Guru Gobind Singh and the warriors complained that their own Sikh helped the wounded Moghuls too with ----r.

The Guru asked Brother Kanhaiya to explain his conduct. "O King, I see no man. I see Thee lying wounded. And I lift my cup of water only to Thee. I see THEE, O King! lying wounded." All cannot be Bhai Kanhaiyas, but the spirit of Bhai Kanhaiya is in the blood of every Sikh. The Chief Dalla boasted of his arms to Guru Gobind Singh. "Why did you not send orders for me to join you in battle? My men are so brave," he said to Guru Gobind Singh.

"Dalla! your men are not brave," said the Guru.

After some days, a Sikh brought a matchlock and the Guru asked Dalla to give one of his soldiers to the Guru to be a target for the new weapon. Dalla could not provide a man out of all his heroes. Alas, not even himself. The Guru sent word to his Sikhs. Two came running along, each of them fighting for precedence for the honour of dying by the Guru's bullet. The Guru asked them to stand one behind the other. Off went the bullet above their heads, and they grieved that they could not be recipients of death at the Guru's hand. To be merely poor is not what the Guru calls dedication. It might be a vow of human vow, a noble resolution, but it is as much a dark deed as any other done in the darkness of "I am," "I do this." To be merely rich is not what he calls being sinful merely on that account. The spiritual criterion is, who has dropped his "I-ness," his "I am-ness" of blind pride, and who has made the Guru's will his own. Intellect and will - power are accomplishments only when the man in man is not mutilated and

mangled. With that attitude, with that complete willingness to be a mere vehicle, the physical vehicle of the Guru's goodness in body and mind, both conditions of physical indigence and opulence are equally blessed. Says the third Guru:

“Blessed are the horses they ride  
Blessed are the trappings of their horses,  
Their merchandise-laden saddle-bags are accepted.”

Poverty is richness of one has taken to it in the amplifications of his passion for the divine. The poor are only then nearer God. But when poverty is inflicted on a subjugated man by a cruel system of conquest, it is a curse, a damnation, a tyranny which is immoral.

Tolstoy's views seem to some Sikhs very close to Guru Nanak, for the Guru rejected the dishes of Malik Bhago, from which when pressed by the Guru's hand, dripped blood, and he accepted the bread of Bhai Lalo, from which when pressed, milk flowed out. The latter was a carpenter, the other a tax-gatherer. The Guru makes, however, a little after, no difference between the two when they enter upon his discipleship, dropping their selfishness. Tolstoy is more a Brahmin than a Sikh; he believes in being a renunciate by a vow, by a mental resolution; in him it is all effort and its consequent opposite reaction. Men like Tolstoy and some Brahminical idealists would say: renunciation and “being rich” are self-contradictory terms. Idle theorists! Riches do not stick to my soul, and poverty does not gnaw at it if I know the inner independence of soul. Without Enlightenment, both are but curses. A man may become poor unnecessarily without his inner attitude at all rising up to that Grace of kindness. In fact, he may be worse when poor than when he was quite rich. What use is renouncing, if wherever you go, you take your wretchedness of anger, lust, uncharitableness, selfishness with you. And if you have become different, what difference does it make if you live on hills of gold or in the dust? They are not essential portions of your soul. The Guru therefore, lays not stress on these relative and external environmental conditions of life, sometimes unchangeable conditions he only insists on the grace of kindness in man and bringing together as far as possible a suitable set of conditions under which the inner virtue might be maintained. That inner attitude is to be constantly fed by the intense affection for the Person of the “Word-in-flesh,” the Guru. This is the nucleus round which the expanded feelings of sympathy have to radiate far and wide and rebound again and again. Universal sympathy is to be a natural radiation of a true man, as coolness is of the shade of an umbrageous tree. And the inner virtue is to be ever husbanded more and more by “dropping wholly the I-ness.” If man has not yet dropped it, he is not fully himself. Men are mere fractions of themselves torn by the deed of “I” by desire and by aberration of mind.

Sense-indulgence, whether through anger, lust, greed, selfishness and its seemingly bright exciting pleasures, appertains fundamentally to the blind “I—ness” of man. It necessarily involves a certain selfish aggressiveness at the expense of the spiritual experience. And so the Guru points out the grossness of going hog-like after sensual indulgence. But the Gurus acknowledge that such tendencies cannot be put down by mere vows, by self-restraint or by mental resolutions. If this were so, Vishvamitra would not have run after Menaka:<sup>7</sup> so resolute a mental personality would not have caught a girl in his arms with that insensate impetuousness of which he is so much ashamed afterwards. The man has not yet attained his mellowed, wise, beautiful and spiritually ripe manhood; he is still so irresistibly drawn by the animal pleasures that are in the body of woman, as distinguished from the wholly spiritual pleasures that are in her lovely soul. How far is the religion of the soul from those who get self-hypnotized and seek pleasure in the mere body.

The Guru trusts with infinite faith the essential nobleness of human nature, and as men see love divine in the companionship of dregs, so the Guru sees it in the companionship of unsophisticated men, the upward tendency to pure spiritual love. Paropkar or altruism is reduced to a simple, honest labouring sweating life, a helpful life, which allows itself to be pulled upwards, elevated by the touch of the Guru and is ever ready to lay down everything in the way

of self-sacrifice in His Name. The river flows and it does universal good. The star shines, the lamps burns—all do universal good. Beauty is for ever altruistic, intellectual more than physical, and spiritual more than intellectual, if relief of human distress and the bestowing of peace and power to souls in struggle is altruism. So a Sikh is a true householder, a true citizen, a worthy patriot and a humanitarian man, whenever the call comes. And he is intensely human all the while. Even a Sikh “Brahmgyani” believes in metalling roads so that pedestrians may have more comfort though his manual labour. And he has no sense of property or possession. When a bird perched on a mango branch, that knows how to sing has spirituality enough not to own the tree, a man should be ashamed of being not so spiritual as a singing bird. The examples of the life of the Japanese people might well illustrate the exhortations of the Guru, to a simple heroic life, in pain no less than in pleasure.

Among the Japanese the lightness of living in frail houses, in frail pleasures, in floating raptures, has a scent of spirituality. And in the life of the Japanese people, the close resemblance of the love of Guru Nanak and Lord Buddha can be truly seen and studied with profit. Heaviness of the unendurable weight of so many moral codes fashioned by the abstraction--mongering mentalities of theological and pious geniuses put a sinking weight on the neck of the people, as they have been put on the necks of the wretched people of India and they never can rise from under its oppression. And they never can rise from under its oppression. The people of India are too conscious of transgressing the theological moral codes, though they transgress them all the same. It makes even spiritual life in India an intellectual burden and one likes to look for life elsewhere than in these wretched and dry, formal “wooden, antediluvian”, ceremonious systems of morality and theology and religion. All these become torments to the people. Much can be adduced from the life of the Sikh people under the Gurus in its broad expanse of all kinds of normal, natural activity and joy.

The Guru hunted game in the forests, and the Sikhs, too, were put on all kinds of manly games. Horseback was like a temple for the Sikh. The Guru brought the spirit of good humour into the Assemblies; and the laughter and other joys of the people in the presence of the Guru were immense. Bhai Nand Lal describes how Guru Gobind Singh played *Hola* with His Sikhs, how mimic battles were organised by Him, and joy of the sport infused into the people. Guru Gobind Singh had such a refreshing sense of humour. He wrote the whole of *Krishna Lila*, and perhaps this is the most charming and living portion of the Hindu religious lore. Once a Fakir came to him, with an offering of jasmine flowers. The Guru said “O Rodha! why did you not bring gold for the Guru?”

“Mystics keep no gold”.

“Then mystics should come empty-handed. They need bring no offering”.

“But some offering to the Guru is essential”.

Guru Gobind Singh winked at Bhai Mani Singh and made a gesture that he should stealthily go behind him and throw down his long cone—like cap. Out of it rolled and jingled gold mohurs on the floor.

When Shiva Dutt came from Benares on his visit to Anandpur (Shiva Dutt who loved him when a mere boy at Patna), the Guru planned a welcome. He went out on horseback from Anandpur and surprised the caravans of the disciples from behind, and overwhelmed them with the spirit of his great delight. They all shivered with that immense joy.

All Sikhs kept free Langars to feed travellers and pilgrims. The Guru disguised himself as a common pilgrim and visited all the Langars. At one he was told it was too early; meals were not ready. Another said he should wait till noon, for that was the time of distribution of food, and so on. When he reached Bhai Nand Lal’s free kitchen, the Brother brought wheat flour half-kneaded and pulses half-boiled, saying, “This is for you, Sir, but if you would favour to wait a little more both things will be cooked for you immediately and served”. The disguise of the Guru was complete, and next day he joked with everyone as to their charity and said that Bhai Nand Lal alone kept a true Langar. “Yesterday I was one of the pilgrims passing Anandpur,” he

said. (Even when engaged in battles at Paonta he had the poet's raillery in choosing metaphors to describe the action. His humour and wit ever irresistible, flowed out of him. All the Gurus had a sense of humour. In the times of Guru Arjan Dev, Suthra kept the Guru's "Saint-Court" in laughter. The Guru once forbade Suthra to be allowed in. He went and made a few thousand round pieces of broken red earthen pitchers and appeared in the disguise of a Jat Sikh and said to the door-keeper:

"These are offerings for the Guru". The Sikh let him in. And he went and put the purses in the centre and began profusely bowing down to them blasphemously with his back to the Guru, saying "Blessed are the thikaris that I am able to see the Guru".

He had been led to dig a tank at Amritsar along with the Sikhs, But he was much too weak to do that labour. So when Guru Arjan Dev came on the scene, Suthra brought a basket and threw it near his feet— "What Guru is he that does not protect us? We are dead with all this digging". Guru Nanak himself was all the time deeply humorous. Bhai Mardana, his minstrel punctuates the whole life of the Guru with his philosophic humour. "Guruji,—you live on air. I need food. You have no care now how your home people are, but I feel for them".

He is a democrat and treats the Guru as a comrade. His respect for him is infinite, but he is absolutely informal, talking to the Guru frankly like a child. When the Guru is very serious, he throws in a sentence, a gem of humour, which makes him laugh. When the Guru's life is narrated in the congregation. Mardana's words fill the mind of the children with delightful vivaciousness. By birth, he was a Muslim, but he was the Guru's disciple from the first day he met him to the last. When Mardana was in fear of imminent danger from wild beasts, rain, floods, and other frowns of Nature, the Guru would soothe him, saying, "Mardana! be not afraid. See the ways of the Creator and wait".

At times the Guru would forget all about food and drink. When Mardana would cry out, "Sire, Guru! you feel neither the pang of hunger nor thirst, but I am dying". And the Guru would smile his benign smile and say, "Mardana! go, pluck the fruit or bring food and water from the human habitation near by" and in deep loneliness, the Master and the disciple would partake of it together.

Once Mardana brought the Guru presents of money and clothes. On seeing them the Guru laughed and asked Mardana what he had brought. He answered that the villagers had made him large presents of money and clothes and he thought that he would bring them to his Master. The Guru replied that these did not belong to them. Mardana inquired how he was to dispose of the articles. The Guru told him to throw them away, an injunction which he at once obeyed. The Guru explained to him the disastrous effects of the offerings of laymen on the transparent consciousness of the devotees of God. "Offerings are like poison and cannot be digested. They can only bring good by fervent adoration of God at all hours. When man performs saint-worship and depends on offerings as his subsistence, the effect on him is as if he had taken poison".

Hence, according to the Guru no one can take out any aspect of life from the complex in which it is found and intellectually emphasize any one aspect in an abstract manner. All, this is life and without all this it cannot be life. Life can just be helped on to its natural blossom which waves on an infinite complex.

The Sikh is essentially a labourer, a farmer, a ploughman, full of generous impulses. and is heroic in his life. He does not understand mental niceties about Paropkar (doing good to others). Most of the necessity of this "doing good to others" is in the nature of providing the cure after a life wrongly lived or as the Guru says, living like a "Manmukh"<sup>8</sup>. It is laying a better foundations of "doing good to others", if one lives the life of a Gurmukh,<sup>9</sup> a good, selfless life, a fragrant lyrical life of simple feeling and unsophisticated thought. A life of simple habits is a better beginning than that made by starting orphanages and hospitals after having caused early deaths of parents and spreading disease in human society. It is better that capitalists oppress not labour, it is better that kings do their work well and legislate on equitable distribution of life's



necessities, health, joy, rather than that some men should rise by upsetting the balance of morality and justice. Guru Arjan Dev says: "They are Paropkaris who live the selfless life of love, of Nam and Simrin." Seva, service of humanity, bears a different meaning to the Sikh than the impersonal service of institutionalising the deadened sympathy of rich men. We had better all die than live on loveless crumbs. What is the use of orphanages, when men have no living love for the children of man, even for their own children, whether on account of the pursuits of physical pleasures or of mental abstractions. The dead cannot do any Seva. Seva is what grows with one's growing capacities.

The Guru has insisted that no dead mentalities, no mechanical definitions, no individual views taken out, above or below the life complex itself, shall be permitted to guide the inscrutable destinies of the people's soul. Opportunities of life are to be brought together, and no strange and extraordinary vows of celibacy, of poverty or Yoga or Bhoga shall interfere with the living choice of a living people. It is love of comrades, love of fellow-beings — "Brothers" is how the Sikhs call their fellow men. 'Bhai' has become the honorific of goodness with the Sikhs. The Sikh has to be drunk with the "wine" poured into the cup of his heart by the Guru. In this inner realization love takes the shape of unbroken inebriation. Bhai Guru Das, the great savant of Sikhism says "Give us, too, a drop of Thy Wine, O Guru, so that we may not be counted amongst the dry moralists." Bhai Vir Singh, the great literary torch bearer of Sikhism, in his poems speaks of it. And such an intoxicated Sikh is with broad sympathies in distributing his soothing, comforting touches and his spark-producing glances, his soul-searching smiles, the little human kindnesses. In the wonderful personality of a Sikh, many personalities meet. And no one can take any one trait from the theoretical books on morality and love and service and judge him. He has become one with Nature; his life is under the guidance of an inspired impulse. And whether at the plough or on the battlefield, it is the impulse emanating from the inscrutable will<sup>10</sup> that finally and eventually in the freedom of his spiritual tendencies urges him to incessant action. He cannot work under any set logical systems of human service or what is academically known as universal love. His is an organic living, he knows its own laws of being. Tolstoy compares human life to a team of horses in harness and says that the man truly living should feel the pressure of the reins that are in the driver's hands.

Those who think cannot live the truth. They appreciate, vindicate and paint sometimes the Truth, but cannot thereby live it. The mere thinkers make mere portraits of it and pleasing but dead pictures. Those who truly live are in the domain of self—realization to live as He may make us live, without eyes fixed day and night on the Guru, with our limbs sweating and labouring for Him. All labouring and sweating is truly and eventually for society. Incessant work of any kind, intellectual as well as that of a scientist, manual as of a farmer, is after all the best form of social prayer. In incessant work the "I-ness" dies of itself.

Provided the seed cells are alive, no amount of earth can prevent the tiny plant from breaking the crust of earth. It has small but infinite power to raise its head towards the sun. That power is in man who is made alive with love. Love cannot be coaxed by vows. No Sikh would take vows. Ever tempting and highly exciting, to the popular mind at least of India, is the dramatic renunciation of men, of vows, and many are led into it irresistibly; but however high-minded mere individuals here and there may become, the people get the spark of life from them. Unfortunately these great and truly democratic notions of the Sikh Gurus were born in a religion-tormented, theology—enslaved, superstitious, idle and speculative India. Guru Nanak left India and lent his universal sympathy to men everywhere. He went to different nations and was the honoured guest of all. He was and is still so. Love is an unceasing remembrance. The touch of love gives an eternal memory of delight to the blind flesh of man. The bones feel the relish of a kiss. Simrin is the life of youth, only the less developed life feels it spasmodically and the highly developed lyrical genius finds no leisure from the enslaved repetition of the thrilling relishes of its perpetual Union-in-separation with God. Guru Nanak is inspired by the moonbeams, by the rays of the sun, by the quivering forest leaves, by the very woods that name Him.

For us, except at rare moments rising to the passionate love of woman or child we can never estimate the Guru's divine emphasis on Simrin—"Naming Him." The very fact that it seems meaningless, unintelligible, shows how great is the difference between the lyrical state of the Guru and ours. But we can, by our little love-quickened life—pulse, guess His unimaginable lyrical state which he calls Simrin. The Prophet Muhammad in that state called all those who do not have it Kafirs and declared their life one long misery. Alas, the Prophet's intense joy became death for the Kafirs. The Guru inspired all who came in his circle men became god by his one touch." "The Guru put his hand on my forehead and thereby threw all evil out of me." (Guru Granth).

The Guru rises up and takes religion, the ethics of man and converts them into a song, a hymn. "Music is the shower of amrita." Man must feel the music of being and on those altitudes there is no "other". The Guru is of the Christian and the Jew, of the Muslim and the Hindu. His disciples are universal. His disciple is a soldier whose life is for the service of all humanity. And yet the disciple's love that prompts services of humanity is his intense love for the person of the Guru. Without this central light round which the Sikh revolves, his dedication becomes a sin, his service disease, a curse.

Footnotes:

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|---|-----------|
| 1. Echo of Japuji (16,17).                | - Editor. |
| 2. Echo of Sri Raga.                      | - Editor. |
| 3. In Muslim lore she is called Zuleikha. | - Editor. |
| 4. <i>Mukte</i> in the Sikh tradition.    | - Editor. |
| 5. These are from Asa-ki-Var.             | - Editor. |
| 6. Editor's note.                         |           |
| 7. An apsara (celestial maiden).          | - Editor. |
| 8. The ego-centred man.                   | - Editor. |
| 9. The God-directed man.                  | - Editor. |
| 10. Hukam.                                | - Editor. |

## CHAPTER XVI

### ON DEATH

Forms break, change and become new, the spirit that manifests through them as beauty is beyond decay, death and change—yet there is no Spirit, so to say, without them. Those attain to immortal freedom of soul who live, with themselves wholly lost in the pure spirit of Beauty, love and life. And those who have not seen Him yet, go the way of death and dissipation.

The individual soul is in the process of creation; it is evolving out of matter and its dual bondage of death and desire. It has to undergo transformation before it is fit for freedom. The individual soul is in different stages of freedom and revolves round a wheel of “births and deaths” in the vortex of “I-ness”, till it completes its development and loses itself in the Being of pure Spirit, when Heaven’s grace finally lifts it off, so to say, from the revolving wheel. Then it is free. It rises above the law of causality. It attains its perfection in one moment, in one glance. The favour of God emancipates it. There are worlds of these souls in different disembodied stages, some fettered in their own violence of thought and deed, some fettered in their own rigid finitude of mental principles, burdened with the heaviness of thoughts and opinions. Good men are bound in the heaviness of their own mechanical goodness pressing on their souls, and apparently “bad” men being light of soul in spite of seeming indulgence in pleasures of “sin”, being wholly disentangled, are freed in self-consciousness. Some are chained with the chains of habits, others with those of fancies, fictions and so on. And all individual souls are thus working out their destiny under the law of “Sow and Reap”.

Freedom is a Ruled objective. “And is comes through Simrin”, says the Guru. Constant repetition in “Naming Him,” “Loving Him,” within the subliminal depths of being brings about freedom from all desire.

Enough is their inner intoxication of Nam and they never violate their souls by desire.

A state of mind prevails in which both time and space are annihilated by Simrin. The individual soul comes in touch with the higher spiritual Realms and by their contact (Sat Sangat) it develops the habit of “Eating the sparks of life” for centuries, under their protection.

True spiritual life is this life of the individual soul in contact with the higher emancipated beings. All below it are yet in the stage of struggle. All struggle is the evolution of matter in its slow transmutation into pure spirit. Every particle of it is destined to be a spiritual entity.

The galaxy of souls shining with their individual lights in the self-effulgence of pure Spirit is a sight worth all this suffering. Indeed, one can say that the one perfected individual soul increases as if it were the self-effulgence of the pure Spirit.

To create the individual soul, as that of Jesus Christ or the Buddha is the effort of evolution. Not all individual souls are immortal yet. Only the love-ripe souls have attained immortality by favour of the Guru.

The spirit-inspired have no fear of death. And the Guru-inspired disciples have shown in their life that the Sikhs of the Guru never shirked to face death. They loved it, courted it, and embraced it with a glad heart. The Sikh is human, but in the immensity of his favour of deathless love, he conquers the fear of death. Here are a people who die with the glow of their faith undimmed.

“Es leuchtis mir ein” (I see a glimpse of it). There is in man higher than love of happiness. How can he do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness? Was it not ‘to preach forth this that sages and martyrs, the poet and the priest in all times, have spoken and suffered, bearing testimony, through life, through death, of the God-like. . . . Thank thy destiny, for those thankfully bear what yet remains; thou hast read of them; the self in thee needs to be annihilated. By benignant fever paroxysms is life rooting out the deep-seated chronic billows of Time. Thou art not engulfed, but come aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not

Pleasure, Love God. This is the ever-lasting year where in all contradiction is solved; where in whose walks and works is well with him.”<sup>1</sup> (Carlyle).

True spiritual greatness does not come from the desire of coaxing pleasure. It is in the sparkle of sharp steel. Guru Arjan Dev sings while being burnt alive. Guru Tegh Bahadur sings while being tortured in the Moghul prison at Delhi. Guru Gobind Singh composes a hymn to God on hearing of the death of his two sons at Sirhind. Guru Har Gobind is lost in God while on horseback. Guru Gobind Singh plays on all the key -notes of ‘the human heart to sing the same divine anthem. The will to suffer and still to triumph inwardly is the essential trait of the character of all the Gurus even when seen from a human point of view. Guru Gobind Singh dresses his other two Sons as soldiers and wishes them the glorious death of a soldier fighting against tyranny. They go and die on the battle -field before his eyes. His disciples die in thousands. Hunger and suffering break their hearts, but the Guru sustains them. Sikh women face death, rather than turn their back on their sun—the Guru—the Ideal—the Pure Spirit-in-form. They had touched the feet of God. These people cared little for pleasures and comforts, they rose to die wholly in love.

Never before in Indian History has pure love of death manifested itself so gloriously as in Sikh History. The Rajputs were blind of the true inward inspiration of love; they died for pride of their clan whose prowess had once made its mark and had raised them in the estimation of the world. They died on their swords, their women on the funeral pyre as suttees, for noble and jealous pride of their blood, for reputation. Great indeed, but yet not of the colour of God. And the Rajputs once degraded from there by Akbar’s policy could never rise again to any distinct heroism, even for their caste. The pride of a clan can offer only a limited inspiration for death; life has greater attractions when such people are civilized by a superior conquering clan.

The Marhattas were the successors to the Rajputs in India; a hardy people essentially after conquest. They will undergo any hardships and display any heroism for gain. Pure love of death is seen only in Sikh History.

Guru Gobind Singh, in his powerful language, addressed the Pure Spirit as the All-death. Guru Gobind Singh coins strange names for God — All-steel, All-death, Great-steel, Great death. “All shall live, nothing shall pass away,” is the burden of the Guru’s active life. War of a defenceless poor people with a whole organized empire indicates not the spirit of warring, but the spirit of seeking death as moths seeking the flame.

Through a marvellous repetition of their large views on love, life and death, destiny, God and man, and through a large range of visions when contemplating on all these great things; through on endless repetition of feeling and sentiment in their sons the Gurus have given us, in their writings, they envisaged the personality of an undefeated spiritual man.

This type of man, ever striving, ever scaling the heights like a soldier—dying, falling and rising again to go forth is silhouetted in Sikh History.

Kindled as great star-fires, no winds of this earth could extinguish item.

Guru Teg Bahadur writes more positively than Guru Nanak Dev and the other Gurus, on sorrow, for that period in Sikh history was following when not the Gurus, but the disciples were to be called upon to die for the sake of their faith and for justice and for truth. Death, which looked so dreadful before, was made by this inspiration the bride of the Khalsa. And this spirit, similar in this aspect with the spirit of Yamoto Bushido of Japan, was invoked by Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Har Gobind, Guru Teg Bahadur and most of all by Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh’s words were made as if to fill the mind of the disciples by the very vibration that one seeks death with perfect faith in a just Divine Order. Men seem gods in their super human endurance of suffering.

Guru Gobind Singh writes a whole chapter in praise of the Sword and All-death. Death, if we remember that all must die, is a great chastener of the human mind. The man who sympathises with the mystery of death ceases to avenge himself on this passing evanescence of life and sorrow and virtue and joy. He is more solemn and pitiful, and can never think of

inflicting any suffering on others. He suffers with the patience of trees<sup>2</sup> growing in the woods. He judges not, for only he can judge who knows both the past and the future. He does not attach dead finality of any kind to his own principles and opinions without according the same privilege to others. In this sublime sadness, true renunciation is of opinions and principles which torment humanity.

And it is remarkable that the Gurus, though at times expressing themselves strongly against certain grossness and imperfections of perverse humanity, and seemingly so full of righteous moral indignation, merge their opinions into their infinite reverence for the unknown scheme of things. "All is as He wills".

If anyone deceives him who knows the sorrow of humanity, he knows he was to forgive him. He deceives not. All sins are washed by this awful human sorrow and compassion as came to Lord Buddha once. What use having grievances against anyone of this earth, when all must die? He thus attains a philosophic balance. But the sadness in the Sikh congregation, as generated by the Gurus, was by no means a hopeless pessimism. The Gurus mobilized the whole race for an incessant struggle for God's favour and the "Guru's acceptance" by dying as bravely as by living cheerfully. And the moments of sadness in Sikh history are moments of the greatest and intensest activity. They call the nation to incessant self-sacrifice.

But the spirit of the Khalsa that despises comfort and pleasure and welcomes suffering, sorrow and death is unique. This passion for death, infused by the Guru in the Sikh, is the only form of that renunciation of which Goethe and Carlyle say "It is only with renunciation (Entsager) that life, properly speaking can be said to begin".

Footnotes:

1. From Sartor Resartus. - Editor.
2. This image is from Sheikh Farid's Slokas. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XVII

### WAR

Dearest Comrades. All is over and long gone;  
But Love is not over—and what love, O Comrades;  
Perfume from battle-fields rising up from foe or arising.  
Perfume, therefore, my chant, 'O Love, Immortal Love'.  
Give me to bathe the memories of all dead solvers;  
Shroud them, embalm them, cover them all over with tender pride.  
Perfume all, make all wholesome,  
Make these ashes to nourish and blossom,  
O Love, O chant.  
Solve All, all with the last chemistry.  
Give me exhaustless — make me a fountain,  
That I exhale love from wherever I go, like a moist perennial dew,  
For the ashes of all dead soldiers.

(Walt Whitman)

War is a social evil on a large scale. It is murder, hatred selfishness enlarged to gigantic proportions. Evil like good is productive of some ultimate compensations of human progress especially when the scale of its operations is very large. Mere death of man is not the most pathetic part of war—men have to die. Death cannot be prevented. But war disturbs personal affections and gives earthquake-like shocks to the civic and social relations of a settled order. Man becomes a brute drunk with the brute spirit of revenge. War is a kind of coming of geological shocks in human affairs that, in themselves, seem to be in need of some shock to grow better.

To make war a fetish like the old cannibals and Tartars and Huns, is making of murder a religious creed; but to make of peace also a fetish in matters of international and social adjustments like the Hindu who says, "All is one, injure not even for saving the oppressed", is to ignore criminally the sad limitations of the material environment of man. "Injure not" is first of all for those who can injure. The low-lying people, the oppressed, if anything, have to inure the injurer to get to the same peace of mind, just as the strong have to reach the same peace by not injuring their injurers.

So the Guru says to those who can injure—injure not, suffer; endure all kinds of violence, but injure not. And those who cannot injure, for them to rise in moral indignation against oppressors of all kinds is the highest function of all true citizens. To die nobly is better than to live ignobly. The Hindu advocates of non-violence cling too much to the body life, while the Sikh is called upon to court death, for in death and beyond death there is the opening of much richer vistas of life than is possible here as slaves, under the heels of stronger people who are out to crush man and eat him up. Theories apart, if a man's blood does not boil in righteous indignation against wrong, he is dead, however splendid the theories of life he may have enshrined in the little circle of his brain. War is an evil like an earthquake, but passing through it is a natural discipline for humanity. The clouds gather, the rain falls, the sun shines, no one can interfere and modify the phenomena. So with war. The Guru did not scruple to wage war against tyrannical and unjust kings, especially when he saw it had so come upon him. It was thrust upon him. Guru Nanak had said, "To die in an approved cause is justified on the part of heroic men." Guru Nanak's personality is reflected in the whole Sikh history. He was not a sentimentalist, or man of the cloister, wrapped up in mystic reveries. Mystic reveries floated about him as clouds about the high mountain peaks. He was a lover of the people and he and his followers worked for them. They fought for the people's liberties. "The sword", says Guru Gobind Singh, "is in the constitution of life. God did just fling it out of himself"<sup>1</sup>. The sword is the revelation of the moral law to the mass-mind. "Those who forget God (the moral

Law) suffer”, says Guru Nanak. Carlyle’s text in the French Revolution is the same. *Jai Tegham*—Victory be to sword’, says Guru Gobind Singh. And in relative and imperfect human development, the statesmen of all nations of this earth know, that is the meaning of *Jai Tegham*. Guru Gobind Singh was the greatest statesman, his religion cannot live on this earth without the sparkle of the sword. And what religion can? Even Buddhism spread through the support of kings. Kings and all international armament must aid the gospel of Guru Gobind Singh. War is a cruel thing, but what is life when viewed from the standpoint of Not—god, but an endless cruelty, one crushing the other? So it is the sword that is capable of destroying darkness and this has to be gone through. The moral Law must prevail. Draw the sword, O Man! if you cannot live at peace with your neighbour. So long as everyone of us is not a true Sikh, a true Christian, a man whose flesh is transmuted into the very flesh of kindness, worse will happen than war, pestilence, earthquake, famines for you Only rooted things can live, the uprooted must be dried up by winds and burnt by the fire. “Mercy is religion, love is religion”, says Tulsidas.<sup>2</sup> The iron is the blood of living races. Only the dead talk of non-violence, only slaves in their helplessness shut their eyes like the pigeon before the cat. The Guru does not mince matters. We have only to ponder what the Guru himself is in midst of war. Guru Har Gobind is on his horse fighting with the Moghul commander, sword in hand. The Moghul gave blow after blow. And the Guru kept dexterously parrying them. His turn came and he said, as if joking with a comrade in a manly duel, “See, that is not the way to deal sword-blows, this is the way”. The Guru gave his thrust and the Moghul fell. What has not been appreciated in the drama of Sikh history, with all its wars and peace, quiet action and ecstatic dream, is that the Guru never knew Fear; the Guru-consciousness was God-consciousness all the time, under all difficulties, tortures, persecutions and wars. So says Bhai Vir Singh, the great Sikh poet-historian. This invincibility of the Guru’s soul consciousness is the great lesson of Sikh life—elevated, transported, rich, looking askance at death and dangers. Little actions of his daily life are little windows through which some glimpse of his spiritual personality, unbending like the high Himalayan peaks, immense as a veritable moral and spiritual universe in itself, can be had.

Guru Har Gobind was to celebrate the marriage of his daughter. The Moghul hordes fell upon Amritsar. When they came, the Guru was in bedclothes. The Sikhs came in anxious haste saying, “Sire, the Moghul armies are hastening hither.” Guru Har Gobind, however, would not be surprised into any confusion on account of his unpreparedness. He ordered his wife and daughter and other members of the family to go to a neighbouring village and wait for him there; and he, with perfectly cool and composed mind, dressed for action. The action took place a little away from Amritsar; the daughter was left in the Amritsar house of the Guru. The Sikhs went and rescued her, and he went out at night looking after the wounded and gave away his daughter in marriage that very night!

Guru Nanak is many times surrounded by cannibals, by Assam Tantriks, by “Kali Yuga” himself, the Apparition of Vice coming like a storm on him. His companion, Mardana, is afraid for his life, but the Guru unfailingly then, as at all other times, says to him: “*Mardania, dekb rang Kartar de*”—Wait and see what my God does, what is His pleasure.

Guru Tegh Bahadur gives up his body to save the Hindu people from the oppression of Islam as practised by the Moghul Emperor. And Guru Gobind Singh? He comes to initiate Said Khan into discipleship, in the enemy’s- camp. Said Khan was the general in command. Seeing him, he says: “What is that secret which makes Buddhu Shah thine?” “Put your head on my stirrup”, said the Guru. Said Khan laid his head at his feet, the Guru touched him with his arrow, and was gone! Said Khan is transmuted into a saint of Simrin. He goes to the mountainous solitudes and renounces the command of the Moghul army. The inspirer of such upward attitudes of remembrance of God in his disciples all the time, even on horseback, is himself fighting—fighting for, as Guru Nanak said, “The kine on which the tiger was let loose”<sup>3</sup>. Nothing could shake the equanimity of his spirit. He was unruffled in war, in peace, in joy and in sorrow. Guru Gobind Singh playfully flings his arrow at the place in the enemy’s camp where

the Moghul generals were sitting and talking of the Guru. They said, "He is reported to be a man of Kashf, a mystic. And why should he be harrassed?" Then fell the Guru's arrow, tipped with gold, and struck a leg of the divan on which they were seated. They all wondered how he could know their minds from such a distance and give proof of his powers of *Kashf*. While they were thus talking, came another arrow, and there was a letter attached to the arrow. "This is no Kashf, (mystic power); this is Kashf of skill in the art of archery". And they wondered still more. Long was the siege of ANANDPUR. He bade his followers to hold on. "The Elephant from Assam," the offering to him, which he had refused to pass on to the Hindu raja, and which refusal was the immediate of all his trouble, was reduced to a skeleton. The Guru still asked his Sikhs to hold on. But they gave up and deserted him. Others asked him to quit the fort, accepting the treacherous offer of the truce that the Moghuls made. The Guru came out. He was chased. His mother and two children had to fly in one direction, his wife in another. He and his two children and his Sikhs in still another. All were scattered. The epics and religious volumes composed at Anandpur were dumped into the stream of Sirsa. While they were thus running, the bell of the holy caravan to the destination of song of His adoration rang; they halted and chanted Guru Nanak's *Asa-ki-Vār*. On the Guru and his camp of song fell the Moghuls. All was lost. But in every good place in the Punjab, *Asa-ki-Vār* is still chanted. Two Sons were lost in the battle of Chamkaur. Many devoted Sikhs fell there. Alone and all lost, Guru Gobind Singh is still undaunted. He journeys through bush and brake over long, distances and when some of his Sikhs again meet him his thighs are swollen and sore. They brought knives and scissors to cut his clothes away, piece by piece, not to give unnecessary pain to Him, but the Guru put his hand on to it and tore it open. He had nothing to eat for days save the leaves of *Akek* (*Calotropis gigantea*) to keep up the physical flame of life. The dedicated cannot budge from self-sacrifice; and sometimes saving of the life-spark is the greatest self-sacrifice; and for Guru Gobind Singh to have eaten *Akek* leaves and to have thought of living on and not dying is the noblest human act. Every breath as he inhaled on this earth is an act of oblation at the altar of God.

He becomes, a guest at the house of a Sikh, Gulaba in a village called Machhiwara, who had been to the Guru in the jungle and had invited him, under cover of night, to his house. He went to his house thus under the shade of night and at his personal invitation. His host Gulaba is a friend, but a trembling, weak, little man. He proposes to conceal the Guru under a huge heap of hay. But to the great dismay of Gulaba the Guru announces his arrival to the Mohammedan population of the village in strange ways. He does not allow himself to be concealed. "What will you eat?" asked Gulaba. And says the Guru, "Mutton, and the goat must be shot by a bullet; my soldiers will do it". Mutton was prepared and as he partook of it he threw some of the bones over the wall into the adjoining courtyard of a Mohammedan neighbour, and a few bones into the courtyard to the Brahmin on the other side. They thought it must be a strange guest who pollutes our courtyards. The bullet shot had aroused suspicions, which the throwing of mutton-bones confirmed. The Mohammedan and the Brahmin families both began shouting, "The Guru". The Guru was wanted by the Emperor's men. His hordes were on his heels, chasing him. And the Guru could not be concealed under the hay heap as his host had, proposed on his arrival at his house. When the voices of the neighbours became loud, the Guru threw gold mohurs as he threw the mutton. One saying "Allah, Allah," kept quiet, threw the bones aside and picked up the gold mohurs. Likewise the Brahmin came with a sacred thread to bless the Guru. He got a few more gold mohurs. Gulaba and his wife felt afraid; and by this time the Moghul pursuers also arrived. Machhiwara was besieged and Gulaba could not conceal even formally his mortal fear. "You will be found, Sire, in the house and I and my all will be destroyed". "Be not afraid. I will go from here uncaught, and not a hair of yours will be touched".



Gulaba is a loving Sikh of the Guru, but his love is weak, his fear more; and he finally frankly denies his little shelter to the Guru. The remote is unseen by mortal eyes, the near terrifies them.

There was in the village of Machhiwara a Sikh called Nihala Choudhari. His mother Guru Devi was a fine Sikh personality; she had spun yarn and woven cloth out of it and prepared a wear for the Guru all these years, waiting to offer it to him and to be blessed. The Guru asked Gulaba to go and invite the lady to his house. The lady came. She was transfigured. Her offer was accepted. She was blessed. The responsiveness of the Guru to the aching prayers of people is infinite. The Sikhs gathered to celebrate the birthday of the Guru at Gulaba's house, verily under the enemy's swords. And right then the offering of food brought by the lady was distributed among the small Sangat (devout group) that gathered there. After the celebration of the brief and simple festivity, the Guru asked Gulaba to go and call Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan who were his old friends—the horse-dealers. The friends come. They reported that search parties were after the Guru, and close search was kept for his person. All suspected Sadhus and Fakirs were arrested. As the Khawaja's army was besieging the town, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan proposed to take him out on their shoulders in disguise; and he went towards Lakhi Jungle.

In Lakhi jungle, the scattered disciples met the Guru again. The Guru here was an afflicted father. He asked for news of his two sons who, with their grandmother, had gone towards Sirhind. A Sikh was despatched very soon after. The Guru asked, "Has the Sikh returned with the news?" "Not yet, Sire, he is but just gone". "Just gone; climb up a tall tree and see, he must be coming". "No, Sire, he is put just gone". "See again". "Not yet". Anxious hours passed; news came that the mother expired from the shock and the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh were buried alive in the Sirhind wall. The Guru sang a hymn of devotion to the Lord. And the Khalsa again chanted the congregational music notes.

His passing through such a way of vengeance, a war, which was not waged by him, with that unequalled elevation of mind, as if the peak of Gauri Shankar was passing through a snow-blizzard. The Guru raised his head like Gauri Shankar, unruffled, majestic and grand. For Sikh history to have produced personalities like this, is what is marvellous and they could not have been understood by the world. Nature conspires against such lofty natures to break them down, and the Guru having passed through all that storm of war unbent and victorious, is the true miracle of their moral strength. War is creative of great nobilities; thus, when viewed in the whole scheme of things, it has a purpose. Those whose aim in life is to sympathize with the consent inscrutable<sup>4</sup>, war too being of it, cannot very well sympathize with their mind-born schemes between themselves and that Great Will of God. Such petty-fogging morality is meagre and of a vain blind pride. It is like saying: "Let us make this world as a whole something better". A tiny cell instead of harmonically functioning in the whole life of the tree, trying to isolate itself to change the tree into a monkey! All such schemes, however fascinating, are only mental, not spiritual. Spontaneous humanity, in its very essence, is moral. Those who are taught moralities become more consciously moral and this conscious morality, like conscious sincerity is a species of immorality. The moral philosopher goes on constructing justifications for his acts and the acts of his friends, while unsophisticated innocent men have faith and do not prevaricate, nor deceive God. Without passing through war, thrust on them as it was, the Gurus could not have created an ever-inspiring New Order for the Khalsa.

Here again, we find the modern poet of America singing the Guru's noble spirit in war. The Hindus who live nearest to him are still repeating the dead slogans of Jainism and boring the very life out of us by repeating its doctrines of non-injury and non-violence:

"Lo, I too am come chanting the chant of battles.

I above all promote brave soldiers"

A sight in camp in the day-break green and dim,

As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,

As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital tent,  
Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended lying.  
Over each the blanket spread, ample, brownish woollen blanket.  
Grey and heavy blanket, folding, covering all,  
Curious I hold and silent stand.  
Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest,  
The first, just lift the blanket:  
Who are you, elderly, so gaunt and grim, with well-greyed hair, and flesh all sunken about  
the eyes,  
Who are you, My dear comrade?  
Then to the second I step, and who are you my child, my darling,  
Who are you, sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?  
Then to the third, a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of beautiful yellow white ivory.  
Young man, I think I know you—I think this face is the face of Christ himself,  
Dead, divine and brother of all—And here again he lies.  
(This to us the Sikhs is the description of the Guru as he went looking for his disciples  
on the Battle-fields.)  
Vigil strange I kept on the field one night,  
When you, my son, my comrade, dropt at my side that day,  
One look I but gave which your dear eyes returned with a look I shall never forget;  
One touch of your hand to mine, O Boy, reached up as you lay on the ground,  
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even— contested battle.  
Till late in the night relieved to the place at last again I made my way.  
Found you in death so cold, dead comrade, found your body, son responding kisses  
(never again on earth responding).  
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew the moderate night-wind,  
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battle-field spreading,  
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet . There in the fragrant silent night,  
But not a tear fell, not even a tong-drawn sigh; long, long, I gazed,  
Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side, leaning my chin in my hands,  
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you, dearest comrade, not a tear,  
not a word,  
Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you, my son, my soldier,  
As onward silently stars aloft eastward, new ones upward, stole,  
Vigil final for you, brave boy. 'I could not serve you, swift was your death.'  
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall surely meet again,  
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed, just as the dawn appeared.  
My comrade, I wrapt in his blanket, enveloped well his form,  
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and carefully under feet,  
And there and then bathed by the rising Sun, my son in his grave in his rude-dug grave I  
deposited,  
Ending my vigil strange with that vigil of night and battle-field dim,  
Vigil for boy of responding kisses (never again on earth responding),  
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget. Now as day brightened,  
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his blanket,  
I buried him where he fell.  
Not the pilot has charged himself to bring his ship into port, though beaten back and  
many times baffled,  
Not the path-finder penetrating inland weary and long,  
By deserts parch'd, snows chill'd, rivers wet, perseveres till he reaches his destination,

More than I have charged myself, heeded or unheeded, to compose a march for these  
States,  
For a battle call, rousing to arms if need be, years, centuries hence.  
Thus in silence, in dream's projections,  
Retrieving, resuming, I thread my way through the hospitals,  
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,  
I sit by the restless all the dark night; some are so young,  
Some suffer so much , I recall the experience sweet and sad,  
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck had crossed and rested,  
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips).

(Walt Whitman)

Footnotes:

1. This is not a quotation, but an expression of the spirit. - Editor.
2. A Hindi poet of the seventeenth century, author of Ramayana. - Editor.
3. From a hymn in Babar-Vani. - Editor.
4. Hukam, reza are meant. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ETHICS

All ethics pertains to the physical struggle of life involved in matter in its effort of evolution or *karma* in the popular sense. Viewed from the cosmic standpoint, virtue and vice have equal value, as both pertain to the temporary state of grossness that has to transcend itself. The good and the bad are not only relative mental terms, but depend wholly on physiological conditions. With the advancement of physiology, it would be possible to cure the thief by a pill and reform the murderer by a dose of glandular secretions. Even a surgeon's knife will be able to turn an idiot into a genius. As long as ignorance about these matters continues, one does not mind the zeal of ethics to reform the human being. After all, it is not clear whether it would be the best possible world immediately if a universal cure of idiocy, perversity, violence of vice and crime is effected.

The spirit of God shines self-resplendent and is independent. Ethics take the world from a relative point of view and from the latter, there can be an infinite number of arrangements and rearrangements. Ethics thus, are temporary substitutes for pills and powders and cures by the surgeon's knife that might come as we get more light on our own constitution. But our true relationship with the soul-word, our relation, the inner relation of the soul with soul-worlds is independent of our physical and mental constitution and its compelling strains and stresses. What has leprosy to do with the relation of a leper-mother to her child? The great moral law of Nature must be identical with the beauty of creation, must be found working as perfectly in the tiger's heart, in a murderer's soul as in Indra and Vishnu. In the moral law as in the Beauty of creation one must needs come face to face with the spirit of God, the spirit of Beauty, the vision of which makes one thankful in this dark, distressing world of matter. The moral law then comes to the tiger, to man, to the doe, as spontaneously as does life. The tiger and the murderer, in their own way, are trying to realize it, for the "upward tendency" is shedding matter and continuously becoming the Pure God. All vice must lead finally to God-realization as effectively as virtue. Virtue is some kind of vice in the state of purification. For God-realization to prescribe mind-born ethics is as ridiculous as to alter the entire scheme of things by feeding a little kid with a special kind of fragrant grass.

In the Guru's system alone, one for the first time comes across the frank truths of spontaneous integration of the spirit of God, through an infinite transformation of matter and its configurations. The pure God must be a certain rearrangement and some happy reconfiguration of matter itself. All mind-born ethics are of matter, material; all minds themselves are mostly physical. All life is of matter and material, which not as yet has its eyes opened to see the Prefect in self-effulgence everywhere as God. The spirit of God thus, is seen by the Guru, as we see sunlight. Those who have seen it, for them the moral law, the beauty, the Spirit of God, the true spirituality of all things high and low have become truly manifest both within them and without. And they are set truly at rest; for them all struggle which is the function of life coming out of matter has ended. The highest function of life is not struggle then, but strugglelessness.

Guru Nanak sings the rapture of seeing face to face the spiritual beauty of Creation. It is redundant to think of "doing one's duty". "Doing one's duty" is as spontaneous and as natural for an emancipated man as for the tigress to protect her little cubs. Guru Nanak's method of reforming is to place a transmuted, radiant gem in the clay ribs of a mere clay statue of man as he is in his unredeemed state. He never looks to the beauty or ugliness of his cast or chiselled features; he never looks to his colour or caste of name or race. A Tania Bhil and a Gladstone are equally ugly and equally beautiful for his purpose. And he makes no conditions, nor parleys with any, nor indulges in categorical imperatives —Don't do this or do that. He lets the gem burn in the breast of the statue. He lets its radiant light work in transmuted matter

of the man into Pure Spirit. A day comes, an hour arrives, a moment short as a flash and long as eternity happens, when the statue is wholly illumined by the light of Guru Nanak's gem and there is the faint spiritual beauty radiating, and the dead statue becomes alive. The breath of Nam sings in him, the man moves on the crowded Universe as a Torch that lights.

All matter is restless. All desire is restless. All life evolving out of matter is impatient. Those who have been initiated into the beauty of the spirit of God, on the contrary, become *restful*. Guru Nanak says, the touch of an elevated Nām-filled personality has the power of vision and peace and sympathy with creation. The alchemical touch transmutes the matter of man. All excitement is over. Love is intense prayer in the lyrics of Guru Granth, but its touch is soothing, not exciting. Love and passion are transmuted by the touch of Guru Nanak into the high ecstasy of the pure spirit. The processes of ethical evolution, the systems of the so-called spiritual and Yogic Sadhanas to perfected men and gods, the desires of attaining uncanny ghostly powers of the lower worlds, are feverish symptoms of the restlessness of the struggle of matter to get to the life of the spirit. The law of Karma, as definitely brought forward by the Buddha, is applicable only to the struggling world and the world of spirits that are not freed yet of their own fulfilment of desires, There is a world above the Spirit-world—the super-spirit world which is all-spiritual and very faintly and vanishingly material, where this law of Karma is transcended. For those who have really met the Guru in their life the way to the ending of all Karma is opened out. And the Guru points to these world of the soul, where matter is not, and all is spirit; and there alone is the world of true freedom both from matter and the laws of causality.

One can almost say that all systems of “do's” and “don't's” and philosophies of doing one's duty and all humanizing systems of laws, all self-sacrifices induced by dry intellectual altruism are earthy, as they are still mere “efforts.” Such goodness stands on intellectual arguments, and is not yet spiritual. To man still struggling, it is of immense value relatively. It is not applicable beyond certain planes of existence.

Guru Nanak is consistent in giving to mere ethical efforts a lower place and ignoring all of them when he is looking upto the shower of grace that comes and makes all alive, above effort, when his gaze is fixed on deathless Beauty; when the everlasting Nām is his theme.

He sits under a tree and sings. The moral law of God works in spite of our ethics. And Guru Nanak says, “Live in god and all goes well”. The one thing needful is to live on heights of glory intoxicated by the Great Beauty of god which is seen by man in the world of immortals. Religion has been for all these centuries naught but stagnant intellectualism, except when it was a vision of the prophet or noble creative-activity of a spiritual “Nām-Entity”.

## CHAPTER XIX

### AESTHETICS

This is exactly what every Sikh thinks of Guru Granth and gets his all from the hymns of the Guru. The Gurus are the masters of beauty. Aesthetics have more of the spiritual than ethics. Here it is the spiritual man that goes out and gets, for the purpose of the subjective rapture, entangled in the spiritual form, inextricable as the latter is from the material form of beauty. The struggle goes on. Sometimes like a bee, he gets into the flower's heart and sucks honey and flies out; at other times he gets buried and decays to death. It is a fatal but the most brilliant pursuit of the senses.

The aesthetic pleasures of the truly spiritual, by the very nature of things, cannot become so intense as to lead to disintegration of themselves. Pleasure is an explosive emotion, it detonates and explodes. True spiritual aesthetics convert all contents of beautiful objects into subjective thrills. They absorb them. They eat the sparks of beauty that the forms of beauty, flashing before them, rain on their soul, as the night-birds eat the glow-worms. The spirit of God or the Being of Truth "lives on music, and wears the colours of life". The truly spiritual cling to fascinating beauty of form, and their God-world, too, is peopled by faces and forms of immaculate lustre. There are worlds of souls beyond, and they are only happy in the company of the perfected emancipated souls. Loneliness is hell. They do not believe there is any bliss for the embodied ones outside the infinite. God too must visit them in the form of man and Nature.

To them the formless Brahman of the Hindus is a meaningless mental attenuation of a logical idea. Those that follow the ghost idea of the Upanishad must abandon form, and also the beauty of life clinging to forms. If two lovers meet after a long separation and in each other's embrace forget their forms in ecstasy of union, it is the chemical transformation of all forms into ecstasy. But this ecstasy fulfils forms; denial of form is rank atheism. The joy of the abstract-idea Brahman can only be of the formless art; therefore, in its love of form, Rup (Beauty) the Guru's idea of form and form transcending soul is truly spiritual as distinguished from the stagnant conceptual inanity erroneously known all the earth over as "spirituality" which defines Truth in terms of formlessness. Beauty is Form; even ugliness of features is beautiful. This is the inner spirit of all true Art. Formlessness is ugliness. Absolute beauty is ecstasy, clothing all kinds of forms and radiating from the sun. As light is bound to the lamp, so ecstasy to the nucleus of "I" perfected, the form, the face. Change, even of death, is the sweep of some artist's brush or chisel that He incessantly moulds and remoulds to His Heart's desire—the Perfect One.

It is Buddhism that brought art to this perfection of self-realisation. The statues of the Buddha at Kamakuru and the little miniatures are the sculptured images of the ecstasy of his universal friendship.

The Greek Artist from this view point is yet only an aristocrat. His preference for the beauty of right proportion of limbs, of right curves and exquisite ripples of lines in the human form cannot allow him to be on terms of loving comradeship with the broad-nosed, big nostriled low castes of India. But the latter, too, have an inner beauty of feeling and goodness and essential divinity of soul.

Nataraja, the Shiva dancing in the rapture of his speculation fulfilled, is not so balanced inwardly as the Buddha of Kamakura in its ecstatic composure. There is mental rhythm in Nataraja, but not the spiritual patience or innocence of a child.

Pre-Buddhistic or post-Buddhistic Hindu Art in its grotesqueness has the restlessness of intellectual effort for the divine in it, while the effortlessness of a newborn infant is in the truly spiritual repose of the sculptured Buddha.

Vishnu or Garuda trying to fly is typical of the self-effort of man to lean out of his skin, to be spiritual by a jump. However highly subtle and abstract the theme, it is not art of the spiritual realities.

Ananda Coomaraswami and other art critics have well high confused the stagnant mentality of Advaita Vedanta in Realms of art with the moving ecstasy of the Buddha, and they explain the realisation of an essentially spiritual being in terms of a mental formula. They are much too near the newly discovered generalisations of the canons of Indian Art. The true spiritual differentiations are yet to follow on a more familiar understanding of the fundamentals. But this goes without saying that the Brahmanical philosophy of the Upanishads which names the Para-Brahm and Brahm only by infinite negation cannot be the parent of art, almost in the words of Kalidas, that the scripture-scorched ascetic could not be the parent of such beauty as Urvashi. Art cannot be the outcome of stagnant mental concepts. Art is the embodiment of feeling which requires for its spiritual realisation the loved-illuminated duality and an eternal infinitude of forms and beings. Art, in its humanity, is creative of intense jealousies contrary to that unruffled calm and in its divinities of “folded thrills” of ecstatic raptures.

The stagnant mentality is essentially inartistic and this one indictment of uncreativity against it makes it a thing of darkness. Tagore says, the best temples are in the most magnificent scenes of Nature. But this worship of Nature is superstitions. Switzerland worship sits scenery better than India, though quite objectively here in Indian Natural scenery is degraded by the touch of its worshipper. Keshub Chandra Sen once remarked: “The Hindu becomes irreligious religiously”. Rishikesh and Hardwar are examples of such a malady. They shut their eyes when amidst the most glorious scene of Nature contemplating, when a Hindu devotee meets God, he shuts his eyes. When a Sikh sees the Guru, he devours Him with his eyes. He closes the eyes when in separation from the beloved.

The Sikh personality, is like that of the Buddhist, a wholly artistic consciousness. “Chisel the Guru in yourself” is the subtle gesture of Guru Nanak’s personality. This spiritual feeling is the parent of all Art.

To fill all inner space with the face of the Guru is the Sikh’s life of Simrin; to create the Beautiful One in one’s own features is Nam. The Soul is above the intellect and the will, and the art of Simrin of Guru Nanak is of the domain of the soul; both intellectual power and will-power must work for soul-culture, otherwise they are of the devil, matter.

## CHAPTER XX

### AT THE FEET OF THE LORD

My beard, my hair, my iron ring, my Sikh face and form are the memorials of His saving touch. I am proud of my rich relationships. My beard is my divine knowledge, it is my salvation. It is holy. I am proud of all His Glory that I see! I see him in myself. I serve Him. I bathe Him, I dress Him, I feed Him. My whole life is but an offering of Love.

I wished to hear again a word from those holy lips of Guru Arjan Dev himself, as did once my forefathers in the Punjab. I panted for it. I thirsted for it. I cried like a child. I wished to see him, the sweetest singer of Divine Love, who lived with us once, and spoke to us with sweetness that no one has since been capable of bestowing on us. Would he meet me? Where has he gone? Where dwells he now?

Messengers robed in white flames came and took me into a bright, fragrant chamber of my own house. There was the Treasure of His Songs.<sup>1</sup> I feel speechless at the feet of the Song, at the feet of His Disciple who has given me that Treasure, and also the zest in my soul for its pure light, at the Feet of the Master. The White-robed Messengers lifted me up and these angels made me sit by the Treasure of Song. The Angels sat in me and opened the Book of Songs and they read and listened. It was, I felt, Guru Arjan Dev come in response to my prayer, and speaking to me and blessing me as he blessed my ancestors of the Punjab. So is he still with me, I was comforted.

His voice still comes ringing through the Sikh. The Sikh is a symbol, a Temple. The Guru made him an image of song. Simrin is repetition of love-desires, noble aspirations, and the never-increasing sweetness of life. No one can escape the Simrin-inspiration. It is that which makes so fascinating the monotony of repetition of day and night, of love and longing. "Simrin of God" says Guru Nanak, "is what makes man alive." Simrin is the true builder and the silent architect of soul and personality.

#### VAND CHHAKNA

To share our bread and joy and love and attainments of God-Realisation with all. To give a feast of our flesh and blood, to be Christs, Buddhas, not men only. To be above Humanity, living outside our bodies, in touch with the super-humanity of the higher world.

The Ideal of discipleship is contrary to the fallacies of political economy. There is no political economy in the kingdom of Love. Father and mother starve to feed their children. It is to seek no kingdoms for itself, it is to add kingdoms to the poorest man. It is to rob no one. Better be animals of the forest, than men with religions of differences and duality. If man is merely tolerant to all religions, he is not yet a man, but a dog who wags his tail equally when touched by a Hindu, a Christian or a Mussalman. Animals are better than "men" who hate each other so much on account of "religions differences."

Better have no tongues,

If tongues are to be employed to name God in vain and to inflame the fires of animal passion.

It is better to die on the battlefield than to live in hatred of each other.

Better total annihilation than enslavement of body and mind even for a moment.

Bequeathe to your children the kingdom of Freedom and its rapture only, not the sickness of the sense of property.

The best law is of love,

The best service is of labour in love,

The best thought is of the emancipation of man,

The best justice from man to man is unselfishness



The best manners are incessant giving of the self away, and incessant forgiving.

The best ethics is melting away into the love of Ideal Beauty.

All that is yours belongs to anyone who needs it.

Any property accumulating round him is a burden to a man of culture when there is so much misery around. How can Princesses sleep and rich men live in comfort, when mothers are starving with babies sucking their milkless breasts? How can there be any true religion with man, when the powerful murder the weak; and how can any race be called civilized when the conquest of other races brutalizes their very soul?

The Union is in feeling in the soul, not in mind or in body.

The world is an inn on the road to perfection.

Footnotes:

1. Implies the Guru Granth Sahib, Scripture of the Sikh faith.

- Editor.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SIKH HISTORY, RELIGION, THE WORKER AND LOVE

Sikh history revolves round the Perfected man. When a whole people call the Guru Sacha Padisah and we find 300 years after, another man Carlyle, one of the greatest visionaries of England, even of the whole West, putting down so critically a whole library of sublime literature on this fundamental idea adopted by the uncouth Sikh peasantry of the Punjab, in their Gurus, is something not accidental. The Guru's shining Ideals float in ether. As far as the modern mind is to be represented by Carlyle, Goethe, Whitman and others in the realm of the spiritual vision of man's place in the universe, a closer and sympathetic study of Sikh history and the study of the Guru Granth would reveal the truth of this fervent view that the Ten Gurus ushered in the modern era of human relationships. The fundamental tendencies of the modern mind are visible in the new words and phrases coined by Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak. The unlettered labourers of love, these Sikhs and their still unrealised ideal Society and State foreshadow the coming of the Universal man. Carlyle says : "I say, find me the true king, King, Able man, and he has a divine right over me". The burden of the Guru Granth's song is also, "Find me a Gurumukh, he has me by Divine right". And this idea is repeated therein a thousand times, so that its clarity is beyond question. Guru Nanak when questioned as to whom was he seeking as a mystic wanderer, replies, "I am seeking the true man of God—the Gurumukh". "What is God?" The Guru in answer sang a hymn or cast a smile, a blessing or a lyrical glance and thereby planted in the questioner's consciousness a small fire, almost unnoticed by him, of live feeling for Carlyle's "Awful Unnameable". They let the feeling grow in man till he of himself comes to feel a unique sympathy welling up in his own being with the creation, and a personal love for the Creator. Merely preaching by word of mouth that God is this and that and talking of the unutterable, giving explanations and showing cleverness, parrying arguments with the dexterity of a trained sword-player is frivolous. The Gurus say: "Burnt be talks about Him"; and they put down in Guru Granth the mere text-book description of the process of inspiration as demonstrated by themselves and say: "Without the Guru, the Gurumukh, the Sant (Saint)—all these terms being used for this personal process of the inspiration of man with God— no one can attain to that enviable state of mind where He by one glance makes the soul free".

The Ten Gurus are the first in the history of man to take up the essential idea that later developed as the comparative study of religions, and declared with the emphasis of their distinctive individuality that "RAM" and "RAHIM" are one and the "Feranghi," the "Turk," the Hindu and the Muslim are men first. The inner man does not differ, be he of the east or the west. All differences are geographical, incidental to peculiar inheritance and habits, and peculiar mental prejudices<sup>1</sup>. There is but one religion of humanity—just simple living with faces turned to God, and keeping all the windows of the soul open to receive His inspiration of Love. God is Love. Life is feeling, a vibration of sympathy. They not only said it, but they brought forth a race of men that rejected all such distinctions. This is the universal simple humanity of the future in embryo. And even if that humanity has not yet come in its fullness, there it is coming. Look yonder, there before you the cosmic mind of the Guru has already conceived it, willed it and it is already heaven-born. "The sun shall pass away, the moon also, all shall be as naught, but the Word of his Saint remains and is bound to bear fruit"<sup>2</sup>. They declared in every hymn of theirs—Feeling is all in all. And they repeat it a thousand times. "Without simple feeling<sup>3</sup> for Him, how can they get to Him"?— Guru Gobind Singh.

We can trace most modern tendencies of human aspirations in the Khalsa that Guru Gobind Singh created in the Punjab. Some of us trace in the Khalsa the State, the society created by Guru Gobind Singh, the beginnings of a socialistic society. But it shows most of all, the comprehensiveness of the creation of the Gurus, rather than that the Gurus may have forestalled socialism as it is now understood. They founded society on the essential goodness of human nature, on love. All other adjustments are secondary, and mere matters left over for the mechanical perfection of the great reconstruction that is coming. Modern humanity is only in a state of fermentation. It must come to accept the conclusions of the Guru on the problem of an idea, yet workable social reconstruction.

It is significant that in the Gurus, all the different types of Heroes recounted by Carlyle in *Heroes and Hero-Worship* are envisaged. Odin and Mohammed and Cromwell, all coalesce in them. They are the letter-givers, the literature-makers, the gods in one. All the dim past and the unknown future hovers round them. Carlyle could have found his "True King" and all his types of heroes in the Guru's disciples.

So deep has been the superstition clinging for ages round human consciousness, that mere preaching of quietness would have failed to rouse the soul of the people to a simple natural human life, deeply imbued with spiritual consciousness of the awful "unnamable". It was well-nigh impossible to free the human mind of a thousand forms of superstitions that meant to the people religion without broadening their outlook by larger contacts. Attempts were made in different parts of India, before the advent of the Gurus in the Punjab, to plant a noble quietism and to liberate the mind of the people from the thralldom of ages. Kabir is the most significant and illustrious example of the Bhaktas of medieval India, who tried it. But the whole movement ended in another kind of quiescent "*Hinduism*", and the followers of Kabir began roaming as dust-besmeared mystics with *dhutura*-poisoned red eyes and singing aimlessly some jingling rhymes under the *peepul* tree, to pass their days on this earth in vain helplessness, as of old.

The Bhaktas again fell back into the old ruts of mystic reverie, a state which comes naturally to rare religious geniuses as a quality of their greatness, and a false imitation which became the religion of the Hindu monastic anchorites who went about and still do, receiving the homage of the simple-minded people. A worse form of self-deception in the name of highest things could not be imagined. The Gurus foresaw that their religion of a spiritual attitude combined with incessant labour and its glad distribution, might lapse into Brahmanical theology or the Bhakta's religion of mystic reveries. This danger was particularly true for India, as men were surrounded by a thousand dead theologies and cosmologies and civilizations buried layer after layer in the subliminal mind of the people, and especially as the Gurus themselves had to use the same language as these systems. And they, the Gurus saw what no one before them saw, that all this reconstruction of the individual and society and new meanings they have thus given to the old, musty and superstitious language, would lapse and die in this quagmire as time rolls. They, therefore, so lived and passed through a hundred fires and made also their disciples so to live, that there may be no confusion in the mind of the people for the future as to the meaning of their message as conveyed from bosom to bosom and recorded with a new personal and social significance in the hymns and songs of the Gurus. And lacking that bosom to bosom, deeply personal and social context, their hymns are being already interpreted in these days as variations of the Songs of Bhaktas of medieval India. And already a Hindu historian, Judunatha Sarkar, who has been writing on the Aurangzeb period, writes that Guru Nanak was one who modified the monotheistic hymns of the Bhaktas of Medieval India! And strange, this historian writes with greater appreciation of Sivaji than he can of Guru Gobind Singh! Such perverted reading of Sikh history has been repeated from text-book to text-book.

In life, when the context is clear, no great group of men like the Sikhs could long misunderstand such things as the Guru pronounced to them, even in the old Brahmanical

phraseology. The stock of words in any language that man has is too poor for the greatest themes. Carlyle himself has to tear up the whole English language and yet the word "God" does not express what he and Goethe mean by "That Awful Unnameable." How poor are our descriptions of the fundamental mystery of creation in all languages of man! The Gurus use the language of Brahminical metaphysics and Buddhistic "Nirvana." Sometimes they use both the words "Nirvana" and "ParaBrahma" in but one sense, for expressing the same indescribable state of mind, but their attitude is that they finally drop all words and only say: "Thou alone knowest. Thou knowest, not we". Their words, thus have a meaning up to the curvature of that particular mental horizon where they happen to be for that particular moment of vision and thought. They condemn strongly the wrong they see, in religions and societies but in the last line of their song, they say "But what fault is this of man? Thou knowest, Thou knowest and they go as Thou dost lead". Opinions and views when thus given up become life-creative for the people. The poison of consistency that is generated by over-attachment to particular views is what eats into the vitals of a life-giving gospel. The curse of all religions so far has been their insisting on one-sided views of Truth and making of what should be a living realization a dead habit. The Gurus says, Truth is Infinite. All views are right. "O God, the world is on fire, the soul of the people is distressed. Save the burning ones at any of thy numberless doors of Mercy"!<sup>4</sup> The Gurus are concerned much to do deeply with the life of human misery to be partial to any dead routine of thought or action.

Guru Nanak condemns the invasion of Babar whom he calls a 'Tiger let loose on a herd of Kine'. He weeps like a father on seeing the Indian women led as common prisoners, their tresses shorn and scattered in the dust; he laments, but he says in the end, "But this too is Thy Inscrutable Dispensation". The Gurus are true leaders of men, true founders of human society with a deep spiritual attitude and with the potentiality of infinite growth. One quality of the Sikh mind has been that its method and habit is more of the cast of the modern scientific mind than in the case of any other Indian race. They worked for a complete and practical disinfection of a whole people's mind of centuries-long weedy and odorous superstition. It was essential to lead them through a hundred fires, a thousand battles. The true love of life is generated in the human breast only by losing it on the battlefields of life, of moral labour, and aye, even of physical warfare, when one has to fight against the wolves for saving the sheep, when one has to die overwhelmed by brute odds for the sake of saving the freedom of a child or woman or the oppressed people, fighting against the aggression of animal nature, to advance the human cause. It looks a paradox, but society can be founded on sufferings and tortures and deaths, not on rose-beds. Nothing dies—it is the everlasting life of society that grows forward.

Guru Gobind Singh says, the sword was first flung out by the Creator. In Creation, there is the sword. He says, Kāl is Kirpān. "Time is the sword". A soldier engaged in constant war is certainly much more a spiritual being, according to the Gurus, than one who looks at his navel, seated in a cushioned chair, smoking his pipe and blowing up the smoke into the faces of beautiful women-songsters, and twittering and dancing and laughing and saying, "I am God, there is nothing else". Man has to choose. Either death from pleasure, or death on the battlefield. War, as entertained by the Gurus, inspiring "sparrows" to fight against the "hawks", I believe, is the essential factor in the foundation of a society with the spiritual vision.

How could man prefer the life of mere rats dying in holes, when there are conspiracies to crush the forces of inner freedom of thought and consciousness and even the reconstruction of human society on some more equitable basis of equality, freedom, goodness and charity. In this aspect Guru Gobind Singh is the sublime culmination of the spirit of Guru Nanak.

Bertrand Russell says, all religion has its origin in fear. But all such religions are merely of the mind and not of the Spirit. Those who breathe this beautiful spirit of creation are ever unafraid. Guru Nanak invokes the man of spiritual life who is unafraid and incapable of causing fear. This

quality is of the highest spiritual humanity. There is religion in every struggling atom; no one can escape the religion which in every atom is longing to attain its perfection. True spirituality knows no fear; it is above the nervous contraction due to the instinct of physical self-preservation and the fear of death. The truly spiritual do not fear death. Unless the attitude of man and society becomes truly spiritual, as distinguished from the mental or the speculative, it cannot maintain its own level in war and in peace, in suffering and in joy, in society and in solitude. The Gurus would not call spiritual the attitude that has fear in it. Guru Nanak calls out the fearless in man and at the same time the rancourless. If a Pandit, talking of spirituality and the spiritual state of absolute fearlessness, cannot die with his head unbent, with his mind unlowered, with the virtue of his heart uncontracted, he is only a prattler and the Guru calls him dead. The truly spiritual are above fear. A soldier is thus more spiritual than a pandit.

The hero has no fear of beast, man, or devil, and Guru Arjan Dev who composed a large part of Guru Granth illustrates this. This most sweet voiced singer, the most sensitive prophet, poet, a man of tenderest human affections and sympathies exemplifies in his life as a man of flesh and blood what that state of life is what that "fourth"<sup>5</sup> is. Bertrand Russell has no data before him of this "fourth", where man has risen above fear, where man has risen to absolute moral realization of himself. This state is rare, but its rarity should not preclude its consideration, and this "fourth" is as much "created" as the rose and the sand-grain, and it cannot be manufactured by any artificial process. In fact such efforts to produce it in the hot summer-house on the part of various creeds, has led all serious men to look at them with utter disgust. Indeed, there is much rubbish in religion that is miscalled the "fourth", which all serious thinkers are driven to reject. But in spite of all that is to be contrary, there have been rare geniuses who lived in this "fourth" as naturally as we live in our daily life of the senses. The emperor Jehangir tells Guru Arjan Dev that he has offended the orthodoxy of both Hindus and Muslims in composing his Book, and that in justice to them, he should delete certain portions. Guru Arjan Dev's calm and short reply was, "It is God's word, I cannot, as an individual, alter what came to me by inspiration. It is the Truth. It shall stand as it is". Then the Emperor Jehangir blames him for having helped the rebel prince Khusro. "The Prince came as a man and took shelter with the Guru, not with me, an individual" the Guru replied. "I, as an individual, could not intervene. I have helped no rebel. The Guru gives shelter to those who come to him and seek his shelter as forsaken, forlorn beings."

And even kings and rebels, when in distress and defeat become in their heart and soul as the poor, forsaken people. The Guru helps even such as these and reckons not if they are kings or poor beggars. The Guru succours the soul of man. The Guru's response to such is always human and no laws can operate there but the Guru's law of mercy, and there it is no political act. It is a human act in which one man is dealing out natural human sympathy to another man. All punishment for this it ceases in the Guru's house, when man is reduced to himself, when a man is in need of help.

Chandu the Hindu official, proud of his rank and caste, tortured him. Always, men drunk with power torture offers like this. Mian Mir, the great Muslim mystic, witnessed those tortures. Burning sand was poured on the Guru's body. The flower, when crushed, has nothing to give but fragrance. The Guru chanted his hymns of "Glory, Glory to Thee" even there. This is no fiction, it is recent history. So also Guru Tegh Bahadur stood above all shrinking for self-preservation. So did Guru Gobind Singh and his four sons. So did Guru Gobind Singh's mother. So did Guru Gobind Singh's wife. The Sikhs died in the same spirit, blaming no one, saying "Glory to Him, Glory to the Guru". So did the tortures suffered by the Guru with superhuman calm infuse into the soul of a whole people the depths of imagination of the "Fourth," and they stood believing where they could not prove. When under the Guru inspiration some Sikhs following their spirit began to live in the same "Fourth" and died unhurt by sword or fire, a whole people were naturally imbued with the truth of greater things than the mere senses can experience or logic dissect. So they felt a new awe

and dignity of life and it made them all full of depths of knowledge, with their eyes turned to Heaven, singing “Glory! Glory!”

The Gurus, unafraid of the old theological Brahminical system of caste, and distinctions of duality and its persecutions, rose and clove the darkness with their sword. The Hindus turned against them, as ear-like they turned against the Buddhists. The Hindus lynch those who differ from them, though they have managed to gain a world-wide reputation for tolerance. The Guru’s powerful sayings against the Hindu vagaries did actually blow up the strongholds of superstition, and built in the human heart a new temple of God. Novalis is forestalled by the Gurus in what he says: “There is but one temple in the world and that temple is the body of man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before man is reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven, when we lay our hands on a human body”. With this great difference that Guru Amar Das gives this praise to the Gurumukh, to a “completed man with the Godward tendency.” The human form is worshipped when it is the vehicle of the inner man and not of the inner animal in it. All Guru Granth is full of hymns which declare that the dust from under the feet of His Saints is our most sacred anointing. Bathe in the dust of the feet of saints.

Rise and surrender yourself wholly to the Saints. The contact of Saints ennobles and purifies. Pay homage to the man of Nam, and you attain the highest thereby. The sight of the Man of God is the sight of God. The Saint of God kindles love in the human heart. At his touch, man realizes himself. Without his favour, there is no realization despite a thousand Sadhanas.<sup>6</sup>

Fearlessness that belongs to the spiritual independence of the soul, we find in the loves of the Gurus and the loves of the Sikhs martyrs truly inspired by the Gurus. The freedom of the Gurus is like the transmutation of iron into gold by the touch of the Guru, the pāras (the philosopher’s stone). It is the freedom of the whole soul, the whole man; it is the freedom through infinite struggle waiting still for His Grace, which comes as perfection to man in a moment, in a glance. “He touched me and made me perfect”. I am now the temple of God. I am the word which no fires can burn, no waters can overwhelm, or winds dry. I am immortality. The forms are the vestures of me, the soul. Strange and unique is the state of the Gurumukh. Imitations are cheap and common everywhere in the history of man, but the man with a Godward tendency is rare—he who is blessed from on high with the state of Simrin and Nam, the man inspired of God. This inspiration of the Guru was weighed in the balance of wars, suffering, torture and death and was found to be solid gold. What is that freedom which is founded on the enslavement of others? What is that joy and that pride, that rank and prosperity which comes after the ruin of thousands of human beings? The Guru says, that that beautiful life is covetable which is neither afraid of aught nor gives fear to aught.<sup>7</sup> To quote again the recent history of Sikh martyrdom. Bhai Mani Singh was hacked joint by joint, for not paying an unjust fine levied on him by the Moghul deputy, as the Guru’s disciple then in charge of the Han Mandir at Amritsar. And Bhai Mati Das was sawn into two at Delhi, like a log of wood. Their body—remples resounded with the sacred chant “Wah Guru! Glory to the Guru!” This spirit is still burning in Sikh bosoms, though centuries of opposition have tried to weaken the moral fibre of the Sikh. These are illustrations of that inspired state where the disciple has become truly a man of God.

The Gurus started the uplift of the Punjab peasantry. To instruct them, Guru Gobind Singh employed a number of poets and scholars to translate Sanskrit books. Guru Angad started a school of the spirit. He gave the Sikhs a new modified alphabet. He educated the children of the nation by contact with himself. He gathered all the vague accounts of Guru Nanak’s journey. He thus laid the foundations of a new literature for the people. Bhai Nand Lal, a great disciple, a scholar of Arabic and a Persian poet, came to see Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur and he never left his presence. Every day he read his compositions to the Guru whose personality inspired him. Bhai Nand Lal is the only disciple who gives us a graphic spiritual description of Guru Gobind Singh’s person. He

has written the Life of his Beloved, lyrics trembling with Persian sweetness. One day, seeing that the Guru was arming all his men, he came to the Guru with a sword fitted in a belt and asked the Guru that he should be enlisted in the Guru's army. Guru Gobind Singh took a pen and gave it to Bhai Nand Lalji. "This is your sword, sweet Nand Lalji. And I will bear the sword you have brought for your sake". This is one of the most significant scenes in the Guru's life. He himself became the soldier-disciple to fight for his scholar and poet-disciple. The infinite tenderness of this personal love of the Guru for the gifted disciple makes us shiver with sweet emotions.

Labour was changed from physical drudgery to the labour of love. In this Sikh spirit of joy labour was no more a groaning struggle of a victim, though it kept its old shape. The same old poor clothes, the same simple, rugged, uncouth, dust-besmeared appearance; the same pathetic conditions of being able to afford no luxuries of clothes and ornaments to themselves and their children. But its eyes were aglow with joy, and its heart felt the soothing thrill coming from the very naming of the Guru, thrills akin to those that the amorous feel at the touch of the woman beloved, that the mother feels by embracing a parted child, vibrating through and through. There was no burden at their back of the fatalistic resignation to the results of their own deeds, Karma, nor the indolence of an animal under the whip of a driver; nor were they jealous of other people's positions and possessions —no they were made men, they found their life and joy in honest labour, in helping each other, in loving the Guru and toiling. Never before had labour become a religion of love, as with the Gurus.

Our civilisation, in getting ready for the theatre, for the cinema hall, for pleasures of senses; needs no depth of life; it can certainly put itself out of tune with Nature's secrets, for to this civilisation excitement, whether of senses or of mind and intellect is all. Civilisation must needs shave off the braids of Christ, bob St. Theresa and shingle Saint Catherine and Mary, for it feels more in the art of actresses of today dancing naked on the stage, than in the Griseldas of yesterday. But sure as the sun rises, tomorrow these shaved men and women will find that no tree can live without its leaves. No birds without their feathers. This intellectual civilization of excited senses, so dressed by the barber and its clean smooth lawns of human faces and heads shall find soon the truth of life suddenly gone from below it without its ever coming to know of it, though the intellect is seemingly quite right in arguing, what is in the hair? "Hair is but grass and the bones as fuel" as says Kabir. When man has no depth of love and life and that divine old nobleness, but only excitements of intellect, when there is only light brimming up of foams of pleasure that lay him and her waste — well then man needs no hair: The woods have leaves, the pine its needles— so a Sikh has his hair, for so bids his Guru. The Guru ordains, wear your hair long, otherwise that subtle spark will flash and pass out of you. If you love me, see that not a hair of your is touched. I as a Sikh, in my love of the Guru, must wear his form.

One day a Sikh mason was making a floor in another Sikh's house, and he knew that there in that Sikh family was one who was a man of Simrin, a Gurumukh, a genius that manifests God. And the mason being fond of the young saint of Simrin, for whom the floor was being cemented, began cementing the floor with the joy of his heart. He would sing, "Glory! Glory" and make the floor. The man who had engaged him was exasperated at the leisureliness of the Sikh mason and he, like a capitalist-employer, rebuked him for not putting in sufficient work and said, "I will break your hands." The wonderful mason look up and smiled and said, "will you?" And he cared not for what he said but continued singing and cementing. The floor when ready had the scent of his soul in it.

The Guru has poured fragrance into the soul of labour. Labouring is prayer, labouring is service. But to live for making and remaking mental abstract concepts is spiritual death. Much of the poison of the mere individual is neutralised in the assemblage of men. The Guru says, "Sadh Sangat" is the cure of the poison that an individual generates in himself and dies of it. Surely, Sadh Sangat is the cure. But Sadh Sangat is a gallery of shining men whose faces turned towards the Guru are bathed in high ideals.

The Guru's reverence before that "Awful Unnameable" is to work with heads down, with tools in our hands, with no vain pride of self, and to work incessantly and to forget in this noble labour all gross and dark selfishness of animal lust, greed, anger. Love is the flowing religion of the honest labourer. It is his raiment and meat—work is true worship only for such as he. To create bread for man and its equal distribution is the best ethics. As long as men are hungry, how can man feel good without working? He is not a man who eats his bread alone.

What is Guru Granth but the expression in music and poetry and in endless but life-giving oceanic repetition, of the fact that the highest spirituality of man is the lyrical sympathy with God, man and nature. This sympathy is to be always "ignorant" in its integrating aspect; and such enlightened yet "ignorant" sympathy is the only true knowledge of ourselves. And once thus adjusted in infinite reverence, let men work, be it in science, in art, or in industry. Without right adjustment, whatever man shall do or gain or whatever progress he shall make, will be its own undoing and in a moment all shall be blown up as if it never was. If science works without this general adjustment of reverence to that "Awful Unnamable," and without this divine Upward tendency, or as the Guru calls it, *Gurumukhta* (the Godward tendency of the human genius), it is the science of mechanically perfected animals, not of perfected men.

This great rapprochement however, is coming. Men like Sir Oliver Lodge indicate that science will have to accommodate more of this reverence and this humanity to be true, and be in awe of Truth whose limits are already shown to be beyond death's door. The Universe is an infinite complex, though a finite whole. And the more we know about it, the more accurate would be the adjustment of our infinite ignorance, the greater will our reverence, personal reference to Truth. And while all will study science and all will labour, in their special directions, the attitude of humanity on the whole will be like the flower opening with the rays of the sun falling on it. This is what the Guru calls the type of the Gurumukh. Mankind will not be the products of intellectual excitement or sensual trifles and of the fatal pursuits of selfishness, individual or social, national or racial, but will be prayers rising like fragrance from the human heart. Humanity will be, in the words of the Guru, Gurumukh. Kali Das and Shakespeare will be honoured only in the thoroughfares for the passing pleasures of the crowd: but the Bible and Guru Granth will be enthroned in the souls of men and women. Scientific savants and laymen, mechanics, electricians, sailors, soldiers, farmers, engineers, and chemists, all shall have one religion of feeling for man and his destiny; and the culture of feeling in sympathy with the suffering of man shall result in the rise of a new democratic religion and art and poetry and music. Guru Gobind Singh by donning the dress of a soldier, whatever might have been his own private views on war, shows that there should be no special superior caste of poets and painters and prophets. The Song in the Sikh consciousness is inseparable from the Labour of Love, the Seva of relieving in however small a measure, human misery.

There is no sense of property in the mind of the perfected Sikh of the Guru. "There is the odour of sovereignty in the deeds of the Khalsa," as the conqueror, Nadir Shah said so critically.

Religion is one immensity of feeling. It is the wondrous lyrical intensity whose look makes all things beautiful, whose touch is freedom. With the Gurus, religion is the property of genius. It is the universal upward tendency of the created towards the Creator. Humanity is one; the God of Humanity is one; the religion of the truly cultured and emancipated men is the same, everywhere and at all times. It is seeking His perfection in all imperfections. It is living, drinking His Beauty, breathing His glory; saying "Glory! Glory!" with the inspired ecstasy of a prophet. Life is divine remembrance that sees His flag of a whole creation waving over the Temple, the hidden temple of the human heart. Divine remembrance is love. In the Word is union, in the Form is separation, yet Form is the Word-in-flesh. Creation is Truth, and there is more in the unseen, than in the seen. All differences, all seeming differences in the Creation are His will and joy in Beauty.



The Infinite is suggested by the finite. It is the radiation of the finite, so to say. God for us in our present limitations, is the man who is filled with God. It is a spiritual universe, more a vision of beauty than hard matter of the fact-world. Man without God in him is a clod of clay, but God without man is the vague product of human speculation that disintegrates the soul and degenerates life.

The Guru sees the created universe as reality. It is beautiful to him, and the beauty of the cosmic being is the whole truth to him. He is intoxicated with the joy of his vision. He is perennially thrilled. The true man to him is he who blossoms like a flower at the touch of the soul of Nature. He looks at the world as it is and is happy. He lives in the living present, wholly inebriated with the joy of All-beauty. Enough is the rapture of the infinite colour of life. God to him is a state of continuous inebriation that gives the rich abandon in which nothing else is of any consequence, in which all other things vanish by becoming much too small. Nature thrills him, for there is a Presence which draws all his soul out. He does not analyse the mystery, he drinks it. And the Guru when the surrounding Moslems sang of seven heavens, sings of countless planets and stars.

The Guru reverences the Form which embodies God the formless so eternally. Objects are the true letters—Akkhars<sup>8</sup> he calls them. By these Akkhars we name Him. His forehead alone is free of Akkhar the syllable of destiny.

The Guru's love of the people is unique. Equal distribution of love and labour are his social ideals. And he founds the Khalsa, an ideal society, on inspired unselfishness. To the Guru in inspired unselfishness alone reside the motives of a true political democracy of human brotherhood on this earth. And his gospel is of incessant labour for curing hunger and nakedness of man, toiling day and night, with the indefatigable spirit of faith. And waiting for His will to be fulfilled in our life and in our labour, is the Guru's service; to love the Guru so intensely that his image may be seen by the disciple in every face. As Brother Kanhaya said: "I know no Sikh, I know no Moslem. I see your face, holy Guru! in all faces, and I give you, Guru, your water of mercy, to you the wounded, to you the thirsty". Service, thus, is a vision of the Guru first, it is his personal Love.

Without Love and sympathy, man is dead, however important he may be and whatever other kinds of brilliance he might possess. And Love of the Guru is the Love of God.

Spirituality is not mere intellectual speculation, however brilliant and complete. The child is nearer to God than a man full of sophistry. A rustic knows more of life than a teacher of philosophy. Every individual has greater knowledge of human history in his very blood and bone than the erudite historian who is digging up the earth to make new discoveries. All that is the well-fed idle man's fanciful play and he flatters himself that it is real knowledge.

One emancipated soul, so to say, increases God. We help God, if we tend towards His goodness, His mercy, His love. We choose well if we feel intoxicated with His Beauty that flashes on us unawares from within everything and everywhere as inspirations of love. Thus they gather goodness, love, sweetness; they gather Nam, swallow flashes and live in sympathy with goodness of men. And then you may well forget the mythical God of philosophy and theology, and even when you so forget him know that you are with the Real God, the Truth, the Beauty of Being. Those who do not know God, who have not seen Him and feel miserable at the sight of creation as it is, need have to bring in extraneous doctrines of metempsychosis, past births, and the mystical Karma to explain what they call the differences in created life and its stages. Infinite variety and infinite differentiation is His WILL, His Pleasure. Seen from the Guru's standpoint it is all-beauty. If birth and death go round in a wheel, let it be, and if not, let it be. The Guru has no room for any other occupation but incessant "aching", throbbing with love for Him. Guru Granth is one sea-like lyric of Nam. The Hymn of Adoration sends its keen-edged thrills into eternity. "Those who know how to praise Him are the true sovereigns". (Japuji).<sup>1</sup> Man is what he does. And this is self—evident.

The Guru calls man to his innate nobility, to his essential goodness, to his divine manhood, and leaves him free to act as he chooses. He does not insist on Karma and retribution like the atheist or the Buddhist rapturist and not like the too academic and ethical Jain. He makes no fetish of Karma, like the Hindu—it is as casual to him as the working of many other forces and so-called laws of Nature in the physical world. But the Guru says : “If the saviours of man so will, they lift him off from the revolving wheel of Karma”. Mercy of God is the Truth which overcomes the relentness working of one’s Karma or deeds. We undo ourselves and the Beloved saves us from the torture and misery of our own doing. “One truly emancipated Being ferries many more across” (Japuji, Slokas). The Law of causality ceases when man attains to his own inner godhood. In the state of that great Nirvana Karma ceases. This is the spiritual hope for man for all times. Nirvana to the Guru thus is the absolute Freedom of Union with Truth with God.

It is immaterial to the Guru whether man is born again or not. Life is but remembrance of Him, the Beloved, and if the soul-consciousness of man is wrapt with that ever-flowing joy, what else matters?

Footnotes:

1. Reflection of one of Guru Gobind Singh’s Kabits. - Editor.
2. Reflection of Sarang, M. V. 6. - Editor.
3. The original is Prem (Love). - Editor.
4. Guru Amar Das in Bliaval Var, IV. 10 (Sloka). - Editor.
5. The state of turiya or obsorption in the Absolute. - Editor.
6. Prescribed religious practices. - Editor.
7. Based on a sloka of Guru Tegh Bahadur. - Editor.
8. Guru Arjan in Gauri Bawan-Akkhari. - Editor.
9. Stanza 25. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XXII

### RESEMBLANCES

If the Guru's teachings are fully interpreted to the nations of this earth, to each nation it would appear as its own scripture.

All nations of the earth will find the Guru already with them in their highest poetry of life and labour. To the people- with the spark of life it would be like daybreak. There would be no sharp differences between East and West in this great music of life. The Christian nations will find of the Bible in it, the Muslim nations of the Koran. The lovers of Sanskrit Upanishads will see the ancient wisdom of India in the Guru's Song. And the scientific mind would see its own reflection in the Guru's mind—so surprisingly revolutionary is the Guru's thought on life, love and labour. The disgust for mere mechanical and superstitious religiosities and hypocritical pieties, shown by all the Gurus, is shared with them by the modern societists.

The Law of Karma is there and is not there. So are there images of the Buddha and Zoroaster in the word of the Guru.

The spiritualists and psychic researchers will find the Guru pointing out as distinctly as possible, that there are worlds of spirit beyond. And that society of spirit too, has its own innumerable circles of spirits good, bad and indifferent. And that above all is the Realm of Pure Spirit, where the Self shines resplendent in pure freedom. That pure freedom, that absolute subjectivity is the fruition of all life.

The Vedantist, imbued with the spirit of universal harmony, would see that the Guru worships Nature and man with reverence and love due to God.

The Buddhist shall find his path and more, and meet the Christian in the Guru.

“What ye shall sow, that only shall ye reap.” “Unto ye will be measured that which is yours, not a grain less, not a grain more”, “God's love is forgiveness of God come to man is the highest conduct”. It is by the grace of God that freedom from Karma is attained.

The Guru always said, “O Muslim, what you are following is ignorance. True Islam is resignation of the self to His will. True Islam is love. This is difficult; not by merely calling yourself a Muslim, can you be such.<sup>1</sup> “O Hindu! True Yoga is Nam, not your sundry vows”. “O Yogi, if your mind is at peace with the Creator, there is self-conquest. And self-conquest is the conquest of the world”,<sup>2</sup> And yet all, whether Hindus, Muslims or Jains are condemned for their hypocrisy. Hypocrisy poisons all the religious professions of man.

In this universal appeal of the Guru's religion some see an eclecticism and a new synthesis. But this universalism is not mental as in the case of a scholar, but is spiritual. Hence it is an organic Whole sprouting out of earth and heaven. The whole past is this present. It is not the result of mental or moral labour, a tiny small laboratory product; it is the Creator's own synthesis brought in the deepest silences of inscrutable Nature's being, and it comes out as the suns and stars are formed in the milky ways.

The Guru has adopted the Hindu language. “Hari! Hari!” of Chaitanya makes Vaishvanism at its highest manifestation come into his reverie; he talks with them. Muslim saints like Farid, and Mian Mir<sup>3</sup> visit him. “Allah” and “Rama” is the same, the mosque and the shrine is the same to the Guru and to his Sikhs. So should be the Christian Church.

The Guru's only question is—Are people living the simple sincere life of men with their tendency towards God, forgiving, loving unvindictive, serving, labouring, and distributing their labour and love, and clinging to the Gurumukh as planets to a central sun in their march in the Infinite? And do they live spreading all over the earth the sweet fragrance of spontaneous goodness that is the very essence of humanity? Has the outer grossness that hides the divinity of man been outgrown, transcended? Has man realized his beauty of the soul in all things?

Blind pride of “I-ness,” vanity of the pride of wealth, intellect, rank and position; the observations of the differences of caste, colour and creed are the poisons which degenerate man. Have these poisons been unpoisoned?

Living sympathy is all.

Man is one. And those that cause differences and fissures are forces of darkness; those that unite, interlock man to man, nation to nation, are forces of light. The best union, as of man with woman, is of both man and woman with God—with he Guru. Those who have met the Buddha, Christ and Guru Nanak are blessed. Those who have met the Gurumukh in any circle, in any age, are true spiritual men. “In this age, the whole religion is the Guru” says Guru Nanak in Siddha-Goshti. Unless you have met him, you cannot have the real zest of union with God. Reading is fruitless, scholarship is in vain, unless you have come in contact with the souls that touch your lips with the ceaseless “Naming Him” and its ever-dripping honey of life. Naming Him is Simrin, as Julian of Norwich has it: “Him verily seeing, fully feeling, Him spiritually hearing and Him delectably smelling and sweetly swallowing.”

Footnotes:

1. Echo of Vār Majh. - Editor.
2. Echo of Japuji. - Editor.
3. A successor of Sheikh Farid Shakarganj met Guru Nanak. Mian Mir was Guru Arjan’s friend. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE SIKH-MUSLIM SCHOOL IN THE PUNJAB

It may not be inappropriate here to refer to a school of Nām—culture in the Punjab that must be so called to distinguish it from the Sufis (the Sufis being the Hindu-Muslim School of thought), the Sikh-Muslim School. It is well-known that Baba Guru Nanak was well-beloved of both Hindus and Muslims. In distant Beghdad, he counted disciples like Shah Behlol. At Mecca, he met Quazi Rukan Din, the Pir of Uch and the latter bowed down to the Guru, begging of Him his sandals to be kept as relics in his dynasty and those sandals are still there. Farid Sani and others like Pir Makhdum Bahauddin were great devotees of Guru Nanak. Mardana was his disciple, Kamal of Kurham loved and died singing the Guru's mantram "Glory be to the Guru"! "Glory be to the Guru"!

And so this intercourse between him and the Muslim mystics became more and more intimate as the Guru's culture spread. The Hindus recited Japuji, sang the Guru's name, lived dedicated lives and went great distances to meet him. They gave up caste, and partook of the food at the Guru's langar. Their doubts and superstitions were dispelled. And they came later on, in Sikh history, to be known as Sahajdharis. These Hindus had abjured wholly the superstitious sundry faith of Brahminism and had taken shelter in the Guru. They formed the Sikh-Hindu School. The fact that this Sikh-Hindu School has automatically lapsed into Brahminism, however regrettable, shows that any school of new culture in India beset with so many quagmires of sects founded on smaller philosophies and empty dogmas, needs not only spiritual isolation, but physical isolation to live. Few Sahajdharis have survived, while the Sikh with beards and hair forming a kind of physical isolation still respond to the call of the Guru, as despite all their imperfections and poverty they still harbour the Guru's spark.

In the time of Guru Arjan Dev, both Hindus and Muslims gathered round his person. Meeting him was a culture for all. The following extract from the pen of the Emperor Jahangir from His Memories shows how both Hindus and Muslims gathered round Guru Arjan Dev, which the Emperor was of course unable to understand and appreciate as the great Akbar had done.

"So many of the simple-minded Hindus, many many foolish Muslims, too had been fascinated by his ways and teachings. They called him Guru, and from all directions crowds of people would come to him".

The fact that Guru Har Gobind had to shelter a Muslim woman disciple from Lahore at Amritsar, to whom the Sikh name Kaulan was given, shows that there was already a reaction caused in some sections of Mussalmans. They might have been quite few due to political reasons, but the element of intense devotion to the Guru was there among them. Ordinary surface-history does not record the meeting of the mystic ancestors of Bullah Shah and Waris Shah, but the literature of these periods of the Punjab is full of internal literary evidence of the language of the Guru being used by these Muslim saints of the Sikh-Muslim School.

A most notable but invisible change had occurred. The Moslem poets of the Punjab gave up their Persian and Urdu in favour of the Punjabi language used by the Guru. Shah Hussain, Bullah Shah and Waris Shah, all belong to this renaissance which followed the influence of Guru Arjan Dev on the mind of his age and the age following immediately after him.

These Punjabi mystics belong to the Sikh-Muslim School, in which though nominally Muslims, they preached the Guru's religion of love, and the Guru as God enough for the living beings of this earth.

Bullah Shah calls Inayat Shah his Sat-Guru.

The Sikh has certainly no quarrel with names. It is the process of inspiration which must come to play under any names.

The dedicated and pure life of Sikh men and women must have had its effect all round it; so much so that it must be said that the Punjab of the Gurus, whether Hindu or Sikh or Muslim, is essentially Sikh. The new interpretation of Islam given by Iqbal as love is due to the unconscious influence of the Guru's presence in the Punjab. It is my faith, no Punjabi can escape the spiritual hidden effects of this great inspiration.

So also in the Sindh Province. In the Punjab of the Gurus came caravans of disciples from Sindh, Kabul and Kandahar, from Baghdad and the Caucasus Ranges and mingled as multi-coloured humanity in the joy of the holy crowds, in the joy of seeing Him.

This pageant of a whole people made alive by the great magnetic influence of the Guru's love and inspiration was life-giving.

Recently in our days, there was a Muslim fakir in the district of Gujrat<sup>1</sup> in Punjab who would, while going away or returning to his place, alight at Amritsar and pay his visit to the Golden Temple. He used to say, "What must have been the influence of the great Gurus, when after four hundred years, here by touching this marble floor of their temple, one gets the stream of Simrin, 'Naming Him', so much quickened. The broken ones are united here. No impurity can stay here. A magnetic current of inspiration still flows here. Those who know aught of spiritual life and of Simrin can feel the flow of inspiration". Such is the testimony of this mystic, evidently not openly of the Sikh School.

There are a hundred more Muslim mystics who practice the Guru's word, "Glory to Him!" "Glory to Him!" They sing "Blessed be Guru Nanak!"

Though history does not trace the social tradition of a decade ago of which I myself have been the child and eyewitness, there has been great amity almost amounting to kinship as of blood between the Sikhs and the Muslims in the villages. The other day I went to a village and lived as the guest of a Muslim family of farmers. Their simple rustic feeling and service reminded me of the Sikh, and I melted away into the feeling, "These are the Sikhs of my Guru, the untutored children of God!". Seeing them I almost cried, "How good to be Muslims if such sweet love and service is Islam!"

Sikh life cast a halo of spiritual softness, almost that of the Buddha's sculptured face on the Land of the Five Rivers and mellowed down the tone of the very speech of the Muslim. These were the social effects of the Sikh-Muslim School.

Rai Bular, the Bhatti child of Talwandi (now Nanakana) has left behind in the very blood of his offspring a feeling of worship for Guru Nanak.

These followers of Guru Nanak loved the Gurus, served the people, and thought ill of no one. Their universal goodwill, their angelic demeanour, their saintly lives drew an involuntary and silent homage from the people of the Punjab. Even the old Pathans of the Indian Frontier bear witness and say, "The Sikh is a Fakir, his prayers reach God. Bow to him as a man of God whenever you see him".

The Guru loved the people, made no distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim. It was the spirit of the Guru's love unshackled by sects and creeds that went deep into the soul of the people.

Invisible transformations were many, but great impetus to a universal friendship between man and man was given by the Guru. He awakened the people to a new spiritual and social consciousness. He awakened individuals to cosmic consciousness. All religions met in the Guru, losing their names. The past was fulfilled and all the future hovered round the song of the Guru. The "Guru" was thenceforward a whole religion of love, for the people. It was a new liberty.

A reference to the pure Punjabi literature created by Bullah Shah and Waris Shah would show in the atomic structure of its words, that this is the language of Guru Granth, with an individual note of rapture from each such poet. Particularly the whole tone of Bullah Shah is distinctly of the colour of the Guru. He refers to the transient pleasures of the world as

“plucking of Kasumbha flowers”. The Guru also calls them the false dye of Kusumbha as compared with the fast dye of the maddar-root to which the joys of soul are compared.

“The men of deeds, of practice of His presence have crossed the river.

I am left behind, defeated in myself.

I have been picking Kusumbha buds from these fields of life”.

He refers to Simrin as “spinning of cotton yarn”

He refers to man as the Bride who is to make preparations here by making sufficient yarn and cloth for her “dowry” and refers to the home after death as the Home of Her Bridegroom. This is exactly in the spirit of the in the very same phrase.

“Sat Guru has made the unmanifested manifest me.”

(Sat-Guru nealakh lakhaya hai)—is a whole refrain of Bullah’s one poem which reads like a tune taken from Guru Granth. Bullah Shah sings directly out of his soul, but he is truly inspired by the Guru-atmosphere in the Punjab.

Shah Hussain, whose songs are so poignant with aching love for God, is strongly resonant of the Guru culture. All great things refuse to be classed. They go everywhere and get classed with everything. But to swing the pendulum is to impart new life to it. Sikhism has been all along supposed to be a blend of Semitic and Aryan cultures. From my study of Guru Granth, the most authentic record of the Guru’s mind, I can say that it is the historic culmination of Buddha’s religion, the religion of the truly illumined, the truly illumined of all races and countries. Few would deny that the true spiritual and human culture first starts from Buddha in this world, it is Buddha’s gospel that in the life of Christ becomes true Christianity.<sup>2</sup> By Christianity I mean the Religion of Christ Himself. “Those who have seen the Son, have seen the Father.” And the Christ’s inspiration gives Islam its humanity. Semitic and Aryan cultures seem to have in animal sacrificing cruelty a common ancestry. Islam in this latter aspect is Vedicism, a dualism and goes to conquer the Kafir like the Aryan of the old conquering the non-Aryan.

Islam by its attitude of conquering others and hating the Kafir and the animal sacrifices in the name of Allah, presents difficulties to the modern thinker. Islam lives in its first great Caliphs. Islam lives now only as an aggression akin to that of an Empire-maker.

Guru Nanak sympathised with the Muslims in their fall from true Islam into the mad religion of empire-making and crushing their fellow-beings under their heels, and there are many passages in which he as their teacher admonished them back to the right conduct, right feeling and right contemplation. The wise and truly religious therefore, bowed down to the Guru.

The religion of the Gurus thus is the Great Humanity of feeling which makes man good without an effort, and is but a “looking up,” “a gazing up” towards God. Men and women looking up to Him forever, waiting for His coming, opening their mouths like rain-birds to the shower of His Love. A moment comes when by His favour, man is transmuted into a god. And all effort of creation is to produce that great man of God. If any animal is to be sacrificed in love of Him, it is the animal-in-man.

The synthetic blending of things takes place in the realms of the intellect; the Guru lives in the soul of the Universe, in the spirit of life, in the labour of love, in the inebriation of that Great Beautiful. A new present starts with the Guru. The future is all his.

Footnotes:

1. This district is now in Pakistan. - Editor.
2. These are individual opinions. - Editor.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SIKHISM AND BRAHMINISM

The Sikh Gurus swept clean the disciples' consciousness of all the entangled flimsy and complex cobwebs of mental weavings and spiritualistic vanities of the great and the vainglorious Sanskrit scholar.

When Sikhism came to the Punjab, Brahminism interpreted it as its off-spring with a view to holding it in its tentacles. And merely because Nanak's mother-tongue was Punjabi, and his theological language of the Hindus, the Guru's wholly original Outlook on life was not understood.

Guru Nanak's genius wasted no time in inventing a new language; the very touch of his genius would make any language new and great. He sang out his soul in whatever language came nearest to him.

It is foolish to make linguistic niceties the pivots of any great and original expression. Nanak adopted a colloquial sort of Persian to speak to the Persians, a sort of Prakrit and Gatha language to the those who knew Sanskrit. To Mussalmans he spoke in the theological system of Alquran, to the Hindus in that of the Puranas. Assuredly he was nowhere, any time, identified with their speculation. His message shines through the images of all languages.

A great architect does not bring his bricks and mortar from Heaven; his mind only he brings. It is the art of the artist that truly brings him to have directly, soul to soul, not the knowledge of the chemical composition of his plaster of Paris or marble or colours, or the shape of his chisel or brush, or pen.

In the case of a genius, it is his creation that gives meaning to him, not the language he speaks or the country he is born in. He transcends all geographical limits of blood and caste and colour, both of body and mind.

To a master, the very mud of the street would furnish material to paint his masterpiece, while to a lesser man the quest of the choice of colour and brushes would become an unending pastime.

Guru Nanak had no time to waste on writing lexicons for giving a right interpretation to his song. A true song is its own interpretation; the beautiful face has its own language in which it speaks to all. Beauty is beauty, even if it knows no language of this earth. Its broken accents are pure music. And to interpret him by lexicons is weariness of flesh. The only right interpretation is the character his song had created, and even though one such creation dies, the infinite creativeness of his song lives. His sustaining song is an immortal Person, capable in its own hour to make the very rocks move to great actions. There is the portrait of his God, painted in that flash-like height of Sikh history. And the meaning of his word is there in the face that shines on the created page, not in the street mud of the language and philosophic generalities that he put on his brush to paint it with. It is with an eye to this great creation and perpetual creativeness of the master that Cunningham, of all persons has been able to differentiate Sikhism from Brahminism. He could do so because he mixed intimately with the Sikh people and studied their history with personal sympathy. He brought a fresh, unbiased, free western mind to bear upon it and it was left for the western mind to see the grandeur of Guru Nanak's message.

It is to be regretted that Sikh and Hindu scholars are interpreting Guru Nanak in the futile terms of the colour he used, the brush he took; are analysing the skin and flesh of his words and dissecting texts to find the Guru's meaning to be the same as of the Vedas and Upanishads! This indicates enslavement to the power of Brahminical tradition. Dead words are used to interpret the fire of the Master's soul! The results are always grotesque and clumsy translations which have no meaning at all. Macauliffe's almost schoolboy-like literal rendering into English, following possibly the interpretations given him by the Brahminical type of gyanies,



the unilluminated theologians who lacked both the fire of inspiration, and the modern mental equipment and who were decayed and eaten up by the inner fungus of the Brahminical mentality, has made the live faith of the Sikh a dead carcase. It has produced neither the beautiful artistic colour of the idol and the shrine, nor the fervour of the inspiration of love. And from his translators, one thinks Sikhism is weak Brahminism. Much that is redundant is put before a world-audience, without the light that made every straw and every little dust particle, every petty detail even, radiant and beautiful. The purple cloud in the sky thrown by nature behind the green trembling branches of a high *sheeshum* tree, like the wings of a huge bird shaking drops of water away, makes of the little tree on earth more a dream of beauty than merely a tree! If however, the cloud is not there and the rainy season of the hot months is not on, it is but a tree, all the charm surrounding it gone. Beauty when deprived of its vital redundancies seems to lose its very soul.

The Master who has attracted a whole people, men, women, and children, and has poured his love and song into their souls; the Master round whom they still go in endless worship is seated there amidst them in their souls. The Guru is the very pole-star with a whole number of stars of the Sikh life going round him. And the people still sing and have been singing in maddening rhythm of soul for centuries now—the Name of Guru Nanak. Ignoring this living spectacle of four centuries and more, the pedestrian scholar closes himself in his room and interprets these songs of the people by the aid of Sanskrit lexicons and English dictionaries! It is the personal passion for the Guru, it is the infinite self-sacrifice of man invoked by this inspiration of love, which truly can interpret the Guru's song. Music of life can have no meaning to one who aches not to it. Mere thinking is an obstacle: the devotees cross all frontiers to meet Him.

## CHAPTER XXV

### GENTUS AND MERE WORDS

Language has no meaning, but what one powerful voice gives to it, and as a beautiful personality speaks it. The dumb sweetness of the rose has a hundred meanings and the silence of the stars transcends all languages, for they cease to have any significance beyond a particular octave. So all languages are mere routine dull speeches till a genius puts his personality into them. Before him they have no meaning but what he gave them. They of India worshipped “OM” the formless. The Guru, heretically as they would think, calls the spirit of the universe Onkar. They think it is un-Sanskritic, No! It is the revelation of Om-in-form, the infinite embodied in Creation, God manifested. The Guru starts with the Real in the subtle. The Hindus prescribed Sadhana, Jap, Tap, vows, vigils, fasts, ascetic suffering and repetition of the word “Om” as the beginning of religion and Yoga. They promised spiritual fulfilment after these efforts. Abnormal accomplishments constituted their spirituality. The Guru says, religion begins with “Guru-Prashād”, “The Grace of the Lord”, which is a reaction in the inner regions of personality; and when that inner reaction or conversion has been effected, then the love-born sings the name of the Beloved. His very flash is a voice, a tongue. It will be a spontaneous and involuntary action of an affected memory, fed by an inspired feeling. With such a heretical departure from Brahminical philosophy, neither words nor Brahminical theories can have the old meaning with the Guru. The main direction of the Guru’s mind determines their new significance and the disciple knows. “Raghnath” means “The Lord or Raghu Vamsha.” Rama, Han, Shiva, Vishnu all these words happen to be used by the Guru. Admitted. And therefore, it is claimed, the Sikh is the worshipper of Rama and other gods of the Hindu Pantheon!

Nothing could be more nonsensical. The Bairagis and Ram-Nam-repeaters are there, futile recluses, while the Sikhs who sang these songs in their daily life and practice are a progressive nation of full-bodied men, each with some heroism. And even if the Sikhs are not so, the Guru’s word is creative of great living nations. It has once historically demonstrated its unique effectiveness. Could not the meanings be what can coincide with the effects they have produced on the life of the people and are still producing? Could not the scholar’s jobbery be made more reverent to the spirit of truth and less obedient to the dead letter of traditional interpretation? Tradition is as the colour of the race in which I am born; it sticks physically to me in spite of the real me, black if I am black, white if I am white, but my soul is free of such limitations. In Lahore the best designed buildings are independent of the local disfigurement caused by the alkaline-earth with which they are built. No buildings escape the effects of the bad material. Exactly in the same way the Guru’s revolution in religious thought and the noble plant stands above the language and myths of Brahminical India.

We will discuss the word “Guru” as in the Sikh history and thought here at length, to show how language becomes new when a genius employs it. “Guru” as in the mind of Guru Nanak, has a meaning which the future longings of an evolving humanity could truly bring out in the fulness of time. The word “Guru” is very common. It was revived by the followers of Shankar, Ramanand and Kabir. All the medieval Bhaktas of India employed it. It is the same word used by the ten Gurus, but it does not mean here what it meant to its earlier users.

Guru Nanak bowed down to his disciple Angad and called him Guru Angad. The divine singer who sang the Arati, bowed down to Angad, then in this is significant. And then Guru Gobind Singh bowed down to a whole assemblage of disciple—the Khalsa—and bowed down to the love-informed state, the “Gurumukh” people, as the Guru. He bowed to the songs of the Ten Gurus as Guru. Guru Arjan Dev used to go disguised as a humble disciple bearing water for the disciples coming to Amritsar to see the Guru, as his consort carried bread on her head along with him and both waited on the roadside to feed the Guru’s disciples, and served them

unknown as two humble Sikhs living on the roadside. Here is visible the passion of the Guru to be the disciple also. The disciples went singing glory to the Guru, to Amritsar and there sat one who was Sikh as also Guru. The Sangat—the assembly of the disciples—was so beloved of the Guru, it was the whole humanity of God. No Prophet before him made another equal to himself. To Guru Nanak, “Guru” thus meant the indescribable inspirational state of life, which invested the human mind with a personal passion for God. It was “indescribable description”. To the Sangat, it was the Guru which embodied that “Word-in-flesh” To the Guru, it was the lyrical God—filled crowds of the Sikhs.

*Guru Prashad* is an inner reaction that transmutes the metal of man. It is concerned with the transmutation of personality. The word thenceforth is new, “Japa” after the inner reaction of Guru Prashad is no *Sadhan*, as in the Brahminical system or as in Patanjli’s Yoga according to which the Brahman and his slaves tell beads. Guru Gobind Singh and all his predecessor Gurus have condemned “japas”, mechanical telling of beads and tapas, ascetic vows and efforts at self-disciplining etc. unless they follow the inner reaction. Religion is love. First love, and all shall be added unto you. This is the Guru’s Scheme—that illumination of soul by the coming in of the Holy Ghost spiritual character and transformation of men with a new God—ward, Guru-ward direction..... is but the natural phenomenon and is beyond all mere human efforts. This is the most fundamental departure of the Guru from the Brahminical, theological, synthetic method of making of man.

All is comprehended resumed in Angad to whom he bows down and says, “Thou art the Guru”. Human flesh transmuted into the live word, human shape become the Logos. Shabad is Guru Nanak’s highest passion and plays about the person of a man, Angad’, made god by the word of the Guru, a new Guru Nanak made by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak bowed down to one Angad. Guru Gobind Singh bows down to the concrete realities of his mind, the kindled disciple-personalities on this earth and the guardian ministers of the Khalsa, the nine Gurus in Heaven. Guru Gobind Singh bows to men, the Guru-transmuted people, and the Gurus. He has his own universe with its own sky and stars. The prayers of the Sikh as composed by the Tenth Guru, are addressed to the nine ancestors in the higher worlds of the soul. It is not addressed to any impersonal Brahman; prayers addressed to the latter become meaningless. The Guru who has written so much to liberate the human mind from the worship of anthropomorphic deities and gods and empty metaphysical concepts, from their mind born ghosts, conceptual gods and goddesses, after all puts his own infants safe in the lap of their mothers, he does not throw them into the running river. He gives over the beautiful group of his disciples to the keeping of the ten Gurus. He puts them under their protection.

The Sikh prayer is the most spiritualistic of all anthems of man. The prayers addressed to these ten ancestors by the Sikhs is as the portrait of reunion here on Earth. By “Akal Purasha” or “Sat Guru” or “Guru”, the tenth Guru also thus means an undefined or spiritualistic relationship with the ten ancestors of the nation of Disciples, realized perhaps in the little invisible point of contact in the moment of remembrance. The Guru means by “discipleship” all the inspiration that might flow from the love of those nine divine ancestors who are no more in the body, to the disciples that are still embodied in this three dimensional space, that they may become recipient of the same, when certain powers are satisfied. The Name in the Guru’s system is an Entity. The whole of Guru Granth is full of this instruction—repeat the Name of Guru Nanak—“Guru Nanak” the Name, is a whole culture. It is remarkable that while Guru Gobind Singh demolishes all vain religions he says: “The Name is my shelter as it was a of ‘Ganika’.”

“Well, from our point of view and also of the ancient wisdom of Egypt based on data obtained from this side of the veil there is a great deal in a name. Even in the mere repetition of some names there is actual power, and sometimes perils. That we know now as we did not when on earth. And we here acquire a reverence for the entity “the Name” which to you would probably seem foolish.”

Vale Owen, *Low Lands of Heaven*.

In Sikh history, the Sikhs dare to impose a fine on Guru Gobind Singh. who smiles on seeing the sense of freedom developing in his people, and pays it. They die for him and he dies with his all for them. Guru Gobind Singh eternally loses himself in the spiritual body of the Sikhs; the latter have his shape. The Khalsa is the Guru. The love-moved people, the living people, are the Guru too. Does not the whole Sikh history revolt against the mere man—worship of the Brahmins, though to all appearances it looks like their man-worship? Guru, thus, in Sikhism, is an indefinable system of inspiring life, which in its comprehensiveness can be understood only by a life-long practice of Nām and a deep personal intimacy with the spirit of the Sikh life. Nam is a cosmic process in operation. And the Guru is only an inspired incomprehensible mood of mind, and Nam the state of his feeling in its varied richness and elevation. In that most authentic and remarkable document, Siddha-Goshti, where the longings of humanity for divine self-realization are put so repeatedly before Guru Nanak in the forms of endlessly repeated questions by the Siddhas and Gorakh-panthis at Batala. Guru Nanak was asked, “Who is your Guru?” And Guru Nanak makes a significant reply which must forever destroy, for all unprejudiced minds, any suspicions of the Brahminical significance of the word Guru. Guru Nanak never said, “I am the Guru” or “Such and such is my Guru”, for if he had a Guru in the Brahminical sense, it goes without saying he must have candidly admitted himself to be a disciple and must have frankly given the name to the Siddhas at Batala. Then there would have been nothing new in Sikhism. as there is nothing in the awakening of the Bhakti doctrine that we find in the Bhaktas of medieval India, except perhaps the natural historic expression by the low-castes, of the seed-like idea of Bhakti, buried in the metaphysical miasma of the old books.

The word “Guru” is used by Guru Nanak in an altogether new sense in Siddha Goshti. He says: “My mind is the disciple and the soul-sound of the Word—the Word-God, the Nām, is my Guru.” When the Siddhas ask him what makes him a unique person who shines with so much freshness of life and self-effulgence, He replies “I am unique because in my soul nestles the indescribable description. And my Guru, the Immortal One Letter—the Nām—Akal, has been the same in all ages”. The Guru thus is a process, a phenomenon, not a person, though one cannot be separated from the other.

Guru Angad denies all personal credit to Guruship. He feels Guru Nanak lives in him, and so speaks to the people. And the Guru, Angad, worships the disciples of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad’s god is Guru Nanak. The heavens for him are dark without him. Here is the love of Dante for Beatrice in its divine perfection. Life to him without Guru Nanak is an affliction. Here rises in the breast of Guru Angad the perfected longing for the Divine, which by its simple elevation has rendered all other loves and longing small and unworthy of desire. Here in Guru Angad’s bosom is love in its loftiest form of an ever-burning, ever-singing peace of Nanak-realization, of a passionate beatitude, of a human Godhood. Its continuousness is marvellous. Its silent, shining eyes, of an “aching remembrance of the Beloved” has become an art-form of life which in its transcendental beauty has risen above the gravitational field of matter, to the higher magnetic attraction of the “Nām—Entity” of the spiritual worlds. In Guru Angad’s personality, one comes face to face with the true spirituality of love, which according to Bhai Guru Das was denied to Shiva and Vishnu, and which, in Buddhism later on, was again stained by the monistic habits of the Bikshus. The Brahminical ideal of spirituality has been mental, purely mental, and it will take years for Sikhism to get out of its subtle grasp; the Sikh’s language and environment, mental and moral, is all Brahminical. When Shiva and Vishnu came out of their high soaring abstractions, it was Prabati and Lakshmi in whose love their intellect found its natural balance and the needed solace and relaxation. On the eerie height that the Hindu seers and sages attained they either died stupefied by the grandeur of their own speculation or felt irresistibly attracted by the greatest fascination of man’s mind, the pleasure-bodied woman. In Guru Angad and Guru Nanak spirituality was forever freed from this reaction which must follow

an extraordinary effort to get out this three-dimensional life and its limitations here. The Guru turned the attitude of the human mind like the face of a flower to the Sun and left humanity free to develop in its absolute spontaneity helped by God and God's Nature. The Guru opened to the vision of man the vistas of Grace from where true spirituality descends on man as the gift of the higher ones, when man becomes a mere vehicle of the spirit of God. The true miracle of grace is the super-phenomenon, so to say, of the interference of the higher ones in the natural and supernatural working of human nature towards its own perfection. This inspiration of Grace makes Sikhism more akin to the religion of Christ than to Buddhism. It suggests that in the life of the spirit there is a certain interference, so to say, in the laws of the non-moral known Nature as here manifested, by the Moral Unknown Nature. This miracle of Heaven makes man truly spiritual. In Guru Angad, the noblest disciple and the noblest Guru have coalesced into the personality whose life-breath is the passionate yet peaceful, delightfully and thrillingly amorous yet wholly restrained, richly abundant yet wholly conserved love for the Guru. It is informed of the glory of the artistic realization of beauty and the glory of the perfected personality of self-realisation. It is the perfected spirituality of the Grace of God in the person of Guru Angad.

Guru Nanak did not find the "Guru" in his sons and they were not so blessed by him. The father conquers his mere human love for his children by his clear vision of what is the Guru! The Guru is in other personalities, as well as in him. Guru Angad preferred Guru Amar Das.

How pathetic it is to see Guru Amar Das passing over his son Mohri for Guru Ram Das, who got up and with folded hands implored Guru Amar Das to give this spiritual sovereignty to Mohri. "No", replied he "I have given thee what was thine. I only say Mohri is my poor son, take care of him." This shows Guru Amar Das is also the man Amar Das, the father of Mohan and Mohri, but who has made a total surrender of all that is human to the blazing beauty of the Guru. "Prayers of the ants are heard there sooner than the trumpeting of elephants".

(The Tenth Guru)

Those offerings are to the Gurus, and Guru Har Gobind receives them for Guru Nanak in him. The dual personality bound together as one in the continuous song of praise and self-surrender is of the very essence of the true culture of love. Mere metaphysical speculation about the identity of these two is morbid stupor. On another occasion, we find Guru Har Gobind, when receiving Ani Rai, putting his shoulders under the palanquin of his guest to bear him along. Here was Guru Har Gobind the man who was honouring as man the memory of the Guru, while he was also the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh says: "I am the servant of the Lord, I have come to see the marvels of His creation." Here was the man Gobind Singh, and he was the Guru. As Guru, he created the Khalsa; as Guru he inspired the Khalsa with the spirit of God, and as Guru he gave his throne to the Song and Word of the Guru.

The entire Khalsa, the Sikh Nation, the beautiful group of Disciples, fond of Him as moths of the candle flame, revolved round him and still revolves round his name and his person. But assuredly the individual life of all the ten Gurus makes it quite clear what Guru means to the Sikh. Guru Granth, the Book of Divine Hymns is the last to be mentioned in this connection. Guru Gobind Singh calls it the Guru. The music of soul in the Hymns of the Guru takes hold of the disciple and his attention is focussed. The focussing of man's self-consciousness (*Surati*—as called by the Guru) at a point where the higher universes of more than three-dimensional space meet in man is the realization of the self-centre of life here. There the disciple meets the Guru. "I live in my song. I come to you when you sing it. I am with you. My angel-hosts are with you. Fear not. I am the Word. I am Shabad, the Logos. You meet me in the very configuration of sound when you intone my songs." Such is the meaning of the thought of Guru Gobind Singh when he declared *Guru Granth* as his successor. The soul of the Art-Creator meets man in his Art-Product.

Guru Gobind Singh saw that the appellation Guru was lapsing into the older Brahminical signification and people were already proclaiming themselves "Gurus". The only refuge for him

who aspires to true perfection is the Buddha alone. And Buddha says in the *Dhamma*: What think ye, O Bhikkhus? Are the leaves that are in my hand greater in number than those on the tree? “Nay, Lord! the leaves that are on the tree are greater in number than those in thy hand”. “In the same manner, understand O Bhikkhus, Dharma is creator than what has been taught you”. Exactly such is the attitude of Guru Gobind Singh in respect of the word “Guru” or Personal Dharma, and he ended this glorious succession once for all. This abrupt ending gives the cosmic process called the “Guru” by Guru Nanak, a potential power for the future growth of men which nothing else could have done. It was the splendid stroke of the Tenth Guru’s man-making genius. The Guru abolished Guru-hood to give it the real meaning to the word “Guru” of Guru Nanak. On the death of Guru Har Krishan, many of the Sodhi clan sat at Bakala in holy poses of Guru—hood and declared themselves Guru in succession.

This shows their gross misunderstanding of the true meaning of Guru-hood, which is of the spirit and not of the body.

This gospel of Guru Nanak has yet to be taken out of its ecclesiastical and theological atmosphere, to be used as a text-book of the science and art of life and worked into the daily life of the whole world. The Human spirit which it invokes is universal. The English, the Americans, black and white, all must receive it in full measure. Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh are theirs, the Sikhs may adore him as they choose, but they are truly prophets of the future. The Guru’s lyrical and human and yet fully-armed religion of the Shining Scimitar, hanging like a flash of lightning by his side, and the Bay Steed and the White Hawk, shall be the religion of the whole humanity Body as good as soul: bread as holy as prayer. Pleasure not the goal, yet nothing denied to man; man shall be completed man with a Godward tendency.

While all were mourning the loss of Guru Gobind Singh (after having performed the cremation ceremony as directed by the Guru Himself), a hermit arrived and said: “You suppose that the Guru is dead. I saw him this very morning astride his horse. When I bowed to him, he said, “Come O Hermit, let me behold thee. Very happy I am that I have met thee at the last moment.” I then asked him whither he was wending his way. He smiled and said he was going to the forest on a hunting excursion. He had his bow in hand and his arrows were fastened by a strap to his waist.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE IDEAL OF SPIRITUALIZATION IN SIKHISM

The latest gleam of true spirituality shines through Sikh History. Guru Nanak comes as the messiah of the age. He trusts man, he loves the masses, he ignores the cave-dwellers, the ash-besmeared, miracle-mongering Yogis, and honours the labourer who sweats for his bread, and leads the simple life of love. He exalts labour as true spiritual conduct. He exhorts a whole people to right action and right living, and puts the Guru as God's image before the people. To those aspiring for the higher life, he suggests that beyond the natural evolution of the physical man by his Karma to the highest manhood, there is indescribable greatness and nobility and love in the background of life, where the powerful emancipated Beings visible and invisible dwell. He merely suggests. He never dilates on it nor describes Paraloka Or Durgah. Guru Gobind Singh calls it Prabhulok, Prabhu Des. This vision of space is spiritualistic. It is the Sat-Sangat, which under certain unknown conditions, actually interferes with the law of Karma and saves the blessed few from the operation of Karma and transmigration.

It is then and then only, when this act of grace caps endeavour that the true freedom of the soul is obtained. This act of grace is an indescribable phenomenon, Akath Katha, that occurs inwardly in the soul-consciousness of man. Those who are thus blessed are truly spiritual beings. They are in lyrical assonance with Sat-Sangat and while yet in the body, see and deal with the great assembly of emancipated beings who live in yet unknown worlds. All their thoughts, actions, volitions, impulses thenceforward become truly spiritual. So long as man is responsible for his actions, so long as his struggle to be free of matter in this cosmic evolution goes on, so long is he still half material and half immaterial; half mental, half spiritual. The word Gurumukh signifies the attitude of waiting for grace—the face turned to the moment of grace descending on man. All must be left to the natural processes, till the moment of perfection arrives and that great congregation of the emancipated souls meets under the shade of the Guru's presence. It is written, few alone would attain to this spiritual vision. The majority, the people, will see this vision in the flesh of their brethren, in the blessed ones amongst them. The continuous and inspired chant of Guru Prashad (grace) slowly and gradually and effortlessly turns the face of man to the Guru. Men and women are the architects of their own destiny. Actions mould the very faces and features of the personality of man. "In shape this body is the result of my actions of ages past, but freedom comes to me by the act of His Grace" (Japuji) Guru Nanak does not define Guru or God, but from Sikh history we catch the subtle suggestion that in Guru Nanak's personality is illustrated that indescribable description, and by loving him we love all that is in the mysterious background of life. "Those who have seen the son have seen the Father also".

Guru Nanak did not place the Gold of the Sikhs in the sky or in speculative reverie. Man on this earth is mostly physical, and he is not to depend much on his reveries, nor boast of them. The very deer of the forest, under certain tragic conditions of life, get into a mood which is a high spiritual mood; it is thus common both to animal and man. Androcles had taken out the thorn from the paw of a ferocious lion and the lion was capable, against the very essence of his nature, of loving him. This potentiality of all and every is wholly spiritual. This spirituality is common to beings sub-human and human both. Guru Nanak suggests that there are beings super-human too. This spirituality of love, is equally common to men and angels. And all the struggle of matter is to extinguish itself, to burn fully into a flame of creation, and rejoices and asks men to rejoice because that attitude of Gurumukh is the essential function of life as it evolves out of matter, and life when properly and rightly set to function is bound to blossom into an unearthly joy, Here the lot and destiny of the living flesh of man and animal is one. Vice and virtue are toys which uninformed man plays with wasting time during centuries. In the very essence of matter, there in the heart of even a tiger, is the ray of true spirituality, shining like a

diamond embedded in a rock. What human ethics dare interfere to increase or dim the light of this gem? Guru Nanak (as in Japuji) sees His Creation and sees embedded in the grossness of man's nature this gem-like spirit of Beauty. He sees it scintillating so wonderfully. He sings of its soothing, life-giving beauty and sways with an endless inebriation of soul; all is so beautiful and the destiny of matter is all so spiritual. The Guru burnt with an unparallel fervour to raise the masses to his vision.

Watch and see. Aid the struggling plant to lift its head to the light. Live in the music of the service of love. Love and devotion are superior to cogitation. This is the Guru's gospel. It is the simple life of the flower, of the stream, of the star.

Muhammed was in rapport with some kind of invisible celestial concourse in the background of life, and he made heroic efforts to make people rise to his vigour of being, so that men might be "brothers" to each other. The non-Muslims were not of the fraternity. This discrimination still clings to the Muslim's mind. But if they are at all a living people, one day they will embrace non-Muslims as brothers, and then, by one stroke Islam will become the, Guru's Sikhism. Whereas Al-Quran discriminates, Guru Granth calls all men brothers Here Islam and Christianity are fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, I find in Guru Granth (which is a present a sealed. message to the world) Guru Nanak's eyes are fixed on the great spiritual presence of beauty in creation, and he counts the low, the poor the vicious, the virtuous as having an equal glory of spirit; even the grasses of the forest have it and the whole material universe glistens with, the rays of that beauty. Winds and fires and waters sing the theme of beauty in his ears. He discusses not soul, not God, not man, he sings this indescribable tale of what he sees, and invokes the spirit of that beautiful creation. He is not after mental or moral conquests; he is for singing a song and forcing Nature itself to co-operate with him to make a whole people informed of the great presence. Here then, in Guru Nanak and his world, all nature becomes articulate, and his voice and personal touch is a comfort to all true thinkers. Amidst so much grossness and filth in the material struggles of Nature and man one is so thankful to God for a sight of the Guru in Nanak. The very fact of the possibility of there being a man like Guru Nanak is comfort enough for all true men and for all serious thinkers of all ages and races. The sight of— him is a whole moral culture. A man stands under the sky with Guru Nanak and is fascinated by His hymns and is deeply affected by His presence as he bows down and gratefully says: God is! All is beautiful; Nothing is amiss; Glory! Glory! Glory! Life is His gift! Inspiration of love is His gift; Creation is wonderful—it has in its soul the blessedness of His touch! To stand flooded with this gladness of all, this Glory of that beautiful unbroken rapture is life.

Footnotes:

1. This is a personal opinion.

- Editor.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### YOGA PRACTICES

Yoga practices have been emphasised by the Brahminical system of religious thought and particularly those curious physiological mental processes known as Hath Yoga in one form or another, for attaining to that ineffable peace of Upanishadic wisdom. The much too exaggerated emphasis laid on them has led to an age-long system of penance and asceticism, special diets and fasts. To the people it has so far meant nothing but empty efforts. The whole country is full of obscurantist practices in the name of religion. All the world's religions have elaborated systems of "spiritual" exercises for self-control, for self—restraint, to avoid over-indulgence and unbridled sensual pursuits for correcting the morals of the people, for making man good and noble; and one can understand that in moral human life they all have their uses when taken like doses of arsenic and opium for specific cures. One can understand the attention the utilitarian laws paid to the behaviour of men towards each other, and the rectification of human motives for living like good neighbours and for carrying on the mutual affairs of state and society in a desirable state of amity; for the enduring together the common afflictions. If the Hindu had not an exclusive type of mind he would see that the full historical and right development of all Hindu spiritual culture blossomed first in Buddhism and then in the lives of the ten Gurus. Sikhism is the best blossom of the East, and the creative reactivity of Eastern culture is most intense in Sikhism.

It is much better that we Indians know the right sources of future inspiration, rather than go about putting new wine in old bottles. The Sikh Gurus alone on behalf of the Hindu race, properly made the Gita message understood. The Hindu sense of intellectual superiority stands in the way of his progress. Imagine Vivakanand's saying, "I belong to a religion whose rebel child is Buddhism". They will not bow down to Truth. They will not take to Buddhism or to the new faith, Sikhism, the religion of the Ten Gurus, the culture of Love, Nam and Simrin, the Ethics of spontaneous Humanity. One can understand that speaking relatively, from the human point of view, it is desirable that there should be no violence and crime endangering the individual and the group freedom of life. If brute violence does exist, interfering with the amicable growth of life, it is even desirable that the freedom of the few should be crushed by meeting violence with greater violence to give a great number of men opportunities that they may rise to a higher and nobler realization of life. A wolf or a tiger coming into the herd of sheep must be destroyed.

But poor, indeed, is the function of all religious Sadhanas when the struggle of its processes is to make men mere automations and human life a twenty-four hour theological routine. It is only the spiritual genius born with definite divine qualities that manifests the inner power of which Schelling writes philosophically. As we have not yet known how to control gravitation, so we do not know the methods of controlling those inner powers which, like physical beauty, come naturally to certain persons. The Hindu system of Yoga, in mere empirical description, speaks of the capabilities of such geniuses, men of great and extraordinary powers and reduces those creations' gifts to mechanical gifts of accomplishment, to algebraic forms with a view to developing a school which would produce similar geniuses. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras have not succeeded in producing Yogis.

In the Guru's House, it is said that Simrin is both the process and the Siddhi (spiritual attainment). Once initiated into His favour, the Guru's Word has alchemical effects. Lyrical repetition transports the human mind to regions of the spirit. Man achieves elevation to a state where all becomes known to him and about which the Guru says: "If this mind lives in that mind, the mind knows then the secrets of the three worlds". The Guru suggests a fourth state where

illumined intuition grown intense in altogether a new sense of the Gurumukh, the superman.

In all of us there dwells a secret marvellous power of freeing ourselves from the changes of time, of withdrawing to our secret selves away from external things, and of so discovering to ourselves the eternal in us in the form of unchangeability. This presentation of ourselves to ourselves is the most truly personal experience, upon which depends anything that we know of the supersensual world. This representation shows us for the first time what real experience is, whilst all else only appears to be. It differs from every presentation of the senses in its perfect freedom, whilst all other presentations are bound, being over-weighed by the burden of the object. This intellectual presentation occurs when we cease to be our own objects, when withdrawing into ourselves, the perceiving image merges into the self-perceived.

At that moment, we annihilate time and the duration of time; we are no longer in time, but time or rather eternity itself (the timeless) is in us. The eternal world is no longer an object for us, but is lost in us.

The Guru's mode of Simrin (love, grace), the coming in of inspiration of the spiritual worlds, has proved its wonderful efficiency for the seeker of this kind of spiritual development. The Sikh martyrs show the invincible spirit of gladness in the worst afflictions. And both the Sikh and the Christian martyrs belong to the inspiration of Simrin; they see angels supporting them and letting them pass through the worst tortures of brutalized man, with inner *Fateh* (victory) resounding in their minds. Bhai Mani Singh whose lips vibrated with the soul-sound —“Glory!” “Glory!” as if he was being kissed by a thousand angels, insisted that his executioner should cut him with his axe joint by joint. Bhai Mati Das was sawn in two and he continued to utter the glorious sound, “Glory to the Guru!” till he was dead. Bhai Taru Singh was flayed alive and it is authentic history that his countenance shone with the light of angels. And thousands of the Guru's disciple were burnt alive, or tortured to death; none uttered a groan. All died peacefully as if borne in, the lap of angels. Simrin of Guru Nanak, thus, is creative of the Fourth State but in an organic way, and it leads “to the Fourth” as it is in Guru Granth, a state of superconsciousness where bodily pain and pleasure cease to oppress. Those who have seen the beauty of the spirit can see no grossness of matter, and these who have seen matter cannot get rid of it with a million systems of *Sadhanas*, try as they may.

True spiritual life, says the Guru, when it begins, so to say a strange phenomenon of transmutation of the human metal takes place. Paras (The philosopher's stone) which is reputed to transmute base metals into gold is at the same time, said to make no difference in the iron of a butcher's knife, the knife of the murderer, or the sword of a liberator of men. By its touch, all iron immediately changes into gold. This is the right simile to show what takes place when the true spiritual life begins. Man is transmuted, the directions of his passions and powers are altered. He is, so to say, switched on to a universal plane of life and he grows with it, he into it and that into him; and the powers of such life become manifest in due course when the season of the ripening of the fruit arrives.

In this attitude of a doe's life-state brought about under certain undetermined conditions can move Heaven to interfere to such an extent as to make a slave a king for one high act of mercy to her. Feeling for her off—spring is superior to Yoga-Sadhana. It seems impossible by any artificial means at this stage of our development to get all those undetermined cosmic conditions together in the same configurative grouping in which they bestowed such perfection on a doe. To attempt to do so is nothing but the impertinent haughtiness of a proud “I” in believing itself to be infallible and final. It is miserable, ugly egoism, and even if one or two succeed, what use is invoking with so much effort, and waste of life's energy, a state of life which under certain undetermined conditions is natural to bird, beast and man? Emerson hits the mark when he says that you may be thinking for centuries that you are making spiritual progress, yet after centuries you will find you are exactly on the spot from where you imagined you started. And true spiritual progress comes to you through

someone's lyrical glances. This is exactly what Guru Nanak means by "Nanak Nadari nadar nihal"<sup>1</sup>. From one glance comes perfection. It is union with God. No one can bring about that moment; it comes of itself. The whole of Guru Granth is full of positive statements on every page, that all may be in the power of man, to fly in the air, to dive, to become invisible at will, to live for centuries in one immortalized physical body, to have all kinds of Yogic Siddhis and Riddhis, the extraordinary mental powers developed by physiological processes of Yoga, so popular in all system of Brahminical religions. What one man has accomplished, all can, but it is not given to him to transmute himself. When transmutation is not in his power, by overstraining himself, by his self-effort of any description whatsoever, the simple life lived and suffering undergone with creation, is the best way to wait for the coming of God. Trying to be extraordinary is not of spiritual naturalness, but a mental abnormality. However high he may fly, he is still subject to the reaction of his own inherent animal passions and pursuits and motives and desires and the flights of imagination are not of the spiritual life, but of physical, material inertia. Man's intellect is after all, the enlarged instinct that works in birds and animals. Instinct has set finalities; so has the human mind.

Bhai Guru Das, the interpreter and missionary of the Gurus, rightly says that even Shiva is full of the dark inertia (tamas). He, after all his associations with evil spirits and snakes and intoxicants, must fall a prey to the charm of a woman, which by his mental processes he tries hard all his life to deny. The Indian seers and savants, the great mental giants all followed the life of expanded intellection. When they were fed up with Yoga practices, they hankered after the fairies of Heaven, and actually produced, in what they called Gandharb marriage, illegitimate children whom they are ashamed to own. These great forest-dwellers had not transcended the gravitational field of the body which they denied so vehemently and they could not but fall out of their dreams, right on their own legs and on the hard earth. Guru Nanak says, "All leap up but what He does comes to pass"<sup>2</sup>. About attainment of God, He says "Let them use all the force they can, make all efforts they can, still alas! all of us are equally helpless".

No mental process can create that attitude of mind, that indescribably describable state of life, in which something happening transmutes man who thenceforward is in the naturally supernatural, humanly superhuman state of transmuted man, a true and genuine divine man, a veritable God. It is the transmuted man in whom the true spiritual life begins. And Guru Nanak and all his successors and his apostles and the most authoritative record of their songs, Guru Granth declares at every page, that without this transmutation all that man does to become a "religious" or "spiritual" genius is a system of unmitigated folly. Man has to be regenerated by the touch of the Gurumukh.

In the true spiritual quest and progress there need be the same patience in man as in the rocks, rivers and the animals. All creation has it, and in its patient march it is shedding all that is material, (including mental activity). It is all processioning on to the perfection of the pure spirit. The evolution is in travail to take life to the point where spiritual beauty may become organic, with hands and feet, with speech, with song, with power to move on its destiny unknown but glorious. We, all created beings, are on one plane of existence, as it is now known in space of three dimensions, and our future lies in some higher sphere of life and not in our penance and vows and efforts to be what we cannot be here. The lion of Androcles, the sheep of the shepherd, the mother doe and the mother tigress, man and his wife, with all the goodness of their virtue and the illness of their sin, with the highly evolved moral men and with the lowest cannibals, spiritually speaking, all are in one state here. Their ignorance is the same, their knowledge of the same type, with differences of degree only. No one is higher than another. This is the standpoint so far I can understand it, that Guru Granth takes and out of these only those in whom "The Husband of his own pleasure plants the nucleus of spiritual life are truly spiritual". They are those who are favoured by the Perfect Ones of some higher worlds.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are algebraic formulae that were not and cannot generate genius by the

efforts detailed therein. All India for centuries has been steeped in its culture and there is no effect at enriching social life, or any extraordinary development of the individual, nor his natural simple humaneness. Theosophical societies took out this text as a great Bible, but the mortals of Kali-Yuga finally fell back upon spinning Gandhi's "Charkha" to free India politically.

The way in which Guru Granth has been referring to the realities of life, shows that the Guru not satisfied with anything, however fascinating mentally, till it is borne out by an overwhelming practice in life. The Truth is subjective, its expression all objective. The Guru discards all speculation which does not tally with experience as the knowledge of objects should respond to the logic of experiments, so the subjective realisation of Truth should respond to the logic of the actual state of life, the inner experience of the soul. The Guru insists on the "spontaneous me," on spontaneous observing of truth, sincerity, simplicity of life; on the spontaneous renunciation of false pride, false honour, false religions, false hypocritical actions of life-on being men. We are just men—good men when we are doing good, thinking good, when we are kind and sympathetic. But being men is not enough to him, it ought to be our natural state of life. Born of humanity, we must needs be human. He declares, on the other side, "Without Simrin the life process is as the process of combustion."<sup>3</sup> Be men, but then your memory should be purified by the Presence of God in it. Man-shape is a great formation, but man-soul is the higher perfection of life. Recast yourself into a more and more divine form.

Here is a message which has avoided the errors of the Buddhistic system of monks and monasteries. It recognizes the inherent spontaneous spirituality of human life. Sikhism is spiritual enlightenment with its sweet homes, humming with industry. Buddhism being a flame of spiritual indignation against the dead material mentality of the Brahmin could not but organise an army of preachers to set examples of perfect human beings. But all such preachers cannot be immaculate for long. All good and self-controlled men who are so under some speculation and resolution or even dedication, die of their self-generated poisons. Only spontaneous goodness of man lasts and has no reaction. The Guru ordains the Buddhistic emphasis on good Karma in the storm and struggle of human life of woe and misery. Man raises a family; he must labour and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. He must distribute his love and labour. He must be simply human from whom emanations of true human feelings should go out. Goodness, gentleness, mercy and compassion should issue out of him, like a nimbus of soft, soothing light. Seeing such a man, all must feel in their hearts, what a good man!

This is decorating human life with the blessedness of the spirit of simplicity of effective goodness. Pleasures of life, of good food, a good family life, good friends—are not to be eschewed for winning any spiritual merit. The beginnings of all true spirituality are in the domestic and social feeling of a man. The Guru seems to agree with Herbert Spencer, man needs to be a good animal first, to be anything better. The Guru emphatically declares, there is not spiritual merit in eschewing the pleasures of physical life nor in self-infliction of physical pain. They are all, so to say, mere accidents of material existence. The one spiritual need is that the attitude of man must be rightly directed towards the spirit of God dwelling alike in man and nature. And till the "Husband's Favour"<sup>4</sup> transmutes you by his lyrical Love, no one of you is truly spiritual. But be good human beings first, and His favour, by its own laws of love, will come to you in due course.

Patience to be where you are, slowly going on, gradually marching, is born of sympathy with the spirit of "God." Yet as guided, as bidden, all life must march to its perfection, everyday growing more perfect. Guru Nanak disapproves of straining to be anything over and above men, good, effective men of action. For the strain shall have a reaction and all such attempts are not essentially spiritual. The "Sahaj" of Guru Nanak is the spontaneous, eternal union with spiritual verity in all positions under all conditions—physical, mental, moral. The laws and conditions of that spontaneous bestowal of the spark of life of the spirit are beyond one's comprehension. The sinner

may get it in a glance, while all the pious talkers may miss it altogether. The true life of spirit is dynamic and kinetic; its own march eats up all carnality, materiality, without any effort on the part of the blessed recipient. Guru Nanak gives an apt illustration to explain true spiritual life. The favour of the husband to take a consort is a real factor and not an illusory metaphor. There is, so to say, a choice and this choice is an essential factor in the cosmic processes of human sublimation to angelhood and godhood. And once He has taken a woman to be his consort, the latter is put in a position where she is the queen in her own right. And when her state reaches its spiritual significance it lives from perfection, from understanding to greater and deeper understanding. The rapture of the spirit has no dramatic colours of the lime—light of a theatrical stage; it is of simple colour. The very simplicity of a “wedded life” is its highest, deepest and most vital lyrical quality.

How foolish is the new dramatic show of a man seeking woman, as compared with the dust-laden hair and love-filled eyes, engaged in hard work. The former is trying to be something, the latter has already been blessed.

Footnotes:

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|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Japuji 38.               | - Editor. |
| 2. Var Asa.                 | - Editor. |
| 3. Guru Arjan Dev.          | - Editor. |
| 4. Symbol for Divine Grace. | - Editor. |

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### GURU GOBIND SINGH THE NEW GITA HIMSELF

The whole of history has not produced a leader of men who could exemplify the tenets of Bhagavad Gita as now interpreted. Its message as now interpreted is lived in the lives of the ten Gurus. And in their times, there was no Bhagavad Gita with its new interpreters, wiser by hindsight derived from Sikhism and Western thought.

Guru Go bind Singh is the new Gita of India in himself and by himself. He is a modern type of prophet who does not care for theory. He kills the tyrant by his sword. He alone had never felt sick or sorry in performance of his duty, nor shy of war or bloodshed, if he had to wade through it in championing the cause of the oppressed. And he is truly the living illustration of the modern philosophy and highest religion of the western races devoted to science and work to "Duty" and to "Nishkama karma". He introduced the ideal of civic citizenship in a whole people and conceives man en masse. He brought out human character in its natural simplicity and beauty, and insisted that all men shall act for the pure love of man and God. He asserted the equality of all men. The Hindu, the Arab and the Feranghi are children of the same Creator. The spirit of Guru Gobind Singh, as leader of men, is an innovation like the Buddha's spiritual democracy. Only Guru Gobind Singh's democracy is more modern, more natural and absolutely spontaneous. There is no coercion of vows in its constitution. On the saddle he is in unbroken union with Akal, the Timeless. He is the ancient Brahmjnani who champions the cause of the poor, fights in open battle, sacrifices his all. His inner ecstasy is not contradicted but fulfilled in death and in the death of a single soldier overwhelmed by attacking hordes that want to kill the soul of the people. His Akāl is beyond all this pantheon of Hindu gods, but He lives in man and nature, both of whom are subject to constant change and decay; and yet the immortal is in them, in their feelings, in their sincerity, in their upward tendencies. The Brahminical "I" which Krishna uses to hypnotize Arjuna, is absent in the archetype of modern man, the prophet and poet Guru Gobind Singh. He mingles with the people as one of them: he lifts a whole people to the natural love of comrades right in India. He puts in their hands the plough and the sword and lifts their minds to the high stars where the people pass eternally singing the song of the Guru. He calls on the Akāl, adores Him as the incomprehensible Infinite, and yet for the people of this earth, he names the Ten Gurus as the Highest spiritual realities.

On this basis, it must be said that intrinsically it is not in the *Bhagavad Gita* as such, but in the life of Guru Gobind Singh that the modern Gita begins its holy chant, whose note of duty has that universal appeal and comprehends so well the spirit of the human struggle that characterizes the nations of the West. And yet the full oriental celestialty of life intact; after all, the life here is a pilgrim on foot to God. Such is the humility of the Guru's knowledge.

Bhagavad Gita used to be read to the dying; now I have seen present-day Hindus in the Punjab repeating it as their morning chant in imitation of the Guru's Asa-ki-var or Japuji. The latter are anthems which elevate the mind of man, wash the soul-consciousness in the roaring flood of morning light. The Gita reminds one of the metaphysical background of Hindu life (with a stray doud of the half-mythical personality of Krishna) and puts so much of immortality of soul into one that simple, human life ceases to have its true meaning. *Krishna* too becomes heavy and over-bearing in the Gita, if it is read like that. He is so charming in his boyhood and in his dancing and singing with the milkmaids of Vindravanam. The doctrine of the immortality of soul as announced in the Gita, especially in case of speculative people intoxicates the reader with a supreme indifference and in that indifference he can die.

Guru Granth that sings of the human personality, like that of Guru Gobind Singh, is full of no other thought but the hymns of the praise of Love and that beauty of Love which glistens embedded in matter. It is All-spirit, it is all feeling there. The best personal portion of all the sacred literatures of the East comes here out of the eternal earth again, peal after peal, paean after paean, again and again. The Guru's speech is full of that dumb adoration which is in the throat of birds, on the tongues of forest leaves, in the heartthrobs of rocks and rivers. The Guru endlessly repeats "Glory!" "Glory!" He has nothing more to say. He has not to philosophise, when he is face to face with God. It is feeling which ends in noble action, not mental concepts, in dismal intellectual fermentation.

Whenever Guru Nanak or the other Gurus stumble against the enormities, tyrannies and oppressions of man and nature, they look at it, notice its shapeless ugliness; but soon they see through it the beauty of the creation and their eyes are lifted above all their darkness. They are ravished by love, and beauty and the lyrical presence of God. God is Love. they say. The third Guru, Amar Das and the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev take the slokas of Farid which are full of intellectual pessimism and correct the outlook of his poetry by inserting the messages of joy, of beauty, of glory, of pleasure, of hope. What great lovers of life they are. Matter is absent in their song; it is all spirit. And their pure gladness of spirit, in hostile environment, burns undiminished like the light of a star. All elevation of soul ignores *details* and rejoices endlessly in the plan of life. Their optimism lies in its spontaneous infinity. Fountains of love have burst and streams flow out of the Gurus. Guru Arjan Dev is sweet beyond measure in his Hymns of Praise. He never tires of singing "Glory! Glory!" It is all music, endlessly sung, page after page, twelve hundred big folio pages, the same words, the same phrases. Ten generations of song and self-sacrifice. It is the music of the soul. It is not mental cleverness that excites praise, it is music and love that gives life. The Guru vibrates with life wave after wave of the same sea; loves the soul of a whole people. Emanations come out of his words and rejuvenate the decayed centres of consciousness. Gladness of soul full of glory rolls like shoreless oceans in him in the immensity of those emotions. All is washed away in the holy waters. People who see not the beauty of the sea, but weep and cry at the shattering of a few paper-boats and little wooden shafts are still of Farid's mind<sup>1</sup>.

Farid: If they have not loved God when the hair were black, how shall they find Him when hair has turned grey?

The Third Guru: O Farid,

It matters not if it be black or grey. He is always found

If one just aches for Him,

But love of Him comes not by our efforts to love Him.

This cup of Love is in His Gift. And He gives as He pleases.

Farid: If they tear open the body of the love-absorbed ones, no drops of blood will be found within.

The Third Guru: O Farid! This body is all-blood.

A body without blood cannot be.

Those who love their God, They have no blood of selfishness.

Farid: I thought it was I alone who was in distress:

I found the whole world suffering.

I climbed up my roof-top and saw from a height That all homes are burning with a similar misery.

Guru Arjan Dev: O Farid!

Behold, the earth is full of gay colours,

And there in is a garden full of humming beehives in the centre,

And no fire dare touch those that have known their God,

O Farid! beautiful is this life on earth,  
These years are full of Joy;  
The companionship of this fine—limbed body is a pleasure,  
And in this body one meets the rare ones who have the spark of His Love in their hearts.

Farid: When seasons change, spring changes into autumn.  
The forests tremble,  
The leaves fall, fall with fear,  
I look in all four directions.  
Nowhere, nothing stays, all shall pass away.

The Third Guru: Why tear off thy silk garments?  
And why wear coarse blankets? The forest is no better than the home,  
Nor rough wear better than fine.  
The Lord cometh everywhere, If the heart is turned Godward.

Farid: O Farid, if thou wakest late from sleep, thou art dead though breathing.  
If thou dost forget Him, He forgetteth thee not,

Guru Arjan Dev: O Farid,  
The husband is full of lyrics,  
His beauty is much too self-intoxicating.  
He needs us not, nor our devotion,  
When one is attuned to His Love this body is a musical instrument always singing.  
O Farid! Alike is pleasure and pain if thou hast found Him.  
Wipe out these modes of thought  
That distress you,  
Whatever is His pleasure is good,  
Find the kingdom of Heaven in submission to His joy.  
The world is all an excited drum,  
When they strike the blow it reverberates.  
You too reverberate when struck. Only he  
Whom Allah makes pure, resonates not,  
That is the soul that has found its infinity.

Farid:  
We give our heart to the world-sense,  
And this world-sense availeth not,  
The true life of the saints of God comes as the culmination of one's luck.

Guru Nanak:  
These gifts of spiritual genius lie in the pleasure of the husband,—  
Who can force them out of Him? Those who wake get them not,  
While He goes and wakes those who are still asleep and gives unto them.

Farid:  
My body burns like an oven  
And my bones burn as fuel in it.  
If my feet get tired,  
If will go on my head to where He may meet me.

Guru Arjan Dev: It is needless to consume thyself like this,  
What availeth it to burn thyself in the fire?  
What availeth it to feed the fire with thy limbs?  
On the feet or on thy head whither art thou going  
When He reigns within you blessing yourself entire?



Farid: Which is that secret word which gives the passage to him,  
Which is that virtue?  
Which is that wealth of gems?

And what shall be my attitude by which I may be the owner of the will of my husband.

The Guru: Waiting for Him and quivering with love for Him, is the secret that gives the passage to Him.

And expanding one's soul filled with gladness of welcoming Him like the laughing flower that blooms is virtue.

And the tongue sweetly naming Him is the wealth of soul.

If such be your attitude, Sister! then His will thou shalt own as thine.

With understanding of Him, one should be as one who hath no understanding of Him.

With all powers,

He should have no self, and yet a self, that should be inexhaustible in its gift of pure gladness.

Farid:

All have souls as gems of God bestowed on them.

If thou hast a Godward attitude,

If thou longest for Him.

Oppress not, break not the heart of God.

Footnotes:

1. Here follow a few of Farid's slokas with the corresponding vision of the holy Gurus. - Editor.

The above extracts are from the Slokas of Farid in Guru Granth.

- Editor.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE SIKH PEOPLE

Needless to repeat history which to those who do not sympathise with us means little. To those who do, every page of Sikh history is an inexhaustible inspiration.

But in its last 400 odd years the Sikhs as a people have shown a peerless spirit of martyrdom for Truth.

Cunningham and others who have written on the Sikh people, have seen a new nation of men in India who were welded together by the genius of the Guru into a spiritual brotherhood whose ideals of art, religion, life and labour were different from all those that had passed. The Sikh people, unlike other peoples of India, are a race of straightforward men of action, whose simple minds, informed of the Eternal by the Guru, shrinks from the idle speculation of the Brahminical mind, and also shrinks from the too theological law of the Muslim, at least of the empire-building Islam so hungry of conquering people (perhaps not the true Islam of the Prophet), and lives the simple, austere life of incessant labour that characterizes the tiller of soil everywhere. They have an inventive genius and love the practical pursuits of life—agriculture, tool-making, and engineering. They are, as a people, fond of colonization. Given opportunities and modern education, this nation has potentialities of progress which no other set of people in India possesses in so remarkable a degree.

Four hundred years ago the inhabitants of the Punjab were all slaves. The invaders that came by the Khyber Pass destroyed by the sword all Indian hopes of ever becoming a self-governing nation. Foreign invasions showed the hollowness of the creed that was holding the people of India in its clutches of caste and colour and dual differences. What could the invaders have achieved if the will to die for freedom were there in the soul of India? Then the Moghuls settled down, Akbar became a Brahmin, Aurangzeb a mere dreamer of a Muslim Empire, and Bahadur Shah a stringer of rhymes that the dancing girls sang.

Islam with its sword has found its grave in India. What is the Indian Mussalman today but a Hindu who hates “Others?” Perhaps in the whole of India today, one cannot find a group that can so continuously suffer for an ideal as the Sikhs.

There is no spontaneously divine personality left in India, except by most laborious and painful efforts & penances and sadhanas. What wearisome life-long penance the Hindu saint has to go through to earn sainthood! If godliness is to be attained at that cost, it does not seem to be worth it. Such laboured cultivation of personality indicates that the Hindu India is decadent—perhaps facing decline from within!

It is, therefore, wonderful that in this dark environment of hovering and lingering death, the Sikh has managed to exist and to make an impact on history. He is not intellectually subtle like the Hindu, he is not stuffed with “knowledge” and, let us say, he has not yet understood his own inner culture fully, but he is alive. This is hopeful. He loves his Gurus, the Masters. As the song of Marseilles thrills the whole French nation, so do the tunes that come out of the Guru’s soul thrill the Sikh people; this response is the sign of life. If a whole people were ever fired by the vital spirituality of a prophet’s song, here is the example of the Sikhs of the Punjab. They never enquire into the meaning of the poetry of the Guru, to them it is music in which words mean the “blessed mood” of inspiration. Out of the downtrodden, oppressed, lifeless slaves of the Punjab, Guru Gobind Singh moulded a nation which has in it the potentialities of a progressive nation of men. In the whole of India, the Sikh nation is the brightest spot still which has an inexhaustible will to die

for the love of its ideals. It is remarkable that this burning idealism is not based on land, or country or clan pride, but on the personal love of the Guru. When they are called upon, the Sikhs seek death as moths seek light. Guru Gobind Singh cut the moorings of this nation from its racial past and a nation wholly modern in spirit and mind sprang up out of the Guru's mind, with a highly inspiring and most deeply reactive tradition and history of its own. And it is very strange that when a Sikh is baptised, he feels a new life come to him, as if the Guru still lives and sends in one glance a wave of life and inspiration. They have potentialities yet. They love art and artistic labour more than metaphysical inanities. It is refreshing to see a Sikh carpenter deeply absorbed in his labour & a Brahmin anointing images with tilaks and mumbling texts!

Their inheritance from the Guru of the spontaneous practice of goodness, spontaneous practice of self-sacrifice, spontaneous practice of love for all creation, for the sake of the Guru, and their natural courtesies resulting from spontaneous manly love, not by a discipline of vows and penances, are the essential humanities of the Khalsa. Their preaching is not abstractions but life. They believe in developing a magnetic presence which should proclaim them and not mere lip-philosophies. Religiosity is not what appeals to them.

The Gurus, the Masters started their religion with a casteless kitchen. The first need of man is bread. When fed, and fed well, he needs the support that is for his life in the innocent smiles of wife and children, in the kindness of a mother, in the intense self-sacrifice of a sister. And this constitutes the second step of their creed in providing themselves with a healthy, harmonious home, and their creed has a "sweet home" to live in. And they are all so attracted inwardly to Him, that his Name is their inward joy of life. And their spontaneous willingness to die for Him, is unique. They feel Him living with them in their soul and in their homes. Without Him indwelling and inspiring them, they think life is but a "chemical process of combustion"<sup>1</sup>. And when this feeling for the Guru throbs continuously like the heart, in an individual, in a whole commune, then they are Sikhs and only then.

One can understand that their shrines, with the song of the Guru enthroned therein, could not tolerate any pageant merely of academic and empty-hearted worship. Worship of the Song (shabad) is filling to one's throat, heart and head. It is impregnating oneself with the spirit of the Holy Ghost. One can understand their bowing down their heads in the sacred memory of the Guru to the "Song Enthroned". And they are right in calling their book 'Guru' Granth. It is the voice that rings in their soul. It is the Person of the Guru reduced to the living seed of song. The Sikh himself, due to the ancient philosophy in his blood and bone has not yet understood the immortal significance of Word—worship, Song-worship as worship of the Guru.

The Sikh was made to be a feast-giver on the roadside, to spend as the day ended, all he earned daily; and it is his self-degeneration if he accumulates and thinks of the morrow. The very thought of the morrow for a Sikh, and "Who will support us when we are ill and unable to earn?" is irreligious. To a true Sikh, death is better than security earned with dishonesty. And the Sikh life, inspired with the ideals of the Guru, can be nothing else. The Sikh can have no thought for the morrow. The more creative a Sikh is, the greater is his distribution on the roadsides of life & as long as he has anything in hand, all must come and those who need, bear it away. His giving away of his labour and love is like the lamp distributing Light, like the rose distributing its fragrance. A Sikh's spontaneous and natural function of life is such; otherwise he is not a true Sikh. The Gurus showed that the true sympathy of man for man is only an effect of a high and true spiritual culture, an inward lyrical silence of love, an inspired inward elevation of the soul, and it would be the natural state of society where his Sikhs are. Inward elevation is all; both intellect and will must be the agencies to continue that state of elevation from the spiritual to the physical.

What is most significant is Sikh society is that like trees, they keep their vision and word beneath their bark and stand in themselves, suggesting through their life and labour the glorious

vision of their creators. The Tenth Guru, while condemning the various creeds as having degenerated into different narrow-minded sects, forgetting the great godly scheme of things of uniting men with Nature and God, of bringing happiness to mankind, declares love as the sole means of attainment of God. This love is silent, manifesting itself in the service of mankind. The Guru insists that religion is a thing which should invigorate the roots, it is not concerned with the surface. Lip worship causes schisms: down with it, down with the life of false religiosity.

The culture of mere intellect and will is of the vales, the Nām culture of the Guru is a thing of the high snow-peaks and low lands. Sikh culture is recognition of the perpetual Divine gift and perennial creativeness. The joy of a true Sikh is a kind deed done, a tear shed, a loaf of bread baked for another, and once even in twenty-four hours, the face turned upward, bathing in~ the light of the Guru's grace. And all truth is self-realised in the inspired spontaneity of the feelings for the beloved beautiful, in a lyrical repetition of the Guru's Song and Name with a sweet aching caused by the disciple's personal love for the Guru who is his gateway to God.

As usual, the world is too inert, too late, to welcome its prophets who bring an altogether new message. So it has been with the Sikh Guru. The Hindus just condescended with a superior air to say that the Sikhs are of them —“born out of them” Culturally and academically and even racially this was not wrong, but inspirationally, it was an attempt to thwart all the potentialities of the Guru's universal message. The Mussalmans of the times benefited more by the great Guru's contact; a great Sikh Muslim school of spiritual culture had its birth in the Punjab. This school sang in Punjabi, the mother-tongue of the people and gave up the Persian and Arabic foreignness of accent and alienness of idea. For, Guru Nanak told Mussalmans of the times that they were false to the original spirit of Islam of the Prophet. He pitched himself against the Hindu Yogis who passed off a drunken stupor of mind as true religion. He condemned the ethical theatricality of the Jams. He vitalized decaying centres of human consciousness with his lyrical presence. He gave the song to the people which cured their soul with the music of the Infinite. He was the embodied Truth to the masses and he emancipated the mind of the masses who were so long oppressed by impossible creeds.

After the Buddha, it was the Gurus who for the first time championed the cause of the masses in caste ridden India. The rich aristocracy and the degraded priests of the Hindus and the Muslims did not listen to him, but the oppressed people followed him with joy. Life made a whole people throb with love and life. For more than a century and a half his message was secretly flaming in the bosom of the people when the genius of Guru Gobind Singh gave them the eternal shape of the Disciples, the Khalsa.

Humble labourers while digging the earth, while ploughing, were in deep union with the God of Humanity. A new spiritual culture was being nurtured in the homes of the dust-laden peasantry of the Punjab. It was the culture of simple humanity with a Godward tendency; it was the culture of spontaneous God-head flowering in essential humanity. The God-ward tendency—being Gurumukh, with face turned to the Guru—was the simple religion of the Sikh masses.

A silent, gradual effortless effort to seek its own perfection through love and labour became the ideal of a whole race. The whole race moved round the central figure of the Guru. The Guru on this earth was the nucleus for the life of the spirit to grow around it. The Guru is the word-in-flesh, God-in-man; so it is no man, yet a man a point where the materiality of the human body and the pure divinity of God did coalesce inextricably and indescribably in the Guru's personality. The Ten Gurus are suns round which many earths revolve. Seeing the Guru, it became impossible to distinguish man from man.

Light with the lamp is there. Guru Nanak's way of thinking is marked by a very fascinating artistic touch; he sticks a shining silver-point on a wave of sea and just shows that it is a wave, unthinkable and inseparable from the sea. Any single thought on life isolated from the infinite

incomprehensible mystery-complex is but a dead concept. He ends all by saying "But he knows, he guides the destiny of creation; what can man think?"

The presence of the Sikh in the Punjab suggested a hundred known types, because he was so wholly fresh. Some thought he was a Muslim, some a Hindu, some a blend of the Hindu, some a blend of the Hindu and Mussalman. But none saw that here was after all one who combined the pristine and the modern, come to the world in hundreds and thousands. Here was a new race with a new life, a spiritual fervour, a fresh vision, with the worship of the Live Word-deity living within their hearts; here was a new nation with infinite potentialities. It was a nation that was set on voyaging into the oceans of its future. The Hindu of the Muslim past was abolished for the Sikh.

The passionate personal fealty of the Guru, the inspirer, was the secret of the power. Here came a nation of disciples in India who did after all cut clear all the tangled jungles of ancient theology, the rank and poisonous weeds of rites and castes, and lived in simple huts of their own fashioning with their minds wholly emancipated, with their labour and love wholly freed. They produced their own literature which sustained their soul. They sang while harvesting their crops; they sang while marrying away their sons and daughters, the great lyrics of Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan Dev. The divine hymns rose from their throats as notes of the music of love, as thrills of prayer, as the voices of the unseen to bless, to console and to guide them.

The Khalsa was thus made invincible by the joy of their Guru's song; even today when they sing his Hymns in chorus of thousands of men, women, girls and boys together, one stands breathless at the immensity of the Guru's powers who put so much life in dead stones that have moved to sing of the highest liberty. They did thus successfully cut themselves off from all the past systems of thought and life. "I am neither Muslim, nor Hindu, nor Jain, nor Jew, nor Gentile. I am the man with no caste, no separate colour. My life is love. My vision is of the worlds of souls. I am bodiless, I am the soul. My religion is the person of the Guru. My tendency is Godward," said the Sikh.

Guru Gobind Singh made the Khalsa a state. He brought forth from his soul a new language for their sustenance. The word "Akali" was coined for them by the Tenth Guru. "Sat Sri Akal" is the communal cry also given by the Guru. His compositions are the eternal companions of the Khalsa, they have the deep sound of victory over death. Guru Gobind Singh exactly like Guru Nanak, almost in the same phrase dismisses all-so called religions and creeds of India as blind superstitions. Power radiates with unique effulgence.

It seems a whole room where he sat must have been filled with dazzling light; no one could see the Guru without feeling the thrill of Eternity, without an awe of that Unnameable.

The word "Akali" is no name or title, but the spirit of this whole race—the Khalsa. The Khalsa means "of God". "Akali" signifies the "Immortal Man" who has completely subjugated matter to soul. It is a flame of inspiration burning in the Disciple's breast, which leaps over death and dissolution and passes on to the future of a whole people.

The Akali-spirit is unique in its transcendental fervour, in its burning idealism, in its rustic spirit of incessant physical struggle to conquer and defeat death.

No kingdom of this earth was ever claimed by the Guru; so the spirit of the Akali was no common ignition obtained from the fire of ambition that burns in 'the human heart. No honour of caste, clan or blood or ancestry was prized by the Guru. The Khalsa's ancestry is from the low-lying despised people of the earth. So the Akali is no spirit of noble pride like that of the Rajput, that led him to burn his women and die fighting on his own sword.

Religious fanaticism was that the Guru never allowed to enter his court. Religious superstition was eradicated from the very blood of the Sikh.

The Guru cleaved with his sword the darkness that clung and clings still to the endless philosophical hair splitting of the Hindu and the Jain.

The liberation of the human mind was the first and foremost thought of the Guru. He liberated man from the slavery of the Devas, the Vedas, and put him to work.

Most of his disciples are even today but farmers, masons, carpenters, mechanics, and engineers.

And those that have taken to be great capitalists and chiefs have already excluded themselves from the Guru's great brotherhood of creative labour and love and death.

If the Sikh, as he was born, had ever been afforded opportunities of spiritual isolation from the rest of the world, to develop his powers of self-realization, and his instincts of art and agriculture and colonization, his would have been by now, one of the best societies of divinely inspired labourers, of saints living by the sweat of their brow.

But Brahminism was there to engulf it from within. His political temper, the result of his complete mental liberation and his passionate love of liberty pitched him against the Moghuls from the time of its birth. Out of the jaws of death, if the Khalsa has still come out, there is much hope for it yet. All is not yet lost. Those Sikhs were men of great power. They were huge mountain-like personalities, outwardly perhaps of hard and black granite, but from whom the fountains of the milk of human kindness gushed forth and went fertilizing the land. They were much too transcendently intoxicated by the "Name of God", the holy spirit of the word-in-flesh that had descended on them to be covetous of heaven or Earth. They were blessed to be such by Guru Gobind Singh in a moment of perfection. They were made great in a moment, noble by a touch, by a glance. And lighted by their examples, the common peasants of the Punjab become saints and angels, for an infinite abundance of spirit had been poured on them from the Heart of Guru Gobind Singh. What miracle can be greater than when a prophet makes others like himself? "Glory ! Glory to Guru Gobind Singh! He and His<sup>2</sup> disciples are one!" And thus once in history came here, in this enslaved country, sincere men deeply inspired by noble and active unselfishness in great masses, who in thousands, laid down their lives in the spirit of true soldiers of God for the defence of everything but themselves. This makes the whole Sikh history, a unique spirit of man embodied in noble action.

"Name of God" with the Sikh is no muttering of names in an insensate jingle as with certain Indian creeds. "If by muttering some unknown God's name, man is to become free why! the Pudna, a bird, ever mutters *you-oo you-oo*" says Guru Gobind Singh. Their inspired activity in Sikh history is but their inward joy of God-realization gushing out of them in floods. Their heroism is akin to that of the Maid of Orleans. "Spirituality is a river in flood", says so truly the great Nietzsche. Nam is personal God carved out of the Infinite in the shape of the universe and the Man-soul ablaze in the centre of the universe.

In Guru Gobind Singh they saw their Personal God face to face before them, and as the infant just born knows naught, so they knew not death, nor tyranny of matter and man. They had found his love, his vision, his life, his genius. And for them this was enough and for hundred of centuries yet, it would be enough.

A new language was born in the Akali camp at Anandpur, out of the poor Punjabi dialect. These Akalis saluted God with the sword, and rode on the planet earth as if it were a mare. A few words and phrases that are left to us still record the history of the elevation of the mind of the whole race. Alas! the Akali is gone. His language is dead, his self-realization too has volatilised. The rich Sikh sardars and princes, and self-seeking money-makers, the tax-gatherers are fettered today with the same illusions that have been the death of all religions. The spirit of the Sikh is of the immortals. It will rise again. The great spiritualising of the Akalis of Guru Gobind Singh is not there now, but even a distant semblance of it reminds us vividly of what has been. One stands aghast at contemplating the immensity of power that they breathed. No Akali said "I". he always spoke of himself as "The armies of the Khalsa", *faujan*. The Sikh was renamed by Guru Gobind

Singh as 'Singh', the lion. And it is this suffix to every Sikh name, in which it was proposed by the Birth-giver of the Akalis to drown all differences of caste and colour in one large family of the Guru, the Khalsa. The rifle, the sword, the pistol, the chakkar<sup>3</sup>, the bow, the arrow are only physical symbols of the burning, dazzling idealism of the Sikh's inner fervent passion for the Guru. The Akali in prayer was once the voice of Nature. It seemed when he stood at prayer, the trees stood with him, and the snow-turbaned mountain bowed with him. In his God-coloured mind, the stars of the whole sky trembled with the music of emotion. His soul passed thundering; it seemed nature was clapping its hands with joy. It seemed the spirit of the mountains chanted the Ten Gurus' "Sat Sri Akal". And whenever they met each other, they sang to each other this dedicatory song composed by Guru Gobind Singh.

*Wah Guruji Kā Khalsa.*

*Sri Wah Guruji Ki Fateh*

Thine O Lord! are we;

Thine the Khalsa,

Thine the victory,

Thine the glory,

Glory to him—the Guru.

The very sound of these great mantras (Aphorisms) of life coined by Guru Gobind Singh transmuted the flesh of man.

The Akalis, few in number, unclad and starved, fought the vast Moghul Empire by charging its high and adamantine ramparts like mad elephants with nothing but their heads. They wanted to beat empires with the shouts of Sat Sri Akal<sup>4</sup>. They surely conquered the hearts of the people with their singing Glory! Glory! to the great Presence. That enthusiasm was unique. And to all thinkers, it must be clear that the Akali spirit was much too modern in its gospel of human liberation, much too restless with the floods of fire pent up in little human hearts, to have sought any merger with the Hindus from whom these supermen mostly sprang, and with the Muslims with whom these saints of God had to fight to what was practically a total self-annihilation.

The Sikh has nothing to give but his life. He is a simple rustic, but sincere. Intellect he does not value, nor its exciting flashes. He is ignorant, but gives away fearlessly his body which the erudite scholars and the so-called saints love to preserve in cotton-wool. Compared to this gift of a soldier in times of danger, all other gifts in the selfish world are mere trinkets and toys. Even in these degenerate days there is the Sikh suffering, and beaming with song both at home and in prison. What is he suffering for? Primarily for the purity of the administration of his church. He may be unlettered, a rustic, wrangling, fighting his kind, but the bosom of a whole *sangat* burns with a glowing love for the ideal of the Guru, with a holiness of prayer, with an intense longing for perfection. It is the upward striving of a man, however heavily encumbered with matter, that is the true worth of man. A self-satisfied man with a few fixed finalities in this awfully immense unknowable mystery and human destiny is a lifeless stone-statue. There is the Cromwellian passion in the present-day Sikhs of the Punjab for casting off the rubbish from the Divine doors of the Guru. Never before in Indian history, has any portion of the Indian race risen with such lofty purpose, as the present-day rustic, the Sikh of the Punjab has risen.

Is not the immaculate purity of the ardent will of the Sikh to maintain his holy places in their atmosphere of divine remembrance a thing of which any group of men anywhere should feel proud. Is the Sikh's untaught and spontaneous willingness to give his own life as oblation at the altar of the temples of the ten Gurus his Inspirers, his Indwellers, his Gods not a perpetual gift of the soul to mankind? There is a gem-like glory scintillating like the best radium, in this strong, granite-bosom of immense matter of the electric body politic of the Sikh. Grossness shall drop

away, the animal shall be vanquished, but the lustre of this silent heroism shall sparkle on the crown of humanity.

The songs of the Ten Gurus and the lives of unparalleled martyrdom have created a new race-emotion in the Punjab; the Sikhs are a new nation in its inspiration and its remarkable cohesion of the masses. The brief Sikh history and tradition inspire the Punjab peasants as no manner of religious fervour did before, which goes to show that the Sikh has a tradition and culture of his own which the Hindu has been unwilling to receive, though he wishes at times to pat him on the back as a kind of off-spring. It is unfair of the Hindus to condemn the Sikhs for their attempts to cut themselves away from the mass of Hindudom. They make it a grievance that the Sikhs wish to make their church stand apart.

Who are the Udasis? The monastic sect started by the son of Guru Nanak, Baba Sri Chand. Baba Sri Chand did not differ in any essential detail from his father Baba Guru Nanak, except that he believed that monks alone can spread a new religion. Udasis are responsible for the spread of Sikhism and making temples and institutions. Udasis gradually degenerated into veritable Brahmin priests. Seeing how the Guru's word "Sat Sri Akal-jo bolle so Nihal" (meaning is not so important as the sound and its cry: Glorious the Timeless. He who shouts is Blessed) inspires the Sikhs. The Hindus of the Punjab at places are adopting the same rhyme "Sanatam Dhram ki Jai" jo bley so abhai (Victory to ancient Dharma. He who shouts is fearless) This imitation is a compliment to Sikhism.

The present-day Hindus believe the Sikhs are only a section of the Hindus. If the Hindus had understood Guru Gobind Singh, the political destiny of the country would have been different. But that was not to be. The Hindu mind being deeply conservative, shuns whatever is new and goes against a certain kind of encrusted orthodoxy. This was challenged by Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Let the Khalsa hold on confidently to the message of the Gurus and follow it. From that miracles unforeseen. Will follow. Let me close this discourse with the time-honoured cry of the Khalsa: Sat Sri Akal! (The Timeless Lord is Eternal)

Footnotes:

1. Guru Arjan Dev. - Editor.
2. Refrain from the var of Bhai Gurdas Singh. - Editor.
3. The quoit. - Editor.
4. The Khalsa host's cry. The sound is more important than the meaning. It means, "Glorious is the Timeless, Deathless". - Editor.



	chapter	Book page, line	Doc page, line
howers	I	10,15	4,5
ryots	II	14,20	1,46
stremblets	III	26,20	3,34
cheas	IV	30,1	5,7
ean	V	42,28	2,34
Simois	VI	52,21	2,42
Kindship	VII	67,29	1,34
Unspactial	VII	74,7	4,1
Wated	VIII	89,19	6,38
Don't	IX	110,20	8,21
Angust	XI	127,18	1,13
Croce	XII	138,9	1,9
Waspish	XV	176,18	3,17
---r	XV	182,31	5,34
thir	XXI	243,14	4,35
doud	XXVIII	305,10	1,41
valley	XXIX	316,22	3,7

***SPIRIT OF THE SIKH***

***Part II***

***Volume Two***

***1993, Second edition***

1. The whole book is typed in Garamond font (English UK), with a consistent font format [i.e., size, bold (for titles), Italics, Underlines ect.]
2. Typographical errors such as shown in the example are corrected wherever noticed.  
Example: Page 37, line 26 of book and page 56, line 8 of the soft copy of **Spirit of the Sikh (Part I)**:  
*known as "Sikh" or Disciple".* IN the given phrase the inverted comas before disciple are missing which have been fixed.  
Besides this corrections like making spaces before and after certain marks (like ; : , . ! ?), consistent with the standard space conventions. The Standards are No space before any of the above shown marks, one space after ; & , and two spaces after every ! : . ? mark.
3. All the Grammatical errors have been left as they are and spelling mistakes corrected according to British English which has been used by the author. At certain places to convey the essence the author has changed the form of words which are not permissible and hence account for grammatical errors. Example: Word "slightingly" appearing on page number 43 of the book and 29 of the soft copy of the **Spirit of the Sikh (Part I)**. All other spelling mistakes, which do not account for the above given explanation have been changed. All the mistakes noticed, but not changed for the lack of surety are listed in the file named mistakes sent along. We can correct them as per your instructions.
4. The present text is typed on A4 page (Size 11.69/ 8.27 inches) with one-inch margin on all the four sides.