



M.A.(HISTORY) PART-I (SEMESTER-I) PAPER-I
HISTORY OF PUNJAB (1469 to 1675)

UNIT NO. 1

Centre for Distance and Online Education
Punjabi University, Patiala
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SECTION-A

Lesson No :

- 1.1 : Principal Sources of Early Sikh History
- 1.2 : Political Condition of Punjab in the Last Quarter of the 15th Century and First Quarter of the 16th Century
- 1.3 : Social, Religious and Economic Condition of Punjab during the time of Guru Nanak
- 1.4 : Travels of Guru Nanak
- 1.5 : Guru Nanak — His Teachings
- 1.6 : Development of Sikhism Under Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das

M.A. HISTORY
M.A. (HISTORY) PART-I (SEMESTER I & II)
PAPER-I : Compulsory

(SEMESTER I)

HISTORY OF PUNJAB FROM 1469-1675 (COMPULSORY)

Time Allowed: 3 hours
: 75

External Examination

Internal Assessment : 25

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER-SETTERS

1. The Syllabus prescribed should be strictly adhered to. The paper-setters should keep in view the topics specified in each paper and not the title of the paper.
2. The question paper will consist of three sections: A,B and C. Sections A and B will have four questions each from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 12 marks each. Section C will consist of 9 short-answer type questions which will cover the entire syllabus and will carry 27 marks in all. There being no internal choice in this section, each short-answer type questions will carry 3 marks. Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the Sections A and B and the entire Section C. The candidates are required to give answer of each short-type question in 50 words i.e. in 7-10 lines.
3. If there is a question on notes, the choice offered in such question should at least be fifty percent.
4. The wording of the questions should be simple and easily understandable by an average student. There should be no vagueness.
5. The number of questions based upon quotations should not exceed two in a question paper.
6. The general standard of the questions should cater to the different intellectual levels - average, above average and below average.
7. Each paper is of 75 marks and three hours duration and 25 marks are of internal assessment.

NOTE: The paper setter should keep in view the topics specified in each paper and not the title of the paper.

Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the sections A and B and the entire Section C

SECTION-A

1. Principal sources of early Sikh History upto 1675.
2. Age of Guru Nanak: Political, Social and Religious conditions of the Punjab.
3. Guru Nanak's Travels, Teachings and their Impact.
4. Development of Sikhism under Guru Angad, Guru Amar Dass and Guru Ram Dass.

SECTION-B

5. Guru Arjan: compilation of Adi Granth, Language, Script, Arrangement of Material, Contents and Significance.

6. Martyrdom of Guru Arjan: Causes and Impact.
7. Guru Hargobind: Organisational Changes and their Impact.
8. Relations of Sikh Gurus with the Mughals 1606-1675; Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur ;Emergence of dissenting Sikh sects: Udasis, Minas, Ramraias, Dhirmalias.

SECTION - C

Nine short answer questions will be set from the entire syllabus. The candidate will attempt all the 9 questions. These questions will be based upon terms, concepts, institutions and historical sources within the purview of the syllabus. The answer of these questions will be of 50 words i.e. 7-10 lines and will carry 3 marks each. Thus, the total marks for these questions will be 27.

Essential Books :

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| 1. | Arora, A.C. | History of Punjab (Punjabi) |
| 2. | Banerjee, I.B. | Evolution of the Khalsa Vol. I & II (English & Punjabi) |
| 3. | Banerjee, A.C. | Guru Nanak and His Times |
| 4. | Dhillon, D.S. | Sikhism, Origin and Development. |
| 5. | Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh | Atlas of Guru Nanak's Travels (Punjabi and English) |
| 6. | Teja Singh & Ganda Singh | A Short History of Sikhs (English and Punjabi) |
| 7. | Bal, S.S. | Guru Nanak in the Eyes of Non-Sikhs |
| 8. | Grewal, J.S. | Guru Nanak in History |
| 9. | Gupta, Hari Ram | History of the Sikh Gurus - Vol. I |
| 10. | Kirpal Singh and Kharak Singh | History of the Sikhs and their Religion Vol-I |
| 11. | Sukhdial Singh | Punjab Da Itihas 1469-1708 (Punjabi) |
| 12. | Sulakhan Singh | Heterodoxy in the Sikh Tradition. 1999 |

Reference Books:

- | | | |
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| 1. | Narang, G.C. | Transformation of Sikhism (English)
ਸਿੱਖ ਮੱਤ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) |
| 2 | Khushwant Singh | History of the Sikhs, Vol.I |
| 3 | Kohli, S.S. | Travels of Guru Nanak |
| 4 | McLeod, W.H. | Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion. |
| 5 | Ray, Niharranjan | Sikh Gurus and Sikh Society |
| 6 | Kohli, S.S. | A Critical Study of Adi Granth |
| 7 | M.A. Macauliffe | The Sikh Religion Vol. - I - VI |

M.A. (HISTORY) PART-I**PAPER-I****HISTORY OF PUNJAB(1469-1675 A.D.)**

LESSON NO. 1.1**AUTHOR : PRITAM SINGH SETHI**

PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF EARLY SIKH HISTORY**Structure of the Lesson**

1.1.1 Objectives

1.1.2 Introduction

1.1.3 Difficulties in Reconstructing the History of Punjab.

1.1.4 Religious Literature

1.1.5 Historical and semi Historical works in Punjabi and Hindi

1.1.6 The Historical works in Persian

1.1.7 Secondary Sources in English

1.1.8 Miscellaneous Sources

1.1.9 Summary

1.1.1. Objectives

- To highlight about the difficulties and hurdles in reconstruction of the History of the Punjab.
- To examine religious, Persian and semi historical sources to History of Punjab.
- To evaluate the secondary sources in English.
- To discuss miscellaneous sources on Punjab history such as coins, buildings and folk lores.

1.1.2. Introduction

Since eleventh century A.D., the Punjab had been a historical unit of India. It did not have its own separate and independent history. The writers on the subject never bothered to give importance to the history of this province separately. The history of the period of our study is mainly a history of the ten Sikh Gurus. Sikh-Mughal and Sikh-Afghan relations after the Guru period culminating into the rise and development of Sikh Misals. For the study of this

important period of history, the student is required to have an analytical eye. No study in detail or depth is possible without adequate source materials.

1.1.3. Difficulties in Reconstructing the History of Punjab: There is a crisis as far as the authentic sources of the history of the Punjab are concerned. The regular accounts of the different events are many time, not available. The reliable and trustworthy historical material is scanty. A student of the history of the Punjab has to face many problems and difficulties in reconstructing its history. The main problems are given below :-

The Punjab lacked interest in recording the different facts of history. They were more concerned with the imaginary other world, than the real one.

In the medieval period, the Punjab was a part of the Mughal Empire. The scholars never attached any importance towards giving a separate and independent identity to the history of the Punjab.

Most of the historians of the medieval period were the Mohammedans. The views of these Persian writers were always biased. They never attached any importance to the rise of Sikhism in this part of the country. They were fanatic. Different events of the history have been distorted according to their own whims. They hated Sikhism and the Sikh Gurus.

At the same time, the accounts of the Sikh writers are also not reliable. The life history of the great religious men have been gradually mixed up with legends and myths in such a manner that the real facts have become obscure and beyond recovery. The devotees and admirers of the Sikh Gurus have presented them as great religious and spiritual leaders than the worldly and historical personalities. But here, in almost every instance, the materials that one possesses are scanty when reliable.

In 1581, the pontification became hereditary. The family feuds of the Gurus became rampant. Prithia tried to kill Hargobind, Ram Rai opposed Guru Har Rai and Dhirmal did not spare Guru Tegh Bahadur. The opponents of *Gurugaddi* always tried to defame the Gurus by writing false stories. The followers of these dissidents mixed up fables and myths with the religious scriptures of the Sikh Gurus.

The Sikh Gurus had led the attacks upon the empty rituals, fanaticism, prejudices and practices of Hinduism. The dominance of the priestly class was also challenged. The Brahmans and other priests became enemies of Sikh Guru. They either did not write anything about the Sikh movement or concealed the facts.

The Sikh Gurus were religious and spiritual leaders. Their writings are more concerned with moral and spiritual uplift of the human beings. A few

historical references in their writing are only accidental.

Emperor Aurangzeb was a fanatic ruler. He wanted India to be a Islamic country. In 1669, he officially banned the writing of history. Later on, he also ordered not to write any historical event officially. So whatever was written during that period could be published only after his death.

After the death of Aurangzeb, the Punjab became a centre of confusion, chaos, anarchy, lawlessness and disturbances. The continuous invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali led to the spread of uncertainty. The peace and tranquility was seldom witnessed. The constant struggle, rifts and dissension had weakened the stability. The persecutions by the Muslim officials was unbearable. The Sikhs remained busy in the struggle for independence against the Mughals and the Afghans. The labour of many scholars had gone waste during this period of turmoils. So the coming generations were deprived of valuable historical materials.

Therefore, a student of the history of the Punjab is naturally beset with the task of reconstructing its history from the different and varied sources that are available to him. One requires a balanced and detached judgement to find out truth from the mass of untruth of the partial and biased material. In spite of these difficulties, the available material can be studied under the following heads :-

1.1.4. Religious Literature

There is a vast religious literature of the Sikhs in Gurmukhi available to us. It is both of historical and semi-historical importance. A part of it is more prone to mythology and requires a discerning and analytical eye to bring out the factual material.

1.1.4.1 The Adi Granth

The Adi Granth is the most important and sacred Granth of the Sikhs. It is also known as 'Guru Granth Sahib' or 'Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib'. It was compiled in 1604. It was written in verse in Gurmukhi script. It contained 974 hymns of Guru Nanak, 63 of Guru Angad, 869 of Guru Amar Das, 638 of Guru Ram Das, 2312 of Guru Arjan Dev, 922 hymns of 15 Bhaktas both Hindus and Muslims and songs of 4 minstrels. Later on 115 hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur were also added. It consists of 1430 pages. It was not written with historical point of view. It contains only prayer to Almighty and the devotional songs. It has truth, harmony and wisdom. It does not give any biographical sketches of the Gurus nor does it refer to the miracles performed by them. The hymns of Gurus refer to their beliefs and doctrines. The hymns of Bhaktas represent three schools of thought, Vaishnavism of Ramanand. Krishna cult of Surdas

and Sufism of Farid. Though it is thoroughly a religious book, yet it throws some light on the political, social, economic, cultural and religious condition of the people of the time. The Babar-Vani of Guru Nanak describes the violent attack of Babar upon the Punjab and the general massacre of the innocent people. The Guru also refers to the policy of high handedness of the Lodhis. He also makes reference to the social and religious customs, practices and usages of the time. The position of women in society was highly degrading. Muslims were exploiting Hindus of the time and the Brahmans were exploiting the other casts. The conquered Hindus were the dumb-driven cattle and they were passing their day in pitiable plight. The TIKE-DI-VAR of Satta and Balwand gives an account of the life and works of the first five Gurus. In Gauri-KI VAR I, Bhai Jetha gives a graphic and authentic account of the life and work of Guru Amar Das. Sunder in his 'Sadd' has given another authoritative historical account. So it can be concluded that it is priceless treasure of historical data of the 16th and 17th century. It may be called the Bible of the Sikhs and is admittedly the greatest authority on Sikhism. Its main interest, no doubt, is religious but references to historical incidents are found here and there and having regard to the paucity of records on the history of the Gurus, these must certainly be regarded as invaluable.

1.1.4.2. The Vars of Bhai Gurdas

Bhai Gurdas Bhalla (1551-1639 A.D.) was a talented and prolific writer. He was thoroughly holy and a brilliant scholar of the Sikh-religion and History. Since his childhood, he was devoted to Sikh religion and attended Sangats. He learnt Gurbani by heart and used to chant it in his sweet and melodious voice. Guru Amar Das sent him to Agra for preaching Sikhism. He learnt *Brijhasha*, Sanskrit and many *ragas* there. At the time of the construction of the city of Amritsar, Guru Ram Das entrusted him with the work of looking after the work of this new development. Guru Arjan dictated him the Bani of the Adi Granth and Bhai Gurdas was writing that in the modified form. Bhai Gurdas composed thirty nine Vars and 556 Kabits or couplets. He was asked by Guru Arjan to get his Vars and Kabits inserted in 'The Adi Granth.' But Bhai Gurdas declined the offer saying that he had not attained that degree of perfection in devotion to God. Though his writings have not been included in 'Adi Granth' yet his Vars are traditionally regarded as '*The Key*' to the 'Guru Granth Sahib'. In Var I, stanzas 23-24 and Var II stanzas 13-14, he gives an account of the religious aspect of Guru Nanak's life. In Kabit No. 345 he tells us that Guru Nanak obtained divine light about his mission in life on *kartik* full moon day. He collected the matter about Guru Nanak from the contemporaries then living like Baba Budhaji. It is presumed that these

Vars were written sometime in the first quarter of the 17th century but Mcleod is of the opinion that Guru Nanak's life was written sometime not much more than sixty years after the death of Great Guru. His account is more reliable as he was a contemporary of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Sikh Gurus. He gives vivid account of the travels of Guru Nanak. He refers to Mardana, Daulat Khan Lodhi and others, but does not give any references to Bhai Bala anywhere. According to Khushwant Singh, "Whatever references he makes in the Vars must be considered authentic." The interest of Bhai Gurdas work is, no doubt, predominantly religious and the Kabits in particular contain merely the Sikh tenets and a panegyric of the Gurus, but it is important to note that they mark a definite landmark in the evolution of Sikhism and should thus be regarded as extremely valuable.

1.1.4.3. The Janam Sakhis

The events connected with the birth, life and previous life of Guru Nanak are called the Janam Sakhis. They are not biographies but hagiographies which means literature of lives and legends of saints. The different events concerning the life of Guru Nanak, in many cases, have not been given in chronological order. About a dozen Janam Sakhis are available. None of these Janam Sakhis was written or dictated either by Guru Nanak or Guru Angad. The script used for all these important Janam Sakhis is Gurmukhi, but the language may be either Punjabi or the composite dialect called *Sadhukkai* or *Sant Bhasha*. Most of these Janam Sakhis are supposed to be written in the 17th and 18th centuries. Some of the important Janam Sakhis are as under :-

1.1.4.4. Puratan Janam Sakhis

Puratan Janam Sakhis means the old Janam Sakhis. There are three Janam Sakhis in this group. The first Puratan Janam Sakhi is considered to be written in 1635 A.D. during the time of Guru Hargobind. Mr. H. T. Colebrook (1765-1837) took the book to England and donated it to the Indian Office Library in 1815. While examining the Gurmukhi manuscripts, a reputed German Scholar Dr. Trumpp discovered it in 1872 A.D. So, it is also known as Wilayatwali Sakhi or the Janam Sakhi from overseas. The government got some copies of this book prepared in 1884 and 1885 and presented these to some institutions as gifts.

A well-known Professor Bhai Gurmukh Singh of Oriental College, Lahore found a copy of it in the town of Hafizabad and thus it came to be known as Hafizabad Wali Janam Sakhi. It was prepared in 1733 A.D. Macauliffe gave it regular form and sometimes it is described as Macauliffe Wali Janam Sakhi. Some copies of this book were in existence at Lahore, Bahawalpur, Shikarpur, Ferozepore, Burdwan and Burhanpur. The author of these Janam Sakhis is

not known but according to Macauliffe and Kahan Singh, one Sewa Das wrote it, so it is also known as Sewa Dass Wali Janam Sakhi.

Another manuscript was acquired by the Indian Office Library in 1907 and is listed in its catalogue as M.S.S. Punjabi B 40. It gives reference of Guru Nanak's life at Sultanpur but differs afterwards.

Puratan Janam Sakhis are considered as the most reliable source on the life of Guru Nanak. The language of this Janam Sakhi resembles with Pothohari form of Punjabi. Its language is simple. The name of Bhai Bala has not been found even once in this book. The common expression of Guru Gobind Singh 'Wahe Guru-ji-KiFateh' is found in it. In 1929, Bhai Vir Singh compiled a Janam Sakhi based upon its material. Macauliffe also got sufficient material for his work from it. On the other hand, Dr. Trilochan Singh holds a different opinion about this Janam Sakhi and says, "In my opinion, it is the most unreliable Janam Sakhi on date of death, and also for quotations from Gurbani ill advised by Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Macauliffe used wrong date and year of death and the wrong date of birth from this Janam Sakhi."

Janam Sakhi of Bhai Bala :- Bhai Bala, a resident of Talwandi, the home town of Guru Nanak is considered to be a close associate and companion of the Great Guru. During the time of Guru Angad, one Paira Mokha of Sultanpur wrote it out at the dictation of Bhai Bala. At that time the horoscope of Guru Nanak was also said to be consulted. Then it was read out to Guru Angad. Dr. Trilochan Singh accepts the authenticity of this Janam Sakhi but it has been commented upon on the following grounds :

Bhai Bala's Janam Sakhi is not written in the archaic language of Guru Angad. Moreover a very close associate of Guru Nanak had to ask Bala that whose disciple he was. In this book the use of the word Wah-Guru shows that it was never written before the time of Guru Ram Das. Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Mani Singh prepared the separate lists of the eminent Sikhs but the name of Bhai Bala found its place nowhere. At many places, the disparaging stories about Guru Nanak have been given. A story about Devlut Masand shows that it was written sometimes after Guru Amar Das.

But it will not be justified to ignore Bhai Bala's name altogether as a genuine person. Though his name has been mentioned only in Mehma Prakash of Bhai Sarup Dass Bhalla. Dr. Trilochan Singh is of the opinion that the book was corrupted by Minas, Handalis, and other from time to time. He accepts its authenticity. The family of Bhai Bala still lives at Nankana Sahib and his Samadhi is found at Khadur Sahib.

Meharban's Janam Sakhi :- Its writer Meharban was the son of Prithi Chand, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev. After the pontification of Guru

Arjan Dev, they became his dead enemies. The Sikhs began to call them *Minas*. It was written sometime in the first half of the 17th century. Its language is basically *Braj* with an admixture of the words of *Persian*, *Multani* and western Punjabi. It comprises of six volumes i.e. *Pothi Sach Khand*, *Pothi Harji*, *Pothi Chatarbhuji*, *Kesho Rai Pothi*, *Abhai Pad Pothi* and *Prem Pad Pothi*. The first three volumes were found at Dam-Dama Sahib in 1940. It is in discourse. Historically it is important because it gives accurate dates, names of persons and only a few miraculous stories.

1.1.4.5. The Gian Ratnawali or Bhai Mani Singh's Janam Sakhi

Bhai Mani Singh was a close associate of Guru Gobind Singh. He was a pious and popular Sikh. He remained with the tenth Guru at Nander till his death in 1708 A.D. Afterwards he shifted to Amritsar and led the Sikhs. He was a recognised leader and a granthi of Harmandir. On the request of some of the Sikhs he compiled *Gian Ratnawali* based upon the Var I of Bhai Gurdas. It is said, the work was completed between 1675-1700 and was shown to Guru Gobind Singh for his approval. But it is believed that some parts of the book were written some years after the death of its writer as his name is referred in the third person at some place. However, it is important as it gives the date of birth of Guru Nanak in the month of Baisakh.

1.1.4.6. Mehma Prakash

Two different versions of *Mehma Prakash* written by different person are available. First '*Mehma Prakash Vartik*' is comprised of twenty *Sakhis* on the life of Guru Nanak and written by Bawa Kirpal Singh Bhalla in 1741. Second version '*Mehma Prakash Kavita*' consists of 65 *Sakhis* and was completed in 1776 by Sarup Dass Bhalla, a descendant of Guru Amar Dass and a resident of Goindwal. First part of this book deals with the life of Guru Nanak and the remaining part with the lives of other Gurus. It is also known as *Vairowal wali Janam Sakhi*.

1.1.4.7. Comments upon Janam Sakhis

All the accounts given in these *Janam Sakhis* cannot be completely relied as (i) these *Janam Sakhis* differ in narrations (ii) sometimes wide gaps are found between one story and another (iii) all were not completed at one time and at one place (iv) overlapping material creates confusion (v) many of fictitious names have been given (vi) at many places vague and superfluous material is given (vii) many stories contradict the very teachings of Guru Nanak (viii) many distorted accounts have been found (ix) stories given in the books are mixed up with fiction, legends and myths (x) miraculous and supernatural stories have been added with the life of Guru Nanak.

In spite of the above mentioned shortcomings, these Janam Sakhis have brought the readers from darkness to light and serve useful and valuable purpose.

1.1.4.8. The Dasam Granth

Guru Gobind was a brilliant poet, and a versatile scholar. He was a great linguist. He kept fifty two poets of highest eminence in his Court. The Great Guru prepared numerous manuscripts. 'The Dasam Granth' or 'Dasam Padshah Ka Granth' is a miscellaneous collection and only a part forms the Guru's own work, the rest being written by a number of Hindu poets, whom the Guru kept in his service. In December 1705, the Guru lost most of his manuscripts while crossing river Sarsa. On reaching Damdama Sahib, the Guru started the work of collection. This book was compiled in one volume by Bhai Mani Singh. It is a collection of eighteen books. It appears, as if one tenth of the total account of eighteen books has been given in "The Dasam Granth." Khushwant Singh writes, "It would therefore, seem that the Granth in question form only one tenth of the total and the word Dasam refers to one tenth and not to the tenth Guru. The book, moreover, serves as an excellent index to the part played in Guru Gobind Singh's life and activities by Hindu theology, mythology, philosophy, history and literature. The Granth contains Jap Sahib or morning prayers, Akal Ustat or Praise of Undying one, Chandi Charitra or Exploits of Chandi, the goddess over demons, Chaupayan or twenty four wars like incarnations of God, Swayyas or religious hymns in praise of God, Shaster Nam Mala or descriptions of weapons of war, Triya Charitar or 404 wiles of women, Zafar Nama or the epistle of victory. The most important part of the Granth is Bachittar Natak or the wonderous drama of Guru's own autobiography. In it, the Guru gives an account of his family, his mission of reformation and his wars with the hill rajas and the Imperial forces. It has fourteen chapters. It also gives an account of Bedis, Sodhis, and the martyrology of his father. It gives us a glimpses of the contemporary life as it then existed. We come across fascinating accounts of the spring festival of Holi, marriage, heavy rains, flooded streams, clear blue sky, methods of warfare, weapons used, tactics employed in fighting and accounts of some of the prominent personalities and places of the period.

1.1.4.9. Hukamnamas

Hukamnamas means orders which were sent by the Gurus to their followers individually or collectively. In these, the Gurus demand material for langer, money for construction of buildings and weapons and horses for warfare. These were accepted with reverence by the Sikhs. Most of these have been destroyed in the turmoil and political upheaval of the 18th century. Dr. Ganda Singh compiled a book in which he refers to 89 Nishans or seals of the

Gurus and the Hukamnamas. Out of these 34 refer to Guru Gobind Singh, 23 to Guru Tegh Bahadur, 2 to Mata Gujri, 9 to Mata Sundri, 9 to Mata Sahib Devi and one to Guru Arjan, 4 to Guru Hargobind, one each to Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan and Bhai Gurditta and two to Banda Bahadur, one each was issued from Akal Takhat, Amritsar and Patna Sahib. These Hukamnamas depict the dates and of the name of the prominent Sikhs. These are important sources of reconstructing the social, economics, religious, political and cultural history of the contemporary people of the Guru period.

1.1.5. Historical and Semi-Historical Works in Punjabi and Hindi

In 18th century many historical and semi-historical works were completed in Punjabi and Hindi but the script of these books is Gurumukhi. These can be mentioned as under :-

1.1.5.1. Gurusobha : Its author Senapat was one of the fifty two poets present in the court of Guru Gobind Singh. He started writing in 1701 and completed it in 1711 A.D. In this he described the life and career of Guru Gobind Singh in the post Khalsa period. It has vivid description why Guru Gobind Singh wrote Zafarnama and is important source regarding Guru's relations with Bahadur Shah.

1.1.5.2. Sikhan-di-Bhagat Mala : It is also known as Bhagat Ratnawali. It was written by Bhai Mani Singh in the 1st half of 18th century. It is the elaboration of the 11th Var of Bhai Gurdas. Description of the life stories of the Gurus, names of the prominent Sikhs and the social condition of time has been given.

1.1.5.3. Prachian : It is a collection of 50 Sakhis (stories) compiled by Bhai Sewa Das. It contains 8 Sakhis of the first eight Gurus, four of Guru Tegh Bahadur and thirty eight of Guru Gobind Singh.

1.1.5.4. Bansavali Nama : Kesar Singh Chibber composed Bansavali Nama in 1780. It consists of 14 chapters. Out of these ten deals with the Gurus, one each with Banda Singh Bahadur, Baba Ajit Singh, Mata Sundri and Khalsa Panth. The dates given in the books are not reliable yet it provides us important information of the post-Guru Gobind Singh period.

1.1.5.5. Guru Bilas : These are two in number, Guru Bilas Padshahi Chevin deals with some important events of life and career of Guru Hargobind. It is supposed to be completed in 1718 A.D. The other book Guru Bilas Padshahi Das was completed by Bhai Sukha Singh in 1797 A.D. It gives useful information about the life and carrier of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. It consists of 21 chapters.

1.1.5.6. Sakhi Pothi : The author of this book is unknown yet it is supposed to be completed in 1840. In 1876, it was translated in English by Atter Singh of

Bahadur. It has 120 Sakhis and of which 38 deal with Guru Teg Bahadur and the rest with the career of Guru Gobind Singh. It mainly deals with the Guru's travels in Malwa territory.

1.1.5.7. Gurpartap Suraj Granth : It was written in Brajbhasha and comprised of two parts (i) Nanak Parkash was written in 1823. It has 130 chapters and deals with the life of Guru Nanak. It appears as if it is based upon Bhai Bala's Janam Sakhi (ii) Suraj Parkash was completed in 1843 A.D. It is a secondary source which deals with the different event of the lives from Guru Angad to Banda Bahadur.

1.1.5.8. Prachin Panth Prakash : It is a secondary source which was written by Rattan Singh Bhangu and published in 1841 A.D. It is scattered from Guru Nanak to the 18th century politics. The detailed description of Sikh Afghan and Sikh Maratha relations has been given. The ancestors of Rattan Singh Bhangu took part in the struggle of the 18th century.

1.1.5.9. Panth Prakash and Twarikh Guru Khalsa : These two books were written by Giani Gian Singh who was a descendant of Bhai Mani Singh. Panth Parkash is based upon Prachin Panth Parkash but definitely an improvement upon it. It is in poetry. Twarikh Guru Khalsa consists of five parts. Jeevan Das Guru deals with the career and work of the ten Gurus. Shamsheer Khalsa narrates the achievement of Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur and Sikh Afghan Mughal Struggle, Raj Khalsa describes 12 misals, life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Anglo Sikh Wars. Fourth part Sakar Khalsa consist of career of Sikh rulers and Sikh Sardars. In the last, the writer described the Gurudwaras, Sikh movements etc. Dr. Bhagat Singh writes, "There could be shortcomings in Gian Singh's Twarikh from which every pioneer work suffers in one way or the other but there is no denying the fact that this great work has inspired many readers, researchers and writers of Sikh History."

1.1.5.10. The Bhatt Vahis : Giani Garja Singh discovered these Bhatt Vahis. It appears that the Bhattas came into contact with Sikhism during the time of Guru Arjan. Their descendants kept the Vahis in which the different events of the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh have been recorded.

1.1.6. The Historical Works in Persian

The Court language during the medieval period was Persian. Most of the historical works were written in that language. Grewal writes, "Indeed the number and the character of Persian chronicles written specifically on the Punjab or the Sikhs, made this form of evidence rather exceptionally important for the historians of medieval Punjab." The most important are given as under :

1.1.6.1.The Royal Histories : During the Mughal Period, many members of the Royal families were good writers. Even the Mughal Kings had employed the courtiers to write history for them. Most important among them are :

(i) Tuzak-i-Babari-or Babar Nama : Babar, the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, was a great scholar. He wrote his autobiography in Turkish language which was translated in Persian, English etc. later on. He refers to the social economic, geographical, religious and political conditions of the Punjab in the 16th century A.D.

(ii) Humayun-Nama : It was written by Gulabadan, a member of the Royal Harem. She recorded the different events of the period of Humayun.

(iii) Akbar-Nama and Ain-i-Akbari : Abul Fazal was court historian of Akbar. He wrote Ain-i-Akbari and Akbar-Nama recording the different events of Akbar's reign from 1556 to 1602 A.D. In Akbar-Nama he gives an account of Emperor Akbar's visit to Goindwal on November 24, 1591.

(iv) Tuzak-i-Jahangiri : It is the autobiography of Jahangir. He records his own impressions about Guru Arjan and describes the reasons for ordering his execution.

Though these sources present one sided picture, yet their historical importance cannot be under-rated or ignored.

(v) Dabistan-i-Mazahib : For a long time Mohsin-Fani had been considered as the author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib but the new researches have proved that it was written by a Mubid Zulfikar Ardistani. The writer was a contemporary of the 5th, 6th and the 7th Sikh Gurus. In the book, he gives an account of the Masand system, martyrdom of Guru Arjan, New policy, battles and death of Guru Hargobind and pontification of Guru Har Rai. He seems to be a friend of the 6th and 7th Sikh Gurus.

Khulasat-ut-Twarikh : In 1696, Sujjan Rai Bhandari a resident of Batala wrote Khulasat-ut-Twarikh. It gives a few useful references about the Sikhs and contains valuable topographical details.

Ahkam-e-Alamgiri : It is a collection of Aurangzeb's letters by a Mansabdar named Mirza Inayatullan Khan in two volumes known as Ahkam-e-Alamgiri and Kailmat-e-Tayibat. In these letters, references about demolition of a Gurdwara, Guru Gobind Singh's shelter at Chamkaur and journey to Deccan have been given.

Tarikh-i-Muazzam Shah : It was compiled by Abdul Rasul in 1708 and gives an account of the death of Guru Gobind Singh's foster son at Chittor.

Akhbarat-i-Durbar-i-Mualla : It is a collection of news letters of the reign of Bahadur Shah. Reference about Guru Gobind Singh's family after his death

are available in these letters.

Muntkhib-ul-Lubab : Khafi-Khan, the writer of this book, described the history of the Mughals upto 1722 A.D. In spite of his biased view, the writer provides very useful information about the events of the beginning of the 18th century. He writes about the treatment of the companions of Banda Singh Bahadur, "Three or four thousand persons were captured and put to the sword which filled that extensive plain with blood as if it had been a dish."

1.1.6.2. Other Persian Sources : Besides above mentioned sources there are some other important Persian sources available to the readers. These can be classified as :-

- (i) Fatuhat Nama-i-Samadi by Gulam Mohi-ud-Din refers to the events of the Governorship of Abdul Samad Khan (1713-1726 A.D.).
- (ii) Asrar-i-Samadi was written in 1728 but the author is unknown. It gives an account of the Sikh Mughal struggle during the time of Abdul Samad Khan.
- (iii) Tazkirat-i-Tahman is the work of Miskin. The writer was a slave of Mir Mannu (1748-1753 A.D.), Governor of Punjab. He refers to the different events of the Mir Mannu and Mughlani Begum.
- (iv) Ibartnama was written by Khairudin, an assistant of the son of Shah Alam II. It gives reference of the Mughal Sikh relations in the Malwa region.
- (v) Jang-nama of Nur Mohammad was written in 1765 A.D. The writer accompanied Ahmed Shah Abdali in his attack over the Punjab and narrated the events of the times.
- (vi) Siar-ul-Muntakhrin was written in 1785 by Gulam Hussain. He gives an account of the Sikh Gurus and the 18th century politics.

1.1.7. Secondary Sources in English

Towards the end of the 18th century of beginning of the 19th century many European travelers and servants came to the Punjab. They laid down their impression about its history in their books. Among these, the following can be considered as most important :-

- (i) Forster's 'A Journey from Bengal to England' deals with the condition of Sikhs in the last years of the 18th century.
- (ii) Franklin's "The Military Memories of George Thomas" gives an account of the military achievements of George Thomas and his relations with the Sikhs of Malwa region in the second half of the 18th century.

- (iii) Malcolm's "Sketch of the Sikhs" contains references about the Sikh religion traditions, culture and history.
- (iv) J.D. Cunningham's 'A History of the Sikhs' narrates fearlessly the qualities of the Sikhs.

1.1.8. Miscellaneous Sources

1.1.8.1 Coins : Coins are also important sources of the history of the Punjab. Besides the coins of the Mughal Emperors, the coins of Banda Bahadur, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Ahmed Shah Abdali are also available. Some coins have been kept in the Museums at Lahore, Chandigarh and Patiala. Coins depict the names of the rulers, dates, economic condition, traditions etc. N. K. Sinha writes, "Naturally numismatic evidence is very useful even when copious documentary evidence is available. Even in the period with which we are concerned, when sovereigns ascended the throne without power and sank into grave without a name numismatic evidence is of great use."

1.1.8.2. Historical Paintings : Many historical painting depicting different aspects of Sikh Guru's life and of Gurudwaras are available. At Goindwal the paintings of 22 persons who were incharge of 'Manjis' are available. Similarly at Amritsar, Patiala and Chandigarh, New Delhi, Dehra Dun, Anandpur and at many other places, many historical paintings can be seen. These paintings throw light on the social, cultural, religious and economic life of people of the times.

1.1.8.3. Building and Monuments: The historical cities, buildings and monuments are very useful sources of history. The religious cities of Amritsar, Anandpur, Kiratpur, Kartarpur, Paonta, Goindwal, Khadur Sahib etc. reveal history of the Gurus. The buildings and the tanks at places provide useful information to the reader. The forts at Lahore, Anandpur, Amritsar etc. narrate history of the period. So the Gurdwaras, tanks, gardens, forts and residence, contain important historical data.

1.1.8.4. Seals and Medals: The Mughals and Afghan rulers were found of bestowing medals to the deserving persons. Similarly, the royal seals were used in place and signatures of the Kings. These seals and medals are also important sources of history.

1.1.8.5. Folk Songs, Proverbs and Ardas: The Folk songs and the proverbs of the Punjab many times reveal the different aspects of history. Some proverbs narrate the character of the Nihang Sikhs, conquest of Durrani and general conditions of the people. Ardas (prayer) recited and repeated in the Gurdwara and at other religious functions, reminds the people of their past sacrifices. The different events and the atrocities committed by the Muslim

rulers upon the Punjabis are repeated.

1.1.9. Summary

So, the sources of the history of the Punjab are large in number but a critical and analytical eye can only discriminate chaff from the grains.

Self- Check exercise:

- Gurusobha was written by.... .
- Akbar's biography is known as... .. was written by Abul Fazl.

Suggested Questions

1. Critically examine the nature and concept of the sources of the early history of the Punjab. How far have these been helpful in giving an authentic account of its history?
2. Write a comprehensive note on the sources of the History of the Punjab from 16th century to 18th century.
3. Write brief notes on :-
(i) Adi-Granth (ii) Janam Sakhis (iii) Some Important Monuments of the Punjab (iv) Dasam Granth (v) Hukamnamas.

Key Words: Sources, Primary, Secondary, Persian, Historical, Coins, Buildings,

Suggested Readings:

- W. Eric Gustafson and Kenneth W. Jones (eds.), Sources On Punjab History.

M.A. (HISTORY) PART-I**PAPER-I****HISTORY OF PUNJAB (1469-1675 A.D.)****LESSON NO. 1.2****AUTHOR : DR. BHAGAT SINGH****Political Condition of the Punjab During the Time of Guru Nanak****Structure of the Lesson**

1.2.1 Objectives

1.2.2. Introduction

1.2.3. Punjab under Bahlol Lodhi (1451-1489A.D.)

1.2.4. Punjab under Sikandar Lodhi (1488-1517)

1.2.5. Punjab under Ibrahim Lodhi (1517-1526 A.D.)

1.2.6. Babur's invasions on India

1.2.7 Guru Nanak's Response to Contemporary political condition.

1.2.8. Summary

1.2.1. Objectives:

- To study the Political condition of Punjab during the Time of Guru Nanak.
- To examine Guru Nanak's Response to contemporary political condition.

1.2.2. Introduction

The Lodhi Afghans ruled India from A.D. 1451 to 1526. The Lodhi rulers were engaged in warfare against Jaunpur Kingdom known as Sharqis Kingdom. Punjab was a part of Lodhi Empire which extended from river Jehlum in the west to Jaunpur (near modern Allahabad) in the East. They were not able to pay sufficient attention to the west. Even an important province of Multan remained outside the control of the Lodhis and Qutbuddin Langah and his successors maintained their independent charge of that province, Sikandar Lodhi had to negotiate peace with Shah Hussain Langah on footings of equality. Because most of the time, the Lodhis were busy in warfare in the eastern and southern parts of the country, the Punjab enjoyed comparative peace till 1519 when it was disturbed by Babur's invasion.

1.2.3. Punjab under Bahlol Lodhi (1451-1489 A.D.)

Bahlol Lodhi gained power in Punjab during the reigns of Mohammad Shah Saeed and Alam Shah Saeed. When Bahlol visited Delhi in 1450, Hamid, who was then functioning as the *defacto* ruler, offered the title of the Sultan to him and expressed his desire to work as his Vazir. Bahlol did not accept the offer. But a little later, he imprisoned Hamid Khan by treachery and seated himself on the throne of Delhi on April 9, 1451.

Before becoming the ruler of Delhi, Bahlol had become the master of the major portions of the plains of Punjab including Sirhind, Samana, Sunam, Hissar, Feroza, Dipalpur and Lahore. The hill areas of Punjab were under local hill chiefs. Immediately after his accession to the throne, he occupied Panipat, Hansi and adjoining areas. For most of his period as ruler, Bahlol continued life and death struggle against the Sharqis of Jaunpur.

Bahlol did not make any changes, in the headquarters of the local administrations. He continued Samana, Sunam, Hansi, Hissar, Karnal, Bathinda, Ludhiana, Bajwara, Jalandhar, Lahore and Dipalpur to be the centres of the local administration. These were important seats of authority and garrison towns.

The characteristic feature of the imperial organization of polity was a sort of tribal feudalism which stood against centralization of government and supremacy of the king. Their tribal spirit insisted on distribution of the conquered country amongst themselves. He tried to humour his nobility to get their co-operation. In social meetings, he never sat on a throne and would not allow his nobles to stand, and even during public audiences he did not occupy the throne but seated himself on carpet. This state of affairs was not conducive to the stability and efficiency of the government. His kingdom presented a poor contrast to the Delhi Sultanate of 14th century in extent, power and grandeur.

1.2.4. Punjab under Sultan Sikandar Lodhi (1489-1517 A.D.)

Bahlol was succeeded by his son Sikandar Lodhi in 1489. He was strong and capable ruler. The Punjab was quieter than under his predecessor. Around 1469 A.D. Tatar Khan Lodhi had been appointed to look after the affairs of the *Iqtas* of Lahore, Dipalpur and Sirhind. He was a strong and successful governor. About 1483-84, he seized some *parragans* of the Sultan's Khalisa-areas. Prince Nizam (Later Sikandar Lodhi) led his men against him from Panipat. Tatar Khan was killed in a clash near Ambala in 1485 and *Iqtas* were assigned to Umar Khan Sarwani. Umar Khan and later his son Said Khan Sarwani managed these *Iqtas* until 1500 A.D. when Said Khan's disloyalty to

the Sultan resulted in his banishment by Sikandar Lodhi. In 1500 A.D. Daulat Khan Lodhi, son of Tatar Khan was made the governor of Lahore, who remained loyal to his master for over two decades.

During the first decades of the 16th Century, Sikandar remained engaged against Tomaras of Gwalior. In these years Sultan could not pay adequate attention to the north-west frontier of this country. Bhera, Khushab and the Chenab were governed by Sayid Ali Khan under the order of Sikandar Lodhi.

Bigotry was the arch-weakness of Sikandar Lodhi. *Jazia* was exacted more severely than before. He is said to have forbidden pilgrimage to Kurukshetra. According to *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, once at the time of Hindus assembling at Kurukshetra, Sikandar decided to put them all to death. Mian Abdulla the Malik-Ul-Ulema, told him that it was against the precepts of the Prophet. Sikandar said in anger, "You side with the infidels, I will first put an end to you and then massacre the Hindus at Kurkhet." But he was dissuaded with great difficulty. According to Farishta, Sikandar destroyed many Hindu temples. Bodhan Brahman's execution is too well-known to history. He had just remarked that Hinduism is as good as Islam. He was offered the option between Islam and death. He chose the latter. So under such a ruler, the Hindus could not expect to have peace and security.

1.2. 5. Punjab under Ibrahim Lodhi (1517-1526 A.D.)

Ibrahim Lodhi, Sikander Lodhi's successor, gave moral offence to most of the chiefs of his clan by withdrawing certain privileges which they enjoyed during the reign of the first two rulers of that dynasty. Overtaxation was another cause of Ibrahim's unpopularity among his nobles that provided Babur with the fit opportunity of trying his luck. The most dramatic events in the history of the Punjab during the time of Ibrahim was the military activity of Babur. Firmly establishing himself in Kabul, Babur began to aspire for India, putting forward a fallacious hereditary claim to the territories-once held by Turks.

Babur writes in his Memoirs, "As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan and as these several countries had once been held by the Turks, I pictured them as my own and resolved to get them into my own hands whether peacefully or by force."

Babur made five attempts to conquer this country. All his expeditions were led into Punjab and the final and the decisive battle was also fought in this province on April 21, 1526 at Panipat.

1.2.6 Babur's Invasions on India

1.2.6.1. First Expedition (1519 A.D.)

In the beginning of 1519 after subduing the rebellious Yusafzai tribe, Babur raided and stormed Bajaur. The use of artillery by Babur helped him to overcome the brave resistance of the people of Bajaur. In order to create terror into the hearts of the people, Babur ordered general massacre at Bajaur. Babur stayed there for three or four months. The next place to attack was the town of Bhera on the Jhelum which was occupied without any resistance. Next came Khushab which too was captured without difficulty. The Chiefs of Bhera and Khushab accepted the overlordship of Babur. He ordered his troops not to do any injury to the people and asked his men to treat them with kindness and leniency.

On the advice of his men Babur sent Mullah Murshad as an envoy to Ibrahim Lodhi demanding that the territories previously belonging to the Turks should be handed over to him. A letter for Daulat Khan - the governor of Lahore was also given to Mullah Murshad. Daulat Khan disallowed Babur's ambassador to proceed to Delhi under the fear of Ibrahim's acceding to Babur's demand. According to *Tuzak-i-Baburi* "this person, who was sent by me, Daulat Khan detained him some time in Lahore neither seeing himself nor allowing him to proceed to Sultan Ibrahim. So my envoy, five months after, returned to Kabul without having received any answer."

Leaving Bhera in the charge of Hindu Beg, Babur returned to Kabul by way of Ali Masjid.

1.2.6.2. Second Expedition (1519 A.D.)

Babur's first expedition bore no fruit. Within a month of Babur's exit from the scene, the territories occupied by him were taken by its old master, expelling Hindu Beg. In September, 1519. Babur, again entered India through Khyber pass, but the news of disturbances in Badakhshan obliged him to go back without achieving anything.

Rushbrook Williams is of the opinion "that he (Babur) desired to join battle with Ibrahim Lodhi, there is nothing to show. The Punjab was his first objective, and it is only when he realised that he cannot conquer the Punjab without conquering Delhi, that he makes up his mind to engage in death-struggle with the reigning dynasty." But this view does not seem to agree with Babur's expressed intention to conquer India.

1.2.6.3. Third Expedition (1520 A.D.) :

Babur came for the third time in 1520 and reconquered Bajaur and Bhera from where his men had been turned out shortly after his

conquests in 1519 A.D. He proceeded to Sialkot which yielded without any resistance and without any damage done to the place. The town of Saidpur was the next victim. The people defied the aggressor but were beaten and made captives. Guru Nanak was an eye-witness to the cruelties to which the people of Saidpur were subjected. Guru Nanak has left a vivid account of how the people suffered at the hands of Babur's troops. In Babur's absence from his country. Shah Beg Arghun, the ruler of Qandhar, created disturbances. Babur returned and conquered Qandhar in 1522 A.D.

1.2.6.4. Fourth Expedition (1524 A.D.)

Bad faith and an ill-blood had been created between Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi and Daulat Khan Lodhi, governor of Lahore. Daulat Khan was called to Delhi but in order to avoid the anger of the Sultan he did not go personally but sent his son Dilawar Khan. This further annoyed Ibrahim who treated Dilawar Khan in a shabby manner and made no secret of how he was disposed towards his father. The estrangement between the Sultan and the governor worsened and in order to protect himself against the well-founded apprehension from the side of Ibrahim; Daulat Khan sent his son Dilawar Khan to Kabul to invite Babur to help him against the Sultan. Daulat Khan wanted to depose Ibrahim in favour of his uncle Alam Khan.

Daulat Khan wanted to be independent of Delhi in Punjab and did not want to give any superiority to Babur or any body else over him for any help received. But without caring for setting the term for help, Babur readily accepted the invitation. He did not like to miss the opportunity to interfere in the affairs of Hindustan.

Ibrahim got an inkling of the conspiracy between Daulat Khan and Babur and sent an army to Lahore under Biban Khan and Mubarak Khan. The imperial army captured Lahore without much difficulty and drove Daulat Khan into exile. But Babur came to Punjab in 1524 in response to Daulat Khan's invitation. He captured Lahore, plundered and burnt the bazar. After four days stay at Lahore, Babur proceeded to Dipalpur which fell to his sword.

Daulat Khan accompanied by his second son Ghazi Khan met Babur at Dipalpur in the hope that governorship of Lahore would be given over to him. Babur gave him the areas of Jalandhar and Sultanpur instead of Lahore. This offer was too short of his expectations and he felt very indignant over it.

At this time, Daulat Khan informed Babur that Ismael Jilwani, a powerful Afghan chief had collected an army near Multan to check Babur's march towards Delhi. Daulat Khan suggested to Babur to despatch a part of his troops to Multan and keep the rest with him. Babur accepted this proposal and was likely to act accordingly, when Daulat Khan's son Dilawar

Khan secretly informed Babur that there was treacherous intention behind the proposal made to him, by his father, Daulat Khan, as he aimed at attacking and destroying Babur's army. When convinced of the mal-design of Daulat Khan, Babur put him under arrest alongwith his son Ghazi Khan. Later on they were released. They fled to the hills. Before returning to Kabul, Babur conferred Sultanpur upon Dilawar Khan and assigned Dipalpur to Alam Khan. Lahore was placed under Mir Abdul Aziz, a close relative of Babur, Sialkot was placed in the keeping of Khusrau Kukultash.

On Babur's return from Punjab, Daulat Khan came out of his hiding place and snatched Sultanpur from his son Dilawar Khan and Dipalpur from Ibrahim's ambitious uncle Alam Khan. Alam Khan went to Kabul and offered Babur full sovereignty over the Punjab as a price of his help to get him the throne of Delhi, expelling Ibrahim.

Babur's shrewdness to accept Alam Khan's proposal, is reflected in Erskin's following observation. "As political justice was not the virtue of the age, Babur probably calculated that if affairs turned out prosperously, it would be an easy matter to cast down the puppet king whom he had set up." Babur agreed to the proposal made by Alam Khan as he considered that, "it would give him a legitimate right to what he had only taken by force." In the meantime, Ibrahim sent an imperial army to liquidate the rebels in the Punjab but Daulat Khan easily routed the Delhi army. Babur's Lahore garrison foiled Daulat Khan's efforts to occupy the whole of Punjab. But Daulat Khan got an easy victory over King's Delhi army which was sent to defeat him.

Babur being busy in suppressing the rebellion in Balkh, could not personally come to Punjab immediately to honour the bargains made with Alam Khan. Daulat Khan was still in arms against Babur so the Mughal Officers at Lahore advised Alam Khan not to further spoil matters with Ibrahim as it would lead to division of concentration. Daulat Khan persuaded Alam Khan to break off his alliance with Babur as Daulat Khan believed the plan of Alam Khan to get Delhi with the help of Babur would finally frustrate his hope to re-establish himself in Punjab. Dilawar Khan was also now reconciled to his father and joined him.

1.2.6.5. Fifth Expedition (1525-26)

Leaving Kabul in the charge of his 16 years old son Kamran, Babur set out on his fifth expedition of Hindustan on November 17, 1525. His son Humayun joined him with troops from Badakhshah and Khawaja Kilan from Ghazni. At Sialkot he came to know of the defection of Alam Khan. He also learnt that Daulat Khan and his son had conquered Lahore. The coming of Babur-un-nerved Daulat Khan who took protection in the fortress of Malot in

Hoshiarpur district of the Punjab. The fortress was besieged by Babur. Daulat Khan conveyed to Babur as written in *Baburnama* that "if his own faults were pardoned, he would take service with me and surrender Malot." Daulat Khan was produced before Babur and his life was pardoned. Ghazi Khan fled toward the hills. Daulat Khan was handed over to Kita Beg to be taken to Bhera for imprisonment there. But he died on the way when he reached Sultanpur.

Having dealt with Daulat Khan, Babur decided for a major action. He writes, "I put my foot on the stirrup of resolution and set my hands on reins of trust in God and moved forward against Sultan Ibrahim.

Alam Khan came to Babur in a miserable condition and sought his protection. According to Rushbrook Williams, "Perhaps at this time also came proposals from Rana Sangram Singh, the Rajput, that, there should be a joint attack upon Ibrahim." But according to *Baburnama*, Babur received Rana Sangram Singh's proposal and offer of help at Kabul. Despite his offer of help, Rana Sangha could not join on the side of Babur in the battle of Panipat, and according to R.P. Tripathi, probably because of the dangers from Muzzafar Shah of Gujrat. The Shah died on 5th April, 1526 only fifteen days before the battle (21 April) of Panipat. It was, therefore not possible for him to organise an effective army and reach Panipat within such a short time. Many nobles like Araish Khan and Mulla Muhammad from Delhi made offers and help to Babur. Babur felt encouraged that in this foreign land he was not without friends.

Finding Babur heading towards Delhi. Ibrahim sent two advance parties, one under Hamida Khan from Hissar-Feroza and the other under Hatim Khan and Daud Khan. The first party was defeated and dispersed by Humayun on February 26, 1526 at Hodal and the second was also dealt with likewise by Junaid Birlas on April 2. After thus routing, an advance party of Ibrahim, writes Babur, "Humayun arrived to wait on me, bringing with him as many as 100 prisoners and 7 or 8 elephants. Ustad Ali Quli and the matchlock men were ordered to shoot all the prisoners, by way of example. "This had been Humayun's first experience of battle; it was an excellent omen."

Babur writes in his memoir that he had left Kabul with 12,000 men which, according to Rushbrook Williams, had been reduced to hardly 8,000 effectives or even less that fought against one lakh men of Ibrahim. But after Daulat Khan's surrender and Ghazi Khan's escape and Dilawar Khan's joining him besides some officers from Delhi-court the forces of Babur must have swelled up by the mercenaries. A considerable increase in the way could not be ruled out.

Babur set his troops in proper battle array at the historic field of Panipat, Babur himself writes "On our right was the town of Panipat with its suburbs, in

front of us were the carts and mantlets we had prepared, on our left and else where were ditch and branch." According to Lanepoole, the cart line was a movable fortress to provide protection to the Mughals. But Rushbrook says that the wagon line was strategem of aggression rather than of defence; it was intended to hold the enemy along an extended front so that his flanks might be open to attack. At Panipat Babur's principal objective was to provide, not to avoid a combat and so was his wagon line a device to destroy the enemy and not a shelter for his own men. It is clear from the breast-works and the formation of wagons that Babur had calculated to prove the combined advantages of attack as well as defence.

Ibrahim had, as was estimated by Babur, one lakh men all of whom could not possibly be fighting men. A large number of them must be camp followers and servants. Still the fighting forces of Ibrahim could not be less than forty or fifty thousand men and about two thousand elements not trained or used to face artillery, which Babur was to use it in battle-field. The contending forces came face to face with each other on April 12, 1526 with gap of three or four miles between them. Both sides remained unoffensive for eight days. A night attack on Ibrahim's camp was ordered by Babur on April 20, which proved abortive. The night attack resulted in a decisive fight on next morning (April 21). The fighting was over by mid day and Ibrahim lay dead in the battle-field like a valiant Afghan.

Babur writes in his Memoir that if Ibrahim had chosen to spend some money he could recruit more to fight against the Mughals. But he was miserly person and was always after collecting wealth. He was a youngman of no experience. He was negligent in his movements, he marched without order, retired or halted without plan and engaged in battle without foresight. Babur further writes that his estimate of the dead was 15 or 16 thousand but it came to be later known in Agra from the statements of Hindustanis that 40 or 50 thousand might have died in battle-field. Babur's own losses in the battle seem to be very small.

Babur emerged victorious in the fight which took place "between a master and a novice a best man at his best and a weak at his worst." Babur's victory could be attributed to many causes. He was a much superior soldier and a brilliant general as compared to Ibrahim who was raw and inexperienced youngman though individually brave. In the battle field mere valour is not sufficient, experience in fighting is equally essential. According to Rushbrook Williams, "If there was any single material factor which more than any other conducted to Babur's ultimate triumph, it was his powerful artillery. Babur had a wonderful power of assessing the strong and weak points of the

army opposed to him. Babur's use of *Tulughma* tactics produced the desired effect."

Ibrahim's army was indisplined and disorderly rabble without cohesion and organisation and also Delhi ruler's elephants were more a source of trouble than that of help. The Sultan of Delhi could not put up a united front to face Babur. Even the Sultan's own men like Alam Khan, Daulat Khan, Dilawar Khan, Ghazi Khan had been planning the overthrow of master. Rana Sangram Singh was also conspiring with Babur to bring about the destruction of the Afghan rule. Ibrahim's failure to win over to his side the Rajputs under Rana Sangha was an irreparable loss to him.

With the Afghan enemies lying prostrate and bleeding and most of them dead in the battle-field immediately after the victory of Panipat on April 21, 1526, Babur sent his son Hamayun and Khawaja Kilan at the head of detachment of his army to Agra to capture the town and take possession of treasures there and another contingent to Delhi. He himself reached Delhi three days later. A Khutba was read in his name at Delhi on Friday 27th April. He entered Agra on 10th May. The accumulated wealth of the Lodhi's was most magnanimously distributed among the people.

The victory at Panipat made Babur the ruler of Delhi but not the Hindustan. He had still to face a formidable opposition in the person of Rana Sangram Singh. He was yet to fight against the Rajputs and Afghans to become the undisputed master of this land. But clearly the battle of Panipat symbolized the dawn of newera that brought Mughal dynasty on the throne of Delhi.

1.2.7. Guru Nanak's Response to Contemporary Political Condition

It was in 1521 A.D. during his last tour that Guru Nanak visited Saidpur for the second time, the town was under Babur's raid at that time. The place was completely sacked, general massacre ordered and houses committed to fire, Guru Nanak was also arrested and subjected to the same nasty treatment to which most of the other persons were exposed. Guru Nanak was an eye-witness to the oppressions and atrocities perpetrated on his unoffending countrymen, bewailing women, slaves and children. He could not bear all that in silence.

The Guru sung his famous lament;

"Babur ruled over Khurasan and hath terrified Hindustan. The Creator taken no blame to Himself. If was Death disguised as a Mughal who made war on us. When there was such slaughter and lamentation, did not thou. O God, feel pain?

Creator, thou belongest to all.

If a tyrant slay a tyrant, one is not angry, but if a ravening lion fall

on a herd, its master has to answer for it.” (Asa Mohalla-I)

The Guru called the invader ‘Yama’ (the-god of the dead) disguised as the great Babur. The Guru resented the Lodhis’ inability to discharge their duty of providing protection to their subjects. He rebuked the Lodhis for allowing the foreigners to snatch away such a precious gem so easily. To quote the Guru.

“The dogs of Lodhis have thrown away the priceless inheritance, when they are dead and gone, no one will remember them with regard.” (Asa Mohalla-I)

He thought of the political disabilities of the people. He was the first Medieval Indian saint to condemn invasion of this country by foreigners and to denounce exploitation. He writes how during war the civilian population particularly the women were dishonoured indiscriminately. In Rag Asa, the Guru referred to the miseries of the women, the Mughals could lay their hands on including *Hinduanis*, *Turkanis*, *Bhattianis* and *Thakuranis*. Guru Nanak’s condemnation of government administration is clear from his following lines :

“The Kaliyuga is a knife; the rajas are butchers; dharma on its wings is vanishing in the dark night of falsehood, the moon of truth does not appear anywhere”. (Var Majh)

The Guru is very critical of the blood sucking kings as is evident from the following lines :

“The kings are lions and the muqadams are dogs, they fall upon the ryot day and night. Their agents inflict wounds with claws (of power) and the dogs lick blood and relish the liver.” (Var Malar)

In the following lines Guru refers to the discrimination against those who do not belong to the religion of Islam.

“The ad-purkh is called Allah, now that the turn of the Shaikhs has come; the gods and their temples are taxed, such is now the custom.” (Rag Basant)

Here an attempt may be made briefly to sum up Guru Nanak’s position in respect of his response to his political milieu. According to Guru Nanak, rulership and riches come not as acquisitions of men but as God’s gift. The raja as well as the beggar exists, because of divine dispensation. Some he has raised to rulership; others wander about begging. God is the fountain of the whole authority. It is in God’s power to degrade the Sultan just as it is His power to exalt the man. An essential trait of the ruler is to receive reverence and homage and the natural relationship between the ruler and the subject is established only if the latter meet the genuine demands put upon him by former.

According to Guru Nanak the whole political authority emanates from Him and the king is the recipient of authority. He believed that the ruler could not escape the responsibility towards his subjects. If he does, the Giver takes away his gifts of kingship conferred on him. Guru Nanak emphasised a democratic idea when he enjoined upon the monarch to rule with the help of the representatives of his subject, and laid stress on the discharge of his administrative functions, and acquaint himself in all fairness with justice, kindness and sympathy.

Guru Nanak was not concerned with any constitutional question. If anything, he accepted the monarchy from the government. He condemned the various offices but not the officers themselves. The failure of the functionaries of state in the proper discharge of their duties incurred his bitter resentment. And his condemnation of oppression, inefficiency and corruption was tantamount to revolt against the authority.

Guru Nanak did not attach divinity to the office of the king though he believed that it was the gift of God. According to Guru Nanak, if the ruler's order was against justice and equity, it was not obligatory on the people to honour them and in that lay the seeds of defiance and challenge to the authority of an unjust ruler. But it is clear that the threat to political authority would not arise so long as the persons concerned exercised it for the betterment of the subjects and were not entangled in worldly greeds.

1.2.8 Summary

Though Guru Nanak was keenly aware of the Muslim domination in the politics of the country, he did not condemn the rulers as Muslims. He clearly identified himself with the ruled as against the rulers. His sympathies of aversion definitely cut across sectarian or communal barriers.

Self Check exercise

- Bahlol Lodhi ruled over India from 1451 to... ..
- Babur first invaded India in... ..
- First battle of Panipat fought between Babur and..... ..

Relevant Questions:

1. Discuss political condition of Punjab during the time of Guru Nanak.
2. Examine Political condition of Punjab under Lodhi Rulers.

Key Words: Political, Empire, Mughal, Religion, Invasions, Shia, Dynasty

Suggested Readings

1. Dr. Fauja Singh (Edited) : History of the Punjab (A.D. 1000-1525) Vol. III.
2. Dr. J.S. Grewal : Guru Nanak in History.
3. Dr. B.S. Nijjar : Punjab under the Sultans (1000-1529).
4. Dr. K.M. Ashraf : Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan.
5. Rushbrook Williams : An Empire Builder of 16th Century.
6. A.S. Beveridge : (English Translation of) Tuzak-i-Baburi.
7. Erskine : History of India under the First Two Sovereigns of the House of Taimur, Vol. I.

M.A. (HISTORY) PART-I

PAPER-I

OPTION : HISTORY OF PUNJAB (1469-1675 A.D.)

LESSON NO. 1.3

AUTHOR : DR. BHAGAT SINGH

**Social, Religious and Economic Condition of the Punjab during the time of
Guru Nanak**

Structure of the Lesson

- 1.3.1. Objectives
- 1.3.2. Introduction
- 1.3.3. Social Condition
- 1.3.4. Structure of Hindu Society
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 - 1.3.8.3. Sikhism
- 1.3.9. Hindu- Muslim Relations
- 1.3.10. Economic Condition
 - 1.3.10.1 Agriculture
 - 1.3.10.2. Industries
 - 1.3.10.3. Trade and Commerce
- 1.3.11. Summary

1.3.1. Objectives

- To explore social condition of Punjab.
- To discuss economic and religious condition of Punjab.
- To examine the prosperity of Punjabi society.

1.3.2. Introduction

During the times of Guru Nanak's birth, Punjab was going through very tough times socially and politically. Both the prominent religion Hindu and Muslim were divided into several classes.

1.3.3. Social Condition

The reader of the social history of the Punjab during Guru Nanak's time is faced with two major social entities, the Hindus and Muslims.

1.3.4. Structure of Hindu Society

The Hindu society was marked by its social differentiation. Al-Beruni wrote in the early eleventh century about the four Varnas among the Hindus—the *Brahmans*, the *Kashatryas*, the *Vaishyas* and the *Shudras*. They had specific duties assigned to them. An infringement of the Brahman's privileges, for instance, was not a mere sin but a crime punishable by the ruler. There were a number of sub-castes in each Varna. This division of the Hindu society was very much there during the time of Guru Nanak.

The Brahmans enjoyed the supreme position among the Hindus. They held sway over the Hindu rituals and ceremonies. The Kashatryas' occupation was that of ruling and fighting. The Vaishyas looked after the trade and agriculture. The Shudras were primarily required to serve the Brahmans, and they were not allowed to perform or practise the religious ceremonies. They were not allowed to study the Vedas or Puranas. The condition of the *Shudras* and *Chandalas* who were considered as untouchables, was obviously the worst. They lived only under the shadow of contempt but also in utter poverty and privation. They were prevented from holding property and were subjected to severe punishments than those meted out to higher classes for similar offences. Thus, they were victims of grave social injustice.

By the close of 15th century, the social situation in the Punjab had considerably changed under the impact of Turkish conquest and rule of the Delhi Sultans. With the loss of Rajput sovereignty, the Brahmans lost their traditional patronage. Despite the elimination of the Rajput from power; the

Brahmans could consolidate their informal authority and exercise their influence over the Hindu masses. They looked after the old and new temples and gave religious instructions in the Pathshalas (Schools) and they acted as family priests to perform various rites and ceremonies.

In those days much of the urban and rural trade and shopkeeping in the town was in the hands of Khatries. They also acted as money lending Shahukars or bankers. The legally valid *hundis* and *tamassuks* were also in vogue. The trading classes did not like to miss the opportunity of earning even a dishonest penny and attempts at adulteration; and fraudulent weight were not uncommon. The Jats were settled mainly in the rural Punjab particularly in the upper-Rachna, upper-Bari and Bist Jalandhar doabs and on the left side of the river Sutlej. They were divided into numerous classes, they had their Zamindaras, Chaudhris and Mauqadams but the majority to them lived as ordinary cultivators. They seriously resented oppression. The Rajputs, the Brahmans, the Khatries and the Jats formed the most important social group of the Hindu society in the Punjab during the period under study

1.3.5. Condition of Women

Woman was regarded inferior to man as ever. The married women were fully engaged in a household work. Ladies belonging to high castes and higher classes remained in strict seclusion. Al-Beruni who wrote a little earlier days, said, "Hindus are married at a very young age, therefore, the parents arrange the marriage for their children. On the eve of marriage, no gift or dowry is settled among them. The man gives only a present to the wife, as he thinks fit, or a marriage gift in advance, but he has no right to claim back, or the wife may give it back to him on her own free will. A husband and a wife can only be separated by death as they have no divorce."

It was always the duty of the husband to provide for his wife. In case he went abroad he must provide for the maintenance of his wife during his absence. 'Sati' though not compulsory, was common among the Hindu women. A widow had to choose between remaining a widow all her life or burning herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband and she usually chose the latter as self-immolation (Sati) by a widow was considered to be an act worthy of appreciation. The widow becoming Sati was placed even above a martyr. Even the spot where the widow became 'Sati' was considered a place of worship. The practice of 'Johar' was prevalent among the ruling Rajput families. Whenever a Rajput chief and his soldiers realised that defeat in the battle was inevitable, they would pour oil on the house and set it to fire burning to death the women and children and with naked swords in hand they would jump into the battle-field killing the enemies or suffering death

themselves. Among the Rajputs and families of many-respecting Zamindars, the practice of infanticide of girls was fairly common.

K.M. Ashraf underlies some serious social evils prevalent among the people in medieval times as untouchability, Sati child marriage, and slavery. He does not make it explicit but the first three were almost exclusively prevalent among the Hindus and the fourth that is, the slavery formed an integral part of the Muslim society. In the Muslim society social inequalities were ignored or occasionally condemned but in Hindu society, they were sanctified by their ancient faith.

1.3.6. Structure of Muslim Society

The Lodhi Sultans had their royal titles, the *Khutba* and the distinctive symbols of royalty-the court, the palace and the harem, the household staff, slaves and poets, musicians and above all large armies at their command. They enjoyed the highest social status. The nobles could not have all this but they could have much large lands, palace-like mansions, harems and slaves. They lived a life of luxury and pomp and show. The Ulema performed the task of promoting the cause of Islam. Madrassas or Maktabas (Schools) were attached to large or small mosques in cities and towns. Many of the Ulemas acted as Qazis (judges) and Muftis (pronouncers of fatwa or verdict) in the service of the States; as they were recognised guardians of the traditional social-religious system and hence they were the most conservative element in the Muslim community. A greater and more respect was shown by an average Muslim to the Shaikhs, Sufis, and Shaikhzadas and Pirzadas. To an average Muslims, a Shaikhzada appeared to occupy the same status among the Muslims as Brahmans among the Hindus.

The respectable social groups of the Muslims lived apart from the common populace. The people of various trades and crafts were concentrated in particularwards in the towns.

The Muslim society in the Punjab, as in other parts of India was marked by sectarian divisions as Sunnis, Shias, Ismailis, Batinis, etc. The Sunnis formed the largest proportion of Muslim population in the Punjab.

The assumption that in Islam, society was based on the idea of equality is refuted by socio-economic facts. A Muslim noble could not be equated with a Muslim water-carrier. A broad social stratification in the Muslim society could be easily seen. The noble formed the social elite and the enjoyed greater economic advantages than any other section or group. According to J.S. Grewal, the craftsmen, personal servants and domestic slaves both male and females formed the lowest strata while the middle strata was formed by the peasants, soldiers, traders, scholars, writers, the Sayids, the Shaikhzadas and

the administrative personnel. The word 'qaum' in its application to the social groups among the Muslims was almost the equivalent of castes.

The Muslim society was marked by the existence of slavery as its integral part and as such the slave was important article of trade in the market.

The refinement and culture found in the upper strata of the Muslim community in the Punjab was not possessed by the general masses even in the cities. In the countryside, life was more or less static.

The people heartily participated in the 'Id' festivals and fairs. Only a few could go on the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Hajis (pilgrims) were honoured for being rare. Almost all the Muslims had a belief in miracles. The Sultans and nobles never missed an opportunity of visiting the mausoleums of the saints for blessings.

1.3.7. Guru Nanak's Response to his contemporary Social condition:

Guru Nanak who was a great social reformer is believed to have preached liberal social doctrine. In Guru Nanak's philosophy an ideal man is free, fearless and a moral being. In the contemporary degenerated society man had lost his initiative. His mind was controlled by his faith in rituals and customs which further controlled his social action in mechanical precision. Rigid observation of formalism within the social groups of both the Hindus and Muslims and socio-political and economic needs of the people led to contradictory attitudes and values among the people.

Guru Nanak's sensitive mind thought of evolving a new social system which had to be different from that of the Hindus and Muslims. He boldly exploited the very foundation of the prevalent belief in false customs, traditions and values. In the age of exploitation, treachery and superstition, Guru Nanak preached the good action, modesty, contentment, self-respect, equality and righteousness. He was strongly for freedom of thinking and action from both political and social authorities. The idea of the brotherhood of man was an important and active principle with Guru Nanak. He believed in the Oneness of God. For him there was no such things as a God for Hindus or a God for Muhammadans.

Distinction of caste is one of fundamental institution resting on religious sanction of the Hindus amongst whom Guru Nanak had to preach. He knew that the spiritual development, religious reform and social progress could not take place under a system where all these things were the monopoly of the so called higher castes. Therefore, Guru Nanak denounced caste system and clearly told that social divisions were not the creation of God but were man made. According to him, God has no caste. In his court 'caste' and 'birth' are

not taken into accounts; honour and 'caste' are determined by the acts of the individuals. Mere preaching without practice carried no weight with him. On his tour, he had Mardana, a low caste Muslim as his companion. Guru Nanak is said to have built a mosque near his house at Kartarpur for the use of Muslims and a Qazi had been put there.

As Guru Nanak clearly knew that man could not live in isolation from society and society influenced the behaviour and attitude of man, he emphasized the significance of Sangat or congregation. Thus he argued in favour of the formation of a social group which by practising common moral code would be cohesive unit. This would add strength to the individual and the group to face opposition from conservative reaction. Justice as a principal of human relation was strongly advocated by him. His concept of justice was extended to the political spheres as well, where it was regarded as the very basis of government and administration.

Guru Nanak strongly disapproved, rather condemned, the time honoured custom of performing *Sati* by the widows by burning themselves along with their deceased husbands. The Guru strongly denounced the economic exploitation of the people. He said that the king and their revenue collectors harassed the people and exacted money from them with utmost cruelty. From the aforesaid account, we may deduce that society conceived by Guru Nanak was free from the fear of temporal authorities, rituals and castes, etc.

1.3.8. Religious Condition

1.3.8.1. Islam : In Guru Nanak's time, Punjab was marked by a rich variety of beliefs and practices among both the dominant religions-Hinduism and Islam. Four orthodox schools named the Hanafi, the Maliki, the Shafi and the Hanbali had developed in Islam. They had different opinions about the treatment to be given to the Kafirs or non-Muslim, Hanafi school being more tolerant than the others. According to it, the Hindus should be regarded as "Zimmis", the protected people. The two major sets among the Muslims were the Sunnis and the Shias. The Sunnis believed in the uniqueness and oneness of Allah and the Muhammad as the last of their Prophets. They believed in the Quran as the word of God revealed to Muhammad. Besides Quran, the main source of religious life was the sayings and practices of the prophet.

The Shias were also an important orthodox Muslim sect which recognised twelve Imams in the line from Fatima and Ali.

People gave a large following to the Sufis who were originally the Musalmans but paid almost no attention to the rituals and religious practices of Islam. The Sufis did not hesitate to advise their royal followers even on matters

that were not spiritual and mystic. A large number of Hindus also attended the congregation of the Sufis as their teachings were liberal and non-sectarian. This common platform where Hindus and Muslims rubbed shoulders with one another had a salutary and wholesome effect on the relations between the Hindus and Muslims.

There were important orders of Chishtis and Suhrawardis established at different places in the country. Multan had an important seat of the Suhrawardi Sheikhs. Thanesar Hansi and Narnaul were associated with Chishti Sheikhs. The most important Sajjedah (seat) was to be found at Ajodhan (Pakistan), the seat of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din-Ganj-i-Shakar, who was most important Shaikh of the Punjab.

The Sufis were the believers in the doctrine of communion with God. In order to have communion they practised austerities and led a life of devotion. Before achieving union with God, they had to pass through various stages. The Sufis established their Khanqahs and Jamait Khanas. The Khanqahs were generally mud houses with one or two rooms only and Jamait Khana was a big hall raised on pillars and thatched with straw. The Sufis lived in the Khanqahs, led married life and had children. They lived a life of poverty. They did not beg anything from anybody. The Suhrawardis had no objection to receive grants from the State.

Since the Ulema considered Islam to be superior as compared to Hinduism, they considered it their holy duty to bring more and more people into the fold of Islam. In many cases, the Hindus were mal-treated on being non-Muslims. Barani, a very prominent scholar of the medieval period was in favour of launching an all-out struggle against Hinduism. In his book "Fatwa-i-Jahandari" he writes, "The Muslim king will not be able to establish the honour of theism (Tauhid) and the supremacy of Islam unless he strives with all his courage to overthrow infidelity and to slaughter its leaders who in India are the Brahamans. He should make a firm resolve to overpower, capture, enslave and degrade the infidels."

1.3.8.2. Hinduism : In the Hindu religion the authority of the *Vedas* was recognized by the priests of nearly all the Hindu sects and it was invoked in the support of many a socio-religious custom. The position of the *Vedas* as 'revealed knowledge' was indeed unique in the scriptures of the Hindus. And throughout the medieval period, the *Puranas* had also been enjoying great popularity.

There was a school of *Sanyasis* who wore ochre-coloured garments and some of them moved about naked.

There were *Jogis* whose order was remarkable for organisational aspect.

The most important Jogi establishment in the Punjab was of the Tilla (mount) of Gorkhnath in Jehlum and regular succession of mahants or leaders had taken place there for several centuries. In the Punjab, most of the Jogis were the followers of Gorakhnath who is believed to have lived in 10th century. Most of them believed that the world was unreal and only God was real. They used to go to forests and mountains for realisation of God.

The Hindu society was torn asunder by unbridgable caste differences. The popular Hindu religion was confined to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, peculiar ways of bathing and painting forehead and other mechanical observances. The study of the scriptures was the privilege of the priests alone. In the words of Gokal Chand Narang, "The springs of the true religion had been choked up by weeds of unmeaning ceremonials, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and indifference of the people. Form had supplanted the reality and the highly spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects. The centuries of invasion, foreign misrule and persecution had produced the greatest depression and the spiritual subjection and stagnation had aggravated the demoralisation to an enormous degree."

1.3.8.3. Sikhism: Guru Nanak's mission has been regarded as the promulgation of a new religion. However much he might have retained from Hinduism and Islam in the matter of doctrine, "his religion remains complete in itself." In short, Sikhism as Islam may be regarded as a new and separate world religion. According to W. H. McLeod, "Guru Nanak did, indeed, receive an inheritance and its influence is abundantly evident in all his works, but it would be altogether mistaken to regard him as a mere meditator of other men's ideas. In his hands the inheritance was transformed. Moreover, the pattern which was produced by this transformation had endured."

Since Guru Nanak was a great religious thinker of his age, we may briefly discuss his attitude towards the prevalent system of religious beliefs and practices. His attitude towards Vedas is visible in his very famous composition, Japji. At a certain level, he speaks of the Vedas as an obstacle to the Nam, the Absolute God. From his point of view, mere knowledge of these scriptures is completely irrelevant. He repudiated the Hindu practices and modes of worship and attached no importance to pilgrimage. To him the sacred thread and the tilak were meaningless.

His attitude towards contemporary Islam was no different. He showed little appreciation for the established orders of his time and did not identify himself with existing forms of religions. He rejected the contemporary forms of religious beliefs and practices, only after he was convinced that he had

something more valuable to offer. He adopted for himself and for his followers the use of his own composition. This means the rejection of the old Hindu scriptural authority and the scriptures of the contemporary religions.

We find that Guru Nanak was neither a Hindu recommending the Hindu scriptures in order to reform Hindu society nor a Muslim trying to eradicate evils in Muslim brotherhood by referring to the Quran. He was thus, rightly speaking, not a reformer but an originator, and a revolutionary and a founder of a new faith and a new sect. Here was a leader in person of Guru Nanak coming from a respectable Khatri family who protested and revolted in favour of the depressed, down-trodden and the wretched humanity and gave a violent shape to the semi-dead nation. In response to his political, social and religious milieu, he reacted sharply and his followers emerged into a new community. The last two decades of Guru Nanak's settled life at Kartarpur were by far the most important periods of his life in terms of his posthumous influence. Hence he imparted regular instruction to his followers and visitors to shed off external forms, discard caste distinction, believe in brotherhood and equality of mankind and serve the people.

1.3.9. Hindu- Muslim Relations

The two faiths seem to have been against or contradictory to each other because of the difference between their doctrines and practices. Guru Nanak was the first and most effective teacher in the Punjab who tried to bring about a concord between the followers of the contending faiths. Their differences had become so marked that no community could accept the other on par with it in matters of faith and practices. Since they were functioning side by side, their mutual influence on each other was inevitable.

Under the advice of the priestly class, the Sultans gave bad treatment to the non-Muslims on the grounds of their religious beliefs. But generally in the interest of his rule, it was wise for the Sultan to adopt a policy other than the one advocated by the religious leaders. So we find that neither the Sultans tried to extirpate the Hindus, nor they gave them full rights of citizenship. The Hindus did not get their due share in the services and they were meted out a step-motherly treatment. Sometimes the state needed the cooperation of the non-Muslims to suppress their Muslim adversaries. Under such circumstances, the Government adopted a policy of half-hearted toleration out of sheer political necessity. At the lower level or social plane the Hindus and Muslims liked to live in peace and amity.

In the words of A. B. Pandey, "We can say with all the emphasis at our command that the Hindu did not enjoy any right and privileges of common citizen. The communal concept of the Muslim rule was responsible for this

differential treatment. We cannot, therefore call the rule of Sultans either, national, or one that was above fanaticism.”

1.3.10 Economic Condition

1.3.10.1. Agriculture: During the period under study, the Punjab was a province. Agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of the population of the Punjab. There was no dearth of land for the tillers of the soil. Feudal system prevailed under which *Iqtas* (Jagirs) were given to the members of nobility. Besides the big Zamindars there were ordinary peasants who were devotedly attached to the land. The produce of the cultivator was shared by the state according to the prevalent practice. Where the cultivator was provided with irrigation facilities, his economic position was more secure and those who solely depended on rains had to face famines also. The cultivation was carried on by the old traditional implements. The methods of growing crops remained the same that came over the centuries, so their income and consequently their standard of living remained unchanged.

The villagers had subsistence on farming. He met most of his needs from the produce of his land. He grew grains, pulses, sarson for oil, cotton for cloth, sugarcane for sugar. The grains included wheat, maize, jowar, barley and rice and pulses included gram, masur etc.

The standard of living of the peasants and other members of the village community was not high as compared with that of today. They were not well dressed and they had no good houses to live. They did not have many amenities of life. Their diet was simple though nutritive. A marriage in village was an occasion of festivity and almost all families of the village contributed according to their means towards the cost of the ceremony.

1.3.10.2. Industries

The major industries of the Punjab were textile, paper, arms, woodwork and carpets. Sultanpur Lodhi, Sialkot, Multan and Gujrat produced various types of textiles and carpets. Sultanpur and Multan were known for superior *chhint*, Gujrat and Sialkot for their chiffon work. Flowered durries and woollen carpets were prepared at Multan. Bajwara (near Hoshiarpur) had specialised in fine cloth and gold work on cloth. Sialkot was famous for manufacturing *dhoties*, *saries*, *turbans*, *lungis* and arms such as *barchis* and *katars* (spears and daggers); swords and jamdhars were manufactured at Gujrat. Ginning and spinning of cotton was done at home by most of the people. Fine cloth was manufactured only at few places but coarse cloth for common people was prepared and sold almost everywhere. Dyeing was done only in big towns. Apart from the manufacture of cloth, cushion, coverlets, bedding, prayer mats etc. were also manufactured. Woollen articles were manufactured in Punjab and adjoining areas. Fine shawls were prepared at Lahore and in

Kashmir. Kashmir goods were brought and sold in the Punjab in large quantities.

The cultivation of sugarcane was fairly extensive in the Punjab. The manufacturing of sugar was done on a large scale at Gujrat. Punjab produced a good surplus of sugar export after local and national consumption.

Crude metal work was done everywhere by the village blacksmith. He made the agriculture implements that the village needed. Articles like knives, locks, keys, razors, buckets etc. were prepared in towns.

Almost every village or town had carpenters who prepared articles used in agriculture and wooden frames for doors and window, cots and other good of furniture and commonly used things like almirahs, chariots, palanquins, chair, tables etc.

House in the villages were generally very simple mostly of earthwork. Beams of timber were fixed on earthen walls. The rich people used bricks burnt in kilns or stones in the construction of their houses. The forts, palaces, public halls, mosques tombs and other building built by the nobles show the development of architecture to a very high standard. Masons working at Delhi, Lahore, Multan and many other places of the Punjab had acquired a name for them.

Normally the industrial associations were based on castes and were hereditary, their implements and techniques of work was crude and their output poor. Excepting those who worked in government *karkhanas*, they received no adequate protection to safeguard their interest. The supply of industrial goods was restricted by the needs of small upper class which needed a few varieties of textile goods, a few articles of metal work and a very limited number of other goods.

According to 'Ain-i-Akbari' ordinary labourer received two *dams* (paises) a day, skilled labourer got three to four dam a day, a carpenter received three to seven dams and mason five to seven dams. Thus, we see that the wage index was fairly low in those days. The rates of commodities during the period under study were equally very low. For example, one maund (about thirty kilos) of wheat could be purchased for 12 dams; one maund of barely for 8 dams, one maund of pulses for 18 dams, one maund of sugar (white) for 128 dams, one maund of ghee for 105 dams; one maund of mutton for 54 dams.

1.3.10.3. Trade and Commerce

Large quantities of surplus corns and other consumable commodities were produced in the country. They could be disposed of by the producers in the neighbouring towns. Industrial goods also were taken for sale to the suitable markets.

For communication on land there were a number of roads and pathways running all over the Punjab. Lahore and Peshawar, Lahore and Delhi, Multan and Delhi. Multan and Qandhar seem to have been well connected by road. Goods were moved from one place to another in carts, on camel, on mules and on oxen. The old class of grain carriers known as *Banjaras* employed hundreds and thousands of oxen in their trade. They moved in the form of big caravans. At the annual or periodical fairs in the towns, the retail merchants and petty shopkeepers of surrounding places obtained their new stock of goods. Cattle fairs on very large scale were held at well known places for the sale of all kinds of cattle.

The role of brokers in business was sufficiently important. Legal agents were regularly employed by important dealers. The native bankers discharged some of the functions of the present day banking. They would give loans and receive deposits or hundies. The practice of lending money on interest was there. Bond (tamasuks) were executed.

Adulteration and fraudulent weights were quite common and from time to time government devised measures to do away with these mal-practices. But they could not be eradicated.

The trade of this country through its land frontiers is very old. In spite of many difficulties, the trade with the north-west frontiers of the Punjab continued unabated. The traders of the Punjab carried on an extensive trade in musk, furs, arms, camels and horses with the central Asian countries. Horses of Turkish breed found a good market in the Punjab.

The big obstacle to the trade was the want of security. Robbers infested the wooden areas. The road watchman appointed by Government were by no means to be trusted.

The wealth was not properly distributed. Most of it was concentrated into the hands of small minority. The rulers and nobles both 'Hindus' and Muslims, had enormous wealth in their hands. The high officers drew very high salaries enabling them to live very richly. They lived in big houses and were attended by a large number of servants. The middle class people were also well-off. The masses who formed the bulk of the population sometimes lived in penury and privation. The government demands on the producer were very high and he was left with about one third of his produce. In normal times the producer could pull on but when there was famine, the common man and the ordinary producer suffered most because in times of famines and scarcity, price of commodities of common use rose very high which the poor people could not afford to pay.

1.3.11. Summary

Generally and in normal times the Punjab enjoyed prosperity and plenty. The rich people were always surrounded by a crowd of retainers and menials and domestic servants. A large number of beggars moved about. All these beggars were a drain on the economy of the country. The wastage by the rich over marriages of their sons and daughters, on sumptuous dishes, on costly dresses and very rich paraphernalia and also buildings, mansions, mausoleums and places of worship and on precious jewellery, horses and elephants, had an adverse effect on the economy of the country. In spite of all this, the common people generally lived in comfort and at least they were not discontented with their living. The people of the Punjab were the producers of certain articles which had acquired a name not only in India but their commodities were also in demand in foreign countries.

Self check exercise:

- Was the main occupation of Punjab society during the time of Guru Nanak.
- Muslims were divided intoand Sunnis.

Relevant Questions:

1. What do you know about socio-religious condition of Punjab during the birth of Guru Nanak.
2. Write short note on condition of Women during the time of Guru Nanak.

Key Words: Society, Economic, Trade, Agriculture, Hindu, Women, Evils

Suggested Readings:

1. J.S. Grewal : *Guru Nanak in History.*
2. Fauja Singh (Edited) : *History of the Punjab, Vol. III.*
3. K. M. Ashraf : *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan.*
4. A. L. Srivastava : *Medieval Indian Culture.*
5. B. S. Nijjar : *Punjab under the Sultans of Delhi.*

**Converted into Self learning mode by Dr Kanwaljit Kaur
Last Updated on April 10, 2023.**

M.A. (HISTORY) PART-I**PAPER-I****HISTORY OF PUNJAB(1469-1675 A.D.)**

LESSON NO. 1.4**AUTHOR : PROF. FAUJA SINGH**

Life and Travels of Guru Nanak**Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.4.1. Objectives
- 1.4.2. Introduction
- 1.4.3. Early Life
- 1.4.4. Travels
 - 1.4.4.1. First Udasi
 - 1.4.4.2. Second Udasi
 - 1.4.4.3. Third Udasi
- 1.4.5. Summary

1.4.1 Objectives:

- To study the early life of Guru Nanak.
- To examine about the various Udasis of Guru Nanak in different directions.

1.4.2. Introduction

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was born in 1469 A.D. into a Bedi Khatri family at Talwandi Rao Bhoi Bhatti, now in Pakistan. The place is now called Nankana Sahib after the name of Nanak. Nanak's father Mehta Kalu was revenue accountant (Patwari) by profession.

The exact date of Guru Nanak's birth is a matter of controversy. Most of the source books such as Puratan Janamsakhi, Meharban Janamsakhi and Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi mention his date of birth as Baisakh Sudi 3, Bikrami 1526 (15 April, 1469). Mehma Parkash of Sarup Dass Bhalla and Guru Nanak Bans Parkash of Sukhbasi Ram also support the above mentioned view. Karam Singh particularly has examined this view in elaborate details in his book 'Katak ke Baisakh' and given his verdict in support of the Baisakh

tradition. On the other hand, Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* and *Gurparnalis* of Kasar Singh and Gulab Singh give the date as Katak Purnamashi of the same Bikrami year 1526. The popular tradition also is in favour of Katak Purnamashi and the annual celebration of the Guru's birth anniversary is held on the full moon day of the Indian month of Katak. Any how, this controversy is now only a matter of academic interest, for all intents and purposes, the Katak view is by tradition preferred over the Baisakh view.

1.4.3. Early Life

Being the only son, Nanak received every care and affection from his parents. When a little grown up, he was sent to school and his teachers taught him Hindi, Sanskrit and Persian. From his early years, Nanak had a contemplative mind and was happier when he was asked by his parents to look after the cattle or to do some business. As a device to make him interested in worldly affairs, he was married off. He had two sons but his parents were sorely disappointed when even marriage failed to change his ways. Then he was sent to Sultanpur Lodhi to stay with his sister, Bebe Nanaki and her husband Jai Ram. Through the good offices of Jai Ram, Nanak was appointed the Storekeeper (Modi) of Nawab Daulat Khan, the ruler of Sultanpur. After a few years service, Nanak felt the Divine Call and resigned his lucrative post to be able to devote himself entirely to this Divine Mission.

1.4.4. Travels

(a) Sources : In the case of Guru Nanak, no first-hand sources are available, except a brief reference in his hymns to Babar's invasions on the Punjab. Therefore, to reconstruct an account of his travels, we have to depend upon later accounts. Among these, the most important is the *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas. However, there are wide gaps left uncovered by this source. Then there are *Janamsakhi* accounts but these show greater concern for bringing out the impact of the Guru's personality than with the factual and objective accounts of his travels. So there are formidable difficulties to be faced by student about Guru Nanak's life. But the task is not hopeless and it is possible to prepare a reasonable story of the Guru's life with the help of Bhai Gurdas's *Vars* and the various *Janamsakhi*.

The most important *Janamsakhi* available to us are as follows :-

1. *Puratan Janamsakhi*.
2. *Meherban Janamsakhi*.
3. *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*.
4. *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi*.

The first three works date back to the first half of the 17th century.

These are believed to have been produced within a few years of one another. The last work was produced about a century later but is regarded valuable because it was an application of the first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas.

Among the secondary works on the travels of Guru Nanak, the following publications of the History Department of Punjabi University, Patiala are extremely valuable.

1. Janamsakhi Prampra.
2. Travels of Guru Nanak-Atlas.

The latter contains 26 maps with explanatory notes.

While Guru Nanak was working as Modi at Sultanpur, he got enlightenment and felt divinely called upon to undertake travels and show the path of truth to the erring humanity. His long travels are called *Udasis* from the manner of his dressing in the course of these travels. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, he dressed himself as follows during the various *Udasis*.

1. Eastern Udasi : Two sheets of cloth, one white and one blue, on one foot a shoe and on the other a wooden chappal, a kalandri cap, a rosary of bones and a Kesar tilak mark.

2. Southern Udasi: Ropes entwined all over the body including head, legs and arms, wooden chappals and Bindi-tilak mark.

3. Northern Udasi : Leather coverings for head, feet and other parts of the body and a Kesar tilak mark.

4. Western Udasi: Blue robes, leather chappals, a rosary of bones, a Bindi tilak mark.

Different views prevail on the number of these *Udasis*. *Puratan Janamsakhi* mentions four *Udasis*, namely eastern, southern, northern and western and a short trip to Goarakhatri (Peshawar). *Meharaban Janamsakhi*, treats of the first two as one and thus refers to three *Udasis* only. Bhai Gurdas omits the southern one and mention three in all, excluding the short trip from Kartarpur. Bhai Mani Singh upholds the view of Bhai Gurdas.

1.4.4.1. First Udasi

Guru Nanak's first *Udasis* was eastward. It is believed to have begun around 1500 A.D. According to Meharaban the Guru immediately turned east and proceeded to Delhi where from he went to Hardwar. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi* before turning to east, the Guru went to Tulamba (modern Makhdumpur, Pakistan) where he met Sajjan Thug and weaned him away from his evil ways. It was after this that he went to Panipat and Delhi. Bhai Gurdas gives no specific information about it but gives a broad hint that Guru set out towards the east from Sultanpur. *Bala Janamsakhi* informs us that before leaving the Punjab, the Guru visited Eminabad and Talwandi. Following the

General trend of these writers, we may accept the view that the Guru marched from Sultanpur straight way towards the east.

After leaving Sultanpur, the Guru proceeded to Karra, Pehowa and Kurukshetra. At all these places, there are old historical gurdwaras in honour of Guru Nanak's visit. It is possible that the Guru also visited these places a second time afterwards. The next place to be visited was Panipat where the Guru had a meeting with Sheikh Edul Kabir (d, 1540 A.D.) Sheikh Edul Kabir was also known as Sheikh Tahir or Tatihor as Puratan Janamsakhi has put it. After Panipat, the Guru visited Delhi and stayed at the present site of *Majnu da Tilla*, followed by the pious *Fakir* Majnu's association with it. Now a magnificent gurudwara stands there. From Delhi, the Guru proceeded to Hardwar. Puratan Janamsakhi contains no references of this place but it is clearly mentioned in Meharban Janamsakhi. It was a Baisakhi occasion when the visit took place and the well known incident of the Guru throwing the river water westward instead of sunward to remove the superstition of the people, is believed to have happened at this time.

From Hardwar, the Guru proceeded to Kotdwar, Pauri (Srinagar, U.P.) Kidar Nath, Badri Nath and Joshi Math. Considering the Guru's visits to Hardwar, Kotdwar and Pauri on the one side and Retha Sahib and Nanakmata on the other, it seems both logical and natural that Guru would have made his journey by the well known old pilgrim's route.

From Joshi Math, Guru Nanak proceeded to Banaras and on the way visited Retha Sahib (23 miles east of Haldwani), Gorkhmata (now called Nanakmata), Tanda Vanjara (now in District Rampur), Gola (22 miles north west of Lakhimpur), Ayodhya, Tanda, Nizamabad, Prayag (Allahabad). At several of these place now, there are commemorative shrines of Guru Nanak. Most of these were Hindu pilgrimage centres. It appears that the Guru has special keenness to visit them in order to meet the religious leaders of these places to study the prevailing religious conditions there and to guide the misguided people. At Gorakhmata which was a famous Sidh Jogi centre of this area, the Guru had the opportunity of having a long discourse with the people there in matter of religion and metaphysics.

At Banaras, Guru Nanak probably had a long stay. There he resided in the Kemeha area situated now at a short distance from the Banaras Railway Station. An old historical gurudwara marks the memory of his visit. From Banaras, two routes, went to Hajipur Patna; the first lay along the Ganga bank while the second passed through Gaya. Because Gaya was an old famous pilgrimage centre of the Hindus and the Budhists, Guru Nanak took the later route and proceeded to Gaya. From there a kacha road led to Hajipur and passed through

the place where later on the modern city of Patna grew up. At Hajipur there is an old historical gurdwara marking the sacred memory of the Guru's visit. From Hajipur he went to Kantnagar (modern district Purnea) via Monghyr and Bhagalpur. From there he reached the city of Malda which was a great Sufi centre. Here the Guru had a long discourse with some local Sufi saints. From this place onwards there are two possibilities :

- (i) He took the road to Sunargaon via Maksudabad and reached Dacca.
- (ii) He travelled northward and reached the town of Dhubri in Kamrup. In all probability, it was the second course which was followed by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak's visit to Assam (then divided into Kamrup and Asa Desh) has aroused some controversy. It has been questioned by some writers. But the Sikh tradition regarding it, is very strong. Meharban makes no mention of it but *Puratan* and *Bala Janamsakhis* both contain definite reference. Bhai Gurdas though vague, also seems to lend support to it.

Dhubri is a chief town of the modern district of Goalpura. After short stay there, the Guru proceeded along the Brahmaputra river and passing through Kamrup, entered Asa Desh which was then under the rule of Raja Swag Narain, an Ahom ruler. Continuing the journey, the Guru arrived at Golaghat which is today the tehsil town of District Sibsagar in the extreme east of Assam. The town was situated on the eastern bank of Dhansari river. This is the Dhansari Valley to which reference occurs in the *Janamsakhis*.

From the Dhanasri Valley the Guru retraced his step by the same route as he had followed for the upward journey. At a point near Gauhati he changed his direction and proceeded to Shilong and then via Jowari and Jaintia hills marched ahead to Sylhet, another great Sufi centre of the area. At this place, exists an old historical gurdwara commemorating Guru Nanak's visit to the place. In the Sylhet area the Surma and Barak rivers provided the most convenient mode of travel. It is probable that the Guru travelled by boat along these rivers and reached Dacca. There is also another possibility that from Sylhet, he went downward to Chittagong which was connected with Sylhet by a much frequented road from there he wended his way to Dacca.

Dacca then, did not have the political importance which it now enjoys and was mainly known for the temple of Dhakeshwari Goddess to whom perhaps it owns its very name. The Guru stayed at the site of present day Rara bazar. An old local well is also associated with his visit. Starting from Dacca the Guru took the road leading to Jagan Nath Puri. On the way he passed through, Calcutta and Cuttack. At that time Calcutta was no more than a big

village noted chiefly for its temple of Kali Goddess. At both these places, historical gurdwara exist in honour of the Guru's visit. From Cuttack, he took the pilgrims route to reach Jagan Nath Puri. The visit to Puri is almost universally accepted. Both *Puratan and Meharban Janamsakhi* mention it. The biography of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by Ishwar Dass confirms it by saying that Guru Nanak and Chaitanya had a meeting at this place. A small gurdwara of Guru Nanak marks the memory of his visit.

After a short stay at Puri, the Guru probably returned to Cuttack to resume his southward journey. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, the Guru ended his first *Udasi* with this visit and returned to Punjab and it was only after sometime that he sent out on his second or southern *Udasi*, *Meharban Janamsakhi*, however, treats of the eastern and southern journeys as one *Udasi*, a view, which looks more plausible. Starting from Cuttack, the Guru passed through Gantur (an important town in Andhra state) Kanchipura (a famous-Hindu pilgrimage centre 145 miles south of Madras), Trivannamali (District of South Arcot). Triuchinappali (old Trichnappali) and Nagapattinam, a very old part of South India. From Nagapattinam, Guru Nanak proceeded to Ceylon.

The visit to Ceylon has been argued both for and against. However, the weight of the argument is in favour of the visit. All *Janamsakhis* excepting Meharban's have supported the visit. Meharban's account is vague but not negative, because it contains a reference to an unknown country which in this context may be Ceylon. Gyani Gyan Singh, a late 19th century Sikh writer, has also accepted the tradition of this visit and gives Mattia Kullam as a place of the Guru's stay. Recently, an inscription has been found in Ceylon mentioning that one Indian saint named Janakacharya visited Ceylon some 500 years ago and had a discussion on religious matters with certain Ceylonese-Scholars. Since the views of that saint are similar to those of Guru Nanak, it is believed that he was no other person than the Guru himself. However, this view is not yet fully established. In Ceylon Guru Nanak is supposed to have visited Mattia Kullam (Now-Batticaloa), Katargama, Sitawaka (modern-Avisvella) Anuradhapura (a capital town of Ceylon in olden times) and Mannar (near the modern Taliamannar).

At Mannar Guru Nanak left Ceylon and sailed for Rameshwaram twenty miles from there. On the way, he passed through Setbanda which according to the Hindu tradition was constructed by Shri Ram Chander at the time of his attack on Lanka. Muslims call it Adam's Bridge. The Nanak Udasi Math Gurdwara at Rameshwaram enshrines the Guru's visit to that place. From there, the Guru started on his return journey to Punjab and on the way passed

through Pattan, Kottayam. Trivandrum (now capital of Kerala), Bidar (then capital of one of the five branches of the Bahmani Kingdom), Deogai, Baroach, Dwarka, Girnar Rocks, Junagarh, Ujjain, Chittorgarh, Ajmer, Mathura, Delhi, Sirsa and Pakpattan famed for the Dargah of Chishti saint Baba Farid.

1.4.4.2. Second Udasi

This journey is concerned with travels in the Himalayan regions. *The Janamsakhis* and Bhai Gurdas's *Vars* mention only the visit of Guru Nanak to Summer Parbat and are silent about how he went there or returned from there. The Bala version has solved the problem by the ingenious device of miraculous flight by the Guru. So to solve this problem we have to depend upon local traditions which, fortunately, are available in plenty. After a brief stay at Talwandi, the Guru set out for Sultanpur. On the way he passed through Lahore, Ghawindi, Khalra, Patti and Goindwal. The visit to Lahore is mentioned in all *Janamsakhis*, and there are two historical gurdwaras also commemorating his visit. Most of the other places also have historical gurdwaras.

From Sultanpur, Guru Nanak entered upon his second *Udasi*. He passed through the Bist-Jalandhar Doab and crossing river Satluj, reached the residence of Pir Budhan Shah. The place where he stayed was later developed and named Kiratpur by the Sixth Master Guru Hargobind. There now stands Gurdwara Charan Kanwal as a memorial of Guru Nanak's visit. From here he entered the hilly region and proceeded to Bilaspur, the headquarter of Raja of Kehlur. Continuing his journey, he arrived at Mandi via Suket. At a distance of ten miles from here was the Skand Dhara Kund called Rewalsar. The Guru visited this place and after that proceeded to Jawalaji. After seeing the ever bright flame of this famous temple, he travelled on to Kangra-via Nadaun and then to Baijnath called Kirgram after the name of the Kir tribe living there.

From Baijnath a route led through the Dulchi Pass to Kulu. On the way to Kulu, he visited Manikarn which has a historical gurdwara making the memory of his visit. He left Kulu and through the Hamtu Pass entered the Spiti Valley. On the other side of the Hamtu pass, there is an old village Mulana preserving the memory of the Guru's short stay there.

The eastern side of the Spiti Valley borders on west Tibet passing through the Shipki pass, the Guru made his entry into Tibet and proceeded up to the Satluj River to Mansarover Lake and Kailash Parbat. Here he met a group of ascetics called Sidhs and had detailed discussion with them on subjects of mutual interest.

The visit to Kailash Parbat (also called Summer Parbat) is mentioned in Bhai Gurdas *Vars* and all *Janamsakhis*.

Leaving Kailash Parbat, Guru Nanak turned north-west and after passing through Garkot and Rudok entered Ladakh through the Pass. On his way to Leh, he passed through Upshi and Karunagar. In some of this area, none except Guru Nanak is worshipped. Close to Karunagar place called Himus Gompa still cherishes the tradition of the Guru's visit there. A stone is preserved there on which the Guru is believed to have seated himself during the visit. Resuming his journey, he passed through Leh, Nemi and Bosgo. A very interesting tradition is preserved at Bosgo. At this place, it is said, an ogre attacked the Guru but when Guru pushed him back, he fell down on a rock which still bears the mark caused by his fall. The next important place visited by the Guru was Skardu and there is gurudwara standing in the Guru's name. From Skardu, he proceeded to famous Hindu temple Amarnath, visiting on the way Kargil, Dras, Zojilla pass and Baltal. From there he journeyed to Pahilgam and Mattan in Kashmir Valley. At Mattan, famous for the ruins of the Martand temple, the Guru had a long talk with Pandit Brahm Das. The place has now a memorial gurudwara called after Guru's name.

The onward journey lay through Anantnag, Srinagar, Bara Mula, Uri, Khola and Hassan Abdal (now called Panja Sahib). Hassan Abdal is connected with the story of Muslim Fakir, Wali Kandhari who out of rage threw a huge stone from the hill-top on Guru Nanak sitting at the foot of the same hill. The Guru stopped it with the outstretched palm of his hand i.e. his Panja. The mark of the Panja can still be seen on that stone. A beautiful gurdwara has been constructed at this place.

Now Guru Nanak decided to see his people at home and turned towards Talwandi now known as Nankana Sahib. Soon after he reached Tilla Bal Gudai a major centre of Sidh Naths. Here again he had a long discourse with ascetic. Resuming the journey, he crossed the Jehlum and Chenab rivers and arrived at Sialkot where he stayed for a short period and then wended his way to his birth-place Talwandi. On the way, he passed through several places such as Pasrur and Saidpur (modern Eminabad).

1.4.4.3. Third Udasi

After a brief stay at Talwandi and Sultanpur where resided his sister, Guru Nanak decided to visit the Muslim countries of west Asia. He took with him rebeck player Bhai Mardana and set out his travels again. At Pakpattan he renewed his contacts with Sheikh Ibrahim Farid II. At Tulumba he had converted Sajjan Thug into a missionary of his creed and at Multan had a meeting with Sheikh Baha-ud-Din, a Sufi saint of the Suhrawardy Silsalah. At

Uch, another Sufi centre, the Guru had a discourse with Sheikh Haji Abdulla Bukhari, a successor of Sheikh Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari.

Resuming his journey from Uch, Guru Nanak reached Sukkar which still has the cherished memory of his visit. From there, he travelled to Lakhpat, probably by boat, down the Kori stream which had ceased to exist now. The place in the 16th century was called Basta Bandu. There is memorial gurdwara which until recently had a jagir from the Cutch government. From Lakhpat he proceeded ahead to visit the old temples of the Koteshwar and Narayana Swami. Then he turned westward and arrived at Son Miani 50 miles west of the modern port of Karachi. A few miles to the north of this place was the famous Hindu temple of Hinglaj dedicated to Kali goddess. Not far from Hinglaj, there is now Nanak Dharamshala set up in honour of the Guru's visit.

Bhai Gurdas and *all Janamsakhis* agreed that Guru Nanak visited Mecca during his western tour. According to Bhai Gurdas the visit to Mecca proceeded the visit to Baghdad. This view finds supports in Meharban also. The Puratan version is not of much help in this regard. Calculating on the main basis of the available evidence, we feel inclined to accept the view that the Guru proceeded to Mecca by sea and returned by land. Meharban's mention of Guru Nanak's visit to Hinglaj en route to Mecca lends further support to our view.

After visiting Hinglaj, the Guru came back to the port of Son Miani to board a ship for Arabia. Presumably, he was not alone in this ship but had the company of a group of Muslim pilgrims bound for the same destination. The ship landed at Al Aswad which was then a famous port for passengers from the east intending to go to Mecca was not far off from there.

Bhai Gurdas and *Janamsakhis* have given a graphic account of the Guru's sojourn at Mecca, particularly of the deep impact made by him on his audience. A detailed account of the Guru's discourse with the people there, is found in a manuscript, bearing the title *Makke di Gosht*.

An objection has been raised by a recent writer W. H. McLeod on Guru Nanak that no non-Muslim could be allowed to enter even the precincts of the city of Mecca, much less enter the Holy Kabba. His objection may be answered on two grounds :

- (i) He was in the garb of a Muslim pilgrim travelling in the company of large group of Muslim pilgrims.
- (ii) In the 16th century there were no strict restrictions on the visit of Mecca and it was possible even for a non-Muslim to make a visit to it.

According to all evidence available to us, Guru Nanak preferred the land

route for his return from Mecca. This was also in keeping with the main purpose of his tour which had been undertaken for travels in the Muslim countries of West Asia and not merely for a visit to the holy city of Mecca alone.

From Mecca the Guru proceeded to Medina where prophet Muhammad has spent many years of his noble life and died. The Guru's visit to Medina is mentioned by Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Mani Singh and Meharban *Janamsakhis*.

From Medina a caravan route led to the north through Palestine, Syria and Turkey. It connected the various parts on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean sea with Constantinople and the Strait of Dardanelles. Both Meharban and Mani Singh versions say that Guru Nanak visited Sham (Syria) and Rum (Turkey). This possibility is not altogether ruled out because Bhai Gurdas also throws a very broad hint of Guru Nanak's wide travels in the region. In case this view is accepted, the journey of the Guru to Baghdad would have to be routed through Damascus, the capital city of Syria.

All the same arguments may be advanced in support of the Guru adopting the shorter route (i) The shorter route from Medina to Baghdad across the Arabian desert is generally preferred by travellers returning to India. It is well-known route generally trodden by pilgrims going overland to or returning from Mecca and Medina. This route was first marked and got ready by Khalifa Harun Rasid's wife, Zubaida Begum. The route passed through Faid on the way.

Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad, once a centre of trade, Government and religion, finds a clear mention in Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*. *Puratan* and *Bala Janamsakhis* make no reference to this while Meharban only suggest it by implication. But the historicity of the visit is established by the discovery of an old Turkish inscription making a brief reference to Guru Nanak's visit to this place. This discovery was made during the First World War by S.D.O. Kartar Singh. The place of discovery was outside the city a point confirmed by Bhai Gurdas also. The English translation of the inscription is as follows.

See how the Most Glorious Lord God fulfilled the wish that for Baba Nanak new structure be built. Seven saints helped (their in). Its date (worked out to be that) : The fortunate disciple made to flow new well or spring of water in the land.

Swami Ananda Acharya, in his well known book *Snow Birds*, has given a long poem prepared on the basis of a certain inscription regarding Guru Nanak's stay at Bagdad. This inscription, however, is not traceable now. The translation of that inscription reads as follow :

Here spoke the Hindu Guru Nanak to Fakir Bahlol and for this sixty

summers since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's world like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey rose.

For returning from Baghdad to India three main routes were open to Guru Nanak : (i) from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf by river and from the Persian Gulf onwards by sea, (ii) the route leading to Kabul via Tehran, Meshed, Kandhar,

(iii) the route passing through Tehran, Herat, Balkh and Kabul. The first possibility may be ruled out mainly for the reason that leaves out Afghanistan which by more than one account was visited by the Guru in the course of his western tour. It is not so easy to rule out the second possibility for two reasons (i) Kandhar is mentioned by *Bala Janamsakhi* among the places visited by the Guru, (ii) Kandhar is on a main route connecting Baghdad with Kabul. The third possibility is also strong as the route has the merit of being at once short and straight. Out of these three possibility, we may give preference to the second possibility for the reason that the third possibility leaves out Kandhar altogether and contravene the evidence of the Bala version.

Still another view sometimes offered is that the Guru while coming back travelled in what we now call the Central Asian Republics of the USSR. In support of this view are given the following arguments : (i) Kaviraj Pandit Arjun Muni in his book *Gurdwara Darpan* mentions a number of places in Central Asia associated with Guru Nanak's name. He got this information from one Sant Atma Ram of Bareilly who had visited these places : (ii) at some of these places there are Sikh Dharamsalas having *Udasi Suthras* or Sikh priests : (iii) Gyani Gian Singh makes reference to some of these places in his *Panth-Parkash* and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*.

This view, however, is unacceptable, being somewhat far-fetched. The Dharamsalas which have been mentioned in this connection were the creation of the Sindhi and Multani traders who trade in these areas and were the followers and admirers of Guru Nanak.

Resuming his journey from Baghdad, Guru Nanak set out on the caravan route leading to Tehran, now the capital city of Iran. From Tehran he followed route, for Kandhar and Kabul. On the way he passed through Meshed. In Bhai Mani Singh *Janamsakhi* there is a reference to the Guru's visit to this place. Meshad literally means place of martyrdom and acquired its name from the fact that in early ninth century Khalifa Harun Rashid and his son and successor along with his (Harun's) son-in-law met their sudden deaths here.

From Meshed Guru Nanak proceeded towards Kandhar via Farah. From Kandhar he journeyed to Kabul along the popular route which was also the main caravan route.

Kabul the present capital of Afghanistan, was at the time of Guru's visit, the seat of Babur's government.

There existed a historical gurdwara in memory of Guru Nanak in the Pan-Chowk of old city. But it was demolished in the forties of the present century when the Government of Kabul purchased the building of that area for their expansion and reconstruction plans of the city.

From Kabul to India there were two roads. One led through Jalalabad and the Khyber Pass and the second passed through the Kurram Valley. Which of these two roads was followed by the Guru, it is difficult to say because we have evidence in support of both, Jalalabad, an important provincial town on the Kabul-Peshawar route, has a beautiful gurdwara in the memory of Guru Nank. Besides there are certain springs of water associated with his visit. Every year the Sikhs of Afghanistan assemble there to celebrate the Baisakhi festival. A remarkable feature of the celebrations is the procession marching from Jalalabad to Sultanpur. All these evidences indicates that the Guru proceeded by the Jalalabad route and passed through the Khyber Pass to reach Peshawar. The argument in favour of the Kurram Valley route is the fact that till recently a place called Mulana situated on this route had a Gurdwara in memory of Guru Nanak.

Out of the two possibilities, the one linked with the Jalalabad-Khyber Pass route is more possible. Mulana being on the Indian side of the frontier hills, Guru Nanak's association with this may be explained as an extension of one of his numerous travels in the Punjab.

After emerging from the Khyber Pass, the Guru pursued his way to Peshawar, the Peshawar of *Tuzak-i-Baburi*. The place was particularly noted for Gorakhatri, a considerable centre of Sidh Jogis. Earlier, it was a Buddhist centre. There used to be a *peepal* tree, more than 100 feet in height about which the tradition was that Lord Buddha had sat underneath it. Babur refers to this tree in memoirs. Later on, the place turned into a centre of Gorakhpanthi Sidhs. Gradually, however, it declined its importance and the Jogis abandoned it. According to Erskine, the main sarai of Peshawar was constructed over the site of the same centre later on.

When in Peshawar, the Guru paid a visit to Gorakhatri and had a long discourse with the residents impressing upon them, as he never failed to do, the futility of their religious practices and exhorting them to lead a meaningful life, spiritually inspired and socially fruitful.

Guru Nanak's visit to Gorakhatri is mentioned in both Puratan and Meharban *Janamsakhis*.

From Peshawar, the Guru travelled homeward by the road which passed

through Hassan Abdal, Tila Bal Gudai, Gujrat etc. and led to Lahore. On the way he happened to pass through Saidpur or Syedpur (later called Eminabad). When he was at Saidpur Babur attacked the place and inflicted horrible atrocities upon the people. The miserable lot to which they were reduced moved the tender heart of the Guru and he composed a piece of finest poetry even found in any language. Collectively the hymns composed on this occasion are called '*Baburvani*'. Guru Nanak's humanism and ethico-political philosophy is perhaps nowhere so well brought out as here in this composition.

From Saidpur the Guru proceeded to Talwandi and from there via Sultanpur he came to that spot on the bank of the Ravi where he founded a new basti named Kartarpur (city of God).

1.4.5. Summary

Guru Nanak travelled through these years and finally he settled down at Kartarpur. Here at Kartarpur, he cast off *Udasi's* garb and putting on the dress of a normal householder, began to lead a settled life. The total span of this period is calculated to be 18 to 20 years. He called all the members of his family to live with him at his residence. Even now, occasionally he undertook short tours in Punjab. One of them, according to Bhai Gurdas, was to Achal Vatala and Multan.

Guru Nanak breathed his last on Monday, Asun Sudi, 10, Bakrami Sammat 1596 (22 September, 1539). By all accounts, his age at the time was 70 years 5 months and 7 days. Before he passed away, he selected Bhai Lehna as his successor.

Self check exercise:

- During the first Udasi, Guru Nanak travelled to... ..
- Guru Nanak's mother's name was...

Relevant Questions:

1. Write an essay on the travels of Guru Nanak Dev?

Key Words: Travels, Guru, incarnation, Baghdad, Mecca, Tour, Visit, Spiritual

Suggested Readings

1. *Travels of Guru Nanak : An Atlas*: Dr. Fauja Singh and Dr. Kirpal Singh
2. *Travels of Guru Nanak* : Dr. S. S. Sodhi
3. *Guru Nanak* : Prof. Harbans Singh
4. *Janamsakhis Parampara (Punjabi)*: Dr. Kirpal Singh

**Converted into Self Learning mode by Dr Kanwaljit Kaur
Last updated on April 11, 2023**

M.A. (HISTORY) PART-I**PAPER-I****HISTORY OF PUNJAB(1469-1675 A.D.)**

LESSON NO. 1.5**AUTHOR : SH. PRITAM SINGH SETHI**

Guru Nanak—His Teachings**Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.5.1. Objectives
- 1.5.2. Introduction
- 1.5.3. Teachings of Guru Nanak
 - 1.5.3.1 Unity of God.
 - 1.5.3.2 Importance of true name
 - 1.5.3.3 The place of Guru
 - 1.5.3.4 Satsung
 - 1.5.3.5 Conception of Karma and transmigration of soul
 - 1.5.3.6 The love of humanity
 - 1.5.3.7 The attitude towards Avatars and divinities
 - 1.5.3.8 Opposition of Asceticism
 - 1.5.3.9 Pilgrimage and fasts
 - 1.5.3.10 The Vedas and the Quraan
 - 1.5.3.11 Challenge to the supremacy of priestly class
 - 1.5.3.12 Caste system
 - 1.5.3.13 Political tyranny
 - 1.5.3.14 Equal status to women
 - 1.5.3.15 Charity and Simplicity
 - 1.5.3.16 Education
- 1.5.4. Sikhism and Bhakti movement
- 1.5.5. Reformer or a Revolutionary

- 1.5.5.1 Reformer
- 1.5.5.2 Revolutionary
- 1.5.6. Impact of the teachings of Guru Nanak
 - 1.5.6.1. Religious
 - 1.5.6.2. Social
 - 1.5.6.3. Political
 - 1.5.6.4 . Moral
- 1.5.7. Character and estimate of Guru Nanak
- 1.5.8. Summary

1.5.1. Objectives:

- To study the teachings of Guru Nanak.
- To find out whether Guru Nanak was a revolutionary or a social reformer.
- To evaluate the impact of Guru Nanak's teachings.

1.5.2. Introduction

The age of Guru Nanak was an age of ignorance and an age of strife and we may say at once that the message of Nanak was a message of truth and message of peace. The truth was buried down. The religion had become the bundle of futile religious ceremonies. The springs of true religion had been choked up by weeds of unmeaning ceremonial, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and the indifference of the people. According to G.C. Narang "Form had supplanted the reality and highly spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects. The centuries of invasions, foreign misrule and persecution had produced the greatest depression and the spiritual subjection and stagnation had aggravated the demoralisation to an enormous degree".²

1.5.3. Teachings of Guru Nanak

The society, had completely lost its purity and morality.

Guru Nanak by force of reason and humility, set himself to change the very face of the society. He started to bring the people back to the religion of simplicity and sincerity. Like great thinkers and teachers, he believed in simple living and high thinking. He preached simple principles to his followers. His

teachings were free from all deep philosophical and ostentatious trappings. The main teachings of Guru Nanak were as follows :-

1.5.3.1. Unity of God Head: Guru Nanak believed in unity of God Head. In the beginning of Japji, Guru Nanak describes the concept of God : Ek Onkar, Sat Nam, Karta Purkh, Nirbhau, Nirvair, Akal Murat, Ajuni Saibhang, Gurprasad (There is one God, Eternal, truth is His name. He is devoid of fear, devoid of malice. He is immortal, unborn, self-existent, and is realized through Divine Grace). Guru Nanak's God is omnipresent, unrivalled, transcendent, formless and omnipotent. He creates everything out of his ownself. Although the creation is God Himself yet it differs from God, as Bhai Jodh Singh writes, "When this is destroyed, the phenomenon as a separate existence ceases, but God still is there." He is immanent and knows all and everything. He is pure and holy. He is self made and above transmigration. He alone is the bestower of gifts. Yet, He possesses many attributes. He is within and as well as without. He is an ocean of mercy, the friend generous, beautiful and bountiful. He is the father and mother of all human beings and takes care of them. God is above Vishnu, above Brahma, superior of Shiva and the creator of Rama and Krishna. There are hundreds of thousands of Mohammeds but only one God. In the opinion of Cunningham, "Instead of circumscribed divinity, the anthropomorphous God of Ramanand and Kabir, he loftily invokes the Lord as the One, the sole, the timeless being, the creator, self existent, incomprehensible, and the everlasting." He is different from the other divinities and prophets. He is pure soul from whom other emanate. Everything that we see is His manifestation.

God can be attained by self surrender and deep devotion. A man should accept His Divine will. God can be realized and not seen. It is faith and a practical way of life. His presence can be felt like the pain in body or pleasure in the fragrance in the flower or electricity in various forms. His creations can lead to His realization. Through sincere devotion and love, the existence of God can be felt. A religious life is always beneficial God is merciful. He affords solace to his disciples in time of affliction and helps them when they are in need of His assistance. He is not far from his disciple. He lives in their hearts. Once they surrender themselves to His will and then He takes charge of them. One should efface one's self completely, recognise God as one's Master. In the opinion of Frederic Pincot, "For Nanak there was no such thing as God for the Hindus, a God for the Muhammadans, for him there was but one God, not in the likeness of man, like Rama, not a creature of attributes and persons like the Allah or Muhammad but One sole, invisible, self-existent, in comprehensible, timeless, all prevailing to be named but otherwise

indescribable and altogether lovely.” Such was Nanak’s idea of the Creator and sustainer of the phenomenal world and it was a conception while at once abrogated all petty distinctions of creed and sect, all dogmas and ceremonies. The realisation of such a God shatters the sophistries of theologian and quibblings of the dialecticians, it clears the brow for the gloom of abstruse pondering over trifles and leaves the heart free from the existence of human sympathies.

1.5.3.2. Importance of True Name

According to Hindu philosophy, threefold path can lead to the salvation of mankind namely Gian Marg (Knowledge), Karam Marg (action) and Bhakti Marg (devotion). Buddhism followed Karam Marg. Guru Nanak, unlike Buddha followed Bhakti Marg. It was the simplest path i.e. Nam Marg or Simran or dedication to the Nam, the True Nam. Guru Nanak sang and preached the Name. The simple conception was easily followed by the depressed, dejected and down-caste people. He told that the true Nam was the cure of all evils and ills. Guru Nanak often used to say, “I have no miracle except the True Name, True devotion, complete surrender of self.” The concentration of mind and effective control over oneself can lead to the worship of True Nam. The self-surrender of oneself means the complete destruction of five great enemies, which constitute the ego viz. lust (Kam), anger (Krodh), greed or avarice (Lobh), attachment (Moh), pride or vainty (Ahankar). Therefore, he said “He who repeath not God’s Name, shall wander in birth and death.” Most of the hymns of Guru Nanak are attributed to the greatness of God. Oneness with God is a must. Nam Simran or ‘Repetition of God’s name can be explained as mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib at several places be based upon (i) Purity of mind and body (ii) Meditation (iii) Silence (iv) Concentration of mind on the meaning of Nam (v) Righteous action (vi) Contentment and patience (vii) Faith and reverence and (viii) SatSang. Guru Nanak simplifies the idea in the famous oft-repeated twentieth hymns in the Japji Sahib which runs as follows. “As water is necessary for cleaning the dirt from the body, and soap for washing the dirty clothes similarly repetition of Nam is essential for removing the dirt of mind.” So according to Guru Nanak, Name is the cure and panacea of all ills from which the humanity suffers. It is the essence of life.

1.5.3.3. The Place of Guru

In Sikhism unique importance has been attached to guru. According to Hindu philosophy a Brahman is generally recognised as a guru. It implies a teacher, both spiritual and temporal and an elderly person. In the doctrines of Sikhism, the guru is a saviour, the prophet, the true enlightener and perfect in every respect. He should be a link between man and God. He should have

realized God. He should be humble, unselfish, unattached and holy. Without true guru one cannot attain the aim of one's life." Man shall not be emancipated without instruction by the Guru, even though he performed hundreds and thousands of ceremonies, there would still be darkness without the guru." The guru not only points the right path but also purifies the seeker by infusing in him the noblest thought and kindling his vision. He is the real guide of a man. In Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak says, "Under the guru's instructions, God's word's is heard. Under the guru's instructions knowledge is acquired, under the guru's instruction man learns that God is every where contained." But a guru should be true and must have the Divine Grace. Guru Nanak tells the importance of Guru's mercy in the realization of God as :

When the True guru is merciful, faith is protected. When the True guru is merciful, man shall never grieve.

When the True guru is merciful, man shall know no sorrow.

When the True guru is merciful, man shall enjoy Divine pleasure.

In Sikhism, guru can be obtained through Divine Grace. He can only be found if a man is firm and pure in his intentions. Peace of mind can only be obtained if a person meets the true guru. In Sikh philosophy, a guru is a master who leads the human being towards their destination. He fills the hearts of the followers with spirit of confidence and inspire them to go ahead towards the way of salvation.

1.5.3.4. Satsang :

In Sikh religion, *Satsang* or the company of the holymen occupies a high place. By sitting, discussing the different points with the holymen, one can attain enlightenment. The doubts of mind can be substituted by purity of mind and action. The Satsang has manifold advantages. The spiritual thought can be ripened. The common discussions can lead to social, religious and organisational uplift. One can be purified and one's ultimate goal of life comes nearer. In Hinduism, individualism had been prevailing since ages. Guru Nanak attached utmost importance to the congregational worship. After Guru Nanak, the other Gurus also followed the system of Satsang.

1.5.3.5. Conception of Karma and Transmigration of Soul :

Guru Nanak also had belief in the Law of Karma and transmigration of soul. He stressed that the outcome of the good deeds is also good. This world is full of virtues and vices. A human being should fight against evils and follow the path of righteousness. Every thing is not pre-ordained. Lasting happiness can be obtained through virtues. In the world, vice is more attractive and charming. God wishes the human beings to follow the path of virtues. Guru Nanak

observed, "Whosoever is born hath comes naked from his mother's womb, and joy or misery is the result of actions in previous states of existence. God and true guru can modify the law of Karma." Payne says, "In the doctrines of Nanak morality hold a higher place than in those of many other Hindu reformers. Loyalty, chastity honesty, justice, mercy, charity temperance are among the virtues on which vital stress is laid, while evil speaking covetousness, anger, selfishness, extravagance, and cruelty are denounced with equal vigour. The daily practice of cleanliness, alms giving and of abstinence from animal food is strictly enjoined." The recitation of Name must follow the good actions. Good actions were nothing in themselves, but the knowledge of the True God was the only way to salvation.

According to Nanak, the immortal soul, emanated from the Absolute, the fountain of light, the pure source, there are supposed to be eighty four lakh types (Yonis) of creatures in this world. Out of them, a birth in human body is the best when a man can get salvation. Soul is part of God. It assumes various forms in different bodies according to one's deeds. It can also be reunited with the source from which it emanated. In this world, a body can be attracted towards evils and vices. Maya engulfs the man. The eternal goal of one's life in Nirvana or Sach Khand. It is the state of ever lasting bliss and happiness. Salvation can be obtained by constant meditation on God by upright character and service of all living beings. According to Guru Nanak, all living beings have two bodies, tangible and intangible, touchable and untouchable, visible and invisible. The former is body and the latter is soul. Soul after one's death travels to another body unless the salvation is attained. Guru Nanak in his Japji Sahib gives five stages for spiritual progress of man i.e. *Dhram Khand*, *Gian Khand*, *Sharam Khand*, *Karam Khand* and in the last *Sach Khand*.

1.5.3.6.. The Love of Humanity :

Guru Nanak loved all irrespective of the caste, colour, creed, religion and geographical limits or barriers. He had faith in the fatherhood of Guru and brotherhood of man. As Bhai Jodh Singh remarks, "Brotherhood of man is the necessary outcome of the unity of God-hood." The principal of universal brotherhood was taught by Guru Nanak. "There is one Father", said Nanak "and we are children of one." He attached utmost importance to the man. He held scarcity of human life in high esteem. Guru Nanak visited the holy places of Hindus and the Muslims and preached the message of God everywhere. He denounced the evil practices of all irrespective of the religion or creed. Guru Nanak taught that life-originated from pure source, the light of Lord, and therefore remained essentially pure.

1.5.3.7. Attitude towards Avtars and Divinities :

Guru Nanak had no faith in gods and goddesses. He denounced divinities and incarnations. He had faith in One God, who was the creator of everything. In the opinion of Trumpp, Guru Nanak did not forbid the worship of other gods on the ground of the unity of the Supreme. But it is not the correct view as Guru Nanak at many places had written that God is above these avtars and divinities.

Guru Nanak had no faith in idol worship. He believed in formless God. In the opinion of Ardastrani, Nanak praised the religion of the Musalmans, as well as the Avtars and the divinities of the Hindus, but he knew that these objects of veneration were created and not creators, and he denied their real descent from heaven. Though Nanak referred to Trinity of Hinduism as the creator, provider and the destroyer of the world yet he says that these are not independent beings because. As it pleaseth God, He directeth them by His order. He declared that God alone was to be worshipped and that He was not to be degraded by making any images of Him and worshipped those images. He believed that it is useless to worship divinities by ignoring the True Lord.

1.5.3.8. Opposition of Asceticism

Guru Nanak totally rejected asceticism. He was against renunciation and taught his followers to live in the world. He denounced all the external marks of holiness which a common man practised as essential part of religion. To stay long in the water, to fast, to do penance with the body upside-down, to wander in the world as a pilgrim, were not acts of virtue, but mere bodily acts and exercises. They had nothing to do with the soul. Guru Nanak's message was "Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world." Guru Nanak tells the definition of purity as, "They are not to be called pure who wash their bodies and sit at leisure rather the pure are they, O Nanak, who enshrine the Lord in their hearts." He attached great importance to the house holder's life. They should love all things in the world as gift of God. One should be honest, truthful and dutiful. He wanted his followers to remain holy amongst the unholy, pure amongst the impure, enjoy the pleasures of life but not to become their slave and live like a lotus in the water.

1.5.3.9. Pilgrimage and Fasts

Guru Nanak was of the opinion that one should have meetings with the holy and pious men. A visit to holy place enables the mind but does not wash away one's sins. He was against giving tortures to one's body. A human body is a sublime temple of God. He wanted people to realise God in one's heart. He stressed the pilgrimages and fasts were of no value. He rejected the holding of

Yajnas and other empty rituals. The thing that mattered was the good deeds.

1.5.3.10. The Vedas and the Quran

Guru Nanak was not against the religious scriptures of any religion. He never condemned the knowledge of these holy books. Kabir said, "The four books and the four Vedas which promulgated in the world, came down from high under the orders of God." He further said, "Do not call Vedas and Quran false. False is one who does not follow them." Guru Nanak condemned the mechanical recitation of these scriptures without understanding the "Immortal Lord". In the opinion of G. C. Narang, that feeding the Brahman, the giving of cows in charity, the reading of the Vedas or the Quran, the mere performance of *Sandhya* or *Nimaz* were not the means of Salvation.

1.5.3.11. Challenge to the Supremacy of Priestly Class

Guru Nanak denounced the Supremacy of the priests who indulged in all sorts of evils. They were misguiding the innocent people for their selfish motives. These Brahmans and Mullahs were greedy and selfish. They had left the path of truth "He emphatically asserted," says G.C. Narang, "that the Brahmans and the Mullahs were not true guides to truth, that they were like blind leading the blind, and that the way of salvation the way of devoting yourself entirely to God, could only be shown by a true Guru who had himself trodden that path.

1.5.3.12. Caste System

Caste system had been the back-bone of Hindu Society since ancient times. At the time of Guru Nanak the Indian Society was divided into countless castes and subcastes. The caste system was known by birth and not according to their deeds. The community feelings had dominated the national sentiments. The national unity was just a dream. Guru Nanak believed in casteless and classless society. He was an exponent of equality and stood against the exploitation of man by a man.

Guru Nanak not only condemned castes, he condemned even the spirit of sectarianism because it was against his basic teaching of 'love'. After his enlightenment he uttered there is 'no Hindu and no Musalaman.' He wanted to develop love between Hindus and Muslims leaving aside their quarrels and fights. The system of common kitchen known as *langer* was started at Kartarpur. The people belonging to different castes, creeds and religions were to sit together at one place and to eat together. He believed in the equality of mankind. Nanak insisted that every Sikh's house should serve as a place of love and devotion, a true guest house (*Sach dharamshalla*). Every Sikh was enjoined to welcome traveller or needy person and to share his meals and other

comforts with him. G. C. Narang writes, "He (Nanak) made powerful attack on the sacerdotal classes of both communities and declared that all people were equal in the eyes of God."

1.5.3. 13. Political Tyranny

The ruling class, at the time of Guru Nanak, had polluted the political and social environment. The Hindus were tortured and mercilessly butchered. The Hindu civilization and culture was suffering at the hands of foreign rulers. The innocent people were the victims of tyranny. The upper class people hated the lower classes. The Lodhis and Babur inflicted the cruelties upon the people. Guru Nanak fearlessly condemned the political tyranny in strong words. After centuries of subjection, Nanak was the first among the Hindus to raise his voice against tyranny and oppression.

1.5.3.14. Equal Status to Women

Women had been condemned in India since ages. Great reformers like Tulsī Das and Kabir did not give good picture of her. At the time of Guru Nanak, she occupied inferior position and was forced to live in the four walls of the house or in Purdah. Child marriage and Sati were common. She was not allowed to receive good education. Guru Nanak gave equal status to women. She was allowed to attend all sermons with a man. Purdah was discouraged. Women could join chorus singing. In the langar, they were to cook the food and serve it to the Pangat. Sikh discarded self immolation on the part of women. Nanak said, "How they be inferiors when they give birth to men? Women as well as men share in the grace of God are equally responsible for their actions to Him." Nanak raised the status of women by asserting that as a wife could win over her husband by her beauty, accomplishments, chastity, love, service and devotion, so could God be attained. Guru Nanak said, "In a woman we are conceived from a woman we are born. To a woman are betrothed and married. Through a woman new relationships are formed. The woman continues the race. When one woman dies, we look for another. The woman carries on the tradition. Why should we call her evil of whom are born, men great and powerful."

1.5.3.15. Charity and Simplicity

Guru Nanak believed in the service of others. A Sikh was expected to make offerings to the guru, community and to the needy. He wanted his followers to earn their livelihood by hard-work. He uttered, "Earn by toil, eat and something give away. O Nanak! such a person knows the real way."

Simplicity was another great aspect of Guru Nanak's life. He wanted simple living and high thinking. At many places he was offered high rank, money

and pleasures of life but he refused all. He strongly pleaded against the glamour and glitter of wealth, wine, women, and war, as these things keep ourselves away from God.

1.5.3.16. Education

Nanak gave great importance to spiritual education for the mankind. He was of the opinion that peace of mind was the foremost thing in life. He lays down the qualifications of a teacher. He opposed the teachers who accepted the offerings of the pupils. He wanted the teachers to be practical with the high standards of morality, spirituality and intellectual attainments. A learned man should do good to others. Ego must be killed and knowledge of truth imparted and accepted.

Religious Toleration

Guru Nanak wanted human beings to be above difference of caste, creed, religion and positions. He taught to respect all religions as only one light flows in them. That was why he was recognised as guru by the people of different religions. He was enemy of evils whether it was Islam or Hinduism. Nanak was guru of Hindus and Pir of Musalmans.

1.5.4. Sikhism and Bhakti Movement

Bhakti Movement, during medieval period, spread out in almost every part of the country. The main aim of all these Bhaktas, who were the members of this great family was to purge Hinduism of its ills. The religious condition of the society had become deplorable. The great reformers like Ramanuj, Ramanand, Kabir, Chaitanaya Mahaprabhu, Nam Dev, Ravi Das etc., tried their best to eradicate the abuses of the Hindu Society. About the religious condition prevailing at the time of Guru Nanak, G. C. Narang writes, "Form had supplanted the reality and the high spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under ostentatious paraphernalia of sects. But Guru Nanak seems to have thoroughly diagnosed the Hindus community of his time, and found out that a religious revival was the only remedy which could save it from impending destruction which Muslim bigots were determined to bring about under state patronage through conversion which was in full swing at the birth of Guru Nanak." Although in some respects Guru Nanak's teaching were on similar lines as had been indicated by the great exponents of the Bhakti Movement, yet in many ways Nanak's religion differed from them.

Guru Nanak's conception of God was quite different from that of other Bhakti leaders. He believed in Nirgun God viz. formless, limitless, and timeless. Nanak's God is free from birth and death. The reformers of Bhakti movements believed in the incarnation of God in the form of Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva

etc. These forms of God had complicated the religion. Nanak's conception was simple and clear. Guru Nanak never believed in Avatars. Though before Guru Nanak many of Bhaktas had also preached the unity of God yet they could not oppose the worship of Shiva or Vishnu often represented by some idol or picture. They had presented God in the concrete form. Guru Nanak rejected idol worship which was one of the fundamentals of the then Hinduism. Most of the reform movements that preceded Nanak were sectarian and in many cases only served to make confusion worse confounded. Ramanand e.g. whose movement gave a powerful stimulus to Hindu revival in Benaras, could not shake off the theory of incarnation instead of preaching like Nanak, the worship of one God, who is never born and never dies; he simply added to the number of existing sects by confining homage to Ram. Guru Nanak wanted to establish union of the individual with the universal. He considered man as wife and God as husband. It was the spiritual Union.

The Bhaktas laid stress on individual alone with Guru Nanak aimed at uplifting the individual as well as society. He laid the foundation of Sangat which was led by his successors. Sikhism survived even after Guru Nanak, while the other sects disappeared or merged in Hinduism either during the life time of their founders or after their death, Sikhism developed as a community. The institution of Guruship which was founded by Guru Nanak, further developed under his successors. At several places, Guru Nanak established Sangats to serve as an association of his disciples to meet regularly to sing the praises of God. None of the other reformers had ever done it. Sikhism is simple and plain. The simple tenets were faith in God, reverence to Guru and ideal of pure life.

The other reformers mainly concerned themselves with salvation of the soul. Nanak visited far and wide to the distant lands for the preaching of his principles while the other reformers kept themselves busy in preaching in the country only. Sikhism was against renunciation of the world and believed that the life of a householder can easily lead to one's salvation. He himself settled down at Kartarpur after his *Udasis* and led an householder's life. His personal example was followed by his successors and his followers. The founders of the other sects advocated renunciation. Guru Nanak rejected asceticism also. Guru Nanak gave much stress upon the high standard of morality by living in the world. He preached that one should abide pure amidst the impurities of world. Sanskrit was held as the sacred language of Hinduism as it was thought to be sent by God. None of Bhakti leaders had dislodged Sanskrit. On the other side, Guru Nanak cut himself off completely from Sanskrit. The teachings of Guru Nanak were couched in

the mother tongue i.e. Punjabi.

Guru Nanak denounced caste system in strong words in matters like birth, marriage and death etc. Nanak condemned the old priestly practices and rituals and insisted on simple and economical ceremonies. The masses who were sick of the priests and their vain rites got rid of them on the insistence of Guru Nanak. The various forms of recitation of the scripture were not approved by him. The teaching of the Bhaktas were influenced by Buddhism, Nath, Yogis, Hath Yoga and Sufism to some extent. The principles of Guru Nanak had a continuity and his words and expression could be understood more easily by illiterate peasantry and working class while those of the reformers lack these aspects. In the opinion of Cunningham, "They (other saints) aimed chiefly at the emancipation from priest craft or from the grossness of idolatory and polytheism. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the terms of nations and their sects remain to this day as they left them. Guru Nanak was more practical than any other reformer of Bhakti Movement. His teachings had direct appeal to the people and were easily understood.

1.5.5 Reformer on a Revolutionary

It is much disputed question whether Guru Nanak was a reformer or a revolutionary. The authors of the subject are divided into two main groups. I.B. Banerjee, G. C. Narang and C. H. Payne are of the opinion that he was a reformer like other members of Bhakti movement. On the other hand, the writers like Macauliffe, Kahan Singh, Teja Singh stress Guru Nanak was a revolutionary who lived to bring out a revolution in the existing order of the society. First of all, we examine how far Guru Nanak was a reformer ?

1.5.5.1. Reformer

A reformer always makes an attempt to remove the abuses and corrupt practices, and to change them accordingly to the need of time and environment. Guru Nanak tried to put a check upon the traditional belief and social and religious practices. He simplified the complicated ceremonies and consoled the hearts of the suffering humanity. He inculcated the fresh hopes of deliverances from sufferings and misfortunes. Guru Nanak never, injures the feelings of others. He infused the spirit of goodwill and co-operation between Hindus and Muslims. His methods were convincing and peaceful. He denounced caste system, which was considered as one of the main pillars of Hinduism. As Dr. Banerjee remarks, "There is no solid ground to contend that Guru Nanak had attempted the abolition of the Caste system." It was not revolutionary because before Guru Nanak, reformers of Bhakti movement like Kabir has also condemned caste system in strong words. He spoke against it in mild and convincing language. In the opinion of Dr. Banerjee, "Guru was never

tired exposing the futility of mere forms and names without the essential implied therein." The monopoly of reading the religious scriptures like Vedas was in the hands of three upper classes namely Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Guru Nanak believed in the equality of men. He attacked the forms of reading of the scriptures. He never rejected the knowledge contained in Vedas or Quran. Mere recitation did not lead to one's destination. Guru Nanak broke all these barriers of caste and preached the recitation of Nam. In the opinion of Dr. Banerjee, "Nanak attacked scripturalism and not scriptures. Guru Nanak himself had said, "What availeth to read the Vedas and Puranas ? It is like loading a donkey with sandal whose perfume he availeth not." At the time of Guru Nanak, the meaningless and empty rituals had engulfed the society. The priests were fleecing the ignorant, innocent, illiterate and simple minded people. Guru Nanak could not reconcile himself with evils and forcefully criticised them. Instead of observing different ceremonies like Yajnas, Guru Nanak told the importance of Nam Simran. Guru Nanak's God was the creator. He believed in formless and immanent God. According to Guru Nanak, these were the creations of God. He stressed that Ram and Rahim, Kartar and Karim were the different names of God. He gave due regards to them. He denounced these mere evil and expounded the name of God in their place which lead to salvation. According to Hindu and Buddhist Philosophy, law of Karma and transmigration of soul were the essential part of one's life. Guru followed the same path. He stressed upon the pure living and good actions in this world. Guru Nanak contended that the purity of religion and life the two essential aspects of one's life. The blind superstitions and improper practices were to be substituted by true observances and faith in God. Nanak's observance that there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman, 'he meant that both had forgotton the true spirit of their religions. He believed in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. His contention was convincing and something to the people of both the religions. The basic civil structure of the society was left untouched by Guru Nanak. He referred no change in the established criminal or civil law. Unlike other religions, Guru Nanak commanded respect from Hindus and Muslims. Hazrat Mohammad had to leave Mecca for Medina due to opposition and Christ had suffered with the life. But Guru Nanak's sweetness of expression and noble ideas won all to his side. His criticism of the officials was unoffensive. He was a friend of all who supported good of all. He never wanted to destroy Hinduism or Islam, but wanted to restore them to their ancient sancity. He condemned forms and not conceptions. His was the slow, steady, mild, moderate, noble, pacifying and peaceful method. As Griffin remarks, "He was reformer in best and truest sense of the word."

1.5.5. 2. Revolutionary

Regarding the other point of view, this school of thought is of the view that Guru Nanak was a revolutionary who attempted to destroy the existing social and religious order of the society. He strived to construct new order of the society at the root of the old. He condemned almost all the basic elements of Hinduism. He was not mild as other reformers were. He was fearless and bold in his preachings. The established institutions were given a heavy blow which shattered here and there. The new system was better and pure. Though before Guru Nanak, many of the Bhakti reformers had expressed the non-sectarian views, but none had ever done greater than Nanak. He emphatically denounced it. The caste system, an essential feature of Hindu philosophy did not escape condemnation from Guru Nanak. Though some reformers had also preached against it before Guru Nanak, but the attack of Guru Nanak was violent and vigorous. The tone was strong. The establishment of the institution of the langar was a severe blow to the caste system. The equality of man by founding the Sangat, Guru Nanak rejected the idea of individual worship which was an inseparable part of Hindu religion. As Dr. Ganda Singh remarks, "Guru Nanak felt the real cause of the misery of the people was their disunity born of diversity of belief. He instructed his followers to build up Gurdwaras of their own. Consequently, Sikh Sangats were formed at different places in the different parts of the country and outside the country. Later on these Sangats developed into big centres of Sikhism. The congregational system became an integral part of the Sikh religion later on. Guru Nanak led the violent attack on the fasts penances and pilgrimage. The famous utterance of the Guru that there is no Hindu, and there is no Musalman was a direct challenge to the very existence of Hinduism and Islam. Guru Nanak left his teachings in the form of verses and it became difficult, for anyone to adulterate them with superior injections. Perhaps, Guru Nanak was the first great religious leader who fearlessly condemned tyranny of whatever type it might be. The political tyranny had touched its climax and this great saint could not ignore it. None of the other Bhakti reformers had ever spoken against it. He openly condemned the prevailing political abuses. As Khushwant Singh writes, "As important as the religious and communal aspects of Nanak's preaching were the political. He violently criticized Lodhi rulers and the great invader Babur, it was due to his boldness and fearlessness that later on a clash between the Mughals and the Sikhs became inevitable." In the opinion of G.C. Narang, "In fact, after centuries of subjection, Nanak was the first among the Hindus to raise the voice against tyranny and oppression." The work of conversion of the jats of Punjab to Sikhism, ultimately, led to the creation of warrior nation. Unlike

Hinduism, Sikhism was a religion of the house-holders. The renunciation was totally rejected, "By adopting Vernacular," say Teja Singh and Ganda Singh "of the country for religious purpose, he in a way, roused the national sentiments of the people. It was strengthened by the community of thought and ideal, daily realised in congregational singing of the same religious hymns. It also improved the understanding of the people. The high truths conveyed to them in their own language made them conscious of new powers of thought in themselves. So this was added the illumination of intellect which comes with the sincerity and enthusiasm of a newly found faith." Guru Nanak's principles did not remain confine to some individual's only as it was the case with other reformers. His teachings were a world force which led to the formation of energetic society for the uplift to mankind.

After examining both the sides, one can conclude that Guru Nanak was bold enough to attack the evils and oppressions violently. He was decidedly a radical reformer, who even did not spare the political tyrants. The appointment of successor during his life was definitely a step towards the continuation of the movement which was founded by him like other reformers. Sikhism went straight towards its ultimate destination which was accomplished during the life of successors. The movements found by the other exponents of Bhakti movement disappearing during the life time of their founders or after a few years of their death. If at all some one survived it. It remained confined only to small number of people.

Guru Nanak, if was not a revolutionary, was certainly not an ordinary reformer. If he did not bring out a revolution, at his times, he sowed the seeds of revolution which ultimately appeared under nine successors. As Teja Singh says, "The guru was not a mere reformer but the founder of a new religion as is clear from the fact that he travelled abroad to non-Hindu countries, established sangats or Sikhs organisations in different countries under charge of Manji holders, and took special care to test and appoint a successor who should continue his work after him."

1.5.6. Impact of the Teachings of Guru Nanak

1.5.6.1. Religious

Guru Nanak was essentially a religious man. His heart pained at the sight of empty rituals, bad customs and shallow traditions prevalent at his time. He condemned them in a strong language. Idolatory and the presence of many gods and goddesses in Hinduism could not be tolerated by a simple and clear hearted religious leader. The dominance of Brahmans who were selfish and corrupt was seriously attacked by the great Guru. He led the people to the worship of one supreme God. Instead of going to the pilgrimage, he stressed

upon the recitation of the Nam of God. The blind faith in ancient tradition was changed. Guru Nanak expounded the simple and economical ceremonies substituting the expensive and complicated rites. He made the people rational in thinking. Self confidence became a part of the life of the people. They became self conscious. Guru Nanak's opposition of idol worship made Muslims friends of the Sikhs. Muslims and Hindu's also came nearer to each other. They developed love and faith. The religious toleration became prevalent. In the opinion of Gordon, "Nanak was the only Hindu reformer who established a national faith. He rose out of the dust as a great preacher, with a great theme which he boldly proclaimed, waking up the people to a higher nation of religion." The principle of religions were purified. Truth became the central aspect of Society.

1.5.6.2. Social

Contemporary society underwent great changes with the social reforms of Guru Nanak. He brought about revolutionary changes in the basic set of the Indian society. The caste system was the biggest target of Guru Nanak. By introducing the institution of langer, Guru Nanak brought the people of different religions, castes, creeds and communities on one place. The people threw away the communal feelings. The differences of rich and poor, high and low touchable and untouchable were done away with. The lesson of love of humanity was learnt. The people welcomed the new and better change in the society. Sati system and female infanticide were condemned. The social regeneration and national feeling became strong under the influence of Guru Nanak. In the religious congregation, people belonging to Hinduism and Islam used to come. The mutual jealousy was replaced by mutual friendship and understanding. The oppressed low caste began to claim equality. Their status was raised up. They were given the place of respect and reputation. Under the influence of Guru Nanak, they became Sikhs and began to preach Sikhism.

1.5.6.3. Political

The Muslim rulers of that time were tyrants. They were fleecing the people. The officers of the state were corrupt. The machinery of administration was out of gear. The Hindus were the victims of the bigotry of Muslim officers. Babur, the Mughal invader was slaughtering the innocent people. Guru Nanak raised his voice against the tyrants fearlessly. Thus guru did think of the political disabilities of the people of his time and remarked, "Sin is the king. Greed, the minister, Falsehood and Lust the deputy to take counsel with. They sit and confer together. The blind subjects, out of ignorance pay homage like dead man." He rebuked the master of the herd, the Lodhi Pathans, for not putting up stiff fight for India, allowing such a precious gem to be snatched

away easily by the foreigner. In this writings, Guru Nanak said, "The dogs of Lodhi have thrown away the priceless inheritance, when they are dead, no one will remember them with regard." "As important as the religious and communal aspects of Nanak's preachings", says Khushwant Singh, "were the political. He was the first popular leader of the Punjab in recorded history and even though the number of his actual disciple was not perhaps very great, the number of those belonging to other communities who paid homage to the ideal of 'there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman', was considerable. It was this idea which gave birth to Punjabi consciousness and the Punjab nationalism." He publically advocated that the tyrants would go unknown and unremembered. His teachings had great effect and ultimately Khalsa was created by the last guru, fought on the principles shown by the founder of Sikhism.

1.5.6.4. Moral :

Guru Nanak gave greater stress upon the high standard of morality. He condemned falsehood, deceit, theft, intoxication and debauchery. He brought these evils to light and told the remedy from these evils. He awakened the soul of community. As Ganda Singh says, "Looking at the helplessness of his countrymen, he discovered them to follow truth. He supported that men should not indulge in bad habits. According to G. C. Narang, "Nanak left the Hindus of the Punjab immensely better than he had found them. Their belief had been ennobled, their worship purified, the rigidity of caste considerably relaxed, their mind greatly emancipated, and they had now become more fit to enter on the career of natural progress to which Nanak's successors were destined to lead." He led the humanity towards ethical progress. The minds of the masses were purified and better equipped. It leavened the whole Hindu thought in the Punjab and improved moral and spiritual tone of the whole people. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh sum up the work of Guru Nanak in these words, "He (Guru Nanak) felt sure that as long as men were steeped in ignorance and corruption nothing could be done for them. He freed them from bondage of so many gods and goddesses, and left them to accept. One Supreme Being as the Creator and Sustainer of all, no matter by what name they called him. He could not be worshipped in the form of an image, the devotee was to practice His presence by dwelling on his Nam. There were no incarnations, no special revelations. Man was the highest manifestation of God, who spoke more frequently through the heart of man through scriptures. With the uplift of man, woman also received her due.

1.5.7. Character and Estimate of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak was a unique personality. He was born great. We do not find any definite evidence about his schooling in his childhood though it is

mentioned in the Janamsakhi that he was sent to a Persian and a Hindi teacher in his childhood. He was a scholar who had thorough knowledge of Hindu mythology, philosophy, arts, religion, science and culture. In the opinion of G. C. Narang, "He did not teach anything new, but whatever he said bore the impress of originality, and displayed the genius of a master mind, he did not quote Manu and Vyasa or Koran and Hadis, but whenever he argued a point his practical wisdom and strong common sense always prevailed over the logic and theology of his opponents." Guru Nanak was a great humanist and a great prophet of peace. He had complete control over himself. After the attainment of supreme knowledge, he imparted the same to the suffering humanity. Sweetness and humanity were the other traits of his character. He was a practical man. His philosophical ideas were welcomed by all. His writings are the expression of his depth of knowledge.

Guru Nanak was a farsighted statesman. At the sight of the suffering of humanity he raised his voice against tyranny and imperialism. He threw a challenge to the powerful man of the time. He prepared the people for the fight for the cause of righteousness and truth. Almost none of the aspects of society remained untouched by Guru Nanak. Fearlessly and boldly he condemned all the evils.

Guru Nanak was a perfect man. He denounced the renunciation and preached the worldly life as the path to one's Nirvana. He surrendered himself completely to the will of God. By living in the world he kept himself aloof from the world. Though he had to undergo great difficulties yet he continued to fulfil the idea of his life. Throughout his life, he followed the path of truth. He loved his family but never indulged too much in worldly affairs.

As social reformer, Guru Nanak's heart was pained to see the evils prevalent in the society. He attacked both Muslims and Hindus for the evil, they were following. He violently attacked the ills of the society. He gave death blow to the old thinking and blind faith. He rationalised the thinking of the people and imparted true knowledge.

Guru Nanak was an unparalleled poet. His writings were supreme and effective. As Khushwant Singh writes, "He was the first to give the rustic language of the Punjab a literary form and finish." He expressed high ideas in his poetry but were practicable in life. He expounded ethics and morality. Truth and worship of Supreme Being were the central themes of his writings. The expression of nature and natural elements have been depicted in the effective form. He converted the dialogues into poetry. The questions and answers are in easy and acceptable form. The symbols, similes and metaphors have been used properly and in perfect form in his poetry. His poetry had direct appeal to

the hearts of the people.

The Imperialistic tendencies were other targets of Guru Nanak's work. He had direct attack upon imperialism. He raised his voice against the exploitation of the poor and innocent people by the priestly class. The rich capitalists and the moneyed classes were also the target of Guru's criticism.

The sense of humour in great Guru was great. At Haridwar he convinced the people by giving the example of watering the field of his native village. At Meccatoo he won the hearts of the people.

Guru Nanak was a great traveller. During the time, when the means of transport and communication were difficult, Guru Nanak travelled to the distant and foreign lands. With a view to set the people of every part of the world right he did not hesitate of going to the Muslim lands even. He visited Ceylon, Burma, Arabia etc., and turned people towards righteousness. He discussed many problems with *Sadhus, Maulvis, Yogis, Naths, Kings, Priests* and ordinary men. He asked them to worship One Supreme God. He was a world teacher who had come to remove the ills and evils of humanity.

To see the deplorable condition of Indians, Guru's heart pained. The helplessness of the masses touched Guru's feelings. The invasion of Babur was condemned, unlike other saints, he was not confined to please the rulers of the time. He advocated religious liberty for all. His teaching were in musical ragas which had direct appeal to the hearts of the people. He was a great patriot whose aim was freedom of all. According to Gordon, "Nanak was the only Hindu reformer who established a national faith. He rose out of the dust as a great preacher with a great theme which he boldly proclaimed, waking up the people to a higher nation of religion."

1.5.8. Summary

Guru Nanak, as a teacher occupies a high position in the history of the world and the highest in the history of the Punjab. He made the people bold and taught how to fight tyranny and oppression. The suffering humanity finds in him a great saint. Guru Nanak ranks with the great prophets of the world like Christ, Krishna, Buddha, Confucious, Rama etc. He taught the message of True Nam as the cure of all ills. His spirituality was unparalleled. His teaching are of the permanent nature. Thousands of Muslims and Hindus flocked round his magnetic personality. In his Bani 'Asa Di Var', 'Japji Sahib' etc. he had expressed his religious views. He is a divine figure, an object of worship and adoration. Sometimes he is compared with Great reformer Martin Luther. It is asserted that both fought against conventionalism, superstitions and old traditions of the respective societies. Both were radical reformers as Gordon

says, "He was a contemporary of Luther, and like the German reformer, he preached no new faith but contended that religion had become obscure and transformed during the course of centuries." They were outspoken and fearless in their approach. The empty rituals were also attacked. Luther spoke against empty rituals of Roman Catholicism while Guru Nanak waged a war against oppression and tyranny. Ultimately Martin Luther's teachings led to the function of Protestantism in Europe while that Guru Nanak's the foundation of Sikhism. Both were men of great learning and experienced. But it is not correct to say that Martin Luther was on equal level with Guru Nanak. The Guru was spiritually much higher than Martin Luther. Luther was haughty and his letters are the indication of that. Guru Nanak is held in high esteem by his followers while Luther does not occupy the same place. Sikhs regard Guru Nanak as the incarnation of God while Luther does not have that place. Martin Luther spoke for the rich men while Nanak's approach was the people and the common man. Even among the Protestants, Luther, is not regarded as spiritually great while Guru Nanak attained the height of spirituality, Payne writes, His (Guru Nanak's) purpose was ethical not political and though we shall see later, the Sikhs developed political organisation and grew into a powerful kingdom, they were, and are, before all else, a religious sect" Guru Nanak was a true teacher, a prophet of peace and humanity, a practical philosopher, a yogi, a householder, a patriot, a reformer combined into one, while Luther was only a religious reformer.

Self Check exercise:

- Guru Nanak' opposed the... .. System in Indian Society.

Important Questions:

1. Make critical study of the main teachings of Guru Nanak.
2. Study the teachings of Guru Nanak in detail and their impact on Society.
3. How far do you agree with the view that Sikhism had its start in a protest, but it was a protest against conventionalism and not against Hinduism?
4. Was Guru Nanak a revolutionary or a reformer ? Discuss.
5. "Nanak left the Hindus immensely better than he had found them." (G.C. Narang) Elucidate the above statement.
6. Give a critical account of the personality and estimate of Guru Nanak.
7. Examine the points of difference between Bhakti Cult and Sikhism.

Keywords: Incarnation, Devotion, Truth, God, Movement, Reformer, Social

Suggested Readings

1. Narang, G.C. : Transformation of Sikhism, pp. 17-26.
2. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh: A Short History of the Sikhs, pp. 2-17.
3. McLeod, W.H. : Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion, Part II.
4. Gupta, H.R. : History of the Sikh Gurus, pp. 55-80.
5. Khushwant Singh : History of the Sikhs, PP. 29-48.
6. Payne, C.H. : A Short History of the Sikhs, PP. 11-29.
7. Cunningham : History of Sikhs.
8. Latif, S.M. : History of the Sikhs, PP. 240-250.
9. Mc. Gregor : History of the Sikhs, PP. 31-47.
10. Indubhushan Banerjee : Evolution of Khalsa, Vol. 1.
11. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion.

M.A. (History) PART-I**Paper - I
HISTORY OF PUNJAB(1469-1675 A.D.)****Lesson No. 1.6****AUTHOR : Dr. BHAGAT SINGH****Development of Sikhism Under Guru Angad,
Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das****Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.6.1. Objectives
- 1.6.2. Introduction
- 1.6.3. Development under Guru Angad
 - 1.6.3.1. The Gurmukhi Alphabet
 - 1.6.3.2. Collection and compilation of Guru Nanak's hymns
 - 1.6.3.3. Institution of Langar
 - 1.6.3.4. His Opposition to Udasis
 - 1.6.3.5. Discipline among the Sikhs
 - 1.6.3.6. Appointment of a successor
- 1.6.4. Development under Guru Amar das
 - 1.6.4.1. Langar elaborated
 - 1.6.4.2. Collection of hymns
 - 1.6.4.3. Manji system
 - 1.6.4.4. Separating of Sikhs from Udasis
 - 1.6.4.5. Baoli at Goindwal
 - 1.6.4.6. Visit of Emperor Akbar
 - 1.6.4.7. Guru's propaganda tour
 - 1.6.4.8. Discarded the old social practices
 - 1.6.4.9. Repudiation of Untouchability and caste distinction
 - 1.6.4.10. New way of celebrating the festivals
 - 1.6.4.11. New death and marriage ceremonies
 - 1.6.4.12. Prohibition of Sati and Purdah
- 1.6.5. Development of Sikhism under Guru Ram Dad
 - 1.6.5.1. Foundation of Amritsar
 - 1.6.5.2. Town of Amritsar
 - 1.6.5.3. Massands of Guru Ram Dad
 - 1.6.5.4. Rapprochement between Guru Ram Das and Udasis
 - 1.6.5.5. Succession became hereditary
 - 1.6.5.6. Steps taken to spread Sikhism
- 1.6.6. Summary

1.6.1. Objectives

- To examine the development of Sikhism under Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das.
- To discuss the various steps taken by three Guru's to spread Sikhism

1.6.2. Introduction

Many developments took place in Sikhism under Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das. Bhai Lehna was a very faithful and devoted follower of Guru Nanak who nominated him to succeed him to Guruship in preference to his sons. Guru Nanak called him Angad, the flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and saluted him as his successor. This nomination was a great significance in the Sikh history. Guru Nanak laid stress on the need of a Guru and so he appointed one to carry forward his mission. As Trumpp says, "the disciples of Nanak would no doubt have soon dispersed and gradually disappeared as well as the disciples of many other Gurus before Nanak, if he had not taken care to appoint a successor before his death." Discussing the significance of the successor, G.C. Narang writes, "Had Nanak died without a successor there would have been no Sikhism today or at best simply another *Kabirism*." In the absence of a successor, there was likelihood of Guru Nanak's followers being absorbed in Hinduism.

1.6.3. Development under Guru Angad :

Guru Angad took many steps which went a long way in the development of Sikhism and which gave a distinctive character to the Sikh community. The development of Sikhism under Guru Angad Dev is as follows:

1.6.3.1. The Gurumukhi Alphabet: Macauliffe says that Guru Angad deeming that the compositions of Guru Nanak were worthy of a special written character of their own, adopted and modified Punjabi alphabet, called Gurumukhi, to give expression to what fell from the Guru's lips. Some people believe that the Gurmukhi alphabet was invented by Guru Angad but it has been established now that this alphabet or the present thirty five Gurumukhi letters were in existence before Guru Angad. In the *Rag Asa*, a composition of Guru Nanak, in the Guru Granth Sahib, it has a 'Patti' of thirty five verses, each of which begins, with a letter of this alphabet. Grierson writes that 'Landa' or 'clipped' was the alphabet of the Punjab during Guru Nanak's time. It had a very imperfect system of vowel sounds, as generally vowel sounds were omitted. Guru Angad felt that the 'Landa' script was liable to be misread. He polished up the form of letters and made use of the vowel signs which he borrowed from the Devnagri alphabet and made it fit for recording the scriptures of the Sikh religion. This alphabet became known as Gurumukhi or the alphabet proceeding from the mouth of the Guru. According to Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, there were three kinds of alphabets current in the Punjab during Guru Nanak's time : *Sharda* (in Kashmir), *Thakri* (in the eastern hills) and *Bhatakshri* (in the plains). A modified form of Bhatakshri was adopted by Guru Nanak and it was popularised among Sikhs by Guru Angad as *Gurumukhi* because it was used in recording the words fallen from the mouth of his Guru. Thus we see that Angad did not invent a new script but merely adopted and modified it and gave it religious sanctity.

The Guru is said to have written a Primer in Gurumukhi script. It had the double benefit of educating the Sikhs and popularising Punjabi, the language of

the people of the Punjab. It also dealt a powerful blow to the domination of the priestly class whose importance mainly rested on their knowledge of Sanskrit which had so far been the language of religion of the Hindus. With the popularisation of Gurumukhi script and Punjabi language, the Sikhs, as Ardistani writes, lost all regard for the Sanskrit language.

1.6.3.2. Collection and Compilation of Guru Nanak's Hymns: Guru Nanak had composed a large number of hymns which represented his faith. Most of them were handed over by Guru Nanak to his successor, Guru Angad. Many of these were still in the possession of some of his followers whom he met at different places during his tours. Guru Angad took pains to collect as many of them as it could be possible. This work was also continued during the period of Guru Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru. When Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru planned the compilation of his predecessors and of himself in one grand volume, he was able to procure the hymns of the first three Gurus from the possession of Guru Amar Das's son, Mohan and this made his task easier. Thus, according to Indubhushan Banerjee, the credit of initiating the work that finally led to the production of Guru Granth Sahib is also due to Guru Angad. This step of Guru Angad saved the compositions of Guru Nanak from interpolation and corruption at the hands of Guru's followers and others.

Some people believe that Bhai Bala Wali Janamsakhi was prepared under the supervision of Guru Angad but it has now been conclusively established that it is a work of much later period.

1.6.3.3. Institution of Langar: The need of Langar or a common mess was felt for the reason that as an institution it possessed the potentiality of a valuable instrument of social reform in a setting where social and caste taboos prevented people from sitting and eating together as it was believed that with the touch of a low caste person, the food of the high caste got profaned and a man during sitting by the side of a poor man, was taken as a setback to the social position of the rich man. Such evils eating into the vital of the Indian society in those days. Guru Nanak introducing inter dining among his followers with a view to do away these evils.

All people were considered by the Sikh Gurus as members of the same human family. All members of the same family eat from the same kitchen and the same things were served equally to all of them. The equality of mankind was not a mere theoretical belief with the Guru but it was a practical realism with them and they took concrete steps to actualize it among their followers. Guru Angad followed the practice of *Pangat* (Eating and dining together by sitting in the same row) more strictly and made it an important institution and an effective machinery to level up the society. He repudiated the prevalent social distinctions and tried to bring them on the same plane by making them sit in the same row and dine their shoulders rubbing with one another. He declared that the existing institution of class gradation and untouchability were indefensible and against the will of God.

The langar was run with the help of contributions made by the followers of

the Guru. According to Gokal Chand Narang, "It taught the Sikhs the first lesson of contributing money towards a common fund." This institution proved a powerful aid in the propaganda work. It served the poor and the helpless. It provided a great bond of union among the Sikhs by mitigating caste prejudices to a great extent. During Guru Angad's days, the arrangement of the langar was particularly looked after by the Guru's wife, Khivi.

1.6.3.4. His opposition to Udasis: As Indubhushan Banerjee writes, besides the danger of absorption, there was the further possibility that the followers of Guru Nanak might gradually narrow down into a sect of quietists. Guru Nanak had declared that the salvation was as much within the reach of a householder as in the case of any other person. He laid emphasis of the necessity of labour for maintenance of one's own livelihood and for the help of others. But under the leadership of Guru Nanak's eldest son, Sri Chand, who discarded the world and sought consolation in undisturbed meditation in the silence of the forests or hills, his followers claimed the same amount of sanctity as Sikhism proper. The Udasis were supposed to practise celibacy and asceticism. They professed to belong to Sikhism and thus Guru Angad was faced with a parallel movement under the guidance of Sri Chand whom people held in great veneration, being the son of the first Master. Now was the time when the fundamental character of Sikhism was to be determined once for all as the whole future of the movement depended upon it. A prompt and a strong decision was called for as a recluse had been held in great esteem over the centuries and there could be a fear of the Sikhs relapsing into Udasism against which Guru Nanak had cautioned them. So under the circumstances, Guru Angad had to actively assert and declare that there was no place for the passive recluse in Guru Nanak's religion which mainly concerned with the active house holders. Guru Angad plainly told the Sikhs that the Udasism and Guru Nanak's religion were two different ways and they could not follow both at the same time. So with this strong stand against Guru Nanak's son, Guru Angad was able to preserve the originality and purity of Sikhism.

1.6.3.5. Discipline among the Sikhs: Guru Angad formulated a code of conduct to be followed by the Sikhs. He told them to regularly meditate on the name of God both in the morning and the evening. He impressed upon his followers the desirability of living a neat and clean life, always keeping in view that all human beings belonged to the same fraternity and they must discharge their social responsibilities towards their brother. Beside looking to their spiritual needs, the Guru emphasised the need of physical fitness also. He is said to have prepared a wrestling ground at Khadur and took keen interest in developing sports among the Sikhs. Probably, the Guru felt that it was a strong body that a strong spirit could live. In order to enforce strict discipline among his followers, the Guru did not spare the lapses of the Sikhs. This discipline went a long way in harnessing the community for the ordeals ahead.

1.6.3.6. Appointment of a Successor: Before his death, Guru Angad appointed one of his disciples to succeed him on the *Guru-gaddi*. This was very

important step taken by the second Guru as Sikhism needed the guidance of an able and a mature person. This was the stage in the history of Sikhism when discontinuance of Guruship could result in the Sikhs relapsing into Hinduism from which they were gradually being separated and organised into a separate community with a distinct code of conduct and religious practices.

1.6.4. Development under Guru Amar Das

Under Guru Amar Das, Sikhism passed through a remarkable transformation and there was a many-sided development of the community under his guidance. Besides the spiritual progress of the Sikhs, he did a lot to bring about changes in the social practices followed by the Sikhs.

1.6.4.1. Langar Elaborated: The Guru's Langar was becoming a great institution. Though the Guru used very simple food purchased with his own earnings but his common mess 'was daily supplied with butter, refined flour and sugar'. The offerings from his followers which had largely increased in quantity were mostly spent in the maintenance of the langar. What the Guru daily received for the langar was daily spent and nothing was saved for the tomorrow in the hope that more would be coming next day. It has already been discussed that no caste distinctions were observed in the langar. And according to Macauliffe, a further blow was now given to caste prejudices in as much as all his visitors were required to eat from his kitchen before they were allowed to see him. Even Akbar and the Raja of Haripur had to do the same. In this way, through *Pangat*, the people were made to give up their social prejudices and look upon one another as brothers.

1.6.4.2. Collection of Hymns: Guru Angad had already collected the hymns of Guru Nanak and the same were handed over to Guru Amar Das with his own. The hymns of Guru Amar Das were compiled by his grandson. According to Dr. Ganda Singh, Amar Das also made a selection on his own account of lyrics from Bhagats whom he used to admire in *Vaishnav* days and adding his comments here and there, left them for posterity. These volumes were later used by Guru Arjan for the compilation of his Holy Granth.

Guru Amar Das declared the Guru's word to be superior to all the scriptures of the world and the Sikhs were enjoined to use only the Guru's word in worship.

1.6.4.3. Manji System: The spread of Sikhism was provided by Guru Amar Das with the introduction of what has been known as Manji system. Because the number of the Sikhs had grown considerably large and they had scattered throughout the province and also in different parts of the country, the Guru could not personally visit all of them to give instructions. Therefore, he organised the scattered *Sangats* or congregations into a system. The Guru partitioned his whole spiritual domain into 22 provinces of bishopries or dioceses called *Manjis*. Each Manji being under the charge of a devoted Sikh whose duty was to preach the message of the Guru and to keep the local body in touch with the centre. These Manjis were further divided into smaller sections called *Pirhis*.

According to G.C. Narang, this measure “must have gone a long way in strengthening the foundations of the Sikh church and in carrying on the propaganda in other parts of the country.” The word "Manji" means a charpoy or cot. The Guru's representative used to sit on manja or manji at the time of offering instructions to the Sikhs who sat on the carpet or on the bare floor. These were in a way branch-*Gaddis* established in different localities and this system came to be known as manji system. Some people wrongly believe that such organisation measures of the Guru were undertaken with political motives. This system was only an arrangement to provide the instruction of the Guru to his followers at their respective places. It is believed that even Muslims were placed in charge of some of the manji.

1.6.4.4. Separating the Sikhs From the Udasis: According to Cunningham, Guru Amar Das authoritatively declared that “the active and domestic Sikhs were wholly separate from the passive and recluse Udasis” and thus, preserved the infant faith from disappearing as one of the many sects that have arisen and vanished within the fold of Hinduism. The separation from the Udasis gave the Sikhs something of a social character in addition to the religious ties that held them together.

Sikhism had become essentially a religion of householders. Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak with a sizeable following of Udasis was still alive. Though he was not offering any opposition to the successor of his father but his great personality and the general tendency among people to put premium on celibacy and asceticism was attracting people to him. Therefore, it was necessary for Guru Amar Das to give a definite lead to his Sikhs in the matter. The Guru told his followers to reject the path of renunciation and to consider the life of a householder as the only way approved for practising religion. This opportune step saved the Sikh church from disintegration and prevented the Sikh from going the way of the followers of Kabir and other medieval saints.

1.6.4.5. Baoli at Goindwal : The foundation of *Baoli* (well) with steps going down to water marked a very important step in the history of Sikhism. It was dug in 1559. It was provided with eighty four steps and Guru Amar Das is said to have declared that whosoever should attentively and reverently repeat the *Japji* (of Guru Nanak) at every step would be saved from wandering in the womb of eighty four living creatures. It soon developed into a very important place of Sikh pilgrimage and the Sikhs in large numbers began to visit Goindwal in order to get salvation. With this place of pilgrimage, the followers of the Sikh faith had no further need to go to the Ganges or any other Hindu place of pilgrimage.

1.6.4.6. Visit of Emperor Akbar : On his way to Lahore, Akbar visited the Guru. The Emperor observed the Guru's rule of partaking food from the Langar before being able to see the Guru. The Emperor was pleased to find that dainty dishes were served in the Guru's langar to a large number of people everyday. Rather whosoever came to the Guru's langar could take meals to his fill. Akbar felt that the langar was a great drain on the Guru's resources. He made an offer of a grant of land to the Guru for the langar, and the offer was politely but

firmly refused saying that it was people's langar run by the people themselves and it could not be made a royal institution or the emperor's langar. At last, Akbar is said to have made a grant, in the name of Guru's daughter, Bibi Bhani. It consisted of several villages in and around which the city of Amritsar is said to have subsequently grown up.

The visit of Emperor enormously increased the fame and prestige of the guru. According to G.C. Narang, the visit of the Emperor made such a profound impression that 'crowds of converts' were brought to the fold of Sikhism. The new religion was further raised in the general estimation of the people when the guru utilised his friendship with the Emperor for the relief of distress of the people.

During the visit to Lahore, Akbar along with his large escort stayed there for a longer period. Consequently, the price at Lahore and in the adjoining areas rose subjecting the peasants to hardship. On the Guru's request, Akbar remitted a portion of the land revenue for one year.

1.6.4.7. Guru's Propaganda Tour : During the Akbar's stay at Lahore some Brahmans and Khatri were said to have made a common cause against the guru. They got a petition presented to Akbar by Gonda's son for alleged illegal occupation of some land by the guru. The Emperor invited the guru to explain his position personally but guru Amar Das got himself excused on ground of old age. He sent Bhai Jetha (later Guru Ram Das) to present the case effectively before the emperor. Being satisfied Akbar rejected the petition of the opponents of the guru.

After sometime Guru Amar Das visited Kurukshetra, Jamuna and Ganges. It is wrong to say, as Macauliffe and others believe that the guru, to please his Hindu detractors, was prevailed upon by Akbar to go on a pilgrimage to the Jamuna and Ganges. The real fact, recorded by his successor in the Guru Granth Sahib, is that guru Amar Das undertook the journey to the sacred places for the sake of saving all people. He did not perform any customary rites there. The guru had gone there purely on a propaganda tour. Wherever he went, he preached Guru Nanak's message. The exemption of the guru and his followers from the payment of the pilgrim's tax shows that the Sikhs were treated as distinct from the mass of Hindu pilgrims.

1.6.4.8. Discarded the old Social Practices : Guru Amar Das was a great social reformer and he felt the Sikh were to be separate sect with healthy attitude towards life they must have a healthy social structure. The prevalent social beliefs and usages had not their original values or had outlived their utility. As a result there was need of introducing new social practices.

1.6.4.9. Repudiation of Untouchability and Caste Distinction : Untouchability was a great evil in which the society was so badly involved. The people belonging to higher castes considered it sinful even to touch a person of a lower caste. This had divided the society into privileged and unprivileged classes. The Guru proposed a very effective cure from this malady. He told his followers and others that whosoever wanted to see him must partake food from the *Langar* by sitting into *Pangat* (row) along with others who comprised people

from all castes. In his hymns, the Guru time and again discarded untouchability and preached the equality of mankind. He told his followers that the castes were man-made and as such could be completely done away with.

1.6.4.10. New way of celebrating the Festivals : The Guru asked his followers that big gatherings of the Sikhs would be held on the first day of both the months of Baisakh and Magh and on the occasion of Diwali. The Sikhs were not to celebrate the old Hindu festivals in the old fashion but they were to go to the guru and celebrate them according to the instructions of the guru.

1.6.4.11. New Death and Marriage Ceremonies : Guru Amar Das told his followers to observe the death and marriage ceremonies in a manner different from those of the Hindus. On all social occasions, they should sing the verses of the Gurus. Regarding death ceremonies, he told the Sikhs that after his death sing God's praises. They should neither call the *Pandit* nor read *Garur Puran*. Similarly, when the Guru's grandson was born he composed the '*Anand*' or 'Song of joy' which the Sikhs were to sing on all occasions of rejoicings.

1.6.4.12. Prohibition of Sati and Purdah : Guru Amar Das prohibited the old Hindu practice of Sati or self immolation of the widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Though this accursed practice of Sati could not be completely abolished but through persuasion the guru was able to achieve a considerable success among his followers. According to C.H. Payne, the guru "is chiefly remembered for his vigorous crusade against the practice of Sati."

The Guru strongly discarded *Purdah* or covering of the face by women. According to Macauliffe, the guru was strongly in favour of widow re-marriage.

Drinking Prohibited : The following hymn of Guru Amar Das sounds like an order to abstain from wine :

"One man bringeth the full goblet, another cometh and filleth the cup,
The intellect of him who drinketh departeth and intoxication entereth his brain. He distinguishes not between mine and thine and is buffeted by his master. If possible, drink not at all, the false wine;

By which man forgeteth God and receiveth punishment at His Court."

Such were the social reforms done by Guru Amar Das. According to Indubhushan Banerjee, "the changes he desired to introduce in the very important ceremonies connected with marriage and death, struck at the very root of the influence of the priestly class, and though in such a matter where long-standing customs and cherished practices were concerned, success must necessarily have been slow, the ball had been set rolling and Sikhism put on the way of gradual dissociation from Hinduism and consideration into a separate sect."

1.6.5. Development of Sikhism under Guru Ram Das

Guru Ram Das succeeded to his father-in-law Guru Amar Das in A.D. 1574. Period of Guru Ram Das was though uneventful but in as much as foundation of Amritsar and the excavation of the tank of Harmandir are concerned, his contribution to the development of Sikhism was of great importance.

1.6.5.1. The Foundation of Amritsar : Historians hold divergent opinion regarding the time when the work of the foundation of Amritsar was taken in hand. Macauliffe believes that it was taken in hand when Akbar visited Guru Amar Das for the first time and he made the offer of a grant of land to the Guru for the maintenance of Langar. On Guru's refusal to accept the offer, the same was given to Bibi Bhani. With the instructions of Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das shifted to the donated land and started the excavation of the two tanks- *Santokhsar* and *Amritsar*, there. Some people think that the offer of the Emperor was accepted by Gur Amar Das though with reluctance and patta to that effect was issued by the ruler on the spot in favour of the Guru as his personal jagir. Then the Guru held the assembly of his followers and handed over the land to his son-in-law Guru Ram Das. According to a later tradition, the land of the site was given to Guru Ram Das by the Zimindars of villages of Sultanwind and Tung. It has been stated in the Amritsar District Gazetteer, "In 1577, he (Guru Ram Das) obtained a grant of site together with 500 bighas of land from the emperor Akbar, on payment of Rupees 700 to the zamindar of Tung who owned the land." However, opinions may vary on the acquisition of the land of the site of Amritsar but it is definite that originally that land was under the proprietorship of zamindars of the village Tung and later it is also certain that the land of the Harmandir was revenue free land. The paper of land settlement of Amritsar relating to A.D. 1865 record "the land of Darbar Sahib, Guru Ram Das got revenue free grant."

Guru Ram Das started excavation of tank in 1573 and laid the foundation of the city of Amritsar, then called *Chak Guru* or *Chak Ram Das* or *Ramdaspora*. A considerable number of disciples of the Guru also shifted to the site. When the excavation of the tank was in progress, Guru Ram Das had to rush back to Goindwal at the call of the dying Guru Amar Das. The work had to be suspended for sometime and it was resumed in 1577. The small village founded by Guru Ram Das had by this time grown into a township. The excavation of the tank had been completed during the pontificate of Guru Ram Das as it has been stated by Bhai Gurdas in the first *Var*.

1.6.5.2. The town of Amritsar, in the course of time, grew to be the highest centre of trade in northern India. According to Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, "We often forget how much the Punjab owes to the Sikh Gurus for advancing the trade. If the Mughal Emperors were great builders, the Sikh Gurus were no less." Judging from the scanty resources at the disposal of the Gurus, it is nothing short of a marvel for them to have founded so many cities, reservoirs and wells. The immediate effect of the teaching that religion could be best practised within the secular concerns of life, was that all prejudices against labour and trade removed and the people, even the spiritually minded people, began to take active part in what were called worldly affairs.

During the subsequent period Amritsar became the Mecca of the Sikhs. Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru constructed Harmandir in the centre of the holy tank. It became a rallying place of the Sikhs and the nucleus of all the activities of the Sikhs in the eighteenth century. The tank of nectar of Amritsar

became a symbol of unity for the Sikhs. The members of the Dal Khalsa in the second quarter of the eighteenth century almost always took a dip in the holy water of this tank before proceeding in any expedition against their enemies. They must do it even at the risk of their lives. It was here at Amritsar about fifty yards from this holy tank that the Akal Bunga was constructed which served as the venue of the Sarbat Khalsa for their national deliberations.

1.6.5.3. Massands of Ram Das : According to Macauliffe Guru Ram Das and Bhai Budha felt they should have sufficient funds if they wanted to complete the whole work in a short period. So the Guru sent his representatives to different places to spread Guru Nanak's message and collect their offerings to be remitted to the Guru for the projects taken in hand. Thus, according to Macauliffe, originated what later on began to be called the *Masand* system. The author of *Dabistan* and some of the modern historians are of the view that Masand system might not have been fully organised by Guru Ram Das but it is certain that it originated during this period. In the beginning the Masands were called *Ram Das*, i.e., the representative of Guru Ram Das and they were also called *Guru Ke*. The Guru had embarked upon very expensive projects like excavation of tanks." The Guru provided the needed facilities for the new settlers at Amritsar. All these projects required enormous funds for their proper execution. So there was nothing unnatural about the Guru's deputing his men to collect voluntary offerings from his followers. All these projects belonged to the whole Sikh community, therefore, arrangements were made to collect funds from its members. It is very likely that this system was named Masand system during Guru Arjan's time, but the collection of funds for the various projects had been granted by Guru Ram Das.

1.6.5.4. Reapproachment between Guru Ram Das and Baba Sri Chand: Baba Sri Chand, the founder of the Udasi sect visited Guru Ram Das. They held a discussion in a friendly manner and decided not to oppose each other. Baba Sri Chand seems to have realised by now the superior character of Sikhism and was convinced that the appointment of a successor was purely on merit as it (Guruship) was a charge of great responsibility and only a fit person was selected to shoulder it. There was no question of his right to it on the simple reason that the office was held by his father, so it should come to him just in routine course.

1.6.5.5. Succession became Hereditary : Upto the time of Guru Ram Das, the successor to the Guruship was exclusively on merit and the successor was selected from the whole of the community. From now onwards, it became heredity. Some people believe that the heredity succession changed the Sikh character from purely religious to religious-cum-political. It is wrong to think this. And there can be nothing more absurd than Mohammad Latif's remarks that the hereditary succession 'materially contributed to the growth of Sikh power, for henceforward the Guru was looked upon by his disciples not only in the light of a spiritual guide, but also as a worldly lord and a ruling sovereign. The *Sacha Padshah* meant the spiritual leader and not a temporal lord. No doubt that the selection of a successor got confined only to the Guru's family

but the suitability was never dispensed with. We find that the elder sons were ignored in favour of the youngest, and the sons were by passed in favour of a grandson and so on. Had any Guru found no suitable successor from his family he would certainly have nominated a successor from outside his family. The Guru were never under an unbreakable vow that the successor must necessarily belong to the Guru's family. All the followers of the Guru comprised his family.

1.6.5.6. Steps taken to spread Sikhism: Besides the measures enumerated above adopted for the spread of Sikhism, Guru Ram Das is said to have converted many people to Sikhism because of his humility and sweetness of his disposition. Bhai Gurdas was sent to Agra to propagate the Sikh faith there. Similarly, many other Sikhs were sent to different places for the same purpose.

1.6.6. Summary

Summing up, we come to the conclusion that the organisation measures of the second, third and the fourth Guru weaned away the Sikhs from Hinduism and gave them a distinct character of a separate community and attracted a large number of people into their fold. Jahangir has mentioned in his '*Tuzuk*' that many Hindus and Muslims had embraced Sikhism and for three or four generations (or spiritual successors) they had kept their shop warm. This means that during the period under study, the development of Sikhism was so prominent as to attract the attention of the Emperor of India.

Self Check exercise:

1. Manji system was started by Guru... ..
2. Masand system was started by Guru... ..
3. Amritsar was founded by.

Suggested Questions

1. Discuss the development of the Sikh Church from 1539 to 1581 A.D.
2. Discuss the significance of the Reforms of Guru Amar Das.

Keywords: Development, Masand, Langar, System, Hymns, Gurmukhi

Suggested Readings

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Mohammad Latif | : | History of the Punjab |
| 2. | Macauliffe | : | The Sikh Religion, Vol. II |
| 3. | Cunningham | : | A History of the Sikhs |
| 4. | Giani Gian Singh | : | Panth Parkash (Punjabi) |
| 5. | Giani Gian Singh | : | Tawarikh Guru Khalsa (Punjabi) |
| 6. | Trumpp | : | The Adi Granth (English Translation) |

7. Narang, G.C. : Transformation of Sikhism
8. Banerjee Indubhushan : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. I
9. Payne, C.H. : A Short History of the Sikhs
10. Teja Singh and Ganda : A Short History of the Sikhs Singh

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