

The Guru Nanak of Brother Sehan



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Preface

Introduction to Sikhism

The Sikh religion was founded by the prophet Guru Nanak I (1469-1539 AD) in India. It is the 5th largest religion in the world. The first Guru Nanak was succeeded by 9 other human Gurus. The second Guru is called Guru Nanak II, the third Guru Nanak III, the fourth Guru is called Guru Nanak IV, etc. Due to the assassination of some Sikh Gurus, Guru Nanak X decided not to have any more human Gurus. So the Sikh holy book became the final, living and eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

Sikhs use the title 'Guru' as a form of respect for their prophets. The title 'Guru' is widely used in India for spiritual guides. Hence, some Sikhs prefer to use the term 'Satguru' (the True Guru) for their prophets because they knew the True Lord (God). The term 'Guru' is made of two different words ('Gu' means "darkness" and 'ru' means "remover of"). Hence, a Guru enlightens by uprooting the darkness of ignorance. Sikhism is a 'New Age' spiritual movement in this 'Dark Age' (of Kaljug).

Hence, in Sikhism the term 'Guru' refers to a 'Teacher (of spiritual knowledge)'. In the Bible, Jesus was sometimes referred to as a 'Rabbi' – which means 'teacher'. The followers or the disciples of Sikhism are called 'Sikhs', which means 'Learners of (spiritual knowledge)'. The Sikh name for the Lord God Almighty is 'Wahe-Guru', which translates as the 'Wonderful Teacher'. Sikhs believe there is only One Creator God for the whole of humanity. Others gave the same Lord God different names.

The Sikh religion has evolved over time. There is a difference between the Sikh history of the Early Guru Period (1469-1606) of the first 5 Sikh Gurus, and the Later Guru Period (1606-1708) of the last 5 Sikh Gurus. Under the fifth Guru Arjan, Sikhism had become popular. Hence, the Sikhs were persecuted, and Guru Nanak V was the first Guru to be martyred in 1606. Sikhism started to change under the sixth Guru Hargobind. Guru Nanak VI started to militarise the Sikhs, for defence purposes.

Hence, the militarisation began when the sixth Guru took over. It continued under the next four Gurus because the ninth Guru was martyred in 1675 – for refusing to convert to Islam. In 1699, the tenth Guru finally setup the military 'Order of the Khalsa'. This organisation was a Brotherhood of 'Sikh-Soldiers'. Guru Nanak X baptised the Holy Warriors in their own military uniform of the five 'Ks'. Khalsa Brotherhood (and Sisterhood) also has its own form of discipline ('Rahit' - a Code of Conduct).

Thus, the tenth Guru Gobind Singh was forced to set up the new elite 'Khalsa Panth' (which translates as the 'Sect of the Pure' ones). Khalsa means 'pure' and the term 'Panth' means 'path' or 'way of life'. However, not all Sikhs are baptised into the sect of the Khalsa. When Guru Nanak X completed the Sikh holy book and made it Guru Nanak XI, he did not mention the Khalsa in the final scripture. Hence, non-baptised Sikhs could continue to follow the Sikh sacred scripture as their Guru.

The title 'Guru Nanak XI' obviously refers to the sacred Sikh scripture, better known as the 'Guru Granth Sahib' (or the 'Holy Granth' for short). In India, baptised Sikhs are called 'Amritari' Sikhs, and the non-baptised Sikhs are called 'Sahajdhari' Sikhs. However, Sahajdhari Sikhs like me prefer to call ourselves as the followers of the 'Nanak Panth' sect of India. Western Sikhs might prefer to call the Nanak-panthi sect as the denomination of 'Nanakism'. Hence, followers of Nanakism are 'Nanakites'.

Only a small number of Sikhs belong to the Khalsa sect of Guru Gobind Singh. The Khalsa has become an organised religion like Islam or Judaism. Nanakism is more of a spiritual movement based on the teachings of the first Guru Nanak and the Holy Granth. Nanakites still respect the Khalsa and some might even get baptised into the Khalsa in the future. Nanakites still choose to wear at least one of the 5 Ks or a turban. Nanakites also use the name 'Singh' for Gentlemen and 'Kaur' for the ladies.

The purpose of this book is to provide access to the early Sikh classics to Western Sikhs, and others interested in Guru Nanak's Sikhism (Nanakism). Most classics have already been translated into the English language, from the Punjabi Gurmukhi language. I hope that this work encourages interest in the early Sikhs or the 'Nanak Panth'. The latter is a term used by Eastern Sikhs. As a Western Sikh, I prefer the term 'Nanakism' and 'Nanakites' for the early followers of Guru Nanak.

However, it's important that Western Sikhs understand the historical and Eastern cultural background of the Sikh religion. Hence, it's important for Sikh intellectuals to familiarise themselves with the Punjabi Gurmukhi alphabet, which was devised by the Guru. For some Sikh words, it's difficult to find English language equivalents. Sikhism originated in a rural Indian patriarchal society of 500 years ago. Like Jesus, the Sikh Gurus and scholars made use of 'parables' (stories that teach a spiritual lesson).

Introduction to this book

The first biography on Guru Nanak by Brother Sehan was written in 1570-74. It was later reproduced by a Dr Padam, under the guidance of Professor Pritam Singh of Guru Nanak University in Amritsar, in Punjab, India. However, this book authored by Professor Padam is called 'Sakhi Mehl Pehle Ki'. It is in the Punjabi language and in its January 2014 edition, published by the Singh Brothers.

The original biography was translated into the English by the retired Professor Joginder Singh Jogi of Khalsa College, also in Amritsar. I've not been able to contact him. The translated work of this Professor is called 'Puratan Janam Sakhi of Guru Nanak: Book 2'. This translation was published by Amazon. The copyright is addressed to 'Sehan Uppal and Bhai Gurdas', both died some time ago.

I have edited and trans-created the biography's episodes in the Guru's life to make it more accessible to a western audience. The concept of 'transcreation' was first developed in India for translating from one Eastern language to a Western one - while maintaining the style, tone, and context. It involves cultural adaptation and creative re-interpretation of a piece of writing.

It's not easy to translate from the Punjabi language and its Gurmukhi script. I have explored this in my book 'The Classical Languages of Guru Nanak'. For example, when the Sikhs say, 'open your ears' in Punjabi, they mean 'listen to me'. As the translator Professor Nikky-Gunder Kaur Singh also says: 'In Sikh literature, "being the dust of feet" just denotes being humble' (in her 'Hymns of the Sikh Gurus')

The need for transcreation is relevant to the Punjabi language, which has a rural and religious background. The English language has a wider vocabulary, which is mainly urban and secular. This biography of Guru Nanak is simple and brief. Biographies show not only the life of the Guru but also the life and culture of the Punjab in the 15th and the 16th centuries AD.

The later biography of Brother Gurdas, which can be found in my book 'The Guru Nanak of Brother Gurdas', is also simple and brief. The biographies of the first Guru are often referred to as the 'Janam-sakhis'. The word 'Sakhi' translates as 'story'. This biography of the first Guru is the oldest because it's based on the original manuscript of Brother Sehan.

As time passed, biographies became more complex with different stories, styles and local traditions sneaking into them. Other manuscripts have been developed from this one Sehan manuscript. The Colebrooke (or Valait-wala) manuscript was first translated into English by Dr Trump, in 1885. The Macauliffe (or Hafzabadi) manuscript was first used for the multi-volume 'The Sikh Religion' of 1909.

Brother Sehan's manuscript has been produced in the form of a 'Katha' (a sermon). Sikh sermons are about the life and teachings of the Sikh Gurus which are often delivered by the singing of relevant hymns, using musical instruments. As these hymns are taken from the Sikh holy scripture, some western scholars think that the Guru's life stories are based on the hymns of the 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

However, some of the hymns or poems found in the Colebrooke and the Macauliffe manuscript don't exist in the 'Holy Granth'. In his 'Vars', Brother Bala is not mentioned by Brother Gurdas in his list of Sikh disciples of Guru Nanak. Hence, some people think that Bala didn't exist. However, Nanak also had other disciples that are not mentioned by Gurdas in his famous 'Vars' book.

The 'Bhai Bala Janam-Sakhi' (1657-59) by Brother Bala is one of the best-known biographies of Guru Nanak. So I have organised its first translation from Punjabi, into the English language, through its own publishers. However, it's important to note that many Sikhs believe that in its present form, this Bala biography has been altered to praise Baba Hindal and put him at a higher level.

Introduction to the Editor of this book

Dear reader,

Sikhs always like to ask about the background of any authors and scholars who write about Sikhism. Here, although I don't give my full name, I would like to say that my parents were born in the Sikh Holyland of the Punjab province of Pakistan (the birthplace of Guru Nanak). Hence, they moved to the newly partitioned India as refugees in 1947. My parents later moved permanently to the United Kingdom.

I was born in England to Khalsa baptised Sikhs. Although I am fluent in the Punjabi language, I think in the English language. I studied the Gurmukhi script in Sunday Schools attached to Gurdwaras (Sikh Temples). In the British Universities, I have studied the Social Sciences to post-graduate level. I've spent 34 years teaching Humanities in English schools and colleges. I have a particular interest in Comparative Religious Studies.

I have travelled widely, at home and abroad. Hence, I have also been on Sikh pilgrimages to places associated with the Sikh Gurus in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, and Sri Lanka. I would like to see more of the Sikh religious classics available in English and other languages, to a much wider and a western audience. I hope that the reader likes this work and is encouraged to read the other classics of Sikh literature.

I hope that that 'Wahe-guru' (the Lord God) accepts this work, as my 'seva' (service) to the congregation.

Mr Singh-Bhadare (BSc, MSc, PGCE)

30th August 2024.

Introduction to 'Brother Sehan'

Brother Sehan is sometimes called 'Bhai Sihan' or 'Bhai Sehan'. The title 'Bhai' (which means 'Brother') is often given as a term of respect to the early disciples of the Sikh religion. We don't know when Sehan was born or died but he lived long enough to serve Guru Nanak I, II and III. We know he lived in Sultanpur Lodhi in the Punjab in northern India, with the first Guru.

The Sikh Encyclopaedia also tells us that Brother Sehan embraced Sikhism at the hands of Guru Angad and lived in Khadur, in the Amritsar district of the Punjab. During the time of Guru Amar-Das, he lived in Goindwal. Respecting the Guru's wish, Sehan married his daughter (Matho) to Bhai Prema. Prema was a former leper healed by Guru Amar-das. He was renamed Murari by the Guru.

Brother Sehan was a contemporary of the first Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. We know this because his name is one of the 22 disciples of Nanak I mentioned in the 'Vars' of Brother Gurdas himself. Under Poem number 11 and Stanza number 14 it says: 'Sehan and Gajan of the Uppal clan and the Khatri caste, were very dear to Guru Nanak'.

Hence, Brother Sehan was very close to the first Guru Nanak. All that we seem to know about Brother Gajan is that he was a first cousin of Sehan. Brother Sehan was a washerman who accompanied Guru Nanak with Bhai Hassu, a blacksmith. The three of them went on a journey to Kashmir. Both Sehan and Hassu wrote down the hymns delivered by the Guru.

Apparently, Brother Sehan orally narrated the first biography of Guru Nanak called 'Sakhi Mehal Pehle Ki' (The Story of the First Guru). In this biography from the early 1570s, the Prophet Nanak is referred to as 'Baba Nanak'. (The title of 'Baba', which means 'Father', is often used as a term of respect). This biography has 28 chapters of various lengths.

There doesn't appear to be any published biography of Brother Sehan himself. We only know about him and his cousin from the 'Vars' of Brother Gurdas. During the time of Gurdas, the names and the lives of Sikh disciples like Brother Gajan and Sehan were fresh in the minds of the people. During the time of Guru Nanak X, the people's memories were fading.

Hence, the people asked the tenth Guru to describe the achievements of these great Sikh disciples. Guru Gobind Singh then described their stories, which were written down in the Punjabi Gurmukhi script by (the now great Sikh martyr) Bhai Mani Singh. The latter wrote a manuscript called the 'Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala' ('The Garland of Sikh Saints').

This manuscript of Bhai Mani Singh was discovered over a century later by a Bhai Vir Singh, who published it in book form in 1912. Early in the 21st century, this book was translated into the English language by Dr G S Chauhan and given a new title: 'The Gospel of the Sikh Gurus'. When it was published, it was distributed for free by a famous Sikh charity called 'Pingalwara'.

Guru Gobind Singh on 'Brother Sehan'

Brother Sehan and his first cousin Brother Gajan visited Guru Nanak to ask for his blessings. They in particular asked to be blessed with the 'Four Boons': -

1. **Dharma** – fulfilment of worldly responsibilities.
2. **Artha** – worldly wealth.
3. **Kama** – fulfilment of worldly desires.
4. **Moksha** – liberation from reincarnation (cycle of birth, death and rebirth).

Words of wisdom

Guru Nanak told them that the Supreme Lord God's Name was 'Waheguru'. If they repeated (meditated) and reflected (contemplated) on this Name, they would be gifted with these four boons.

Having heard all this, both disciples were eager to know about the meaning of this Name of 'Wahe-Guru'. Hence, Guru Nanak explained that 'Wahe' was the expression of seeing something wonderful; something beyond human understanding. The Supreme Being created the Universe and all the humans, animals and plants in it. However, we are not able to see or imagine the Creator.

Hence, this is the 'wonder'. The 'Gu' in 'Gu-ru' refers to the darkness or ignorance. Not seeing the Creator is the ignorance. The 'ru' in 'Gu-ru' refers to the light, which expels the darkness. It is the Supreme Being that removes our darkness of ignorance and to understand the Creator of the Universe. Hence, the Lord God is known as 'Waheguru'.

Then both Brother Sehan and Brother Gajan asked: 'How would the mere reciting of the Name of *Waheguru* bestow upon them the four boons?' Then Guru Nanak explained it: -

1. When we go to meet the 'Sat Sangat' (the holy congregation), every step is equal to the fruits of 100 'Ashvamedha Yagnas' (horse sacrifice). This is 'Dharma' – the fulfilment of both the spiritual and the worldly duties.
2. The worldly people work hard and run after worldly possessions. However, it comes naturally to the devotees of God, as people come to them on their own with their offerings. This meets the need of 'Artha' (or wealth).
3. The wishes of the devotees are fulfilled by God when the Lord's Name is meditated upon. This is the fulfilment of 'kama' (desires).
4. When the name 'Waheguru' is comprehended, it's meaning finally seeps into the body, mind and intellect. Then one is blessed with 'Brahma Gyan' (Divine knowledge), granting one with 'mukti' (liberation).

Hence, salvation can be achieved through the understanding of God's Name and spiritual knowledge.

After hearing these words of wisdom, both Brother Sehan and Brother Gajan acted upon them. They woke up early in the morning, bathed, prayed or recited on the 'Gurbani' (compositions of Guru Nanak) and then went to work.

During the whole day, both would meditate with every breath on 'Wahe' whilst inhaling and on 'Guru' whilst exhaling. Hence, they continuously recited 'Waheguru' all the time. Both would also offer food to the other disciples of the Guru, from their own earnings.

When Brother Sehan's daughter's marriage was fixed, the bridegroom and his people were to arrive the next day. Delicious food was prepared for the wedding feast. In the evening before the marriage ceremony, a large group of the Guru Nanak's disciples were on their way to meet the Guru. They stopped at Sehan's house because they were tired and hungry.

Brother Sehan humbly offered them the food that was prepared for the wedding day. Sehan's wife was very worried about doing this. However, Sehan himself was untroubled. Since the food was served to the Guru Nanak's own disciples, Sehan said that the Guru-ji himself would save his honour. As was expected, the groom and his marriage party arrived the next morning.

However, whereas the lady of the house was extremely worried, Brother Sehan remained unshakeable in his faith. After offering his prayers, Sehan unlocked the door to the room where the food was kept. Amazement! The room was full of food fit for a king. The wedding guests enjoyed the banquet for a full five days. Sehan then said: 'The Guru saves the honour of his Sikhs'.

The groom and his party were overwhelmed with the hospitality of Brother Sehan. As was the tradition then, they happily left with the bride. This true story illustrates the power of faith. It shows how undoubting in 'Waheguru', fulfils all our desires and needs. This story about the 'Four Boons' was orally narrated to his disciple Bhai Mani Singh, by Guru Gobind Singh.

Conclusion

It can be summarised, that under the guidance of Guru Nanak, Brother Sehan Uppal and Brother Gajan Uppal learnt the spirit of 'Waheguru' Simran (meditation on the One). They were taught that by engaging in this practice of devotion and sincerity, one could attain the four cardinal blessings known as the 'Chaar Padarath' (the Four Great Boons).

Sikhs sometimes also talk about the 'Four Spiritual Treasures', that are needed for a Soul to attain the supreme spiritual bliss (i.e. the attainment of God): -

1. The Treasure of Spiritual Knowledge
2. The Treasure of Salvation
3. The Treasure of Divine Wisdom
4. The Treasure of Spiritual Birth.

Chapter 1 (A Prophet is born)

“The Great Prophet Nanak was born in Talwandi Rai Bhoi Ki (in India).

During the Dark Age, he was given the name ‘Guru Nanak’.

He started his own (religious) sect during this Dark Age”.

[Today, Talwandi is called ‘Nankana Sahib’ and it can now be found in modern day Pakistan].

Nanak was born three hours before dawn, on the morning of 15th April 1469. Heavenly music played in his noble court. Three hundred and thirty million gods (1) * offered to submit to the Guru. These gods or angels bowed to the prophet that God (the Formless Being) had sent for the salvation of the world: ‘Salute him and pay homage to him!’

The father of Guru Nanak was ‘Kalu’, of the Khatri caste and the Bedi clan. Kallu lived in Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi, where the Guru was born. When he grew up, Nanak started to play with other children. However, the Guru was different from the other children. In his heart, he meditated on the Lord God’s Name.

When Guru Nanak reached the age of five years, he started talking about the unapproachable and inaccessible God. Whatever he said, he said it thoughtfully. Everyone was left impressed. The Hindus said that a god-like form had taken birth. The Muslims said that another devotee of God had been sent into this world.

***References for these numbers, can be found at the end of the book.**

Chapter 2 (The teacher)

When Guru Nanak reached the age of seven years, his father Kalu decided to send him to School. He took his son to the Pandit (the teacher) and asked him to teach the child Nanak. The teacher accepted the student Nanak and wrote something on a wooden tablet for him. Nanak studied there for a day. The next day he kept quiet.

As Nanak was quiet, the teacher asked why he was not studying. The student Nanak then asked his teacher: 'Pandit-ji, have you studied something that you want to teach me?' The teacher then replied that he had studied everything, including Mathematics and the Hindu scriptures (Vedas and the Shastras). Then the child Guru recited the first stanza of the hymn on 'learning': -

*"Burn your worldly affection and pound it into ink;
Turn thy intelligence into superior paper.
Let divine love be thy pen, and the heart thy scribe;
Enquire of thy Guru and write his instruction.
Pen down the praises of God's Name;
Inscribe that the Lord hath neither end nor limit.
O' master, learn to write this account, so that;
Where an account is called for,
there though may receive the true stamp (of divine approval)". (2)*

The teacher then asked: "Nanak, from where have you obtained this information? However, listen Nanak! They who remember the Lord's Name, what fruit will they obtain?" Then the student Nanak recited the second step (or stanza): -

*"In this Court of the Lord, where one has been proven True;
greatness, eternal peace and everlasting joy are bestowed.
The faces of those, in whose hearts is the True Name,
are honoured with the Mark of Grace.
This state of grace comes, not by idle words". (2)*

Then Guru Nanak recited the third step (or stanza): -

"Some arrive in this world, some get up and depart.

They give themselves big names (like a leader of men).

Some are forced to beg, others have vast courts and guards.

In the hereafter, it will be revealed what is one's true worth.

Without the Lord's Name, all else is worthless." (2)

The teacher was surprised and realised that the child Nanak was a great devotee of God. Then the teacher again asked: "Nanak, why do you like to talk about such things? You are still a child. You have a long time ahead of you. You have yet to enjoy your life with your parents, wife and family members". Then Guru Nanak recited the fourth step (or stanza): -

"The fear of Thy retribution, O Lord, is mightily terrifying.

My body is therefore trembling, and wasting away.

They who go by the names of kings and sultans, are being reduced to dust.

At the hour of departure, all false affections are snapped". (2)

The teacher was amazed and paid homage to his student Nanak. Considering him to be a perfect being, Nanak's teacher told him to do whatever his soul desired.

Guru Nanak was also sent to study some 'Turkish' (Persian and Arabic) languages. [In India, the term 'Turk' was often used to refer to Muslims of Central Asia or the Ottoman Empire. 'Chaghatay Turkish' was the language of Tamerlane, another conqueror of India. The Persian language was also brought to India by the Zoroastrians, who fled Muslim persecution in their own country].

Chapter 3 (The young Guru)

The young Guru Nanak was disillusioned with his life. When he came home, he didn't do any useful work. When Nanak sat down, he kept sitting. When he slept, he kept on sleeping. Within himself, Nanak felt low-spirited. Guru Nanak preferred company of the 'Faqirs' (the holy men). Nanak's father Kalu was surprised at this and wondered: 'How could his son Nanak live like these celibates?'

When the young Nanak reached the age of nine years, he was made to wear the 'Janeu'. [The Janeu is a sacred thread that is worn across the body of a Hindu child. The sacred thread ceremony is considered a rite of passage that marks the entrance into adolescence. It is traditionally done when a boy is between the ages of 8 and 16 years. However, today some Hindus get it done before their marriage].

However, young Nanak did not speak to anyone about what was in his heart. Then people of his village spoke to Nanak's father Kalu. They told Kalu to get his son married so that he would not be downhearted. Kalu then got up and thought about how to get his son Nanak married off, so that things might improve. Eventually, there was an Engagement ceremony in the house of Mool Chand, Nanak's father-in-law.

When Guru Nanak was twelve years old, his marriage was arranged. [Life expectancy was low in those days, so people probably tended to marry earlier]. However, Nanak set his heart on no one and ignored his household. Nanak really talked to no one - not even to his parents, wife or any of his own family members. Members of his household said: '...he goes away with holy men these days'.

Chapter 4 (The green pasture)

One day, father Kalu asked his son Nanak to take the buffaloes out to feed on the grass. Hence, Guru Nanak agreed to do this and brought the buffaloes back by nighttime. The following day, Nanak again took the cattle out for grazing. However, this time, Nanak fell asleep by the side of a field of wheat. Buffaloes went into this field and ate up the wheat crop.

Then the master of this wheat field arrived. He asked Guru Nanak: 'Why have you destroyed this field of wheat crop? You have to compensate me for this loss. Then Nanak replied that no harm had been done to him: 'So what if some buffalo happened to have had a mouthful? God may help it to prosper thereafter.'

The master of this wheat field had a row with Guru Nanak. Then both Nanak and the master of the field, went quarrelling to Rai Bular Bhatti - the Chowdhary of Talwandi village. [A Chowdhary was a local landowning administrator under Mughal rule in India]. The Chowdhary asked for Nanak's father Kalu to be brought to him because Nanak didn't really care about anything.

When Kallu turned up, the Chowdhary asked him if he had told his son Nanak not to ruin the fields of others: 'You have to compensate the loss, otherwise you have to face the Turks [the Muslim rulers].' Kalu agreed with the Chowdhary and then moved around in confusion. Then Nanak spoke: 'Sir, nothing has been damaged there. The field's master speaks false.'

The field's master then said that Nanak had ruined the whole field: 'I only want to be compensated, otherwise I will call the Turks here. Then Guru Nanak replied again: 'Not a single leaf has been damaged. Send your man to check it for yourself'. Hence, the Chowdhary sent his footmen. When the footmen returned, they said: 'Not a single leaf had been disturbed.' The Chowdhary criticised the field master, whilst Nanak and his father Kalu returned home.

Chapter 5 (The shadow of the tree)

By the Will of God, Guru Nanak was blessed with two sons – Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das. However, Nanak's downheartedness did not go away. He kept sitting underneath the trees. One day, Nanak was sleeping in a garden. While sleeping, the day decreased but Nanak did not wake up. Rai Bular the Chowdhury of Talwandi arrived for a hunting spree.

The Chowdhury saw someone sleeping under a tree. He also saw the shadow of all the other trees had decreased. However, the shadow of the tree where someone was sleeping was still in the same place! The Chowdhury asked his men to wake up the sleeping person. When the Guru woke up, the Chowdhury realised that it was Nanak the son of Kalu.

The Chowdhury remembered what had happened recently in someone's field of wheat. He concluded that Nanak was not a mindless being. Nanak was a person blessed by God. When the Chowdhury returned home, he sent his footmen to collect Nanak's father Kalu. When Kalu arrived, the Chowdhury gave him some advice concerning his son Nanak.

The Chowdhury said: 'Kalu! Do not say anything abusive to your son. Nanak is an enlightened being. By virtue of him, my town is blessed. Kalu, you also feel satisfied as Nanak was born as a son to you'. Kalu replied: 'Only the Lord God alone knows, God's own doings.' After his talk with the Chowdhury, Nanak's father returned home.

Chapter 6 (The family is worried about Nanak)

Guru Nanak preferred the company of Holy men and talked to no one else. The whole family was worried about him. Everybody said that Nanak had gone insane. First Nanak's mother came to her son to tell him that sitting with holy men served no purpose. Nanak had family responsibilities, including two sons.

The Guru's mother wanted her son Nanak to do some work. She wanted him to end his daily debates with the Holy men: 'People laugh at us because they say that Kalu's son does not earn a living'. However, whatever his mother said did not touch Nanak's heart. Nanak did feel worried but still laid down again for four or five days.

As the situation eased, Guru Nanak's wife went to see her mother-in-law. Nanak's wife said: 'Why are you sitting here, when your son has been lying all quiet for the last few days? He does not eat or drink anything. Then Nanak's mother went to speak to her son again: 'Son, how does it help by your lying down? Do eat and drink something. Take care of the crops in the fields. Your entire family is worried about you. Son, if you don't want to do something; you don't have to do it. We will say nothing to you. You don't have to worry about anything.'

Chapter 7 (The farm, the field and the fence)

Guru Nanak's father Kalu was also worried about his son: 'Son, what do we say to you? It is good to do some work. Son, our crops are standing fully ripe. If you go and stand there, it will not be ruined. Then everyone will say that Kalu's son is good. Son, crops depend on their masters'. Then Nanak replied: 'Father! We have cultivated quite a different crop. We keep it well-maintained'.

Then Guru Nanak continued: 'We have run the plough. The soil has come to its wetness. We keep standing all the eight quarters there. [In India, they use to divide the day and night into four quarters each]. Father, if we can't take care of our own crop, why do we care for someone else's?' Nanak's father Kalu was left confused.

Then Guru Nanak's father Kalu asked: 'Look men, what does my son say?' Then Kalu asked his son Nanak: 'When did you cultivate the crop field? Forget this useless talk. If you want to, we can plough the field with your different crop. Let's see how you manage, for your livelihood'. Then Nanak replied: 'Father, we have already ploughed the field for our crop and it has grown well'.

Again, Guru Nanak's father Kalu said: 'Son, we have not seen your crop cultivation as yet. I don't understand what you are saying'. Then Nanak replied: 'Father! We have ploughed the field. It's good to look at. You will hear it yourself'. Then Nanak sang the first stanza of this hymn: -

*"Let the mind be the farmer, Good deeds the farming,
modesty the water, and thy body the field.
Let effort (in the way of God), irrigate thy field.
In this field, sow the seed of devotion (the Lord's Name).
Make Contentment the furrowing, and let the fence be of Humility.
By devotion and grace shall this crop sprout –
Where it grows, blessed will then be thy home.
O father, 'worldly wealth' (illusion) does not accompany us.
This 'temptation of wealth' has lured away the whole world
but only a rare few understand this". (3)*

Chapter 8 (Trading)

Then again, father Kalu spoke: ‘Nanak, you better sit in the shop. Shop is our agriculture. Then Guru Nanak recited the second step (or stanza): -

“Let the mortal body be your shop, and make the Lord’s Name your merchandise.

Make attentive devotion the storage vessels, wherein you store the Lord’s Name.

Deal only with Lord’s traders (the Saints), and thus enjoy the profitable bargain”. (3)

Then once again, Kalu said: ‘If you sit in the shop, you can sell horses as your commodity. Your mind remains gloomy. If you do business, then you can also move about abroad. Then we can say that you have gone to do some trading and will soon return’. Then Guru Nanak recited the third step (or stanza): -

“Let the study of sacred scripture be thy trade,

And let truth be the horses thou take to sell.

Gather up merits for your travelling expenses,

And leave not today’s task till tomorrow.

When thou shall arrive in the Kingdom of the Formless Lord,

...Shall thou obtain peace in the Divine Palace of Bliss”. (3)

Guru Nanak’s father Kalu once again said: ‘Nanak, you are living with us. You can go and do some job. Your brother-in-law Jai-Ram is treasurer to Daulat Khan Pathan. If you go to Sultanpur, you can work with him. Your mind might feel better there. We have given up on you earning. If you stay sad, people will say that Kalu’s son has become a holy man’. Nanak recited fourth step (stanza):-

“With devoted heart render service: make faith in the holy thy vocation.

Make the curtailment of sins thy labour;

Only then will people call you blessed.

Nanak says: If God favours thee with the (Lord’s) Grace,

then fourfold will become thy honour”. (4)

Chapter 9 (God is Great)

Guru Nanak said: 'Father! Our crop has grown fully. We are so confident of this crop that it shall pay off all debts of the Government. Sons, daughters and all members of the family shall be comfortable. We shall also pay off the Lord God's debt. All the Fakirs (Holy men) and the others will be blessed.

The Lord God whose farming I have done, often visits. Since that day, I have become friendly with the Lord. I have been very happy since then. Whatever I ask for, the Lord provides it. Father! I have found the great Lord. The Lord has allocated me all that merchandise, employment and shop transactions.

Nanak's father Kalu was surprised: 'Son! We have not heard or seen anything from your Lord'. Then Guru Nanak replied: 'Anybody who has seen God, they admire my Lord'. Nanak then sang the following hymn from the Holy Granth:-

"By hearing of Your Greatness, everyone calls You Great, O' Lord.

Only those who have seen the Lord God, know how Great the Lord is.

No one has the power to evaluate You; No one can describe Your Greatness.

Those who try to describe You, remain lost and absorbed in You.

O' my Great Lord of Unfathomable Depth, You are the Ocean of Excellences.

No one knows the extent or the vastness of Your might.

"All those who contemplate have met and practiced intuitive mediation.

All the appraisers have met and evaluated Thy worth.

The theologians, spiritual guides, mystics, and the teachers of preachers –

None of these can describe even an iota of Your Greatness.

"Truth, penance, austere discipline, virtues

and the great miraculous occult powers of the great Yogis –

Without Thee, no one has attained such spiritual powers.

By Thy Grace, they are received. No one can hinder or halt their flow." (5)

Guru Nanak's father Kalu again said: 'Forget this talk and do it the people's way. Without work, life is nothing'. Nanak remained quiet. Kalu got up and went to work. He said: 'Nanak has become unproductive for us. The crop does not get ruined from the outside'. Nanak's family belonged to the Bedi clan. They said something strange happened to Nanak, for him to become disillusioned.

Chapter 10 (The Doctor)

For three months, Guru Nanak lay down. He did not eat or drink. The Bedi family was depressed. They started to ask Nanak's father Kalu: 'How can you sit there whilst your son is lying down. Call a doctor and get your son treated'. People would say that Kalu does not get his son treated because of the money.

Then Kalu got up and brought a medical doctor into his house. When the doctor was about to take his patient's arm, Guru Nanak got up and said: 'O Doctor! What are you doing?' The doctor replied: 'I'm checking to see what troubles your body'. Then Nanak just laughed and recited the following verse from a hymn: -

"They have called in the Doctor to prescribe a cure.

He touched my arm and felt my pulse.

The simple doctor knows not that the pain is in my heart". (6)

The following was added by Guru Nanak:

"O doctor you are wise only if you can diagnose the (spiritual) disease (of my mind).

Prescribe such a treatment,

by which all sorts of illnesses can be cured". (6)

Guru Nanak recited another hymn in reference to the Doctor: -

"O foolish doctor, don't give me medicine.

The pain persists, and the body continues to suffer.

(The pain of separation from the Lord brings torment to the body).

Your treatment has had no effect on me". (7)

Further to this is: -

“Pain is the poison. God’s Name is the cure:

Grind it up in the mortar of contentment,

with the pounding of charitable giving.

Should you administer it daily, the body doesn’t fall ill.

At the final hour, you will strike down the Messenger of Death.

O fool! Take thou such medicine, by eating which thou will be cured of thy sins.

“Power, wealth and the beauty of youth are all just shadows.

When the Chariot (of the Sun of Wisdom) moves, one sees them in their true colours.

In the hereafter; neither your fame, high caste, or physical might go along with you.

This world is dark like the night.

In the next world, there is the light of truth –

[the sight of God will be revealed there].

“Let your taste for pleasures be the firewood,

Let your greed be the clarified butter.

Let your lust and anger be the cooking oil.

Collect them together and then and consign them to the fire (of thy knowledge).

Fire sacrifice, burnt offerings and reading of the ‘puranas’ (ancient Hindu scriptures) –

Whatever is pleasing to the Lord, that alone is acceptable.

“If intense meditation is the paper,

the Lord’s Name is the prescription.

They for whom this treasure of medicine is prescribed;

They look healthy, when they reach the Eternal home (the Lord’s House).

O Nanak, blessed is that mother who gave birth to them”. (8)

Then the Doctor left and said: ‘O Brother! Nanak has no illness or health problem’.

Chapter 11 (Nanak goes to Sultanpur)

Jai-Ram was Guru Nanak's brother-in-law, who lived in Sultanpur. He was the treasurer to Daulat Khan Pathan. When Jai-Ram learnt that Nanak was confused and was not working, he wrote a letter inviting Nanak to come and meet him. After reading the letter, Nanak agreed to meet him in Sultanpur.

Members of Guru Nanak's family were happy for him to go to Sultanpur, believing that the change of scenery would be good for Nanak. When he was about to leave, Nanak's wife began to cry. She already felt distant from him. When Nanak goes to this unfamiliar place, when will he return? Then Nanak said: 'O simple one! What was I doing here and what shall I do here? I am of no use to you'.

Then Guru Nanak's wife said that when he was at home, it was the universal monarchy for her. Without Nanak, this world was of no use to her. Then Nanak became more merciful: 'Don't worry about anything. Every day will be your royal rule'. Nanak's wife then said: 'I don't want to stay here, Master! Take me a long with you'.

Guru Nanak replied: 'It's God's Will that I should go. If I get some employment, I shall call for you. Do you agree with this?' Nanak's wife had been silenced. After saying goodbye to his family and friends, Nanak left for Sultanpur. [Like Brother Sehan, Jai-Ram was a Jat Khatri Uppal. Both lived in Sultanpur at that time].

Chapter 12 (The Storehouse)

When Guru Nanak arrived in Sultanpur, Jai-Ram was very happy to see him: 'O Brother! You are doing well'. Then Jai-Ram asked for a meeting with Daulat Khan: 'Respected Nawab! My brother-in-law has arrived. He is well-learned and wishes to meet the Nawab Sahib'. The Nawab replied: 'Then bring him here'.

Guru Nanak was brought to the Nawab. Nanak met the Nawab with some offerings. Daulat Khan was impressed and asked his name. Jai-Ram replied that his name was 'Nanak'. Then the Nawab said that Nanak appeared to be gentle and an honest person: 'Assign my entire work to him'. When the Nawab gave him the robe of honour, Nanak was very happy.

Then Guru Nanak and his brother-in-law returned to Jai-Ram's house. When they started working, Nanak worked so efficiently that everyone was happy with him. Everyone said that some praiseworthy gentleman has come. Everyone praised Nanak before the Nawab, who was also pleased. Whatever payment Nanak received; he shared it with others (in God's Name).

Guru Nanak gave in the Lord's Name, and sang hymns of God's praise at night-time. One day, Mardana the Musician from Talwandi came to live with Nanak. Whoever came afterwards, Nanak would first get them to meet the Nawab and then get a job for them. Hence, a lot of people earned their bread by virtue of Nanak.

When a quarter of the night was left, Guru Nanak would go to bathe in the river. When morning came, he wore the clothes and applied the mark on his forehead. Then Nanak would come to his office in the court, to sit down and work.

Chapter 13 (The incident in the river)

Guru Nanak regularly bathed in a local river, with an attendant. When he went into the river, Nanak left his clothes with this attendant because he only went for a short while. However, one day, Nanak did not come out of the river. After waiting for a while, the attendant was tired of standing around.

Confused, the attendant went to see the Daulat Khan: 'Nawab Sahib! Nanak went into the river but has not come out. That's why I have come to see you. What should I do?' The Nawab mounted his horse and went to the river. He ordered his divers: 'My respected Minister has gone missing in the river. Spread the big net. I will reward all of you'.

The divers spread the big net and searched for Guru Nanak until they were tired. However, Nanak was nowhere to be found. The Nawab was disappointed because Nanak was a gentle minister. After three days had passed, Nanak came out of the river at the same spot where he had first disappeared.

Guru Nanak was supposed to have been lost in the river. The people asked where he had come from? Nanak entered the camp* and threw some things away. Many people gathered there. When the Nawab learnt about this, he went to see Nanak in person and asked him what had happened to him.

However, Guru Nanak uttered and spoke nothing. The people said that something had happened to Nanak, when he disappeared in the river. The Nawab agreed that something mysterious had happened to Nanak in the river. As he was disheartened, the Nawab returned home. Nanak only wore a waist cloth for some days, since coming out of the river.

Guru Nanak went and sat amongst the holy men. Mardana the musician was also sitting there. After sitting here for a day, Nanak stood up the next day and said: 'There is no Hindu or Muslim'. When the people reported this to the Nawab, he wasn't bothered: 'Nanak is a devotee of God'. However, a Qazi (Muslim judge) told the Nawab that Nanak was saying something very strange.

*Sometimes the word 'dera' is used here. It refers to a socio-religious organisation in Northern India.

Chapter 14 (Nanak debates with the Qazi)

Introduction

This Chapter includes what some Sikh scholars call Guru Nanak's 'Code of Conduct' for his (Sufi) Muslim followers. During his lifetime, Nanak had both Hindu and Muslim followers just like Jesus (founder of Christianity) had Jewish disciples. Nanak produced a code of conduct for both his Hindu and Muslim followers. These codes of conduct are based on the spiritual teachings of the Guru.

Both the Hindu and Muslim codes of conduct can be found in the poetic stanzas of the Sikh sacred scripture, the Holy Granth. Just like Jesus before him, Guru Nanak was more interested in spiritual values rather than the dogma of organised religion. This Muslim (or the Sufi) Code can be found mainly in the four stanzas under 'Raga Majh' section (pages 140-1) of the Sikh holy text.

These four stanzas (for Muslims) are reproduced in full in this chapter. The first stanza shows how to be a good Muslim. The second stanza looks at the main pillars of Islam. The third stanza focuses on topics like the Halal diet, the path to Heaven, and the importance of truthful living. In the Bible, even Jesus says: 'the truth will set you free'. The fourth and final stanza looks at the five Muslim prayers.

In this chapter, Guru Nanak says that: '(In God's eyes), there is no Hindu or Muslim'. He taught that God doesn't care about our religious labels but how we conduct ourselves. God doesn't care if we call ourselves Hindu, Jew, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, Sunni, or Shia. Nanak emphasised these three fundamentals: **Worship** (of God), **Work** (honest labour), and **Welfare** (serving others).

When the Nawab invited Guru Nanak to come and see him, Nanak showed no interest. The people started to say that Nanak had gone insane. Then Nanak asked his friend Mardana the musician to play the rubab. [The rubab is a musical instrument that looks more like the guitar]. Nanak then sang the following hymn: -

"Some call me wild, to others I'm a demon.

Some say I am a mere humble man.

But I am mad after my Divine King, my God.

I know none other than the Lord.

*"A person is said to be insane, when they go mad with the fear of God;
And accept none other than the Lord.
Serve only but the One God, and realise only the Lord's Will.
In what else is their wisdom?
Mad indeed is they who cherish the love of the Lord God, with a single mind.
They consider themselves bad (being lowly), and the rest of the world as good and blessed." (9)*

After singing this hymn, Guru Nanak went silent again. Whenever he did speak, he said the same thing: 'There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim'. The Qazi again complained to the Nawab. The Nawab said his 'heart longs for a glimpse' of Nanak. He sent his footmen to bring Nanak to him.

The footmen went to see Guru Nanak and told him: 'Nanak, the Nawab has called for you. He has asked the great Lord to render a glimpse of you'. Then Nanak got up and said: 'My Lord's order has come. So, I shall go'. Nanak then put the belt around his neck and went to see the Nawab. The Nawab was very happy to see Nanak.

On seeing Guru Nanak, the Nawab said: 'Nanak! For God's sake, take off that belt from your neck and tie it around your waist. You are a good Fakir'. Then Nanak removed the belt from his neck and bound it to his waist. Then the Nawab said the following: 'Nanak, it is my bad luck that a minister like you has become a fakir'.

Then the Nawab turned to the Qazi and told him that this was his chance to question Nanak. The Qazi then asked a question: 'What do you mean when you say that there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim?' Then Guru Nanak recited the following verses: -

Stanza 1

*"It is difficult to claim to be a Muslim.
To do so one must love and act like a true Muslim:
First, one must be devoted to faith in God (Allah) and the Lord's prophets.
With a scraper, they scrub their inside clean of Ego.
(And remove all pride and vanity of wealth:
Through charity, as the file removes the rust).
In the way of the Prophet, banish all delusion about life and death.
Gracefully accept the Will of God.
Believing in the Eternal Creator, erase the arrogance.
Nanak says, if they are merciful to all creatures;
Only then can they be worthy of being called the true Muslims". (10)*

After the recitation of these verses, the Qazi was amazed. Then the Nawab told the Qazi that Nanak was some messenger of God. When it was time to do the Muslim (Namaz) prayer, Guru Nanak followed the others. The Qazi, the prayer leader, offered the Namaz. The Qazi saw Nanak smiling at him.

When he finished the Namaz, the Qazi asked the Nawab: 'Did you see Nanak laughing at our prayer? You said that Nanak is a good Fakir'. Then the Nawab raised the matter with Guru Nanak. Nanak replied that the Qazi's prayer had not been accepted (by God). This is why he smiled. The Qazi told the Nawab that Nanak should say what was wrong with his prayer.

Then Guru Nanak told the Nawab: 'When the Qazi was standing, while offering the Namaz, his mind was not on the prayer. His mare had delivered a she-calf at home. The Qazi was thinking that the she-calf could fall into the well. Hence, his mind was elsewhere'. Again, the Qazi was amazed and fell at Nanak's feet.

Then the Qazi said to Guru Nanak: 'Nanak, you are great. You have been blessed with God's great favour'. The Qazi felt humiliated because he could not judge Nanak. Then Nanak recited the following verse: -

"Those who fear God have no other fear.

Those who do not fear the Lord, have much to fear.

Nanak: the mystery (of this Royal writ) is revealed,

only when one is brought before the Sovereign Court (of the Lord God)". (11)

Obviously, the following stanzas are addressed to the Muslims. Guru Nanak starts by reciting the following verses: -

Stanza 2

*“Let mercy be thy mosque,
(Make thy mosque of compassion)
Let faith be thy prayer-mat;
(Make thy prayer-mat of sincerity)
and honest living be thy Koran.
(and fair play your Holy Koran).
Let humility be thy circumcision.
(Make modesty your rules of observance)
Let civility be thy Ramadan fast.
(Make courtesy your fasting).
Thus does thou become a true Muslim.
Make pious deeds thy Kaaba (Mecca)
and truth thy spiritual guide.
(Let eternal Truth be the spirit of the prophet)
Make good actions thy kalima (creed)
and piety thy Namaz (prayer).
[‘Kalima’ is the Muslim declaration of faith]
If thy rosary be what pleases God (God’s Will);
Nanak says: the Lord will keep thy honour”. (12)*

Introduction to Stanza 3

This stanza looks at religious diets. It starts by mentioning that Hindus are not allowed to eat beef. Most Sikhs also, do not eat beef. Like the Jews, Muslims are not allowed to eat pork. Muslims have both permissible (Halal) and forbidden (Haram) foods.

In the Sikh sacred scripture (the Holy Granth), Guru Nanak rejects vegetarianism in a debate with a Hindu. Some Sikhs and all Gurdwaras are vegetarian. (Gurdwaras are open to people of all religions). For obvious hygienic reasons, Sikhs are forbidden to eat carrion – the decaying flesh of dead animals.

However, Sikhs do have their own Sikh Code of Conduct called the ‘Rehat Maryada’. Sikhs are not allowed to eat Halal or Kosher (Jewish diet) meat because of its religious ritualism (sacrifice of an animal in God’s Name). Sikhs have their own diet, like ‘Jhatka’ meat, which Sikh butchers do cater for.

Stanza 3

*"To grab what is another's is evil,
as beef is to Hindus, and pork is to Muslims.
Your Spiritual Guide will stand with you,
(Spiritual guides referred to here are the Hindu 'Swami' and the Muslim 'Pir').
only if you don't eat what is forbidden.
[The Guru stands by those,
only when they have not eaten the carrion –
the carcass here, refers to any earnings from foul sources].
By mere talk, one does not earn passage to Heaven.
(Not by mere chatter does one obtain paradise).
Salvation comes only from by the practice of the truth.
(Deliverance comes by living the truth.
By truthful living, comes forgiveness).
If one puts spices on forbidden food,
it becomes not pure thereby.
Nanak says: from false talk, only falsehood is obtained".*

When Guru Nanak recited the following hymn, then all (the Sayyids and Sheikhs, Qazis and Muftis, and Khanins) were amazed. The Nawab informed the Qazis and Muftis that Nanak is truthful. Asking anything else is futile.

Stanza 4

“There are five Muslim prayers, with their appointed times.

The prayers have five different names.

(Let these be the true prayers:-)

Let truthfulness be thy first,

Let honest living be thy second,

(The second prayer is to lawfully earn thy daily bread)

Let wellbeing of all be thy third,

(The third prayer to God is charity in the Lord’s Name)

Let sincerity (of heart and mind) be thy fourth

(The fourth prayer is pure intent and mind)

Let (singing) praises of the Lord be thy fifth.

These five form part of noble conduct (good deeds).

By reciting the Prayer of Good Deeds,

you can claim to be a true Muslim.

Any other Prayer is false and, false is their value.

Says Nanak, those who are untrue will lead others to regret (and repent).” (13)

Wherever Guru Nanak went, he spread his vision for the people. Hence, everyone welcomed him. Nanak spoke again:

“O fool, think not that your Husband (Lord God) can be obtained by mere words.

In the pride of wealth and the glamour of beauty,

(In the vanity of worldly love and the pride of physical charm)

You have squandered this life away”. (14)

The Nawab was very impressed. He fell at the feet of Guru Nanak. Both the Hindus and the Muslims started to agree with the Nawab that God did indeed speak through Nanak. They said to the Nawab: ‘You need to keep Nanak’. Then the Nawab, in front of Nanak and all the audience, said: ‘all my royal reign and ruling order is his’.

Then Guru Nanak said: ‘Revered Nawab! The Lord God be all merciful to you. I cannot stay here. All this monarchical reign and capital, mansions and money matters are yours. I have abandoned it all’.

Chapter 15 (Mardana the Musician)

Guru Nanak walked along a meandering way, in the wilderness. Whilst on this Zigzag way, he couldn't find a suitable location to stop. Nanak always knew when Mardana felt hungry. Mardana used to say that the Guru always knew everything. Nanak replied: 'May God be merciful'. One day, Nanak said: 'Mardana! Go straight to that locality'.

Once, Guru Nanak told Mardana that the Uppal family clan of the Khatri caste lived there: 'Go and stand silently at their door. All the Hindus and Muslims will bow at your feet. They will spread cloth sheets for you. Members of the Khatri caste will present you with something pleasant to eat, clothes and rupees'. [The rupee is the name given to the money used in India]

Guru Nanak also told Mardana that: 'No one will ask you where you came from and whose man you are. Anyone who came and saw you will offer all their own to you. They will be flattered to have had just a glimpse of you'. Mardana felt very happy because of the generosity shown by Guru Nanak.

One day, Mardana did go to this local place. As he walked, he did get a lot of admiration. Everyone started to come and fall at his feet. Then Mardana returned to Guru Nanak with a bundle of clothes and rupees. When Nanak saw Mardana laughing, he asked him what he had brought that made him so happy.

Mardana replied: 'Master! It is all in worship of your name. By virtue of you, the whole world came with enthusiasm and eagerness. All got up to offer their services. Clothes and rupees were collected in abundance. I told them that I would take them all to my Master'. Nanak replied: 'You did well but all this is of no use to me'. Mardana left everything behind and moved on with Nanak.

Chapter 16 (In the wilderness)

Whilst walking, Guru Nanak and Mardana entered the wilderness. No human could be found. Mardana was hungry again and said: 'All grace to your worship. We are poets who have begged to eat other people's loaves of bread. We have already done away with those from back there. Now we have entered a vast uninhabited land'.

Mardana went on: 'Only God can rescue us now. Some lions could just come and get us'. Nanak replied: 'Mardana, no one will come near you. Don't be downhearted'. Then Mardana replied: 'How can I not feel upset. You have brought me to a desert'. Then Nanak said: 'Mardana! We are not in a barren land. We are in a village where God's Name comes to mind'.

[Then Guru Nanak recited the hymn which the Sadhus, seekers, 330 million gods, celibates, ascetics, and Pir Prophets are running around to find]. This hymn is: -

*"For a sight of the Lord God,
the gods themselves have done penance, fasting, pilgrimages, and performed ablutions:
The Yogis and celibates underwent austerities (disciplined lifestyle),
Whilst others wear saffron robes and become hermits (for Thy sake).*

*"For Thee, Lord, in loving devotion they are all dyed.
For many are Thy Names, and countless are Thy forms.
It cannot be told how many virtues Thou hast.*

*"Leaving behind (Royal) castles, Mansions, elephants and horses;
Mortals have gone to foreign lands in Thy search.
The spiritual guides, prophets, seers, repentants, and the faithful
abandoned the world, accepted Thy creed (and were approved by Thee).*

*"Others abandoned their pleasures and tastes and,
forsaking clothes, covered themselves with the skin.
All those in pain, O Thou Compassionate One;
inspired by Your Name, have become beggars at Thy Grand Gate.*

"Some wear hides, others take to the begging bowl.*

*[*Hides are animal skins that have been treated for human use].*

Some take to the Yogi's wooden stick,

whilst others wrap themselves in the deer's skin.

Others raise their hair in tuft-knots,

wear sacred threads and tuck up the loincloths (the Brahmin way).

Thou art the Lord and I am Thy seeker.

Says Nanak: O Lord, how can my garments determine my caste (social status)?" (15)

Chapter 17 (The sweet fruit and the poisonous fruit)

Mardana asked Guru Nanak how he could be active without eating something? I am tired of walking. I am dying. Nanak then replied: 'Mardana! Eat to your fill from the fruits of this tree. Eat as much as you want to eat. However, do not take any away with you'. Hence, Mardana started eating the genuine nectar-like ripe fruit.

Mardana enjoyed the sweet taste of the fruits and thought to himself: 'I've eaten and enjoyed this fruit. I do not know if I will find and eat such fruit again. I will take a few, bound in a bundle, with me'. Later on, Mardana again felt hungry. Hence, he took one out and had a bite. As soon as Mardana took a bite of his sweet fruit, he fell down on the floor.

Then Guru Nanak asked Mardana what had happened. Mardana then replied: 'O Master! I was hungry again. So, I ate the sweet fruits that I brought with me, tied in a bundle'. Nanak replied: 'Mardana, you made a big mistake. It was poisonous fruit. It was the Word (of God) that gave it the sweet taste'.

Then Mardana said to Guru Nanak: 'All grace to you and your learned work. I am a musician who must beg to eat. You are a great person. You can eat or do without. You can enter any place of your choosing. How can I keep up with you? Sir, you are better off without me'. Nanak replied: 'Mardana, I'm happy with you. Why do you want to leave me?'

Mardana replied to Guru Nanak: 'I might live, if I don't die of hunger! Whatever nourishes you, let it be the same for me. Then I can stay with you. Nanak, kindly give me this Word and then I will be happy to stay with you'. Then Nanak replied: 'You will forever be blessed and delighted in the world'. When Mardana got up, he envisioned all the inaccessible and the unimaginable.

Chapter 18 (The return to Talwandi)

Guru Nanak felt disillusioned in Sultanpur, so he returned to Talwandi after twelve years. He sat in an abandoned place, two miles from Talwandi. After sitting for an hour, Mardana asked Nanak if he could go home to see if his people are alive or not. Nanak laughed and said: 'Mardana! If your people die, then why should we take care for the world?'

Nanak continued: 'If you want to, you can go and meet them. However, come back quickly. You can also go to my parent's house but don't mention my name'. Then Mardana showed reverence to Guru Nanak by touching his feet. When he reached Talwandi, he entered his home. Many people gathered there.

Many people came and bowed at the feet of Mardana. They said that he is a 'poet beggar' but also the close disciple of the Great Guru Nanak. Nanak's reputation had grown all over the world. Hence, everyone who came, bowed to his feet. Once Mardana had finished checking up on his own household, he went over to Nanak's house.

Chapter 19 (Guru Nanak's mother)

Mardana came in and sat in the house of Guru Nanak's father. Soon, Nanak's mother came and clung to Mardana's neck. Whilst crying, she said: 'How and where is Nanak?' All the neighbours gathered in the courtyard, asking questions. Mardana said he met Nanak in Sultanpur but knew nothing about him after that time.

After sitting for a while, Mardana got up to go. Nanak's mother realised the fact that he was leaving so soon, meant that he was with someone. Nanak's mother also got up at once. She grabbed some clothes and Indian sweets. Then Nanak's mother followed and soon caught up with Mardana.

Whilst walking with Mardana, Guru Nanak's mother said: 'Mardana! Help me to meet with my son Nanak'. Mardana remained silent. When Nanak saw his mother and Mardana arrive, he bowed at the feet of his mother. Nanak's mother kissed her son's forehead and said: 'I am a sacrifice onto you, my son. I am sacrificed onto seeing you. You have pleased me a lot by showing me your face'.

Having seen his mother weeping, Guru Nanak said: 'Mardana! Play the rubab'. Nanak then recited the following hymn: -

"For the (opium) addict, there is nothing like the drug; to the fish nothing like the water.

Those who are attuned to their Lord – everyone is pleasing to them.

May I be sacrificed and cut into pieces, O Lord, for Thy Name.

"The Lord God is a fruit-bearing tree, whose sweet Name is 'Amrit' (Ambrosial nectar).

Those who taste it are satisfied. I am a sacrifice onto them.

"I see Thee not, although Thou abides in all.

How can the thirst be quenched,

when against the pool (of nectar) stands the wall (of doubt)?

"Nanak is Thine merchant; Thou, O Lord, are my merchandise.

My mind is cleansed of doubt, only when I praise and pray to Thee". (16)

Guru Nanak's mother placed her Indian sweets and clothes in front of Nanak. When she asked him to eat, Nanak said: 'O Mother! I am already fully fed'. Then Nanak's mother asked what he had eaten. Nanak asked Mardana to play his rubab, whilst he recited the first stanza of another hymn: -

*“To believe in God’s Name is to taste the sweet delicacies;
To hear the Lord’s Name is to taste the salty flavours;
To utter Thy Name is to taste the sour dishes,
To sing the holy Word is like the adding of spices.
Love of the One Lord is the thirty-six flavours of the ambrosial nectar –
These are obtained by those who are blessed by Divine grace.*

*“O friend, the pleasures of all other foods are false
because eating them causes discomfort,
and fills the mind with sin (foul thinking)”. (17)*

Then again, the mother of Guru Nanak spoke: ‘Take off this robe (of honour) from your body and wear new clothes. Then Nanak recited the second stanza: -

*“To dye one’s mind in God’s love, is to wear the bright red colour.
To wear the shiny white clothes is to practice the truth, purity and charity.
The blackness of sin is erased by the wearing of blue clothes.
[Different groups in different situations and followers of various faiths wore particular colours]*

*“To meditate on the (Lord’s) lotus feet, is my robe of honour.
Wear the cummerbund (the waistband) of contentment,
And gather the wealth, the youth and the beauty of the Lord’s Name.*

*“O Friend, the pleasures of other clothes are false.
Wearing them, the body is ruined and evil doing takes possession of the soul”. (17)*

Chapter 20 (Guru Nanak's father)

When Kalu (Guru Nanak's father) realised that his son was nearby, he came riding a black (female) horse. Nanak bowed at his feet and showed respect. Then Kalu started to weep. He asked Nanak to ride his horse back home. However, Nanak replied that the horse was of no use to him. Nanak then recited the third stanza on 'horse-riding':-

*"To know Thy way (O Lord) is like the mounting of a horse –
the saddle, and the golden tail-tips.*

The pursuit of virtue is like the equipment (quiver, arrows, bow, spear and the sword-strap).

My (kingly) drum and the banner (flag), is Thy honour bestowed upon us.

Thy grace is my high caste.

"O Baba (father)! The pleasures of all other rides are false.

If riding causes discomfort, it fills the mind with sin". (17)

Then Kalu spoke again and said: 'Nanak, at least visit your home. We have built some new rooms. You have a family to meet. Stay for just a few days. You will be happy at home. Then you are free to go. Then Guru Nanak recited the fourth and the final stanza of his hymn: -

"The bliss of Thy Name is the pleasure of a house, a mansion or a castle:

O Lord, Thy favouring Glance of Grace is my home and family.

God's Will: That command is good that pleases Thee –

To say anything else is far beyond anyone's reach.

Nanak: The Lord God is the True King who seeks no counsel.

"O father! To seek ease (rest or sleep) other than this, ruin's bliss.

Any other ease, to the body brings torment and fills the mind with evil thoughts". (18)

Then Guru Nanak said: 'Mother! We have come as we said we would. My mind is as yet sad. Now kindly accept my Word'. Then Nanak's mother replied: 'Son, how can my mind be happy? You have come after travelling for many years and you are not home yet'. Nanak finally said: 'Mother you will be happy when you accept my word'. Nanak then left and his mother kept silent.

Chapter 21 (Sheikh Kamal)

After leaving Talwandi, Guru Nanak visited a river area called 'Ravi Chenab'. He then moved through a barren land, before approaching a place called 'Pakpattan'. Nanak and Mardana sat down at an uninhabited place, about three miles from Pakpattan. Sheikh Farid was the 'Pir' of Pakpattan. (Pir is the title used for a Muslim saint). Sheikh Brahm was the current Sheikh Farid II.

Sheikh Kamal was one of the servants of the new Pir. Kamal was a gentle person and well-informed of God. One morning, he was out to collect wood for the Pir's kitchen. Kamal noticed both Guru Nanak and Mardana sitting there. Mardana started to play the rubab, whilst Nanak started singing the following verse: -

"Thou Thyself are the writing tablet, Thou Thyself the pen and the script.

Thou are the only One, how can there be any other?" (19)

After hearing this verse, Kamal left his wood behind and walked towards Guru Nanak. After bowing before Nanak, he sat down. Then Kamal asked: 'Master! All greetings to you. Please kindly recite that stanza again'. Then Nanak invited Mardana to repeat the verse, which he did. Kamal then learnt it by heart and thanked the Guru. He then picked up the wood and returned home.

When Kamal got home, he put down the wood and greeted his own Pir: 'Pir-Ji, I have just met a lover of God'. When Sheikh Brahm asked 'Where?' Kamal replied: 'Pir-ji! I had gone to collect wood. There I saw Nanak and his rubab-player. Nanak sang his own couplets'. Sheikh Brahm then asked: 'O son, did you learn any couplet?' Then Kamal repeated Nanak's verse: -

"You Yourself are the writing tablet and the pen.

You are also what is written on it.

Meditate upon the One only, how can there be some second one?" (19)

Sheikh Brahm then asked Kamal if he had learnt anything from this couplet. Kamal replied: 'Yes, Pir-ji. It is clear to me'. Then the Sheikh said: 'Son, let us go and see this person whose couplet it is. He is a devotee of God. Take me to him'. The Sheikh then boarded his palanquin, which followed Kamal.

Chapter 22 (Sheikh Brahm)

After about 3 miles, Sheikh Brahm found Guru Nanak sitting down. He approached the Guru and said: 'Nanak! Greetings to you'. Nanak returned the greeting and welcomed the Pir: 'God is graceful that we have met'. They both shook hands and sat down. The Pir then asked: 'Nanak, Kamal and I were surprised on hearing your couplet. I wanted a glimpse of its reciter'.

Then the Pir added: 'Nanak-ji, please explain your couplet: Meditate upon One only, why there be a second one? However, the One is the Lord of the two. Then who to serve and who to reject? You say there is only One. However, the Hindus say that only they are right, and the Muslims say themselves to be right. I may see who is right and who is not right?' Nanak then recited a verse: -

"Forever and ever serve the Lord God, who is amongst us all.

Why serve another [a second], who is born and then dies?" (20)

Then the Pir asked again: -

"Fareed says: tear the clothes into shreds and wear a shawl.

I wear only those clothes that lead me to my Beloved Spouse (the Lord God)". (21)

Then Guru Nanak replied: -

"Why tear thou silk robes and wear a woollen blanket?

One can obtain the Beloved Groom, in one's very home, if one's heart is pure.

(If thou put thy mind on the right path, thou can meet God in thy daily life in thou own home)". (21)

Then Guru Nanak spoke again: -

"The soul-bride is at home, her Husband Lord (God) is away,

Ever thinking on Him: she misses him and suffers in tears.

She will meet Him without delay, if she rids herself of duality." (22)

Then the Pir asked again: -

"Fareed says: When she is young, the soul-bride did not love her Husband Lord (God).

When she grows old, she dies.

And now the woman (the soul-bride) cries from the grave: 'I did not meet You, my Lord'!" (23)

Then Guru Nanak replied again: -

“The rude, ill-mannered soul-bride is encased in the body tomb.

The foolish female is black-hearted and of impure mind.

Should she be virtuous, she will meet the Husband Lord (God).

However, the soul-bride is unworthy, and filled with sin”. (24)

Then again Guru Nanak explained: ‘Sheikh-ji! If a woman is badly behaved and the husband is wise, he shows no affection to her. If a woman is well behaved and is afraid of the man, then he makes her happy. He is always cheerful towards her. If the bad-mannered wife at home stinks, why should the husband go near her?’

Then Guru Nanak continued: ‘Sheikh-ji! The ill-mannered one is she who does not know her own husband. She is irritable and remains proud. These are the characteristics that make her nasty. If such traits dwell in her, then why should the husband meet her? Why should the Husband (the Lord God) not meet her if she has virtues?’ Then the Pir asked in verse: -

“Nanak-ji! What is that ‘word’, by which we meet the Husband (the Lord God)?

What are those clothes, what are those precious charms, to win the Lord’s love?

Pray: What is that trait, what is that magic mantra? Please tell all of this to me!”. (25)

Then Guru Nanak replied with this verse: -

“The Word is Humility, forgiveness is the virtue,

And your sweet speech is the jewel-like Spell.

Wear these robes, O sister friend (the Bride), then you will spell-bind your Husband (Lord God)”. (25)

Then Guru Nanak explained his verse: ‘Sheikh-ji! Observing humility is good for everyone. Hence, it is the Word. Someone might be good or bad. You have to accept whatever the Lord grants – comfort or discomfort. The tongue should utter a good word. This is the precious charm. Then the spouse will be hers only – leaving all the other mates’.

Then the Pir said: ‘Nanak-ji! Does service result in blessing or does the blessing result in service?’ Guru Nanak replied: ‘Service is the most important. If one serves without pride, they will win the grace of the Lord. If she feels proud whilst serving, however beautiful, the Spouse does not come near her. The spouse Lord is obtained through service’.

The Pir fell at the feet of Guru Nanak and said: 'Nanak you are great! You have shown us the way to God. We have woken up today! You are God's messenger. We are left without doubt, how to meet God'. Then Nanak said: 'Sheikh-ji! Only those talks are worthy that are related to God's Name'. Nanak also recited the following verse: -

*"Beauty and lust are tied in a bond of attraction,
just as the hungry rush for the tasty meals.
Greed is bound up in its search for wealth,
the sleepy one will use even a tiny space as a bed.
The angry one barks and brings shame upon themselves.
Blinded by anger, they involve themselves in senseless chatter.
Nanak says: it is best to remain quiet;
Without the Lord's Name, all that the mouth utters is but dirt". (26)*

Guru Nanak then tells the Pir: 'Sheikh-ji! Just as some adore beauty and lust, lovers of God adore the Lord's Name. Just as the bed covers suit the sleepy ones, God-lovers love the holy Name. Whatever is good to write, the same should also be spoken. It is better to remain silent than to utter something bad'.

The Pir (Sheikh Brahm) then asked Guru Nanak the following question: 'Nanak-ji! I need a cutter but I don't know of what kind? By use of it, a person can get slaughtered. With this cutter, the animals get slaughtered, and men become sinful. Can you give me a cutter that slaughters pride'. Then Nanak replied: -

*"The dagger is of truth and truth is the pure steel.
Its handiwork is indescribably beautiful.
It is sharpened on the grindstone of the holy word.
It is kept safe in the sheath (cover) of virtue.
If one is killed with that, O Sheikh, there the blood of greed is spilt.
One who is slaughtered in this ritualistic way, is approved and acceptable to God.
Such a one sacrificed, at the Divine Gate, is merges into the Lord's vision". (27)*

Then Guru Nanak said: 'Sheikh-ji! If greed is involved, it is sinful and forbidden. With greed removed, it becomes permissible'. Then the Pir replied: 'Whatever blessing has been sort from God, has been obtained. I have one more request. If allowed, I may ask?' When Nanak gave him permission, the Pir uttered the following verse: -

*"The Undeivable is not deceived by deception.
nor can a dagger (of lust) inflict a wound on it.
How can one whose mind is greedy, abide by the Lord's Will?
Without oil, how can the lamp be lit?" (28)*

Hence, the Pir asked Guru Nanak: 'Materialism is the real captivator. It cannot be cheated by saying only. This greedy mind cannot cut materialism. O Nanak, how does the lamp burn without oil? Without burning of lamp, light does not come up. How can the lamp burn without oil?' Nanak then answered with this verse: -

*"Let one live by the oil of wisdom (gathered from sacred scriptures).
Let fear of the Lord God be the wick, for the lamp of this body.
Let this wick be lit with the torch (knowledge) of Truth.
The one who is thus enlightened, meets the Lord. (28)*

Guru Nanak added: 'With this oil thus shall thy lamp burn'. The Pir invited Nanak to his home and said: 'I can see you talk of God and the Lord is definitely within you'. Nanak laughed and said: 'O Sheikh, you are redeemed'. The Pir then said: 'I have this doubt that a poem cannot be made without two but you say that only one has taken place. Describe God's physical being'. Nanak sang:

*"God created the Self (Lord) and manifested the Lord's Name.
God then created the Universe, and seated within it, watches it with delight.
You are the Giver and the Creator. With your grace, you bless everyone.
You are the knower of all: By your command you confer life and take it back.
Sitting on Your cushion (throne), You enjoy the game". (29)*

When Guru Nanak stopped singing this verse, Mardana stopped playing the rubab. The Pir then got up and paid his respect to the Guru: 'Nanak! You have merged into God. There is no difference between God and you. You must be merciful to us'. Nanak replied: 'Sheikh-ji! Your faith has been noticed by God'. The Pir then replied: 'O Nanak! Give me your Word'. After saying that the 'Word is there', Nanak continued with his travels.

Chapter 23 (The city of corpses)

Introduction

The background to this Chapter is Emperor Babur's invasion and plundering of Sialkot and other areas in Northern India. The hymn below is addressed to Lalo, a carpenter of Saidpur (Eminabad). Lalo was also a disciple of Guru Nanak. Chapters 23 and 24 includes the 'Babur Bani' This 'Bani' composition is famous for the four hymns of Nanak, on Babur the Mughal Emperor. One Sikh scholar claims that Nanak was the first person to use or write the term 'Hindustan', which is found here. (30)

After leaving Pakpattan, Guru Nanak travelled through the rest of the Punjab. He passed by Dipalpur. Then he reached Kirian Pathanan by travelling through Kanganpur, Kasur, and Patti (in the Western Punjab). To reach Kirian Pathanan, Nanak also travelled through Goindwal, Vairawal, and Jalalabad in Eastern Punjab.

In Kirian Pathanan [probably near Sultanpur Lodhi], Guru Nanak got the Pathans to become devotees. [Pathans are Pashtu speakers from Persia]. Then Nanak travelled to Saedpur (Saidpur), via Vatala (Batala). When Nanak sat down, he witnessed a marriage in a house of Pathans. The Pathans were dancing.

Guru Nanak was sitting with the other Fakirs (Holy men). The Pathans ignored them. As the holy men felt hungry, Nanak got up and approached the houses nearby. Mardana and the holy men followed Nanak. They begged at many houses, but no one helped them. Nanak became angry and asked Mardana to play the rubab. Then Nanak recited the following hymn: -

"Friend Lalo! As the word of The Lord comes to me, so do I reveal it.

Babur (the Mughal) has invaded from Kabul.

He has brought with him the wedding party of sin.

And demands our Motherland as his wedding gift.

(Forcibly demands surrender of Indian womanhood – tradition of giving away daughter in marriage).

"Both modesty (the sense of shame) and righteousness have gone into hiding.

O Lalo: Only falsehood hears the appeal – moving about as the leader!

The function of the priests (the Muslim Qazis and the Hindu Brahmins) is over.

O Lalo: Satan now performs the marriage rites.

[Satan conducting marriages refers to the dishonour of Indian women by Babur's soldiers].

“O Lalo: Muslim women recite the Koran, and in their misery, they call upon God.

The Hindu women of all castes, in their suffering, also pray to the Lord.

The wedding songs of murder are sung.

The wedded ones are anointed but blood is sprinkled instead of saffron”.

(Saffron dissolved in water is traditionally sprinkled on clothes during a wedding ceremony). (31)

Background to the next hymn

This hymn of Guru Nanak is the second part of the same hymn above. The dates mentioned here are in the Vikrami calendar of the Hindus. (Sikhs now have their own Nanak-shahi calendar). The reference here is to the invasion of Babur the Mughal in Vikrami year of 1578 (1521 AD). This prophecy is about the rout of the Mughals.

Babur’s son Humayun was dethroned and left in Vikrami year of 1597 (1540 AD) when Sher Shah Suri, the ‘disciple of man’, took over. Sher Shah Suri was an Afghan and the first Muslim king in India to make common laws for Hindus and Muslims. He tried to unite them into one nation - an example later followed by Akbar the Great.

“Nanak utters the Lord’s praise, in this City of corpses.

He mentions this event (and voices this account):

‘The God who created this colourful world,

And in many pleasures engaged it.

The Lord watches this all, sitting detached and alone.

God is True and the Lord’s decision is based on true justice.

True shall be the judgement pronounced by the Lord.

As the country will be torn to bits,

Hindustan (India) will remember the prediction I made.

Coming in seventy-eight (1521 AD),

They (the Mughals) will depart in ninety-seven (1540 AD).

Then another hero will (appear on the stage) – to rise up to uproot them’.

Nanak utters the word of Truth –

Truth he utters; truth that the time calls for”.

[and proclaims the truth at the right time]. (32)

After this wonderful hymn had been recited by Guru Nanak, one Brahmin heard about it and wanted to meet Nanak in person. Hence, the Brahmin filled a plate with resins and went to see the Guru. On seeing him, the Brahmin said: 'O merciful! The wrathful hymn you sang, please repeat it'. Nanak replied that the emotion had now gone. Hence, the hymn could not now be repeated.

Then Guru Nanak went on to tell the Brahmin and his family not to stay here. He told them move to the pond, about a mile away. Hence, the Brahmin took his family to the pond. When morning arrived, Emperor Babar attacked. He also went onto attack Saedpur. Babur massacred all the villages nearby, killing both the Hindus and the Muslims. The Pathans were furious.

Babur's foot soldiers bound all the women, young and old. All the men were killed, the houses were looted and demolished. Those arrested were forced to march. Nanak's hymn had predicted the great havoc. God listens to Faqirs (Holy men), who keep faith in God. Such Fakirs are ever satisfied - having controlled the five-elemental physique, they should be rendered service.

On the third day, Guru Nanak entered Saedpur. When he looked at the village, blood was shed everywhere. Nanak asked Mardana: 'What is this land?' Mardana replied: 'O Baba! All happened as you said it will'. Then Nanak asked Mardana to play his rubab. When Mardana started to play the rubab, Nanak recited another a hymn: -

"Where are the games, the stables, the horses, and the chariots?

Where are the drums, the flutes, and the blow-horns?

Where are the heroic soldiers, the scarlet uniforms, and the sword-belts?

Where are the beautiful women with their finger rings,

Beholding in their hand-mirrors their elegant faces?

They are no longer to be seen here.

"This is Your world; You are the Lord of the Universe.

In an instant You make and unmake.

You distribute the wealth as it pleases You.

"Where are the grand gates, mansions, and the magnificent palaces (with their domes)?

Where are those elegant caravanserai?

[Caravanserai refers to the beautiful roadside inns, where travellers could rest].

Where are the beautiful brides, relaxing on a cosy cushion; seeing whom, one gets no sleep?

Where are the betel-leaf sellers, the chambermaids, and the harems?

They have all vanished like the shadow".

*“For the sake of wealth, so many have been ruined.
This wealth has disgraced so many – led so many astray.
It is difficult to gather wealth, without committing sin.
When one dies, their wealth does not accompany them.
Those that the Creator Lord destroys (casts off),
the Lord first strips them of virtue”.*

*“When they heard of the invasion of Emperor Babur,
Millions of the Muslim divines (spell-workers) prayed to stop the invader.
Babur burnt down ancient (well built) temples and the rest houses.
He cut the princes from limb to limb, throwing them to the dust.
None of the Mughals was blinded by such spells (of the spellbinders).
No magic or charm (written on a paper) could save the people from disaster”.*

*“The battle raged between the Mughals and the Pathans,
And their swords clashed on the battlefield.
The Mughals fired with their guns,
Whilst the Pathans attacked with their elephants.
O Siblings of Destiny: Those whose letters (of their record)
were torn up in God’s Court, they are destined to die”.*

*“Dishonoured were the women of Hindus, Turks (Muslims), Bhattis and Thakurs.
[Bhattis were a caste of Rajputs and Jats of Northern India. Thakur is an Indian feudal title].
These women had their gowns torn from head to toe.
In cremation-yards, some found their resting places.
Those whose brave husbands did not return home; how did they pass their nights?”
[This hymn refers to the mourning of the dead, during Babur’s invasion].*

"The Lord God is the Creator (of the Universe).

The Lord God acts and causes others to act.

To whom should we complain?

Both pain and pleasure come by God's Will.

To whom should we go and cry?

The Lord is pleased with the commands issued:

Nanak says, we receive what is written in our destiny". (33)

Chapter 24 (The Emperor meets the Guru)

Introduction

This chapter has a historical background. The Emperor Babur was then the ruler of Kabul (now in modern day Afghanistan). He first made assaults on his original home 'Khurasan' (now in modern day Iran).

This chapter also depicts the state of the degradation of the Pathan rulers of India, during the time of Babur's invasion. Guru Nanak's hymn below, was uttered at the time of Babur's second invasion of India. Nanak himself suffered imprisonment in his hands.

Wherever the Kingship of Babur prevailed, the Pathans were taken prisoner. After conquering India, he marched towards Khurasan (in Persia, Central Asia). Guru Nanak followed. Babur was not just an Emperor but also a member of the Kalandar sect of wandering Sufi dervishes. During the day, he did his kingship.

However, at nighttime, Babur bound his feet with an iron chain with head overturned. After midnight, he did a lot of prayers and meditation. When morning came, Babur got up to offer 'namaz' (prayer) and also to read the Koran. Afterwards he ate 'hemp' (a cannabis drug). As Guru Nanak was with the prisoners, he asked Mardana to play the rubab. Nanak then recited a hymn: -

"Having conquered Khurasan, Babur terrorised Hindustan (India).

Our Creator-Lord has not taken the blame

but has sent the Mughal (Babur) as the Messenger of Death.

There was so much slaughter that the people screamed.

O God, did Thou feel no compassion for them?"

"O Creator Lord, Thou belongs to all.

If an aggressor were to attack another aggressor,

Then no one feels any grief in their mind". (34)

Background to the next hymn

In this hymn below, Guru Nanak is making use of animal symbols. It refers to the tigers (Barbur's ferocious troops), the cattle (India's weak rulers), and the dogs (the extravagant Pathan/Lodhi rulers of India). By 'jewels', Nanak is patriotically referring to the people and the resources of India.

*"However, when a powerful tiger attacks a herd of innocent cattle,
then the Master must be called to account.*

The jewel (of my motherland) has been laid waste and defiled by dogs.

[The dogs have spoiled and laid waste the priceless gem of my country].

No one pays any attention to the dead, no one mourns them.

O Lord, You Yourself unite; You Yourself separate. This is your privilege".

*"If someone gives themselves a great name,
and indulges in all the pleasures of the mind;*

In the eyes of the Lord God,

they are just a worm that feeds on a few grains.

*Nanak: Only one who dies to the self (ego) while yet alive,
obtains the blessings, by chanting the Lord's Name". (34)*

When Emperor Babur heard this hymn, he said: 'O friends! Bring This Fakir (holy man) to me'. Once Guru Nanak was brought before the Emperor, Babur said: 'O Fakir! Repeat what you have just sung'. Hence, Nanak recited the hymn again. Nanak opened the eyes of the emperor. Babur then said: 'O friends! This fakir is a gentle fellow'.

Babur then opened his box of marijuana and offered it to Guru Nanak: 'O fakir! Do have some'. Then Nanak said: 'O Emperor! I have already taken the drug. The effect of the drug that I have taken, it never goes away'. Then Babur replied: 'O fakir! What is that drug that you take, whose effect never goes?' Nanak then got Mardana to play his rubab, whilst he recited this hymn: -

"O Lord God! Fear of Thy is my hemp-drug.

My mind is the leather pouch which holds it.

I am intoxicated with Thy love; detached and alone.

My hands are the begging bowl

but I hunger only for a glimpse of the Lord.

For this, I beg at Thy door – everyday and forever".

"I yearn, for Thy sight.

O Lord, I beg at Thy door. Bless me Thou, with Thy Grace".

[I am a beggar at Your door – please me with Your charity].

"Saffron, flowers, musk oil (of the deer) and gold may be offered by all castes.

[These objects are believed not to be 'polluted' by the touch of lower castes]

The scent of sandalwood, and of the Lord's saints also,

make fragrant all those who come in contact with them".

"No one says that (clarified) butter or silk are polluted.

Such are the Lord's saints, whatever their caste or social status.

They who surrender themselves to the Lord's Name, and are attuned to God,

Nanak begs for charity at their door". (35)

Emperor Babur was so delighted with this hymn, that he said to Guru Nanak: 'O fakir! Stay with me'. Nanak replied: 'Emperor! I will stay for a day'. Then Babur said: 'Stay for three days'. Nanak then agreed to do this. Nanak saw the suffering of the prisoners held by Babur. Then Nanak asked Mardana to play his rubab, whilst he sang the following hymn: -

"Their hairstyles were combed into plaits and the parting painted with ruby red colour.

Now their head of hair has been cut with scissors, and their throats are choked with dust.

These ladies lived in spacious mansions but now they are not allowed near them".

"Greetings to You, O Father Lord, Greetings to You!

Primal Creator! Your limit is not known.

Many times, you continuously make and change the Scene of Your Play".

*“When the beautiful ladies were married,
their husbands looked handsome beside them, lending them glory.
The brides came in decorated palanquins;
their arms dangled with bangles made of ivory.
Water is sprinkled over the heads of the bride.
Glittering fans are waved above them, to keep them cool”.*

[The purpose of sprinkling water over the bride’s head, is to protect her from the evil eye]

*“The brides were offered ‘lakhs of rupees’ when they sat,
and ‘lakhs of rupees’ when they stood.*

[‘Lakh’ refers to one hundred thousand. Here, ‘rupee’ refers to an Indian coin].

*They ate nuts, coconut pulp and dates;
whilst they rested comfortably upon their couches.
Today, a rope is put around their necks
and their necklace of pearls is broken into bits”.*

*“Their wealth and youthful beauty,
which gave these women so much joy have now become their enemies.
The conqueror gave the order,
the soldiers dishonoured them and carried them away.
If it is pleasing to God’s Will, the Lord grants greatness;
if it is pleasing to God’s Will, the Lord bestows punishment”.*

*“Should one meditate on God beforehand,
then why should they receive punishment?
The Kings had lost their heads and took pleasure in parties.
Since Babur’s rule has been proclaimed,
not even the (Pathan) princes get their bread to eat”.*

“The Muslims have lost their ‘Namaz’ (prayer times).

The Hindus have lost their ‘puja’ (ritual worship).

Without their sacred squares,

how can Hindu women bathe and anoint their foreheads with the saffron mark?

(Without plastering their kitchen-square, Hindu women can’t do ritual cooking).

In their time, they never remembered the Lord Ram.

Now they are not accepted, even if they shout Allah.

[‘Ram’ and ‘Allah’ are the Hindu and Muslim names for God].

Now before Khuda (God), Muslim women dare not bow their head”.

[This verse refers to Muslim women not being permitted to enter the mosque].

“Some (warriors) return home after the carnage.

From them, some ask about welfare of their relatives (on the battlefield).

For some it is pre-ordained, that with their spouses gone,

they shall sit and cry out in pain.

Whatever is the God’s Will, that alone happens.

O Nanak, what is the fate of humankind?” (36)

When Guru Nanak sang this hymn, he was his real self. Then Babur went over to Nanak, who was lying down - asked what had happened to him. The people said that Nanak was a very empathetic person. He had witnessed God’s calamitous event. Then Babur replied: ‘O friends! Fold your hands to God that the Fakir gets up’. Nanak soon got up.

When Guru Nanak got up, there was the flash of an enormous light – as if thousands of suns had risen. Babur paid homage and said to Nanak: ‘You be merciful’. Then Nanak said: ‘O Emperor! If you ask for mercy, then please release all the prisoners’. Then Babur submitted one request: ‘I may say if you allow’.

When Guru Nanak gave him permission to ask, Babur said: ‘If you give a word, then I will speak out’. Nanak then asked him, what he wanted. Babur then said: ‘I beg this thing only that my emperorship may go on succession-wise’. Nanak replied: ‘Your emperorship shall last a long time’. After this, Babur released all the prisoners. Nanak then left him and continued his journey.

Chapter 25 (Nanak camps on the riverbank)

Guru Nanak travelled through jungles and foreign lands. After visiting the river area of the Ravi Chenab (in India), he finally decided to settle in the Punjab. When he returned to the Punjab, he arrived at a spot on the bank of the River Ravi. There was a lot of excitement there. If anybody heard about this place, they went there.

The people were told that a God-loving fakir named 'Nanak' had been born. He was instructed by the Lord. The many who congregated there, became his disciples. Whoever went to see the Guru was pleased. Whatever he said was true and able to be seen or understood. Whatever verses Nanak uttered, the fakirs (who gathered there) sang them with 'reeds' (a musical instrument):-

"Falsehood will come to an end, O Nanak, and Truth will prevail in the end". (37)

[The false ones will definitely lose before God, and the true ones will survive].

The place of Guru Nanak, by the riverbank was greatly appreciated by all. If any Hindus, Muslims, celibates, ascetic leaders, sadhus (covered in ash), vegetarians, udasi, householder, mendicant, Khan Courtier, Nobles or any Karori Landlord visited; they all left impressed with the Guru. Everyone offered their praise.

Chapter 26 (The village of Kartarpur)

Introduction

This final chapter is about a man who has been given the name of 'Karoria'. This might not have been his real name because the author might not know it or forgotten it. 'Karoria' could have been the name or the title of his clan or his caste. The name 'Karoria' could also come from the word 'Crore' which means ten million. He seems to have been a rich Muslim landlord who was concerned that a Hindu Guru Nanak was undermining the faith of the Muslims, on his land.

People sometimes get confused when Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, is referred to as a Hindu in the early historical manuscripts. Nanak was born a Hindu like Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was born a Jew. During his lifetime, Nanak's followers belonged to the 'Nanak-panth' sect. 'Panth' just means 'path'. Hence, Nanak-panthis followed the teachings of Guru Nanak. There was also the 'Kabir-panth'.

In early Sikhism, the place used for Congregational prayers was called a 'dharamsala'. It was a place of worship. It was different from modern usage which generally limits the term to a resting place. Wherever Guru Nanak went, he called upon his disciples to set up 'dharamsalas' and congregate in them to repeat God's Name, and sing the Lord's praises. He also started a new town. Nanak said, as all land on Earth belongs to the Creator (Kartar), this place will be called 'Kartar-pur' (Creator's town).

Near to where Guru Nanak was living, there was a village. In this village lived someone called 'Karoria'. He enquired about Nanak because his name had become famous. Karoria learnt that Nanak had spoilt the Hindus and even the Muslims were now losing their faith: 'What religion do the Muslims have, that they can have faith in the Hindu Nanak?'

Karoria made plans to go and see Guru Nanak. He wanted to tie Nanak up and bring him back to his own village. As he climbed the horse, it jumped. Hence, Karoria did not go on that day but rode his horse the next day. Whilst on his way to see Nanak, Karoria became blind midway during his journey. He then sat down.

Then some people told Karoria that Guru Nanak was a Great Pir (a holy man): 'You must meditate on him'. Then Karoria started to praise Nanak. Some people even bowed down to the Guru. Then Karoria said that Nanak is a great person. When Karoria again tried to ride his horse, he again fell off because he couldn't see anything.

Then the people said to Karoria; 'O Master! You are wrong. You cannot ride the horse. Guru Nanak is a Great Pir. You should go on foot to be forgiven'. Hence, Karoria then decided to walk. [Hence, his eyesight was restored]. When he saw the Guru's divine court, he bowed and greeted from there. When Karoria came near to the Guru, he showed his respects at the feet of Nanak.

Guru Nanak was pleased with Karoria. Karoria was delighted with the Guru and ended up staying with him for three days. Before leaving, Karoria said: 'Nanak-ji! If you allow, I will donate a piece of land in your name. Name it Kartarpur. Whatever is produced, it will be given to the dharamsala'. When Nanak's father Kalu learnt of a village set up and settled by his son, he visited it with others.

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1. These gods included 44 Sidhas, 9 Nathas, 64 Joginis, 52 brave Heroes, and 6 celibates.
2. Page 16 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) – under ‘Sri Raga’.
3. Page 595 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Sorath’.
4. Page 596 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Sorath’.
5. Page 9 of SGGS – under ‘Rahiras’.
6. Page 1279 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Malar’.
7. Page 1256 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Malar’.
8. Page 1257 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Malar’.
9. Page 991 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Maru’.
10. Page 141 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Majh’.
11. Page 788 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Suhi’.
12. Page 140 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Majh’.
13. Page 141 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Majh’.
14. Page 24 of SGGS – under ‘Sri Raga’.
15. Page 358 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Asa’.
16. Page 557 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Wadhans’.
17. Page 16 of SGGS – under ‘Sri Raga’.
18. Pages 16-17 of SGGS – under ‘Sri Raga’.
19. Page 1291 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Malar’.
20. Page 509 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Gujari’.
21. Page 1383 of SGGS – under ‘Slokas’.
22. Page 594 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Wadhans’.
23. Page 1380 of SGGS – under ‘Slokas’.
24. Page 1088 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Maru’.
25. Page 1384 of SGGS – under ‘Slokas’.
26. Page 1288 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Malar’.
27. Page 956 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Ramkali’.
28. Page 25 of SGGS – under ‘Sri Raga’.
29. Page 463 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Asa’.
30. “First use of Hindustan by Guru Nanak” by Jodh Singh (2004)
31. Page 722 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Telang’.
32. Pages 722-723 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Telang’.
33. Pages 417-418 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Asa’.
34. Page 360 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Asa’.
35. Page 721 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Tilang’.
36. Page 417 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Asa’.
37. Page 953 of SGGS – under ‘Raga Ramkali’.

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This book looks at the life and teachings of the 15th century prophet Guru Nanak, who founded a new spiritual movement. Now Sikhism has become the world's 5th largest religion. Brother Sehan was a close disciple of Nanak. We know this because his name and information about him is mentioned in the list of early followers, produced by the first Sikh scholar Bhai Gurdas.

Brother Sehan produced the first biography of Guru Nanak. His original manuscript has been used as a basis for many other biographies on the founder of the Sikh faith. This manuscript includes Nanak's 'code of conduct' for Sufi Muslims and the 'Babur Bani'. The latter looks at the Mughal invasion of India and some of the prophecies made by the Prophet Nanak.