THE SACRED SCRIPTURE
SYMBOL OF SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS
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THE SACRED SCRIPTURE
SYMBOL OF SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS

(A Comparative, Chronological and Philosophical Approach
to the Guru Grantha)

R K ARORA

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THE Guru Grantha is a compendium on spiritual science. The most important theme which runs through all the pages of the Scripture is love for God, constant singing of His praises and the means by which the soul is united with the Lord. Of course, some references on social and temporal matters are also available here, but the major thrust is towards the inner source of spirituality. The Gurus were completely intoxicated with love for God and through this they attained the supreme state of blessedness and were never tired of explaining the beauties and bounties of such a life. Here we come across mysticism in its most perfect form not as an academic discipline, but as a total experience where the duality vanishes and the object and the subject merge in each other.

The doctrines explained here are of a purely practical nature. Formalism and ceremonial aspect are quite alien to it. The experience of the Beyond and the means to realize it are expressed in a simple language sung in most beautiful notes. Both the end and the means are internal and within the body. The human body thus becomes the laboratory for experiment and experience. The principle of macrocosm and microcosm in the mystical sense finds its fullest expression here.

Each page of the Grantha is drenched in spirituality. The chapters dealing with God, soul, sahaja, śūnya and sabda explain the grand majesty and the mystery of the subtle regions. The experience of these is to be seen to be believed. God in both aspects with or without qualities occupies the prominent theme. The soul is a part of the divine and of the eternal light. Due to past karmas it is enchained in worldly matters. The only purpose of life is to break this cycle of actions and seek communion with the Lord.

There are many hurdles and obstacles in the path of spiritual progress. Mind with its mercurial nature keeps us off the
world, for the world and by the world. Māyā, the great enticer yokes us to the cravings of the world. The Book is quite explicit on these two concepts. It believes that except God, all are under the sway of māyā. Its power and sphere of influence is so vast and tremendous that none is allowed to cross the worldly ocean.

In order to hinder hindrances of mind and māyā the Gurus take refuge in the path of nāma. This path is the simplest, within the reach of all and the most efficacious for inner spiritual growth. It is well graded and starts from constant utterance of His nāma. Contemplation and concentration come at a later stage leading to ajpa japa. Many yogic practices are also pressed into service which are subordinate and auxiliary to this path and these have been explained in peculiar yogic terminology. Love and devotion to the Lord are central to this path and occupy the most prominent position.

In the path of spiritual journey, the importance of Guru is rightly stressed. He is the one whose every pore of being is imbued with God’s love and has reached the last stage of the journey. In the Text we find that on many occasions he comes close to Godhead and guides and directs the activities of the sādhaka towards his upward ascent in the spiritual regions. Without him none has crossed the worldly ocean and without him there is darkness all round.

In the chapters on nādīs, human body and divine marriage we come across many yogic practices, tāntric concepts, both Hindu and Buddhist stating that the truth lies within the body and is to be attained through the body. Cakras, lotuses, daśam dvāra, trikuti, bank nāla, phenomenon of light and music, anhad nada and a host of other terms and concepts clearly show that the authors of the Grantha fully imbibed the practices of other paths—tantras, siddhas and nāthas. But they were quite emphatic on the point that these can be useful only when guided and supported by love and devotion to God.

The mystical message of the Masters is a synthesis of profound significance. They discarded the non essentials from various cults and assimilated the essentials only and with the help of their own experience made this religion at once a new and a modern one.
The author is fully conscious of the fact that spiritual matters and experience do not fall within the scope of mind and intellect, because they are beyond it. Scholarship and spirituality are two separate subjects.

Finally, the author is greatly indebted to M/s Harman Publishing House, New Delhi for publishing this book.

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RAJ KUMAR ARORA
INTRODUCTION

THE eighth century A.D. was a remarkable epoch in the history of Indian religious thought and practice. It ushered in a new social and religious movement which had a long history and embraced nearly the whole of India. Sarahapada, also known as Rahulbhadra, a scholar of Nalanda University was the harbinger of this new age. He condemned the caste distinctions and attacked the ritualistic aspect of religion. He followed esoteric practices and espoused the cause of the underprivileged. He was followed by eminent teachers whom we call the Siddhas. They believed that bliss can be attained through the body which is the microcosm of the macrocosm, through yogic practices shunning all external ceremonies of religion. Their teachings betrayed the general characteristic of atheism as preached by Buddhism. Many scholars believe that this was the period when Mahāyāna began to proliferate itself into several cults and creeds.

We know that Hinduism and Buddhism had come closer to each other and in the Tāntric movement we find their culmination. This gave rise to several cults and creeds like Sahajyāna, the Vajrayāna, the Kālacakrayāna and so on which in several ways were the descendants of the Siddha movement. Along with these cults there emerged another yogic cult, the Nātha cult, which owes much to the cults preceding it. But Nāthism gave much emphasis on esoteric practices such as the culture of breath, the rousing of the kundalini sakti and the nāḍī sādhanā. The followers of this cult, like the Siddhācharyas continued condemning the ceremonial aspect of religion, the hierarchy of social gradation, the Brahmanic supremacy and a variety of other allied topics.

The above mentioned cults and creeds relied mostly on yogic practices to gain the highest end of life. These practices were quite meaningless for the vast majority of people. Moreover,
with the passage of time these degenerated into immoral practices and had also lost social relevance by emphasizing only the achievement of the state of bliss. "But these rebels (Siddhas, Täntrikas, Nāthas) broke but did not build, criticised and did not create, condemned and did not construct. Their solution was only one—merger in the invisible formless vacuity (alakha-nirāṇjana-śūnya)" On the ashes of these cults emerged the Sant mat which carried further not only their ideas on social inequality and ceremonial religion, but also their doctrines giving them their own interpretation and meaning keeping in view the demands of time. We come across here a continuity of certain practices and ideas as is clear from the opinions expressed by many scholars. "The movements launched by Kabir, Dādu, Nanak, Jñāneśvara, Caitanya and a host of other saints and reformers throughout the length and breadth of India, were the efflorescence of the seeds of revolt and levelling sown by the long line of the Siddhas beginning with Sarahapada". "On the debris of Buddhism the medieval bhakti cults came into being. When in the seventh and eighth centuries the Purānic religion was being reorganized and the caste system based on birth was being re-established, some of the elements of Mahāyāna were imbibed by the Śaivas, and the human and bhakti elements were incorporated in their teachings by the saints from the followers of Mahāyānic Buddhism". It is further stated, "Buddhism before its death left its indelible marks in India. Today we call it the Sant mat. The medieval sants can rightly be called the descendents of the prophets of Buddhism". "The Sahajyāna became the ancestor of the mystical cults of north India. Gradually it merged with the Hindu Tantras which was the religion of the common man. The religious current of the Sahajyāna and the Hindu Tantras reached the Sāhajjiya cult of Bengal. The interaction of these currents gave birth to the mystical cults of the sant poets. Here the doctrine of Ātmā coalesced with the invisible nature of sahaja and thus was popularised the concept of Rāma, Hari, and so on." Some of the scholars are of the opinion that the Sant mat is more influenced by the Nātha cult and less by the other cults. "The sants have direct contact with the Nātha yogis. The teachings of these yogis had subtle effect on their doctrines.
My own observation is that the sant mat is the developed and changed form of the Nātha cult. The only difference is that the doctrines of the sants were influenced by other philosophies also, therefore, its form began to appear distinct from the Nāthas".6 "The association of the sant mat with the Nātha cult is further highlighted in these words, “Matsander Nātha prepared the background for the sant mat. If we study the two cults comparatively, we will be firm in our view that the yogini kaula path of Matsander Nātha deeply influenced the nirguṇa school of thought. His ideology, his sādhanā, and the vocabulary which he used are found in the teachings of the sant mat. Our considered view is that the sants of the nirguṇa school were more impressed by Matsander Nātha than Gorakh Nātha. The main reason is that in the doctrines of Matsander Nātha there is chief emphasis on the culture of the mind and emotions while in the teachings of Gorakh the emphasis is on haṭha yoga".7 In this connection the view expressed by Nagander Nātha Upadhyaya is worth quoting.8 He says, “The basis of Gorakh’s doctrines was the Vajrayāna of Buddhism. The principal features of this cult were: sādhanā of the body, ridicule of Brāhmaṇas, adoption of the vāma mārga and the idea of mahāsukha. He (Gorakh) discarded their immoral practices and followed the path of haṭha yoga. His main doctrines were: Godhood, common path for Muslims and Hindus, total dislike of outer forms of religion, discovering of truth within the body, uselessness of the study of religious scriptures, indifferent attitude towards the learned, condemnation of the caste system, importance of guru, breath culture, importance of cakras and the nādis. Thus the Nātha yogīs in a way continued the tradition of the Vajrayāna. Later on the Sant mat of the nirguṇa school adopted and adapted certain doctrines of the Vedanta, the Sufis and the Vaiṣṇavas and moved on the path shown by the Siddhas and the yogīs.

Thus we observe that there is marked continuity of certain religious ideals and practices between the sants including the Sikh Gurus with the Nāthas, the Vaiṣṇavas, the Buddhist Sāhajiyas and the Siddhas. The fact is that several doctrines of the sants betray a strong affinity with the earlier cults. The sants did not promulgate their doctrines in a void, but carried forward many
beliefs and ideas as adumbrated by the leaders of several cults who have been mentioned above. To strengthen our assertion we quote here some views regarding inequality of caste, social distinction and worthlessness of the outer forms of religion as preached both by the Siddha āchāryas and the sants.

There is a very forceful condemnation of scholarship and the study of religious books as a means for spiritual growth.

"The truth can be fully realized by the self and not by the scholar, because what comes within the scope of mind can never be the absolute truth."9 It is further remarked, " Scholars who are dependent on the science of logic and study, are indifferent to the path of true religion".10 The same view is repeated in the Gorakhbāṇī in these words, "you cannot attain Godhood by reading the Vedas, Šāstras, Quran and other religious books. Only the rare yogi knows the true state. The rest of the people are busy with the affairs of māyā".11 "The qazis and the mullas have read the Quran. The Brāhmaṇas study the Vedas. The Kaprias and other ascetics have visited pilgrimages. None of them has attained nirvāṇa".12 The Jain mystics also echo similar views. "Caught up in the meshes of the six systems of Indian philosophy the mind finds no way of getting rid of illusion. The one God is divided in six ways, in six systems and hence none has attained liberation through them".13 Kabir maintains, "The people read the four Vedas, none makes any inquiry about the Lord. The truth has been discovered by Kabir and the pandits are searching the field in vain."14 "The world is dying of reading the books, yet none has become the real pandit, if a single letter of the Dear One be learnt, a man becomes really a learned man".15 In the words of Dādu, "I have composed a few verses and a few sākhis and there arises the conviction in me that I am wise in the world. May be, listening to the discourses on knowledge some śabdas and sākhis are mastered,—and similarly arises the conviction that there is no match for me. What is the good of composing verses and reciting sākhis if the truth of the Lord—the ultimate reality is not realized"?16

The Sikh scripture maintains, 'The man who possesses knowledge and does not know the guru, what is the use of his good deeds and study?'17 Those who read the religious books continuously forget their spiritual duties. They purposelessly come
and go from the world”.18

The utter worthlessness of pilgrimages and wanderings in the forest in themselves for spiritual benefit are forcefully stated here:

“A dog sinking in the Ganges is not considered pure; therefore, bathing in holy places, is futile for pious men. If bathing can confer merit, the fisherman must be the most meritorious, not to speak of fish and other aquatic animals, who are always in water, day and night. It is certain that by bathing even sin is not dissipated because people who are in the habit of making pilgrimages are full of passion and hatred”.19

“It is useless to bathe in the waters of the Ganges. If the water has the capacity to purifying the body, it could also purify the body of the dog and the dog should be fit for liberation. The fisherman who dives in the water should also be liberated from the fetters of the worldly life. So is the case with the fish. None can prevent these poor creatures from getting liberation. Liberation is never possible through going on pilgrimages or bathing, it is to be attained only through the purification of the mind, by purging it of all the impurities of subjectivity and objectivity”.20 The Gorakhbaṇṭi21 speaks in the same strain, “You worship lifeless idols by offering flowers. This will not help you in crossing the ocean of the world. You take a dip in the holy waters. Instead of cleaning the body, enter your Ālmā and clean it of all impurities”. “The pilgrimage of the abode of the Lord is the pilgrimage of Śūnya. The pilgrimage of a holy place is that of water only. The successful pilgrimage is that of the Lord or a meeting with the guru”.22 In the words of Kabir, “The world is tired of going to pilgrimage and bathing in the sacred rivers. People settle near the city of Benaras and drink transparent water, but there is no salvation without the nāma of Hari”.23 “Some go to Mathura, some to Dwaraka, some go to Puri to have a glimpse of Jagannath, but without the association of the saints and sincere devotion to the Saviour, nothing avails at all” 24 The Sikh Scripture continues the spirit of revolt”. If the man is unclean, how can he be purified by worshipping stones, visiting places and pilgrimages, living in jungles and wandering around as an ascetic”25 It is further remarked,
If one bathes at a pilgrimage with an evil heart and the body of a thief, his body is cleaned by bathing but the heart becomes filthier. Outwardly he is clean, but inwardly he is impure. A sadhu possesses goodness, even if he does not bathe in a holy water, and a thief, even if he bathes, remains, a thief.²⁶

The following para shows that the leaders of different cults had total dislike for outward religious signs and observances.

The Sāhajiyas raised the banner of revolt in this connection in these words, "If only the naked attain liberation, the dog and the fox would also attain it. If liberation is attained by tearing off hair, the hips of the young woman also attain it, if liberation can be attained by merely putting on the feathers of a peacock; then the peacock and the deer should also attain liberation, why should horses and elephants be not liberated?"²⁷ "The wearing of a religious dress can never remove the internal desire for worldly enjoyment. O, you, the head of all the shaven headed, you have indeed got your head shaven, but you have not made your heart, free from worldly desires. He who has shaved his heart, that is, has made his heart free from worldly desires, has indeed done away with the world of bondage."²⁸ Fasts, pilgrimage, worship, gifts, offerings and prayers—all these are of no use before yogic practices".²⁹ Kabir revolts against all formalities of the Hindus, the Muslims and the yogis. "The Hindus have died by worshipping gods and goddesses. The Turks have perished by going on pilgrimage, the yogis have died with matted hair, but none of them knew the truth".³⁰ Dādu's criticism is also quite piercing. "The absence of rites and ceremonies and their preachings are repulsive without the name of Rāma—vain are knowledge, yoga and meditation. Wise men there are many—many are the pandits and heroes, innumerable are the ways of outward show, none is the one who is absorbed in the Lord. All are busy in the outward show and carry on propaganda and self advertisement. But Hari is attained through self abnegation, none proceeds towards that path."³¹ The authors of the Sikh Scripture also assert boldly, "One may be able to recite the eighteen Purāṇas and
the four Vedas or may bathe on auspicious days; give to each according to rules prescribed for each caste; fast and observe regulations day and night; or may be a qazi, a mulla, or a shaikh, a yogi, a jangam, or one wearing orche robes, or may be a householder and live accordingly, but without understanding and wisdom (of nāma) all are to go to the house of yama". Here yogic practices are specially ridiculed.

If I live in a cave or a mountain of gold or remain immersed in water; If I remain buried in the earth; or ascend into the sky; or remain suspended head down, if I clothe myself completely or wash (clothes) endlessly; if I read the white, red, yellow and black Vedas at the top of my voice or remain unwashed, it is all in vain. Such practices are all error and evil.

The Brāhmans were also not spared. They were thoroughly exposed and subjected to the harshest criticism.

"O, ye Pandit, you are getting husk and leaving the grain. You are ignorant of the ultimate meaning of the world, but remain satisfied with the scriptures and religious books and their meanings. Those who are proud of their knowledge, but do not know the inner essence of things, they are like a doma who is of low origin and is always at the mercy of others. There is no need to read much. A single flash of real knowledge burns down all vices and virtues". In the words of Dādu,

O, Pandit, you call yourself son of Brahmā—your pot is empty—you do not know about it, you are talking about scriptures, but in your house there is going on the dance of ghosts. Merely by reading you will never reach the ultimate state,—by reading you will never cross to the other shore, by reading scriptures you will never reach the goal

The Grantha maintains, "Listen to me, O, Pandit, you put your truth in all your religious books. The work which brings peace is meditation on God. You stand up and recite the sāstras and the Vedas, but your actions are those of the world.
Inner filth and evil are not cleaned by hypocrisy”.

Caste as a social institution with privileges and rights received trenchant criticism at the hands of the leaders of the above mentioned cults.

The Siddhas made determined efforts to break the barriers of caste. In fact a majority of them belonged to the lower castes. “The fact is that a large number of 84 Siddhas came from lower orders of society, about half of them being of the rank of doma, camāra, caṇḍālas, washermen, oilmen, tailors, fishermen, woodcutters, cobblers and so forth, indicates that the Tantrika movement was accelerated chiefly by the members of the lower orders of society that had always been relegated to an orthodox sociology”. They preached equality for all and broke the barriers of caste. “The teachers who wandered free from the convention of social taboos, did teach through their teachings and actions that there is practically no distinction between a Brāhmaṇa and a domb and a king and a slave. Some of them like Saraha who was a Brāhmaṇa by caste became voluntarily an outcaste; he married a girl of the mean class, a daughter of an arrow maker. In his first dohā, he attacks his former birth, that of the exalted Brāhmaṇa. He could find no reason to regard a Brāhmaṇa as the highest of men”. “Yogis are casteless. Within the order there are no caste restrictions on eating, drinking and smoking”. Kabir also uttered similar views. “If thou thinkest, penalties for deeds—born a Śūdra, you die a Śūdra. If birth from Brāhmaṇa makes you a Brāhmaṇa, why did you not come by any other way? If birth from a Turk mother makes you a Turk, why were you not circumcised in the womb? If you milch black and yellow cows together, will you be able to distinguish their milk?” The idea of equality is carried in the Grantha in these words, “See everywhere and in all men, the light of God. Do not ask a man’s caste. Caste and status are futile, for the one God maketh all”.

Thus from the above we find that the Siddhas were the originators of a powerful movement which ridiculed the age long institutions, both social and religious of the Hindus. Their spirit of revolt continued unabated in different forms and by different cults with varying degrees of emphasis. This spirit filtered down to the Sāhajiyas, the Nāthās and the sants including
the Sikh Gurus. The Sikh prophets continued attacking these outworn customs and ceremonies with considerable zeal and vigour. For this purpose they are indebted to the teachings of the earlier cults as said above. “There is no doubt that the protestant and non conformist attitude towards the system of caste, rigid ritualism, barren scholasticism, worship of a countless number of gods and goddesses, meaningless socio-religious customs and practices etc. of Brahmanical Hinduism, that characterise the teachings of Kabir and Nanak, were all derived from the older protestant and non conformist sects and cults as transmitted to them by the Nāṭhapanthies in the main”.42

S. B. Dasgupta also writes in the same strain,

The Vaiśṇava Sahajjiyas of Bengal and a host of village poets roughly known under the general name of Baul belong directly to the same school of thought; the sant poets of northern and upper India and other devotional lyricists, the mystics of Maratha and even the Sikh and Sufi poets belong to the same school of heterodoxy and criticism.43

“...The traditions of the Siddhas came to an end in India, but their ideas did not go waste. They can be seen in the teachings of the Nāṭhas, Kabir, Nanak and other similar sects” .44 Thus it is observed that the springs of reform and equality were welling up from the main structure of the Hindu society itself centuries before the Muslim conquest and continued to sweep and spread throughout the medieval period of Indian history. But it must be added here that the two movements promulgated by the Siddhas and started by the sants with their emphasis on exposing the social and religious evils had some differences also. The Siddhas and the Tāṅtrikas were influenced by the Buddhist ethos, whereas the sants seem to have also imbibed Vaiśṇava liberalism. Besides the social conditions which prevailed in the eighth century were not the same in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Moreover, the Siddhāchāryas and the sants had different upbringings both spiritually as well as intellectually. The differences between these two sets of leaders were also reflected in their emphasis and approach to social and religious evils. This has been well stated by Dharm Vir Bharati45 in these words:
The criticism of the sants against the outer formalities of religion, caste system and the knowledge of scripture is different from those of the Siddhas to a considerable extent in its content and form. As far as denunciation against caste is concerned there was a marked difference in the social conditions as prevailed during the period of the Siddhas and the sants.

In the eighth century when the Siddhas preached their doctrines the lower classes were not a degraded lot and the Brāhmaṇas did not exert considerable influence in north India. But the Brāhmanic supremacy over social matters was reasserted and vigorous attempts were made to tighten their hold over the system during the times of the sants. This is quite evident from the fact that Ramanand had to encounter very stiff opposition from the orthodox quarters when he spoke against caste system and untouchability. This meant that the caste system once again had become quite rigid, in spite of the liberal teaching by some Vaiśṇava teachers. This rigidity of the caste system provided the necessary spur to the sants to speak against it boldly and effectively. In this endeavour they also got inspiration from the Vaiśṇava liberals. But their criticism of the caste system was influenced by the style and thrust of the Siddhas. Another difference between the Siddhâchâryas and the sants was that they preached and practised their doctrines under different conditions. The Siddhas had inherited the Buddhist traditions which were sufficiently widespread in those days. They did get respectable positions in their own community after exposing the social and religious evils of the Hindu system. By the time the sants made their teachings popular, the Buddhist literature and the Buddhist centres were either in ruins or destroyed. The sants who vehemently opposed the orthodox four fold division of society, had no refuge of their own like the Siddhas. No doubt, the liberals among the Vaiśṇavas were their only ray of hope and support. Wherever it was not available, their own convictions and self-confidence gave them inspiration.

In the same way the intellectual climate had also undergone change. The Buddhist of the Tāntric age criticized what they
felt was the hollowness of the knowledge of the śāstras, but they had their own scholarly traditions in which their teachers were quite proficient. Many among them were masters of Sanskrit, Prākrit and Adbhraṁśās. They were also quite proficient with the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna doctrines and the Śaiva tantras. Some of them had also studied the Vedas and their different branches. By the time of the sants, the vitality of the Buddhist academic traditions had dried up and some of the sants who belonged to the lower castes found it difficult to learn from the Brāhmaṇas. That is why there was a change in the style of criticism regarding Śāstric knowledge. The sants gave more emphasis on feeling and less on study which had been denied to them in the Brāhmaṇic scheme of learning. The sants preached that with study, learning and knowledge one cannot become perfect. They told their followers that devotion to Hari is far better and beneficial than book knowledge. The same criticism was continued in the haṭha yoga cults because for them means were more important than scholarship. The sants accepted the importance of the haṭha yoga practices, but added the element of love and devotion to it”.

But whatever the case may be, the sants including the Sikh Gurus continued to condemn and criticise the social and religious evils of the society within the general framework of the teachings of the Siddhāchāryas. These differences in emphasis and style were quite natural because both of them—the Siddhas and the sants lived and preached in somewhat different environments and they had to adjust their doctrines accordingly. The Sikh Gurus got this legacy, but they moulded it, reformed it and adjusted it to the needs of the times.

Side by side with this legacy the authors of the Grantha also inherited many religious principles, and practices of the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas and the Nāthas. Here in the Guru Grantha we come across many terms and concepts, both Buddhist and yogic used several times generally in the same way and with the same emphasis and sometimes with new emphasis and new meaning keeping in view the changed conditions and their own internal experience. Some of these concepts used in the Holy Book many a time are:

Sahaja, sahajāvasthā, sahajādhyāna sahajāñjana, sahaja-
yoga, sahajaguphā, Šabda of five symphonies, automatic ringing of the Šabda, flow of Šabda, roaring of Šabda, music of vīnā and kinguri, surt Šabda yoga, Šūnya, Šūnya samādhi, Šūnya avastha, Šūnya mandala, mahāŚūnya, nirvāna, nirvānapada, nirañjana, parampada, khasam, nine doors, tenth door, closing of nine doors, opening of the tenth door, oozing of nectar, incessant flow of nectar, drinking of nectar, idā, piṅgalā, sususmaṇā commingling of idā and piṅgalā, triveni, bhanavar guphā, six cakras, piercing of six cakras, haṁsa, body as the abode of truth, macrocosm and microcosm, trikuti, lotus, twelve petalled lotus. sixteen petalled lotus, blossoming of lotus, gagan, gagan maṇḍala. ajpā japa. bank nāla, phenomenon of light and music, the moon and sun, devouring of moon by the sun, mahāsukha, Śiva Śakti, union of Śiva, Śakti, māyā, mahāmāya, guru’s Šabda, unmani, ultīśādhanā, nāda, turiya, samarasa, and so forth. On a careful study of the Sikh scripture it becomes quite obvious that these concepts and terms have been woven into the fabric of Sikh thought. The thread which binds and weaves these terms together and gives them on several occasions a new shape and a new meaning is that of devotion—love for God. In the following pages an attempt has been made to study some important concepts in their historical setting using the analytical and comparative method so as to bring about the main contribution of the Guru Grantha in the realm of philosophical doctrines and practices.

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| अ-स | a   | क-क्र | ka  | ठ-व | ḍha  | र-उ | ra |
| ए-ड | a  | ख-घ | kha | ण-ण | ṇa  | ल-व | la |
| इ-ऍ | i  | ग-घ | ga  | त-थ | ta  | व-व | va |
| ई-ऎ | i  | घ-घ | gha | थ-थ | tha | श-श | sa |
| उ-ऍ | u  | ङ-ऍ | ṇa | द-द | da  | ष-ष | sa |
| ऊ-ऎ | u  | च-च | ca  | ष-ष | dha | स-स | sa |
| ऋ-ऍ | r  | छ-छ | cha | न-न | na  | ह-ह | ha |
| ए-ए | e  | ज-ज | ja  | प-प | pa  | | |
| ऐ-ऐ | ai | झ-झ | jha | फ-फ | pha | | |
| ओ-ओ | o  | ञ-ञ | ŋa  | ब-ब | ba  | | |
| औ-औ | au | ट-ट | ṭa  | भ-भ | bha | | |
| एं-एं | m  | ठ-ठ | tha | म-म | ma  | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | ḷ  | ड-ड | ḍa  | य-य | ya  | | |
| ओं-ओं | | ढ-ढ | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | ण-ण | | | | | |
| ओं-ओं | | त्र-त्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | थ्र-थ्र | | | | | |
| ओं-ओं | | ज्र-ज्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | ञ्र-ञ्र | | | | | |
| ओं-ओं | | ट्र-ट्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | ठ्र-ठ्र | | | | | |
| ओं-ओं | | ड्र-ड्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | ढ्र-ढ्र | | | | | |
| ओं-ओं | | ण्र-ण्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | त्र्र-त्र्र | | | | | |
| ओं-�ं | | थ्र्र-थ्र्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | ज्र्र-ज्र्र | | | | | |
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| ओं-�ं | | ण्र्र्र्र-ण्र्र्र्र | | | | | |
| ऐं-ऐं | | त्र्र्र्र्र-त्र्र्र्र्र | | | | | |
GLOSSARY

Advaita-Vedānta: Non-dualism—belief in One eternal reality.
Aikāntaka-dharma: The religion of one adorable God.
Ajapā japa: Spontaneous and natural recitation of a mantra.
Ākāśa: Void, sky, heaven.
Alakho-nirñjana: God, the indescribable, invisible.
Ali: The left nerve, idā.
Anhad nāda: Śabda-Kinguri—The divine music which rings without striking.
Anahata cakra: The centre opposite the heart.
Ātmā: Soul.
Auls: A class of devotees of perfect men.
Avadhūti: The middle nerve.
Avalokitesvara: A Buddhist deity.
Avatāravāda: The doctrine of incarnation.
Bāṇi: Hymns, Teachings of the saints, the inner sound.
Bāṅka-nala: This is the curved duct through which the mahārasa passes.
Bauls: These were the village singers, both Hindu and Muslim whose approach to divinity was through love and piety.
Bhakti: The doctrine of devotion.
Bhanvargupā: The fourth spiritual region.
Bhujāṅgam: Snake.
Bindu: It is a point at which the perfect experience is opened to the centre and the flow is established.
Brahmarandhra: It is the opening for the pure and perfect experience.
Buddhi: Intellect.
Cakra: Centre. According to the Tantras there are six cakras in the human body. When these are pierced through one attains the supreme state.
Cāṇḍāla: Despised people.
Caryapadas : Collection of songs sung by the Siddhāchāryas.
Cit-śakti : The power of cit to reveal Itself and to know Itself.
Citta : Pure consciousness.
Daśamadīra : The tenth door.
Dāsya : Servant attitude.
Dharma kāya : This represents the anahat cakra. It is the principle of non-dual cosmic existence.
Dhvani : Divine music.
Dohā : Songs sung by the Siddhāchāryas.
Doma : A low class.
Gagan maṇḍala : Sphere of the sky of the second region.
Gagan : Sky, heavens.
Gorakhbāṇi : A text containing the doctrines of Gorakhnātha.
Grantha : The Holy Book of the Sikhs.
Guṇās : The three characteristics—sattava, rajas and tamas.
Guru śakti : The power of the Guru.
Guruvāda : The doctrine giving Supreme importance to the Guru.
Harṁsa : Yogic term for soul.
Hāṭhayoga : Practice of vigorous exercises to attain liberation.
Heruka : Supreme Lord of the Buddhists.
Hukam : God’s will.
Icchā-śakti : The violational nature.
Idā : The left nostril, a nerve.
Jagajīvan Dātā : Life giving Lord.
Jaṅgam : A preacher of the Lingayat religion.
Jāti : Caste.
Jīvas : Souls.
Jīvātma : Soul.
Jñāna-śakti : The power of knowledge.
Jñāna voga : The path of knowledge.
Joti-jot samāna : Merging of Light (Soul) with the light (God).
Judaism : The religion of the Jews.
Kāfīr : Non believer.
Kālacakrayāna : A sect of Tāntric Buddhism.
Kālī : The right nerve.
Kaprias : Mendicants of the Jaivas.
Karma : Actions.
Glossary

Karunā : The female principal.
Kāya-sādhanā : Discipline of the body.
Khasam : The Lord.
Khecarī mudrā : It is a yogic discipline, where the sight is fixed between the eye brows and the tongue extended backward. This leads to the flow of nectar.
Kinguri : A musical instrument.
Kriyā-sakti : Inherent activity of thought, vimarṣa.
Kṛpā : Grace.
Kumbhaka mudrā : The practice of holding the breath in the lungs.
Kundalini sakti : Hidden serpent power.
Lalanā : Left nerve. Idā.
Mādhurya bhāva : Attitude of Love.
Mahāmāyā : The great illusion—ignorance.
Mahāparinirvāṇa : Liberation.
Mahārasa : The great elixir.
Mahāsukha : Profound bliss.
Mahāsūnya : The great void—a term popularised by Buddhism.
Mahāvidyā : Wisdom.
Mahāyāna : A School of Buddhism.
Mantrayāna : A path which believes in the efficacy of mantras. An introductory form of Tāntric Buddhism.
Mānuṣī : Human.
Māyāvāda : The doctrine of māyā.
Mimāṃsa : One of the six systems of Indian philosophy.
Mokṣa : Liberation.
Mudrās : Bodily postures during yogic practices.
Mūlādhāra : The lowest cakra where the serpent power remains coiled.
Nāda : Divine music.
Nāḍī : The nerves.
Nāḍī sādhanā : Discipline of the nāḍīs.
Nāma mārga : The path of nāma.
Nātha : A term added to the name of the followers of Gorakh.
Nāthayogtis : The followers of Gorakhnāth.
Nairāma : The female principal—karuṇā or prakṛti.
Neti neti : Not this, not this—a term used in the upaniṣads.
Nevali: A yogic exercise.
Nirañjana: A term applied to God.
Nirguna: God without attributes.
Nirvāna-pada: The state of liberation.
Nirvṛtti: A state of rest, static aspect of the ultimate reality.
Nyāya: One of the six systems of Indian philosophy, Kanada is the author of this system.

Omkāra: God. A term widely used by the Hindu and Buddhist works, yogīs and sants.

Pañcakarma: A yogic text.
Pañcha Bhaṭṭika: The first five states of existence.
Paramapada: The highest state of liberation.
Parama tattva: The great essence.
Parinirvānā: The state of liberation.
Pātālas: The lower regions.
Pīṅgala: The right nostril, the right nerve.
Prajñā: Śūnyatā.
Prānavidya: Knowledge of life.
Prāṇāyāma: Practice of breath control.
Prakṛti: Nature.
Pranava: It constitutes three letters a-u-m or Om.
Pravṛtti: A sort of introversion of the faculties, when psychic forces move upward. The state of activity.
Prema-aspects: Attitude of love.
Puruṣa: God of the Śāṅkhya philosophy.

Qudrat: Nature.
Rabek: A musical instrument.
Rajas: One of the three guṇas.
Rasanā: The right nerve.
Śabda: Word-sound current.
Śabda yoga: Esoteric and spiritual exercises leading to the union of soul with God.
Sādhanā: Physical and psychic discipline.
Śaivite: Followers of śaivism.
Sādhaka: An aspirant.
Sādhus: Mendicants.
Saguṇa-Brahman: God with attributes.
Glossary

*Sah* : A part of the mantra uttered by the followers of Gorakh.

*Sahaja* : A state of perfect bliss.

*Sahajajyāna* : It believes to realize the ultimate nature of the self by following the most natural way.

*Sahajajñāna* : The ultimate wisdom.

*Sahaja samādhi* : Absorption in the state of ultimate perfect happiness.

*Sahajāvasthā* : The state of perfect bliss.

*Sahaja yoga* : The path leading to the state of sahaja.

*Sāhajīyās* : The teachers of the doctrine of sahaja.

*Sahajāyāna* : A path which believes in attaining the state of sahaja.

*Saguṇa* : God with attributes.

*Śaivites* : Followers of Śiva.

*Sakā* : Friend.

*Samādhi* : Total absorption.

*Samāna* : Equal, same.

*Samarasā* : The realization of the universe amidst all its diversities.

*Samantabhadra* : A Bodhisattva.

*Sāṅkhya system* : One of the six systems of Indian philosophy.

*Sāṅkhīnī* : This is the curved duct and from it pours the nectar into the tenth door.

*Sanyāsī* : A recluse.

*Sant mat* : The doctrines of the saints.

*Sarhapa* : A Siddhāchārya.

*Sāstric* : Pertaining to religious scriptures.

*Satchidānand* : Truth-beauty-goodness.

*Sattva* : One of the three gunas.

*Siddhas* : Siddhāchāryas-Siddha-yogis. A class of people whose ultimate goal is to attain the state of sahaja.

*Simran* : Recitation.

*Soham* : I am that.

*Sumū sabda* : Music of the void region.

*Śūnya* : Void.

*Śūnyāvasthā* : The state of being void.

*Śūnya maṇḍala* : The region of nothingness or void.

*Śūnya-samādhi* : Absorption in the state of void.
Śunyatā : The male principal—Puruṣa.
Śunyavāda : The doctrine of void.
Surta : Soul-consciousness-inner attention.
Surt śabda yoga : Practice of sound current. Union of Soul with God.
Susuṣmaṇa : The middle nāḍī.
Tamas : One of the three guṇas.
Tantras : Tantra is a class of texts which promulgates profound matters covering science of cosmic principles and the science of mystic sound.
Tāntrika : Followers of Tantras.
Tapa : Austerities.
Theistic : Believer in God.
Triveṇi : The place where iḍa, piṅgala and the suṣumnaṇa—the three nāḍīs meet.
Trukuti : Appallation of the second spiritual region.
Turiya state : Super Conscious state, where the soul makes its first contact with the śabda.
Ulti-sādhanā : It is a regressive process involving yogic exercises which give an upward motion to the whole biological and psychological system.
Upāya : Karuṇā.
Vaikuntha : Heaven.
Vajrayāna : A form of Buddhist mysticism.
Vāma mārga : The left handed path.
Vātsalya : Attitude of parental affection.
Vikalpa : A determination consisting of conceptual unification of the many into one.
Vimarṣa-ṣakti : Power of thought.
Viṣuddha cakra : It is at the junction of the spinal chord and the medulla oblangata.
Yajñas : Sacrifices.
Yama : A Hindu god i.e. The god of death.
Yoga : Union.
Yogi : A person who practices yoga.
Yoginikula : A tāntrik work.
Yugas : Age or cycle of Time.
THE concept of God is quite old in the history of Indian philosophy. Its earliest references are found in the Rgveda. "That which exists is One, sages call It by various names"—so says one of the hymns. It is quite true that the Rgvedic religion was anthropomorphic in nature, but here we get a clear reference to the God of all gods who directed and superintended the work of the Āryan polytheism. With the passage of time there was widespread opposition to the ritualistic aspect of the Vedic religion, and in this atmosphere the Upaniṣadic philosophy placed before us a very comprehensive account of God mentioned above. This attributeless God or the nirguṇa-Brahman was beyond the cognition of mind and buddhi (intellect). He was clothed in such a subtle and abstruse language that it failed to carry conviction with a section of the people after some time. These ideas along with some other beliefs convinced Buddha to reject them outright and instead he exhorted his adherents to follow the path of nirvāṇa. Jainism also exhibited its reluctance to accept the Upaniṣadic current of the thought about God. Later on, in the Purāṇic age we find that the Vedic religion was resurrected in many aspects, and in its pantheon many more gods and goddesses were added, thus making the already existing list of deities bigger in volume. Śaṅkara, the greatest exponent of Indian philosophy, preached his monism in forthright terms, of course, giving a few references like the Upaniṣads to Īśvara, the qualitiful Brahman in his teachings. The Nātha cult, which was a mixture of Śaivism and Tāntrism, speaks about Śiva, the Supreme God in the Upaniṣadic idiom.
Śaṅkara's non-dualism was cold and lacked in warmth, so was the case with the Nātha cult and the various offshoots of Mahāyāna. Such ideas failed to carry the popular appeal. Moreover, the proliferation of God into various sub-standard deities, along with their meaningless rituals and ceremonies lowered the status of the highest reality to a poor level. In order to do away with these abuses, the leaders of the Bhakti cult placed before us the pristine purity of God in simple and easy language, no doubt, being influenced by the teachings of the earlier cults and philosophies to some extent. Many sants who belonged to this great Bhakti cult spoke about God not as logicians or philosophers, but as profound devotees. The Sikh Gurus by their direct experience and supreme vision expressed their ideas about God, His nature, qualities, powers, etc. in a very touching and soothing language in their hymns. The following is a brief account of their views about God:

**God, the Nirguna**

The Sikh Masters explain in very eloquent terms the nirguna aspect of God. "His name is truth. He does everything. He is without fear or enmity, is beyond time, without form and self-existent. He was true, is true and will remain so".1 "He is the primeval, the infinite and always remains the same".2 "He is unseen, imperishable, unknown and immaculate".3 "The primeval Lord, yonder of the yond, is all by Himself".4 "He is immeasurable and unfathomable".5 "He is unborn, whole, not made of five elements and is eternal".6 "How was He before creation has also been explained, in detail, in these hymns. "When the world existed not, there was no sin or virtue, the Lord was in Śunya samādhi, there was no enmity or jealousy, no form or colour, no joy or pain. He alone was by Himself. There was neither doubt nor attachment".7 It is further said, "When the Lord was in His seat of peace, there was no life, death, or destruction, there was no Citragupta, none bound or released. He Himself is the wonder of the wonders. He came into being by Himself."8 Emphasis on the unity of Godhood is stressed here, "He is the one law, all elements belong to Him".9 "Many are His forms and colours, but He remains one. He is eternal, absolute and one".10 "Remember the one
alone, praise the one, dwell on the one, seek the one alone, sing the praises of the one. He is the one, the one alone, from the one came out many”.11 “Do not believe in trinity, believe in one”.12 The Upaniṣadic idea of neti neti is mentioned here, He is neither young, nor old”.13 “He has neither father, mother, relatives, friends nor wife”.14 Speaking further about His nature it is remarked, “You only know Your greatness, You only know Yourself”.15 His play is indescribable, even the gods are tired of His search. How can the son witness the birth of his father”.16 His association with ṣabda is stressed here, “He has no form or sign. His anhada is subtle, it is sung without striking. He is revealed through the ṣabda”.17 The sahaja state is referred to here, “You are unreachable, primeval, immaculate and absolute. I cannot describe your state of sahaja”.18 Exhausting all worldly language for a description of God the Gurus merely said, “He is the most wonderful”.19 It is further explained, “Wonderful is the nāda, wonderful are the Vedas, wonderful are forms, colours and creatures that wander here. Wonderful is life and its distinctions. Wonderful is water, fire, earth, attachment, detachment, hunger and food. He is far off and near. He is all wonders”.20

We come across several references of this impersonal God in many philosophical texts. “He is the knower, the known and knowledge. He is absolute and formless. He is bliss absolute”.21 “There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor this lightning. He alone shines there, everything shines after. Through His lustre all shine”.22 The idea of negation is mentioned here, “It is neither subtle nor gross, neither long nor short, neither shadow nor dark, neither air nor ether, non-luminous without eye or ear, without organ or mind, and without any interior or exterior”.23 According to Śaṅkara, “Brahman is nirguṇa, nirviṣeṣa and absolute consciousness. It is one, indivisible, without a second, having in itself no distinction”.24 These ideas of the attributeless nature of the highest reality continued to permeate the philosophy of various offshoots of Buddhism and the leaders of the Bhakti cult. “The eternal, immutable existence which transcends the tūriya and all other states is the unconditional absolute, the supreme Brahman or Para-Brahman, without prakṛti or her attributes,
which, as being the inner self and knowing object, can never be the object of cognition, and is to be apprehended only through yoga by the realization of the self".25 Gorakh Natha also echoes similar views, "There is neither beginning nor end, neither day nor night. Where there is no difference, there is the abode of Brahman. He is everywhere. He is neither subtle nor gross."26 Many sants also expressed similar views, "He is as He is. He knows Himself, none other knows Him".27 "He is unreachable, beyond of the beyond and absolute. He cannot be described with the help of language".28 "There is none except Him. You have many names. You are Allah, you are Rāma. You are my Lord".29 "The attributeless nirañjana is in the śūnya state. There is effulgence".30 "Let us reach that place where there is neither the sun nor the moon, neither day nor night. He is in sahaja state.31

Thus we observe that the ideas concerning the nirguna aspect of God as adumerated since the time of the Upaniṣads, continued to grow with varying degree of emphasis. Śaṅkara broadcast the Upaniṣadic doctrine with remarkable clarity. It is true that Buddha refuted the existence of God in any form, but the various offshoots of Buddhism speak of the highest reality in its attributeless form. The Natha cult did not lag behind in this respect. The sants including the Sikh Gurus give supreme importance to their God in His nirguna aspect. The Gurus, while speaking and praising about Him, rightly accept their inability to give complete expression to their profound vision and satisfied themselves by stating that He is the wonder of wonders. This is the most extra-ordinary and exciting experience which they gained after their sādhanā. The reference to śūnya, śabda and sahaja in relation to God as mentioned above shows us that the Masters were marginally influenced by the doctrines of some yogic cults. But it must be frankly admitted that they not only tried to synthesize the best part of the teachings of other cults and creeds as far as this aspect is concerned, but they also expanded and enriched the Upaniṣadic doctrine.

God, the Saguna
But the God without attributes could hardly satisfy the
cravings of the heart. We know that the sants of the Bhakti cult including the Sikh Gurus advocated the path of devotion and, therefore, they must have God who favourably responds to their worship and comes to their aid. Such a God should listen to the prayers of the devotee, love and embrace like parents, forgive sins and exhibit His concern in abundant measure for them. The sants wanted not a cold but a warm God. As is said, “God, in order to be an object of human conception, cannot be attributeless, impersonal spirit—eternal and infinite, of which we can form no idea whatsoever. Such a God is beyond the realization of the human mind. All learned attempts to express the eternal and infinite God remain but idle expressions, ‘words, words, words’, says Prof. Tiel, ‘must become fresh in order to get admission into the human heart”.

The saguna God was popularised by Rāmānuja and Tulsiḍāsa, “The loving personal God of Rāmānuja, so full of grace and compassion to the jīvas or the bound souls, had already gained greater popularity than the formless Brahman of the advaita-Vedānta. Tulsiḍāsa captured the imagination of the people further by making the Godhood live and move in earth”. The Sufis have their own view about this matter. “The essence of God’s essence is love. Before the creation, God loved Himself in absolute unity, and through love revealed Himself in Himself alone. Then desiring to behold that love in aloofness, that love without otherness and duality, as an external object, He brought forth from non-existence an image of Himself, endowed with all His attributes and names”.

The Grantha devotes many hymns to the saguna-Brahman. “He is the treasure-house of virtues. His greatness cannot be measured”. “He is wise, beneficent, of tender heart and of pure form”. “You are the king of kings, the supreme Master; Your tribe is most sublime; you are the supreme father, most glorious; you are the bravest among the warriors, you are the most pious yogi, the creator of the creation, with true court, yours is the most pious sanctuary. You are the most truthful merchant and trader of the eternal virtues. You are the most perfect ascetic; your commandments are most powerful”. Here is a reference to the Vaiṣṇava doctrine, “You are lotus-eyed, sweet-tongued, to you mother Yaśodā fed
with rice and curds. When you were at play and the silver bells of your belt tinkled, the mother was very happy, so superb was your beauty. You have decked yourself with yellow robes; you have teeth like flower-petals; you are always in the company of Rādhā”.

The same idea is further explained in these words: “He incarnated Himself as the fish, the tortoise, the boar, assumed all attributes and played the game of three balls on the banks of Yamunā”.

It is again mentioned, “In whose house is the virgin beauty Lakṣmī, whose lamps are the sun and the moon, there the god of death dances. He is the lion-Lord, in whose house is the four-headed Brahmā, the potter who moulds and shapes the world; in whose house is the crazy Śiva, the world teacher; in whose house are Citragupta, the scribe of vice and virtue of men; Dharmarāja, the lord of dissolution; He is my Lord Śrī Gopāla. In whose house sing the heavenly musicians and singers; all the śāstras sing His praise; in whose nearness abide Arjuna, Prahlāda, Dhrīva and all the Siddhas and the Buddhhas”.

Here are references to nirvāṇa, and śūnya, “He is the God of nirvāṇa”. “He illumines in the śūnya region, there is neither the sun nor the moon, there the primeval Lord lives in bliss”.

Kabir echoes similar views, “If the whole water of the ocean is turned into ink, the trees in the jungles are made the writing pens and the earth the paper, even then the qualities of God cannot be explained”.

“In His court crores of suns and moons shine, thirty-three crore gods take their food there; there are several oceans, Indras, Dharmarājas, mountains Gandharvas, and so on. It is difficult to describe the grandeur of His court.”

It seems that the Sikh Gurus eulogise the qualities of the saṃsāra-Brahman in the most superlative terms. The above account shows that they draw heavily from the Vaiṣṇava doctrines. The terms śūnya, nirvāṇa, etc. prove some impact of Buddhism on them, but nowhere do they use their meanings in the Buddhist sense. At certain places the nirguṇa and the saṃguṇa aspects of the Lord appear to coalesce. Rightly the Hindu pantheon is allotted a secondary position in the court of this God.
A BRIEF SURVEY OF GOD'S QUALITIES

God and His Immanence
The Sikh Gurus place before us such a wonderful picture of this quality of God that it appears certain that they saw Him everywhere and felt His presence in all directions. They utilise several worldly symbols and idioms to describe their experience. "He is in the heart of all. He is ingrained in their being".45 "Before me is God, behind me is God and in the middle is also God".46 The idea is explained through several similes in these words, "He Himself is the fisherman, Himself the fish, the river, the iron-ball and the net".47 "He is in the jungle; He is in the grass and over the mountains. He is in the fire, water, air, four quarters and ten directions. There is no place without Him".48 "He Himself is the teacher, the pupil and He Himself instructs".49 "He Himself is the angel, attendant of the angels, divine musician, utterer of the six systems of Indian philosophy, Śiva, Śaṅkara, Maheśa, yogī, reveller, sanyāśi, and wise of the wise".50 "He Himself is the essence of the Vedas, the Purāṇas and the śāstras. He Himself utters it. He Himself is pleased. He Himself is the householder and detached. He himself moves us to perform good deeds and Himself withdraws us from there. He himself bestows pleasures and pains, and blesses us with bliss".51 "You yourself are the man and woman, the chess-board (the world) and the chess-figures (the creatures). You are the ring of the play, the players and the figures. You are in the trees, fruits, flowers, black bee, earth, sea, fish, tortoise, the creator and the cause".52 Summing up it is remarked, "The light of God pervades the egg-born, foetus-born, sweat-born and the earth-born".53 Such an elaborate account of the immanence of God as described by the Gurus shows that not a particle or a corner is left out by them where the power of God is not felt.

Similar ideas expressed by the yogis and the sants deserve our attention. "But as He is the individual soul in every body, He is the perpetrator of cruelty and injustice and He is the victim of cruelty and injustice; in every warfare He fights against Himself, He is both the victor and the vanquished, He is the master and the slave, the parent and children, the teacher
and the pupil, the wise and the unfortunate and so on. By virtue of His vimarsa-śakti He puts Himself in an infinite variety of situations, in an infinite number of individual bodies and as a plurality of individual souls and experiences, He enjoys Himself in all situations”.54 According to Kabir, “God is immanent everywhere. There is nothing which is separate from Him. He is in the world and the world is in God”.55 “Wherever my vision goes, I see the Lord alone”56 Namadeva and Dadu also speak in similar strain. “Understand this thing perfectly that God is present in all”.57 “As is the oil in the oil seeds, fragrance in the flowers and ghee in milk, so the power of the Lord is present in all creatures”.58 The Sufi sants also uttered the same experience. “He is one in all things, to conceive ourself as separate from God is an error”59

Thus we observe that the detailed description of the immanence of God given by the Sikh Masters shows the highest stage of mysticism which they experienced.

God, the Creator
The Gurus provide us with a clear cut answer to the question concerning the creation of the world. “For aeons of ages, there was chaos everywhere. The boundless Lord was seated by Himself alone and detached in the heart of chaos. The world of strife was still not born. Thus 36 yugas were passed in that state; as was His will, the absolute Lord worked. He had no rival, when He created the four yugas. He remained hidden within all”.60 The fact of creation is the work of a magician. “When God, the magician, beats His drum, all come to see His play. When he assembles His play, then He is alone imbued with Himself”.61 “Creation is due to the will of the Lord. If He wills, He expresses Himself in creation, and when He wills, He becomes the one alone”62 “At the time of creation He did not consult anybody. He did it all by Himself”.63 A pointed answer is provided here, “When there was no creation, what deeds did the men do which led to their rebirth? The Lord Himself stages His play and sees it so. It is He, who creates all”.64 Speaking about the whole creation the Grantha mentions, “Why not dwell on the Lord of nirvāṇa who has created so many lac species?”65 It is further remarked, “He has
created many Viṣṇus, Brahmās, and Śivas and merged them in Himself. He has created many māyās".  
  
He has created ego and ingrained greed into His creatures".  
  
"Both wisdom and ignorance are Your creation." He has created the three modes and accumulated men with māya".

It will be interesting to compare this aspect of the quality of the Lord with the views expressed by the holders of other doctrines. According to Gorakhnātha, “Śiva though dwelling in His own perfectly blissful, differenceless and changeless nature with His infinite power in Him, playfully (without any effort or out of fullness of His nature) manifests and enjoys Himself in manifold forms, and they practically appear in the dual aspect of the enjoyer and the enjoyable, the creator and the created, the supporter and the supported, the soul and the body, and the self and its expression”. This view as held by the Sufis, is mentioned by Ram Pujan Tewari in these words, “I was a hidden treasure. I thought that people should know Me. Thus I created the world”. It is further remarked, “Verily, your Lord is God who created heaven and earth in six days. He created the sun, the moon and the stars, subject to His laws by His commands”. Dadu speaks similarly, “Oṃkāra took his birth from Him. From the five elements was born the body of many forms and also all the expanse. From the body were born the distinctions of I and that, and thence the castes”.

The above-mentioned views show that the work of creation is ascribed to God alone, who was absorbed in Himself before creation. His proliferation into several forms is the work of His will, which few can understand. His playful nature is the cause for the beginning of the world. The Gurus boldly assert that the differences of this world, both in quality and quantity, are due to Him. They believed that God is the only source of what we see around us.

**God, the Merciful**

The God of the Holy scripture is full of compassionate feelings and is always ready to come to the aid of his devotees in time of need and difficulty. He is not a cold God with stern look and
unconcerned about the problems of creation. He has warm feelings for all. “He also sustains the ungrateful. He is the beneficent Lord of mercy”.75 “He is the wish-fulfilling jewel and the embodiment of mercy”.76 He also forgives all. “He forgets our demerits, because he is the Lord of forgiveness”.77 “The speech of my Lord is nectar-sweet. He never speaks bitter. He overlooks my misdeed. It is His infinite nature to purify the sinners”.78 The Holy Book exhorts us by mentioning that “Rest thy hope in this, He is the hope of all.”79

The merciful nature of the Lord is highlighted in other religions also. “Avalokiteśvara is personification of mercy. He abrogates and nullifies the old law of karma and he visits the perfactory of airci and makes it a cool and pleasant place”.80 Islam also does not lag behind in describing this quality of God. “If you love Allah then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your faults and Allah is forgiving and merciful”.81 “The God is one God. There is no god but He, the Merciful, the compassionate”.82 Dadu also expresses similar ideas, “When the heart unites with the Merciful, there remains no distinction”.83

The Sikh Gurus make a welcome departure from the Upaniṣadic doctrine of God in this particular respect. They make Him a loving deity who forgives and showers mercy. References of the merciful nature of God are available in the Bodhisattva doctrine and Sufism as stated above, but it is interesting to learn that the yogic cults are silent about this aspect.

This all-encompassing merciful nature of God as described in the Grantha brings courage to all and re-awakens faith in them.

God and His Fear
In addition to the loving aspect of the Lord, the Sikh Masters also speak about the fear-aspect of God. They believed that this fear is very helpful in the process of spiritual path. The Grantha is quite emphatic on this point. “Without the fear of the Lord none can worship Him, nor can love Him”.84 “Without His fear the cloth (of mind) is dyed not and the mind cannot
become pure. Fear gives birth to several divine qualities. "From the fear of the Lord emerges bhakti and detachment." Here in these hymns fear is given a very high position. "The wise always live in the fear of the Lord. It destroys our illusion." "In the fear of God we attain the fearless Lord." "Through fear we attain the state of sahaja and light is merged in light." Fear and love are mentioned together in these hymns. Without the fear of the Lord, none is blessed with love, and none can cross the ocean of existence. On whom is the mercy of Lord is blessed both with love and fear of God. Without fear one cannot worship the Lord. It is love in fear of God that one is crowned with the worship of the Lord. The authors of the Holy Book describe the importance of guru for cultivating this quality, "When one meets the guru, fear emerges in the mind and one is dyed in love." From the true guru is born the fear of the Lord and thus we attain the door of salvation. The Gurus believed that the whole creation is working in the fear of the Lord. "In the fear of the Lord blows the wind, the rivers flow, the earth is crushed under burden, clouds roam in the sky, Dharmarāja stands at the gate, and the sun and the moon shine. In His fear are all the Siddhas, Buddhhas, Nāthas, warriors and heroes. Men come and go, but the writ of Lord's fear is over the heads of all." How to inculcate fear is stated in this hymn, "When one leaves one's cravings, fear abides and the actions become pure.

The importance of fear in the religious quest has also been mentioned in the earlier Islam. "Love is foreign to Semitic peoples, only fear could have improved them." "The fear rather than love of God is the spur to Islam." Both fear and love are stressed here. "In his attitude towards God, in his journey through life, man has to balance himself on two things, namely, the fear of God and the love of God. Mere love of Allah alone may lead man, in his first vision of mystic consciousness, to lose that respect for the power, the might, and the omnipotence of Allah, which is due to Allah.

Thus, from the above discussion we observe that the Sikh faith is influenced by Islam to some extent in this particular aspect of God. But the Gurus gave us a very wide dimension of this quality when they assert that the whole creation is
working due to the fear of the Lord. Here, the love and the fear aspects have been happily blended in their teachings.

**God and His Grace**

The doctrine of grace occupies the central position in the Sikh religion. As He is great, so is His grace. It works in myriad ways. Meeting a true guru is an act of grace. "Through His grace we find the true guru". One gets all spiritual attainments due to His grace. "It is through His grace that we love the Lord and meditate on śabda". "One may try as many times as one can, but cannot discover nāma without His grace". "On whom falls the grace of the Lord becomes entitled for the highest state". "When You are in grace, You come splendidly in the mind. I find nine treasures, I practice the mantra-yoga of the guru and I merge in truth". Grace removes our troubles. "By His grace our sorrows and afflictions are removed". In this hymn, grace is given the highest position. "Distinctive dress, knowledge of the scriptures, concentration, etc. are of no avail. On whom is the Lord's grace becomes His devotee. Numerous good actions, practice of virtues and austerities, visits to holy places, practice of sahaja-yoga in the wilderness, heroic acts—all these are false. Only His grace is the standard of His approval". All share His grace. "On everybody is Your grace. Some get more, others get less share". "He has filled the matter, earth, and space with His grace".

Similar references are available in other cults also. "In the Bhāgavata religion there is much stress on this doctrine. God can be attained only by His grace. He cannot be bought for any price or gift. No human attachment, physical, intellectual, moral or spiritual is adequate for the attainment of God". Islam also does not lag behind in this respect. "When shall God free him, he replied (Abu said) this is not effected by a man's exertion, but by the grace and help of the Lord". It is further remarked, "He is gracious unto His servants and it is produced by the bounty and mercy of God, not by the acquisition and action of man".

It is clear that the Sikh religion teaches firm faith in the doctrine of grace which removes our anxieties and directs us
towards our path. Outward manifestations of religious life pale into insignificance before it. God bestows His grace on all and it has filled all quarters.

**God and His Will**

*Hukam*, will or divine law is another important attribute of the Lord. It acts everywhere. All things going on in the world, whether good or bad, are due to His will. As is said, "One is born in the will of the Lord and thrives in His will. In His will the egocentric is driven away and suffers; in His will we realize the *sabda* and are ushered in His court, in His will all our actions are rewarded and in His will one is cursed with ego and the sense of duality, in His will we are in the round of the world and guiled by demerits; when one realizes the will of the Lord, one is merged in truth".112 It is further remarked, "In His will one moves about and rests in peace; in His will one looks on pleasure and pain alike. One lives and dies and contemplates on nāma in His will. In His will is sorrow and joy and in His will ceases our coming and going".113 Creation and dissolution of the world are ascribed to His will, "When He wills, the world is created and in His will He merges it in Himself. Nothing happens without His will"114 Human qualities and actions are also attributed to this divine law. "There is none who is wise or fool, only His will prevails.115 "There is none perfect nor imperfect, nor wise, nor ignorant. As is the will of the Lord, so the man engages himself".116 Meeting a guru is due to His will. "Among the 84 lacs species, whom He wills, will meet the guru".117 Summing up it is said, "There is nothing beyond Him. What He wills is done".118 The Grantha emphatically stresses that we should submit to His will so that we may be one with ourselves, one with reality and the whole order of divine life. "I submitted to His will, all my woes departed and I got happiness".119 "By submitting to His will, one is rid of cravings and increases his life four-fold".120 "When one submits to His will, one gets the fruits of fasting, religious works, piety and self-control. All the desires are fulfilled".121 Those who do not surrender to His will have to come to grief. People say that God gave four Vedas to Brahmā. He read them and reflected on them. But
he did not submit to the Lord's will, and, therefore, he moved between hell and heaven”. The difficult problem of surrender is solved in this hymn. “Only they will submit to his will, on whom is His grace”.

The will of God has been also highlighted in Islam. “Will is one of the seven attributes of God in Islam. God can do what he wills and whatever He wills comes to pass. His will comprises everything possible, whether good or evil. He wills the faith of the believers and the unbelief of the infidels. His will is external, and is not posterior to His essence. God is the worker of that He willeth God misleadeth whom He wills and whom He wills He guideth”. Dadu also echoes similar ideas, “We are united with God when, shedding all sins and impurities, we sincerely surrender ourselves to His will.

God, both Nirguna and Saguna

God, with and without attributes as already mentioned above, is not divided into two parts, both distinct from each other, but they are the aspects of the same divinity. This idea is re-emphasized, again and again, in the Holy Book. “He Himself is attached, detached and separate”. “You are the absolute and the related Lord and between these two ends you stage your play”, “He is the manifest and the unmanifest, creates and destroys, pervades all and remains detached. He speaks and understands, comes and goes. He is both absolute and related”. “He manifests himself in many forms, and is yet distinct from them”. “In the abode of Śiva, is seated on the throne the boundless, infinite and unfathomable Lord!”

References of the above-mentioned aspects of God are also available in ancient Indian thought. We have noted that the Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara gave much prominence to nirguna aspects, but they also provide us with a few references concerning His qualitiful form. The Mahāyāna Buddhism also did not lag behind in this respect. “The Mahāyāna improved the bhakti cult. It accepted Buddha as lokakattara and he propagated the doctrine of the Turning the Wheel of Law. In this thought-current, Buddha assumed two aspects. The one was without nature, without śūnya, without form and, therefore, Nirāñjana. He never comes in this world. He is neither born
nor preaches. He remains in the state of parinirvāṇa. The second is His form of māyā. It emerges from the abdomen of Mahāyāna. He practised austerities, attained wisdom and turned the wheel of law. He served the people and then attained mahāparinirvāṇa. The idea is that one aspect of Buddha was qualitiless and the other was with qualities”.131 “In Amitā (Amitādhya—the first deity in the Mahāyāna Buddhism) every wish was centred. Grace, mercy, beneficence as well as wisdom and power were his attributes”.132 The yogīs also believed in this respect. “Accordingly, the Siddhayogīs proclaim that Śiva, the supreme spirit, has eternally a non-dual (advaita) nature and a dual nature, a transcendental nature and a phenomenal nature, a self-absorbed nature and a self-activity nature, a self-concentrated nature and a self-diversifying nature, an inwardly self-enjoying nature and an outwardly self-enjoying nature, a nameless, formless, changeless and absolute nature and also a nature perfectly free from self-manifestation, in innumerable names and forms and wonderful varieties of change and difference constituting the cosmic system.”133 Kabir134 while speaking about the Lord and His various qualities tells us that He is both saguṇa as well as nirguṇa and also beyond that. Dadu135 also utters similar views.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing account of the concept of God, both nirguṇa as well as saguṇa, shows that since the Upaniṣadic times, both these aspects have been mentioned. The Upaniṣads which propounded the theory of monism and, later on, the Sāṁkhya system which brought many dimensions to this aspect of God, gave a few references of the saguṇa-Brahman in their teachings. The Mahāyānanists also speak in the same strain, but within the framework of their teachings. The leaders of the Sant Mat also preached oneness of God in His nirguṇa aspect, thus highlighting the continuity of the Upaniṣadic doctrines, but they also broadcast the saguṇa aspect. It was due to the fact that the bhakti movement, of which they were the foremost leaders, gave much prominence to the prema-aspect rather than the jñāna-aspect in their teachings. But it must be frankly
admitted that the sants including the Sikh Gurus revert back, again and again, to His attributeless form, because they wanted Him to remain above the sectarian creeds. As is rightly said, "It was the message of the one indwelling God who pervades all, forming the essence of them, that the sants of the nirguna school delivered both to the Hindus, who in spite of their sublime Vedantic principles of monism were hopelessly enmeshed in polytheism, and to the Mohammadans who in the face of their monotheism would not like their Allah to extend his protection to the kafir, thus, implying another God for him, the Kafir". This message of one God, the highest of the high, in whose court all gods and goddesses of the Hindus stand and sing His praises, was particularly directed towards the Hindus in order to enable them to worship Him only. A few references given above regarding the use of similes of the Vaisha muddy doctrines by the Sikh Gurus need not lead us to the conclusion that they were preaching the traditional Bhagavata religion by giving a thin garb of this cult to their Lord, when they praised His saguna aspect. This is quite clear from the fact that they have emphasized the worship of one God and not the trinity.

The saguna aspect of God along with a brief account of His qualities stated above shows that the God stands among His devotees and is quite ready to come to their aid in time of need. He loves, forgives and bestows succour to all. His attributes like grace, will, etc. are all saturated with His divinity. His immanence in all forms of life as mentioned by the Gurus proves the grandeur of their mystical experience. It is true that many cults and creeds had influenced the Sikh religion like the yogic phenomena of light and music, the Upanisadic doctrine of monism, the Buddhist perception of sunya and sahaja, the teachings of Kabir, etc., but the Gurus gave to all these terms their own meanings and interpretations while expressing their inward divine experience.

Many tantric, yogic and Buddhist idioms such as gagan, sahaja, sunya, tattva, etc. which were current during those days were used by them, but these were thoroughly drenched in the bhakti teachings. At several occasions their yogic contents were pared and they were given the strong flavour of devotion.
We have seen above that the sagun aspect of God was given wide publicity. That was the need of the hour. God with qualities or īśvara, became the religious edition of the metaphysical Brahman. Thus this God came to the doors of the poor, the needy, the miserable, and the vast majority of the ordinary men to rekindle faith and devotion in Him. It was not a God of abstruse philosophical disputations and meaningless yogic rituals, but a God who could be enshrined in the heart, easy for comprehension and devotion. Herein lies the grand contribution of the Sikh mystics to the concept of God.

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THE term soul has been used since ancient times by a large number of prophets and philosophers in their teachings. They have expressed their different and divergent views about the nature of this concept. These differences are due to the fact that they did not belong to the same period and place and had also diverse experiences of their spiritual quest. Moreover, they used several terms like Ātmā, spirit, jīva, self, hamsa etc. to denote this concept. Whatever the differences may be with regard to the nature of this concept, its meanings can be broadly described in two ways. “The word soul in its primary meaning, designates an entity conceived as the cause or vehicle of the bodily life and psychical activities of the individual person. The soul is assumed to exist as a spiritual substance, in rather sharp antithesis to material substances, thus giving form to the contrast of soul and body (as constituents of man) and the assumption of their separability”.¹

The earliest references about soul can be traced to the Rgvedic hymns. There this term has been used in a variety of ways. At one place it is used in the sense of body.² At another place it is referred to as the intelligent principle.³ It is also the controlling agency.⁴ It is quite well known that the Rgvedic Āryans were the worshippers of nature and, this worship being the earliest phase of religious consciousness, therefore, they explained the term in a simple manner. With the passage of time this concept began to assume a metaphysical and philosophical garb. The Upaniṣads which show a passage from the prayers of the Rgveda to some well defined philosophical
doctrines gave a definite meaning to this term. "It is the bodiless within the bodies and unchanging among the changing things, it is great and omnipresent".5 "He (self) dwells in the earth, in the waters, in the fire, in the atmosphere, in the mind, in the sky, in the sun, in the quarters of heaven, in the moon and the stars, in darkness, in light, in all things, in the breath, in the speech, in the eye, in the ear, in the skin, in the understanding, but none knows him".6

Though Buddha did not believe in the existence of soul as we commonly understand it, yet he gave his own interpretation to this term. "The conclusion, therefore, that there is no real self, the term accordingly is merely a convention. We never know the self as such, but merely have knowledge of psychic happenings, sensations, perceptions, feelings and so on".7 Śaṅkar, the great exponent of the Indian philosophical thought equates soul with Brahman in several aphorisms. Various offshoots of Buddhism like the Sahajyāna, the Kālacakrayāna, and the Mantrayāna, which developed after the eighth century A.D. do not use the term in the Upaniṣadic sense, but follow the views as explained by Buddha. For them the supreme bliss is not the merger of soul with God, but the absence of any thought construction or emergence of any desire. The followers of these cults believed that when the mind becomes free from all these, it is in a state of perfect peace and calm. As Vishambar Nath Upadhyaya puts it, "The real form of realization is free from any thought construction, which means the non emergence of desire. When the consciousness is devoid of any flow of desire, this is called Ātmā. The Buddhist Tantras and the Śaivites believe in this. The followers of Śūnyavāda are averse to the concept of Ātmā, because it shows the existence of a permanent and eternal entity".8 The leaders of the Sant cult who were to some extent influenced by the practices and principles of the Tantras, discarded their atheistic tendencies and reverted back to the Upaniṣadic current, in their doctrines. Their views about soul and God and other allied concepts betray a remarkable similarity with that current. But it must also be mentioned here that the Sants were a part and parcel of the old great bhakti-movement, and, therefore, it was in the fitness of things that they must be influenced by that current
also. As far as the discussion about the concept of soul is concerned we find a marked similarity between the Sikh Gurus and the philosophical currents of the Upaṇiṣads and the Bhakti cult. The following explanation will amply prove this contention.

Nature of Soul

In the Guru Grantha we come across several hymns dealing with this concept. It is used there in a variety of ways. It is referred to as light, which pervades all. It is also equated with truth. The fire cannot burn it; the air cannot dry it and the thief cannot steal it. It is the image of the transcendental Lord, it is neither old, nor young. It neither suffers sorrow, nor is caught in the noose of Yama. It is not wasted away. Explaining further its nature, it is remarked, “The soul is neither human, angelic, ascetic, śāivite, jogī or sanyāsī. It has no mother or son. Then what is it, that abides in the body? None can find its end or limits. It is not a householder, a renouncer, a king or a beggar. It has no body or spot of blood. It is neither Brāhmaṇa, or Kṣatriya, a man of austerity, or a shaikh, nor does it live or die, it is a particle of God and abides as the indelible ink or paper”. It is also referred to as Šabda. “The swan soul is immaculate, it rings at the true door”.

Thus from the above discussion we find that soul is divested of any caste, cult or worldly relationship and is equated with the Lord in the Sikh scripture. All qualities which we associate with God inhere in it, though in the minute form. It is not a separate identity but a part and parcel of the divine.

It will be quite useful to compare the ideas concerning the nature of soul as mentioned above with some other religious and philosophical currents. Śaṅkara maintains that, “The Ātmā or Self is the innermost reality, or the self of every thing. It is the essence of every thing, material or immaterial, that exists. It is the all-pervasive and, therefore, infinite. It is eternal, unbound and undying. It is not created, hence imperishable. It is satcitānand. I am Brahma and thou art that, that is, You are not different from That”. “The all-pervasive nature of the soul is explained in the Gorakhbāni in these words, “Ātmā is the fish, it is the net, it is the fisherman,
and it is also the God of death. It is the killer as well as the saviour. Due to the impact of māyā, it takes many forms. There is no holy place beyond that. It is unseeable and indivisible. But whatever is, it is".16 The ideas of Kabir are in general agreement with the Guru Grantha. He says, "The Ātmā is light. It is the source of light for all. It is eternal, pure, all knowing, free and true".17 It is further mentioned, "It is neither man, jati, avadhāt, mother or father; who knows who lives in this temple (body)? None knows its limits. Neither it is a house holder nor an ascetic, a king or a beggar, a Brāhmaṇa or a carpenter, a recluse or a shaikh. It is immortal".18

Soul and Body
The soul and body have intimate relation with each other. The former brings life to the latter and thus all its organs function. With the departure of soul, the body becomes lifeless and all movements and functions come to an end. In our own language we call it death. It is quite difficult to say how the soul and body come in contact for the first time. The Guru Grantha gives the answer in these words, "The Lord has brought the union of the body and soul by His grace".19 Here is a reference to the Tāntric language. "The body is built upon six lotuses (Cakras) and within it is the incomparable soul".20
The relation between these two is further stated. "The body and soul love each other immensely. The soul is a yogī (detached) and the body is like a beautiful woman".21 Here the same idea is explained in a different way, "On the tree of the body sits the bird (soul), it sucks nectar and abides in the śabda of the guru, it flies not, nor it comes and goes, but finds place in its Home".22 Regarding the actual station of the soul in the body the Guru Grantha states, "When you cross the state of trikuti, you stay in your own Home".23
The aforesaid discussion shows that the soul and body come together by the will of the Lord. The soul is unaffected by pleasure and pain and, therefore, is the spectator. Its place is beyond trikuti and there it enjoys the bliss of nectar.
Similar ideas are also expressed in the Gorakhbāni. "There is a Brahm Kuṇḍ situated in the trikuti: It is the residence of
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It is further stated, “The soul is evidently a spiritual manifestation of the supreme spirit, while the body is the physical manifestation”. Kabir maintains that, “Atma is different from mind, buddhi, body, vital wind and jiva. When the Atma comes in contact with the body and becomes subservient to the five organs, it is called as jiva”.26

Soul and God

It has been repeatedly mentioned in the Guru Grantha that soul and God are always the same. There is difference of degree and not of kind. Both are endowed with similar qualities. The soul is a part of God, the whole. “You are Me and I am You. There is no difference between us”.27 “The Brahman (God) meets the Brahman (Soul). None can separate us”.28 “The wonder Lord meets the wonder soul”.29 “The ocean is in the drop and the drop is in the ocean. He alone knows who knows the way”.30 The soul is like the Lord and vice versa. He is known by contemplating on the sabda”.31 A usual argument is advanced to reinforce this assertion. “As gold and gold ornaments or the drop and the sea do not differ from each other, so Atma and God are the same”.32 As the gold ornaments when melted become gold again, so do I in my God”.32 The qualities of both these terms have been well explained here. “The Lord dies not, so I am afraid not, He is destroyed not, so I fear not, neither is He poor, nor I am hungry; neither is He in woe, nor I am in misery. There is no other destroyer but He, neither is He bound, nor I am in bondage, neither He toils, nor I struggle; He is spotless, I am spot free. He is in bliss, I am in ecstasy. He is not worn out by care, therefore, I am not in pain. He is of stainless body, I am free of stains. Neither is He hungry, nor I have any cravings. He is Immaculate, so am I”.33

The identity of soul with God has been amply illustrated by many other writers as well. “The relation of jiva Atma and Brahman is like two birds. One is passive and the other is active”.34 As sparks come out of the blazing fire, so all these beings come out of Brahman and return to Him”.35 “The self is the Brahman”.36 Gangesvara speaks about the effulgence of
the two in these words, "The lustre of the body of God was simply indescribable. It was like the combining of light of twelve suns at the time of great conflagration. The thousand celestial suns, that rise at once in the sky could not have matched the infinite lustre of the Ātmā".37 The simile of the drop and ocean as mentioned above is also stated by Kabir. "It is of great wonder that the drop blends with the ocean and the ocean with the drop".38 It is further explained, "My beloved resides in my heart, and my heart resides in my beloved. I am unable to make any difference between the two, whether it is my own self or my Lord".39 "My Ātmā is a part of Brahman".40 Whether it is past, present or future, the sameness of relationships persists between soul and God".41 Dadu says, "When the heart unites with the merciful, there remains no distinction. Just as the melted ice blends with water, so in the same way does the slave of Hari unites with Him".42

The aforesaid discussion establishes the identity of soul with God. There is no inherent difference between the two. P. Barthwal is right when he says, "The position thus is that ultimately the souls are one with God, whether by virtue of being coalesced, or identical with or of being emanation from Him".43 S. S. Kohli also echoes similar views, "Jīva being part and parcel of Brahman, is itself Brahman. When the egg of illusion bursts forth, Brahman is merged in Brahman, none can separate it".44

Soul After Liberation
The condition of soul after it has cut asunder all the fetters of the world has been discussed in a variety of ways in the Holy Book. Here is a reference to the state of sahaja and the drinking of nectar. "The soul's bird sits on the beautiful tree, and pecks at truth with the love of the Guru. It drinks nectar and enjoys the state of sahaja. Thus the wanderings of the mind comes to an end".45 In this hymn, merger has been pointed out. "The devotee lives in his Home and merges in nāmā".46 The idea of having a seat in the celestial regions is mentioned here. "I have my seat in my self (Śiva's abode) and forsaken all desires and disputsations".47 Divine marriage is referred to here. "When
I met the long separated Lord, the heat of ego vanished. I was in a blissful state. There was peace. The wedding song was sung. I can never forsake my Lord’. Here is another idea, ‘I have become His slave, my sadness is removed. I have fixed my mind in the temple of the Lord’. It is further remarked, ‘When the light merges in the light, there then remains nothing’. “Where does the soul go after death? It is released from bondage of the three modes. It merges in the anhad śabda which is beginningless”. “The drop merges in the ocean. Now the drop does not separate from the ocean”. Know Him, for knowing Him one becomes He. When one meets Him none can tell who is who”?

Mohan Singh Oberoi sums up the above mentioned experience of the Guru in these words, “The goal of man according to the Guru is to unite with God who is wholly one and of whom each one is a part in the literal sense of the word, for God is impartible, and there is none else but Him, and a reflection of Him in its limited oneness, constituting its individuality. And this goal is seven fold. In other words, “God unites with God. We should unite with Guru, for God is the only teacher. We should unite with the Life-intensely, richly, diversely, for God is the life of all and Dispenser of all life. (Jājīvan Jagjīvān Dātā). We should unite with naturalness, for God is sahaja (Natural, spontaneous creative Being). We should unite with nature, for God is the Lord of all nature (Qudrat). We should unite with the Order and the Will for God is all Will-Order-Law, and there is no other Law, Order or Will other than His Hukam. We should unite with the qualitative or quantitative names of the Lord because the name is the most potent manifestation of Him and takes us close to Him. We should unite with the word (of the God-inspired Guru) set to music, sung in accompaniment with music, in a congregation, in the process of the word as the Eternal Guru, with our eyes closed, ears drenched in melody and harmony, and mind concentrated on the meaning of the word (Kirtan yoga), because God is the word, because God is the poet, or the musician, because God is there in the congregation of His devotees (God is His own hymn singer), because God is supreme and ultimate reality of every word”.55
The views of N. R. Ray in this connection deserve our attention. He says, "The word in which this absorption or blending or merger, is characterised is a very significant one, it is either samati, or samānā, as in the sahaja samati, joti joti samāna, sabda samāna, sachi samāna for instance, the root verb in each case being sam which literally means to equalise, merge, blend, absorb, fill, pervade, or unify. But for the context in which the word samati and samānā are used, it is clear that what is meant is absolute absorption, unification, merger or blending in a manner as to leave no trace of consciousness of duality or separate identity".56

It appears from the above discussion that the Sikh Masters explain their experience in a variety of ways. But this can be broadly classified in two ways i.e. complete merger and a fellowship with the Lord in the heavenly regions. Here we find a blending of the Vedantic doctrine as well as the theistic belief. As is rightly remarked, "In the monistic Vedanta, the identity of soul with God being held in the strictest possible way, the seeming identity of the soul in life is interpreted as an illusion, and release means the disappearance of the illusion, the complete absorption of man in God. Of the theistic sects on the other hand, while a few believe in absorption, the masses believe in the actual reality of the soul, and teach that a released soul either enters into a mystical union with God in which individuality is not lost or spends eternity in a fellowship with God which does not in the slightest impair individuality".57 The mystical idea is aptly explained in wordly language in these words, "She acquires the right of citizenship in the country of the Lord."58

The leaders of the Tantras had a peculiar experience of their own in this regard. Of course they do not use terms like soul and God. "The germ of the mind is covered with the mud of thought constructions. It shines forth when it is washed with the waters of the knowledge of the Void and the experience of the universal compassion".59 Kanhapa says, "As the salt is dissolved in water, so the citta is merged in mudra. The citta always remains in the same state. It attains the state of Samārāsa".60 The experience of the followers of Gorakhnath is stated in these words, "From continuous practice of the
nāda, the whole store of demerits is wiped out, and the breath and the mind are surely absorbed in the passionless being (Niranjana), (the Yogi) hears neither the sound of the conch nor of drum at all. Being fixed in the state of unmani (mental in-action) (his) body becomes a piece of wood. Free from all the states, exempt from all the anxieties, that yogi is as if he were dead. Verily he is liberated. He is neither consumed by death nor scouraged by (his) deeds.\textsuperscript{61} The experience of Dadu is mystical. "When the curtain of māyā is removed, the Jīva becomes Brahman. The relation between these two has always been the same. Both become one.\textsuperscript{62}

From the above account we find that the Sikh Gurus mention a very rich and varied experience of the last stage of spiritual sādhanā. It includes union, absorption, drinking of nectar, enjoyment of bliss, hearing of the celestial music, of the attainment of the state of sahaja, of fellowship with the Lord etc. It is a wonderful state which defies expression through wordly language or idiom.

CONCLUSION

The aforesaid discussion shows that the concept of soul is very old. Its nature and qualities have been mentioned since the time of the Rgveda, which changed from time to time. After God, the concept of soul finds sufficient prominence in the doctrines of many philosophers. The Sikh Masters were no exception to this rule.

The Gurus equate Soul with God and believe that it contains all the qualities of God, though in a minute form. The purpose of life is to remove the curtain of māyā and thus facilitate the union of soul with God. The soul resides in the body and is the agent as well as the witness of the wordly phenomena. Due to a variety of factors it is separated from God. The only purpose of life is to seek union of soul with God. This profound experience of union or absorption has been stated in a variety of ways by the Sikh Gurus. Here we find the influence of the experiences of several cults and creeds which preceded the emergence of the Sikh faith. The Vedantic, Yogic and bhakti experiences are happily blended here. It appears that the Gurus combined in themselves the best of these
three currents with regard to the fixed goal of life. Herein lies their main contribution to the philosophy of the concept of soul.

References

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29. Ibid., p. 803.
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40. Ibid., p. 301.
41. Dadu Dayal Ki Bānī, I, p. 45.
42. Sant Bānī Saṁgraha, I, p. 92.
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48. Ibid., p. 730.
49. Ibid., p. 782.
50. Ibid., p. 335.
51. Ibid., p. 327.
52. Ibid., p. 341.
53. Ibid., p. 11.3.
54. Ibid., p. 325.
55. Sikh Mysticism, pp. 35-36.
56. The Sikh Religion and the Sikh Society, p. 119.
58. Underhill, Mysticism, p. 162.
59. S. B. Dasgupta, Introduction to Tantric Śāstra, p. 48 i Ī Śāṇ Siddhī., 117.
60. Doha Kosh, p. 46.
THE use of the term Śabda in Indian philosophy is quite old. It has been used both in the ordinary sense as well as a philosophical concept. In its elementary meaning it is a means to knowledge, but in its theological connotation it is associated with the eternal sound or Brahmaṇ. In the Nyāya\(^1\) philosophy it is regarded as verbal knowledge, while in the Mīmāṃsa\(^2\) system it is considered as eternal, absolute, self-sufficient and authoritative. In the Tantric literature Śabda got wide currency and was used as the creative principle of the world along with the special terminology employed by the writers. “It is the Brahmaṇ considered as all pervading Śabda, undivided and unmanifested whose substance is Nāda and Bindu, the proximate cause of manifested Śabda and artha”\(^3\) (meaning). “Philosophically Śabda is the guṇa ākāśa, or ethereal place. It is not, however, produced by ākāśa, but manifests in it. Śabda is itself the Brahmaṇ”\(^4\).

It goes to the credit of the Nāth yogis that they took sufficient pains to popularise this term to a great extent in their principles and practices. In addition to this they also gave sufficient currency to another term i.e. anhad śabda or Nāda to which the Tāntrikas refer occasionally. These yogis by their special discipline of idā, pingala and suṣumana, the kuṇḍalini yoga along with the breath control, heard that divine music of the celestial regions which was unstruck and continued eternally without striking. This divine music became the be-all and end-all of their sādhana. S.B. Dasgupta states beautifully the majesty of the anhad śabda and the means to attain it as
practised by the Nāthas in these words. "The word anhata generally stands for anhat dhvani, which means the uncreated and unobstructed sound, which is all-pervading and eternal. In the process of becoming of the Being, the first stage is the śakti (power) and the next stage is the sound, the cosmic vibration from which evolves the visible world. It is the first music, the divine music, the cosmic music. The plexus in the heart is the seat of this anhat. To listen to it, the yogi must withdraw his senses from the outward objects, turn them inward and then concentrate the mind on the centre of the heart, through such concentration and some accessory yogic practices, the mystery of the anhat becomes unfolded to the śādhak and he comes to be in tune with the cosmic rhythm, which arrests all states and processes of the mind and draws the śādhak nearer to God."5

Like so many terms and concepts which were popularised by the Siddhas and the Nāthas and incorporated by the Sants in their doctrines, Šabda and Anhad Šabda perhaps occupy the foremost position. The Sants including the Sikh Gurus have given it a great prominence. As McLeod puts it, "Šabda is one of the terms which essentially descended to Guru Nanak through Sant channels from Nātha sources. The term has a significant history apart from its Nātha usage, but it appears to have been from this Nātha usage that it passed on to the Sant currency."6

Thus we observe from the above discussion that Šabda has been used in a variety of ways since ancient times. Its meaning changed from time to time. The Siddhas and the Nātha yogis gave this term a respectable position in their doctrines as said above. From them it filtered down to the teachings of the Sants. In this background we would like to discuss this concept as contained in the Guru Grantha keeping in view the different sources from which the ideas associated with it emerged and developed along with the contribution made by the Gurus in the growth of this term.

**Guru and Šabda**

The Guru’s Šabda occupies a prominent position in the Sikh scripture. It has been used in a variety of ways. It is like a
mantra whose contemplation leads to liberation. It must be made clear here that Ṣabda in the sense of mantra as we come across in some schools of Tantrism like the Mantryāna, the Vajrayāna and the Nātha cult does not find any mention in the Holy Book. Suffice it to say that mantra is referred here to God’s name that is Hari, Rama, the Guru’s instructions and so on. Those who reflect on the Ṣabda of the Guru are turned Godward.”

Meditate on the Lord, through the Guru’s Ṣabda, this is the only pure mantra”. “I have attained unseeable and the unperceivable Lord through the Ṣabda of the Guru”. This term is also used as revealed word. “When the Ṣabda of the Guru enters your being, you do not forget the Lord”. “By the grace of the Guru I have attained the Ṣabda and thus my doubts have been removed”. Ṣabda is referred to as nectar here. “The Ṣabda of the Guru is nectar, quench your thirst with it”. “When the Lord is in mercy, we meet the Guru and then drink the nectar of Ṣabda”. It is also equated with eternal light. “The Guru’s Ṣabda is the light of the world, through His grace it comes to our mind.” “When the light of the Ṣabda dawns, all darkness is removed”. Ṣabda is also considered as a means. “Those who realize God through the Ṣabda of the Guru are always pure”. “I came to the Guru to learn the ways of yoga. He revealed it to me through the Ṣabda”. “There is a well of nectar within you, draw it out with the Ṣabda of the Guru”. The Sikh Gurus have boldly asserted the greatness of Ṣabda in these words: “On the authority of the Vedas and the Śastras Nanak says that the Ṣabda of the Guru is the most authentic of all. It has come from Above”. It is further remarked, “A Brahmin may read the religious text thrice a day and discuss the rules of grammar, but without the Guru’s Ṣabda no one has ever been saved”. Ṣabda brings peace, deliverance and the control of mind. The Gurus knew quite well that the attainment of Ṣabda is not within the reach of all. Only a few exceptional persons become fit to receive Ṣabda. As is rightly said, “When one kills one’s ego, one becomes capable of knowing the Ṣabda”. Blessed is the bānī which reveals Nām, it is known by a few on whom the Guru grants favours”.

The Gorakhbānī uses this term in a variety of ways. “In the
Sabda of Guru is unmanifest param tattva. When one reflects on it (Sabda), one realizes it (paramtattva). By the Sabda, Nada is awakened". In order to have the highest state we must have the support of the Sabda. The Guru's Sabda leads to the desired goal. With the help of the gross Sabda, one is able to comprehend the subtle Sabda. Thus grossness is merged into subtleness. Mohan Singh calls it Surta Sabda Yoga and maintains, "It is the yoga of making Surta—attention rise through the magnetic aid of Sabda—imparted by the teachers, and heard within and united with, merge itself in, the Supreme Self, Atma". Summing up the views of Gorakhnath in this connection, Nagendra Nath Upadhyaya observes. "Gorakhnath has talked about the light of the Sabda (Nada) in the Gagan (brahmmanda). It is the essence and is unfathomable. From some of the writings of Gorakh it so appears that Nada and Sabda carry the same meaning. Sabda is used in two senses:—(1) Nada and (2) Guru's instructions. From the point of view of practice the relation between these two is very thick. As long as one does not hear Nada or Sabda, one is not in a position to realize the highest reality. With the help of Guru's Sabda (instructions) one is awakened to Nada. It is through the agency of Sabda (Guru's teachings) that one realizes Nada. In the end the Guru's Sabda merges in the Sabda or in other words the means and the end become the same. The sadhak feels the unity of Guru's Sabda in Nada".

Thus we find that the Nath cult and the Sikh Gurus use the term almost in similar ways that is in the sense of means, Guru's instructions, light and so on. The Sikh Masters also use it as the revealed word as well as nectar. In this connection the views of Dewan Singh are worth quoting. He says, "In Sikhism which is all mysticism, the purely mystical role of the Guru invariably works through the medium of Sabha which is not ordinary language or speech but a revealed word, coming directly from God through the eternally appointed Guru, in the form of Guru Nanak, his nine incarnations and his spoken word called Sabda or Bani".

God and Sabda
In the Sikh scripture Sabda has been associated with God with-
out attributes. “Śabda alone is eternal, the rest passes away”.31 “The Lord is not far off, recognize the Śabda in all”.32 “Within us is enshrined the infinite Śabda”.33 “Śabda is the supra temporal, supra spatial, transcendental reality of Godhead called Sunn Śabda (the void logos)”.34 It is also used as Lord with attributes. “The immaculate Śabda compassionate like God, destroys our ego”.35 “Through the Śabda is the creation and the dissolution”.36 It is also referred to as the Light of the Lord. “The light of Śabda permeates the three worlds, whoever enjoys it becomes immaculate”.37

In the Tāntric literature Śabda is used in a sense and with terminology peculiar to them in these words, “Śabda or sound which is Brahmn, and as such the cause of the Brahmand is the manifestation of Cit-Śakti itself. The Viśvasāra Tantra says that the Para Brahman, as Śabda Brahman whose substance is all mantras, exists in the body of the Jivatma”.38 It is further remarked by the same author, “The Śabda Brahman manifests itself in triad energies, knowledge (jñan-śakti), will (icchā śakti) and action (kriyā śakti), associated with the three guṇas of Prakriti—Tamas, Rajas and Sattav”.39 The views of Gorakhnath as summed up by A. K. Banerji40 are worth quoting here in this connection.

Gorakhnath and the Siddha yogi’s school further described this Pranava as Anhad Nāda (eternal sound, not produced from any friction, not produced from any collision or upheaval, not broken into pieces or a number of distinct sounds, but is beginningless and endless natural monotonous integral sound), which is the original self expression of the supreme spirit in the form of sound. This Pranava, Oṃ, pervades the Mahākāśa and is immanent in the Panch Bhūtika universe. All particular sounds arise from this Oṃ, and are again ultimately merged in it. It is the essence of all the Vedas and the Vedānta, which only expound it and interpret it in various forms of words and concepts. It is this Oṃ, this Anhad Nāda, this Śabda Brahman, which naturally shines within the heart of every Jīva. His (Gorakhnath) Brahman with attributes and without attributes was in the form of Śabda. Everywhere he has sung the praise of Śabda. For him Śabda was all in all.41
It appears that certain ideas which we come across in the Guru Granthi with regard to Šabda and God were, no doubt, floating in the air. The Gurus at many places have eulogised the majesty of Šabda like the Nāthas and the Tāntrikas, but they have invariably discarded the yogic practices which the latter preached. There is hardly any direct mention of the word Ōṁ in their teachings, though, no doubt, its inner meaning has been retained. Generally the Sikh Gurus avoid the use of the term Brahman in their teachings and, therefore, they do not associate Šabda with Him. It is true that they regard Šabda as the cause of the beginning of the world as well as its end, but they do not elaborate this point as we come across in the Tantras as stated above. Their views appear to be more akin to Kabir in this matter. "Omkar is the fundamental cause of the world. He abides in the subtle and the gross forms". He himself is in the form of Nāda and Bindu. He himself is the worshipper and the worshipped. Šabda which is called Rām Nām is immanent everywhere". The use of the terms Nāda and Bindu show that the Nāthas and the Tāntrikas had some influence on Kabir, which we occasionally come across in the teachings of the Sikh Masters.

Šabda and Nām

These two terms have been used by the Sikh Gurus in a variety of ways. At certain places Šabda is stated as a means and Nām as the end. "When the God-turned knows the Šabda he merges in the nectar of Nām". "Without Šabda one cannot attain Nām". The mysterious Šabda is revealed through the Guru, and then one merges in Nām". In these hymns Nām appears to have been replaced by Šabda. "When the Nām abides in the heart, the Anhad Šabda rings". "By the Nectar Bāni (Nām), one realizes Šabda". Here both these terms convey the same sense. "Those who are imbued with Šabda are the Param Hāmīsas, they have Nām in their hearts". "Through Šabda, Nām dwells up in our mind, and we thus meet the Lord". It appears that the Gurus use these two concepts, sometimes the one as a means and the other as an end and vice versa and also sometime carrying the same sense. J.S. Grewal is right when he says, "Šabda and Nām are interchangeable terms".
Paul Deussen\(^52\) tries to bring out the difference between the meanings of these two terms in these words, "Whereas Nām is purely a luminous and mystical term with ineffable connotation like Hukam, Śabda is a more tangible and considerable term, in the sense that Śabda is something revealed or made manifest in order to kindle the light of true knowledge in the human mind, because knowledge is emancipation, according to Vedantic mysticism". Similarly Sharat Chandra Verma\(^53\) maintains, "Nām, the inner power of the Being or the wisdom capacity which determines existence, is, therefore, synonymous to the word (Śabda) or the nature of the Ultimate Reality or Expressed Reason, because there is a potential continuity between the two".

Thus we find that the Sikh Masters do not demarcate the distinction between these two terms in their doctrines. For them these carry the same sense as a whole. In the language of mysticism logical and linguistic meanings of terms which convey the idea of inner experience are neither possible nor desirable.

Śabdā and Mind

In the Sikh scripture Śabda has also been discussed in relation with mind in different ways. Śabda is a weapon which pierces the mind. "My mind is pierced with Śabda"\(^54\) Śabda stills the mind. "Without stilling the mind, its outgoing ceases not, it cannot attain the Lord. Through the Śabda it is controlled"\(^55\) The Sūrt Śabda Yoga is sufficiently highlighted in these hymns: "My mind always revels in Śabda".\(^56\) "When the Śabda enters the mind, all woes depart".\(^57\) The mind is deluded by Māyā, it is released by the indwelling of Śabda\(^58\) But the mind which is filled with the filth of the world can neither see the light of the Śabda, nor be attuned to the Śabda. Therefore the Gurus have rightly stressed that only a transparent mind\(^59\) can merge in the Śabda.

It appears that the Sikh Masters regard Śabda as God's light which removes darkness of the mind, as an arrow which pierces the mind; as divine wisdom, which removes our ignorance and as eternal sound, the contemplation of which leads to bliss.

Gorakhnath (addressing the Muslim followers) says, "The
dagger which Prophet Muhammad used was a subtle dagger. He killed the strings of worldly attachments of his followers with it. Thus they lay dead to the material world. This dagger was in the form of Šabda. Their mind withdrew from the outward contacts and there was the beginning of the inward spiritual life”. The true Guru is the real warrior. He flung his only arrow (Šabda) on his disciples. The latter fell down dead, and attained the state of Samādhi. Thus all the ties of the world were cut asunder”. “The fake Sadhus parade the pangs of love. But those who really feel that intense agony of separation, are entirely different people. Kabir’s mind had become stationary after being hurt by the arrow of the Šabda of the Guru”. “The Yoga by which Surt is fixed on Šabda when all faculties of mind are merged in Šabda, is designated as the Surt Šabda Yoga. In the first instance Šabda takes the form of God’s love and the devotee utters His name. In the end he merges in the Šabda Brahman. This is called Sahaj Yoga”.

From the above discussion it appears that the views of the Gurus in this respect are more akin to the Sant thought as represented by Kabir and less with Gorakhnath. In the doctrines of Gorakhnath, love of God (Bhakti-Mārga) is totally lacking. There is yoga practice, but in the Sant Mat love for God is brought to the forefront.

Anhad Šabda
Anhad Šabda or the divine music has been referred to in the Holy Book by various names. It is called as Anhad Bāni, Anhad Nāda, Anhad Šabda, Hari Kirtan, Sacci Bāni, Sahaj Dvani and so on. Here we see that the same experience has been stated with a wealth of details. This music is the music of the Beyond. It is heard by the Absolute or the Eternal Ear. When the aspirant hears it, his being is saturated with God-intoxication. His every pore is immersed in the eternal joy.

According to the Guru Grantha this music can be heard when the mind withdraws itself from the nine doors (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, and two evacuation organs) of the body and is in a state of concentration. “When I close all the nine doors of the body, then all the musical instruments are
heard”.70 This music can also be heard in other states of mind as well. “When we contemplate on the instructions of the Guru, we hear it and thus I-am-ness is destroyed”.71 In the state of sahaja, this music rings and my face becomes pleasing”72 In the Śūnyā Samādhi, there rings the Anhad Nāda. I am unable to explain its wondrous beauty”73 “On whom-so-ever is the grace of the Lord74 and the Guru75, he listens to this divine melody”. “The Anhad Śabda rings in the turiya state”.76

In the Guru Grantha we come across an interesting account about the number of strains and the kinds of instruments which go to make this music. Here is a reference to five strains. “I have pleased the Sants and am attuned to the Lord. There strike the five sounds”.77 Instead of five, many strains are also mentioned. “When I meet the Lord, many strains ring in my heart”.78 Similar is the case with the kind of instruments. “Within me rings the Anhad bāni of kinguri”.79 The melody of kinguri is ringing, but the yogi cannot hear it, because he is absorbed in his self”80 Here is a reference to vina. “In the hearts of all rings the music of vina and one loves the Śabda day and night.”81 The combined symphony of other instruments is also referred to. “The sound of rebeck, tambourine, cymbal and ankle bell go to make the Anhad Śabda”.82

The yogis of different hues relied on hath yoga practices to hear this music as noted above. Here we come across, the process by which it was heard along with the different notes of the music. “Before we listen to it, the inhaling and exhaling process becomes mild. At this stage are heard many sweet strings. The mind, the vital wind (prāṇa) and the kundalini pass through the Suṣusmaṇa and there is the music of several instruments. These notes rise up from various directions and in spite of their large number can be classed into nine categories. It can also be possible that after hearing these for a long time one hears the Anhad Nāda by the grace of the Guru. Then all these strings are not heard, because by this time the mind is absorbed in Anhad and the door of the light is opened”.83 “When the mind and the vital wind are united, then one hears the Śabda (Anhad Nāda)”.84 None is able to hear this Nāda. When by special yogic practices the Suṣusmaṇa path comes into life and the kundalini is awakened, then the vital wind becomes
stationary and through this path Anhad Nāda is heard”.85 “When all the nine doors are closed, we hear the Anhad Śabda in the path of Suṣusmaṇa”.86 Gñāneśwara also refers to the awakening of the kuṇḍalini. “When the kuṇḍalini is awakened and takes possession of the heart, then the unstruck music begins to be heard”.87 Kabir also refers to the closing of nine doors. “In order to listen to this Anhad Nāda one must close one’s eyes, ears and other doors of the body”.88 “A contented and pure person who has subdued all his cravings knows the mystery of the Anhad Śabda. His mind becomes pure and all this happens with the grace of the Guru.”89

Reference to several symphonies, and of the music of Kinguri and Vina are also available in the literature of the yogis. “There is a reference to the image of the stringed musical instrument, vīna in the Caryapada No. 17. The Siddha Vinapada uses the analogy of vīna. He says that he has made a new kind of vīna of which the sun is the gourd, the moon is the string and the avadhuti is the stand which produces sound even without being struck. Vinapada says, “Friend, hark the Heruka, Vina is being played. The notes of the string are being heard. The best of the elephants on hearing the sound—Ali and Kali now enter the Samarasa. When the striker presses (the string) the sound of 32 strings spreads everywhere, the king then dances and the queen sings. This is Buddha Natak”90 The same author explains the ideas of this para in these words, “In the image of the stringed instrument (vīna) the words which are important are the gourd, the string and the stand to which they are fitted. The gourd is the Sūrya and the string, the Candra. These represent the two nādis on both sides and the stand represents the Avadhuti, the nādi id the middle. When the first two are brought together and fixed on to the middle one, a music which is not produced by any agent but spontaneous, is heard within and this music resounds in all the nādis. When this music is heard by the gaja, the best elephant, (which is explained as the citta) it proceeds upwards to drink the samarasa. When the music continues, the king, i.e. the yogi dances and the queen that is Nairatama—the yogini sings”.91 “In the Nātha cult there is a mention of different notes of this music. The men of experience have said that in the first
instance there is heard the sound of the thunder of the clouds, the gurgling of ocean water and so on. Later on is heard the sound of cymbal, bell and so on. In the end the sādhak hears the sweet note of vīna, kinguri and so on". The Sants of Maharashtra have also made vague references about it. "The dark night of the soul is ultimately transcended and the mystic reaches his destination. One’s mind is absorbed in hearing the mystic sound that destroys all passions. The sound is like the loud beating of the cymbals. It is sometimes so extensive that one feels as if heavens were reverberating with it or were endowed with tongues". Sunder Dass refers to several notes, "When perfection has been gained in the discipline of the mudras, then one hears the notes. This is styled as Anhad Nāda. This is the unstruck music. These notes are of cymbal, bell, vina, gurgling of ocean water, thundering of clouds and so on".

Surely, there is no uniformity in matters of the number of notes which provide us with the symphony of the Anhad Śabda. Of course, the Gurus refer to many notes, but their chief emphasis is on five sounds. The sounds of kinguri and vina about which they make no difference as we find in the case of some yogic cults, betray some impact of the Siddhas and the Nāthas on them. But the Gurus had nothing to do with their yogic practices in order to hear this music. Their views of Anhad Nāda are completely drenched in mystical language when they state—"The Lord Himself is immersed in the Anhad Śabda". The idea that this sound is quite automatic and is heard without being struck is found in the teachings of almost all the leaders of different cults whose references have been given above. Like the Sants of Maharashtra, the Gurus also show us their experience of light and sound in this connection. In the Gorakhbāṇi (p. 19) there is reference to light and music, but unlike the Gurus, it is attained through the hath yoga.

In this context another point attracts our attention. It is the roaring sound of the Śabda. The Guru Granthā says, "Through the instructions of the Guru five sounds ring in me and by great fortune I hear the Anhad Śabda. I see the bliss giving Lord (Hari) and by the Guru’s instructions, the Śabda roared like a thunder within me in all majesty". Echoes of this thunder are
also found in the cult of the yogis. "In the Gagan (Daśam dvāra) is being heard the thunder of the Anhad Nāda. Listen to it every time. Never allow your mind to go astray". "He has identified all with the self, and there followed a tremendous roar of spontaneous anhat sound. On hearing that sound the arch enemy Mara, and all the desires and afflictions of the body vanished".

**Majesty of Šabda**

In the Guru Grantha the majesty of Šabda has been discussed in very eloquent terms. It is regarded as the only support for the aspirant, the only means for the attainment of bliss and the only object worth striving for. In its absence spiritual life becomes impossible. "Without the Šabda one cannot have eternal happiness". "Without it man believes in duality and his coming and going ceases not".

The all-pervading greatness of this term is clearly mentioned in these words, "The three worlds of God are within the sway of Šabda, through Šabda we discourse on the Vedas, the Šabda reveals what is written in the Smṛtis, Śāstras and the Purāṇas. Through Šabda is the yogi’s Nāda and all his discourses, through it is piety, religion and the life of actions; all are seen within the sway of Šabda, except the transcendental Lord who is beyond their reach". The Gurus criticise the hatha yoga practices and emphasize the supreme importance of Šabda in these words. "The yogic practices like nevali, bhūyangam, rachek, kumbhak, purak etc. are all useless. It is through the Šabda of the Guru and devotion that I have attained the essence of the Lord".

Similar references are also available in the Tāntric and Yōgic literature. "In the Prapancasāra it is said, "The universe of the movable and immovable things is linked together and pervaded by this Šakti, which is Dhvani. It is this Šakti which is called by such names as Nāda, Prāṇa, Jivaghoṣa and so forth". "O Avadhuta, contemplate on Šabda. It is useless to give importance to a place or a pilgrim station. All other actions bring no reward. When you attain Šabda you see God as you see the reflection of the moon in the water. It is through the Šabda that the body attains perfection". Kabir also refers.
to it, "By the power of the Šabda the sins of the world are destroyed. The Šabda makes kings forsake their kingdoms".\textsuperscript{105}

Thus we observe that the majesty of Šabda was highlighted by the leaders of several yogic cults and the Sants. But the Gurus have given it the foremost position and that too in a very detailed manner which we hardly come across in the writings of other leaders. Let us quote a modern scholar who has summed up the beauty of Šabda in these words. "The word reveals the absoluteness of God. Meditate on this and make your submission before Him. The word reveals the eternally stable performance of God, the eternity of God. Reflect on this and abandon the fickle fleeting world. The word reveals the absolute freedom of one from all that is māyā. Meditate on this and so separate yourself from its deceit. The word reveals the ineffable greatness of God. Reflect on this and make yourself humble before Him".\textsuperscript{106} Another writer writes in a similar fashion, "Šabda is the only saviour or saving factor in the universe. Nobody ever became God unless the Šabda or Logos quickened his consciousness. This may mean a mystical transformation inside the heart and not an outward mechanical action or intellectual understanding".\textsuperscript{107}

CONCLUSION

The aforesaid discussion about Šabda shows that in the beginning this concept was used as a means of knowledge. But after some time it assumed a metaphysical garb and began to be equated with Brahman. The Tāntrikas and the Nātha yogīs also used this term extensively in their doctrines and practices. Šabda began to be associated with divine music as well as \textit{Om} by them. In the writings of Kabir, Šabda continued to have an exalted position. The Sikh Gurus by the use of this term show their strong links with the yogic cults and leaders of the Sant Mat. In this long journey the concept received the impact of various cults and creeds thus making it a doctrine of profound importance and adding lustre to its majesty.

The Siddhas and the Nātha yogīs advocated breath culture, kūṇḍalini yoga and such like haṭh yogic practices to attain the bliss of Šabda. Their doctrines are permeated by this particular mode of sādhana. It is true that Kabir also refers to these
practices occasionally, but he relies much on the teachings of the Sants that is devotion, grace, self surrender, singing the praises of the Lord etc. The Sikh Gurus generally disassociated themselves from these yogic practices and followed the main doctrines of the Sant Mat. In their teaching there is a blending of Surat Šabda Yoga with Nām Marg. As Rattan Singh Jaggi puts it, "The Guru's Anhad is attained through Surat Šabda and Nām meditation which the yogis tried to achieve through the hath yoga practices".

Anhad Šabda as divine music has also been referred to by several leaders as mentioned above. Various strings and notes which go to make this melody are also spoken of. While referring to different notes, we find that the music of vina is common among the Gurus, the Nāthas and the Siddhas. This is the internal melody. The Gurus also regard the melody of the kinguri as the internal sound. There is a reference to the several notes of the anhad Šabda in the teachings of the Siddhas, the Nāthas and the Sants together with their names, and similar is the case with the Gurus. But their chief emphasis is on five sounds which make the music of the Anhad Šabda.

The majesty of the mystic Šabda which we come across in the Sikh scripture hardly finds any parallel in its fullness. An analytical account of Šabda as discussed above proves this contention. The Sikh Gurus pruned the yogic and similar associations connected with this concept and made it a purely mystical doctrine. Here lies their grand contribution towards the theory and practice of this term.

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THE concept of bhakti is very old in our country. Many references of this term are found in the Upaniṣads¹ and the Bhagavad-Gītā.² The Nāradīya Sūtra³ mentions eleven types of bhakti. Many references to devotional love occur in several Purāṇas. It appears quite definite that this cult had many followers in the whole of India in ancient times. A powerful movement called the bhakti movement gained momentum during the medieval period. Rāmānand, Jñānēsvara, Kabir, Nanak and Nāmadeva were some of the foremost leaders of this cult.

In this cult since the earlier times uttering of Lord’s nāma has been stressed upon as a means to the fulfilment of the religious ideal, along with the other modes of bhakti. With the passage of time and under the impact of the teachings of the exponents of the bhakti movement these traditional modes lost their importance and the utterance of nāma simran was considered as the most efficacious means in the religious quest. It must be stated here that the leaders of the later forms of Buddhism gave considerable prominence to the recitation of the mantras in their scheme of sādhanā. The Natha yogīs ajapa japa and the recitation of the gāyatri were widely practised by many people. The Sants or the leaders of the bhakti movement who imbibed many concepts from the Tāntrikas and the yogīs in their teachings also inherited the culture of the japa to some extent from them. In the Sikh scripture the nāma mūrga becomes the choicest path of spiritual endeavour as well
as mystical concept of profound significance. Such interpretation we hardly come across in the yogic and devotional literature of the early period.

**What is Nāma**

In the Holy Book nāma has been used in a variety of ways. Therefore it is difficult to give a precise definition of this concept. At certain places it refers to the Lord’s nāma that is Rāma or Hari. It is also equated with the Lord’s light. “Those who possess the light of nāma within, their mind is always steady”.4 “When the light of nāma dawns, all the sins are erased and one is freed from the yoke of Yama”.5 It is also used in the sense of nectar. “The taste of nāma is like nectar, it is always sweet”.6 “When the devotee reaches His Abode, he is imbued with Lord’s nāma and drinks nectar always”.7 “Nāma and ābda carry similar meanings here”.8 In whose heart the ābda of the guru resides, gets the treasure of nāma. “All the joys of liberation are contained in the melody of nāma”.9 Nāma and sahaja appear to have the same sense. “Those who are imbued with nāma, merge in sahaja”.10 “By listening to nāma one gets happiness—and is in sahaja bliss”.11 It is also referred to in relation with soul. “Nāma (soul) merges in nāma (God)”.12 “Within thee is the jewel of nāma (soul). But the man lives in the sphere of three guṇas and, therefore, unable to discover the truth within”.13

It is also used as the will of God. “Through nāma (will) one is born, through nāma one dies, through it one merges in truth”.14 “Everything works within the sway of nāma. It is by good fortune that we understand nāma”.15 Nāma is equated with the Lord without attributes. “I am proud of those who have realized nāma”.16 “The true nāma is the fearless and the absolute Lord”.17 “The unthinkable Lord enters my mind”.18 It is also used in the sense of God with attributes. “Nāma has created everything, but without the true Guru, you cannot see Him”.19 “Fire, water and air which make the world are the slaves of nāma”.20 In some hymns nāma and love for God convey the same meanings. “Like a farmer, God sows the seeds of nāma in the heart of every individual. It grows and thus the devotee gets the highest treasure of the nine jewels”,21 “God
has blessed me with His nāma. I have forsaken all things. He has given me the bounty of His nāma, my only support.”\textsuperscript{22} The association of nāma with the power of God is stated in this hymn. “Nāma is the power which supports all things, all the world, universe, continents and all life. He who enshrines that power in his heart attains the supreme state”.\textsuperscript{23} Here we find that many views about nāma are put together. “People on whom is the grace of the Lord, get His nāma in their hearts. Those who worship nāma and believe in nāma are honoured in His Court”.\textsuperscript{24} The same is mentioned in a detailed manner. “Nāma is the inner knower of all hearts. It comes to our aid in all difficulties. It is the treasury of many priceless objects. This treasure is unfathomable, infinite and supreme. It is my eternal Master. It is the perfect merchant prince. It is the self dependent being. It is my loved food and the sole object of my life. I am permeated through and through by nāma. Everything vibrates with it. By the grace of the Guru I always keep company with nāma. When I utter nāma, anhad šabda rings in me. By the grace of the Lord I have got the treasure of nāma. I am perfectly attuned to nāma”.\textsuperscript{25} This most magnificent and mystical interpretation of nāma shows that nāma stands for all for what God stands. It is equated with His power, light, love, wisdom, will, nectar, eternal music and soul. Therefore, the Sikh Masters ask repeatedly for nāma in their songs and hymns”.\textsuperscript{26} The same thing appears to have been stated in a different way. “In the Guru Grantha, the true nāma has been mentioned as Vadā Nām : Great Name, Uchā Nām : Highest Name; Ek Nām : Ambrosial Name, Gurmukh Nām : Name of the Enlightened; Nirbhaya Nām : Fearless Name; Nirmal Nām : Pure Name, Abināśi Mantra : Eternal Mystical word; Nirguṇa Nām : Attributeless Name : Niranjana Nām : Immaculate Name and Niscał Nām : Unshakeable Name”.\textsuperscript{27} It is further stated, “The true nāma in the deeper sense is not the word by which we describe an object, but the total power, quality, character of Reality, in which the prophet has tried to sum up mystical power and experience of his presence”.\textsuperscript{28} It appears quite certain that the whole spiritual essence is designated by one thing that is nāma by the Sikh Gurus.\textsuperscript{29} It was quite well known to the authors of the Grantha that the Nameless
cannot be assigned any name because he is beyond the worldly language and idiom, but in order to express their inner spiritual experience, they must call it with some name. No doubt, this concept of nāma was quite difficult to comprehend because all attributes and epithets of the Lord are styled as such, therefore, in order to simplify this mystical doctrine, the Gurus used Hari or Rama invariably in their teachings. This Rama or Hari was not any historical person, a hero of the Rāmāyana, but was a symbol of the total reality. These names of God were already ingrained in the very marrow of the Hindu psyche as a result of the teachings of various offshoots of the Bhakti cult, therefore, the Masters thought it fit to popularise them.

It will not be out of place to give some brief references of the concept of nāma as preached by other reformers. Kabir considers nāma as the great essence. "I have tasted all the tastes of the world. But in sweetness none is equal to the taste of nāma".30 It is further said, "In this trade (devotion to nāma) I have got nāma, the priceless gem. My coming and going have come to an end. The true traders regard the true nāma as the only property. When we are in possession of nāma we can have easy access to the supreme Trader. That nāma is the Trader, the jewel and the ruby".31 Namadeva equates nāma with God. "The nāma of God is the form of God and the form of God is the nāma of God. There is none other except the nāma of the Lord and anybody who says there is another, is a fool".32 "I shall lose all bodily consciousness and merge in the nāma of God".33 Paltu echoes similar views. "By surta śabda practice open the lock of the shop. Do your duty and the mystery of nāma will be unfolded".34 "Nāma is Nameless. None can call Him by any name. Nāma can neither be written, nor read nor described by words. If we try to confine Him in any form, our efforts will prove futile. Nāma is indescribable and falls beyond the scope of language".35

The aforesaid discussion shows that nāma according to the Gurus is a term which is as deep and expansive as the Lord Himself. In order to become one with nāma, the authors of the Grantha advocate a distinct path called the nāma mārga. To this we now turn.
Namā Mārga

The Sikh Masters were quite emphatic in stating that in order to realize the Reality within namā mārga is the only means. Of course, they pointedly make reference to other means also, but in their scheme of sādhanā this means is the most efficacious and gets precedence over others. "None can get release by the study of holy books. All karmas and religious duties are quite useless. Only the uttering of namā is of supreme importance".36 "The pandits recite the Vedas and the Smritis. The yogis follow Gorakhnath and practice various forms of yoga. I remember the Lord's namā."37 "The Lord is not pleased by songs, by reading the Vedas, by following the path of yoga and knowledge, by wandering naked, visiting pilgrim stations, alms giving, sitting alone in the śūnya state, dying a warrior's death in the battle field and by rolling in dust. He takes into account our love for Him. He is pleased with him who is imbued with namā".38 The Gurus castigate several modes of worship and bring the majesty of namā mārga in this hymn. "Some go to the woods and keep silence, some suffer the pangs of wintry frost and never clean themselves, some keep their hair matted and look wild, some love their castles and fellow men, some do not sleep, some burn fire around and waste themselves, without namā their bodies are reduced to dust".39

The namā mārga was systematised, organised and made the most potent vehicle for the attainment of bliss by the Gurus. The spiritual career was to start from the remembering of namā. "Those that have the namā of the Lord on their tongues, reach His abode".40 "Utter, His namā with every breath, in all situations and at all places".41 The authors of the sacred scripture knew quite well that mere remembering of His namā does not take one any where. "It should be practised with concentration, meditation and contemplation".42 "Those who remember namā with concentration, look pure in the court of the Lord".43 Contemplation of namā brings us to the eternal station.44

The first step in the namā mārga according to the Gurus is the uttering of his namā or popularly called the namā simran, but the second step is harder than the first because it demands
focusing of mind on one object. It may be called the yoga of nāma but not in the prevailing yogic sense. The Gurus refer to another form that is nāma simran with mind full of Love. "I want nothing, but the love of the nāma of the Lord".45 "Those who are attuned to the nectar with mind full of love are the blessed ones. They stay in their own Home".46

Constant, automatic, spontaneous and effortless nāma simran day and night and with every breath, not with the tongue but with the mind, popularly called the ajpa japa in the yogic terminology has also been prominently referred to by the Gurus. "By the grace of God I am blessed with nāma. My mind is in bliss. My whole being is weaved in nāma".47 "A true devotee of the Lord is always busy in ajpa japa without uttering His nāma with the tongue".48 "All munis and the devotees of the Lord have practised ajpa japa".49

The above mentioned different aspects of nāma mārga are neither separate nor distinct, but they are the expression of the same process. The Gurus do not make any gradation in the process of upward journey to the Absolute. Neither these are the milestones showing the distance covered by one method, nor showing thrusts into the un-known by the application of the second method. Nāma mārga is for them one unified and complete process and the masters boldly proclaim that it is not within the reach of all to utter or have nāma. "There is a profound greatness in nāma. Many have uttered it, but have not discovered its true worth".50 "On having the Lord’s nāma one becomes adept and is endowed with magical powers. He is blessed with nine treasures and all his desires are satiated. He is calm and contented and māyā worships his feet".51 It is a state of sahaja and there is joy of bliss. "When I hear nāma, I am excited to see your vision".52 The philosophy and methodolg of nāma is beautifully explained in this hymn: "Nāma is within, utter nāma with tongue, reflect on nāma, hear nāma and believe in nāma; when we praise nāma we attain His castle. Nāma is illumination within. Bliss is nāma, without nāma we are not approved in His Court."53

The uttering of God’s name for the attainment of the highest goal of life was also emphasized by some Purāṇas. "He who utters Hari even once, becomes fit for liberation".54 "He who
ever remembers His nāma at any time, in any condition or under compulsion or while sneezing, he is relieved of all the sins”.55

“The object one attains in the satya yuga by contemplation, in the tretā yuga by yajñas, in the dvāpar yuga by worship, that is attained in the kali yuga by the recitation of the Lord’s nāma”.56

This recitation of the Lord’s nāma was replaced by the uttering of the mantras with a yogic orientation in the doctrines of the siddhās and some yogic cults which emerged after the 8th century A.D. The leaders of these cults made it quite systematic and a powerful means for the attainment of bliss.

“The japa of the mantras (in the cult of Tāntric Buddhism) according to Pañcacartha, does not mean the mere chanting or muttering of the mantras, it is, as it is with the school of Mantra yoga, a yogic process of controlling the vital wind with the help of the mantras. In the Mantra yoga (as for example), Oṁ containing within it the part ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’ are divided conveniently into three parts of the process of prānâyāma. Thus here in the Pañcacartha the japa mantra is Oṁ, ah hum and to mutter them in the yogic process according to their meaning is called vajra japa”.57

Explaining further it is said, “The Vajra japa seems to be nothing but prānâyāma associated with the mantra for the control of the vital wind and to control the vital wind is to control the mind, and to control the mind is to destroy it, is to realize the essence of the dharmas.58 Here we come across a marked impact of śūnyavāda. “A very popular mantra of the Vajrayānists is—all the dharma are of void nature, I am also of the void nature, this voidism remains the central spirit of Vajrayāna in which God which is worshipped, the worshipper who worships, the material which are offered in worship and the mantra of worship are all regarded as perfect void”.59

We are quite aware that Oṁ as the metaphysical syllable as well as the essence of truth has occupied the foremost position not only in the Hindu philosophical and devotional thought, but also in the various offshoots of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Summing up the meanings attached to the term that is Oṁ in Hinduism and Buddhism R.B. Anuruddha writes, “For many, especially the Hindus, the Oṁ stands for Pārmātmā (over soul), or as a symbol of a divine universe and for ‘siddhi
or super natural power which can be attained by great yogis or siddhās. Om is further the source of all light, enlightenment, life and infinity. A is consciousness, U is sub-consciousness and M is śūnya (void or Reality). All philosophical and religious sects of India from the earliest times of the Vedic age adopted this mystical syllable as the quintessence of the highest inexpressible reality, the attributeless Absolute, which is Mahāyāna Buddhism is the Dharma Kāyā (the law body). Almost all Indian sects, however, gave to the sacred syllable different meanings and yet they agreed to the fundamental idea behind it. Mahāyāna Buddhism with all its branches adopted it likewise and therefore, Om is unbroken link between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hinduism. In Mahāyāna it became a symbol of its universality which does not recognize securitarian differences. Om stands, therefore, for the unity of those who follow the great path, the Boddsisattava path of guiding our fellow men from ignorance to wisdom, from hatred to universal love, from cravings to detachment. Om is the symbol of Buddhism in a similar manner as in Hinduism for Brahma; the Buddhist, however, does not seek unity with the Buddha as the sumnum bonnum of his religious himself, a Mānuṣi Buddha in order to show the way of liberation to the suffering world”.

The Nātha yogis, the direct descendants of the Tāntric leaders, and an important link between them and the Sants, imbibed some of their doctrines in their teachings. Like the Tāntric creeds they relied much on the mantras and their utterance but they gave to it a completely yogic form and content, and styled it as the ajpa japa. Explaining the yogic process of this japa A. K. Banerji, remarks:

“Gorakhnath teaches us that every time we breathe out, air passes out from within with the sound ham and every time we breathe in, air from outside passes into our body with the sound sah. This we can easily perceive, if we pay close attention to our breath. This means that every creature and particularly every man, is naturally and unconsciously repeating the mantra ham sah, ham sah with every breath day and night during all time. This is a divine design. The sound ham implies Aham that is I or the
individual self and the sound sah implies He or the cosmic self Brahman-Paramātmā-Śiva. Thus with every out-breathing the individual self (Jīva) frees itself from the bodily limitations and goes forth to the cosmos and identifies with the soul of the cosmic body (Śiva), and with every in-breathing, He, the soul of the cosmic body, Śiva, enters into the body and reveals himself as Aham or the individual self."

Every Jīva goes out with ham sound and enters with sah sound and thus every Jīva continually repeats this mantra, Hamsah, Soham. This is called ajpa japa and the best form of the gāyatri mantra. One is not required to repeat the mantra orally or with any volition or effort. Gāyatri means a sacred song, by the singing of which one is delivered of all bondage. By the wonderful divine design the great mantra pregnant with the highest spiritual truth is being constantly sung by every Jīva with every breath day and night without any effort.

A sādhaka has only to pay deep attention to the inner meanings of his natural breath, in order to realize the identity of the individual self and the cosmic self and attain liberation”. The same author further observes, “This is the magnificent conception of our natural breathing process. The highest enlightenment is associated with it. The cultivation of this conception and constant remembrance of the essential identity of the individual soul and the soul of the universe with every breath occupies a very important position in Gorakhnath’s system of yogic sādhanā. This is called ajapa japa”.

The Sants who promulgated their doctrines within the compass of the bhakti movement did away with the recitation of mantras with their yogic connotations like the prāṇāyāma and discipline of breath, but continued to give supreme importance to the utterance of Lord’s nāma as mentioned in some of the Purāṇas. Of course, we find references to the ajpa japa in the principles and practices of the yogic cults and the Sants, but there is a marked difference between the two. The former have complete yogic orientation, while the latter are soaked in devotion with some elements of yogic sādhanā.

It is quite interesting to compare the nāma mārga as contained in the Guru Grantha with some other Sants. Kabir
refers to complete concentration. "In the process of nāme-simran the devotee should be so engrossed that he even forgets all about his body. The mind with all its faculties is imbued with nāma and thus the difference between the devotee and the objects is obliterated." Here Kabir refers to love. "I have left reading, writing and bookish knowledge. I only love Rama." It is further remarked, "if the mind is full of love, then there is no use to utter His nāma. The wife does not utter the name of the husband, but is always in complete love with him. Similarly the devotee without uttering His nāma with the tongue is always imbued in the love of God." Dadu echoes similar views, "I always remember nāma in my heart. There is no need for any external japa for me." He is worshipped by the three worlds, but He is formless. The flag of His nāma is fluttering everywhere. Dadu has experienced it. Nāma is that symbol by which we realize the Lord. Namadeva is a passionate devotee of the nāma mārga. "Through mystical experience, through devotion, through deceit, through the torments of the saṁskāras, let the nīma of God always dance on my tongue." "If there were a cessation of the utterance of the nāma of God on my tongue, my tongue will be split with thousand parts." Tulsi Dass expresses similar views but with deeper emotions. "The virtue of uttering Rāma nāma is infinite and in my judgment is greater than Rāma Himself. Nāma mārga is stated here with a wealth of worldly similies. "As the gold smith looks intently towards the balance while weighing gold, the person flying the kite has his eyes fixed on the kite in the sky, ladies with filled pitchers of water on their heads go on walking and talking with one another, but their mind is yoked to one point, the cow while moving at a distance has her attention fixed on her calf and the mother performing all domestic duties has her mind tied to her child in the swing, so my mind is fixed on your nāma." Ordinarily the japa of the Sants can be classified into three categories. These are, (1) with tongue, (2) with mind, and (3) with the whole being. In the words of Barthwal, "Simran is of three kinds (1) the external japa, (2) the ajpa japa by which the śādhaka leaves the sphere of the outside world and enters the domain of the internal life, and (3) the anahat, here he enters into secret
inmost being, where he recognizes himself and crossing all
hurdles becomes a part and parcel of the Infinity. Keshni
Prasad Chaurasia mentions also three classifications of the
japa of the Sikh religion, “The Sikh Gurus dwell on ordinary
japa, ajpa japa and japa when the mind is imbued with God’s
Love in their teachings. When the individual gets sufficient
training in the japa by tongue, he then starts ajpa japa. In
this kind the devotee abandons the aid of tongue and his japa
with every breath goes on automatically. The third kind of
japa is of the highest quality. In this japa there is harmonious
coordination of body, tongue and mind of the devotee. His
individual internal being is so merged, in the universal cosmic
Being, that separation becomes an impossibility”. It means
that the japa of the first kind loses its identity and becomes a
part of the second japa. Similarly after great practice the
second kind that is the ajpa japa is merged in the third category.
When the third japa reaches its climax, there is complete
identification and all categories and the japa cease to exist. As is
rightly remarked “the japa dies, the ajpa japa perishes away
and the anhad japa also comes to an end, when the surt is
merged in the ābā. All the worldly fetters are cut asunder
and there is liberation”. The view of Sharad Chandra Verma
about the first two kinds of japa are worth quoting here. He
says, “Repetition of God’s nāma is an unerring psychic device,
by virtue of the fact that truth itself becomes embedded in the
mind and sat nāma or Truth eternal has been emphasized.
Meditation is consequently that stage whereby removing
the grossness of mind and with involution, from the within,
where the conscious Absolute (Atmā or Soul) rises to the realm
of Supreme Spirit, and the process of God’s realization is
through japa and meditation of Nāma because doctrinal en-
lightenment alone is not the end, but the means”. He further
observes, “The process of meditation and concentration, is
therefore, a process of direct conception of the object of
devotion remaining distinct. The act is then devoured and
becomes subjective to the object itself. Subsequently the subject,
the object and the predicate, the devotee, the object of devotion
and the act of devotion, all become one”.

Thus we observe that nāma simran as a distinct and a very
effective means had its roots in one or the other form in their
earlier cults and creeds whose references have been cited above.
The Sants removed many yogic cobwebs of the Tāntras and the
Nāthas attached with this particular mode of worship and made
it a purely mystical, practical and devotional means. It is true
that contemplation and concentration are yogic processes,
but the Sikh Gurus lay much emphasis on the love of God in
the act of simran. The basic and fundamental proposition of the
Sikh faith i.e. devotion or bhakti remains always the uppermost.
This simple yogic sādhanā acts as an aid to the mind to remain
fixed, on one point. The mind which is overflowing with diverse
worldly cravings, when filled with love for God remains straight
in its path towards the spiritual goal. As Pershu Ram
Chaturvedi
rightly puts it, “As the mariners’ compass is a
sure guide for the captain of a ship on his onward march,
in spite of the fact that he is unable to see the polar star due to
thick clouds on the sky, so a person, whose mind is fixed on one
object never goes astray in spite of his involvements in the worldly
setters. The mariner’s compass is an external object and it may
go out of order on certain occasions, but the mind well trained
in the act of concentration never leaves its path and this
disciplined nature becomes a part and parcel of the very being
of the devotee. In order to have such a fixed and permanent
attitude of mind the Sants have given supreme prominence to
simran. Barthwal’s opinion in this regard is worthy of mention.
He
says, “Nāma simran which is also called a form of mantra
yoga is another form of surt śabda yoga. It is the yoga of all
yogas. Bhakti yoga, rāja yoga, mantra yoga, karma yoga, hāṭha
yoga and jñāna yoga are included in this yoga. The basic doctrine
of all these yogas come under the umbrella of nāma simran”.

Majesty of Nāma
For the Sikh Masters majesty of nāma is indescribable. They
believed that their activities both outer and inner are associated
with nāma. All relations are contained in nāma. “The Lord’s
nāma is my father, mother, brother and friend.” Nāma is the food of 36 kinds and we are
satiated by eating it. “The nectar nāma is the betel leaf in my
mouth.” “Nāma is our dress. There is no need to have any
other dress". Its glory is beyond expression. "If I may live for aeons of years and have air as my food, even then I cannot understand the grandeur of nāma." If I write million of pages and write through an ocean of ink, still I cannot comprehend You and Your nāma. About the greatness of nāma certain other hymns deserve our attention. "Nāma is the essence of all the Śāstras". The mantras, the Tāntras, the penances, the good deeds of propitiation and atonement are all contained in nāma. "All the four objects of life, the eight supernatural powers, one finds in the quintessence in nāma. All meditations, knowledge of scriptures, austerities, discipline of yoga, ways of works, renunciation and wanderings, all religious efforts, deeds of charity, piety, oblation, fasts, deeds of merit and so on pale into insignificance before nāma". It is further remarked, "Nāma was contemplated upon by the kinnars, yakṣas, adepts, seekers after truth, Śiva in trance, Dhruva, Prahlad; nine Nāthas, Brahma’s sons, eighty four siddhās, Buddha, Akrur, Namdeva, Trilochan and Kabir. To the same nāma are devoted the thirty three angelic beings and all men of chastity. It was contemplated upon by Bhiṣma and thus in his mind rained nectar. "The glory of nāma spreads like the rays of sun, like the fragrance of Elysium tree and its praises are sung in the north, south, east and west". The Gurus were so completely overwhelmed by the majesty of nāma that they see it in all objects. "Nāma is the bath, it is the seat and the store, it is the water and the chaṇḍan, it is the lamp and the wick and the oil, the light that burns is also nāma, it is the thread, the garland, it is the fly brush that moves over my head."

We have noted above that for the Nātha yogis the ajpa japa or the gāyatri mantra with all the yogic practices associated with it has occupied supreme importance in their spiritual scheme. In the words of A. K. Banerji, His (Gorakh) natural gāyatri mantra has its origin in the Kuṇḍalini śakti and is sustainer of the vital system. The knowledge of this is called prāṇavidyā (true insight into the vital system) and it is mahāvidyā (great wisdom)." He who attains the knowledge of this ajpa gāyatri is truly the knower of yoga, wisdom equal to this, japa equal to this, knowledge equal to this, has never been and will never be. Ajapa gāyatri is the bestower of liberation to the yogis. It
washes all our sins. Any branch of knowledge or any japa has no comparison with it. No wisdom was equal to it in the past nor there will be in future. Many Sants like the Sikh Gurus have eulogised the importance of nāma in superlative terms. Jñāneswara says, "When Prahlad uttered the nāma of the Lord, the latter came to his rescue. God's nāma is the best and the holiest of all the things. It is His nāma that came to the help of Dhruva, Gajendra, Ajmala and Valmiki. "One among many mortals after death may go to the home of the Lord, but the (devotees of nāma) have brought down God on earth. They are right royal like a lion, but of compassion on their tongues. My nāma dances without interruption, the nāma which it would take a thousand births for one to be fortunate enough to utter." It is further said, "I do not live in Vaikuntha, nor do I inhabit the disc of the sun, I traverse the heart of the yogis, but before those who celebrate my nāma, I am always to be found if I am lost anywhere". Kabir echoes the glory of nāma in these words, "God counts only that day on which we remember nāma. The worker receives wages for the working days only. God's devotion is the only job to be done in life". Namādeva also expresses a similar view, "None can know the ways of the Lord. The supreme object of Life is to utter His nāma. The religious merits accruing from the gift of a million cows or a gift of golden mountain can never be compared with the greatness of nāma." Sunder Dass says, "It is the distilled essence of all the philosophies and religious acts. As ghee is contained in the curd and milk, so in all our activities nāma is the basic thing". Commenting on the views of the sants, Gopinath Kaviraja observes, "By the glory of nāma the longest distance (here to hereafter) is easily covered. The power of nāma is unthinkable and beyond measure. The hymns uttered by many Sants enlist the faith of the distressed people and provide them with support of nāma. It removes all the troubles of the people. In the Kali age nāma is the natural way for redemption of the supportless".

CONCLUSION

The above analysis shows that the glory of nāma sung by the Sants is a special characteristic of their teachings. It is true
that utterance of nāma was emphasized by some Purāṇic writers as the supreme means to attain the spiritual goal of life. Later on the utterance of nāma was replaced by the recitation of the mantras with its yogic orientation and complicated rituals by the leaders of the Tātris in order to gain bliss and perfect peace. The ajpa japa of the Nātha yogis with its breath culture was aimed at rousing the kuṇḍalini sakti and its upward march to the sahasrara, i.e. the abode of Śiva. The Sants including the Sikh Masters denounced the efficacy of the mantras along with its yogic content and orientation. In fact they catch hold of the line of the Purānic authors with regard to the recitation of nāma. Nāma according to the Gurus is not only a means but it is a mystical concept. For them nāma pervades all life, both earthly and non earthly. They see and experience its mystery everywhere. All other disciplines, cults, dogmas, creeds and faiths occupy a subordinate position in comparison with nāma. Here we find nāma and God become interchangeable terms, whatever is applicable to one is also applicable to the other and vice versa. The Guru’s experience with nāma and their total identity with it becomes so overwhelming that their vision becomes coterminous with the cosmic vision. This profound vision is the special and distinguished contribution of the authors of the Grantha which we hardly find in its wholeness and grandeur in the teachings of the other Sants whose references have been given above.

References

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3. 82.
4. The Ādi Granth, pp. 28, 40, 42
5. Ibid., p. 412.
6. Ibid., pp. 40, 170
7. Ibid., pp. 81, 87, 101, 209, 814.
9. Ibid., p. 1013.
10. Ibid., pp. 85, 1217.
11. Ibid., p. 1213.
12. Ibid., p. 114.
13. Ibid., p. 117.
15. Ibid., p. 421.
17. Ibid., p. 465.
18. Ibid., p. 798.
19. Ibid., p. 753.
20. Ibid., p. 1328.
21. Ibid., p. 20.
22. Ibid., p. 401.
23. Ibid., p. 289.
24. Ibid., p. 17.
25. Ibid., p. 1144.
26. Ibid., pp. 44, 289, 716.
28. Ibid., p. 66.
29. (i) (The Name is the total expression of all that God is, and this is the truth. W. H. Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion),
   (ii) (The word Nāma is expressive not only of the Unity and oneness of God but includes all mystical, aesthetic and all inclusive qualities, in their plurality and multiplicity, Sharad Chandra Verma, Guru Nanak and the Logos of Divine Manifestation) p. 91.
31. Ibid., p. 227.
32. Abhyangas, p. 64.
33. Ibid., p. 77.
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38. Ibid., p. 1240.
39. Ibid., p. 1285.
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41. Ibid., pp. 104, 191, 289.
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45. Ibid., p. 504.
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50. Ibid., p. 349.
51. Ibid., pp. 405, 1240.
52. Ibid., p. 426.
53. Ibid., p. 435.
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ŚŪNYA

INTRODUCTION

THE CONCEPT of śūnya is very old in Indian thought. Its reference is available in the Mahābhārata. This text\(^1\) while describing the thousand names of Viśnu, refers to śūnya as one of them. Śaṅkhara\(^2\) maintains that Viśnu is śūnya because He is devoid of all qualities. In various schools of Buddhism we come across pointed references of this term in a variety of ways. “The term śūnya is variously understood. To some it means nothingness, to others a permanent principle, transcendent, indefinable, immanent in all things. The former is true of the world of experience, the latter of metaphysical reality.\(^3\) It is further mentioned, “It cannot be called void or not void”.\(^4\) In the Dohā kośa there are also several references to śūnya. Here is a clear mention of four gradations of śūnya like śūnya, ati śūnya, mahāśūnya and sarvaśūnya in some yogic texts.\(^5\) Gorakh Nath\(^6\) refers to three kinds of śūnyas. Daḍu\(^7\) in his hymns makes mention of the four kinds but their names are different from Gorakh Nath. A text attributed to certain yogic cults gives reference to seven kinds of śūnyas, “There are seven kinds of śūnyas, of which the six are impure and contain the seeds of phenomenalism, whereas the seventh is the Supreme Reality, which is Pure Being, and Consciousness and is free from all the Vikalpa”.\(^8\) The Jainas\(^9\) also borrowed some non-Jaina concepts like śūnya and preached them in their doctrines. In the Dharma cult of Bengal śūnya\(^10\) also found much prominence. “This śūnya was made much use of also in the yogic literature of the Muslims of Bengal”.\(^11\) “Thus we find that the concept
of śūnya was widely preached by various cults and creeds, both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. It was Mahāyāna Buddhism which gave great prominence to it in its teachings and practices. Later on, it filtered down to the doctrines of the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas, the Nāthas and the Sants. As is rightly observed, "So much emphasized was the idea of śūnyatā as the nature of the Ultimate Reality in Buddhist philosophy, religion and literature for centuries in India and outside, and so widespread and deep-rooted was its influence on the masses through the enthusiasm of the Mahāyānist, that the association of the idea of voidness with that of the Ultimate Reality became a tradition".¹² Kshitimohan Sen¹³ provides us with a brief survey of this concept and the ideas associated with it in these words, "In the sādhana of Mahāyāna the idea of śūnya entered as the bestower of all kinds of enjoyment and happiness. With the passage of time the contact of Buddhism with śūnya became more thick. In the philosophy of Vajrayāna, śūnya began to be considered as the fundamental substance of the world. Thus except śūnya all the gods and goddesses were reduced to a cipher. Except śūnya, all is māyā. This śūnya assumed the form of Alakha Niraṇjan and filtered down the doctrines of the Nāth and the Niraṇjana. The followers of Gorakh give it a prominent place in their philosophy. In the teachings of the Vāma Mārgis, śūnya got a very honourable position. The eighty four siddhas have sung the praises of śūnya". Thus we observe that this term was widely used by several systems. Its ascendancy was felt after the Mahāyāna doctrines had received wide currency. The Sants including the Sikh Gurus also imbibed its essence and made it a part and parcel of their practices and principles.

State of Śūnya

The Sikh Gurus have described the state of śūnya or śūnya samādhi in a variety of ways. It is a state beyond contradictions. "There is neither death nor life, neither pleasure nor pain".¹⁴ Physical appetites become irrelevant in this state. "I have left my hunger and sleep and śūnya has merged in śūnya".¹⁵ Another simile is provided here. "When the pitcher breaks and the reflection in the water merges in the reflected object, as does one merge in śūnya after the doubt is removed".¹⁶ It is further
remarked, "As the water pervades the universe, so does one merge in the śūnya".17 This is the abode of the Lord. "For those who are in śūnya samādhi there is neither earth, nor water, nor sky, for them, there is the Lord alone".18 "The Sants have their abode in the śūnya samādhi, that is the place of Brahman".19 Here this state is not considered equivalent to the abode of the Lord. "The yogīs dwell on śūnya and regard Lord as unknowable".20 Śūnya and sabda are the same states, "He is engrossed in śūnya samādhi and dwells on sabda".21 It is also equated with the Tenth Door. "Above us all is one, the most wonderful and unique Lord. His abode is in the Tenth Door".22 Thus it means that according to the Sikh scripture śūnya state has been described in many ways. One attains this state when one reaches the Tenth Door. It is the abode of the Lord; both with attributes and without attributes. It is the state where rings the melody of the sabda and the coming and going ceases and also vanishes away the sense of subjectivity and objectivity.

Almost similar reference can be easily traced from the literature of the Siddhas, the Nāthas and the Sants. A manuscript of the Siddhas mentions, "Śūnyatā, which is firm, substantial, indivisible, impenetrable, incapable of being burnt, is called the Vajra".23 In a song attributed to Savara-Pada, it is mentioned by him that he has awakened the Nairātma damsel by destroying śūnya, ati śūnya, and also the adjoining house (i.e. mahā-śūnya) by the stroke of the fourth śūnya of his heart, and by the side of the adjoining house (mahā-śūnya) shines another house lit with moon rays, and when all the mass of darkness is driven away—the sky shines with lustre".24 Here in these references we find general Buddhist nature of atheism.

In the cult of Gorakh Nātha we come across mention of this term also in a variety of ways. "It is located in the sususmanā, the middle path".25 "In the śūnya state the nature and intensity of bliss corresponds to the nature and bliss of the thousand petalled lotus".26 "It is a state beyond duality",27 "In this state nectar always rains",28 "The state of śūnya and of sabda are similar in experience".29 In the words of Banerji, "Gorakhnātha also calls the parama śūnya, where all objectivity and individuality vanishes in this experience, and, there remains only one infinite, eternal, differenceless, changeless absolute
experience. Śūnya does not mean absence of existence, but perfect, subject object-less, space timeless unconditional existence”. Kabir also echoes similar views about his experience of the state of śūnya. “In this state rings the melody of the śabda and there my mind dances. By the grace of the Lord I have found nectar. I am in sahaja”. In this state the distance between I and thou is obliterated, “I merge in śūnya in such a way as the wave merges in the ocean”. For Kabir it is the state where the Lord manifests Himself with all His light. “There is effulgence in the region of śūnya. There is no sun, no moon, only Nirañjana and the melody of the śabda. I experienced light in all my pores and the Lord became manifest”. Dadu also provides us with eloquent references of his experience of the state of śūnya. This is the abode of the attributeless Lord. “In the tank of śūnya the mind picks up jewels. This is the abode of Nirañjana, the unchangeable and indivisible Lord”. “He equates sahaja with śūnya and says, “There is neither death nor life, here pleasure and pain become the same. This is the highest state. There is no duality. My mind is in sahaja. Fix your mind in sahaja śūnya and drink nectar”.

Some sufis were impressed by the yogic practices and, therefore, they imbibed certain Indian terms and incorporated them in their teachings. Śūnya is one of them. “In the ocean of śūnya rise up the currents and merge in it”.

Thus, the attainment of the state of śūnya is the highest achievement of the spiritual endeavours according to the Siddhas, the Nathas and the Sants. The Siddhas being the inheritors of the atheistic traditions of Buddhism described this state within the frame-work of their teachings. Gorakhnath adds timidly theistic elements in this term. Ram Kumar Verma is quite right when he says,

Śūnya symbolises that state which is devoid of duality and there one experiences Truth, Beauty and Bliss. This is beyond the reach of body and mind. This is the state of highest bliss. For the Siddhas this was the supreme goal of their efforts. Because they were born and bred up in the agnostic traditions of Buddhism, therefore, they have nowhere stated that in this state of supreme happiness there
is the experience of the bliss of God realization. But Nāthism emerged as a result of interaction of Śaivism on the prevailing cults, therefore, it saw light in the union of Śiva and Śakti in this concept. In this way the Nāthas did not leave this concept where the Siddhas had left it, but with confidence added spiritual meaning to it and enlarged its scope. The sādhaka attains liberation in the union of Śiva and Śakti”.

But the Sants including the Gurus still further widened its sphere. They boldly asserted that the state of śūnya was the state of God realization. Thus the term śūnya was now saturated with mystical ideas. Here the Gurus discarded the old connotation of this term and made notable changes which accorded well with their general teachings.

The idea of the association of Nāda or Śabda with śūnya appears to be of considerable antiquity. Muni Dutt, the commentator of the caryapādas at one place maintains that the Siddhas point to the melody of the śabda in the śūnya state. This idea was further developed by the Nāthas as we have mentioned above. In order to convey the idea of the melody of the nāda the followers of the Nātha cult carried with them a musical instrument called the singni as a symbol. We all know that Guru Nanak had with him his disciple, Mardana who played upon rabab or rebeck (the musical instrument), while he sang his hymns. It appears that Nanak continued the traditions of the Nātha yogis but with a difference. We have no information whether Kabir and other Sikh masters did the same or not. But it seems that they did not carry any instrument with them while they sang hymns. Thus, they discarded that symbol.

Śūnya and the Lord
The Sikh scripture associates śūnya with God both with attributes as well as without attributes. It is the abode of the One Lord. "The transcendental Lord is seated in śūnya. He Himself is detached and infinite". There is śūnya Lord within and without, it is in the three worlds. Whosoever attains the fourth śūnya is not affected by vice or virtue. He who knows
that śūnya (Lord) pervades everywhere, knows the mystery of Nirañjana, the Ādi Puruṣa”.42 “In the śūnya state abides the yogi, our Lord. He is neither woman nor man”.43 References to śūnya with Saguna Brahman can also be easily traced in the Holy Book. “The Lord is in śūnya samādhi, the supreme object of our lives and the Master of the three worlds”.44 “He created the world out of His śūnya state. Water, air, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva were also created from this state”.45 “Out of His śūnya state came the seven seas, sun, moon, earth and sky. He also created māyā”.46 Śūnya is the abode of Śambhu, whosoever finds his abode there, is a yogi. There is light of śūnya in the abode of śūnya. There the detached yogi resides”.47 “From śūnya were born ten incarnations and all the worlds. From the light of śūnya emerged the five elements” .48

The Siddhas, the faithful carriers of the Buddhist traditions equated śūnya with the Ultimate Reality, the seat of bliss or mahāsukha, as they used to put it, but nowhere do they refer to God with or without attributes along with this term. The term Nirañjana, which later on was extensively used by the sants, no doubt, finds mention in their songs. “Enter the śūnya Nirañjana, after killing your mind with the help of nirvāṇa”.49 “When the mind is merged in śūnya, all the cravings are extinguished”.50 “The mind should feel that it is śūnya, the world is śūnya and the whole universe is śūnya” .51 Summing up the views of the Cāryapadās about śūnya, S.B. Dasgupta52 observes, “It is absolute purity obtained by transcending the principles of defilement. It is the purified knowledge, the ultimate truth, the supreme omniscience. It is a state which can be said to be neither without beginning, nor with beginning, neither without middle nor with middle, neither without end nor with end. It is beyond the categories of either being or non-being, merit or demerit, or even a combination or the absence of both”. The Vajrayānists also gave much prominence to śūnya. “The main point on which the Vajrayāna conception of the pantheon revolves is that of the five dhayāni Buddhas and the five Buddha families. The deities are all voluntary manifestations of śūnya, in forms dependent upon the Bijas uttered”.53 It is further stated. “In the Vajrayāna three elements are involved, śūnya, vijñāna and mahāsukha. The combination of these is called
Vajra: Śūnya is Nairātma, a goddess in whose embrace the individual mind (Viññāna) is locked and in which it remains in eternal bliss and happiness”. 54 Gorakh Nath believes that it is the abode of Śiva. “In the śūnya are father and mother. There abides the Niraṅjana by Himself”. 55 In the Sufi literature śūnya is equated with God without attributes as well as with attributes. “Śūnya is beyond sound and language, there is neither vice nor virtue, there He abides by Himself; it is the secret of the secrets”. 56 “From śūnya He became gross; He Himself wears many garbs”. 57 “From śūnya is born everything. From śūnya is born śūnya. The world of diversity is born from śūnya, like Indra, universe, regions and all things”.

For Dadu, śūnya and the attributeless Lord are the same. “In the śūnya is Brahman, Niraṅjana and the Formless. There is effulgence. I have experienced this state”. 59 It is further remarked, “According to Dadu there are four śūnyas—kāyā, ātma, parama and sahaja. The first three śūnyas are the regions of the manifest Lord, and the last is that of the unmanifest Lord. Here He is in sahaja śūnya. This is the last stage. In the kāyā śūnya are the five elements, in the ātma śūnya is the light, in the parama śūnya the soul meets the Lord, and in the fourth śūnya Dadu is alone. This is the last stage to reach. There the Niraṅjana Lord is present everywhere. None can speak about His qualities”. 60 Some followers of Caitanya were deeply impressed by this term and they associated śūnya with Kṛṣṇa, their highest deity. “The staunch apostles of Vaiṣṇavism of Orissa in the 16th century, like Acyutānanda Dāsa, Balrāma Dāsa, Jagan Dāsa, Anant Dāsa etc., who were all contemporaries and who propagated Vaiṣṇavism as professed followers of Caitanya, described Lord Kṛṣṇa as the śūnya Puruṣa, and made Him none but the incarnation of śūnyatā, the ultimate void”. 61 In some other texts śūnya along with the Lord with attributes find sufficient mention. “Śūnya is beyond seven continents, nine regions of earth, seven pātālas and twenty one universes. There the Lord Niraṅjana lives”. 62 Thus we find that the Sikh Masters along with other leaders of the sant mat associate the concept of śūnya with God both with and without qualities. The same idea can also be easily traced in some other texts as mentioned above. Here we definitely find a departure from the
teachings of the Siddhas and the Tāntrikas who though speak about the Ultimate Reality, do not speak about God in association with this concept. No doubt, that the Nāthas speak of Śiva, but they are not as forceful, clear and eloquent as the sants including the Gurus are, when they equate śūnya with God. The Gurus abandoned some old meanings associated with this concept and tried their best and also succeeded eminently by giving a powerful theistic slant to this concept in their teachings. In this way they once again established in the popular mind the meanings of śūnya not as an agnostic doctrine, but as a mystical principle.

We have noted above that Niraṇjana has been equated with śūnya in the doctrines of the Siddhas, the Nāthas, the Sants and several other cults. In the literature of the Siddhas, Niraṇjana stands for the Highest Reality, but in the doctrines of the Sants it stands for the Supreme Lord. S. B. Dasgupta puts it beautifully in these words, "The use of the word Niraṇjana is not, however, very uncommon in Hindu philosophical and theological texts, but its use seems to be more common in the Buddhist than in the Hindu fold, and it is very frequently and aptly used as an epithet of reality, which in its ultimate void nature is stainless like the sky above. In the liturgical works of the Dharma cult, queer derivation of the word Niraṇjana are offered which are purely arbitrary in nature. This epithet or rather the synonymy Niraṇjana for Ultimate Reality or the formless Supreme Being became very popular in all the vernacular literature, and in fact it has been very widely used by the Dharmītes, the Nāthīts, the Bauls, the Sufi poets, the nīrgūṇa poets of Hindi literature and also the Sikhs".63 Thus the position of Niraṇjana was eminently recognised by all the above mentioned cults and creeds, though, no doubt, with different emphasis and meanings, keeping in view the framework of their doctrines and teachings. This may also be due to the impact of the teachings of the Dharma or Niraṇjana cult as well as the respect which the leaders of this cult got from the yogis and the Sants, where Niraṇjana was allotted the supreme position. "Niraṇjana or the paramātma is neither born nor dies. It is always of the same nature and is immanent everywhere. He is un reachable and unknowable. He is formless and eternal. His māyā pervades everywhere. He guides the
destinies of the whole world in His unmanifest form. He never incarnates Himself".64

“Hari Dasa, one of their eminent teachers, received spontaneous adoration and respect from Gorakh Nāth, Gopi Chandra, Bhartrhari, Kabir and Dadu”.65 But later on, Niraṇjana’s position was lowered. It was usurped by the True Puruṣa. “Beyond śūnya is the abode of the Puruṣa. He is without name”66 “When afterwards the Niraṇjana was defeated and relegated to a secondary position, the True Puruṣa was given the highest status. Consequently the abode of śūnya was considered lower than the parama loka. In this way, the latter was considered beyond the region of śūnya”.67 This idea is mentioned by Kabir in a different way. “It is true that Kabir regards Niraṇjana in high esteem, but for him the Ādi Puruṣa is like a tree and Niraṇjana is equated with the branch of that tree. But it appears that later on due to the infighting among the followers of the Niraṇjana cult, Kabir, does not give him the same position”.68 But in the Guru Granthi we find that Niraṇjana and Ādi Puruṣa are the same. The Sikh religion does not lower the most exalted position of Niraṇjana in its teachings.

How to attain the Śūnya State
We have already mentioned that the attainment of the state of śūnya is the highest spiritual goal. In order to achieve this state the Gurus have recommended certain ways, both yogic and non-yogic. References to the former are clearly seen in these hymns, “When the mind is in unmani state (when the wind passes through the suṣumaṇā) one attains śūnya state and then duality departs”.69 “When I turned my breath inwards, I pierced the six cakras and attained the śūnya state.”70 “When one arrives at the Tenth Door after closing the nine doors (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth and two evacuation organs) one hears the anāhata śūnya music and comes face to face with the Lord. The unmanifest śabda becomes manifest”.71 Nāma is also considered as a means for the attainment of this state. “Imbued with nāma one is in śūnya samadhi”.72 “When one contemplates on nāma as the seed of the mantra, then the mind is inverted and it attains the state of śūnya”.73
instructions of the Guru are also very efficacious. “Through the instructions of the Guru I merge in śūnya, the highest state”.74 This state can also be attained if one is able to subdue his five cravings. “A yogī is one who disciplines his five senses. Thus, he gains wisdom and is always merged in śūnya samādhi.”75 Sahaja path is also recommended. “By the sahaja path, I attained sahaja and merged in śūnya.”76 Death for the world of name and form also leads to the same goal. “Who dies while living merges in śūnya.”77

The Siddhas had their own way of attaining the state of śūnya.78 “When all the cravings are stilled, the mind enters the state of śūnya”.79 In the Nātha cult emphasis is laid on mudrā. “Through the khecari mudrā one attains the state of śūnya Niraśājana”.80 Kabir recommends contemplation. “When I contemplate, I become forgetful of the bodily senses, my mind becomes cool and I bathe in the tank of śūnya.”81

Thus, we observe that the Gurus partially accepted the traditions of the Siddhas, the Nāthas and Kabir in this connection. They rightly rejected the path of hard sādhanā because it was enormously difficult to practice for a layman. It is quite true that the practices of the Nāthas like the piercing of the cakras (not by rousing the Kundalini Śakti, but by turning the breath inward) and awakening the suṣumna that is, the middle path have been recommended, but along with it the path of nāma, the Sahaja path, and the instructions of the Guru have also been highlighted considerably as means to attain the state of śūnya. Discipline of the five desires and death towards the worldly objects appear to be quite common things in all these creeds.

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned account about śūnya shows us that this concept has been used since the period of the epics in Indian philosophy. Of course, its use was very much limited, but later on in the Mahāyāna philosophy of Buddhism it began to be propagated as a philosophical doctrine of the greatest importance. The ever-enlarging scope of the Mahāyāna principles in the fold of Buddhism itself as well as its penetrating impact on contemporary creeds gave śūnya sufficient currency.
The Siddhas, the Tāntrikas, the Nāthas and the Sants incorporated this concept in their beliefs and teachings. In this way, it is quite correct to conclude that the Gurus had their contacts with the Siddhas particularly via the Sants and the Nāthas for the adoption of this concept.

The Siddhas regarded Śūnya as the Ultimate Reality where there is neither death nor life and it is a state of profound bliss. The Vajrayānists called this state by the name of Vajra. The Nātha yogis also gave this concept the most exalted position where there is the union of Śiva and Śakti and the sadhaka drinks nectar. The Gurus also express similar experiences but they had discarded certain other things associated with this concept like that of the Vajra of the Vajrayānists, the void of the Siddhas and the union of Śiva Śakti of the yogis. They felt that the state of Śūnya is that of God realization, which the Siddhas did not propagate and the Nāthas expressed reluctantly and that too in a few words. As the Gurus were the staunch followers and strong advocates of the theistic doctrines, so they spoke boldly about God and His equation with the Śūnya state. No doubt, they inherited the Śūnya traditions from the later forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but they discarded its agnostic approach. Moreover, the later Buddhist cults expressed Śūnya in negative terms but partially positive in experience; whereas the approach of the Gurus was total, positive in form, expression and content in this matter. This concept as taught by the Nāthas and the Siddhas reached the periphery of the teachings of the Gurus. They introduced mystical meanings into it when they declared that Śūnya is not different from the Lord. Their Śūnya was saturated with mysticism. It appears that the doctrines of theism which had gone underground due to the tremendous influence of the Mahāyāna cult and its various sects and sub-sects, struggled once again to come to the surface through the teaching of the Nāthas and these came into full bloom at the hands of the Sants and the Gurus. Here the Gurus owe more to the Nāthas than to the Siddhas in certain respects.

There is no mention of the three, four or seven gradations of Śūnya in the Guru Granth as we find in the teachings of the Siddhas, the Nāthas, Dadu and Kabir. Surely the Gurus discarded this gradation and dwelt on Śūnya which was the state
of complete identity of the soul with the Lord, with or without attributes.

The concept of śūnya Nirañjana contained in the Guru Grantha was widely propagated by many creeds as we have noted above. The Dharma cult or the Nirañjanas of Bengal sufficiently popularised it through its teachings. The Gurus continued the old traditions of this concept but like some sants whose references have been given above, they did not denigrate the position of Nirañjana and gave him consistently the most high position and equated him with the attributeless Lord. In order to attain this state hatha yoga is discarded though a few yogic practices mentioned above are incorporated by the Gurus in their scripture at random, but their chief emphasis was on the sahaja path and also that of bhakti together with the disciplining of mind in this connection.

The aforesaid discussion also shows that terms like śūnya and sahaja are mixed up with each other. Sometimes one is taken as a means and the other as an end. Any how, the Sikh Masters were neither logicians nor they were to build any systematic philosophical thought, but they were devotees, pure, simple and par excellence. A profound devotee never bothers about the meanings of different concepts which he uses in his teachings, but in his exuberance he utters them as he experiences them.

This means that the Holy Book maintains strong links with the several cults and creeds of those days. Śūnyā’s journey from the Mahābhārata to the Sikh Gurus was a very long one. In this journey many eminent thinkers tried to enlarge the dimensions of its meanings and scope together with the practices connected with it. The Buddhist metaphysicians like Nāgārjuna for the first time placed before their readers its deep meanings. This concept became so attractive and enchanting that all the later creeds had to incorporate it in the general frame-work of their dogmas. The Sikh Gurus were no exception, but they made some notable changes here and there in the definition and scope of this concept as described above.

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SAHAJA

INTRODUCTION

SAHAJA, both as a means as well as an end has been extensively discussed by the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas, the Sāhajīyās, the Nāths and the Sants. It has been repeatedly mentioned by them that the only purpose of their sādhanā is to attain the state of sahaja. It is true that the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas and the Nāths relied on their different yogic practices to attain the goal, whereas the Sants, no doubt, refer to these practices here and there, but their chief emphasis is on love and devotion to attain the state of sahaja. The importance of sahaja was so widespread that we find the emergence of a new path, called the Sahajayāna, within the general frame work of the later forms of Buddhism. The culture of sahaja continued penetrating from one cult to the other, of course, with varying degree of emphasis, with regard to the concept and methodology, till its spirit was imbied by the promulgators of the Sant cult. Thus in this process of transit certain old things associated with this concept were discarded and some new meanings were attached. It is said that Sarhapa,1 a luminary of the Nalanda University, started the Sahajayāna in protest against the existing Buddhism which had become profane, unnatural and outdated. Buddhism had now lost its original purity and had reduced itself to a hotch potch of rituals and ceremonies. In order to extract it from the cobweb of formalities, it required the services of dedicated teachers which it found in Sarhapa and the other Siddhas. They gave great prominence to sahaja in their scheme of spiritual endeavour. “All efforts of that individual will come
to nought if he thinks of attaining nirvāṇa without sahaja”.

“He who has attained sahaja has nothing to attain more, for whatever is knowable is contained in sahaja”. In the Tāntric literature we also come across many references about sahaja. “None can explain sahaja. Words fail to convey its inner meanings. One can experience sahaja, when one serves the feet of the guru”. “The Yoganikula also advocates the doctrine of sahaja. It defines sahaja almost in terms of the Buddhist mystics as a state in which the mind attains immobility, becomes free from duality and illusion”. Sahaja both as means and ultimate goal finds much prominence in the Buddhist Tāntric literature also. “The name Sāhajjīya seems to be doubly significant, it is sahaja because, its aim is to realize the ultimate innate nature (sahaja) of the self as well as of the dharmas, and it is Sahajayāna also because of the fact that instead of suppressing and thereby implicating undue strain on the human nature itself, it adopts a natural way. What is natural is the easiest; and thus sahaja, from its primary meaning of being natural acquires the secondary meaning of being easy, straight and plain”. For the Nāthas the attainment of sahaja was the highest goal. “The aim of the esoteric practices of the cult (Nātha) was the attainment of the state of nativity that is neutrality (sahaja) where there is no birth or death as such”. Kabir and Dādū also echo the same sentiments. “All speak of sahaja, but none knows what sahaja actually means. That is really sahaja, through which a man leaves off all his objects of desire: that is called sahaja which keeps the five (senses) well under control; that is really sahaja, in which the son, the wife, all wealth and desires remain merged together, and in which Kabir becomes the maid of Rāma: that is really sahaja, through which the Lord is realized in a natural way”. “Let us proceed, O Dādū, to the land where neither the sun nor the moon can go, where there is no access for day and night—every thing remains mystery in sahaja”. 

Sahaja—The Natural Way

To attain the supreme blissful state that is sahaja, leaders of different cults have recommended their own paths which they call as sahaja-mārga. The Siddhas and the Nāthas emphasize
the practice of various yogic postures and exercises and they are of the view that their method is the internal natural method. We know that the Siddhas laid considerable emphasis on the doctrines of Prajñā and Upāya and the Nāthas on the union of Śiva and Śakti, and the doctrine of sahaja is elaborated within the frame work of these two aspects of reality. In their scheme of sādhana piercing of the six cakras, rousing of the kundalini sakti, ajapā japa, holding of breath etc. are considered the most authoritative means for complete identity with the Supreme Reality. The Sahaja-yānī Vaiṣṇavas put these yogic practices in the background and strongly recommended the path of love and devotion. “Sahaja is used in the writings of Sāhajiya Vaiṣṇavas. But they discard the concept of the Buddhist Sāhajayás. They have incorporated love in their concept. In other words we can say that the highest state of love is sahaja.”\(^\text{10}\) With the passage of time the concept of sahaja was sufficiently shorn of its yogic connotation and the Sants began to propagate it as a path quite natural to human beings and quite in harmony with the performance of the worldly duties. That is why we find that the Gurus were house-holders and never recommended the abandonment of the world. They showed by their lives that the spiritual life and performance of worldly duties can go together.

_Means to Attain the State of Sahaja_

In the Guru Grantha we come across some ways and means to attain sahaja which accord well with the main teachings of the Sants. The Gurus reject many practices advocated by different currents of religious thoughts whose mention we have already made. They are of the firm view that yogic practices are useless in this regard and strongly recommend the path of ethical life, love of God, service of guru, the sahaja way and so on to attain the goal. Penance, self mortification suppression of desires have been rejected outright. “I have practised austerities and self discipline and controlled my senses through hātha yoga, but met the Lord in a sahaja way”.\(^\text{11}\) The Sikh religion is a great votary of this natural way or sahaja path. “One gets sahaja or bliss in a sahaja way,”\(^\text{12}\) “Through sahaja I have seen the Unmanifest Lord and the Light of the Formless Lord”.\(^\text{13}\) “In whose heart lives the Lord is liberated,
he attains the state of sahaja in a sahaja way”. The Sikh Gurus emphatically declare, “He alone meets the Lord, who meets him in a sahaja way”. “When you do not believe in Him, and do not love the Lord in a sahaja way, you do not relish the taste of śabda. It is no use to practice haṭha yoga”.

This sahaja path has been discussed in a variety of ways. The Sikh faith gives us many options in this matter. Of course these options are not exclusive of each other, but they are the tangents of the sahaja path. God’s constant remembrance and praises by the devotee enables him to attain sahaja. “Those who remember the Lord, abide in the state of sahaja”. “Those who praise the Lord enjoy the sahaja bliss”. Love of the Lord is also the sahaja path. “By loving the Lord sahaja bliss entered my mind. Performing good deeds also lead to sahaja”. “Because of good deeds, one sees the Lord and attains the state of sahaja”. We all know that in the Sikh religion the Guru occupies a unique position. His service and grace enable us to attain this state. Without his aid none is accepted for this blissful experience. “One attains sahaja when one serves Guru. All his cravings are stilled”. “All people crave for sahaja, but without the guru none can attain it”. “By the grace of the Guru, we attain sahaja. Our duality vanishes and we love the One alone”. “When by the instructions of the guru, the Lord abides in our heart, we attain sahaja bliss”. “By repairing to the feet of the Guru, sahaja state is awakened in me, and all my desires are fulfilled, when one is in the state of sahaja, through the śabda, the melody rings very sweet”. When the grace of the Lord is on us, we attain the sahaja state. “By the grace of the Lord, one receives honour at the door of the Lord and one merges in sahaja”. “What pleases you, I accept, that bring sahaja to me”. “When the Lord is in mercy one enters the abode of fearlessness, all one’s sorrow and strifes are gone and one merges in the state of sahaja”. Complete surrender is another way to attain sahaja. “When I surrender my body, mind and intellect to the Guru, I sleep in sahaja”. Some references to ethical values are also mentioned. “When the mind is free from all evils, one realizes the Oversoul within and merges in nāma—the sahaja”.
Thus we find that the Gurus strictly adhere to the sahaja (natural) path to attain the state of sahaja. They do not emphasize on the yogic practices as we come across in the teachings of the Nāthas, the Siddhas and the Sāhajjīyas. Full faith in the Guru, his teaching, his grace, as well as the practice of moral virtues have been widely stressed upon. The doctrine of love in this connection has been given a very high place. Over and above these the will of the Lord and His grace are also very important factors in the doctrine of sahaja. Moreover, while impressing on their followers, the Gurus knew well from the personal experience that sahaja mārga suited well to the psychology of the common man. The appeal of the Gurus was to the common man, who was simple in habits and thoughts and relied more on emotion and less on intellect for his religious enterprise. Therefore, they touched the inmost feelings of the heart. In fact, the bhakti current is saturated with mystical love, which, according to the Gurus was the sahaja or the natural path. We all know that the Gurus have invariably discarded the scholastic attitude in their sādhanā. As Underhills puts it, "Mysticism claims to be able to know the Unknowable without any help from dialects, and believes that, by the way of love and will, it reaches a point to which thought alone is unable to attain. It is the heart and not the reason which leads us to the Absolute".31 "In order to understand sahaja sādhanā we must remember some psychological facts. The human heart is naturally inclined towards emotions. The Sants have stressed the development of this emotional aspect in a natural way. As long as this tendency is yoked to worldly objects, it is of the world, for the world and by the world. But when it is directed within and is tagged to God, we style it as bhakti. The Sants have brought this tendency in bold relief and explained it in beautiful language".32

Sahaja Dhyāna—Sahaja Samādhi
It has already been stated that the doctrine of sahaja was sufficiently widespread among the leaders of various cults and creeds. Its pre-eminence is judged by the fact that its association with other terms was also widely used. The Siddhas and the Sants called their sādhanā as sahaja yoga, sahaja samādhi, sahaja
dhyāna, and their ultimate aim as sahaja ānanda or sahaja sukha.

"The Siddhas gave such a profound importance to sahaja that with every thing connected with their sādhanā they used this word, like sahaja jñāna, sahaja tattva, sahaja sukha, sahaja pantha and sahaja samādhi".33 Pointed references are also available in the Nātha literature. "The followers of the Nātha cult use this term as sahaja mārga, sahaja samādhi, parama tattva etc.".34 The Gurus35 have also continued the tradition about the use of sahaja when they say, "Where there is sahaja dhyāna, one drinks nectar and really serves the Guru".36 "When one remembers the Lord always, he is in sahaja dhyāna".37 "In sahaja samādhi all our afflictions are removed and the coming and going also ceases".38 "In this state one drinks the essence of the Lord’s nāma".39 "I am always in sahaja samādhi. I contemplate the deep and unfathomable Lord.".40 "I enter sahaja when I am in deep sleep".41 "In the śūnya samādhi, the mind is merged in sahaja".42 The importance of Guru is rightly stressed here. "Only the fortunate ones find the true Guru. They are always in sahaja dhyāna".43 Describing the state of sahaja samādhi the Guru Grantha44 mentions, "As the water merges in water, and the light in the light, so one merges in the perfect Puruṣa, one knows one’s essence, that is the state of sahaja samādhi".

Sants like Dādū and Kabir also made many references to sahaja samādhi. "Sahaja samādhi is not either a temporary or permanent state of mind. It is the complete transformation of one’s own nature. It is at once a new, pure and natural life which changes our being and environments. It is a state of our internal purity which is the most precious gift given to us by the Guru".45 Parshu Ram Chaturvedi46 while discussing sahaja samādhi of Dādū says, "The secret of Dādū’s sahaja samādhi is that the devotee always feels himself in the company of the Lord. His body is in the world, but it works under His direction". "In the words of Nihar Ranjan Ray,47 "An analysis of these disciplines seems to indicate that what Guru Nanak (and other Gurus also) was aiming at was a transformation of the individual psyche and will by bending and directing both towards the ultimate goal of achieving the merger with the
ultimate Absolute." This process is styled in the Sant Mat as the sahaja yoga. Here we come across several small currents coalescing with one another like God’s praises and remembering Him, His grace, directing our craving, desires, tendencies, ambitions, achievements etc. within and think and talk and feel always of God. This is called sahaja yoga because it condemns hard penances, haṭha yoga and the allied practices and firmly recommends the path which is easy, straight and natural. This is quite in harmony and consonance with our real life. The instinctive life needs sublimation and the direction and convergence of all the faculties towards one road. At present the mind travels in several worldly roads, lanes and bye lanes. By the sahaja yoga it must move on only one road, which leads to God.

**Nāma and Sahaja**

Some scholars are of the opinion that the Guru Grantha while recommending several paths to attain the Ultimate Reality places the greatest emphasis on nāma mārga. Nāma like sahaja is considered both as a means as well as the end. We come across its relation with sahaja at some places in the Guru Grantha. Nāma is considered as a means and sahaja as an end. "Let us remember nāma and ask for nāma from the Lord. With its help we attain the state of sahaja".48 "When nāma enters our mind, we attain the state of sahaja".49 "In a natural way, sow the seeds of nāma, the crop will be abundant, and then the mind is in the state of sahaja".59 "When one drinks the essence of nāma, he is dyed in the colour of sahaja".51 "I have received nāma, and merged in Truth in a sahaja way".52 In certain hymns sahaja and nāma point to the same state of mind. "Reaching the state of sahaja, one merges in nāma".53 "The wise have nāma as their treasure and they trade in sahaja".54 "One is always in bliss and merges in nāma in the state of sahaja".55 "I have subdued my desires and the sense of duality. In the state of sahaja I attain the infinite nāma".56

**Mind and Sahaja**

The mind with its conation, cognition and affection processes
is always moving away from its centre, the Home. All its activities are world-oriented. Its wanderings never come to an end. It is completely soaked and saturated with earthly things. But in the state of sahaja there is wholesale transformation of the mind. Instead of running away it gets rest and calm. Now it has to go nowhere and abides in its own nest. “In the state of sahaja, the mind rests at its own place and its wanderings cease.”

“The diamond (of the mind) is pierced through with the diamond (of the Lord) and the wavering mind is held in sahaja.” Here we find that the sahaja state is akin with the state of śūnya. “When the mind is held in śūnya, then the swan (mind) does not fly out, one reaches the state of sahaja.”

This is a state where death and time reach not. “Hold your mind in the sahaja vacuity amidst all duality, and by attaining the final state of arrest drink nectar, and there is no fear of Kāla”. (death or time) “In natural ease (sahaja) the mind goes beyond the reach of Time”. The mind is alone there and enjoys its own nature. “On seeing and hearing it (i.e. the sahaja nature) all the senses are destroyed and the mind within revels in solitude”.

State of Sahaja
The promulgators of different cults and creeds including the Sikh Gurus have invariably mentioned about the state of sahaja, though they have candidly admitted that it is beyond expression. Vocabulary and words fail to carry out the inner experience which is felt by the individual. The rules of syllogism can never define it and so the intellect or buddhi can never comprehend it in its entirety. The Guru Grantha mentions this state in details in these words, “He (who has attained the state) sleeps and rises in sahaja; he is silent in sahaja and speaks in sahaja; he eats and loves in sahaja; in sahaja separation is removed; he meets the sants in a sahaja way; through sahaja he meets the Lord; he lives and abides in Home in sahaja, in sahaja duality is vanished, in sahaja is joy, in sahaja he drinks the nectar nāma, in sahaja the soul is imbued with the Lord; the mind is stillled in sahaja, anahada śabda rings in sahaja,—he only enjoys the state of sahaja who knows it.” It is further stated, “There (in the state of sahaja) is neither sea nor rain, shade or sun, creation or
dissolution, life or death, pleasure or pain. There is only one 
śūnya state and there is no duality—such is the wonderful state 
of sahaja, it is beyond description”.

It is a state of profound 
light. “There is great effulgence of the Lord. There the light 
of the sun and moon appears insignificant. I attained this state 
by the grace of the Guru. Nāmadeva is wrapped in the state 
of sahaja”.

In the Siddha literature we come across similar 
views, “The ultimate goal is the creation of the state of sahaja 
which is one of great blissfulness. It is a state which is without 
beginning and without end, and a state free from duality. When 
this state is attained the object world disappears from view and 
all the aggregates, elements, and senses merge in it. The sādhaka 
then finds himself to be the sole reality identical with the 
universe, identical with Buddha—a being who is ever free. 
Every thing else dwindles into nonentity”.

Tilo pada says, “Sahaja is a state where all the thought constructions are dead 
(i.e. destroyed) and the vital wind (which is the vehicle of the 
defiled citta) is also destroyed—the secret of this truth is to be 
intuited by the self—, how can it be explained (by others)”.

The Sāhajijiyas, no doubt, use their peculiar vocabulary about 
sahaja. “Now, in the Sāhajiya Buddhism śūnyatā (void) and 
karunā (compassion), transferred as the prajñā and the upāya, 
are held to be the two primary attributes of the Ultimate Reality 
which is sahaja”. In the doctrines of the Vaiṣṇava Sāhajiyas’s 
love occupies the unique position with regard to sahaja. “The 
sahaja is a rasa, the supreme emotion of love, the quintessence 
in every body”. “The supreme state of the Vaiṣṇavas is not 
the state of absolute cessation, or annihilation—, it is a posi-
tive state, though of a super mental nature, of the eternal flow 
of divine love—like the smooth and incessant flow of oil”.

The difference in the doctrine of sahaja between the Buddhists 
and the Vaiṣṇavas becomes clear in these words, “The final 
state of mahā sukha as the state of sahaja of the Buddhists is 
also the final state of sahaja with the Vaiṣṇava Sāhajiyas, but 
the Vaiṣṇavas conceived this sahaja state as the state of supreme 
love and this supreme love has been conceived as the primordial 
substance which underlies the world process as a whole. But 
how can this sahaja be the Ultimate Reality? It is the Ultimate 
Reality in as much as it is the non-dual state of the unity of
Śiva and Śakti, which are but the two aspects of the Absolute Reality as conceived in the Hindu Tantras”.71

But the concept of sahaja as propounded by the Sants like Dādū and Kabir is almost similar in spirit and form with the Sikh Gurus. “When the mind becomes absorbed in sahaja, one can see without eyes, feel without body, and mutter the name of the Lord without tongue; one can hear without ears, can walk without the legs and can have consciousness without the mind, this is really the nature of self.”72 Kabir says, “Sahaja is beyond description. There is neither sun nor shade, neither rain nor sea, neither beginning nor end. There is neither life, death, pain or pleasure. It is neither śunya nor samādhi. It cannot be weighed, it is neither light nor heavy, high or low. There is neither day nor night. There is no water, air, fire there”73

While discussing about sahaja the Gurus associate it with God in one form or the other. “In sahaja we are dyed in the colour of God”.74 “In sahaja we have a vision of the Lord.”75 “The gospel of the Lord is undescrivable and the mystery of God is unknown, the angelic beings call it sahaja”.76 “In the true śabda is the melody of sahaja, and the mind is attuned to the true Lord”.77 In the Siddha literature sahaja is associated with void. “In sahaja the self is void, the world is void—all the three worlds are void,—in pure sahaja there is neither merit nor sin”.78 The Vaiṣṇava Sāhajiyas show their leanings to Vaiṣṇavism and the importance of love in their teachings. In the Vaiṣṇava Sāhajiyā school the two aspects of sahaja or the absolute reality are explained as the eternal enjoyer and the enjoyed, as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, and it is further held that all men and women are physically manifestations of the ontological principles of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā”.79

Sahaja is a state which is of happiness, rest and oneness. “I have become quiet, peaceful and enjoy the sahaja bliss”.80 Blessed is the home of sahaja, there is joy, bliss and happiness”.81 The Sāhajiyas also aimed at this wonderful experience. “The Sāhajiyāni objective was not immortality in any physical sense but frankly the peaceful, radiant, blissful, changeless and hence waveless experience of sahaja which was one of the
same as Mahāsukha, the great happiness”. 82 Dādū also speaks the same thing.” “Bereft of the two is sahaja, there sorrow and joy become one, that sahaja neither dies nor lives; it is the state of complete Nirvāṇa”. 83 In this state, according to the Granthā, one drinks nectar and all his doubts are removed. “In the state of sahaja nectar rains”. 84 “The tongue tastes nectar and all thirsts are satiated. One lives in the love of the Lord”. 85 “All doubts have been removed”. 86 “One drinks nectar and the bonds are broken”. 87 In the state of sahaja there is joy and beautiful description of divine marriage. “My beloved has come to my Home. There are congratulations from all sides. My mates sing the song of joy and my friends and kinsmen are in bloom. The divine music rings in my ears, and I am in bed with the Lord. Now I attain the state of sahaja”. 88 “I have attained the Lord in a sahaja way. All shower their blessings. The fairies have come with their divine instruments to sing the śabda”. 89 When one goes beyond the three guṇas, one enters this state. “Sahaja is that state of soul which is above the three guṇas and is of wisdom”. 90 Kabir also echoes similar experience when he says, “It is that state when the five senses are under complete control. It so appears that we have the vision of the Lord”. 91

Thus from the above discussion it becomes quite clear that the concept of sahaja as experienced and mentioned by the Sikh Gurus is very comprehensive. It is a state of unity, bliss, peace, free from duality and doubt, beyond and above the three guṇas, of nearness with God, of drinking of nectar, of stillness of mind, of reaching from home to Home, of effulgence, of love, beyond life and death, heat or cold, and thirst or hunger. It is a state quite unique in itself and beyond expression.

CONCLUSION

We have seen from the aforesaid comparative analysis that the doctrine of sahaja since the Siddhas began to propagate it, was adopted by various leaders of religious thoughts as the only goal to be strived for. It took about five centuries of journey for this doctrine to reach the outskirts of the Sant Mat. This
journey was long and sahaja had to make its way onward via several routes like the Nāthas, the Tāntrikas, the Sāhajjiyās and so on. The concept of sahaja was so over-whelmingly attractive and true that the Sants imbibed its essence in their teachings. In its onward march many practices associated with it had to be abandoned and new ones adopted keeping in view the genius of the new cults. As Keshni Prasad Chaurasia says,92 “It is quite clear that the concept of sahaja has been prevalent since ancient times. The Siddhas used it in the sense of Prajñā and Upāya and the Nāthas as Śiva-Sakti and the union of Nāda and Bindu. When sahaja reached the periphery of the Sant Mat this definition appears to have been lost. Kabir believed that sahaja is beyond these definitions. It is the parama tattva to be achieved by the aspirant in a sahaja way. It is based on a natural and balanced life”.

Dharma Vir Bharti appears to be more candid. He says,93 “The Sants were not unfamiliar with this Sahajayoga. They regarded sahaja as natural and the yogic practices were the necessary part of their sahaja sādhanā. In this sādhanā the concept of the unity of prajñā and upāya was almost forgotten. But in the general framework of yogic practices, they styled their sādhanā as sahaja japa, sahaja dhyāna, sahaja samādhi and so on. In this way the Sants viewed sahaja as a natural human endeavour, but they did not forget the traditional yogic meanings attached to it”. It is true that the Sikh Gurus practised their discipline and sādhanā in the atmosphere which was surcharged by the philosophy and methodology of sahaja, but like a swan they discovered what was non essential from their point of view. The Buddhist Tantra’s view of prajñā and upāya; Hindu Tantra’s view of the union of Śiva and Śakti and the view of the Nāthas that is Nāda and Bindu with regard to sahaja is discarded by the Sikh Gurus. But the state of sahaja as of profound bliss where there is neither death nor life as stated by them was accepted by the Sikh Masters. Moreover, in the Guru Grantha, sahaja is soaked in theism while in the Siddhas philosophy there is an atmosphere of agnostism. The view of the Sāhajjiyās of the dalliance of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in the state of sahaja is avoided by the Gurus, but their spirit of mystic love is imbibed by them. The Gurus while stating their
experience with regard to sahaja as a means as well as end show marked aversion to the yogic practices and their peculiar terminology. They knew that the yogic practices followed by several yogis in different parts of India had fallen into disuse and their centres had become the hot beds of corruption to which many references are available in the Guru Grantha. The Gurus in their wisdom and reforming zeal had to say good bye to these unhealthy practices and placed before their hearers a simple and easy path called the sahaja path or the sahaja yoga. In this supreme endeavour the spirit of sahaja was kept intact, while its form changed in order to suit the changed circumstances. The Gurus left the beaten tracks and followed the path as shown by Sants like Kabir, Nāmadeva, Dādū and so on while making it more smooth, broad and easily traversable. The Sikh religion was more fortunate than the cults preached by Kabir, Dādū and others because a galaxy of nine Masters continued the teachings of their founder that is Nānak. Thus in this long history the doctrine of sahaja was preached and practised in continuity. The outside unhealthy practices which were subjected to constant ridicule could not enter the boundary of the Sikh religion. In this way the concept of sahaja maintained its original purity and sanctity which proved to be a great asset for the growth and development of the Sikh theology.

References

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33. *Dohākośa*, p. 149.
49. *Ibid.* p. 34.
52. Ibid., p. 591.
53. Ibid., p. 30.
54. Ibid., p. 68
55. Ibid., p. 448.
56. Ibid., p. 604.
57. Ibid., p. 13.
58. Ibid., p. 483.
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60. Kshitimohan Sen, Dādā, p. 383.
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63. pp. 236, 237.
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74. The Guru Grantha, p. 32.
75. Ibid., pp. 58, 68, 503.
76. Ibid., p. 453.
77. Ibid., p. 1234.
78. Dohā Kosa No. 34.
81. Ibid., pp. 194, 888-89, 1212.
83. Kshitimohan Sen, Dādā, p. 382.
84. The Guru Grantha, p. 119.
85. Ibid., p. 119.
86. Ibid., p. 205.
87. Ibid., p. 428.
88. Ibid., p. 247.
89. Ibid., p. 917.
90. Ibid., p. 733 (In the Guru Grantha, p. 1119 (Footnotes) it has been explained in these words—An individual generally behaves in the state of three guṇas. When he tries to go up and makes efforts, he is in a state of rajas, a state of activity; when he is in anger or envy, he is in a state of tamas; when he leaves the world and becomes a recluse, is above pleasure and pain, he is in a state of sattva. In the Gurumata, beyond these three states is the sahaja pada, or the turiya
or the fourth state, where the Sants reach. In this state the man is not subject to the three guṇas, but the master of all these and utilises them to fulfil his obligations).

GURU

In different fields of Indian philosophy and religion the guru has been allotted the supreme position. The guru tradition has always been repeatedly mentioned and stressed upon in unmistakable terms by all. "The whole field of Indian philosophy and religion is characterised by a unanimous emphasis on the guruvāda or the doctrine of the preceptor".1 "In one sense the intellectual development of the man since times immemorial can be called the history of traditions of the guru. The bookish knowledge has its own place in our life, but besides this theoretical knowledge, when we pass our eyes on the practical knowledge, then we can never overlook the supreme necessity of the guru".2

But when practical religion as preached by the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas, the Vajrayānists, the Sāhajiyās, the Nāthas and the Sants including the Sikh Gurus became quite widespread in India, the importance of the guru increased to great dimensions. The Tāntrikas who were the staunch votaries of practical religion had inherited the traditions of the guruvāda, but because of the special nature of their sādhanā they gave the guru supreme status. "In almost all the Tantras the guru is always praised in the superlative terms and is declared to be the highest reality itself".3 "In fact, the guru is the legacy of the Tantras. The Tāntrik sādhanā is the most sacred Śāstra. It is quite mystical and mysterious. Its knowledge without the guru is unthinkable".4
Similar is the case with the Vajrayānists. "In fact, the handing down of traditions through an uninterrupted chain of gurus and disciples is common with reference to all Śāstras that were produced in India, but nowhere is reverence shown to the guru so much in evidence as in Vajrayāna". Speaking generally, S. B. Dasgupta writes, "The high stress of many sant poets is on the guru or the murshid, that of the Sikhs is still more particularly on the guru, that of the Natha Yogis is similarly on the guru, that of the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās, and the Auli, and other religious sects of Bengal is also on the guru". It is further mentioned, "The guruvāda was fully blossomed to its perfection in the Hindi devotional literature of the sants. It is true that the concept of guru had degenerated in the hands of the Vajrayānists, but the sants who had the good of the world at heart, adopted the pure concept of the guruvāda. They followed the path of the perfect yogī and thus experienced the indispensability of the guru".

The teachings and writings of the leaders of the various creeds as mentioned above created profound faith and respect for the guru among the people. Naturally, under this influence many bogus gurus with half-baked doctrines must have cheated many innocent people. As some outward signs were considered very important for the guru of a particular sect, so there was no dearth of the number of such people coming to the forefront. The Sikh Gurus were quite conscious of this fact and, therefore, they laid particular emphasis on the qualities of a true guru. They rightly condemned the stress laid on the outward symbols of a guru and instead relied on the inner excellence of a guru. As is said, "The true guru is one who has the Nāma of the Lord in this heart". "The true guru is one who dwells on truth. The sat guru and truth are one, he is a true guru who has overpowered five desires". "The true guru is the field of Sahaja, whosoever loves it, sows in it Nāma, there is an abundant crop of Nāma and one merges in Nāma".

Guru and God
The Sikh Gurus have repeatedly mentioned that the guru and God are one and inseparable. God's light dawns on the guru and His power is transferred to him. Therefore the guru is the
manifest form of the unmanifest Lord. "There is no difference between the guru and the Lord".11 "God and guru are one, He is present everywhere".12 Here we find that though there appears to be a reference to two separate persons i.e. God and guru, actually they are inwardly one, and maintain complete identity. Jñānadeva expresses the identity of the devotee (himself), his guru and God in these words, "God, His devotee and the guru are united together, as three rivers merge in a confluence, when every thing becomes God, how is one to worship Him.13 Attributes of God are also applied to the guru. "Blessed is the guru, the great Puruṣa, through whom I see the vision of the Lord".14 "The guru is God, unfathomable and mysterious; his service leads to the knowledge of the three worlds".15 "He, the guru is and always will be, so this is what the Lord has revealed to me".16 "Without the guru there is no support; He is the giver and bestows Nāma. The guru himself is the transcendental Lord, the supreme God".17 In the Tāntrik Buddhism we also come across similar references. He (guru) is idolized as the Buddha, he is the Śūnyatā, he is the Dharam Kāyā and emancipation of the individual lies in his power.18

The above ideas of the Guru Grantha establish the point that the references are to a human guru who has expanded his spiritual faculties to the maximum and becomes one with Him. Whatever belongs to the guru belongs to God and the latter always stands by the former. For it is clearly stated, "The Lord himself is the refuge of the guru and He saves all who belong to the guru. Whoever thinks of ill will for the guru, is destroyed by the Lord. This is the fact of the Court of the Lord and this is the mystery".19 Surely, the guru here represents the majesty and power of the Lord. God for most of the people is beyond comprehension and unthinkable and perhaps quite fictitious, therefore, there is the indispensability of the guru, a human being whom the devotees can see, talk with and get their doubts removed. For them the guru represents the Lord. Sometimes the guru is a substitute even for God, or at least God is to be realized through the medium of the person of the guru, who stands as the living proof for the existence of God".20 It is true that the Sikh scripture considers at certain places a human being as a guru, but it also refers to
the Lord as the guru. Like the guru there is no pilgrimage, for God is the true Guru.\textsuperscript{21} "My guru is the transcendental Lord, the God of all gods, infinite, unthinkable and mysterious".\textsuperscript{22} "I worship my guru, my guru is God, my guru is the transcendental Lord, He is unknowable and unperceivable".\textsuperscript{23} "He who created me, I know Him through the guru. The guru is the creator and the cause of all causes".\textsuperscript{24} Thus we find that the Sikh religion believes that God as well as a human being who has developed total communication with Him are the gurus. Drawing a distinction between these two the Guru Grantha maintains, "One (God) is Light and the guru is the form".\textsuperscript{25} "The Lord resides in the guru’s mind and imparts glory to him".\textsuperscript{26} "The Lord is merged in the guru and there He dispenses his Šabda".\textsuperscript{27}

The most distinguished position enjoyed by the guru in the Sikh religion is indicative of the fact that the theory of the avatāravāda is vaguely referred to in certain respects, though this religion does not believe in this theory. Therefore, Macnicol\textsuperscript{28} is of the opinion that, "The avatāras of the Hindu legend have been definitely replaced by the true guru, and devotion to him is the vital centre of religion". But the Prophets of the Sikh religion were quite careful and conscious about the evils of idol worship, therefore, they tried their best and eminently succeeded in not allowing their followers to become idolators. This was achieved by constant teachings of the pure doctrines, in spite of the fact that certain rival sects out of jealousy or selfishness attempted to dilute the original faith by trying to incorporate certain ideas which were repugnant to the basic teaching of this religion.

**Greatness of Guru**

The guru as the embodiment of God’s power\textsuperscript{29} has been right’y eulogised in the most superlative terms in the Sikh faith. A wealth of adjectives are attributed to him. His praise is unbounded. His greatness and glory like the Lord are immense and beyond description. "The guru is the ladder, he is the boat, the river, the ocean, he is the ship, he is the tiratha".\textsuperscript{30}

"He is the giver, he is all powerful, all reside in him, he is God, and he saves the drowning people. We have no words to
praise him. He does everything himself".31 "In the guru is enshrined the Lord Himself, he unites us with the Lord, he is the sea of devotion, he who comes to Him, partakes of it, the guru in his mercy opens his tongue, there is light of God to see".32 "There is no pilgrimage like the guru, he is the pool of contentment and compassion, he is the clean flowing river, bathing in whom one is rid of impurities. When we bathe in the wisdom of the guru, we are rid of all evil desires and develop godly qualities".33 In extolling the qualities of the guru there is no dearth of adjectives in the Guru Grantha. It is mentioned. "The guru is the pool of nectar, only the fortunate ones bathe in it".34 "He is the deep and vast ocean of peace".35 "The ways of guru are boundless and infinite".36 Keeping in view the highest position of the guru the Sikh religion emphatically declares, "None is equal to the guru, I have searched the whole world",37 "He is God, the transcendental Lord. The glory of the guru cannot be described. I have pleased my guru and the Lord is merciful to me".38 This most dignified status of the guru has impelled the authors of the Sikh Scripture to state with perfect conviction and ease that "O, my mind, utter guru, guru, and attain bliss. Enshrine the teachings of the guru in the heart and remember the Lord with every breath. I am a sacrifice to the lotus feet of the guru; sing always his praises, bathe in the dust of his feet, and attain glory in the true court. He is the ship to ferry across. When you meet him, you are not cast in the world again. He is my mainstay for the Lord. He is my family, my code of conduct, my groom, my refuge. He is the manifestation of the Lord. I cannot estimate his greatness".39

Similar parallel references from other tests are worth quoting here. "As when a tree has been watered at the roots, it goes to the branches and the foliage, as when a man has taken a bath in the sea, he is said to have bathed in all the holy waters of the world, and when nectar has been once enjoyed, all the flavours have been forthwith enjoyed, similarly, when the guru has been worshipped, all desires are fulfilled".40 Sant Jñāneśvara is unable to find words in praise of the guru. He says, "Is it possible to add lustre to the sun? Is it possible to add a scent to camphor? How can a sandal tree be made
more fragrant? How can one add a hue to the pearl? Or, what is the propriety of giving a silver polish to the gold? It is better that one should remain silent, and silently bow to the feet of his guru". It is further added, "As when the Sun shines on the horizon, the moon fades away in the back ground, similarly when the guru shines, all the sciences fade away. It is thus the only adequate way of expressing one's appreciation of the greatness of the guru, for the greatness of the guru can never be adequately praised". Summing up Jñāneśvara's devotion for the guru, Ranade writes, "His love for the guru is profound, and absolutely unbounded, and though he praises him with all the wealth of his poetic genius, heaping similies upon similies, and metaphors over metaphors, he yet declares that he is absolutely incapable of adequately describing the greatness of the guru". In the Tantras also the guru is similarly praised, "The guru is not to be thought of as a man. There is no difference between guru, mantra and deva. Guru is father, mother, and Brahma. Guru, it is said, can save from the wrath of Śiva, but none can save from the wrath of the guru". In the literature of Gorakh Nāth the same sentiments are echoed, "The guru is the highest mantra and jap. He is the highest knowledge, nothing is without him. Maheśvari is pleased with whom guru is pleased. If the guru is satisfied, all gods are pleased".

**Guru and Grace**

In the devotional literature the doctrine of grace has a profound significance. The moment it is granted the aspirant's fire is cooled, fountain of love is let loose in the heart and he has the vision of the Lord. As there is no difference between God and guru, so the efficacy of the grace of the guru is quite similar to that of the Lord. The all-powerful grace of the guru has the miraculous powers. "By the grace of the guru one worships the Lord," and is released from the bondage". This subtle power burns ego and duality. Its impact on the mind is immense. The mind is not soiled, it is imbued with Nāma, and is in perfect peace". It leads to the inner rediscovery. "He (Lord) is not revealed by words and chatters, but by the grace of the guru. It also conquers the enemies. "By the grace of the
guru I have overpowered my enemies and they have left my abode". The door of salvation is opened by the guru's grace. "The door (Tenth door) is unlocked. By the grace of the guru, it is opened and one enjoys the blissful life.\textsuperscript{50} The blossoming of the lotus which the yogis attained after many practices was also achieved by grace. "By the grace of the guru the inverted lotus of my mind is blossomed. There is illumination all round and darkness is removed".\textsuperscript{51}

This doctrine of grace has been greatly highlighted in those cults and creeds which proceeded the Sant-Mat. "It is extremely difficult for an ordinary spiritual aspirant to attain true success in the renunciation of all objects of senses and mental desires and enjoyment, in the realization of the absolute truth, in the state of absolute freedom, without the merciful help of an enlightened guru".\textsuperscript{52}....."Great importance has been attached to the selection of the preceptor—for it is neither by much reading nor by penances, nor by any amount of labour undertaken in innumerable practices that a sādhaka can get at the truth, it has been repeated over and over again that Truth can never be attained without the blessings of the preceptor".\textsuperscript{53} Swami Pratigyanand is more clear on this point when he writes,\textsuperscript{54}

Now, at every crisis and critical position the aspirant or sādhaka requires and often gets what we may call ultra ego centric 'help' or extra scheduled power. He gets it from Mother Kāndalī herself in that vital and supremely important aspect of hers which is called guru sakti. In one sense, it is the aspect of divine grace, it is kṛpa.

Jñānādeva praises the grace of the guru in very highly eulogistic terms. "Bathed in the waters of his guru’s grace, the individual self becomes so pure that he comes to regard even Śiva as impure, and would not allow the latter to touch him".\textsuperscript{55} He exultantly proclaims that he has been made the sole sovereign of the kingdom of the supreme bliss by the grace of his guru; and though he is really one with the guru, it is the love of the latter that he should be addressed as his Master's own".\textsuperscript{56}
The Guru Granthi states eloquently, "When the guru is in mercy (grace) one meets the Lord, he is ferried across, reaches heaven and Nāma is enshrined in the mind. The mind ceases its wanderings in the ten directions and the five demons are subdued. The body becomes eternal, one always dwells on Nāma and gains the knowledge of the three worlds. One is always blessed, finds the Abode, and is detached. He is steadfast and takes good and bad things in the same spirit and the destiny is awakened. He gets the reward of bathing in 68 holy places and the poison is turned into a sweet essence for him. All the doubts are removed and the noose of Yama does not effect him. He is neither born, nor dies, without the guru there is no refuge".

Thus we find that the power of the grace of the guru is immense in the Sant literature as well as the Nātha’s doctrines and the Tantras. Service of the guru, moulding one’s life in the will of the Lord, remembrance of His Nāma, detachment with the world are a few things to mention which entitle a person to become fortunate in the eyes of the guru and receive his grace. The Granthi is very eloquent on these aspects, and herein lies its contribution to the doctrine of grace.

Guru and Śabda

In the Guru Granthi the doctrine of śabda has been often emphasised to a very great extent. It is used in many ways and senses. Here we are concerned with its meanings vis-a-vis the guru. As the guru is the repository of all spiritual jewels, so in him enshrines the śabda and he also imparts it to the devotee. Śabda is the means by which one gets wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord. “By the śabda of the guru one recognises the abode of the Lord within”.58 “From the guru’s śabda one becomes fit to get knowledge and intuition”.59 “The diamond is hidden in everybody. But due to ignorance one is unable to discover it. Only the guru’s śabda empowers us to know it”.60 “We get illumination within by the śabda of the guru. In this way Nāma keeps our company in the end.”61 When I dwell on the śabda of the guru, I find that the whole world is on fire.”62 True is the guru, true is his śabda, through which I know the Lord”.63 “The guru is the boatsman, the śabda is the
oar to ferry us across”. The śabda cools our craving, perishes our passions and brings peace and happiness. “By the śabda of the guru, I quench my thirst. I attain bliss in a sahaja way”.65 “The śabda of the guru opens the hard gate of the mind and the light dawns”.66 “The śabda burns ego and attachment and removes all cravings and hungers.”68 “We get peace when we remember the śabda of the guru”.69 There is stress on the reflection and contemplation of the śabda. It may mean a mantra whose references in the Guru Grantha are nowhere to be traced, or the general instructions imparted by the guru to the devotee. Needless to say that it is quite easy to reflect on a mantra consisting of some words but quite difficult to contemplate on the whole teachings of the guru. Its one purpose is to make the mind steady. The mind remains within the small radius of a mantra, reflecting again and again over it, thus gradually heading to the quickening of the process of absorption. “The true guru has blessed me with the mantra of the śabda, I dwell on the śabda and sing the glory of divine joy”.70 “The mind becomes steady and motionless when we contemplate on the śabda”.71 Only that person is wise who reflects on the śabda.72 About the majesty of śabda as the medium it is emphatically declared, “Without the śabda of the guru one is not released.”73 The identity of the śabda and guru is clearly mentioned, “The śabda is the guru and the guru is the śabda, the śabda shows the path of deliverance”.74 The glory and dignity of the śabda has been well recognised in other creeds also. The knowledge of the Lord and the Lord are not two different things. That secret is opened by the śabda of the guru. As a thorn is helpful in extracting a thorn and the key opens the lock, so the śabda is opened by the śabda.75 From hell and heaven, I am freed by the favour of the true guru. Death by which the whole world is frightened, that death becomes meaningless by the śabda of the guru”.76

Guru and His Service
The guru, a human being, but having all the attributes of the Lord, is the only person who deserves our service. The service of such a personification of God is the valid passport for liberation and it leads to the knowledge of the Supreme being. The
merits of pilgrimage, fast, disciplines etc. are also found in the service of the guru. 77 “One gets the fruits of 68 holy places by serving the guru” 78 “By serving the guru cravings are stilled and one gets wisdom.” “Duality is burnt to ashes and the mind is satiated” 79 “One becomes famous in the four ages after serving the guru” 80 and also has the knowledge of the three worlds. 81 Those who do not serve the guru are a miserable wretch. “Who does not serve the guru is a fool. He comes again and again in this world and is unable to attain the gate of salvation”. 82 “Without the service of the guru all actions hinder the progress of soul”. 83 It is only the rare who serve the guru. “In whose destiny it is so written, he serves the guru”. 84 In addition to the different forms of service the Sikh Gurus enjoin upon their followers to serve the guru with the śabda”. 85 Thus we find that the Sikh religion believes that what one gets by devotion can also be attained by the service of the guru.

Guru and Nāma
According to Macnicol, 86 “The Nāma is the mysterious concrete embodiment as it were, of the deity, and the power of the guru lies in that he can convey it to the seeker. And he can only convey it. The guru and Nāma are inseparably linked”. The guru is the custodian of Nāma. “Without guru you cannot find the Nāma, you may perform millions of deeds”, 87 “The guru is imbued with the Nāma, he is the only boat in the Kali yuga.” 88 The guru grants the bounties of Nāma to the deserving few. “When we meet the guru, we get the treasure of Nāma. 89 “When I was blessed with Nāma my mind was cooled”. 90 “He gives us the nectar Nāma and one is not born or die again”. 91 Thus we find that the true guru is saturated with Nāma (the power of Lord) and he transmits or awakens the same in his devotees.

Guru as the Mediator
The guru is not only a human being with all the attributes of God, the repository of Nāma and śabda and gifted with all the divine qualities and powers as mentioned above, but also the only authorised person to work as a channel between the
devotee and the Deity. None can have direct access to the Lord except through the medium of the guru. The guru shows the way, helps thesadhaka in moving forward on the way and brings him face to face with the Supreme Being. In the Sikh scripture we find several hymns addressed to the guru as being the mediator. “God is realized only through the guru and the devotee enters the door of salvation”. He is the only connecting link. “The fire is present in the wood but without the proper way we cannot discover it, so without knowing the way through the guru, we cannot find the Lord’s door”. In Christianity similar ideas are also mentioned. “He (guru) is the mediator between his brethren and the Divine”.

**Importance of Guru**

Such a mysterious person, as the guru who is imbued with Nāma and śabda, who has permanently established his communion with the Lord and is the only and true representative of God in His fullness and entirety is bound to occupy a position of supreme importance. He is the messenger of God on earth. He is capable and competent to do all things and without him nothing is possible. Our cravings, ego, afflictions, the five thieves within us and other enemies are devoured by the supreme power of the guru. “Without the guru, the readers of the six Śāstras, the yogis, the sanyāsīs and so on are always in doubt”. “The study of holy books, japa, tapa, pilgrimages, austerities and all such things do not bring peace to the individual. It is only when we meet the guru, that our mind becomes tranquil”. “There is no refuge for those who keep away from the guru and do not seek his living presence. Those who do not meet him, their life is cursed. He, who is cursed by the guru is cursed by the whole world. Those who do not identify themselves with the guru, they seek refuge in vain”. “Without the help of the guru none has attained the Lord. He is the essence of the Lord. He reveals it and also proclaims it. When we meet the guru, we are delivered and our attachments are gone”. About the effulgence of the guru it is said, “Let hundred moons rise and a thousand suns come up, but with this brilliancy, there is darkness without the guru”. Keeping in view the glory of the guru, the Sikh Masters emphati-
cally declare, “I contemplate the guru within, I utter the śabda of the guru with my tongue, I see the guru with my eyes, I hear with my ears his śabda, when I am imbued with the true guru, I shall have my abode in Lord’s palace”.\textsuperscript{100}

To quote a few relevant parallel references from other sources may be quite interesting and useful to us. Kanha says, “Cut the tree down with the axe of the great preceptor’s instructions so that the tree may not shoot forth any more. The tree grows up in the waters of good and evil and the wise cut it with the instructions of the guru”.\textsuperscript{101} Only that person who follows a true guru can drink nectar from the well located in the Daśama Dvāra to his heart’s content. Though this nectar is available in a sahaja way, but the disciple without a true guru remains thirsty and dies in vain”.\textsuperscript{102} Kabir echoes similar views. “The guru’s greatness is so immense that his instructions for a short time can take man to the heights of God-head”.\textsuperscript{103} “It is out of light of the guru that the moon and stars are created, and it is through his light above that the sun shines”.\textsuperscript{104} The sant literature is full of guru’s greatness. “The spiritual seeds already present will grow into flowers and fruits when the guru like the clouds will rain the waters of his instructions at the appropriate time”.\textsuperscript{105} “In the sant literature a person without the guru was considered very low and mean. The sākhīs of Kabir begin with salutation to the guru.\textsuperscript{106} Sant Jñāneśvara is very eloquent on this point. He says, “Let me make my heart the seat for the guru, and let me place upon it my guru’s feet.” Let all my senses sing the chorus of unity, and throw before the feet of the guru a handful of flowers of praise. Let me apply to the feet of the guru a fingerful of sandal ointment, made pure by the consideration of identity. Let me put before his feet ornaments of spiritual gold. Let me place upon them the eight petalled flowers of pure joy. Let me burn the essence of egoism, blow off the lights of self annihilation and cling to the feet of the guru with the feeling of absorption”.\textsuperscript{107} He (Jñāneśvara) regards that “a moment spent without the guru is greater than a world cycle”.\textsuperscript{108} Here is a typical example of profound respect for the guru. “His reverence for the guru was so great that he never turned his back towards him, and his midnight journey to the river
he used, on all occasions, to walk bare footed, that is with the face towards the guru’s house (Amar Dass).109

On meeting the Guru

Only the most fortunate persons meet such a guru, because he is one in lacs. God manifests Himself through him. It is due to the fruits of the past good deeds of the aspirant or due to the grace of the Lord that one earns the good fortune to come in contact with a true guru. “He alone meets the perfect guru in whose writ it is so written”.110 In the Sikh religion contact with a guru is most auspicious and spiritually rewarding. “Who have met the guru find their object of life fulfilled”.111 “One is not blessed when one lives in Benaras, and so wisdom is not lost if one leaves Kāśī; we get wisdom and are awakened when we meet the guru”.112 “A meeting with the guru removes our fear and doubt”.113 The whole spiritual experience is summed up beautifully, “When we meet the perfect guru, the wandering of the mind ceases, nectar oozes from the Tenth Door, and we are attuned to the music of sahaja, and see the Lord within our Home”.114

Thus a perfect guru is at once the conserver and the carrier of the whole spirituality which is God Himself. But it must be admitted that the perfect guru never parades himself with some sign boards. He is always humble and considers himself the servant of the Lord. His inner effulgence shines on his face and eyes and he utilises his powers for the good of the world without proclaiming them. He does this job, silently, secretly and indirectly.

CONCLUSION

Thus from the above discussion it becomes quite clear that the tradition of the guruvāda is, no doubt, quite old. Repeated emphasis is laid on the guru’s supreme importance in the spiritual way of life. Various esoteric cults have said much about the status and powers of the guru. It is true that similar references are found in the allied cults of the sant mat as well as the cults that preceded them, but the sphere of guru’s
importance has been sufficiently widened here. But at some places his position becomes subordinate when he performs the duties of a mediator or carries out the Will of the Lord. After all, God has to work through some human agency and the perfect guru is the only instrument in that direction. The Sikh Masters imbibed and assimilated the current traditions about the guru, but they broadened several aspects of his sublime personality, thus making him as one among men but not one of them. He lives and moves in the world, but his being is merged in the Lord. His position is exalted to the highest when he is made equal to God and without him there is utter darkness in the world. Only men of good fortune get the proud privilege of coming in his contact. He is one with Nāma and śabda, the two most profound concepts in the Sikh faith. It is rightly said that the greatness of a true guru is beyond expression.

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93. Ibid., p. 535.
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MĀYĀ

INTRODUCTION

THE DOCTRINE of māyā is one of the chief contributions of Indian philosophical systems. Almost all writers and thinkers of several cults and creeds and schools of thought have used this term in a variety of ways. In the Vedas¹ and the Upaniṣada² it is referred to in different senses. In the Bhagvata Gītā³ māyā is stated as the power of Brahman. Some Buddhist scholars have also to say something on māyā. According to Nāgarjuna, “Those who see that things exist or that they do not exist do not see the truth, for all things are called māyā because they are unreal like a lightning flash.....because they are not born yet appear to be (and) as the world is neither different from reality nor identical with it and though the world is treated as māyā, māyā is said to be not without reality”.⁴ Śāṅkara by his masterly mind made it a purely philosophical doctrine and uses it in the sense of ignorance, illusion, appearance and also the material cause of the world. Māyā is used in the sense of supreme power in the Tantras.⁵ Its references are also found in the teachings of Gorakh Nāth.⁶

Thus we observe that the concept of māyā was quite widespread in almost all systems of religious thoughts. The teachers of the bhakti cult as well as the sant mat did not lag behind in expressing their own ideas about māyā. The Sikh Masters were also quite well aware of this term and they gave sufficient prominence to it in their doctrines.
What is Mâyā

In the Sikh scripture mâyā has been used in several senses. It has been used in the sense of wealth. “You gather mâyā and are, therefore, accursed”.7 “This wealth is mâyā, the great illusion”.8 She is the daughter of sea (Laxmi).9 “The pandit instructs other, but himself trades in mâyā”.10 Relatives and attachment with them are also mâyā. “There is no need to take pride in mâyā. Father, mother, sister and other kith and kin will not go with you”.11 “The desire for mâyā attaches us with wife, son and kins”.12

“Father and mother love their children immensely, but all attachment is mâyā.”13 “Having faith in one’s relatives, kindreds, sons-in-law, sons, friends, chiefs and so on is the play of mâyā”.14 Mâyā’s thick relations and its operation through three guṇas have been sufficiently highlighted in the holy text. “The three modes of mâyā make you yelp”.15 The Vedas say that mâyā has three attributes,16 and it has yoked us to these three modes.17 “Mâyā of the three guṇas pervades everywhere due to attachment.”18 “By reading the Vedas and the Śāstras you are bound to the mâyā of the three attributes and are engrossed in blind strife”.19 It is also used in the sense of passionate life. “In the third part of the night, when you are young, you are agitated and lured away by mâyā”.20 The Gurus hit at the Hindus who practised polytheism. In this regard they said, “Belief in gods and goddesses is the source of mâyā. This belief led to the creation of the Śmṛtis and Śāstras”.21 Sense of duality is also mâyā. “When one has the sense of duality, the mind is swayed by the poison of mâyā”22 It is also a great impediment. “Whatever I decide in my mind, it does not allow me to fulfil it”.23 “It does not allow me to gather virtue and practice continence”.24 It is the source of all. “Believing in mâyā, the source of all, men are swayed by doubt”.25 The Sikh Gurus further define mâyā in these words, “When one is bound by pleasure and pain and acts in ego it is called mâyā”.26 It is the power of the Lord and is the cause for the birth of three gods, “Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are the sons of mâyā”.27 The authors of the Grantha were well aware of the pervasiveness of mâyā and they said, “Gods, wealth, desire for glory, greed, intoxication, ego, attachment with sons
and wife, worldly possessions, beauty, cattle, sweet sounds, the all enveloping darkness of five desires, doing good deeds in ego, renunciation, austerities, pride, caste, avocation, culture and so on come under the sway of māyā”.

Parallel references of this concept culled from relevant literature, when compared with the above can be of great value for having a better understanding of this term. According to the Tantras, “Śaktī is both māyā, that by which Brahman creating the universe is able to make Itself appear to be different from what It really is, and mūla prakṛti, or the unmanifested state of that which, when manifested, is the universe of name and form. It is the primary so called the material cause of the world”.

Gorakhnāth maintains that māyā is like a tree which has no branch, root, leaves or shade. It grows without water. In spite of this people are very much desirous of getting its fruits. Banerji explains the same thing in a different way in these words, “Gorakhnāth regards māyā as a form of expression of the human individuality. It appears to consist in giving undue importance to one’s own individual self and its interests for that reasons dealing falsely with others.” According to Kabir, “Māyā is like a shadow. When we try to catch it, it runs away. He who runs away from it, can not leave it. It sticks to him”. He further maintains, “It is the mother of ignorance. Due to this ignorance the individual moves in this world fearlessly. The world is an illusion. Māyā has bound everybody”. Namadeva’s view of māyā pertains to wealth and passionate attachment to the satisfaction of five senses. “The fish without caring for her life jumps towards the hook, eats her food and is caught by the fisherman, the man is attached towards gold and woman and falls a prey to the cycle of birth and death, the bee collects honey, but cannot enjoy it, all these pleasures are temporary. Māyā in the form of wealth and fame remains in this world”. Dādu also echoes similar views, “My mind is a culprit. It does not obey me. It is immersed in the love of gold, woman, attachment, ego, anger, sex and hankers after the satisfaction of five senses. It does not bother about the ultimate end that is the death”. “Whatever we see around, is the mirage of māyā. Man is attracted towards its glow and regards it as true.
The above account of mâyā contained in the Guru Grantha as well as other aforesaid sources show that it is viewed in three ways namely: (i) It hides the true nature of truth from our view, (ii) it presents truth as untruth and (iii) it makes us believe untruth as truth. In the Siddha literature it is the sakti of Śiva, the dynamic power, while Śiva, is the static element. In the Nātha cult it is stated to limit the view of the Highest Reality. When this term began to be adopted by the leaders of the sant mat in their teachings, its old connotation as preached by the Sāmkhya system, Śaṅkara, the Siddhas and the Nāthas was sufficiently enlarged and changed. The Sāmkhya view that mâyā is eternal was totally rejected by the sants including the Gurus. The view of Śaṅkar was partially accepted by the sants in their hymns here and there. As Buddha Prakash says, “Nanak does not regard mâyā or prakṛti as an independent entity as in the Sāmkhya system, not as a part of Brahman, which makes him appear in manifold forms of the world without in-hering in them, as in the thought of Śaṅkar, but as the burgeoning of being in the numerous aspects and objects of existence, which are all real”. 37 Paul Devanand’s views are also worth quoting here. 38 He says, Although Kabir and Nanak turned away from certain principles of their ancestral Hindu faith, they still adhere closely to the belief that the world is mâyā. They would not subscribe to the mâyā theory of Śaṅkara Vedanta. By they hold that, in some form or other, the advaita explanation of the phenomenal world ought to be preserved in all religions”. The view that mâyā is the Śakti of the Lord which gives birth to the whole world as preached by the Siddhas and the Yogiś was partially accepted by the Gurus. Thus it appears that the concept of mâyā found a synthesis of several prevailing views in some respects in the doctrines of the Gurus. The Sikh Masters placed before their followers a simplified meaning of this term like their other doctrines. They enlarged its scope and made it coterminous with the whole creation where its writ ran large except the regions of the Lord.

Mâyā and its Kingdom
The sphere of influence of mâyā is vast. Its kingdom is stretched
to enormous dimensions. It rules over the world of insects, beasts, men and gods. Even the three gods that is, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva work under its supervision and they obey its commands. All are caught in its net. The Sikh scripture speaks in unmistakable terms about the tremendous and limitless empire of māyā in several hymns. "Māyā permeates the whole world and beguiles us all". Māyā the great enticer, entices us all. It is even dear to the ascetics and the adepts. Its bonds cannot be snapped. A person who recites the six Śāstras and visits the pilgrim stations cannot come out of its net. Fasting, worship, penances and such like religious acts are unable to erase the effects of māyā". It has overpowered all yogis, experts on the Śāstras and all the thirty three crore gods are astounded by its power. It has conquered all places and all homes". It dances its evil dance and yokes every one to evil. It has enticed away the sun, and the moon gods. When it tinkles its ankle bells, evil ranks within us. Its several gestures bewitch everyone except the Lord. Due to its effects men are intoxicated with wine and are tossed about on the high seas".

The Granthā is quite emphatic regarding the all pervasive impact of māyā. "The birds and deer are ridden by māyā, the flies are bewitched by sugar (māyā) and so waste them away, the horses and camels are in love with māyā, the eighty four siddhas, the six yatis, the nine Nāthas, sun, moon, and the men of austerities are all influenced by māyā; the angel of death and the five demons are under its sway; the dogs and jackals are lured away by māyā; the monkeys, leopards, lions, foxes, lambs, cats are under its impact, gods and angels are corrupted by it; ocean, earth and Indra are defiled by māyā, in short any one who has a stomach is afflicted by māyā". The text particularly mentions its impact on human beings. "Due to the love of māyā people have forgotten the Lord". "My eyes, ears and beautiful body are tired and exhausted. Age has worn out, but the love of māyā has not decreased".

Similar references about māyā are also found in the Sant literature, "This is the māyā of the Lord. It has gone out for a hunt. With the aid of its dubious shafts it has killed the yogis, the adepts, the Jains, the Brāhmaṇas, the jaṅgams and other
angelic beings". 46 "It has enticed not only the human beings, but also the munis, the angels and the gods". 47 The serpent mâyâ-stings all in the form of gold and woman. Even Brahmâ, Viṣṇu and Śiva could not escape from its net. 48 The grinding mill of mâyâ is in full swing. The whole world is being ground in it. None can save himself, howsoever, he may try from its clutches. Lust, anger, attachment, greed, and so on drive it. The three guṇas drag every body in this mill. The ground persons are turned into powder and then this powder is heated on the iron plates of karmas. Desire, the unchaste woman, spoils the house of all. Knowing fully well all the implications of mâyâ’s wrath, the individual is engulfed by the all powerful god of death. 49 It is further remarked, "Mâyâ has beguiled all. None has beguiled its o far except the true devotee of the Lord". 50

Thus we observe that the influence of mâyâ has been stated by manî Sants in their own way, but it is mentioned in the Guru Grantha in a very detailed manner, where it covers the whole creation.

Mâyâ and its Forms

"Mâyâ, the power of the Lord fulfils its designs through various forms." In the Sikh scripture it is likened to a poisonous insect whose bite is always fatal. "Mâyâ is a serpent which girdles every soul". 51 It is "equated with an old type mother-in-law. "The mother-in-law is vicious. She does not allow me to stay in my Home". 52 "I am separated from my spouse by my mother-in-law". 53 "It is the owner of the home. It wears many garbs and assumes many forms. It does not allow me to sit in my home". 54 "It has become the mistress of the Home and does not permit me to occupy it". 55 It is a woman of ignoble character. "Mâyâ is a shameless and a cursed woman. It is an ugly witch devoid of any chastity". 56 It is like a charming woman. "It is extremely attractive and beautiful. It entices us in the world, in the home and on the way". 57 It is an intoxicant drink. "The kaliaje is the bar woman, who sells sweet wine of mâyâ. We all drink this wine". 58 It is the great enticer. "The fish is deluded and is attached with the water. The moth is deluded by the light of the lamp; the illusion of
lust afflicts the elephant, and the bee is passionately attached to the flower—all this is due to the power of māyā, the great enticer”. 59 Thus we observe that māyā operates through various forms as is rightly said in the Grantha.60 “It beguiles, entices and deludes all by its various forms”.61 Many Sants have also echoed similar views. “Māyā possesses enormous powers of attraction. It has many devices by which it entices its prey. The individual is bewitched towards it by the hunger of senses”.62 “A demon lives in my mind and stings me always”.63 “It has cast its net everywhere and catches all”.64 “It is sweet tongued. It poses to be humble. But it is a demon and eats the flesh of its prey”.65

Thus we observe that the concept and scope of māyā have been sufficiently widened and enlarged in the Holy Text. Its power of delusion is unsurpassable. Being the most obedient and dutiful servant of the Lord, it successfully utilises its skill over all with a few exceptions.

How to subdue Māyā
This Supreme māyā who has spread its most dangerous cobweb everywhere and engulfed all is a hard nut to crack. It has many agencies through which it has brought to knees those who have dared to conquer its citadel. All except a few lie prostrate before its power and magnetism. The composers of the Guru Grantha provide us with many means by which māyā can be subdued.

Nāma is the most efficacious recipe to remove the effects of māyā. The scripture praises the glory of nāma in several hymns. “The colour of māyā fades away when one dyes oneself in the colour of nāma”.66 “When we cherish the Lord’s nāma in our heart, all tastes of māyā become tasteless”.67 “Māyā is a snake who has injected its poison everywhere, its antidote is nāma”.68 The śabda of the guru is also quite helpful in this matter. “By the śabda of the guru, māyā is burnt away”.69 “All the gods and human beings are locked in the fortress of māyā. It is through the śabda of the guru that this fort is overpowered”.70 The grace of the guru also removes our attachment with māyā. “The couriers of māyā are very strong. They have bound down everybody. By the grace of the guru I have subdued them
all". The path of wisdom is mentioned in this hymn. "When the storm of wisdom comes, it sweeps away the thatched roof of doubt supported by mâyâ". Here detachment is stressed upon, "Without detachment the bonds of mâyâ cannot be loosened".

Certain yogic schools and the prophets of the sant mat have expressed similar ideas in order to get rid of the clutches of mâyâ. Gorakhnâth says, "Enter the abode of nectar (Sahasradala) and kill mâyâ, the snake. He has seen that it has stung the whole world... It runs in all the ten directions. Garuḍa, the discipline of breath can kill this snake. I have used this weapon to subdue mâyâ". Gūṇeśwara recommends the path of wisdom like the Sikh Gurus, "To know that mâyâ is unreal is to be able to destroy it, altogether. A child may be frightened by a pseudo demon, but does the demon exists for the matter of it. Can one really throw the castles in the air? Is it possible to break the horn of a hare? Can we pluck the flowers in the sky? The tree itself is unreal, why then should we trouble about rooting it up? The tree itself is unreal, and to know that it is unreal is sufficient to destroy it". Kabir maintains, "When cravings and desires leave their nature and withdraw themselves, then one gets the bliss of God realization. Thus the expansive tree of mâyâ dries up and in its place the flower of spirituality blossoms up".

Dâdu believes that it is God Himself who shows us the way and we thus become free from the fetters of mâyâ. "All cults and their means are the work of mâyâ. Man entangles himself in these and, therefore, cannot attain the truth. The true path is that which is shown by God to his devotees and the latter attain truth".

Thus we find that the Sikh Masters rely on nâma, śabda, grace of guru, wisdom, detachment and so on as means to get rid of mâyâ. With the departure of mâyâ the mind is filled to its brim with the love of God. Then there is no vacuum in the mind. The entrance of God's love and the departure of mâyâ go side by side. Because where mâyâ is, God is not and vice versa.

Mâyâ and God
The Holy Book discusses the relationship of mâyâ and God in a
variety of ways, "First of all Puruṣa became manifest, from Him came out māyā. Whatever belongs to māyā, belongs to Hari".78 "It is created by God. It is neither powerful nor powerless".79 "He himself has spread his māyā and is a witness to it".80 "As is the fire of the womb within, so is the fire of māyā without. Both are equally dreaded, though both are the play of the Lord.81 The Sikh religion believes that attachment with māyā is due to the will of the Lord. The desire is stilled not, because it is deeply attached to māyā's dust. "The Lord Himself ministers the potion of māyā to the man, so he comes and goes again".82 "When the Lord wills one is born to the great joy of the relatives, and then is not attuned to the Lord. Thus the writ of māyā begins to run".83 It is the slave of God. "Why do you not remember Hari, whose māyā is the slave".84 The man says good bye to the Lord and greets His slave (māyā).85 It is His reflection. "The Lord has created three faced māyā. It is His reflection".86 It has no independent existence of its own. "All manifestations of māyā are through Hari".87 It is quite true that māyā derives all her powers and manifestations from the one source, but one cannot exist with the other in the world. As is rightly said, "When the spouse, our Lord is out, Māyā reigns within us".88

From the above analysis of māyā contained in the Guru Grantha, we conclude:

1. The Lord is the creator of māyā, as well as the craving for it.
2. It subsists because of His powers.
3. It is His slave, servant and reflection.
4. All manifestations of māyā are due to God.
5. It has no independent existence.
6. The Lord has created her to beguile the mankind.
7. It is not an illusion.

In the Tantra literature we also find that māyā represents the power of the Lord. "Māyā cannot be an illusion. This is the Śakti of Śiva and like Him is present everywhere".89
Kabir maintains, "The Lord has created mayā, and from her emerges the whole creation".90

Thus we observe that God as the creator of mayā has been mentioned by many prophets. It comes out of Him, inhere in Him and obeys His commands. It is a curtain between the soul and the Lord. All this is done under His will. Describing the relationship between mayā and God, Ram Khelavan Pandey rightly says, "When we consider that mayā is eternal, we have to state in what sense it is so. Whether independent, or dependent, or both or neither. It is the power of the eternal light, and it exists in Him. Therefore, it is neither completely different, nor wholly identical with the Lord. The reason is obvious, there will always remain a difference between the all powerful Lord and His power".91 "As is the relation of burning power of fire with the fire, so is that of mayā with God".92

CONCLUSION

The above account of mayā as mentioned in the Guru Grantha shows that the Masters reject the Advaitistic view of mayā along with the yogic terminology concerning this concept in various respects. They knew quite well that their teachings were meant for the mass of the people and there was no use talking about mayā from a very high philosophical level. Moreover, they were not the votaries of any cult or creed, whatever they preached was based on their own experience and sādhanā. Their purpose was to educate people properly and mayā's position vis-a-vis the world. As is rightly pointed out, "Maya Vāda is used to enlighten man to educate him to give him a starting point or an ending point for the explanation of the existence of himself and of the mysterious universe around him".93

The Gurus believed that mayā is not an illusion, the existence of the world around us is quite real. The effects of mayā are quite real in the sense that they keep the man away from the Lord. As Devananda observes, "The underlying notion is that the world creation casts a spell over men, and beguiles them with doing things they would not do in their right senses. If they were in their right senses they would realize
that they are of the same eternal nature as the abiding Being of God. This world in this sense is māyā”.

In the words of McLeod, “Māyā in the thought of Nanak (as well as the other Gurus also) is not the cosmic illusion of the classical Vedānta. The world is indeed māyā, but it is not unreal. It is illusion only in the sense that it is accepted for what it is not. Delusion is the most appropriate word”.

We have noted that the sphere of māyā’s influence is astoundingly extensive, the whole worldly life along with the sphere of gods and goddesses come under its sway. No doubt, similar references are also available in the teachings of other Sants, but the treatment which the Gurus give is very detailed.

The Sikh Prophets rightly judged the power of māyā and man’s inability to subdue it. Therefore, they rely on God’s and guru’s grace, utterance of nāma, cherishing of śabda, detached view of life and so on as means to achieve their objective. Esoteric practices and hatha yoga have been completely discarded in this connection.

Māyā is the Śakti of the Lord and works according to His will as a servant and as a slave. It has deluded all people from the view of the Lord. It hinders the process of becoming with being. It is not different from Him, but exists in Him.

Summing up we can quote Buddha Prakash, “Since māyā or the power process, by which the protean diversity of the world unfolds itself baffles our understanding; we consider and describe it a miraculous and incomprehensible, and because it conceals the basic substratum of the integral unity of things in its manifold forms, it plays a delusive and confusing role, and, by making us treat the variety of objects as fundamentally, it even proves misleading and disconcerting”.

Māyā according to the Gurus is not a theory of metaphysics, but an attitude towards life. The cult of māyā was simplified and harmonised by them. It was preached with a wealth of details and symbols thus making it easily understandable. In this sense their contribution of the development and growth of this concept is quite significant.
References

1. The term māyā, as used in the Vedas, means primarily mysterious, awesome, wonder working power which produces effects that transcends human understanding. Paul David Devanandan, The Concept of Māyā, p. 23.
2. To them belongs in stainless Brahman world.
   In whom there is no crookedness and falsehood, no māyā (illusion)
   Praśnopañiṣad, I, 16
5. The limiting power of Reality by which its unmeasured Being consciousness is measured, and its elogical nature is made thinkable in terms of forms and categories has been called māyā.
   (The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV, p. 229)
8. Ibid., p. 77.
10. Ibid., pp. 56, 116.
11. Ibid., p. 23.
12. Ibid., p. 61.
13. Ibid., p. 75.
15. Ibid., p. 127.
16. Ibid., pp. 128, 647.
17. Ibid., p. 25.
18. Ibid., pp. 1140, 1260.
19. Ibid., p. 1126.
20. Ibid., p. 75.
21. Ibid., p. 129.
22. Ibid., p. 366.
23. Ibid., p. 371.
24. Ibid., p. 371.
27. Ibid., p. 7.
28. Ibid., p. 182.
31. Philosophy of Gorakhnāth, p. 147.
34. Sant Bāṇi Saṅgraha, II, p. 32.
36. Ibid., p. 116.
38. The Concept of Māyā, p. 169.
40. Ibid., p. 1216.
41. Ibid., pp. 499, 500.
42. Ibid., p. 1231.
43. Ibid., p. 1160.
44. Ibid., pp. 30, 111, 112, 175, 205.
45. Ibid., p. 793.
47. Dādū Ki Bāñi, I, p. 128.
49. Sant Bāñi Saṁgraha, (Paltu), II p. 219.
50. Ibid., I, p. 223.
52. Ibid., p. 355.
53. Ibid., p. 37.
54. Ibid. p. 371.
55. Ibid., p. 371.
56. Ibid., p. 796.
57. Ibid., p. 392.
58. Ibid., p. 350.
60. Ibid., p. 485.
61. Ibid., p. 485.
63. Ibid., p. 168.
64. Dādū Ki Bāñi, I, p. 168.
67. Ibid., p. 321.
68. Ibid., p. 1415.
69. Ibid., pp. 129, 246, 412, 513.
70. Ibid., p. 195.
71. Ibid., pp. 392, 833, 821.
72. Ibid., p. 331.
73. Ibid., p. 329.
74. Gorakhbāñi, pp. 139-40.
75. Gītānāswāri xv, 215 ff.
76. Granthāvali, p. 212.
77. Dādū Dayal Ki Bāñi, p. II, p. 94.
78. The Guru Grantha, p. 693.
79. Ibid., p. 481.
80. Ibid., p. 537.
81. Ibid., p. 921.
82. Ibid., p. 461.
83. Ibid., p. 1393.
84. Ibid., p. 1552.
85. Ibid., p. 195.
86. Ibid., p. 868.
87. Ibid., p. 797.
88. Ibid., p. 965.
89. Arthur Avalon, Śakti and the Śāktas, p. 388.
90. Granthāvali, p. 250
91. Madhya Kālin Sant Sāhitya, p. 302.
MIND

INTRODUCTION

THE part played by body and mind, the gross and subtle entities, respectively, in the path of spiritual discipline has been widely discussed by all those who followed the path of release. Some have advocated the mortification of human body while others considered it as a sacred instrument for the attainment of the supreme goal of life. Whatever the differences in approach may have been, it is an admitted fact that all religious men have forcefully brought into bold relief the importance of control of mind. Many methods, based on their personal experiences, have been described by leaders of different cults and creeds. The Sikh Gurus have also described their religious practices. In the Holy Book we come across several hymns in which they state their own views regarding the nature and importance of mind in the process of spiritual sādhanā.

Nature of Mind
The *Guru Granth* provides us with an interesting account about the nature of mind. Mind is mercurial and wanders in all directions.\(^1\) Intoxicated by māyā, it is like a wild elephant\(^2\) or the crooked tail of a dog.\(^3\) It is always overpowered by the sense of duality, and therefore, full of evil intents.\(^4\) The two aspects of mind are stressed upon here. It performs all actions. It is greedy and ignorant. By the grace of guru it remembers the Lord’s name.\(^5\) It is further remarked: Mind is the yogī (detached) and mind is the indulger (attached). It is both the
giver and the beggar. The Sikh Masters were fully conscious of the fact that mind is the repository of all spiritual essence. ‘O Mind, you are the embodiment of light, know yourself……., God is within you. The mind is Śiva, the mind is Śakti. When the mind attains the superconscious level, then the mystery of the Lord is revealed. When the mind awakens, its duality vanishes away.

Thus we observe that the Gurus have rightly described the two aspects of mind, dark and bright, worldly and unworldly. Ajit Singh Sikka is right when he says, “The actual interpretation of the great Guru is that the mind lives between light and darkness. It is amidst possibilities and probabilities. It becomes beauteous, and it may become ignorant.”

The fleeting nature of mind has been highlighted by the leaders of many cults. Speaking of Tāntric Buddhism, B. Bhattacharya points out that, “According to this school the human mind, or as it is called in Buddhism, the Bodhi-mind, is something like a continuous stream of momentary consciousness, which changes every moment the consciousness of the previous moment, giving rise to the consciousness of the succeeding one, the former being the cause of the latter. The chain of momentary consciousness is without a beginning, or, at best, its starting-point cannot be traced”. “The mind wanders in all directions for the satisfaction of five senses. It is enormously difficult to control it”.12

The dual nature of mind has also been stated. “The citta is the root of all. Worldly enjoyment and release are found in it. Pay homage to it. Take refuge in this citta; you will attain all the desired fruits. The bound citta brings bondage and the released citta leads to Nirvāṇa”.13 The idea that the mind is Śiva and Śakti mentioned above occurs also in the Gorakh-bānti.14 “From the mind arises māyā, by the mind it is destroyed”.15

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that all religious teachers have stressed that mind is of fluctuating nature, it is the cause of good and bad deeds, and is the repository of spiritual essence also. The problem before these teachers has been how to subdue this all powerful mind so that it may give up the path of māyā and move on the road to liberation. In the following
pages is given a brief account of the means and methods recommended by the Sikh Masters to attain the desired goal.

How to Discipline the Mind
The role of the guru in the process of disciplining the mind of the devotee has been strongly stressed. In the Guru Grantha we come across many hymns dealing with this subject. Meeting with the guru is referred to here. The mind is released when it meets the guru.  

"By the service of the guru the mind becomes pure and its darkness and ignorance are removed". Faithful observance of guru’s instructions by the devotee brings the desired results. "When you contemplate on the śabda of the guru, you attain the castle of the Lord”. The kindness of guru also helps and serves the purpose. "When the true guru is kind, the mind realizes the Perfect Being." Rememberance and contemplation of nāma is another way to subdue the mind. "The mind filled with the Lord’s nāma, does not wander any more”.

"Body and mind become satisfied when one remembers nāma”. The efficacy of this method is highlighted over other disciplines. "When one practices haṭha yoga to control the desires, one’s body wears down. By penance and fasting the mind is not tuned to Divinity. There is no parallel to Rāmanāma for this purpose”. The mind can be held when it is imbued with love and praises of the Lord. "Whose heart is imbued with God, his mind and body become cool and steadfast”. All the waves which rise and fall in the mind are intoxicated with the love of the Lord, and, therefore, now it is stilled.

Terms and concepts of the Tantras and haṭha yoga are frequently employed here. The mind is restrained when one closes all the nine doors of the body. In this way the flow of desires in the mind is controlled. "O ignorant mind, turn your vital wind backward and drink nectar which drops from the dasamadvāra”. The śabda yoga is also described here. The yoga of the devotee is to discover the inward reality through the practice of śabda. The unsteady mind is now imbued with the śabda. It is further remarked, when one controls one’s mind, its outgoing comes to an end; without the control of the
mind none can attain the Lord. Rare is the one who knows how to control the mind. It is controlled by the śabda. This is the secret known to a few only. Individual efforts are also relied upon. “I have calmed my mind with great and gradual efforts. Māyā which beguiles the whole world has been trapped by the tranquil mind”. "It is through the mind that the mind is convinced that nothing dies or passes away".

The above account shows that the Sikh Masters provide us with many ways and means to subdue and still the mind. These are grace of the guru, recitation of nāma, and its contemplation, passionate devotion to the Lord, following the instructions of the guru, self-efforts and śabda yoga. These are not different from one another, but parts of the same scheme. Mind, which is the hero of many battles has to be besieged from all quarters and attacked with all weapons. As the forces enclose on with tremendous vigour, the mind accepts its defeat, and becomes calm, quiet, whole and complete. It now meets the Lord and enjoys eternal bliss. These ways come under the general framework of the sant mat or the religious tradition of medieval saint-poets, and frequent references to yogic cults and practices are found at some places.

It will be quite interesting to compare the methods found in the Guru Granthā with those recommended by the teachers of other cults who preceded the Sikh Gurus. Siddha Saraha says, “With the instructions of the preceptor arrest the vital wind through the constant arrest of the mind. When this vital wind is made steady, what can time and death do to a yogi. The body is the boat, a pure mind is the oar; with the instructions of the wise preceptor take the helm. Make the mind quiet and then direct the boat on, by no (other) means can we reach the other shore”. Śāntipā writes, “Go on combing the mind like cording of cotton. In this process you are separating gradually all the impurities contained therein. With the constant repetition of this process all elements, however subtle, are removed. In the end bliss is attained. Similarly by combing the mind we will observe that the mind has reached the state of śūnya”. The Gorakhbāṇi also recommends a similar method. “The mind has overpowered all the gods and goddesses. It can be arrested after it is pierced with the arrow of the guru’s
wisdom.”

“Do not allow the mind to go out. Its outward movement must be checked. Let it go within. When the vital wind is turned inward or when the life-current instead of going out moves within and reaches the brahma-rândhra, the mind comes to rest.”

Reference to the rousing of the power of the Kundalini and the recitation of the mantra, so ham, hariśa in a yogic way are also found in the text. As is well known, in the Siddha and the Nātha cults, emphasis has been laid on yogic practices.

In the age of the sants or saint-poets we find that the yogic practices are generally criticized and an intensely devotional attitude is adopted instead. The sants believed that the mind must be dominated by love for God and all the thought-currents should be saturated with His love. Kabir says, “The mind is like an elephant. The Lord’s nāma is the goad which can control it.”

“Give your whole love to God to meet Him. Detach your mind from the worldly actions and attach it with devotion of God.”

Dādu echoes similar views, “Wash your dirty mind with the nāma of the Lord. It will be cleansed when it goes within”.

“When the mind dies for the worldly objects and desires it become powerless, it begins to love the Lord”.

The State of Calm Mind

The application of all the methods mentioned above leads to a state of complete identity with the Infinite, a state difficult to explain in words. It has been rightly said by a Chinese sage that “those who know do not speak, and those who speak do not know”. But still something with regard to this profound experience is stated by many sants. In the Guru Grantha we come across some descriptions of this experience. It is a state where one drinks nectar. “With guru’s instruction mind is stabilized. This is how it enjoys nectar”. Here one listens to the divine music. When the waves of the mind are stilled, there issues forth the anahada-kâṅguri. The same idea is expressed in a different way. “The mind is the township, the mind is the stall, and it is also the keeper of the stall. It dwells in several garbs and wanders throughout the world. Through the śabda of the guru it is imbued with God and the sense of duality merges in sahaja. It is a state of supreme peace. When the mind
wavers, it is in doubt. When the doubt is removed by the guru, it attains peace”.

There are also references to sahaja-samādhi. “When the light became manifest within, the mind began to believe in God and got merged in sahaja-samādhi. It is a state devoid of all afflictions. “When the boundless and incomprehensible Lord comes to my mind even for a moment, then all my sorrows, pains and ailments are gone”. There are also references to yogic practices. “When the mind becomes whole, it bathes within. It is now in the superconscious state and is, therefore, beyond birth and death. It is now completely turned away from māyā and rests in the daśamadvāra. It has pierced all the coils of the snake (i.e. 6 cakras) and seen the Lord. Māyā and attachment are gone. The moon has devoured the sun. When I pull my breath inward and enter the kumbhaka mudrā, I listen to the ringing of the anhada śabda. The guru has given me this secret”.

In the Tāṇtrika schools this state is explained in these words, “When the citta becomes tranquilized, there is neither birth nor death, neither bondage nor liberation. All the differences between thesis and antithesis vanish at once”. It is further said that, “The excellent Nirvāṇa is another condition of the mind, which is bright with purity, is free from all the false constructions and the dirt of attachment”. According to the Gorakhabāṇi, when the diamond has pierced the diamond, that is to say, when the soul has merged in the Lord, then why should the mind come in the body again. The mind enjoys that blissful state”. Kabir says, “O mind, you are free to go anywhere without any hindrance. I have known Him and rest in Him. Then wherever you go, you will find Rāma there”. It must be added here that this experience is not partial, restricted to the sphere of mind, body or senses, but it is complete and whole. It is not a case of giving an intellectual assent to an idea, it is the total response of the whole being of the individual. As has been rightly said, “The whole process of mental discipline resulting in such state, only makes it clear that the intellectual certitude is a necessary preliminary to the intuitive knowledge of Brahman. But the certitude is given in experience and not as a result of intellectual arguments”.
CONCLUSION

The above discussion about the nature of mind and the means to subdue it leading to a blissful state is a topic of very absorbing interest. We have seen that different means were employed by the teachers of different cults. The Tāntric Siddhas and the followers of the Nātha cult relied on yogic practices, while the sants adopted other methods to attain the desired goal. In this process the importance of mind has been rightly considered by all of them. The yogic cults did not believe in the existence of God. Hence, according to them, a liberated mind is that mind which is free from all thought-construction. This is the state of supreme bliss. But for the followers of the sants of the mat, God is the Ultimate Reality and they tried to seek Him by stilling and controlling the mind. The Sikh Gurus were fully conscious of the part played by the mind in the process of bondage as well as in the process of liberation. They have recommended some devotional methods within the reach of all for the control of mind. Herein lies the contribution of the Gurus to this specialized branch of devotional mysticism.

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27. Ibid., p. 908.
28. Ibid., p. 665.
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30. Ibid., p. 514.
31. Dohākośa, of Saraha, song no. 32.
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33. Gorakhabānī, p. 73.
34. Ibid., p. 146.
35. Ibid., p. 71.
36. Ibid., p. 124.
37. Kabīr Granthāvalī, p. 29.
38. Ibid, p. 86.
40. Ibid., I, p. 114.
42. Ibid., p. 335.
43. Ibid., p. 1350.
44. Ibid., p. 1199.
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46. Ibid., p. 971-72.
48. B. Bhattacharyya, An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism, p. 41.
49. Gorakhabānī, pp. 149-50.
NĀḌĪŚ

INTRODUCTION

A NĀḌĪ, which, in the ordinary sense, is a nerve, an artery, a nerve channel or vitality-air-pathway, plays a vital role in the practice of yoga. The practitioners of different cults and creeds, who drew their sustenance from yoga philosophy, have forcefully advocated the culture of nāḍīś for the attainment of the highest goal of life. The Siddhācāryas who promulgated their doctrines round about the 8th century A.D. have made pointed reference to the sādhanā of nāḍīś in order to attain bliss. The same has also been repeatedly emphasized by the followers of the Tantras. The Nātha-yogīs also believed that the human body could be dematerialised and the wear and tear of the organism could be stopped if one strictly followed the discipline of the nāḍīś under the guidance of a perfect preceptor. The sants including the Sikh Gurus, who imbibed many concepts and ideas of the Siddhas and the Nāthas, have also made some reference to the sādhanā of nāḍīś here and there in their teachings. But it must be understood that the sants were not the yogīs in the then accepted sense of the term, but if we adopt the meaning of yoga as union, then they were perfect yogīs. During those days, the yogīs were those who followed their own peculiar path of yoga. The sants neither practised any such path nor observed any formalities. They were staunch votaries of the path of devotion, but because of the impact of yogic cults which were prevalent in those days, they mentioned certain yogic practices in their teachings, Nāḍī-sādhanā being one of those practices.

In the human body there are many nerves, though writers on
yoga do not agree as regards their number. In the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* there is a reference to three and a half crores of nāḍīs. According to the *Śīva-Saṃhitā* (2.13), there are three and a half lacs of nāḍīs in the human organism. G.W. Briggs refers to two lacs of nāḍīs. "In general, the nerves are said to be seventy two thousand in number (excluding the smaller ones, *i.e.*., the upanāḍīs, which are innumerable). The Hindu Tantras and the Yoga-Upaniṣads, in general, agree with the Buddhist Tantras as to the total number of nerves (though contradictions are also found)". Kabir refers to seventy two nāḍīs.

From the point of view of practical yoga only some of the nāḍīs are of significance. Again, the writers do not agree with regard to their number. John Woodroffe is of the opinion that their number is fourteen, while, Vasan G. Rale maintains that they are ten. Among these, fourteen or ten nāḍīs, three are most important for the purpose of our discussion.

*The Three Nāḍīs*

The three nāḍīs which play a key role in the practical aspect of yoga a recalled by various names. In the literature of the Siddhas they are styled as *Lalanā*, *Rasanā* and *Avadhūti*. They are also known by the names Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. In the Nātha cult they are termed as *Īḍā*, *Piṅgalā* and *Susuṣmaṇā*. The Buddhist Tantras equate *Īḍā* with *Ālī* and *Piṅgalā* with *Kāli*. Sometimes *Īḍā* is considered as the left nostril and *Piṅgalā* as the right nostril. *Īḍā* is also known as *Śakti* and *Piṅgalā* as *Śiva*. These are also understood as the male and the female, and the sun and the moon, respectively. Kabir and the Sikh Gurus speak of *Īḍā*, *Piṅgalā* and *Sususmaṇā*, or Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī, sun and moon, or the right nostril and the left nostril, in their teachings when they refer to nāḍīs. The Sikh Gurus nowhere use terms like *Lalanā*, *Rasanā* and *Avadhūti*, or *Ālī* or *Kāli* used by the Buddhist Siddhācāryas.

These nerves and the ideas connected with them in the context of yogic sādhanā have their origin in the doctrines of the Mahāyāna religion. In the various offshoots of this religion, we frequently come across terms like *Prajñā* and *Upāya*, and *Śānyata* and *Karuṇā* which are of great significance for our purpose here. S.B. Dasgupta believes that the nāḍīs mentioned
in the sant literature are nothing but the changed form of the terms used by the teachers of the Mahāyāna religion. He says, “Śūnyatā and Karuṇā are widely used as Prajñā and Upāya, respectively in the Tāntric Buddhism”. He further says, “Prajñā and Upāya are called Lalana and Rasana which are the names for the two nerves, Idā and Piṅgalā well known in the Hindu Tāntric system. The nerve where these two nerves meet is called the Avadhūti which is again the middle nerve corresponding to the Susuṣmaṇā nerve of the Hindu Tantras, and this nerve is regarded as the way to Nirvāṇa”. It is also stated that “Lalana is of the nature of Prajñā, and Rasana remains as Upāya, and Avadhūti remains in the middle as the abode of Mahāsukha”. “This Prajñā and Upāya, or the Alī and Kāli, are associated with the moon and sun, or the night and day respectively”. In the Pañca-krama, Prajñā is called the vāma (left) and Upāya is named daksīṇa (right). Dharm Vir Bharati also echoes similar view in these words, “In haṭhā yoga traditions associated with the Buddhist and the Hindu Tantras, Idā, Piṅgalā and the Susuṣmaṇā have been termed as Lalana, Rasana and Avadhūti or the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Sarasvati. Along with it Idā is called as Śakti and Piṅgalā is styled as Śiva. Idā is also termed the left and Piṅgalā the right and the Susuṣmaṇā the middle nerve. The confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna is the union of Śiva and Śakti”. In this context, S.B. Dasgupta observes: “What is Śūnyatā? It is a perfect knowledge of the essence of all that is and is not, it is the perfect wisdom or Prajñā. This Prajñā is the static or the passive aspect of Reality. Karuṇā, a strong emotion of compassion, is the dynamic principle that leads one to an active life for the liberation not only of the self, but also of others; it is, therefore, the active principle and is called the Upāya (the means). Again, the important nerve on the left side of the body, called the moon or the river Ganga represents Prajñā, the Lady, and the nerve on the right side, called the sun or the river Yamuna, represents the Upāya, the Lord. It appears quite certain that some concepts and terms of the Mahāyāna doctrines penetrated into the ideology of the sants including the Gurus through the channels of the Tāntrikas and the Nāthas.”
The Susuṣmaṇā Nāḍī
Among these three important nāḍīs, Iḍā, Piṅgalā and Susuṣmaṇā, the last occupies the central position in yogic methodology. It is styled as the Brahma-nāḍī which leads to bliss. When the yogic sādhanā is successfully completed by the aspirant, he begins to drink nectar which passes through it. This state is of perfect union, of effulgence, and of peace. This experience is highlighted in the Guru Grantha in these words: “Through the Susuṣmaṇā, I attain the state of Sahaja (bliss) and the lotus of my mind was blossomed.”14 It is further remarked, “In the middle (Susuṣmaṇā) of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā (Iḍā and Piṅgalā) I live on the shores of Sahaja-Śūnya. My mind rests there. This is what the yogīs try to achieve”.15 Similar ideas about the supreme importance of this nāḍī are to be found in various yogic texts. Kanha says, “He has realized the wave (i.e., vibration of bliss) in the middle course”.16 “I have intuited the (non-dual) state through the teaching (of the preceptor). I sit at where the couple of nerves (the left and the right) are united together with Susuṣmaṇā”.17 “The boat is steered through the middle of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā; there, the exhilarated lady (i.e., Naiyātāmā, absorbed in the sahaja bliss) smoothly carries her children (i.e., the yogīs) to the shore”.18 Many such references also occur in the literature of Gorakh Nāth. “He who rests his mind in the Susuṣmaṇā reaches the abode of Brahman”.19 According to Kabir, “The middle path (Susuṣmaṇā) is the path which leads to sahaja”.20 Dādū echoes similar views, “In the middle of candra and sūrya, resides Rāma”.21 Thus there appears to be a marked similarity in the continuation of the idea with regard to the importance of the Susuṣmaṇā nāḍī as the only channel leading to sahaja or blissful state in the teachings of various religious leaders.

The Sādhanā of Nāḍīs
In order to attain the highest objective of life like Nirvāṇa, Mahāsukha, Sahaja, Bodhīcīita, non-dual state, Samarasa, Paramapada, of drinking of nectar, of hearing of anahada śabda, union of Śiva and Śakti, etc., as the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas, the Nāthas and the Sants call it, there is a special provision for the sādhanā of nāḍīs in their respective teachings. They believed
that the perfect control of Iḍā and Piṅgalā by various yogic practices leads to the opening of the Susuṣmaṇā, the door of salvation. The authors of the Guru Granthā recommend the control of breath in this connection: "Hold your breath in the Susuṣmaṇā, and listen to the divine music". Here is a vague reference to Prāṇāyāma. "Breathe through Piṅgalā as well as Iḍā constantly and follow this practice. By this method, breath will be held up in the Susuṣmaṇā, and the mind will rest in sahaja". At one place reverse sādhanā is recommended: "Turn the tide of your breath upward. This leads to the union of the Gaṅgas and the Yamunā and thus one bathes at the confluence Susuṣmaṇā". The idea of confluence is clarified here: "When Iḍā, Piṅgalā and Susuṣmaṇā merge at one place, it is the confluence of the Gaṅgās, the Yamunā and the Sarasvati (Trivenī). There, the mind bathes and one has a vision of the Lord. The body thus attains spirituality". The practice of Šabdā is also stressed upon: "True is the Šabdā of the perfect Lord by which the Susuṣmaṇā rests in the state of sahaja". The path of samādhi and knowledge is also indicated here. "Let the wisdom be the molasses, contemplation the mahuwa flower, and the fear of the Lord enshrined in the mind. then the Susuṣmaṇā rests in sahaja. In this state one drinks nectar". Thus we find that the Sikh religion hints at several sādhanās which lead to the confluence of the three nāḍīs and the attainment of the state of sahaja. These sādhanās include practice of Šabdā, control of breath, samādhi and holding of the breath upward. These are purely yogic practices whose references we come across in abundance from the writings of several cults and creeds which owe allegiance to yoga philosophy in its widest sense. "The importance of this nāḍī (Susuṣmaṇā) lies in the fact that, through it, by certain practices, one can put a stop to the Iḍā and the Piṅgalā nāḍīs, i.e., by consciously controlling the incessant working of these sympathetic chords, it is possible to put a stop to the metabolic activity of the body. This conscious control over them, which could only be achieved through the Susuṣmaṇā nāḍī, suspends the general wear and tear of the tissues of the vital organs, and helps in the prolongation of life. When the Iḍā and the Piṅgalā are thus devitalised by the Susuṣmaṇā nāḍī, there is said to exist no night or day for a yogi. Susuṣmaṇā is said
to devour time”.28

The same idea is expressed in the Šantras. Naropa says, “By observing day and night the patterns of concretization, non-concretization and utter non-concretization like fire melting the ice, one disentangles the pathways and straightens them out in the central pathway, active mobility is totally stopped and the instructive forces become transcending awareness. The ‘Red’ and the ‘White’ materiality-producing forces become the unitary creative potentiality. Physically the organism becomes a transfigured body, and mentally-spiritually radiates light, bliss and nothingness”.29

Similar pointed references are available in the Vajrayāna, though here typical vocabulary is used. “(In the Vajrayāna) the commingling of the two—Prajñā and Upāya—is like the commingling of water and milk, in it the duality is merged into one without distinction and is called Prajñā-Upāya. This Prajñā-Upāya is the creative principle of the universe, and everything emerges and develops from this principle. It is called Mahāsukha, because it is eternal happiness, and is known as Samantabhadrā, as it is wholly auspicious”.30 In the literature of Gorakhnātha we come across many similar references: “With the union of the sun and the moon one attains the state of Śunya and the nectar begins to ooze”.31 “The yogī listens to the šabda when the sun and the moon unite”.32 Here is mention of uttī sādhanā: “Unite the Gaṅgā in the Yamunā and the sun in the moon”.33

In the Nātha cult we find that there is profound emphasis on breath control and prāṇāyāma. By regulating the breath, the yogīs of this sect proclaim to attain the abode of Śiva. They are of the opinion that our energy is always wasted away because of the downward trend of the vital wind. This trend can be easily stopped by a process of yoga-sādhanā based on breath control. In the words of A.K. Banerji, “With the restlessness of the vital energy our mental energy also moves on restlessly. They are closely related. A yogī through the systematic practice of breath control can bring the restless movements of the vital and mental energy under his voluntary control and can even bring them to a state of perfect rest. Control of breath and control of movements of Īḍā and Piṅgalā
play a very important part in this yogic discipline. Iḍā and Piṅgalā can be unified in Susuṣmanā and thereby the whole energy may be concentrated for truth realization”.\textsuperscript{34} It is further remarked: “The vital impulses and the mental inclinations which, in normal life, are diverted towards outward and downward directions come easily under control of the spiritual urge and the disciplined will; the power of determination is, therefore, immensely increased, the internal and the external obstacles in the path of spiritual progress can easily be conquered and there is steady and rapid ascent of the psycho-vital energy in the susuṣmanā mārga towards spiritual ideal”.\textsuperscript{35} This practice of Nātha yogīs is the reverse sādhanā to which the Gurus also make reference as said above. According to Dasgupta, “The yogic practices of the Nātha Siddhas is ulṭā or repressive, firstly in the sense that it involves yogic processes which give a repressive or upward motion to the whole biological as well as psychological systems which in their ordinary nature possess a downward tendency, and, accordingly, in the sense that such yogic practices lead the Siddha to his original ultimate nature as the immortal Being is his perfect or divine body, back from the ordinary creative process of becoming”.\textsuperscript{36} There appears to be similarity in the idea of acquiring the spiritual body by this process of yoga as mentioned by the Sikh Gurus as well as the Nātha yogīs. The Guru Grantha makes a passing reference to this fact, while the Nāthas repeatedly mention it in their doctrines. In the words of the same author,\textsuperscript{37} “In the Nātha cult, however, the commingling of the sun and the moon has the deeper significance of transferring the material body of change to an immutable body of perfection. How can this be effected? It can be effected by a perfect control over the destructive force of the sun and then rejuvenating the whole body with the nectar oozing from the moon. We have seen that the sun represents the principle of destruction and the moon that of creation. The yogi tries to avoid both the extremes, and have recourse to a principle of eternal commingling of the destruction and creation. This is what is meant by the real commingling of the sun and the moon”.

Kabir also makes a reference to this ulṭī sādhanā in his teachings. “The Gaṅgā merges in the Yamunā. There is no water, but the mind bathes there”.\textsuperscript{38} Dādu also mentions of a
similar experience.\textsuperscript{39}

In this connection, we would like to mention another interesting idea associated with this sādhanā which we come across in the teachings of the sants and the Nātha yogīs. It is with regard to the wasting away of nectar. The Guru Grantha states, “Nectar is in our home. It is being stolen away. None knows this fact”.\textsuperscript{40} This idea is sufficiently highlighted in the literature of the Nāthas: “In the ordinary course, the nectar, trickling down from the moon through the Tenth Door falls in the fire of the sun and is eaten up or dried up there.”\textsuperscript{41} “The sun of twelve digits dries up the nectar of the moon of the sixteen digits”.\textsuperscript{42} Ram Khelavan Pandey’s\textsuperscript{43} views are worth quoting here in this connection. He says, “In the thousand-petalled lotus there is a centre of triangular shape. There the moon resides and the nectar always oozes from this place. The sun situated in the Mūlādhāra dries up this nectar. In this way, the nectar is always wasted away. When this process is stopped, one drinks nectar and remains young always because the wear and tear of the body comes to an end. In the methodology of yoga this nectar occupies a unique position. In the literature of the sants this is called Mahārasa. When one drinks it, all other tastes become tasteless for him. This is the only and the real elixir”. We may state here that the Guru Grantha betrays the impact of the Nātha sādhanā in this context.

One may also mention, in this context, the much practised kuṇḍalinī-yoga and the piercing of the six cakras by the yogīs whose stray reference is also available in the Sikh scripture. It is stated there, “Turn the tide of your breath with the help of prānāyāma. In this way the kuṇḍalinī will pierce the six cakras, and the mind will be fixed in sahaja. This leads to the discovery of that thing which neither comes nor goes, neither lives nor dies”.\textsuperscript{44} The awakening of the Kuṇḍalinī by certain yogic practices, including breath control and its upward movement from its station, \textit{i.e.}, the Mūlādhāra to the Sahasrāra, has been mentioned by the teachers of several yogic schools”.\textsuperscript{45}

\textit{The Final State}

The final state attained by the sādhaka after the successful
completion of nādi culture, prānāyāma, kuṇḍalinī yoga, piercing of six cakras, uḍḍī sādhanā, etc. has been described by the Gurus. In this state the path and the goal are merged together and lose their separate identity. When the aspirant experiences the final state of perfect bliss, he is then totally unconcerned with the means, because, for him the means and the goal are absorbed in each other. As is rightly mentioned in the Guru Granthā, “I have abandoned the discipline of Iḍā and Piṅgalā as well as of sun and moon, because I have merged in the light of God.”46 “There is now the constant flow of nectar with which my mind is now completely filled. I have forsaken all religious acts like fasting, pilgrimage, piety and self control. The elixir is now not wasted away. I have fixed the cork to the pitcher containing nectar. I am now in the state of sahaja”.47 Dādu also refers to this experience. “There is neither sun nor moon, neither the melody of Śabda, neither pleasure nor pain. Only the formless Lord resides there.”48 “Iḍā and Piṅgalā, surat and śabda, sun and moon have ceased to exist. It is an experience beyond description. None knows it”.49

CONCLUSION

The above discussion of the nādi-sādhanā as mentioned in the Sikh Scripture can be favourably compared with the then prevalent religious cults and creeds. The importance of the three nādis and the unique position occupied by one of them, i.e., the Susuṣmaṇā, has been universally accepted by almost all the followers of the different cults and creeds. The earliest concepts of the Mahāyāna doctrine, i.e., Śūnyatā and Karuṇā, Prajñā and Upāya and their union leading to the state of bliss, seem to have been totally forgotten by the sants. Similar appears to be the case with the terms like Lalana, Rasanā and Avadhūti. But the Gurus use Iḍā, Piṅgalā and Susuṣmaṇā and sun and moon, in their teachings, the terms popularised by the Nātha yogis. In this connection, the Sikh scripture demonstrates the impact of the Nātha cult on it. But we must bear in mind that though the Gurus do not use the distant Buddhist terms, they do show definite similarity in the attain-
ment of the goal with them, no doubt, with some changes. The Siddhas, the Täntrikas, the Nithas and the Sikh Gurus express similar experience with regard to the attainment of the state of Sahaja or drinking of nectar after the completion of their sādhanās. But there is a marked difference here. The Siddhas and the Täntrikas do not mention anywhere about God in this state of supreme bliss, but the sants including the Gurus are quite emphatic on the point that this state is that state where one has the vision of the Lord. The Nātha cult makes a reference to the abode of Śiva when it mentions about this state. It appears certain that the ideas of agnosticism as mentioned in the later forms of Buddhism were done away with by some yogic schools and the sants. In this connection, Nāthism appears to be standing between the earliest cults of Täntrism and the later creeds of the sants, thus making a connecting link between these two important religious currents. The Sikh Gurus do not rely exclusively on the Täntrikas as the Nāthas do regarding nāḍī-śādhana, prāṇāyāma, and rousing of the kuṇḍalinī śakti in order to attain the state of Sahaja. In fact, the Gurus give only passing reference to these practices in their teachings, as is quite evident from the small number of hymns which mention them. The Holy Book makes love for God and remembering His name, the supreme path for purposes of experiencing identity with Him. These yogic sādhanās are given quite a secondary position but they do betray the impact of the then prevailing yogic cults and creeds on the Sikh religion. We also come across certain references in the Guru Grantha where these practices have been condemned. It is mentioned, “By haṭha-yoga and suppression of desires the body becomes weak. By observing fasts and hard penances the mind is cleaned not. Remembering of God’s name is supreme”.50 It is further remarked, “Yogic practices like naveli bring no reward. All our actions are useless without God’s name”.51 While the impact of the practices seems to be quite prominent on the teachings of Kabir as is shown by Trigunayat52 and Ram Kumar Verma53 this impact is discernible to quite a lesser degree in the Guru Grantha. With the passage of time, the Nātha cult, which had inherited much from the Täntrikas, appears to have left some of its dogmas and shows a marked trend towards Śaivism. This cult came into contact
with the teachings of the sants, particularly, Kabir, who again abandoned the rigours of the haṭha-yoga, of course, practising some of them, and gave it a new orientation. In the Guru Grantha we discover that the impact of these yogic cults was further decreased and love for God and uttering His name as the means to attain Him occupied the foremost position.

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DIVINE MARRIAGE

THE language of the inner religion, mysticism or higher form of religion has always been symbolic. The mind cannot reach 'there' and the tongue is unable to express its mystery. It has been rightly remarked that 'they who know, do not speak' and 'they who speak, do not know'. It is, therefore, through symbols that the men of God try to provide some glimpses of the Beyond.

Type of Relationship of the Individual with God
Generally speaking, the Bhakti cult adopted four types of relationship towards the Lord. These are master-servant, friend-friend, parent-child and husband-wife relationships. Service, equality, affection and complete identity, are the respective hallmarks of these four types. It has been rightly remarked by an old sūtra that, "the devotee first serves the Lord as a servant. Then he approaches Him nearer, and loves Him as a friend. Then he rises higher and manifests parental affection for the loved one, as a father for his son. And ultimately all vestiges of remoteness between them vanish altogether. The two become one in spirit and the devotee develops all the marks of a devoted wife's love for her beloved husband. The devotee consecrates his whole being to the beloved Lord, loses himself in Him and feels His living presence everywhere".¹ In the three attitudes i.e. dāsya, sakhā and vātsalya, the highest attainment to which a mystic aspires that is, complete identification and oneness with the Lord appears to be not possible because there remains some idea of selfhood or ego in the mind of the devotee. But in the mādhurya bhāva this ego is completely eliminated and the
person becomes one with himself and one with the Reality. "The union, the desire to lose one's individuality, is the highest state of a mystic". Since love for God occupies the most prominent position in the Sikh religion as the sovereign means to attain God, and this being the only bond between the wife and her husband, the Sikh Gurus consciously bring into bold relief this mādhurya bhāva in their teachings. The Guru Granthā explains very vividly and beautifully the marriage of soul with God, and fully utilises the wealth of details available in marriage ceremonies between two partners.

**The Devotee as Wife**

In the Guru Granthā it is emphatically enjoined upon the aspirant that "all are His brides". Further it is said, "there is only one Groom, i.e. God and all creation is His bride". This idea is explained with a wealth of details in these words:

"Like a married couple enjoy the bed of the spouse". "The Sun has risen in full splendour, I have spread the bed in full faith for my Lord. My ever new Love comes to enjoy me". "...O, my father, give me in marriage to my Lord. I long for Him. I belong to Him. The Lord of the three ages enjoys His bride". "The father has given me in marriage in a far off land (Māyā). Now I do not go back to my father's home".

The above mentioned idea of God as the lover and the individual, both man and woman, as the beloved and their union contained in the Sikh scripture finds its echoes in various cults, creeds and schools of Indian philosophy. But it must be clearly emphasized here that the vocabulary and the sense of this idea used by them differs in many respects from the form and essence of the Sikh faith. In the Hindu and the Buddhist Tantras, as well as in the Nātha cult, the idea of union has been considerably highlighted, but their concepts and methods vary to a great extent. The Hindu and Buddhist Tantras, and the Nīthas use the terms śiva śakti, pragyā and upāya and idā pinglā respectively in their sādhana to attain supreme bliss by the merger of these two entities. The sāhajjiyas following the path of love and devotion, propagated the union of male and female in the form of Krishna and Rādhā. They used several episodes from the life of Krishna as depicted in the Bhāgavat Purāṇa and
other allied texts to illustrate their point. But we must bear in mind that in these cults the male and the female are considered the counterparts of these two yogic concepts as mentioned above. "Both the schools (Hindu and Buddhist Tantras) hold that the ultimate non-dual reality possesses two aspects in its fundamental nature—the negative (nivṛtti) and the positive (pravṛtti) the static and the dynamic and these two aspects of reality are represented in Hinduism by Śiva Śakti and in Buddhism by pragyā and upṣya (or śūnyatā and karuṇā). It has again been held in the Hindu Tantras that the metaphysical principles of Śiva and Śakti are manifested in this material world in the form of male and female, tāntric Buddhism also holds that the principle of pragyā and upṣya are objectified in the female and the male." It is further explained, "The world appearance as a result of dependant origination is the grand bridegroom; had he not been there and bride śūnyatā would have been dead as it were. But, on the other hand, had this beautiful bride of śūnyatā been separated for any time from the bridegroom, he would remain eternally under bondage. So the relation between śūnyatā and karuṇā is like the relation of inseparable conjugal love, the love between them is the most natural love and so it is inseparable". In the Sāhajjīya cult the idea has been stated in these words, "Sahaja as the absolute reality of the nature of pure love involves within it two factors i.e., the enjoyer and the enjoyed represented in the Nitya Vṛndāvan by Krishnā and Rādhā. These principles of the enjoyer and the enjoyed are known in the Sāhajjīya school as the Purusha and Prakṛti manifested on earth as the male and the female". From the above it can be safely concluded that the Sikh religion discards the vocabulary and the terms used by the Nāthas, the Sāhajjīyas and the Tantras. The Hindu and the Buddhist Tantras as well as the Nāthas consider the male principle as the static one and the female principle as the dynamic one. But in the Sikh religion we do not come across any such statement showing the static and dynamic aspects of Reality. In the Sāhajjīya school the wife and husband are represented as the counterparts of Rādhā and Krishnā, which show their strong inclination towards Vaiṣṇavism. The Guru Grantha rejects
this interpretation and considers every person as wife of the Lord. In this connection the Sikh view resembles much with the views expressed by various medieval saints. "Jñāneśwara speaks of God as the Lover and the devotee as the beloved. This, however, he tells us under the influence of the erotic mysticism which finds the relation between husband and wife to be near analogous to the relation of God and devotee".12 "I shall marry the only Lord".13 "All of us are the wives of the same One Lord. And for Him we decorate ourselves".14 In Christian mysticism the idea has been expressed in these words: "Nor are there found any expressions equally sweet to signify the mutual affection between the word of God and the soul, as those of bridegroom and of bride; in as much as between individuals who stand in such relations to each other all things are common, and they possess nothing separate or divided. They have one inheritance, one dwelling place, one table and they are, in fact, one flesh. If, then, mutual love is specially beneficial to a bride and bridegroom, it is not unfitting that the name of bride is given to a soul which loves".15

Thus, it appears that the Sikh Gurus reject outright certain practices and ideas associated with this concept as we find in the case of the Tantras and the Nāthas. They have discarded the yogic sadhana of these cults and creeds and recommend the path of passionate love as we find in the relation of husband and wife. The union of pragyā and upāya and of Śiva and Śakti, the static and dynamic aspects, respectively, leading to the state of mahā sukha or sahaja find similar echoes also in the Sikh scriptures where the union of the wife i.e., the soul with the husband i.e., the Lord, leads to utter bliss. In the Sikh faith we find that the Lord is also quite active with regard to the passionate entreaties of the soul. He feels the pangs of passionate separation of His beloved; listens to her and also comes to the rescue. There is warm embrace with the soul and He ravishes her.

It can be said with considerable emphasis that the concept of divine marriage available in the Guru Grantha accords well with the general framework of the sant mat. However, the Sikh Gurus describe the mystical marriage, right from the betrothal ceremony to its consummation, with all its customary
Divine Marriage

ceremonies.

Ornaments of the Bride
Before marriage the bride has to be decorated with ornaments and she wears specially made clothes. Unguents, perfumes, powders and so on are applied on the body. Similar is the case with the divine marriage. The inner spiritual marriage requires no earthly ornaments at all, but the bride must look attractive enough to engage the attention of his spouse. It is here that we find stress being laid on the cultivation of moral virtues in the Guru Granth, “The devotees who speak sweetly and are humble, enjoy the bed of the Lord”.16 Constant remembrance of the Lord is another ornament of the bride. “A woman whose jewel is pure mind, and she with every breath remembers the Lord, becomes entitled to Lord’s love”.17 Submission to the will of the Lord is another virtue, “Obeying the will of the Lord is the chief ornament of a devotee”.18 Self-surrender is yet another attraction. “A true bride must surrender her body and mind to the Lord”.19 We all know that the Sikh Masters have repeatedly emphasized the necessity of nāma and śabda. These become the choicest ornaments for every bride. The Lord hastens towards the devotee who possesses these jewels. “When she loves nāma, she becomes a true bride”.20 “Who decks herself with nāma and the fear of the Lord, reaches the abode of the Lord and always lives there”.21 “She, whose ornament is the śabda, remains in the state of sahaja with her Lord.”22

Pangs of Separation
The disturbed state of mind of the bride whose husband is away is very realistically depicted. “The wife when separated from the husband passes sleepless nights in pain. Her body withers away and she longs intensely for the Lord. She is becoming dry. But if the Lord wills, she can yet meet Him”.23 When after repeated requests and treacherous wait He does not favour her, she cries in pain: “My prayer is in wilderness, how shall I be comforted without Thee. The night is long and extremely painful. I cannot live without Thee, there is none to take care of me. I wail alone”.24 Death is about to approach her, “My bed is alone. I am in great distress. Death is here”.25 The
Lord listens to these prayers and decides to come there. But His arrival is short-lived. He comes like a guest. "When the bride longs for the Spouse, full of worship and love, He comes like a guest to meet His beloved". In the medieval devotional literature of the Hindus and the Sufis, references of this state are found in abundance. Kabir's longing is very intense. "I am burning in the fire of love, and, therefore in great distress. I do not go under the shade of the tree, so that it may also not burn down in that fire". "When will that day come, when I shall embrace Him warmly, for whom I have got this body". "The last stage of the pangs of separation is death. Kabir's body is now reduced to a mere skeleton because it is devoid of blood and flesh". "The condition of Dādu in such a state causes great anxiety and misery. Seeing His path, his hair have turned grey". The Indian Sufi literature also contains many such references: "The blade of the sword is very sharp, but the agony of separation from the Lord is extremely frightening". "He who has this pain in his heart, becomes immortal. He can never die". The mystic does not rest till his goal is achieved. P.N. Srinivasachari puts it beautifully in these words: "When the longing becomes intense hunger for the Absolute, it is an infinite hunger for the Infinite".

It is needless to emphasize here that this fire burns down all impurities of the mind, and a pure and spotless mind becomes quite fit to receive the Lord. But the bridegroom does not come alone. He brings with Him a marriage party at the bride's residence.

The Marriage Party

We come across quite vivid descriptions of the marriage party of this divine marriage in the Sikh scripture. The Lord comes with His entourage to take the bride to His place. "I marry the Eternal Being, who neither dies nor is born. The marriage party consists of holy servants of the Lord. In the company of the sants the marriage was performed". "Accompanied by the Lord's servants, the marriage party looks beautiful". "The seers, the sages and thirty three crore gods come in heavenly chariots to see the grand spectacle". "The Lord has arranged my marriage. He has come to wed me. The
wedding party consists of the angelic beings. It is wonderful".37

In the Indian marriage many relatives and friends of the bride also come to take part in the marriage. The Guru Grantha makes reference to this also. "By His grace, the Lord has come to my house. My friends have assembled to celebrate my marriage. My mind is in ecstasy to see this play".38 Here is a very peculiar reference in this connection: "Let me make my body the dye-stuff and then dye my mind. The five elements i.e. earth, water, fire, wind and ether are my friends and relatives. I must go round the fire and be imbued with the love of the Lord. O! my mates, sing the wedding song, because the Lord has come in my home".39 The reference to these five elements, of which this human frame is made up of, means complete self-surrender of the devotee to the Lord. "The bride sings the song of joy. In my home comes the Lord. My mind and body are filled with Him. The five tattvas are the marriage party. Rama has come to wed me. I am full of youth. My body is the vedī, and Brahmā reads the Vedas, I am going round the vedī, and marrying Rama. I am very fortunate. Thirty-three crore gods and eighty-eight thousand munis have come to witness the scene. I have wed the only Lord".40

The Marriage Ceremony
Now the Lord reaches the bride’s house to wed her along with the marriage party. Here again we come across the selection of the auspicious time. "The Lord comes to my house on the auspicious day. This day has been selected by a priest after consulting his books. I was overwhelmed with joy".41 The marriage can be solemnized only by the guru. "Through the guru, I was wedded".42 "I was wedded to the Lord through the guru’s śabda and my mind has accepted the truth".43 The reference to the custom of circumambulation is also there. An eloquent and detailed reference of this custom is available in the Guru Grantha. There is a mention of 'four rounds'. "In the first round the Lord sent me back to the world to perform household duties and look upon the śabda of the guru as the gospel of the Vedas, practise goodness and discard sin and dwell on the nāma of the Lord. This led to the cleaning of the mind’s impurities and the gathering of bliss. The Lord appeared to be
happy with me. In the second round the Lord united me with the true guru. I became fear-free except the fear of the Lord. Ego was also erased, I saw the vision of the all-pervading Lord and heard the divine music (anhad śabda). In the third round there was joy and detachment. The tie with the parents (world) was cut asunder and the knot with the in-laws (Lord) was strengthened. I saw the Lord and uttered His nāma. In this round there was divine attachment. In the fourth round the mind is held in sahaja. I attained the Lord. He met me spontaneously by the grace of the guru. I am now in love with the Lord. I have got my heart’s desire. The glory of nāma rings in my mind. The Lord has brought about this wedding. I am in bliss; and illumined by nāma”.44

These four rounds suggest that there are different stages of the journey to the Absolute. In the first round, the individual performs all the worldly duties and prepares himself for the love of the Lord. The Lord is pleased with his efforts and unites him with the guru in the second round. In the third round relations with parents are completely erased and the soul goes to the house of the in-laws to live there. In the fourth round the soul enjoys the fruits of marriage. The Christian mystic, Richard of St. Victor also divided the ‘steep stair way of love’, by which the contemplative ascends to union with the Absolute, into four stages. These he calls the betrothal, the marriage, the wedlock and the fruitfulness of the marriage.45

Giving of dowry by the father to the daughter was an established custom. The Sikh Gurus also use this symbol. It is said, “O father! give me the Lord’s nāma as dowry”.46

Married Life
After due performance of ceremonies, the marriage is consummated. The bride is now full of bliss and her every pore is full of nectar. “When I mount His sej (bed), I find all the seven seas (five sense organs, mind and intellect) brimful with nectar”.47 “When she meet her Spouse, the Lord, she is blessed with immense bliss”48 “All honour, greatness and joy belongs to her. She is now in possession of all miracles, perfections and the nine treasures. She lacks nothing. Her speech is sweet, she is pleasing to the Lord, and her wedded state is
eternal”.49 “She abides in her house. There is divine music. She is very fortunate”.50 “The marriage is performed with pomp and show. The five sounds ring within me”.51 “I am never widowed. I am always the bride of the Lord, and remain in sahaja.”52 “When loved by the Lord, she bathes in sahaja at the confluence of truth”.53 “When I meet the Lord, the wedding song is sung. I merge in sahaja. I cry not again”.54 Thus we find that the wedded life represents the state of sahaja, perfect peace, the attainment of all powers and of listening to the anhad śabda. The devotee becomes a part of the Great Silence. As P.N. Srinivasachari says, “Spiritual marriage is consummated in the innermost recesses of the interior castle. The enraptured soul neither sees, nor hears nor understands owing to the thrills and touches of divine union”.55

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it can be safely concluded that the concept of divine marriage is found in mysticism wherever it has been preached. The Christian, Sufi and Indian mystics have conveyed their inner experience of the unitive life through the agency of the marriage symbol. They have rightly found that human marriage affords an adequate symbol for describing the spiritual communion of the mystic with the infinite.

In the Guru Grantha this mystical communion has been described in detail with the help of poetic genius of the Gurus. Many Indian rituals and ceremonies have been utilised by them to trace the journey of the bride to the abode of her Bridegroom. She decorates herself with nāma, ethical qualities and amiable nature and inculcates deep devotion for the Lord. The long wait makes her desperate and her whole being begins to ache with the pangs of separation. Ultimately, the Lord is pleased by her sincerity and comes with His marriage party. He is well received and goes back with the bride to His Abode. There is complete joy and happiness in the married life. Thus the Guru Grantha describes this marriage in worldly terms. But, in spite of its earthly garb this marriage is purely non-worldly. As Ram Kumar Verma puts it, “In mystic marriage there is no smell of worldliness or sex but it is wholly flavoured with
spiritualism". Through the husband-wife relation symbol the dry thoughts of philosophy and spiritualism are brought back to life and lustre. By using this symbol these ideas are described in soft and sweet language.

In the married life, the bride becomes the co-sharer and co-partner of all that belongs to the Lord. Everything they hold is in common. The effort of the true wife is not to get the wealth, miraculous power and other presents from the Husband, but to seek union with Him. As is rightly said, "The true mystic experiences are not the gifts of God, but God Himself".

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HUMAN BODY

INTRODUCTION

THE body is the medium of all the activities of man, political, social, moral, spiritual and the like, and it is the agent by means of which the four aims of life, viz., dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa, are fulfilled. While various parts of this human frame, constituted of the five elements, work in perfect harmony with one another at the physical level, the mind controls and guides the physical activities and functions. This process goes on imperceptibly and without interference from any quarter. When the harmony is disturbed due to indigestion, exhaustion, cold or any other factor, a medical expert can set the system right.

The above aspect of the human body consisting of different parts working individually but coordinated and supervised by the mind, is, however, based on the physical plane. The mystics, sages and men of God of several climes and countries have, however, gone beyond this aspect of the body and have spoken of a spiritual and philosophical orientation thereof. By their sādhanā, their vision had transcended the physical notion. They might have followed different paths such as yoga, the control of breath, rousing the kūṇḍalini-śakti, japa, love, nāma, and piercing the cakras, but they regarded the human body as possessing also a spiritual aspect. By their scheme of sādhanā and discipline they attained that abode which is beyond the reach of the intellect and is called by various names like the Home of Soul, Sahaja (blissful) state, God, etc. They conceived this body as a great laboratory where they conducted their
experiments and attained supreme bliss. All this was accomplished in and through the body. For them the body was not only the instrument for the satisfaction of the physical needs, but also an agent for spiritual experiment and experience. Hence, we come across several emphatic statements of this grand concept of human body both in the Guru Grantha and in the basic texts of other earlier and later cults and creeds.

The Body as the abode of God
The human body is made by God and He Himself resides in it. It is the shrine where the Lord lives. The Guru Grantha asserts: “This body is Lord’s temple and the jewels, rubies, pearls and such like precious things are found there”. “Truth lies within the human body”. “Within the body is the most beautiful seat (of the Lord)”. “Within us is the real thing, nothing is outside”. “In the fortress of the body lives the Infinite Lord. He is the Enjoyer and the Relisher”. The body, being the seat of the Lord’s Throne, is also the fountain of nectar; “Within the body is the pool of nectar, but the people of the world, for the world, and by the world, do not know its taste. They are like the deer who are ignorant of their musk and move about here and there”. “In the fortress of the body is the nectar. We get it when we serve the true guru. Thus, we enjoy the vision of the bliss-giving Lord”. “When one is imbued with love for God, one can drink nectar”. The body is also the repository of nāma (‘spiritual essence’): “When one searches one’s body and mind, one finds nāma. Thus, the mind becomes steadfast and its wandering ceases”. “The Lord’s nāma is a balm. When applied, it removes pain. Our afflictions and woes depart immediately. Find the balm in the body”. From the above passages it would appear that the Sikh Gurus were convinced that this human body is a mine of priceless spiritual gems and that therein one could have a glimpse of the Lord, taste nectar and find nāma.

Similar references are to be found also in Tāntric literature and the texts ascribed to yogis and the Sants. The Hevajra-sastra maintains: “The truth is within the body and arises out of it”. It is further mentioned in another text: “The human body is the Brahmapura, the city of Brahman. Īśvara himself enters
into the universe as jīva”\textsuperscript{12}. Dādu echoes similar views: “Some run to Dvārakā, some to Benaras and some to Mathurā but the Lord is residing within the body. Near is the venerable One, God is within the body. O, Dādu. all are leaving him aside, and all are offering their worship outside”.\textsuperscript{13} Kabir’s experience is also identical. It is expressed in these words: “In the lake of the body there is a lotus without parallel, and on it resides the Supreme Being of profound lustre. Of Him there is neither sign nor form”.\textsuperscript{14} The Ratnasāra refers to the above-mentioned ideas in a different style and language in these words:

If one realizes the truth of the body, one will be able to realize the truth of the universe. The realization of the truth of the body leads to the realization of the truth of the Self, and the truth of the Self is the truth of Vrindāvana. All truth of Krishna and Rādhā is to be known from the body.\textsuperscript{15}

The Guru Grantha sums up the experience of the Gurus which they realized in the body in a symbolic language: “There one hears the anāhata-nāda and the melody of the śabda. One views all lands, spheres and the universe. The scene is so grand and awe-inspiring that one is completely wonder-struck. The Lord sits there in His majestic, kingly attire on the throne. The mind is absorbed in the Mind. The inverted lotus is filled with nectar and the mind comes to rest. At this stage ajapa-japa is continued and one is merged in the Primeval Lord”.\textsuperscript{16} It is instructive that the views of the Sikh Gurus are fully in consonance with those of the authors of several cults referred to above.

*Microcosm and Macrocosm*

The human body is not only the seat of the Lord or the pool of nectar or the treasure of nāma; it contains in itself the whole universe in minute form. All objects around and beyond us can be found within this body. The gods, sacred places, rivers, cities, celestial beings, mountains, and the like are located in this human frame. The yogī, by the power and practice of yoga, and the mystic, by the force of his intuition, can comprehend the world of name and form within himself. This is stated in a symbolic language in the Guru Grantha in these words: “In
the body are the cities, mansions, forts and bazars".17 "Within the Home is the earth, the bull and the under-worlds".18 "The body has the fear and love of the Lord. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, the three gods, also reside in the body".19 "The guru has shown me sixty-eight pilgrim stations. I bathe within".20 "Within the body are the nine regions of the earth, towns, bazars and shops. Here are nine treasures of nāma. When one reflects on the śabda of the guru, one gets light. Here the Lord weighs our merits and He Himself is the Weigher".21

The idea of the body as the microcosm of the universe is an old Indian philosophical concept, but it has been elaborated by the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas and the Sants. The yogis of different cults have even located the seats of different gods in the different regions of the body. The Buddhist and the Hindu Sahajiyas, have expressed similar views. While discouraging pilgrimages, Saraha says: "In the body is the Ganges and the Yamunā, here is the mouth of the Ganges, here Prayāga and Benaras, here are the sun and moon, here are the sacred places. I have not seen a place of pilgrimage and an abode of bliss like my body".22 "The famous principle of the Tantras is that whatever is in the universe is in the body".23 "As for the first principle, the belief of the Tāntrikas is that the ultimate truth is not an abstract principle transcending the universe, but is immanent in it, and that the human body is not merely a thing in the universe, but is an epitome of the universe—a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm. There is, therefore, nothing in the universe which is not there in the human body".24 The Gorakhabāṇṭ also speaks in the same strain: "My coming in and going out has ceased. I have discovered the universe in the body, and attained all supernatural powers. Eighty-four lac species are within this body. After subduing all evil desires, one reaches the Tenth Door which is locked. It can be opened with the key of Kuṇḍalinī. All gods, temples and pilgrim stations are located in the body. I have attained the eternal Lord in Sahaja way. Only the rare are able to conquer this fort".25 It is further remarked in the same text: "Dive deep into this body because everything is contained therein. The sword which can kill all the five demons (passion, anger, greed, attachment and ego) is also in this body. Use this sword and
slaughter your enemies”. According to the Śiva-Saṁhitā, “In this human body are seven continents, Sumeru, rivers, oceans, mountains, regions, ṭris, munts, nakṣatras, graha-
maṇḍalas, and pilgrim stations”. It appears that the Sants also imbibed the above-mentioned idea together with its symbolic language from the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas and the Sahajiyas. Dādu says:

In the body are located the One Immutable, the sky, the earth, air, light, sun, moon, divine music, three worlds, fourteen regions, and the whole universe.

Elsewhere, this experience is stated in a detailed manner: “Within the body is the sky, within it is the earth; within the body are the four Vedas, within it lies the mystery; within the body there is repeated birth, within it is the beginning and the end; within the body is God. Within the body are the seven seas, within the body is the unknown Lord, within it is the water of the rivers, within the body is the truth profound, within the body plays the vital force, within it is nirvāṇa, within it pours the incessant flow (of nectar); in the body are the arts, in it is One Being, in it is the flow of love, and in it the company of the Lord; in it blooms the lotus and resides the bee, in it is the manifestation, in it resides the Seer”. The account of Sundar Dass is more detailed. He says: In the body are Viṣṇu, Maheśa, Brahmī and other gods and sage Nārada; in it are Indra and Kubera; in it is the mount Sumeru; within the body are the sun and the moon, the seven seas, nine lacs of stars, the flow of the Godāvari and the Ganges; in it is the Enjoym and the worldly bliss and also the Gorakh yogīs; in it is the assembly of the Siddhas, in it resides the Soul in her loneliness; within the body are Mathurā and Benaras, in it are the householder and the ascetic; in it the bathing of the tīrthas; within the body are all dancing and singing and the playing on the flute; in it is the red powder of the spring; in it the husband and wife; within it are the heavens and the nether worlds; in it the decay of time, in it the beings are living for ages and in it they drink nectar to be immortal. When the mystery of the body is known, death and decay will not befall any person. This mystery can never be
fathomed without the help of the right preceptor".30

It is quite safe to state that the concept of body as the epitome of the universe, though of quite earlier origin, was given wide currency in their teachings by the Siddhas and those who followed them. This conception continued with the Tāntrikas, the Nātha yogīs and the Sants with varying degrees of emphasis. Some, like Sunder Dass, Dādu and Saraha, have given us extensive accounts in their doctrines while others like the Sikh Gurus were satisfied with brief accounts. Whatever the case may be, it is interesting to note that the leaders of the different cults and creeds whose ideas we have mentioned above derive their inspiration and influence from the Hindu ethos or from the Vaiṣṇava doctrines. This is quite evident from the names of places like Kāśī, Prayāga, etc., and the names of rivers like the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā which are sacred to the Hindus. There is no mention of any Buddhist sacred place. As Dharma Vir Bharati maintains,

It definitely appears that the Siddhas, being influenced by the Hindu traditions, have located Prayāga and Vārāṇasī in the body, because they have not mentioned any Buddhist pilgrim stations (like Śāranātha, Kuśinagara etc.). These stations are sacred for the Hindus and not for the Buddhists. Similar is the case with the Ganges and the Yamunā. The Sants were also influenced by this Vaiṣṇava current and they mentioned sixty-eight pilgrim stations in their songs and hymns.31

*The Body as the only means*

We have noted above that Truth lies within the body, along with all the worldly and heavenly objects in their minute form. Therefore, the body becomes the only vehicle for the attainment of that Truth. The search is to be directed within. The body is to be churned to discover that pure gem. External means have to be completely discarded. In fact, they are of no avail. The Sikh Gurus emphatically declare in the *Guru Granthā* :

The path which is so difficult lies in your body. I cling to Him within my Home".32 “I have churned the sea of my
body and found the most precious jewel”.33 “By the instructions of the guru I searched the town of my body and found the nāma therein”.34

A few parallel references may be cited here, in this connection, from the Tāntrik literature. S.B. Dasgupta writes: “The second principle points out that the body, according to the Tantra yogīs, is not only the abode of Truth, but is also the best medium for realizing the Truth”.35 A similar view is expressed in the Nātha cult in these words: “This phenomenally infinite and eternal cosmic order is realizable in the obviously finite and transient body, the macrocosm is realizable in the microcosm. When the yogic vision is attained, the individual feels himself a viśvarūpa (cosmic personality) and sees all the worlds and all orders of phenomenal realities as comprehended within this all-pervading existence and as illumined by his universal consciousness”.36

Dādu echoes similar views: “In the temple of my body I shall perform my prayers—none else has access there; there shall I count the beads made of the pearl of the mind, and then my Lord will be pleased. My bath is in the stream of my heart, I wet my hands there”.37 We find here that the ceremonial aspect of religion, as emphasized by the Brāhmaṇic religion, is completely discarded. The Siddhas, the Nātha Yogīs and the Sants believed in kāya-sādhanā, and, therefore, their whole attention was fixed on the human body. Moreover, they were the staunch votaries of practical religion and had nothing to do with its outward forms. The Sikh Gurus continued these ideas in their faith and have brought before us the grand majesty of the human body.

*The body and the two opposite forces*

The Sikh Gurus have candidly mentioned that this body enshrines within it nāma, truth and the universe in its minute form. Because truth is within the body, it is through this body only that one is able to discover that truth. But the Gurus were quite conscious of the fact that there are opposite forces like falsehood and evil tendencies in the body also. The body is the interplay of several desires, both good and bad. The
Sikh scripture maintains: “Within the body are virtues and vices, the two brothers”.\(^{38}\) “Within you are God and mayā. They permeate you through and through”.\(^{39}\) The fortress of the body is closed by two doors, falsehood and ignorance. These doors can be opened by the Šabda of the guru”.\(^{40}\) “In the house of my body there are ten doors. Five thieves (demons) always break in and take away all virtues and riches. But it is also made of gold and is decked with jewels. When wisdom is awakened, we attain His essence”.\(^{41}\) The Sacred Book exhorts us to rise above these two opposite forces in order to attain bliss: “When one rises above woe and virtue, one comes back Home and attains the state of Sahaja”.\(^{42}\) Thus, the Grantha provides us with a balanced and rational view of the human body.

**The Tenth door (Daśama-dvāra)**

It is generally believed by the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas, the Nāthas, the Sahajjīyas and others that the Tenth door is situated somewhere in the body from where issues forth nectar. It is the abode of Sahaja, where the devotee listens to the Divine melody. It is the ‘Home of the Lord’. When one reaches this place, one is emancipated, bathes in the ocean of love of the Lord and comes face to face with His benign presence. Here birth and death cease, and the coming in and going out stop. It is the state of perfect knowledge and illumination.

This Tenth door is unmanifest, while the remaining nine doors of the body, namely the two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth, and the two evacuation organs, are manifest. The individual discharges all his worldly duties through these nine doors. These are the openings for the outer world. But the devotee of the Lord tries to open the Tenth door. The Guru Grantha maintains: “When the Tenth door is opened, we have a vision of the Lord”.\(^{43}\) “When the nine doors are closed, and one sits in the Tenth door, one is in bliss”.\(^{44}\) But the question arises as to where this Tenth door is situated? Here, the Grantha indicates the location of the Tenth door and also integrates the two paths namely yoga and devotion: “When one imbued with love abides first in the twelve-petalled lotus of the heart and then holds his breath in the sixteen-petalled (lotus), sky
(gagana), the Tenth door, one gets bliss”.45 (Here the terms sky, gagana and the Tenth door refer to the same place). There are also other vague references contained in the Guru Granthā about it. “Man is the highest creation. Above him is the head and there is the window (Tenth door) of the self”.46 “High above is the sky, (gagana), the Tenth door, there the soul resides; there also resides the Unfathomable Guru, the Lord”.47 “I have attuned my mind to the Basic door. In the east rises the sun, and the merudanḍa (susūṣmaṇa) reaches the brain; in the west is the stone (ignorance), above it there is a window, and above it is the Tenth door. There one has a glimpse of the Infinite and the Boundless Lord”.48 Here the idea is expressed in a beautiful and appropriate simile: “The gate of salvation (Tenth door) is too narrow, it is like the tenth part of a mustard seed, but the mind is swollen like an elephant”.49

It appears that the reference to the twelve and sixteen petalled lotuses in the Guru Granthā is a continuation of the ideas contained in the Tantric literature. Here we find that the twelve-petalled lotus and sixteen-petalled lotus refer to the Anāhata and the Viśuddha cakras respectively. “Anāhata-cakra is a deep red lotus of twelve petals, situated above the last and in the region of the heart, which is to be distinguished from the heart-lotus of eight petals facing upwards, where the spoken deity is meditated upon.”.50 “Next above the naval lotus (Nābhi-padma) is the Anāhata, in the region of the heart, which is red like a bandhuka flower, and is so-called because it is in this place that the munis or sages hear that sound (Anāhataśabda) which comes without the striking of any two things together, or the sound of the Śabda-Brahman...... Here are: Isā, the overlord of the first three cakras; the šakti kākini, garlanded with human bones, whose heart is softened by the drinking of nectar.”.51 About the sixteen-petalled lotus it is stated: “Viśuddha-cakra, or Bhārattisthāna, abode of the Devī of Speech, is above the last and the lowest end of the throat. It has sixteen petals... .”52 John Woodroffe, the author of the Serpent Power, provides us with the details of this cakra in these words: “At the spinal centre of this region, at the base of the throat is the Viśuddha-cakra with sixteen petals... . This
cakra is so called because the Jiva is made pure by seeing the ‘Abode’. Here is the centre of the white circular Ākāśa or Ether-tattva, the bija of which is Haṃsa. Ākāśa is dressed in white, and mounted on a white elephant”.\(^{53}\) We find here that the Guru Grantha restricts itself to mentioning only the two lotuses and so discards the association of goddesses and the powers with them along with some of the yogic elements.

S.B. Dasgupta gives a systematic account of the location of the Tenth door in these words: “It is held in the practical yoga that the quintessence of the visible is distilled in the form of Soma or nectar (amṛta), and is deposited in the moon, the Sahasrāra. There is a curved duct from the moon below the Sahasrāra up to the hollow of the palatal region; it is known in the yoga physiology as Śaṅkhini. This is the baṅka-nāla (i.e., the curved duct) frequently mentioned in the vernaculars through which the Mahārāsa (i.e., Somarasa) passes. This curved duct Śaṅkhini is described in the Gorakha-vijaya as the serpent with mouths at both ends. The mouth of this Śaṅkhini, through which the Soma or Amṛta passes down from the moon is called the Daśama-dvāra or the Tenth door of the body as distinguished from the other nine ordinary doors”.\(^{54}\) The Grantha also refers to the baṅka-nāla in these words: “He is sitting in his own Homa and the baṅka-nāla looks very beautiful”.\(^{55}\) The Gorakh-bāṇi gives us many details about the Tenth door or the Brahmaramdhr, and the nectar which flows out of it in these words: “One must capture the fort situated within the body, and thus live eternally. Nine ditches (nine doors—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth and two evacuation organs) do not allow us to reach the fort. It is immensely difficult to conquer it. It is situated on a very high place surrounded by hills. The water (nectar) which reaches all parts of the fort is located at a very safe place. It is called trikuṭi or brahmarandhra from which flows the nectar. Our abode is neither here nor there, but in the Sahaja-śūnya which lies in the middle of the trikuṭi”.\(^{56}\) It is further mentioned in the same text: “I have reached the Tenth door or the Brahmaramdhr. I have attained the stage of liberation”.\(^{57}\)

In fact, the Guru Grantha refers to yogic vocabulary as well as yogic sādhanā, but not in the same systematic and methodical
manner in which they occur in the writings of the Tāntrikas and the Nāthas. The doctrines of the latter are yogic in form, content and spirit, but the śādhanā contained in the former is permeated with divine love for the Lord, though references to yogic practices are found occasionally at certain places. This is the case also with several Sants who preceded and followed the Sikh Gurus.

The problem for the aspirant is how to reach the Tenth door, drink nectar there and see the Lord. The Guru Grantha indicates some ways in this connection: "After closing the nine doors, one enters the Tenth door and has a vision of the Lord. There one listens to the Anāhada-śabda".58 "Close the nine doors of the body and open the Tenth door, this is the essence of wisdom".59 Besides this method, other ways are also suggested. "When the ego is erased, the Tenth door is opened".60 "He is emancipated who has controlled his mind. He then abides in the Tenth door and knows the knowledge of the three worlds".61 There are clear references to the yogic practices. "Know the quintessence of reality by holding the breath in the sky gagana-sahasrāra of the Tenth door".62 "The body is made up of 72 principal nerves. There is only one door in it, i.e., the Tenth door. The man wanders in the world through the nine doors. The yogi whose roaming has come to an end sucks in air and holds it in the gagana or the Tenth door and is then blessed with the nine treasures of the Self".63 Surely, the idea here is to withdraw our consciousness of the world which we gain through these nine doors and concentrate it within. The outward journey is to end, and one goes within. That is the Homeward march. For this purpose the holding of the breath is vaguely recommended here.

CONCLUSION

From the above account it may be noted that the concept of the human body as the abode of truth mentioned in the Guru Granthu accords well with the concept mentioned in the literature of the Siddhas, the Nāthas and the Sants. The majesty of the human body has been rightly raised to a very high position by repeatedly emphasizing that it is the only instrument
through which one meets the Lord. It is the only repository of nectar, of bliss, of effulgence and of the An̄hata-sabda. Besides this, the yogi visualises the whole of Brahmāṇḍa in his own body. In this connection, we have seen that the Sikh Gurus do not elaborate this aspect as we find it discussed in detail in the literature of the Siddhas, the Nāthas and some Sants. The gurus were quite conscious of the fact that this body is also the source of māyā, ignorance and worldly attachments, which ought to be removed in order to attain supreme bliss. It appears that the ideas about the nine manifest doors and the unmanifest Tenth door which we come across in the teachings of several yogis were incorporated by the Sikh Gurus in their teachings. The sādhana for closing the nine doors and the opening of the Tenth door finds frequent reference in the Guru Granthā. Here the impact of the yogic practices is clearly discernible. It is true that the Gurus talk about the concept of the human body in the general framework of the practices and principles as adumbrated by the yogis and the siddhas of several creeds, though certain aspects thereof are not stressed. While discussing the location of sacred place and rivers in the human body, the Sikh religion appears to be more influenced by Vaiṣṇavism as compared to the several cults of the yogis mentioned above. There are marked similarities with regard to the Tenth door, its location, flow of nectar, and the hearing of the Anāhada-sabda with the Nāthas and the Tāntrikas. The vision of the Lord at this place mentioned by the gurus find similar echoes with other Sants. The Siddhas and the Tāntrikas, the inheritors of the Buddhist tradition of atheism, speak little about the Lord in their teachings. The Nāthas, no doubt, refer to the Lord in their experience, but their concept of the Lord is different from that of the Sants including the Gurus. Thus we find that the Sikh Masters inherited several points with regard to the concept, of the human body from the earlier teachers such as the Sants, the Nāthas and the Siddhas, but the authors of the Granthā made some change in emphasis here and there. The above account brings also into bold relief the contribution made by the Gurus to the dimensions of this concept.
References

1. The Guru Grantha, pp. 17, 149, 309.
2. Ibid., pp. 27, 120.
3. Ibid., pp. 126, 343.
4. Ibid., p. 425.
5. Ibid., p. 517.
6. Ibid., p. 644.
7. Ibid., p. 800.
8. Ibid., p. 1046.
9. Ibid., p. 110.
10. Ibid., p. 259.
11. Hevajra-tantra, Manuscript, p. 36 (a).
17. Ibid., p. 57, 955.
18. Ibid., p. 126.
19. Ibid., p. 754.
20. Ibid., pp. 754, 973.
21. Ibid., p. 754.
26. Ibid., p. 75.
27. Śivasāṁhitā, Part II, pp. 1-2.
29. Ibid., pp. 601-2.
33. Ibid., pp. 442, 449.
34. Ibid., p. 732.
39. Ibid., pp. 343, 1065.
40. Ibid., p. 514.
41. Ibid., p. 833.
42. Ibid., p. 126.
43. Ibid., pp. 34, 80, 974.
44. Ibid., pp. 328, 1040.
45. Ibid., p. 970.
46. Ibid., pp. 976.
47. Ibid., p. 982.
48. Ibid., p. 1095.
49. Ibid., pp. 509, 1362.
52. John Woodroffe, Introduction to the Tantra Shastra, p. 53.
55. Ibid., p. 452.
58. Ibid., p. 110, 124.
59. Ibid., p. 152, 1123.
60. Ibid., p. 124.
61. Ibid., p. 490.
62. Ibid., p. 355.
63. Ibid., p. 477.
CONCLUSION

BEFORE we conclude our remarks about the nature of the Sikh faith and what it acquired by transmission from the previous cults, it will be profitable to note what other scholars have to say on the legacy of this faith. McLeod¹ has tried to sum up their views thus:

1. For the strictly orthodox Sikhs the faith can be regarded as nothing less than the product of the direct revelation from God (Gobind Singh Mansukhani, *The Quintessence of Sikhism*, 1958, p. 1, Amritsar).

2. Many Hindu commentators, stressing the elements common to Hindu and Sikh traditions, have maintained that Sikhism is properly regarded merely as one of the many Hindu reform movements which have appeared from time to time in Indian history (Radhakrishnan, *The Legacy of India*, p. 59).

3. In like manner there have been Muslim claims, based upon such doctrines as the oneness of God and the brotherhood of believers, to the effect that Sikhism is an offshoot of Islam (Abdul Quadir, *The Legacy of India*, p. 291).

4. Finally, there is the interpretation, popular in western text books, that Sikhism may be understood, as the product of a consciously eclectic intention, an attempt to fuse Hindu and Muslim beliefs within a single irenic system.
Conclusion

The view that Sikhism emerged as a bridge between Islam and Hinduism seems to be quite popular with some Indian scholars also. "It is an explicit attempt to unify the Hindus and the Muslims, and certainly needed in synthesising within his (Guru Nanak) own teachings, the essential concepts of Hinduism and Islam."2 "In his teachings Hinduism and Islam reached a point of concordance nowhere else realized".3 "Sikhism was born out of wedlock between Hinduism and Islam".4 Writers like R.C. Majumdar5 and Tara Chand6 also hold similar opinions. Dorothy Field expresses her views somewhat differently, though, no doubt, within the general framework of Hinduism and Islam. She7 writes, "It is a pure, lofty monotheism, which sprang out of an attempt to reform and to simplify Mohammadanism and Hinduism, and which, though failing in this attempt, succeeded in binding together, like Judaism of old, a whole race in a new bond of religious zeal." Giving his discordant note about the impact of Islam and Hinduism on the Sikh religion J.S. Grewal maintains,8 "In the teachings of Guru Nanak, there is no attempt of reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam, both are set aside in order to get at the source of religion itself." Aziz Ahmad9 is of the opinion that Guru Nanak failed to fuse Hindu and Muslim beliefs and, in fact, psychological resistance to Islam was inherent in Sikhism.

It seems that scholars who advocate fusion or synthesis theory about the Sikh faith use terms like Hindu religion and Islam in a very loose manner, more particularly Hinduism. There is no Hindu religion in the accepted sense of the term, but a mass of principles and practices, philosophies and dogmas

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It must be mentioned here that the pure teachings of the Gurus assume a sharp and critical attitude towards several cardinal principles of Hinduism. The priesthood, the caste system, the Vedas, belief in several gods and goddesses etc.

In the same way the Gurus did not believe in many practices and principles of Islam. Islam enjoins five prayers for its followers, but the Gurus believed that prayer can be at any time. The concept of the day of resurrection and creation according to Islam has not been accepted by Guru Nanak. Unlike the Muslims, the Gurus were emphatic on the point that there was no advisor of the Lord, no lieutenant, son or relation of God.
many of which are contradictory to one another. As Macnicol has rightly observed,

The question what is Hinduism is one which no one is likely ever to be able to give a simple or quite intelligent answer. It has no creed, summing up authoritatively its tenents. It has no historical personality as its centre where life dates its beginning that can be discussed. It may be described rather as an encyclopaedia of religions, a vast conglomeration, comprehensive in the widest sense, an amalgam of often contradictory beliefs and practices, held together in one by certain powerful ideas and by a system of social regulations.10

Surely the Sikh Gurus did not want to fuse this Hindu religion with Islam also having many such things in it. McLeod holds the opinion that Sikhism emerged within the Indian religious milieu, but seemed to have been more influenced by the teachings of the nirguna bhaktas. He11 writes, “An analysis of the teachings of Nanak will demonstrate that the essential components of this thought were already current in the Indian society of the period. Nanak taught a doctrine of salvation through the divine Name. Others were already preaching this doctrine, and a comparison of their beliefs with those of the earlier Sikh community plainly shows that Nanak taught from within a tradition (Nirguna Sanjpradaya) which had already developed a measure of definition”. Tracing the history of the nirguna school, Barthwal goes deeper into the past and maintains, “The nirguna school is the result of eclecticism. The process that culminated in the formation of this nirguna-panth did not last only for some years or even for a lifetime, but was the work of a process incessantly going on for ages together. The process begins, on the one hand, more than two and a half thousand years back, that is, even anterior to the fourth century B.C. in the Aikantic Dharma or the religion of simple minded devotion, and, on the other in Buddhism not among the less remote.

Monistic pantheism and the love of a personal God coming from the first current (i.e. from Aikantaka Dharma) and the
‘Śabda-yoga’, with the idea of complete surrender to the Guru, and the middle course, coming from the second (i.e. from Buddhism) entered the Nirguna school through Rama Nanda’.\textsuperscript{12}

Some writers hold the opinion that the Sikh religion has some vague links with yogic cults which preceded it. According to G.S. Talib,\textsuperscript{13} “Reverting to the philosophical vocabulary, which is Sanskrit-based though not necessarily cast in the purist Sanskrit forms, it came to Guru Nanak, as to the devotional poets in the medieval centuries, as shaped and moulded by the long philosophical tradition of the period around the tenth century when Hinduism took a new stride along the road to liberalisation, though this new step itself lapsed into a rigid orthodoxy and a decadent, esoteric philosophy. While the Guru made a powerful attack on this and other decadent traditions, the terminology which it had made current had perforce to be employed. In the yoga traditions of medieval times certain terms in the spiritual context such as Guru, Śabda, Nāma, Jivan mukta, and others had acquired a fresh, deeper orientation. Certain new terms like Gurumukh, Sikh, (Ṣījya) Bānī, Gorakh, Śiva Śakti, Nirañjana, had been made current. These were derived from Sanskrit sources, but their new usage was in freshly contemplated contexts had acquired new connotation. Such vocabulary was taken by the Guru, and given new spiritual content in place of the esoteric, obscurantist and sectarian meaning which had been attached to them in the yoga tradition”. N.R. Ray\textsuperscript{14} also writes in the same strain,

Indeed a comparative study of the terms, phrases, imageries and symbols, and even the language itself of the Sants and Sadhus of the medieval period show a remarkable similarity between theirs, on the one hand and those of the Sahajayani Buddhists, and the Nāthapanthīs, for instance, on the other.

A comparative and chronological survey of various concepts discussed in the previous chapters shows that the Sikh religion seems to be influenced by four main currents—offshoots of the Mahāyāna religion which flourished after the eighth century, the Nāthas—the Vaiṣṇavas and the Sants and the sufis. It is quite true that some of the ideas and doctrines can be easily traced
back from the Upaniṣads also. No doubt, Islam appears to have some marginal effect on the Sikh thought. As the Sikh masters were great synthesesers, so they extracted from these currents what was needed, useful and met the demands of time. As Barthwail puts it,

The practice of yoga with its ajapa japa, its esoteric anatomy borrowed from the tantras, its use of breath and various other aspects, the monism of Šankarācārya, the doctrine of grace, the sensuous intensity of passion of devotion illustrated by tantricism without bringing actual perverse sense life into play, which is said to be the bane of the tántric, practice, have all been synthesised into one to form a harmonious whole.

By their own experience the Gurus transformed this heritage in one complete whole and dyed their teachings with love for God. With the help of texture of devotion to God they weave different ideas, thoughts and practices which at once gives the impression of its being a new religion. This heritage was sufficiently enlarged, ennobled and enriched by the Gurus. By doing this the Masters always kept their fingers on the spiritual pulse of the common man. That is why the two most outstanding and unique characteristics of this religion as contained in the Grantha—its utter simplicity and the music of the hymns spontaneously attract a devotee both Hindu and Muslim towards it.

The analysis reveals that as far as the concept of God in His impersonal aspect is concerned, the Sikh faith betrays its strong links with the upaniṣadic doctrines as well the theistic and mystical creeds which followed later on. The doctrine ‘not this’ ‘not this’ as described in some upaniṣadic texts also finds mention in the Grantha. Some yogic or Buddhist terms like śūnya, śabda, sahaja, nirañjaṇa etc. are also stated here, not in their original connotation, but soaked with God’s love. While outpouring their inner spiritual experience about nirguṇa Brahman the Gurus became speechless, and only utter the Most Wonderful.

The saṅguṇa aspect of God in the Vaiṣṇava garb has also been repeatedly mentioned at various places in the Grantha. It is
true that this aspect of God with His self diversifying nature was also popularised by some leaders of the Mahāyāna* religion as well as the Nātha yogis but the Sikh Gurus draw heavily from the deities and devotees of Vaiṣṇavism and speak nothing about the gods and deities of Buddhism. The term God of nirvāṇa need not mislead us, because here it is not used in the original Buddhist meanings, but as the God of the Bhakti cult.

The Grantha rightly describes the sāguna Brahman in the most eulogistic and devotional expression. The qualities of His love, grace and mercy make Him at once friendly, loveable and affectionate to the devotees. His fear aspect also helps in the spiritual progress of the aspirant and this seems to have been taken from Islam where fear is given a very important place. Love and fear aspects of God run side by side in the Grantha.

*Some scholars hold the opinion that the nirguna Brahman is another form of Buddha.

1. In the Mahāyāna Buddha had two forms. One is without form, nirākhya, embodiment of Dharma; He never comes in this world. He is neither born; nor preaches, nor attains the state of parinirvāṇa. The second form is His own creation. It is all His play. It was born out of the womb of Mahāyāna. He practised austerities, gained wisdom and turned the wheel of law. He got parinirvāṇa, preached his doctrine of Dharma for the benefit of all. It means in one form he was without attributes and without form and in the second with attributes and with form. (Malvika, Vidyavati, p. 116)

2. Buddha is omnipresent, and all knower. I have worshipped His true nāma.

(Suttanipata, Hindi, Translation, p. 239)

3. We can understand better if Rāma of the nirguna saṁpradāya is compared to the Tathāgata. Rāma who resides in the heart is not the Rāma with bow and arrow or the killer of Rāvaṇa, but the Tathāgata. He has three forms and is immanent everywhere.

(Shanti Bhikshu, Mahāyāna, p. 131. Calcutta).

4. Vithal, the God of Namadeva is omnipresent, knows all, highest of the high, lord of all, indescribable and the true Guru. Such a God entered the teachings of Namadeva through the channels of the Siddhas and the Nāthas. Scholars hold the opinion that Vithal is another form of Buddha.

(Anant Ramchander Kulkarni, Marathi Dhampada, p. 1)
Here the devotees stand in awe before the wonderful Lord and also are passionately attached towards Him for His benevolent qualities. At various places in the Granthā both the aspects—nirguṇa and saguṇa are merged in one showing that Reality is indivisible.

The idea that God has created the whole world and He manifests Himself in His creation contained in the Granthā was also popularised by many cults of popular Hinduism. The immanence of God everywhere and in all the species of creation has been described in a most thorough, detailed and exhaustive manner by the Gurus which we hardly find in any religious literature. The Gurus were wholly imbued with the power of God, and therefore, they saw Him at all places, in all creation and everywhere.

Many hymns in the Granthā sing about the will of God or the divine law within the sphere of which the whole creation moves and performs its duties. Nothing is beyond that will. The Islamic conception of the will of God as well as that of the sants seems to have influenced the Gurus in this respect. Submission to His will has been emphatically mentioned to gain happiness here as well as hereafter.

The Sikh faith, no doubt, is mainly indebted to various Hindu religious currents in stating about God and His qualities. But Islamic impact can also be noted at a few places. The Sikh Gurus soak His qualities in the devotional idiom and bring Him from the high skies nearer to the ordinary man who can easily invoke His blessings and seek His help. The abstruse God was thus socialised and brought down to the doors of all. But the Gurus were quite aware of the dangers of idolatry, and that is why, they again and again revert to the qualitiless metaphysical Brahman.

As far as the term soul is concerned, its nature can be classified broadly in two ways that is the upaniṣadic where it is regarded as part of God with the same qualities though in minute form, and the Buddhist, where the mind freed from the process of thought constructions becomes the soul. In this connection it may be mentioned that the Sikh Masters do not subscribe to the Buddhist belief, no doubt, they have used many a time the term haṁsa in place of soul taken from the
Mahāyāna doctrines and some yogic schools. The scripture’s view agrees well with the Upaniṣadic as well theistic doctrines about the nature of soul, its qualities, its relation with God, the state of release, and of complete union or fellowship with God in the celestial regions. The symbols of a drop of water and ocean and that of ray and sun are repeatedly mentioned here. The abode of soul i.e. beyond trikuti and the state of bliss are similar in the teachings of Gorakh and the Grantha. Here we find that the Mahāyāna teachings and the Tāntric doctrines with regard to this concept have little impact on the Sikh principles, while it is discussed in the general framework of the Upaniṣadic thought and many popular Hindu theistic currents.

Another concept, i.e. Śabda popularised by the Tāntric yogīs found its way in the Sikh scripture through the Nātha cult. The common meanings of this term among the Siddhas, the Nāthas and the Sikh Gurus are—guru’s instructions, cosmic vibration, supreme reality, eternal power and as a means to subdue and still the mind. Anhada Śabda in the sense of the divine music, which can be heard with the divine ear, when the mind is free from all worldly attachments and its ego is extinguished, has also been referred to in the principles and doctrines of the yogīs, the Nāthas, the Sants and the Gurus. We also come across the music of various symphonies and ultimately of five symphonies here. The music of kinguri, of Vinā and the roaring of Śabda at some spiritual level are similar in their doctrines. After listening to this music one enjoys bliss and tears away the veil of māyā.

As far as the practice of means to hear this music are concerned the Gurus refer to several methods like closing of nine doors, contemplation on the instructions of the guru, samādhi, śabda yoga, love of God etc. like Kabir and other sants, but invariably their methods are devoid of haṭha yoga practices like the awakening of kuṇḍalini; the breath culture and the upward flow of the vital wind which we frequently come across in the Nātha and Tāntric teachings. The authors of the Grantha like the other sants make occasional references to the yogic practices, but their emphasis on love for God is most pronounced and prominent. Whereas the yogic cult followers during the course of their sādhana listen to different sounds of
instruments in relation to their śādhanā which becomes subtler and subtler, no such mention is discussed in the Grantha.

The majesty of Šabda as the supreme power has been highlighted by the yogis of different hues, the sants and the Sikh Masters. For them Šabda pervades everywhere, meditation on which leads to supreme bliss. For the Sikh Gurus, Šabda, nāma and God become quite same in their final analysis. Nāma simran and sura šabda yōga with love and devotion and some yogic practices find a happy blending here in the attainment of bliss.

Thus it means that the description of this term in the scripture leads us to believe that the Sikh religion has close relations with the teachings of the sants and several yogic schools, but the greatness of the Masters lies wholly in drenching this concept in mystical and theistic colours.

Nāma both as a means as well as the end, occupies a unique position in the scripture. As a mystical concept* it is equated with God. His qualities, attributes, power, will, light and so on. In the Grantha at several places nāma and God carry and convey identical meaning. It is true that parallel references about nāma are also found in the Sant literature, but here the Gurus sufficiently broaden and deepen the meaning of this term. Of course, the Tāntric literature has no such reference.

Nāma as a means, or the nāma mārga has a speciality of its own in the Sikh scripture. It is considered the supreme means because it is quite easy, natural and within the reach of all. The process starts with simran, but after some time it takes the form of a yoga, called the ajpā japa where the mind and not the tongue constantly utters God’s name. The Gurus soak the

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*Some references are also available in the early Buddhist literature—

1. Due to the True Nāma I have gained peace in both the worlds (Avuttara Nikaya, 8.6.4; 8.6.5; 8.8.5).

2. In the Muijama Nikaya (32.6) Sacch Nāma (true Nāma) is equated with Buddha.

3. The true Nāma of the Sant Sōdhana is the Sacch Nāma of the Pāli canon. It is one of the name of the Tathāgata. It shows that Buddha of the Sacch Nāma became the True Nāma of Kabir (Bharat Singh Upadhyaya—Baudha Darshan tathā anya Bhāratiyā Darshan, II, p. 1061).
whole process by an intense feeling of love. Thus this method consists of simran, yoga and devotion, a harmonious blending. Echoes of uttering of God’s name are, no doubt, found in the Purāṇas and other earlier devotional hymns, but the yoga of the Granthā in the process of simran called the ajāpā jāpa is meant to control the mind and not like the mantra japa of the Tantras or the breathing process of the Nāthas* which are meant to control the vital wind and turn its flow upward.

The Gurus seem to be deeply overwhelmed by the majesty of nāmā that they see it like God everywhere, and in all things. It is the essence of all spiritual knowledge and sādhana.

It can be reasonably asserted that the nāma mārga as described in the Granthā is a complete mārga and is easy to follow and practice by all. Herein lies the contribution of the Sikh scripture to the various methods and means in the attainment of God.

The term sūnya, no doubt, having stray references in the earlier literature was popularised by the Mahāyāna Buddhism and its various offshoots. It filtered down to the Nāthas, the sants, the sufis, some Muslim cults of Bengal and also some Vaiṣṇava cults. It was defined within the general framework of Buddhism by several offshoots of the Mahāyana. The sants including the Sikh Gurus gave it their own orientation and made it a purely theistic principle. This state is the highest state of spiritual perfection according to the Siddhāchāryas, the Nāthas and the Sants.

In the Sikh scripture sūnya is equated with God in His

*The ajāpā jāpa as a method of union, has undoubtedly been borrowed by the nirgunīes from the system of Gorakhnāth. Concentrating the mind and regulating the breath is a preliminary to ajāpā japa. Undoubtedly, prāṇāyāma bring the mind under control. But it appears that whereas the prāṇāyāma of the yogīs is forced and even aims at the utter suspension of breath is what is known as Kevala (kumbhak) the nirguṇīes appear simply to be conscious of breathing which, being conscious has to be naturally deeper than the ordinary breathing of which we are never conscious. We become conscious of it only when we feel some difficulty about it. Besides, for the nirguṇīes this is only an auxiliary practice, which is meant to complement the nāma simran and he is required to remember the name of God with every outgoing and incoming breath while practising this.
attributeless as well as with attributes forms where He creates the whole world. While in the literature of the Siddhas and the Nāthas it is the state of highest reality which is pure, devoid of quality and of utter bliss, but in the Scripture along with these it is also of companionship with God.

Side by side with this concept, the term nirañjana was also popularised by these creeds and cults. Nirañjana stands for ultimate reality in the Tāntric literature which is of void nature but it stands for God in the teachings of the sants. Of course one can come across some differences in the relative position of nirañjana and the True Purusha or the Satya Purusha in the doctrines of Kabir and other sants, but in the Sikh Scripture His position is kept in tact with the Ādi Purusha.

In order to attain this state the Gurus recommend some yogic practices along with nāma simran, sahaja mārga, guru’s instructions, subduing of five senses and so on. The impact of the earlier cults and creeds is clearly perceptible on the Grantha.

The analysis has shown that the term sahaja, both as a means as well as the end was popularised by the leaders of various yogic cults beginning from the 8th century. The emergence of a special cult called the Sahajayāna shows that this term got widespread acceptance in course of time. Attainment of the final state of sahaja, that is bliss, through the path of sahaja that is easy and natural formed part of their religious doctrines and practices. In the Grantha the Gurus also gave great prominence to it in their teachings.

According to the Buddhist mystics the state of sahaja is of supreme bliss, without grief or pain and doubt or illusion. The Nātha yogis also describe their experience of the state of sahaja in almost similar language. It is true that the authors of the Guru Grantha also use similar ideas but along with it they experience this state as the state of God realisation.

The views about sahaja of the Siddhāchāryas were explained in the general framework of their atheistic doctrines, whereas the sants including the Sikh Masters explain this term in the theistic garb. In the state of sahaja the union of two active and passive elements that is prajñā and upāya according to the Siddhāchāryas do not find any mention in the Grantha. The
Nātha term of Śiva and Śakti to attain the sahajānand is, no doubt, found in the Grantha at a few places, but not used in the sense in which the Nāthas put it. The Vaiṣṇava Sāhijjiyas term of love sports of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the sahaja state is not mentioned in the Scripture. While stating about the experience of sahaja state, the Sikh scripture seems to have taken the idea of bliss from the Siddhas, of love from the Sāhajjiyas and of God realization from the nirguṇī sants. These three currents find confluence in the Scripture.

Coming to sahaja as a means for attaining that state, the Gurus do not subscribe to the esoteric practices, but here and there in the Grantha they make them subservient to the path of devotion and love. For the Siddhāchāryas and Nāthas yogis the sahaja mārga consists of breath culture, rousing of the kuṇḍalinī, repetition of mantras in a yogic way, upward march of the vital wind, piercing of cakras and so forth. No doubt, there is a mention of some of these practices in the Book, but the Gurus emphasize the path of love for God, singing His praises, uttering His nāma, His service in a sahaja way that is, easy and natural path to attain the state of sahaja.

The description of the state of sahaja with a wealth of details seems to be quite the same with the Buddhist āchāryas and the Sikh Masters. The āchāryas use Buddhist terms, but the Gurus draw heavily from the devotional literature. Sahaja is a state of mahāsukha for the Siddhas, for the Gurus it is that of mahāsukha as well as of God realization.

A pre-eminent position of a guru in the path of spiritual progress has been recognized since the earlier days. This tradition was continued by the Siddhas, Tāntrikas, Nāthas and the Sants. The Sikh Masters also followed the same tradition and spoke in superlative terms about the guru and his importance in matters of internal religion. The guru here becomes the embodiment of total reality, bliss and perfect knowledge. The Grantha and the other teachers speak similar language in the praise of the guru. All agree that the grace of guru helps the devotee in controlling his mind, of opening of the tenth door, and the blossoming of the lotus. In the Sikh faith nāma and śabda are deeply associated with the guru. In whatever sense these terms may be used—instructions, simple nāma,
spiritual essence, music, mystical power, the guru becomes the personification of these two terms. At several places in the Grantha the guru is equated with God and he represents God in all His aspects.

Such a perfect master is difficult to find. His service is greatly stressed upon. All religious deeds are contained in his service. This service is to be taken not in the worldly sense that is offering of clothes, coins etc. but to follow the path which he recommends. The best and the only service of the guru is nāma simran and contemplation on the śabda. As a real guru is a rare commodity, so a true devotee is to be hardly found, remark the Masters. Such a guru has brought down God on earth and is also authorised and competent to take devotees to God. It is quite difficult to comprehend the greatness of a guru. Meeting such a profound, pure, liberated and perfect soul is in itself a very rewarding and ennobling experience.

As far as the term māyā is concerned the Scripture does not agree with the theory that māyā is eternal as in the Sāmkhya, or it is an illusion as preached by Saṃkara or it is the active principle of reality as advocated by the Siddhāchāryas. According to the Gurus it is the power of the Lord and has beguiled the whole world at His commands. Its sway extends in all directions—insects, birds, animals, human beings, angels, gods, adepts, yogis and even the natural forces. This has been illustrated with so minute details by the Gurus that one stands in awe at the enormous power of māyā as well as the expressive quality of the authors of the Grantha. Again the operative part of māyā is stated in worldly images and similes—it is a poisonous snake, an unchastic damsel, a beautiful woman, an intoxicant drink and so on. In order to convey the aims, forms and evil effects of māyā to the audience the Gurus use too simple language which we hardly came across in Upāniṣadadic thought, monoism of Saṃkara or the Buddhist literature. The term has been discussed in the general framework of the sant doctrines, though in a very detailed form by the Gurus. Similarly in order to subdue māyā the Masters recommend several means like nāma simran, śabda, grace, wisdom etc. which bring this doctrine nearer the sant thought. Yogic practices and exercises are discarded in this connection. The
Gurus have made this doctrine of māyā too simple and understandable to the common man.

Ideas concerning the fluctuating nature of the mind and the only source for bondage as well as release are quite identical in different cults and creeds. The difficult process of the control of the mind to gain bliss has also been stressed by almost all of them. Numerous methods both yogic and devotional are recommended by the Sikh Gurus to bring the mind to rest. Among the yogic are withdrawing the current of consciousness from the nine outlets and the practice of śabda yoga. These take the mind to its original seat, the tenth door where it gets bliss. The non yogic means are uttering of Lord’s nāma, love for God, filling the waves of mind with His praises, ethical conduct, guru’s grace and his service. These means are not exclusive of each other, but different parts of the same process. The Siddhas and the Nāthas rely on purely yogic means, whereas the Sikh Masters follow both the means giving more prominence to the devotional aspect.

The liberated mind comes in the blissful state where its cycle of coming and going cease to exist. It is now pure and shines by its own lustre. According to the Sikh faith a devotee in this state drinks nectar, is in sahaja state and also in the company of the Lord. Yogic terminology like the piercing of the six cakras, devouring of the moon by the sun and hearing of the anhada śabda are also mentioned in the Grantha. Thus it means that the Gurus merge both the currents that is, yogic as well as devotional when they state their views concerning mind, its nature, the means to suppress it and its final stage.

Leaving aside the difference in the names and number of nādīs as mentioned by the Buddhist and the Hindu tantras, the Nāthas, the Sants and the Sikh Gurus, it is quite clear that the three nādīs—iḍā, piṅgala and susuṣmaṇā or the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati, have been considered the most important in the path of spiritual sādhanā by all of them. All also agree that the susuṣmaṇā is the central nāḍī for the purpose of the attainment of bliss. The Guru Grantha makes mention of these nādīs many a time, thus showing its indebtedness more to the Hindu Tantras and the Nāthas and less to the Buddhist Siddhāchāryās. For the sādhanā of the nādīs some yogic
practices like holding of breath, uṣīsādhana, concentration, śābda yoga etc. have been recommended by the Sikh Masters. No doubt, these have also been stated by the Siddhas and the Nāthas, but as their cults are purely yogic in form and content, they solely rely on these practices. Whereas the Sikh Gurus make some references about these practices in their doctrines, but their chief emphasis is on love for God and the recitation of His nāma—the teachings of the nirguṇi sants, for the attainment of union with God.

The symbolism of the sun and the moon mentioned in the Scripture finds its parallel references in the Tantras and the Nātha doctrines. But there is one difference. The Sikh Gurus never claim that by drinking nectar the human body can be dematerialised and can be rejuvenated as the Nāthas and the like minded cults believed. For the Scripture the human body is perishable and subject to the laws of change. Here also the kuṇḍalini yoga and the process of piercing of the six cakras is stated at some places in the Book, though it is used extensively as part of the practices of the haṭha yoga by the Buddhists and the Hindu Tantras as well as the Nāthas in their principles and practices. As Barthwall puts it, “Obviously they did not accept haṭha yoga in its entirety, but they (Gurus and the Sants) did draw on it. Like the Upaniṣadic sages they concerned themselves not with the āsana (postures) but with upāsanā (devotion) and only those of the yogic practices that to their minds helped in completely withdrawing the mind from the sense objects, were accepted.” Again the final state of sahaṇa, of drinking of nectar by not allowing it to be wasted away seem quite identical in the Granthā and the Tāntric literature. Thus the impact of Buddhism and yoga seem to be quite prominent in this respect in the teachings of the Sikh Gurus who were quite conversant with yogic practices and terminology.

The divine marriage explained in the Sikh scripture with a wealth of worldly details from the betrothal ceremony till the consummation of marriage has its parallel references in the sant literature. As love and not the yogic practices is the most important link between soul and God, so the symbol that is its best counterpart, the wife and the husband has been used invariably by the Sikh Gurus. The Masters neither believed in
the passive and active principles of reality as we find in
Buddhism and the yogic doctrines, nor did they use their
vocabulary to explain the act of union. According to the
Gurus, in the mystical marriage, both the individual soul that
is, the wife and God, the Husband are active. The soul makes
entreaties with passionate love and God also responds to it.
Here we find that the Grantha betrays nearness with the sants’
teachings.

While discussing the concept of human body both as a
repository of truth and the only means to know that truth, we
find that the ideas of the Grantha have been explained within
the general framework of the principles and practices of the
Siddhas, the Tantras, the Nāthas and the Sants. It has been
repeatedly stated by all of them that this body is the laboratory
for spiritual experiments, which contains in itself, the abode of
bliss, nectar and all the spiritual essence.

The theory of the macrocosm and the microcosm that is
whatever is in the universe is also in the body in its minute form
has been beautifully explained with a wealth of details by all of
them.

As these cults were immensely practical, so they believed that
truth can be known only through the medium of the body. The
path recommended in this connection is to withdraw conscious-
ness from the outside world by closing the nine doors. These
manifest nine doors, the unmanifest tenth door, the viśuddha
cakra, the anhada cakra, the bank nāla, the trikuti and such
like terms are quite familiar in the Grantha and the teachings
of the Siddhāchāryas, the Tāntrikas, the Sāhajjiyas and the
Nāthas. However, there is some difference about the location
of the tenth door between the teachings of the Grantha and
others, but all are quite unanimous on the point that when one
reaches this door, one attains emancipation, drinks nectar, sees
light and hears the divine music.

Thus it becomes quite clear that the Sikh scripture has
marked affinity with the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas and the Nāthas.
But when the Grantha describes that in the body one can realize
nāma or God and comes face to face with His benign presence,
it leaves the stream of these creeds and joins the current of the
nirguna school.

Thus we find that the Gurus had to reassert with great emphasis the spiritual nature of the human body, because by this time the followers of the Siddhas, the Tāntrikas and the Nāthas had adopted useless outward ceremonies like besmearing the body with ashes, wearing of skulls, and peculiar dresses as an important part of their religion. The Grantha once again enjoins upon its followers to go to the source of spirituality. Here again the importance of the human body is brought into bold relief by commingling the two currents, those of the sants and the yogic cults.

As we see that the movement of the Siddhas was a vast social synthesis, so the religion contained in the Guru Grantha was a vast spiritual synthesis. The Gurus displayed a superb sense of choice and selection from different religious currents mainly those that flourished after the eighth century A.D. and also to some extent from Islam particularly Sufism. By their own internal experience based on devotional line of thought or the spirit of love they made a beautiful whole out of parts. This whole was given an identity and individuality of its own and distinction from others. This distinction and individuality were given a unique shape when the hymns were sung in musical notes, immediately touching the very core of being of the devotees. The simplicity of this religion as contained in the Book provided the easiest method for the transformation of becoming into being. This faith has provided spiritual solace to many of us and will continue to do so if we are ready to adhere to the original doctrines.

References

5. *The History and Culture of Indian People*, The Delhi Sultanate, p. 569.
Conclusion

10. *Indian Theism from the Vedic times to the Mohammadan Rule*, p. 150.
15. Traditions of Mysticism based upon the *Nirguna* School of Hindi Poetry, p. xii.
17. In this movement people of all castes, creeds and professions joined it. Sarahapadā, Niroppā, Tilopā were Brāhmaṇas, Dombipa, Darvikapa were *Kṣatriyas*; Luippā was a *Kāyastha*; Udhalippā and Bhaliippā belonged to the *Vaiśya* community; Tantipa was a weaver; Camaripā was cobbler, Jogipā a singer; Minapa a fisherman; Carpatipā, Ananyapā and Kapalapā were *śudrās*. Women also joined them. Laksminkara was the sister of King Indrabuiti; Mambhada was a maid servant and Makhalapā was the daughter of a householder.
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CATALOGUED,

Spiritual — Doctrine

Doctrine — Spiritual