CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

From times immemorial and because of its geographical peculiarities, India has been an agricultural country with land as the main source of production and maintenance of her people. Except for a small minority in Guru Nanak's time, India's vast population lived in the villages as they have lived down to the present period. The main feature of medieval India's economy was production chiefly for local consumption. The peasant or the cultivator was the backbone of this economy, who tilled the soil, worked hard throughout the year, yet lived in utter poverty and hardship, as is evident from a number of couplets in Guru Nanak's Bani.

The system of cultivation in those days was not very different from the present one. The wooden plough, the toothed harrow, the smoothing board, the levelling beam, the sowing drill, spades and sickles were the common implements used in the whole process of production from the land. The crops depended mostly upon rainfall and only partly on wells and canals. To convey the idea of spiritual upliftment, Guru Nanak by using the common vocabulary familiar to village folks indirectly portrays the system of cultivation as under:
Let thy mind be the farmer and deeds the farming and let thy body be the farm, water it, yea, with effort. Let the Lord's name be the seed, and contentment the furrowing, and let the fence be of humility. If thou doest deeds of love, thy seed will sprout and fortunate will then be thy home.²

At another place Guru Nanak writes that:

The true and wise farmer knoweth, that one sows the seeds only after one hath tilled the land and furrowed it.³

Such examples in Guru Nanak's Bani are not wanting. Referring to the human body as a farm, the actions of a human being as seeds and the Nam of God as water, Guru Nanak indirectly points out the three basic needs of a farmer to have good harvest.⁴ Similar kind of views are expressed in the following couplet:

If good actions be thy farm, and thy seed be the word, and the way of Truth thy water, The growth will then be of faith.⁵
Guru Nanak gives very high place to a farmer, who to him, is like God, who feeds the entire world without having any distinction of high and low or rich and poor in his mind.\textsuperscript{6}

Land cultivation was a year-round occupation for those who were engaged in it. The farmers had to work day and night to cultivate and protect the fields from stray animals and others (including the grain lifters) who might turn up at the harvest times. His two busiest periods were the seasons of summer and autumn, harvesting and planting, which in Nanak's \textit{Bani} have been referred to as \textit{Haari} and \textit{Sauni}:

\begin{quote}
For me, the Harvest of the spring
is the Lord's Name,
Yea, the Lord's Name is again
the Harvest I gather in Autumn.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

The autumn harvest, \textit{kharif}, also known as \textit{Sauni}, started in the middle of September and continued through November. This was a very busy season, for the farmer had both to harvest the crops in different fields as they ripened and to prepare for sowing the fallow fields that had been lying under water during the rainy season and were now drying out. If the soil had retained the dampness of the rains, it was easier for him to plough, but if it had not rained, he had to irrigate these fields with water drawn
from the ordinary well or from the Persian-wheel. To Babar it was a strange novelty to see such kind of wells in Hindustan which were used for irrigational purposes. Guru Nanak calls such wells as a rahats or Arhats. Guru Nanak applied the symbol of rahat or Arhat with deeper meanings attached to it indirectly referring to the system of irrigation prevalent in those days. In Rag Basant Hindol he writes:

Make (service with) hands thy persian wheel,
(Arhat or Rahat),
and the chain and the buckets,
and yoke thy mind, like the bullock to run it,
and then irrigate thy body with the God's Nectar.

To water the fields from ordinary wells was a difficult process. It involved a strenuous manual labour to draw water by buckets tied at the one end of the string. The other end being in the hands of one who had to pull the bucket out from the well. Usually such wells were popular with the women-folks of the villages who drew water from these wells for domestic needs. The domestic animals like the cows and buffaloes etc. also got their water needs fulfilled from these wells.

Apart from these ordinary or Persian-wheels the land was also irrigated by rivers and canals. But a large part of the cultivation, throughout the country depended
on rains. A normal rainfall was a great boon to the cultivators, as their livelihood and prosperity depended on it. If it was scanty, draught was always accompanied by scarcity, misery and distress. So the farmers waited anxiously the two months of the rainy season - Sawan and Bhadon on which depended their existence and also major part of the state's income. The importance of the rains for the farming community can be judged by the following couplets of Guru Nanak.

When it rains there's joy all round;
in water lies the key to all life.
It is the rains that grow food, sugar and cotton
which giventh to all a covering.
When it rains the cow hath grass to graze,
and the housewife the curds to churn;
From this is the ghee with which is the sacred fire propitiated,
and the Yajna and worship performed,
and all our works are blest.

Stating further, the importance of rains in country's life, Guru Nanak writes:

'The famine goeth if it rains well
and the streams are full'.
Another busy time for the farmers was the summer harvest, *rabi*, commonly known as *Haari*, already referred to in an earlier passage.\(^\text{16}\) This was the time when the crop had to be cut, threshed and winnowed and the grain for the year must be stored, as also the fodder for the animals.\(^\text{17}\)

It is difficult to speak of the size of an average holding or even of the proportion of the population which took to active husbandry. We can roughly state leaving aside those who were engaged in domestic labour and crafts, all others took to cultivation on land.\(^\text{18}\)

**The Agricultural Products**

The agricultural produce of the country as a whole could not have been very different from what it is today except for the newly introduced cultivation of tobacco, tea, coffee and the extension of jute crop and the like.\(^\text{19}\) Some of the important products mentioned in Guru Nanak's *Bani* are wheat, rice, sugarcane, oil seeds, cotton and milk products like curd, butter, ghee (purified butter) and the sweets made out of milk and coarse sugar.\(^\text{20}\) Fruits of various varieties were produced in many parts of the country. Some of the (names of the) fruits appearing in the *Bani* of Guru Nanak and other saint poets of the *Adi Granth* are: *amb* (mango), *angoor* (grapes), *khajooran* (dates), *khakhrian* (melons), *ber* (a big berry fruit), *kelay* (banana)
and dakh bijoorian (a fruit grown around Bijaur). 21

The medicinal herbs, spices and fragrant wood were
grown in large quantities and found a market in and outside
India. A large number of industries and crafts were fed
on the surplus of agricultural produce of which there was
ample to spend and spare. 22 The most important manufactures
which flourished on agricultural produce were ropes, bas­
kets, unrefined sugar (gur), oils of various kinds, scents
and spirits. Oil was produced through the process of the
oil press (ghani) and the spirits, and liquors manufactured
from unrefined sugar, mahwa, barley-cake and rice. 23 How­
ever, the social status, the limited opportunities of the
village craftsmen and the administrative oppression dis­
couraged them from making progress beyond certain limits. 24

The peasants and the village craftsmen including
carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, oilcrusher (telis),
weavers, basket makers and others worked very hard, but it
can be asserted with confidence, on the basis of references
in Guru Nanak's Bani that their lot was very miserable and
they lived constantly in a state of semi-starvation. 25

Amongst the producing classes, the agriculturists were the
worst sufferers. The major portion of the produce of the
land went to the state in the form of land revenue and other
taxes. A portion of the rest went to the pandha, maulvi,
and the priests and another part went into the pocket of
village sahukar in the form of interest on loans. After
all this, only a meagre amount was left with the cultivators for their subsistence.\textsuperscript{26}

The famines were quite frequent and the state made no provision for relief to the affected peasants. Even the remission in revenue was negligible. It is only after the end of the sultanate period and the first two rulers of the Mughal dynasty that the condition of the peasants, started improving. During Sher Shah Suri and Akbar's reign their condition improved considerably and the dahasala system/zabti initiated by Todar Mal proved a beneficial measure.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{Industries}

Although agriculture was the main occupation of the bulk of the people, there were many important industries like textiles, indigo, paper and metal work which had made a considerable progress in their respective fields and were known for their quality. Woodwork, leather items, embroidery, calico printing, inlay work, sugar, scents and different kinds of oils were some other items which were produced for wider consumption and some of these products found a good market abroad.\textsuperscript{28} Guru Nanak's \textit{Bani} does not mention the volume of production of these items or the places where they were produced, but the casual references to people who carried these works provide us valuable information on the existing industries in India in his times.
The manufacture of the textiles was the biggest industry of Hindustan. It included the manufacture of cotton cloth and silk. Cotton was extensively grown in the country. Cotton fabrics were dyed with the leaves of the trees, flower-plants and vegetable dyes. The popular colours were red, yellow, blue, green and black. Guru Nanak has repeatedly mentioned majith red colour which was fast and long lasting. People were fond of bright colour as is evident from the contemporary paintings of early Mughal India. The dyeing industry and calico painting went hand in hand with the manufacture of cloth. Coarse cotton clothes were either dyed or printed with a variety of well shaped and well coloured flowers or figures which were so fixed in the cloth that no water could wash them out. The quality of Indian textile products was excellent, and the output was sufficient to meet the demands of internal consumption.

Industries like embroidery, gold and silver thread work were also flourishing in many big cities. Costly clothes with rich embroidery and gold work were in great demand with the aristocracy and other rich classes of the society. Guru Nanak has given a detailed description of the clothes worn by these people. A great quantity of woollen stuff and fur was imported from outside for the use of the upper classes.
Besides the manufacture of cloth, other goods like carpets, coverlets, beddings, prayer-carpets, bed strings and several other articles were manufactured.\(^{33}\)

**Metal Work**

Metal work has a very old tradition in our country, to which many ancient idols of South-India, Mehrauli's iron pillar and coins etc. bear witness. In fact, next in importance to the textiles was the metal industry which continued to make progress during the period of our study. The Indian metal workers handled various metals like gold, silver, brass, iron and zinc, mixed-metals and mica with great skill and perfection.

In Guru Nanak Bani we find several references to goldsmiths\(^{34}\) (silversmiths), and ironsmiths\(^{35}\) who produced excellent jewellery\(^{36}\) and various types of knives, scissors and items of armoury including swords, daggers, shields, iron coats and headcovers for the soldiers and army. Iron chains for prisons, iron buckets for the Persian-wheels, axes, hatchets, choppers and agricultural implements were also manufactured.\(^{37}\)

Another class of metal workers made utensils of gold and silver for the aristocracy and utensils of common use (for the masses) made of iron, bronze and zinc. Guru Nanak's Bani provide us the names of some of the utensils which were in use in those days, \textit{thaal} (tray, a brass
plate), lota, garva (a jug of brass), karahi (frying pan, a stewpan, cauldren), katori or katora (a small bowl, dish or gabler of metal) and karchi (large spoon or ladle) etc. 38

Potter's Work

Although potters (kumhars) 39 did not enjoy any respectable status in the medieval Indian society, yet they remained an important part of the village and urban society. Their products like pitchers and clay pots of various sizes and designs were used by every class of society, irrespective of their material position or official status. The only difference could be in the quality of the products used by the upper and lower classes of the people. No home was without earthen pots, be it a palace or an ordinary dwelling. Big earthen trays, water containers (matka or ghara), (surahi, handi), pipkin, pigy banks and toys were the main items commonly used by the people, besides artistic types of vases, jugs, flower-pots and other such items, which found favour with the richer sections of the society. Guru Nanak used the word bhande 40 (utensils) and all the products used in the kitchen or in day to day life of the common householders.

The potters also made bricks (itan) which were used for making houses, big mansions, royal palaces, tanks, baolies and wells etc. Sometimes clay for making earthen
products was procured from old and dilapidated graveyards. The clay pots and bricks were then baked in the fire as is clear from the following lines of Guru Nanak in Asa-di-Var.

The dust of a Muslim's grave becometh lump for the potters wheel, And of it he (the potter) fashions bricks or and, burning they (the clay products) vessels wail. Yea, the hapless clay burns and cries out as fiery coals fall, continuously upon it.  

Stone and Brick Works

A large number of workers were engaged in stone and brick work. The Indian artisans and masons displayed great skill in constructing forts, palatial buildings, tanks and reservoirs. In Guru Nanak's bani, we find references to words like 'kotgarh' (forts), 'pake-bank dwar', (residential mansions of the rich) and sar or sarovar (tanks) etc. which were constructed with stones and bricks. Babar was particularly fond of the skill of Indian workmen. He employed more than 2000 stone-cutters for the construction of buildings at Agra, Dholpur and at other places. The labourers were poorly paid. They worked very hard to earn their bread. They were exploited in every possible manner by the rich and the hiring agencies.
The period under review also witnessed the introduction of the use of enamelled tiles and bricks which continued to grow in the subsequent centuries due to the royal patronage to these industries.

Leather Work

The leather industry considerably developed during the medieval period. Although Guru Nanak has made no direct reference to it, but references of chamars (shoe-makers, tanners or cobblers), a caste or a class of leather workers are found in the writings of other saint poets of Adi Granth.

The social status of this class was very low in the society as is clear from the following couplets of Bhagat Ravidas, who himself was a chamar (shoe-maker) by profession.

My constant companion is Evil
I am oppressed by this thought
My deeds are perverse
My birth is low
...

But Ravidas, the tanner, utterth Thy praise;
for he is dedicated to Thy Love-worship.

At another place, Ravidas states as under:
I am of low caste, with little honour,
Yea, my birth is low:
And still, I, the cobbler,
have not served my Lord,
the King (of the universe). 48

The leather-workers produced shoes of different kinds, scabbards of swords and daggers, covers of books, saddles and briddles for horses in the royal army as well as for those maintained by the nobles, peasant's water buckets to draw out water from well and other articles of daily use were made of leather. 49 Leather was also used for packing sugar parcels for export. Skins of goats, buffaloes, oxen etc. were sent from Gujarat in many ship loads to Arabia and other countries. 50

Oil Crushing Business

It was carried on a large scale by a class of people called telis 51 (the oil producing men). Mustard oil was used in earthen lamps as well as for other domestic needs. Mustard seeds were crushed in the ghani (an oil mill). This is the word used by Guru Nanak in his Bani. 52

The process of manufacturing oil was almost similar to the process still in vogue in the rural areas. Telis used the he bull or an ox to make the press work:
Yea, he circles round desire,
as does oilman's bull round the oil press. 53

Gur and Sugar

Sugarcane was cultivated in India on a large scale and sugar was made from it for the local consumption as well as for export. The villagers generally used gur (unrefined sugar) which was made out of sugarcane juice. The process of making it was almost similar to the one which still prevails in UP, Haryana, Punjab and other sugarcane growing areas of the country. The usual process of manufacture was as follows:

They cut the sugarcane into sections, then pressed them in the mill; the juice was then heated in big iron-pans until it crystallized into unrefined sugar, then it was either turned into cakes of gur, or with a little more refining made into soft sugar (khand). The most refined and esteemed form of sugar was the crystallized white khand. 54

The refined sugar (khand) was a luxury beyond the means of the poor. It was used by the rich and the aristocracy. Sweatmeats must have been made almost entirely of the raw-sugar (gur). 55 Country made liquor was also made out of it as is clear from Guru Nanak Bani. 56

Honey was collected all over the country but rearing
the honey bees was not a profession by itself.\footnote{57}

**Perfumery**

The rulers and the rich classes of the society were fond of perfumes and scented oils. Words like chowa, chandan, agar and kapoor etc. are frequently used in Guru Nanak Bani.\footnote{58} All these items were in common use in those days. The perfumery industry must have flourished in the big cities only, where the rulers, nobles, the provincial heads, merchants and rich people generally resided.

**Other Minor Industries**

Certain other minor industries also flourished in various parts of the country. These included coral work, ivory work, imitation jewellery and glass work specially the glass bangles of various colours and sizes. Indian ivory workers at that time were great experts in turning out in-laid and plain articles like bracelets, bangles, dice, chessboard etc. Red coloured ivory chooras (bracelets) were worn by the young brides at the time of marriage. Some of the above mentioned items are found in Guru Nanak Bani as is clear from the following couplets in Rag Asa:
When these beauties were married, their glamorous spouses sat by their sides. Yea, and they were carried in planquins and bangles of ivory dangled round their arms, (In greetings) water was waved over their heads, and they were fanned with glass studded fans.  

Wood work of different designs and qualities was also produced throughout the country by local workers engaged in this profession. The popular items being palangh and charpai or manjian (beds), peerihian (a kind of flat chair without back), doors, pegs, toys, writing boards (takhtis), writing tablets, pens (qalams), pen containers (qalam dans), saddles and scabbards of swords and daggers. 

Paper Industry

During the period of our study, paper was commonly used for writing books (manuscripts), farmans, sanads and maintaining the records of land revenue in vahis (registers kept by the patwaris and other revenue officials). Moneylenders (sahukars) also kept vahis (registers) in which the records of loans and money received back were kept. There are several references in Guru Nanak's Bani which confirm our belief that paper was widely used by government and private agencies for the above mentioned purposes. Paper was manufactured at Gujrat, Burhanpur, Sialkot, Delhi, Patna and Kashmir. The manufacture of ink was another
product which went along with the paper industry.

**Ship Building and Boat Making**

Ship building and specially boat making industry was in a flourishing state in the times of Guru Nanak. It is evident from the frequent references (in his Bani) to **bohith** (medium and small sized ships, vessels), **nao** and **beri** (boat or a ferry), and **patni** or **tulhara** (ferryman), who carried passengers across the river or took them to distant places during normal and rough weather conditions, in their boats or ships. The following couplet of Guru Nanak is very significant in this regard:

*The sea is rough and dreadful,*  
*I know not its shores.*  
*I am without a boat or a raft;*  
*neither is there a Boatman nor the Rows,*  
*The True Guru is the only vessel on the fearful (sea)*  
*whose eye of grace takes me across.*

Besides carrying passengers the boats were used by the fishermen to catch fish from the deep waters.

Guru Nanak does not mention the places where the work of making ships or boats was carried on, but it is a matter of common understanding that these places must have been near the rivers or sea-coasts. While ordinary boats or rafts were made of some ordinary wood which was
easily available, the good boats and small and medium sized ships were made of teak wood. The ship building activities were mainly carried on the western coasts of India. Calicut was a great ship building centre.64

Trade and Commerce

No clear cut indication is available in Guru Nanak's Bani about the volume of internal and external trade being carried out in the country. However, frequent references of 
viopari, beopari (businessmen), vivopar, beopar (business), 
vanjaras (banjaras), mandis (markets) and shahukars (money-lenders) etc.65 point out a great deal of trade and commerce flourishing in the country. References of trading in precious metals, jewels, diamonds66 and horses67 are some of the fields where businessmen and merchants invested a good deal of capital to earn maximum profits. Horses were also used for carrying the merchandise from one place to another. The merchandise was kept in the store houses.68

The trade was mainly the monopoly of the vaishyas.69 The banjaras carried on the business of conveying agricultural products and other items of common use from one part of this country to another on a very extensive scale. The sensible and shrewed banjaras, as Guru Nanak points out, carried only such items which would fetch them greater profits without any risk involved in the loss or damage of their merchandise.70 Guru Ram Dass, in a very symbolic
way, calls those sikhs as banjaras who come in the Sikh congregations to trade in the name of God, which is the most precious thing in the world.\textsuperscript{71}

Though the main business was done through regular shops (hat) in the market or mandis, the petty shopkeepers had small shops (hatees) through which they carried the retail business. With the opening of these shops in the morning the buyers started coming to purchase the commodities required for the domestic needs.\textsuperscript{72} These shops were usually maintained by the Hindu-Banias\textsuperscript{73}, who were an essential and an important part of the economic structure in medieval India. Sometimes the banias advanced money to the farmers, artisans and others.

Money lending was mainly the business of sahukars\textsuperscript{74} and mahajans\textsuperscript{75}, who extended loans to the farmers, petty businessmen and shopkeepers and many a times to the men in power. They were very popular with the people who had loose habits and were given to luxury. The moneylenders charged high and sometimes very high rates of interest from their clients. While the rich people borrowed money to meet the expenses on their luxuries, the poor peasants borrowed money for purchasing bullocks, marriage of their sons or daughters or for purpose of consumption.\textsuperscript{76}

The moral standard of merchants was not high. Various fraudulent ways and means were followed by them to earn money. Guru Nanak bitterly criticized such means and
reminded people that wealth accumulated by them by sinful ways was of no avail to them after death.

Many, O many, have been consumed and wasted away by their riches, which are gathers not without sinning, nor carries along when dead.\textsuperscript{77}

Attempts of adulteration and use of fraudulent weights and measures were quite common.\textsuperscript{78}

Weights and measures differed in weight and number in different places and with different classes of the people, so that there was absolutely no uniformity.\textsuperscript{79} The different weights were \textit{mans} (maund), \textit{seers}, \textit{paos} and \textit{chattanks}, which were in use in India, until a few years back, before the decimal system was introduced. Goldsmiths used \textit{tola}, \textit{masha} and \textit{rati} to weigh the gold and gold ornaments.\textsuperscript{80}

As regards the measuring of time, a year consisted of twelve lunar months and a day and night together went to make eight pahars, each pahar being equal to three hours. A pahar was subdivided into sixty \textit{gharis}, each \textit{ghari} equalling twenty-four minutes. A \textit{ghari} was further subdivided into sixty \textit{palas} and \textit{palas} into \textit{chasa} and \textit{visa}. In one of his hymns Guru Nanak writes:
The second, the minute, the hour,
the solar and the lunar day,
the changing seasons,
are all created by the same, lone sun. 81

The measurement of distance was made by kos or karoh and gaz. A kos was about two miles according to our present reckoning. For the sake of convenience it was divided into three parts, each of which was called a dhawa. The gaz with which smaller lengths (of land or cloth) were measured, was not uniform throughout the country. It differed in different places and for different commodities. 82

**Coinage**

Coins of gold, silver and copper (of various denominations) were current during the period of our study. The names of some of the coins we come across in Guru Nanak's Bani are tanka and daam besides kauri which was commonly used in the remote areas of the country. Gold mohars were also used but were not in daily circulation and were not employed as a money of account. An important feature of the coins current in those days was the monetary rather than token value. 83 There is a mention of impure and debased coins in Nanak Bani, which were not accepted for any transaction. They were not sent to the Treasury either.
The false coins are not sent to the Treasury, they see not the Guru-God.
The false ones have no station, nor honour; O' no one winneth through falsehood.

Inland Communication

For communication on land, there were a number of roads and pathways running all over the country. Except for a few roads which connected the principal towns of the empire, the condition of roads was very poor. There used to be serais, khankahas, wells and the shady-trees on both sides of principal highways for the convenience and comforts of the merchants and the travellers. Guru Nanak in his Bani calls this world a halting place like a serai where people come and stay (for an allotted period) and then they leave to the unknown destination. Sher Shah took special interest towards the improvement of roads and inland communications.

Journey along the roads was covered on the back of the horse, camel or in bullock carts. Horse as a mode of conveyance was preferred for long distant journeys. Camels and bullock-carts were used for caravans of merchandise. Bullock-cart was a good conveyance for the rural and poor people. Ladies and well-to-do people of the urban society performed journeys in a dola or a doli. The nobles and the affluent officials and their ladies used palkis or
planquins for moving to other places. These *palkis* were carried by four *palki-bearers* known as *kahars*. It was a comfortable, good and dignified means of transport.\(^{90}\)

Travelling in medieval India was not without perils, discomfort and dangers. The life and property of travellers and merchants was not safe unless they had a large group of men travelling together or had armed guards with them to protect them from thugs, dacoits and highway robbers. Whenever the robbers found a stray-passenger or a small group of men travelling on a lonely road, they attacked them and looted their belongings. Generally, the travellers were killed and their dead body was thrown in a running stream or in a nearby well. The usual method of killing was by strangulation.\(^{91}\)

These dangers and discomforts of travel, insecurity of life and property were great impediments not only for pilgrims and travellers but also for the internal trade and commerce. Sometimes passengers, pilgrims, traders and merchants also suffered on account of external invasions and internal military expeditions.\(^{92}\)

Guru Nanak's period witnessed several raids on the North-West Frontier and into the interior parts of the Punjab by Babar, who ultimately succeeded in establishing an empire in *Hindustan* after defeating Ibrahim Lodi and Rana Sanga in the battles of Panipat and Kanwah respectively. These invasions made the life of the people insecure and
The invading armies not only plundered and looted the towns and villages, but made people captive and homeless. Invasions from the north-west frontier side affected the normal life of the people and dislocated trade and industry to a great extent. Thus life, property, merchandise and agriculture were at the mercy of the conquering armies. Generally, standing crops were burnt which created the famine conditions in the country. After the raids the prices of the commodities rose very high. The poor people died of starvation.

India carried on her overseas trade with eastern as well as Western countries, but Guru Nanak makes no such reference as to the countries India traded with. The only reference found in his Bani are the words des-pardes (foreign lands) where the merchants used to go with loaded ships of merchandise to earn rich profits. Guru Arjan also uses the same vocabulary in his Bani.

Minor Professions

Apart from these professions, there were some ordinary professions in which the lower class people indulged and earned their livelihood. These people included jugglers and acrobats (bazigari), snake charmers, puppet men and those who worked in the natshalas (theatres) or performed their shows in the open before the people. Those in the medical profession - vaids and hakims enjoyed fairly good
position in the society. Even begging was a paying profession for some people who depended on alms and charity. Guru Nanak was against such human parasites who lived on the earnings of others. He preached and emphasized on the necessity of labour to earn one's own livelihood. He declared in a clear and firm language that only those who earn their livelihood with the brow of their labour can find the true path to God.

He alone treadeth the path of righteousness who earneth his bread with honest labour and shareth with others.
NOTES


Thy body is the farm, thy actions the seeds, tis watered by the name of God, in whose hands is the whole earth.

Thy mind is the farmer, and when the tree sprouts in thy soul, thou attainest to the state of Nirvan.

Adi Granth, p. 23:

\[
\text{ਨ੍ਰੀਮੁਨ੍ਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਛ ਪ੍ਰਿੱਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਚਾਲਿਤ,} \\
\text{ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਚਾਲਿਤ,} \\
\text{ਨ੍ਰੀਮੁਨ੍ਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਿੱਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਚਾਲਿਤ,} \\
\text{ਨ੍ਰੀਮੁਨ੍ਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਿੱਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਚਾਲਿਤ.}
\]
Adi Granth, p. 24 :

«\textit{Gopa Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 27.}

Adi Granth, p. 24 :

\begin{verbatim}

Adi Granth, p. 24 :

\end{verbatim}


Adi Granth, p. 1286 :

\begin{verbatim}


Adi Granth, p. 1286 :

\end{verbatim}


"In Lahore, Depalpore, Sirhind and the neighbouring districts, they water by means of a wheel ...."

9. Adi Granth, p. 1329 :

\begin{verbatim}


"In Lahore, Depalpore, Sirhind and the neighbouring districts, they water by means of a wheel ...."

9. Adi Granth, p. 1329 :

\end{verbatim}


\textit{contd...}
As do rotate the buckets
hung on the chain of the persian wheel,
One being emptied and the other filled,
So is the play of our God ....

Adi Granth, p. 1171:

As do rotate the buckets
hung on the chain of the persian wheel,
One being emptied and the other filled,
So is the play of our God ....

11. Adi Granth, p. 228:

Yea, he's like the pot tied to a string
and goeth in and cometh out (of the well)
of the skies and the under worlds.


Adi Granth, p. 150:

contd...
Guru Nanak describes the process of making gur (unrefined sugar) from the sugarcane in the following couplet of Adi Granth, p. 143:

\[
\text{contd...}
\]
See how they cut up the sugarcane and bind its feet,
And then, men strong of limbs,
Crush it, in a crusher, (and thus the gur is made).

In a symbolic way Guru Nanak speaks of the distilleries and the raw material out of which country wine was distilled; see Adi Granth, p. 360:

Gnosis thy molasses, concentration the mahua flowers, deeds the bark of the kikar-tree, faith the distilling pot, the plaster of love, thus yea, is the elixir of life distilled.

See also, Adi Granth, pp. 15, 353, 354 and 969.


See Roychoudhary, S.C., *Social Cultural and Economic History of India*, (medieval age), Delhi, 1980, pp. 75-76.


Although Guru Arjan has not mentioned Akbar's name in his *Bani*, yet the following lines are indicative of the improved conditions throughout his empire.

*Adi Granth*, p. 74:

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 guru namo naam bhikshat dr
 pe teet he jisme kahat dr
 saheg muhali kotha
 dhuru teer ome than naamu
```


The merciful Lord hath now given the command.
That no one will domineer over and give pain to another, and, all will now abide in peace, 0, such is the rule of His Mercy, 0 dear.


34. *Adi Granth*, pp. 8 and 1239.


Abul Fazal states that for their excellences the goldsmiths were sometimes paid ten times the value of the metal on which they worked, as their wages.

contd..


For *ghara* (water container), *gagar* or *gagaria* (water pitcher), *matka* or *matki* (a large earthen pot, pitcher), see, *Adi Granth*, pp. 13, 254, 374, 392, 478, 483, 654, 843, 986 and 1222. For *handi* (pipkin, pot), see pp. 718 and 1368.


*Adi Granth*, p. 466:

भिटी क्षमता बाईं ऐसे बाढ़ बुनियादीं॥
बारि ये अदा बाढ़ नहीं देने लोकों॥
नहीं नहीं ड़े सुनी दर्द भि हरि पहाँची बृजस्थित॥
ठकल नहीं ड़े हस्त बाढ़ बीसर में नहीं झाड़ी॥
42. *Adi Granth*, pp. 141, 729, 752 and 1246.


45. See, *Adi Granth*, p. 1143:

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माँझ रिठल मनुषी बनः
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He toils the whole day for his bread.


*Adi Granth*, pp. 345-46:

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मेह लौटि उपर मेह लियो तरः तरः
मेह लब्रायु मुटिया नम हरणे
...
...

पैन उड़ति दे बनके अव रिठल चमने
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*Adi Granth*, p. 486:

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ताही हिर चढ़ा हिर
हिर कर्म चमने
उना रम दी मैद द उमी
सरि रिठल चमने
```

49. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 201.

50. Ojha, P.N., Aspects of Medieval Indian Society and Culture, Delhi, 1978, pp. 136-137. For further discussion on the subject, see, Moreland, W.H., India at the Death of Akbar, Delhi, 1962, pp. 162-163.


52. Ibid., p. 1288. This word ghani is also used by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev more clearly in his Bani; see, Gopal Singh, (tr.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 305.

For the angel of death
presses them in the press
(oil crusher or ghani).
as doth the oilman the oil seeds.


Adi Granth, p. 712:

श्रद्धा अदृ यथार्थ घर अश्मी
निशु रप्त घर गुजन्वित प्रग

Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 718 and 800.

54. In Guru Nanak Bani words, like gur and khand etc. do appears at places:

contd...
For gur, see, *Adi Granth*, pp. 15, 142, 360, 582, 1286.

For gur and khand, see the following shalok of Baba Farid in *Adi Granth*, p. 1379:

```
irag iS jeyg ars
h eg n fusto gn 3 tffrfe 3a ii
```

Mannmohan Singh, (tr.), *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 4553.

Sweet are candy, sugar, gur (unrefined sugar) honey and the buffalow's milk.
Yea, sweet are all these, but sweeter by far is God.

For the process of making gur, see, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*; also see, Ashraf, K.M., *op. cit.*, p. 134 and footnote 26 of the present chapter.


56. See footnote 26 of the present chapter.


*Adi Granth*, p. 417:

contd...
Also see, *Adi Granth*, pp. 557-58:

Gopal Singh, (tr.), *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 545.

Break thy cosy bed
and thy ivory bracelets,
O woman, ....
Thou neither hast true bracelets
nor bangles,
Nor thou knowest the pedlar
who hawks them yea.

For chess and chessboard etc., see *Adi Granth*, pp.842, 1020, 1085 and 1205.

For these items, see, *Adi Granth*, pp. 14, 479, 552, 822, 968, 1288, 1291 and 1379.

1. तबक्त तन्म त सिखिष्ट ग्रंथ
2. तख़्त हुए ते हिंदू तेही भर्ती क्षणु लगे
3. तख़्त बेठे हिंदू तेही ते बुधुः जैसी विचार जानवरी


Also see, *Adi Granth*, pp. 636, 1015, 1040, 1113 and 1287.

65. For all these words appearing in Guru Nanak Bani, see, Adi Granth, pp. 18, 22, 23, 56, 57, 59, 140, 141, 153, 155, 227, 357, 417, 442, 595, 937, 992 and 1238.

Adi Granth, p. 22:


O thou traders, trade in the true merchandise, buy thou the goods that last with thee. The buyer is all-wise, let him receive the goods, with pleasure.

Also see, Adi Granth, p. 140:


66. Adi Granth, p. 141:

contd..

Some trade in jewels, others in glass,
If the true Guru is pleased,
We find the treasure of jewels within us.

67. *Adi Granth*, p. 166:

Some trade in jewels, others in glass,
If the true Guru is pleased,
We find the treasure of jewels within us.


The merchant goeth to trade with his horses.
And earneth wealth and buildeth hopes,
and strengthens his love of maya.

68. *Adi Granth*, p. 595:

The merchant goeth to trade with his horses.
And earneth wealth and buildeth hopes,
and strengthens his love of maya.


contd..
Make thy ever-decreasing age as thy store-house,
and stock it with the Lord's name.
And deal only with the Lord's pedlars,
the saints and reaping the profit be in joy.
Hearing of the sacred books, let this be thy trade,
and load with thy merchandise the horses of truth.
Yea, carry then with thee the fare of merit
and leave not this day's task till tomorrow.


70. *Adi Granth*, p. 418:


The following couplet is in the form of an advice
to those who indulge in the true business,
(i.e., seekers of the truth of God), that they
should deal only in such items, which bring profit
on their merchandise.

... ... 

Trade, ye with a set object
Lest ye grieve,
yea, ye are traders
only if ye reap some profit.

See also, *Adi Granth*, p. 18.
71. *Adi Granth*, p. 442:

देवनागरी हितः श्रद्धा अभिनं

नमां नवं नमः हे सते॥

Gopal Singh, (tr.), *op. cit.*, p. 438.

The traders of the same kind come to Thee and they reap the profit of the Name.

Also see, *Adi Granth*, p. 399.

72. *Adi Granth*, p. 789:

हुले हर में रहनु॥

ने गुरुपे में अजिजनु॥


And as many are the living beings, so many are the customers.

Yea, when the shops are open, the trade goeth on, and no sooner that one cometh from one end than one quiteth from the other.

For words like shops and bazars etc., see, *Adi Granth*, pp. 141, 399, 595 and 992.

73. *Adi Granth*, p. 718:

ग्रीयों ने अज ब्रज अजदे - -- ॥


The grocers (banias) home has asafoetida.
No jeweller can weigh in his scales either the earth or the sea or the mountain, with his little weights (tola, masha and rati).
Adi Granth, p. 12:

\[ \text{For measurement of time also see, Adi Granth, pp. 98, 107, 140 and 843.} \]

82. For weights and measures (of time and distance), see Jaffar, S.M., op. cit., pp. 222-223.
Adi Granth, p. 464.

83. For tanks or tank, daam and kauri or kaudi, see, Adi Granth, pp. 133, 147, 156, 195, 227 and 335.


Adi Granth, p. 23:

\[ \text{Also see, Adi Granth, pp. 143, 662 and 789.} \]

86. For inland communications, see Farooque, A.K. Muhammed, Roads and Communications in Mughal India, Delhi, pp. 35-40.

88. See, Adi Granth, pp. 64, 418, 659. For night-stay in a serai, see Suhi Kabir, Adi Granth, pp. 792-793.

89. Lunia, B.N., op. cit., p. 227. For Pack horses, see Adi Granth, p. 166.

90. For references of different types of modes of conveyance, see, Adi Granth, pp. 417 and 1010.


92. Ibid., p. 228.

93. In one of his hymns, Guru Nanak gives an eye witness account of Babar's attack on saidpur and the miserable condition of the people to which they were subjected to suffer; see Adi Granth, pp. 417-418.


95. See, Adi Granth, pp. 496 and 1147.

96. Ibid., pp. 481, 487, 655, 736, 1023 and 1061. To quote a line from the Bani of Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1023:

गोपाल श्री गोपाल
निन्दे दिंदे पुर्यां उभरणी जै


contd...
This world is like a juggler's game.
Here one juggles one's part.
Yea, as one mumbles in a dream.

97. See, Adi Granth, pp. 832 and 1139.

98. About this profession, see, Adi Granth, pp. 1008, 1256, 1279 and 1363.

To quote a couplet from Guru Nanak Bani, Adi Granth, p. 1279:

ਹੁੰਦੀ ਮੁਰਤੀਕਰੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜੀ ਬਚੇਂ ਐਕੀ॥
ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀ ਨੇੜੀ ਭਰਨ॥
ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਪੁਰਨੀ ਖੁੱਲੀ ਅਕਲ॥
ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦਰਦੀ ਸੋਚ ਸਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਕੈ ਕੀ ਗਾਹੀ॥
ਨਹੀ ਸੋਚ ਕਧ ਦਹਾਣਾਈ ਜਗ ਲੈ ਆਹੀ॥
ਦੇਖ ਐਨੀ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਮੇਂ ਹੁਨਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੋਂ॥


Adi Granth, p. 1245:

ਭਰਨੀ ਭਰਨੀ ਹਿੰਦ ਵਚਨ ਦੇਵਨੀ
ਰਹਿਤ ਵਚਨ ਬਣ ਏਂਤੀ॥