CHAPTER IV

Comparative study of selected hymns of Guru Nanak and Martin Luther.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we are making a special study of the hymns of the two religious reformers. A comparative study of their works would imply a study of the works of the same kind and since Guru Nanak's literary legacy exists only in the form of hymns, we are forced to limit this study to a comparison of their hymns. We are of course confronted with the difficulty that Nanak left behind 974 hymns, Luther on the other hand only 36 comparatively short hymns. We try to sidestep this difficulty by taking only a few selected hymns of both, in Nanak's case, the most important ones, namely, the Japji, Asa-di-War, Sidha Goshti and Baramah, in Luther's case four hymns, each drawn from one particular group as representative of the rest. Nanak's works are certainly much longer than Luther's four selected hymns. But since they are all religious poetry and hence similar in theme and since their high poetic quality derives from the same sources, in our qualitative analysis of these works, length is not a consideration at all. Perhaps the fact that Nanak's hymns are all original while Luther's are mostly adaptations of psalms, biblical passages, prayers etc. is a more serious difficulty. But the very changes that the adaptations present can offer conclusive evidence on the views and methods of work of their author and hence are of as great value as original works.
The Hymns of Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak has written 974 hymns. (207) Some believe that Guru Nanak used to sing and his disciples used to note the songs down. But Professor Prakash Singh is of the opinion that Guru Nanak has written all his compositions himself and later on handed them over to his successor Guru Angad.

"Guru Nanak had taken great care in preserving his compositions. He handed them on to his successor, Guru Angad so that his message could be spread after him." (208)

Kapur Singh, a famous scholar is also of the opinion that Guru Angad has collected the scattered papers of Guru Nanak.

207. His own contribution was two thousand nine hundred and forty nine stanzas and nine hundred seventy four hymns, in the Adi Granth.


Compare: 'There are almost a thousand hymns of Guru Nanak in the sacred scripture, the Adi Granth.' Singh, Khushwant; Guru Nanak the Poet, in: Guru Nanak, His Life, Times and Teachings, Edited by Gurmukh Nihal Singh, New Delhi, 1969, P. 218.


Compare: 'The real facts are that the Second Sikh Guru, Guru Angad (1504-1552) formed the nucleus of the book now called Guru Granth Sahib by collecting in one place the revelation of his Master which then lay scattered as papers written by Guru Nanak himself. That all these manuscripts were written in what are called Gurmukhi characters in Guru's Hand is hardly in doubt.'

Buru Nanak has touched on all fields of human life, although, no doubt, the main theme of his writings is God.

Sant Singh Sekhon had divided his literary writings in three main classes.

"First, three are those which deal mainly with the new or modified metaphysical beliefs and ideas that he wanted the people to be guided by; and they can be called metaphysical in nature. The Japji, the Dakhani Onkar, the Sidha Goshti and many other hymns can be put in this category. In the second category are to be placed the compositions that criticise the wrong social customs and practices of the people (...). Thirdly there are those compositions which refer to political conditions and events." (209)

Gurbachan Singh Talib has also divided Guru Nanak's writings into three categories.

"Those that are primarily philosophic and meditative, those that are lyrical and devotional and those mainly ethical." (210)

But he himself does not accept this division as absolute.


210. Talib, Gurbachan Singh; Guru Nanak, Makers of Indian Literature, loc. cit., P. 40.
Another division of Nanak's works can be made according to chronological order. (211)

1) 1469 to 1497 AD. Hymns composed during his life at home up to the age of 28. These include such verses as those addressed to his teacher at the age of seven and to the Pandit at the sacred thread ceremony.

2) 1497 to 1521 AD. Those composed during 24 years of extensive missionary travels. Most of his compositions belong to this period.

3) 1521 to 1539 AD. Hymns composed during the time spent at Kartarpur.

Naturally this chronological division made on the basis of Janam Sakhis and other accounts filled with legend and myths is not absolutely dependable.

Guru Nanak has expressed his thought through hymns on different themes according to the demands of his time. All his poetry is in rhyme, to facilitate memorising and recitation, for it is meant to be repeated by the devotees for personal edification and spiritual uplift, individually and in assemblies. Except Japji all compositions of Guru Nanak are composed in various ragas. (212) They can easily be sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. Guru Nanak used to sing his hymns and his minstrel companion, Mardana.


212. Talib, Gurbachan Singh; Guru Nanak, Makers of Indian Literature, loc. cit., P. 36.
used to play the reback for him. Nanak was of the opinion that music attracts the attention of the human mind more quickly and it touches the human heart more deeply than any other thing. Gobind Singh Mansukhani sums up Nanak's attitude in the following words:

"Musical sound originated from God. It is holy in every sense. The best way to worship God is to blend the divine word with holy music. The music for worship is higher than the type of singing indulged in by some for entertainment." (213)

Kanwar Mrigendra Singh also feels that Nanak has given an important place to music. (214)

S.C. Verma goes to the extent of saying that if one wants to understand Nanak's hymns, then one must have a full knowledge of Indian music. (215)


214. Compare: "(...) music provides a new social pattern when sung or heard in a congregation i.e. the Sangat. Singing in a congregation purifies the mind and prevents the person from committing sin."


215. Compare: "The resonance of the hymns and their ethical tone can only be fully appreciated when the corresponding musical sonants are understood."

Guru Nanak has created a number of verse compositions. These are:

a) Japji.
b) Asa-de-Var.
c) Sidha-Goshti.
d) Barahmah-Tukhari.
e) Dakhani Onkar.
f) Majh-di-Var.
g) Malar-di-Var.
h) Sodar and Sohela.
i) Alahunian.
j) Babar Vani.

The above mentioned list of Guru Nanak's compositions is not fully exhaustive nor is it based on chronological order; it is based on their importance in the Panjabi literature.

**Japji: The Sikh Morning prayer.** (216)

This composition is in 40 chhandas i.e. 2 slokas and 38 Pauries (hymns) consisting of 4977 words in all. The Japji is a deeply reflective poem. In the whole Adi-Granth the Japji is the only composition which is not set to music. The Japji emphasises the Oneness of God, devotion to the Name and love for the supreme Lord.

"In the Japji important philosophical truths have been stated in beautiful and meaningful

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216. Japji: We are following the translation of Max Arthur Macauliffe.
language and in a succinct and poetical form. It is, therefore, not easy to understand, much less to explain, this master-piece of the Great Master." (217)

No exact date is known about the origin of this composition. Different theories have been expounded about this and other compositions of Guru Nanak. But most of the Sikh Scholars are of the opinion that Japji took its present form after he settled down in Kartarpur.

"(...) Japji was composed at different times and put together in the form of a single composition by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur in order to give his disciples a compendium of his teachings for their recitation, guidance and inspiration." (218)

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217. Singh, Prakash; An exposition to Japji Sahib, loc. cit., P.268.

218. Ibid., P.265.

Some of the other theories about the date of composition are the following:—

a) Besides the view of the Janam Sakhis given above, it was believed by Bhai Mani Singh that the Japji Sahib was composed by Guru Nanak as a result of his discussion with Sidhas and Yogis.

b) Some chroniclers believe that the various hymns in the Japji were composed at different times as and when occasion demanded. For instance, the 22nd Pauri (Hymn) was believed to have been composed while Guru Nanak held discussions with Qazis and Mullahs at Mecca and Baghdad.
It is said that the original manuscripts of the Adi-Granth are preserved in Jullundur:

"The original manuscript of the Adi Granth as compiled and corrected by Guru Arjan, the Fifth Guru himself, is still preserved at Kartarpur in Jullundur District (Panjab)" (219)

The Japji begins with the Mool-Mantra (lit. Fundamental Formula). The Mool Mantra is followed by a Shloka, which forms the prologue of the composition. Then follow 38 Pauris (Stanzas) and in the end once again a shloka, in all 40 hymns.

"The whole Japji is divided into four parts; the first part contains seven Pauris, the second twenty, the third four and the fourth seven Pauris. The first seven Pauris define and deal with the problem of the devotee of the Lord. The second part takes the devotee step by step towards the Great Reality or Truth. The third part describes the attitude of the person, who has realized the Great Reality, and the last part discusses the spiritual truth seeker." (220)

c) Another variation of Bhai Mani Singh's view is that Guru Nanak had narrated his discussion with the Sidhas to the chief disciple, later his successor, Bhai Lehna (renamed Guru Angad), and that after composing the opening Shlokas he had asked Guru Angad to write the remaining part of the Japji as explained by him. A similar view is expressed by Dr. Mohan Singh on the basis of Bhai Santokh Singh's 'Suraj Parkash' (Gurupartapsuruday).

Compare: 'According to Dr. Mohan Singh and Prof. Sahib Singh the probable date of the composition of the verses of Japji in the order they appear today was 1532 AD seven years before the Guru's death.'


219. Ibid., P. 263.
220. Ibid., P. 261.

Pauri is equivalent to stanza.
A similar division of Japji has been made by Vinoba Bhave:

"In the first seven stanzas the theme is the eternity and immaculateness of God and devotion to Him is enjoined upon man. That section is in a sense the Preamble. The second section is made up of three passages of four stanzas each, containing the exposition of the Path of 'listening', Contemplation and Absorption. The third section contemplates the vision of God, and expresses it as infinite glory and might, presiding over the universe. To imagine His form and might is beyond man's intellect. All that lies within man's power is to pray to Him, to seek refuge in Him, to merge with Him. These we must attempt. The last section concerns itself with Praxis, that is, action and endeavour in the way of God-realization."(221)

The Japji is recited by every true Sikh in the early morning hours. The Japji is the only composition of Guru Nanak which is not to set to Music and is not meant to be sung to the accompaniment of any musical instrument. (222)

221. Bhave, Vinoba; Commentary on Japuji, Guru Nanak's Great Composition, loc. cit., p. 47.

The Japji begins with a confession or rather triumphant assertion of faith in the one eternal God:
"There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent". Truth is fixed as the essence of his being. "The true one was in the beginning..."
Nanak's name for Him is 'Sat Nam', the true name. How to know him, asks the singer in the first Pauri. "How shall man become true before God? How shall the veil of falsehood be rent?" (223) The answer follows immediately: "By walking, O Nanak, according to the will of the Commander as preordained."
Stanza II deals with this will or Hukam, which rules the Universe. 'All are subject to His order, none is exempt from it'. One who understands God's Will is "never guilty of egoism". In the next Pauri God's greatness and bounty are sung. "The Giver giveth; the receiver groweth weary of receiving". Continuing the thought in the next Pauri, the question is asked,

223. Khushwant Singh's translation of the line is:
'How then shall the Truth be known? How the veil of false illusion torn?'
Gopal Singh: 'How then to be true? How rend the veil of sham, untruth?'

The difference in meaning between Khushwant Singh and the other two translations is striking. The seeker of Japji seems to be engaged not in the quest for some abstract truth, as Khushwant Singh's lines suggest, but in the quest how to reach God, to obtain Him.
"Then what can we offer Him, whereby His court may be seen?" "Meditate on his true Name", we read in the same Pauri. In the next the all important role that the Guru plays in leading man to God is dealt with. "Gurmukh Nadam Gurmukh Vedam". The Pauri culminates in the lines "My Guru hath explained one thing to me, that there is but one Bestower on all living beings; may I not forget Him", with which lines the next Pauri also ends. In the seventh Pauri turning the thought round as it were, the singer says, no man can bestow anything on God.

Pauri 8 to 19 Vinoba Bhave calls section two or the second step in man's ascent to God. The first four Pauris begin and repeat almost in every line 'By hearing the name' and close with the refrain"Nanak, the saints are ever happy, By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more". Even the number of lines in these Pauris is the same which is not the case with most Pauris in the Japji. The high poetic quality of the Pauris strikes one as much as the fullness of feeling and the nobility of thought that enunciates spiritual truths in epigrammatic terms. e.g. "By hearing the Name truth, contentment and divine knowledge are attained" (Pauri X).
Vinoba Bhave calls these three qualities Satya, Santosh, Jnan the great jewels, the essence of the Guru Granth. (224)

The repetition at the beginning of each line (Suniye in the original), while leading each time to the mention of some new gift bestowed by listening to the 'Naam' is at the same time a rhetorical device that adds to the effect. Intoxicated with the 'Naam' Nanak exultantly sings about all that it can bring the devotee. He is here more the Poet singing God's praises than the theologian or the philosopher. One can say that Japji shows throughout a highly poetic approach to the entrancing question of man's attaining of God. It is to be remembered that Nanak called himself poet. (225)

The next four Pauris relate 'the condition of him who obeyeth God', although it is admitted that no paper or pen or writer can do it. While Macauliffe and Man Mohan Singh translate 'manan' as 'obey', Vinoba Bhave interprets it as 'contemplate' and Gopal Singh and Khushwant Singh use 'believe' for it. In any case we can take it for granted that it depicts the stage next to listening or hearing. Once again the Pauris (12 to 15) are uniform in length, each line begins with 'manan' in the original Gurmukhi script.

224. Bhave, Vinoba; Commentary on Japuji, loc. cit., P.17.
and ends in rhyme. The last two lines rhyming on 'hei and ei' form the refrain (Aisa namu niranjan hei / ji ki mani jane mani ei). None of the translations seem to have done full justice to the sheer melody of the original. The great spiritual truth the refrain expresses becomes through the very simplicity and directness of its expression an adequate recording of a rare exalted experience: "Whoever obeyeth (contemplates) God, knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart."

Stanzas XVI, XVII, XVIII according to Vinoba Bhave depict Dhyana - absorption in God - that follows Contemplation. "In accordance with the order already indicated, after Srawan (Suniye - Listening) and Manan (Mannai - Contemplation) the next step is Dhyana (Absorption) of which consideration is taken up next. Contemplation is an activity of the intellect, but Absorption lies beyond it. Guru Nanak therefore defined Absorption as devotion. Dhyana is such complete Absorption that it eliminates everything else except the object into which the seeker is absorbing himself." (226) To the layman, the 16th Pauri seems to deal with 'the elect' who are acceptable and obtain honour in God's court and who see the infinitude of God's creation as well

226. Bhave, Vinoba; Commentary on Japuji, loc. cit., P. 22.
as their own worthlessness. The refrain for the three Pauris is, "So powerless am I, that I cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee. Whatever pleaseth Thee is good. Thou, O Formless one, art ever secure". If in the 17th Pauri we hear about the good ones who do penance, in the 18th we hear of the perpetrators of evil and God stands above both good and evil.

Not only the refrain but the uniform beginning of the lines and the repetition of the word 'numberless' knit up the Pauris from 17 to 19.

The next section of Pauris 20 to 27 which Vinoba Bhave calls 'praise of the Lord' glorifies the Creator, who alone knows when He fashioned the world (XXI), who has no limits (XXII, XXIV), whose bounties cannot be recorded, whose gifts include distress and hunger also (XXV), whose attributes and dealings are priceless (XXVI) and in whose praise wind, water and fire, all the Gods, Rikhis and Pandits join (XXVII). These paeans are outbursts of rapture at the glory of God, the eternal, the true, the holy, to whose will all remain subject. The God of these Pauris is not Nirguna, the attributeless one but Saguna, who 'will do what pleaseth Himself'.

The last Pauris (28 to 38) are different in tone and concern themselves with 'Praxis—that is action
and endeavour in the way of God realization." (227)

In the Pauris XXVIII and XXIX numerous rituals of the yogic path of discipline are given in the form of a series of metaphors. Guru Nanak rejects them all as he has always rejected rituals and external observances. (228) In the next two God who directs the creator, provider and destroyer, who beholdeth His creation, but is Himself invisible is saluted! "Hail! Hail to Him, the primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age." With the same salutation the two preceding stanzas also close.

In Pauris 34 to 37 again we have not the rapturous praise or description of God, but the sober description of the four spheres or Kamada which the devotee must traverse. In the first, Dharam Khand, or the sphere of duty or the realm of righteousness in the world of men, each is judged according to his acts. The next is the realm of knowledge (Jnan - Khand) peopled by Krishnas, Shivas, Indras, Dhruvas etc., who are possessors of divine knowledge. Next is the realm of Happiness (Shram Khand) whose attribute is beauty. The fourth (Karm Khand) is the realm of action whose attribute is force. This is peopled by very powerful

227. Ibid., p. 47.

228. For example the incident of throwing ablution to the West or sleeping with his feet towards the Kaaba. (See P. 70, 78 of this thesis)
warriors and Gods' in whose hearts God dwelleth'. The 38th Pauri using the elaborate imagery of a goldsmith's workshop speaks of the forging of logos, the word, the Naam.

In this rather prosaic section occurs however the very moving and deeply poetic depiction of complete self-surrender to God. "I have no strength to speak..." (stanza XXXIII)

The last part of the Japji is a sloka, that limits itself to our planet with its air, water and earth and to the human race that is judged according to merits and demerits. It closes with the affirmation that many shall be emancipated along with those 'who have pondered on the Name'.

The Japji is no philosophical treatise like the Bhagwad Gita, but praise of God in highly poetic language. It certainly presupposes some philosophical and theological assumptions about God and man. But it is not exposition of the theories that we have except perhaps in the very last part, but exultant singing of the glory of God. It is filled with such exalted emotion and ardour that one would call it a hymn to God rather than a philosophical poem.

We see Nanak deliberately using in addition to the melody of music, rhetorical devices, poetic imagery
and familiar metaphors to lend effect to his words. Many Sikh scholars consider the Japji a masterpiece of poetic composition in Panjabi language. 'This great composition of Nanak has revealed the potentialities of the panjabi language such as its analytical power, appropriate vocabulary and pithiness. The study of the Japji proves that during the sixteenth century when certain important Indian languages such as Urdu and Khari Boli were not yet current, the Panjabi language had developed a definite form and proper expression.' (229) 

Asa - di - Var. (230)

Ballads in which the brave deeds and battles of heroes were sung in Pre-Nanak days were called Vars. Guru Nanak used this popular form of folk-poetry to spread his teachings. He wrote three Vars in the Majh, Asa and Malar ragas. The Japji is recited, but the Vars, being set to music, are sung.

Asa-di-Var is sung in the morning to the accompaniment of musical instruments. It has 24 Pauris interspersed with slokas. A few of the slokas were written by Guru Angad. The slokas and Pauris make up together 83 stanzas.

No special date can be assigned to Asa-di-Var.

230. We are following the translation of M.A. Macauliffe.
Some of the stanzas were written very early, as for example, the one addressed to the Brahmin priest who came to invest him with the Janeau, the sacred thread, or similar ones written in specific situations. Asa-di-Var is in fact a mixed collection, not limited to one theme and not logical in the evolution of thought. Since the unifying central idea of the Japji as well as its high poetic quality is lacking, Asa-di-Var falls far short of Japji, although in a few stanzas it does rise to the level of the Japji.

We can perhaps divide the stanzas into three groups, those that praise God in the manner of Japji, those that lay down ethical instructions for man, those that are argumentative and satirical in nature.

Asa-di-Var begins with an assertion of the all important role of the Guru, a theme which is taken up in other stanzas also as in Pauri IV, VI and VIII. It is in the glorification of God that the work most closely approximates to the Japji. With the repetition characteristic of him, Nanak defines God as the true one (Slok II - 'True are Thy regions and true Thy universe'), sings his glory in Mahala I ('Great is His glory whose name is great, Great is His glory whose justice is true'), expatiates on the wonder of the
creation and of the creator (Wonderful Thy word, wonderful Thy knowledge. Slok. III), acknowledges God's power as the source of everything. (By Thy power we see, by Thy power we hear or enjoy the highest happiness - Mahala following Slok III), points out how the fear of God keeps the universe going ('In fear the winds and breezes ever blow. In fear flow hundred of thousands of the rivers') and in the last Pauri (XXIV) accepts God's will as the only concern of man.

"Man must do the work which God destined for him from the beginning, Nanak, except in the one God alone there is no abiding place. He doeth what He pleaseth."

Running like a red thread through the 83 stanzas is the contemplation of God the creator.

God Himself created the world and Himself gave names to things, He made Maya by His power, seated He beheld His work with delight (Pauri I)

In Pauri II he says God then appointed Dharamraj to judge their acts. In slok VIII he speaks of God's care for His creatures. "Nanak, God having created animals taketh care of them all / The Creator, who created the World hath to take thought for it also."

The same idea is repeated in Slok VI.
Equally persistent is the theme of truth and falsehood (Slok II, Pauri II, Pauri VIII and Slok X about falsehood) and one of the most interesting stanzas is that on the question when man can be called true.

Man is known as true, when truth is in his heart

Man is known as true, when he beareth love to the true one,

Man shall be known as true, when he knoweth the true way,

Man shall be known as true when he receiveth true instruction,

Man shall be known as true, when he dwelleth in the pilgrimage of his heart.

Truth is the medicine for all, it removeth and washeth away sin.

Nanak maketh supplication to those who are in possession of truth. (P. 231-232)

The ethical precepts are so much a part of the spiritual or satiric passages that perhaps they should not be taken out of the context. They are however the weakest portions of (Asa-di-Var) and only the epigrammatic finish and the profound truth of many of them make them remarkable. A few examples are cited:

"Everyone is perfect to himself: no one admitteth himself wanting" (P. 233)
"Pain is Medicine, worldly pleasure a disease" (P. 233)
"As man acteth, so shall he be described" (P.235)
"Dispute not with a fool" (P.244)
"The more one readeth and writeth, the more is one tormented" (P.229)
"When pride is removed, God's gate is seen" (P.227)
"As man regardeth God, so God regardeth him" (P.227)
"None may remain when his measure is full" (P.225)

Among the satirical passages which were called forth by specific incidents like discussions with Pandits or a toll-keeper's fanaticism about purity, the sharpest are these against the Brahmmins. It is clear that Guru Nanak was as fond of dispute as Luther and could hit even harder than Luther.

"On their foreheads are sacrificial marks; on their waists reddish dhotis; And in their hands knives; they are the world's butchers." (P.240)

"You read books, perform your twilight devotions, argue, worship stones, and sit like cranes; You utter falsehoods as excellent jewels; You meditate on the Gayatri three times a day; You wear necklaces, put sacrificial marks on your foreheads, carry two dhotis and put towels on your heads,
If you knew God's designs you would know that yours is verily a vain religion." (P.237)

Cogent reasoning and broad humanity fill the passage on women "why call her bad from whom are born Kings?" (P.244) or the verses composed when some
Brahmins left a house where there had been a birth, calling it impure. "If the idea of impurity be admitted, there is impurity in everything." (P. 242)

It is true that these passages do not coalesce with those referred to earlier. But they are also remarkable for force, brevity and reasonableness.

We shall close this study of 'Asa-di-Var' with an analysis of one of the hymns in it. It is slok III: "Wonderful Thy word, Wonderful Thy knowledge". Once again as in his most powerful passages each line begins with the same word 'Vismath', wonderful. One can guess the sheer effect of such repetition on the singer and the listener. Apart from this deliberate use of a device to sweep the devotee off his feet on a wave of spiritual intoxication, what strikes us most is the attitude of wonder and rapture that the poet-devotee experiences at the contemplation of the creator and his creation.

The stanza begins with the expression of wonder at 'Knowledge', a knowledge that encompasses earth and its products, elemental powers and creatures, man and his pleasures and feelings as well as man in his relation to God, and culminates in the confession of the feeling of wonder that has become habitual.
with him and of the fortune of those who possess this knowledge and understanding and sense of wonder.

Beholding these wonderful things I remain wondering Nanak, they who understand them are supremely fortunate.

Not only in the evolution of thought of the whole stanza but in each line we notice the same artistic perfection. The combination of words in each line is at the same time poetic and philosophic, imaginative and logical. "Wonderful Thy word, wonderful Thy knowledge." The poet passes from the simplest unit 'word' (which itself, Guru Nanak uses very much in the sense of 'logos' rather than mere word) to the widest expanse of it, namely the whole realm of knowledge. Then he turns to what knowledge unfolds and with the same sweep covers at one stride individual creatures and all species of creation.

"Wonderful Thy creatures, wonderful their species".

In the next line he speaks of all their external aspects:

"Wonderful their form, wonderful their colours."

Then with a sudden turn from vast perspectives to specific details he admires with all sensitiveness of an artist and a lover of beauty the pure naked beauty of unadorned animals.

"Wonderful the animals which wander naked"
His brush next captures in broad strokes the elemental power: wind, water, fire and earth. (231) All the beautiful movements of fire are enshrined in the line:

"Wonderful Thy fire which sporteth wondrously" and the earth with all its vegetation and mineral wealth is also brought into this cosmic picture.

"Wonderful the earth, wonderful the sources of production"

The next lines touch on man and his relation to God. Nanak's great affirmation of life welcomes also "the pleasures to which mortals are attached", the whole gamut of their experiences from hunger to repletion. His love embraces all aspects of nature from the desolate desert to the populous road. With a deft use of antonyms he brings alive the actuality of the emotional relations with God.

"Wonderful is meeting, wonderful parting from Thee; Wonderful Thy nearness, wonderful Thy remoteness; Wonderful to beheld Thee present."

This exquisite affirmation of God and man and life dissolves into the sense of wonder that fills his whole being and holds him its life-long captive.

231. Indian concept of the five elements i.e. Earth, fire, air, water and sky.
This poetic manifesto of affirmation once again reveals the poet in Nanak more than the philosopher, a fact of which we are even more convinced when we turn to the original in Gurmukhi. Not only the Raga or music accounts for its melody, but also the rhythmic beat with the caesura in the middle of most of the lines, the deft and changing use of initial and internal rhymes etc. For example the first lines in the original (Wonderful Thy word, wonderful Thy knowledge) are:

Vismad Nad, vismad Ved
Vismad Jeev, vismad Bhed
Vismad Roop, vismad Rang

The translations are but a matter-of-fact rendering of the content and ignore the melody of the lines. Not only the first three lines but throughout the stanza we notice this disparity between the original and the translation. The two lines:

Vismad sanjog, vismad vijog
Vismad Bhuk, vismad Bhog.

are translated by Macauliffe as

Wonderful is meeting, wonderful parting from Thee;
Wonderful is hunger, wonderful repletion.

To sum up, in this stanza Guru Nanak impresses us as a superb word artist, poet and singer in addition to being a thinker and philosopher.
Sidha - Goshti (232)

Sidha - Goshti is one of the important compositions of Guru Nanak. The exact date of this composition is also not known. Different scholars have different opinions about the date of this composition. Some feel that it was composed in Kartarpur. "It can be safely assumed that his more important works like Japji, Asa-di-Var, Sidha - Goshti and Baramah (...) seem to have been recorded at Kartarpur." (233) Duncan Greenlees gives 1539 as the year of this composition. (234)

Sidha - Goshti has been composed in Ramkali Raga (musical measure). It has 73 stanzas and each

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232. We are following the translation of Khushwant Singh. In a few instances quotations from Manmohan Singh are also included as indicated in the footnotes.


234. Compare: "Early in 1539, the Guru attended the Sivaratri festival at Achal Batala, where he wrote the Sidha-Goshti, which is believed to be a report of discussion held there with certain yogis who followed Gorakhnath."


Compare: 'During his residence in Batala, the Guru composed the Sidha-Gosht, a treatise from which the Jogis are said to have derived spiritual consolation.'

Macauliffe, M.A.; The Sikh Religion, loc.cit., P.163.
stanza contains six lines. This composition is in dialogue or better in question and answer form like the Catechism of Luther. As already pointed out Guru Nanak was dead against ritualism or purely external religious performances from his early childhood. At the time of the sacred thread ceremony at the age of nine he opposed this ceremony in a hymn. (235)

During his missionary journeys Guru Nanak met many yogis and Sidhas. The many disputes he must have had with them must have inspired Sidha - Goshti which depicts a debate with Guru Nanak on one side and the men of miracles forming an assembly on the other. Nanak provokes the dispute by a statement of his position: "What is the good of wandering about? It is through the True Name, that man is rendered pure. Without the True Name no one is emancipated." (236)

The Yogis then ask a series of questions and Guru Nanak answers them. Nanak disapproves of the practice followed by the Yogis who practise self-torture and reduce the body to a skeleton through fasting and penance. He discards the asceticism of this sect; leaving one's home, leading a solitary life and begging.

235. See above p. 63 of this thesis.
for food from door to door.

The Yogis tell him:
Shun the shops and highways of the cities
Amidst trees of forests go and stay
Wild roots and berries be the food you eat
Sages who know say this is the way.
Go bathe at places of pilgrimage

If union with God be your goal (...)

This is the only way of life as you will see.

They also speak about the external trappings of a yogi.

Wear rings in your ears and the hermit's cloak on your person, carry the beggar's bowl.

(P. 176)

Nanak replies:

What means the patched cloak and begging bowl? Instead of putting upside down your begging bowl
Turn your back on worldly things.
Little use is it to wear the Yogi's cap on your head.

The essence of asceticism "is to abstain from too much sleep and too much food". Truth, tranquility and self-control should be one's guides. (P. 177)

He who effaces his ego,
of attachments is made free
Within whose heart is truth enshrined
He alone is a real yogi. (P. 181)

It is not alone the yogic way of life that they discuss, but also questions that have exercised the human mind in all ages.
What comes to life at birth?
What dies when a man dies?
Whose spirit pervades the three regions
The nether world, the earth and the skies?

How is the soul lost? How is it found?

Where does man come from?
Where does he go when he dies?

How can we find the reality of the Ineffable?

This terrible blot of death how can we burn?
How be fearless when to our final home we turn?

Nanak's answer is always the same in content
though the words might be different. One finds salvation
through the divine word, the Naam to which we are led
by the Guru.

It is through the guru's teaching,
We merge in the Formless one. (P. 180)

And it is by following God's Hukam that
we understand reality.

He who questions not the divine command
But accepts it as a wonder beyond seeing
Will understand the reality of things and beings.

The sense of order and the spirit of affirmation
that filled Nanak's soul come to expression in these
lines and elsewhere also in this work. The Yogis
ask him:

What are your views on the beginning of Creation? Where did the Creator-in-trance then reside? What were the first glimmerings of knowledge?

Nanak answers:

The beginning of the beginning staggers the imagination. It can only be described as indescribable wonder. In the profound stillness of sunya (nothingness) God came to in-dwell within Himself. (P. 180)

He defines Sunya as 'the great stillness within and without', the state in which a human being is identified with God (P. 183). Those who attain Sunya are like the Creator, who created them (...) outside the wheel of birth, death and rebirth. (...) they hear the beat of drums unbeaten by hand and are in tune with the Infinite. (P. 183) The Gurmukh (one turned towards the Guru) who follows the Guru will attain this state; but the Manmukh being turned to his own Man (mind), i.e. egoistic, will not know the essence of reality.

Through their questions the Yogis try to pin-point reality. They ask: 'When there was neither a heart nor a body, where did the mind and breath reside?' In the stillness of Sunya, replies Nanak. "Everyone and everything was a part of God prior to creation. It is the greatest of untold tales." (P. 184)
Sidha - Goshti is thus on the one hand an exposition of the true way of life and on the other a grappling with fundamental questions of metaphysics. Nanak who has pondered over these questions and found their answer tries to express them in words that can be understood. For that purpose he uses metaphors. Some of them are beautiful, e.g., about crossing the turbulent sea of the world without sinking in, he says:

As the lotus in the water is not wet
Nor the water fowl sporting in a stream

(P.175)

Implying the necessity of austerity and asceticism the Yogis ask:

"If teeth are made of wax, how can they bite on steel?" or about a soul encased in a body subject to passions:

"How can one live in a house of snow when one's clothes are aflame?"

(P.182)

In these two comparisons Nanak makes use of opposites like snow and fire, steel and wax, a rhetorical device he often uses. Another beautiful instance of this, this time not with objects and their characterisation, but with ideas, we have in the

237. Compare the translation of Manmohan Singh, "As a lotus flower remains unaffected in water, as also a duck swims against the stream's current and becomes not wet." (P.595)
following lines:

"He who in a crowd can be alone
In a multitude of desires is without desire.
Such a one has access to the Inaccessible
And knows the unknowable." (P.175)

Without desire in the midst of desires, access to the Inaccessible, knowledge of the Unknowable. Once again the consummate word artist is at work as much as the religious teacher.

Some of the images used are however forced and artificial:

Make thou turning away from the world thy beggar's - wallet and the essence of the five elements thy cap!
Let keeping the body alert be thy grass-matting and the mind's control thy loin-cloth.

(P.598, Manmohan Singh)

Such metaphors seem to be almost a mannerism with Guru Nanak, although at their best they are highly imaginative and poetic.

In this dispute with the Sidhas and Yogis Nanak naturally discusses the ideas and uses the

238. This translation of Khushwant Singh seems, in the overeagerness to emphasise the contrasts, to take liberties with the original, especially in the first line. Manmohan Singh's translation is more faithful to the original: "He who lives in an aloneness, engraining the one Lord in his mind, living without desire in the midst of desires and sees and shows to others the inaccessible and Incomprehensible Lord." (P.595, Manmohan Singh)

But for a few such shortcomings Khushwant Singh's translation is as a whole the better of the two.
terminology of Hindu philosophy, in other words the language of Sadhu Bhasha.

The question and answer form makes for conciseness, directness and briskness, but except in rare flashes the high poetic quality, the exalted emotion, and the sheer word melody of the Japji and Asa-di-Var are absent in this work.

**Baramah (Twelve months)** (239)

Nothing can be said about the exact date of this composition. But many scholars are of the opinion that it was written by Guru Nanak in the last years of his life at Kartarpur. It is believed to be amongst the last of the Guru's compositions. (240) Duncan Greenlees is of the opinion that Baramah was composed by Guru Nanak towards the end of 1531. (241) But most of the Sikh scholars like Lal Singh reject a precise date. (242)

239. We are following the translation of Khushwant Singh except for a few quotations from Manmohan Singh.


241. Compare: 'Somewhere about the end of 1531 the Guru wrote his exquisite mystic poem on the twelve months, its theme being the loving union of the soul and God.' Greenlees, Duncan; Guru Nanak, in: The Panjab Past and Present, loc. cit., P. 293.

Baramah is a short composition consisting of only 17 stanzas. Each stanza has six lines. This important composition of Nanak describes the different moods of Nature in the twelve months of a year. Baramah is one of the most beautiful examples of Mysticism. The love sick bride is left in the loneliness of her home. Her spouse has gone too far away from her. Helplessly she is waiting for the arrival of her Spouse:

O Nanak, Thy bride is beholding Thy way. 
Hear Thou, O Omnipresent spirit. (243)

(P.771)

The changing seasons increase her agony in the absence of her groom. This grief stricken bride is the human soul and her Spouse is God, who is far away from her.

Baramah begins with the first Indian month 'Chet' (15th March to 15th April). This is the spring season. Everything is blooming and the Koel calls in the mango-grove; but the soul is full of sorrow and pain, while her spouse is not at home. Then comes the month of Baisakh. The bride feels that Baisakh can become beautiful for her if her groom loves her.

"Without thee I am as worthless as a shell."
But the Lord is within herself.
"If thy body and soul yearn for the Lord, 
the Lord shall love thee.
And Baisakh will beautiful be."

(P.166)

Then comes one of the hottest months, 'Jeth', when everything burns like a furnace. But the bride keeps waiting and singing the Lord's praise.

"Thou are great and good, truth manifest and unshakeable,
Of attachments art thou free, And, I, lowly, humble, helpless." (P. 187)

Then comes another hot month Asadh (June-July), when the earth burns hot like fire. When everything burns with scorching heat, she seeks the cool of the evening. She does not know what is in store for her, sorrow or a life of joy everlasting, but she leaves it to her Lord.

Nanak, my death and life are with the Lord,
To whom I have surrendered this soul of mine. (P. 774)

Savan (July-August) brings clouds and rain and the flash of lightning terrifies the bride and without her Beloved she has no hunger and no sleep.

"My body and soul yearn for my Lord
If He return not, I shall die pining for Him." (P. 188)

She consoles herself:
"she alone is the true wife who loses herself in the Lord." (P. 188)

Then comes Bhadon (August-September). It is also rainy season, when river and land are one endless
expanse of water, frogs croak, peacocks scream and the nights are dark. This is time of enjoyment and merry making. The bride alone is unhappy. She is afraid:

"I lose myself in a maze of falsehood /
I waste my wanton youth. "Whither shall I go? she asks and finds the reply, "ask the Guru the way/ He knoweth the path which leads to the Lord." (P.189)

In Asan (September - October) from the depth of her yearning rises the cry:

"O Master come to me / I waste and shall die" (P.189)

She feels that the Master forsook her because she strayed on to the paths of falsehood. Now age hath greyed her locks and the fires of hell lie ahead. 'Whither shall I turn?' she asks in desperation. But consoling thoughts arise:

"If the name of the Lord courseth in thy veins, life and hope will forever be green." (P.189)

And the long waiting will be rewarded. She will get her due, she thinks, in the month of Katak (October-November). But self-examination tells her she still, 'full of faults dies not nor gains release.'

And one watch of day drags on like half a year. (P.190)
But Maghar (November - December) brings her assurance, 'She loveth the Lord, the Lord loveth her,' and "she singeth songs of joy and fulfilment."

(P.190)

In the month of Pokh (December - January) as "winters frost doth freeze the sap in tree and bush" so does

The absence of the Lord
Kill the body and the mind
O Lord! why cometh not thou?

rises the cry from the soul.

But in Magh (January - February) comes fulfilment after pilgrimage within herself and purification.

"I met Him.
He found me good
And let me lose myself in Him," says she.

Phalgun (February - March) finds her in full bloom. Day and night she is in spiritual exaltation. She is in bliss because she hath no love for self.
The poem ends on a quiet note of complete fulfilment and contentment.

O Nanak, a bride welcomed in the Master's mansion / Hath found her true Lord and Love.

This story of the soul's yearning for God and union with Him after much waiting narrated under the metaphor of a bride and her groom reminds us of the
'Psalm of Psalms' in the Bible of Radha-Krishna songs in many Indian languages. But it is not only the soul's intense longing for God that comes to expression, but also the process of purification that the soul must undergo before the union with God takes place. In 'Bhadon' and 'Asan' and 'Kathak' we read of 'wanton youth', 'paths of falsehood' etc., which the soul has followed. But the Guru's guidance leads her to the right path even though the world is agitated because it hath lost faith in Him, 'God'. Hence in Magh we read:

I made my ablution.
The Lord entered my being
I made pilgrimage within myself and was purified. (P.191)

In addition to the Guru's role, the poet stresses also the grace of God, the divine Will and pleasure as supreme.

The Master willed not and
His palace doors were barred to me.
When He wanted me I went
With garlands and string of jewels and raiments of finery. (P.192)

Thus the cardinal points of Guru Nanak's message are embedded in 'Baramah' also. One reads also beautiful descriptions of nature which reflect
the moods of the soul. For example in 'Bhadon' when because of monsoon, 'the seas have burst their bounds in the ecstasy of fulfilment', the soul also feels in the unbridled atmosphere, 'waste my wanton youth'.

Lal Singh rightly sums up the content of 'Baramah' when he says: "This bani depicts the beauties of nature, self analysis, devotion to the Lord, yearning for union, attainment and the pain of separation." (245)

About the melody and the word - beauty of of this work there is no need to say anything. We had ample evidence of these even in the compositions discussed earlier, in which the balance naturally swings in favour of thought. In this poem that reads like a string of love lyrics, the elements of poetry and fantasy will have, it stands to reason, the upper hand. Guru Nanak, the God - intoxicated pilgrim, the great lover of music explains his love for God and rapture at merging with God in lines of surpassing beauty and melody.

"In the original the rhythms are inexpressibly beautiful, casting an enchanting spell over the mind. In intensity of yearning, these

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244. Compare: 'The moods of the months and seasons exert their influence on the stages of the soul's journey to the final bliss and beatitude.'

poems touch the level of the greatest poetry and should be studied as a hitherto undiscovered portion of the national literature of India." (246)

The shorter compositions of Guru Nanak like Sohila, Sodar, Fajh-di-Var, Alahunian, Ramkali Dakhni Onkar etc., we shall refer to only briefly. Their theme is a repetition of what the Japji and the longer pieces deal with. The Naam and the Guru are the focal point in them also. The same exalted emotion or rather God-intoxication informs them also. And not only the ragas in which they are composed (Sri Raga, Raga Asa, Raga Gaudi etc.) but also, as we have seen in the other hymns, all the devices of word melody like rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, repetition etc. make them musical. The sweep of imagination, the free use of images, especially of metaphors and similes turn them into a rich poetic repast even for a lay reader.

The first lines of any of the hymns would be evidence enough. A few chosen at random are given below:

Man maigal sakat devana,
ban khand maya moh kairana.

These lines incorporate a very telling metaphor.

246. Talib, Gurbachan Singh; Guru Nanak, Makers of Indian Literature, loc. cit., P. 42.
Our mind is like a rogue elephant crazed with notions of its own might.

Continuing the metaphor in the next line, the poet sings:

It lives in a jungle of delusions and attachment
It runs hither and thither in terror of death
If it finds the guru to guide, it will find its sanctuary.

(P.126-127, Khushwant Singh)

A more truthful and more vivid description of the human situation cannot be given in as few words. This is from Raga Asa. The next one is Raga Gaudi.

Chao chandan auk chadavau,
pat patambar peher hadavau

(P.107)

Alliteration with 'ch', and 'p', assoance with 'a' and the rhyming of 'chadavau' and 'hadavau' strike even the most casual reader. These lines are a powerful expression of the need to turn to God.

I may perfume my body with scented aloe and sandal
Drape it in silks and satins.
Without the Name of Hari, how shall I find happiness?

(P.107)

The following is in Raga Vadhans:

Amla amal na ambdai, machi neer na hoe.

Once again imagery serves to explain a religious concept while the melody sings its way into
the listener's heart. The translation of this line and those immediately following is:

To the opium addict there is nothing like opium.
To the fish water is everything.
Those imbued with the Name of their Lord
Find every prospect pleasing.

(P.150)

One can quote hundred such lines.

Instead of labouring a point too much, we shall now deal only with hymns that are different from the general pattern. The Babar Vani hymns inspired by Nanak's agony at the misery inflicted on the people by Babar's invasion are full of questioning of God's justice. He asks the creator who 'disguised death as the Mughal and sent him against us'.

Didst Thou not see the killing?
Didst Thou not hear the wailing?
Did not Thy heart fill with pain?

He remonstrates gently with God for letting such things happen.

If the strong battled the strong
Our hearts would not be as full of complaint.
If a fierce lion fell upon a herd of cow
We would ask the cowherd, where wert thou?

(P.241)

Naturally he recognises it as God's will and submits to it:

'What He wills comes to pass.'

(P.130)
'Thou art the author of all things, 
Thou seest all, Strange are Thy 
manifestation.' (P.129)

He blames the rulers also for the tragedy.

'Had our rulers but looked at the future 
Would they have suffered such fate? 
Our rulers lost their heads 
In sensual indulgence and pursuit of pleasure.' (P.129)

What interests us even more than Nanak's 
tremendous pity for the suffering, is the attitude of 
questioning that breaks through his poetry. He recognises 
God as the author of all things, evil as well as good. 
This idea he has expressed elsewhere also. His familiarity 
with doubts and duality finds repeated expression e.g. 

In Raga Dhanasari occur the words: 
"Life is an invaluable gift, man squanders 
it in duality, 
He knows it not himself, he stumbles in 
doubt and sorely grieves." (P.161)

On Page 160 he speaks of the wise who 
'reject duality'.

'Doubt and duality bear no fruit.' (P.145) 
'Going from pilgrimage to pilgrimage 
Does not wash away doubt.' (P.148)

It is in warding off doubt and in setting one on 
the right path that the Guru plays his role. That Nanak,
the great devotee and believer had understanding for and even experience of doubt, brings him close to us. This quite human strain coming amidst the pious singing certainly widens his appeal.

The Hymns of Martin Luther.

Most of Luther's writings are in prose. But he realized that hymns can ensure the greater involvement of the laity in church service, a conviction that came to him from Thomas Müntzer's collection of songs in 'Gemeinde der Geisterfüllten'. So, quite late at the age of 40 he began to write hymns. (247) Luther has written altogether 36 hymns (248)

247. Luther begann, soweit unsere kenntnis reicht, Mitte 1523 im Alter von knapp 40 Jahren und weniger als ein Jahr nach seiner schriftstellerischen Großtat, der Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments, Verse zu schreiben."

Markus, Jenny; in: Martin Luther's Ausgewählte Schriften, Kirche, Gottesdienst, Schule, hg von Karin Bornkamm und Gerhard Ebeling, Frankfurt/Main, 1982, P. 222.

248. Compare: Luther composed thirtysix hymns in all of which two thirds were published and probably also written during the years 1523 to 1524.

H. O. Burger; Luther as an Event in Literary History, in: Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 128.
but some of the scholars like Markus Jenny and L. Cowie differ on this point. Cowie for example says that he has written 40 hymns. (249)

According to Markus Jenny, 'Luthers liturgisch musikalisches Schaffen ist zwar nicht sehr umfangreich - man kann im besten Falle 45 deutsche Stücke zählen - dafür aber sehr umfassend.' (250)

We see that most of Luther's works like Nanak's were written to meet specific demands of the time. He felt the need of hymns for the quick expansion of his new reformation theology. He wrote hymns mainly to provide his congregation with words and the tune to sing. Luther has never considered himself a poet (251), like Guru Nanak. At first he requested his friend Spalatin to write some Kirchenlied, as he was not very sure about his ability as poet. But when he did not get any good

249. Compare: 'The first Lutheran hymn book appeared in 1524. It was a small collection of eight German hymns of which four were by Luther himself. Soon afterwards he published twenty four more of his own hymns and later wrote twelve.' Cowie, Leonard W: Luther, loc.cit., P. 96.

250. Markus, Jenny; Gesangbuchvorräten, Lieder, Gebete, in: Martin Luther's Ausgewählte Schriften, loc. cit., P. 222.

251. Burger, H.O.; Luther, As an Event in Literary History, loc. cit., P. 128.
response from his friends he began to write himself and through his *Kirchenlied* he became 'the father of protestant church song.' (252) His hymns thus played an important role in the history of German Literature. Richard Friedenthal considers Luther's hymns the strongest achievement of his late years. (253)

In Luther's hymns music plays a very important role (as in Guru Nanak's compositions). All his hymns are to be sung and are not meant for reading or reciting. He also like Nanak was of the opinion that music reaches deeper into the human heart than any other thing and has a lasting effect on human mind and heart. From his childhood he was very fond of music and had also learnt to play the lute. In his own words, 'My heart bubbles up and overflows in response to music, which has so often refreshed me and delivered me from dire plagues.' (254) Friedenthal correctly sums up its effect on Luther when he says: 'Luther sah in ihr Trost bei Trübsinn und Anfechtungen, und das wurde die Aufgabe der Musik auf Jahrhunderte.

252. Fechter, Paul (Geschichte der deutschen Literatur Band I) Germany (W.Y) P.54. 'Luther ist der Vater des deutschen, daB heißt des protestantischen Kirchenliedes.'

253. Friedenthal, Richard; Luther, loc. cit., P.562.

hinaus: Trost, Erhebung, und ein höheres Reich jenseits der meist trübseligen und erbärmlichen Wirklichkeit. '(255)

Luther wrote (in 1529) his little catechism in the form of question and answer. The interpretation was made very simple and clear so that the laity can also understand it easily. Just to make his Catechism more interesting and effective he wrote Catechism songs like 'Die zehn Gebote'. Through singing everybody, even children, can remember it easily and it can easily pass from mouth to mouth. It cannot die or fade away like preaching. 'He hoped that even if all his other writings were to perish, this would remain.' (256)

Although Luther has composed only 36 hymns, it is not possible to put these hymns in a chronological order, as the exact date of every hymn is not known. But most of his hymns appeared between 1523-1524. 'Geistliche Lieder Luthers erschienen ab 1523/24 im Druck. Es gibt kein externes Zeugnis dafür, daß sie lange vor ihrer ersten Veröffentlichung entstanden sind.' (257)

255. Friedenthal, Richard; Luther, loc. cit., P. 564.
256. Quoted from Cowie, Leonard W; Luther, loc. cit., P. 93.
Luther's hymns can be divided into four groups: (1) Psalms (2) Children's songs (3) Kampflieder and songs of Praise (Lobgesang). Felix Messerschmid has also divided Luther's hymns into four types. (258)

a) den vorreformatorischen Liedtypus (In Gottes Namen fahren wir, Mitten wir im Leben sind, 'Gott sei gelobet und gebenedelet,' Dies sind die heiligen zehn gebot, 'Mensch wiltu leben seliglich', 'Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist, u.a. dazu als einzige freie Dichtung', Vater unser im Himmelreich).


c) das Gesellschaftslied ('Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott', 'Sie ist mir lieb die werte Magd'.

d) Das Meistersingerlied ('Jasaja, dem Propheten das geschah') (259)

258. Messerschmid, Felix; quoted from Ernst Arfken 'Ethliche geistliche Lieder zusammengebracht, Luther als Kirchenlieddichter, in TUK Sonderband, Martin Luther, 1983, P.45-120.

259. Oskar Söhngen has also made another division of Luther's hymns: "In folgedessen entstand ein riesiger Bedarf an neuen Liedern, den Luther mit seinen Freunden und Mitarbeitern zu decken suchte: Katechismus-Lieder ('Wir glauben all an einen Gott'), Kinderlieder ('Vom Himmel hoch'), biblische Darstellungen von Christi Heilsarbeit ('Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gemein'), Dramatisierungen einzelner Bibelszenen ('Mit Fried und Freud') und deutsche Psalmengesänge ('Ein feste Burg')
Luther's hymns are mostly adaptations of Latin hymns, Psalms and Bible text. Completely original creations are few in number. Some of the hymns reveal the fundamental fact that God's word is the only way to get true salvation.

"They are not in the least concerned with individual experiences or changing moods but with testifying to the one fundamental fact on which his whole existence was based - a fact whose truth he had realized after bitter personal struggle and which once it was established, remained true for all time, regardless of changing situations or any doubts by which he was assailed. This fact is the word of grace given to us by God in His Holy Scripture." (260)

It is not possible to discuss here all Luther's

(From pre page)


A similar type of division of Luther's hymns was also made by Gerhard Hahn: 'Luther Lieder selbst wieder sind zwar in Sachgruppen eingeteilt (1. Festlieder, mit Weihnachten (Advent) beginnend, 2) Katechismuslieder 3) Psalmlieder 4) die übrigen)'

Hahn, Gerhard; Evangelium als literarische Anweisung, loc. cit., P. 17.

hymns. (261) We will discuss only some of Luther's hymns not in chronological order but according to their importance in the categories they belong to:

"Nu freut euch lieben Christen gmein" (262)

This hymn appeared in print in 1523 in a

261. Luther's hymns are the following:

1. Ach Gott, vom Himmel sich darein
2. Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir
3. Christ lag in Todesbanden
4. Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam
5. Christus wir sollen loben schon
6. Der du bist drei in Einigkeit
7. Dies sind die heilgen zehn Gebot
8. Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott
9. Ein neues lied wir haben an
10. Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort
11. Es spricht der Unweisen Mund wohl
12. Es soll uns Gott genadig sein
13. Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ
14. Gott der Vater sein uns bei
15. Gott sei belogen und gebenedeiet
16. Herr Gott, dich loben wir
17. Jesaja, dem Propheten, das geschah
18. Jesus Christus, unser Heiland
19. Jesus Christus, unser Heiland
20. Komm, Gott Schopfer, heiliger Geist
21. Komm, heiliger Geist, Herr Gott
22. Mensch, willst du leben ewiglich
23. Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin
24. Mitten wir im Leben sind
25. Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist
26. Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein
27. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland
28. Sie ist mir lieb, die werte Magd
29. Vater unser im Himmelreich
30. Verleih uns Frieden gnadiglich
31. Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her
32. Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar
33. Wür Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit
34. Was fürchtest du, Feind Herodes, sehr
35. Wir glauben all an einen Gott
36. Wohl dem, der in Gottes Furcht steht

262. We are following Karin Bornkamm and Gerhard Ebeling's edition of Luther's works Martin Luther, Ausgewählte Schriften. (Kirche Gottesdienst, Schule), Insel, Verlag, Frankfurt, 1982.
collection of songs in which four were by Luther. It is a historical ballad like; 'Ein neues lied wir heben an' and has all the simplicity, melody and drama of heroic ballads. It consists of ten stanzas each with 7 lines. Each stanza falls into four clear divisions. The first four lines have the rhyme scheme a b a b, the next two e - e and the last is an unrhymed line. There seems to be in most of the stanzas a corresponding division of thought also. In the first stanza, for example, the first four lines introduce the song and the singers, so to say:

Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein/
und laßt uns fröhlich springen /
Daß wir getrost und all in ein /
Mit lust und liebe singen /

The next two lines state the theme:
was Gott an uns gewendet hat /
und seine süße Wunder tat /

The last unrhymed line standing by itself in sharp relief expresses the quintessence of the whole hymn.

Gar teur hat ers erworben.

This pattern seems to be repeated more or less regularly in all the stanzas.

As striking as the rhyme and the regularity of the structure of the stanzas is the interweaving
of sounds into a texture of melody. Luther counts his syllables and that has naturally its effect. In addition to it comes the subtle play with sounds. In the last words of the first four lines the nasals n and m (m actually only in one instance) predominate. (ten gmein, -ngen, in, ein, ngen). There is liberal sprinkling of liquids in the remaining part of the lines with alliteration in the fourth (Lust und Liebe). The trill is perhaps the most dominant sound; freut, chri (first line) — Nü freut euch lieben Christen gmein fro, spri (Second line) — und laßt uns fröhlich springen. getrost (third line) — daß wir getrost und all in ein. The last line is a wonderful example of sonority, thanks to the r's and the full vowels Gar teur hat er's erworben.

An analysis of each stanza would reveal the same skill-ful evoking of word melody and symmetrical structuring of stanzas. One can say that they are not only the part of a song but also perfect examples of word artistry, in other words, a poem.

The hymn narrates the great story of man's redemption by God, 'die wesentlichsten Fragen christlicher Lehre und christlichen Lebens.' (263)

It begins as a first person narrative, the 'ich'

calling upon the other Christians as 'wir' and 'uns' to join in the singing. In the second and third stanzas the same 'ich' as the representative of the human race describes in powerful terms the human situation, the state of sinfulness in which man lived. Thereby a very strong basis of Christian theology is built up, namely the theory of original sin (Mein sünd mich quält Nacht und Tag darin ich war geboren), Free will (Der frei Will habt Gotts Gericht/er war zum Guten gestorben), the domination of the devil, sin and death over man:

Dem Teufel ich gefangen lag,
im Tod war ich verloren
Mein Sünd mich quält Nacht und Tag.

The unrhymed last lines of the two stanzas crystallize the situation in pithy words:

"Die Sünd hatt mich besessen"
"Zur Hölle mußt ich sinken."

The dynamic quality of the verse is due to the verbs which are all 'von spürbar affekthafter Ausstrahlung', as Gerhard Hahn points out. (264) (gefangen lag, verloren, quält, haßte, trieb, verdorben, erstorben etc.) and at the same time commonly used in the theological jargon. Luther thus combines

264. Ibid., P. 113.
'eine theologisch-gedankliche Sinnschicht und eine affekthafte Bildschicht.' (265) One more facet of this depiction is to be pointed out. When the soul sings about its absolute sinfulness, desperation and helplessness, it is not just repeating theological jargon, but voicing personally and poignantly experienced feelings of sinfulness and helplessness, which means that they are in a way akin to Erlebnislyrik.

In the next two stanzas God enters the scene. Man's misery moves him and his 'Vaterherz' turns to man and he does what costs him dear (Er ließs sein Bestes kosten), for it involves sending his son to the earth. Addressing his son he requests him:

"Fahr hin, meines Herzens werte Kron,
Und sei das Heil dem Armen."

There is a return to the theological motives of sin and death in the act of redemption.

Und hilf ihm aus der Sünden not /
Erwürge für ihn den bitter Tod /
und laß ihn mit dir leben.

To free man from sin is to conquer death for him and to let him live with God in eternity,
this union with God being the highest stage for Luther as well as for Nanak. If in the fifth stanza we read of God's 'Vaterherz', in the sixth we hear of the son's becoming the brother of man.

Er kam zu mir auf Erden /
Von einer Jungfrau rein und zart /
Er sollt mein Bruder werden.

Hiding his power in human form (in meiner armen Gestalt) he comes like a hero to capture the devil (Den Teufel wollt er fangen) who holds man prisoner (Dem Teufel ich gefangen lag).

The following stanzas, especially the 7th, read like the simple moving melodic lines of a Volkslied. The smooth flow of the lines and the use of words of one syllable are specially to be mentioned. We have in these the son's words to man, again in direct speech. Continuing the metaphor of a fight and capture, the son says:

"da will ich für dich ringen"

And he offers man his great love, his sacrifice and above all mystical union with himself. 'Ich geb mich selber ganz für dich.' In words that are almost a repetition of the folk song, 'Du bist min, ich bin din' (266) he says:

Denn ich bin dein, und du bist mein / 
Und wo ich bleib, da sollst du sein / 
Uns soll der Feind nicht scheiden.

The last line with 'nicht scheiden'
underscores the union of the soul with her divine spouse. In antithetical lines the son sings of what he will do for the soul.

Den Tod verschlingt das Leben mein / 
Mein Unschuld trägt die Sünde dein.

In the last two stanzas the rest of the story of the redemption is told. After his passion and death and ascension into heaven, Christ the son of God will be 'der Meister dein' and send the Holy Ghost,

der dich um Trübnis trösten soll
Und lehren mich erkennen wohl
Und in der Wahrheit leiten.

What he has done and taught, man or the soul must do and teach. All that man has to do is to rely on Christ ('Halt dich an mich'), to recognise that everything is done for him (Das leid ich alles dir zugut) and that God has paid dearly for him, and not to set any store by human Law (Und hüt dich vor der Menschengesetz).

It is surprising, as Hahn points out, that the announcement of the good news of redemption, of
the gospel (Evangelium) by Christ, replaces a powerful description of the actual sufferings and death of Christ. One possible reason seems to be that Luther works the story up to the 'Ich für dich und ich bin dein' of the 7th stanza, that is, up to a personal lover's union with Christ and hence resorted to this personal address of man or the soul by Christ. (267)

This hymn seems to emphasise four points,

1) Man's helplessness and his incapacity to redeem himself. 2) The redemption of man purely as an act of mercy and grace of God. 3) The supremely important role played by the son who in a personal struggle 'erwürgt' death and by the Holy Ghost who teaches and guides man 'in der Wahrheit' (This double role is assigned by Nanak to the Guru) 4) The necessity

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267. Gerhard Hahn gives the same answer in his remark: "Gemeint ist die Möglichkeit, aus einer direkten inneren, privaten Begegnung mit Gott, Christus, dem Heiligen Geist, einem Engel verpflichtende Offenbarung zu empfangen!" (P. 125-126)

Compare also Stapel: 'Mit feinstem Empfinden für das religiöse Zulässige ist in der Ballade der Tod und die Auferstehung Christi nicht erzählt, sondern in der Rede Christi an die Menchenseele verkündigt, beides wird aus einem bloßen Bericht zur vertrauensvollen und mahnenden Verkündigung eines Geheimnisses.' Stapel, Wilhelm; Luthers Ballade vom Kampf des Gottessohnes mit dem Teufel, quoted from Gerhard Hahn, P. 123).
for faith on the part of man ("das hält mit festem Glauben")

Except in the direct speech the action is in the past tense. But who this 'ich' is and at what time the action takes place, it is not specifically announced. Hence it could apply to every human soul at any point of time. The son holds the promise of redemption to every human soul who believes and who accepts God's love.

If the time of action spreads over all time, the scene of action spreads over earth, heaven and hell, (Er kam zu mir auf den Erden / Gen Himmel zu dem Vater mein - fahr ich von diesem Leben / Zur Hölle mußt ich sinken.)

We can conclude that this hymn in spite of the simplicity of its language befitting a ballad, is vast in its scope as far as theme, dramatis personae, scene of action and time of action are concerned and hence as grand as any of Guru Nanak's great hymns.

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott. (268)

This is perhaps the most famous of Luther's hymns

and was called the battle song of the Reformation, 'die Marseillaise des 16 Jahrhunderts'. It is an adaptation of the 46th psalm and was published in 1529.

This hymn consists of four stanzas, each with nine lines. In the manner of German Meistergesang and Minnesang of the Middle Ages, it falls into three divisions, the first two consisting of four lines each and the last being a single line that sums up the whole stanza. The first four lines have alternating rhymes, the next four rhyming couplets and the last is unrhymed.

The psalm was originally a thankoffering of Israel to Jehovah for protecting Jerusalem from besieging enemies. Luther uses it, as he himself explains to praise God for protecting us against the enemies of the human soul in general, more specifically against the enemies of the Reformation.

"Wir aber singen in Gott zu lobe, das er bey uns ist und sein wort und die Christenheit 269. H.O. Burger for example calls it Luther's greatest hymn and says: "I hesitate to analyse Luther's greatest hymn 'Ein feste burg ist unser Gott'. Here too Luther has produced a work far removed from the spirituality of those medieval Latin hymns, whose sublime and aloof solemnity and remote and tenuous melodies we so much admire."

Burger, H.O.; Luther as an Event in Literary History, loc. cit., p. 133.
wunderbarlich erhielt wider die hellischen Pforten, wider des wüten aller Teufel, der Rottengeister, der welt des fleisches, der sunden, des todes etc." (WA 38, 35, 7-19)

This hymn therefore describes a fight between God and the devil, the champion God has chosen being Jesus Christ, der Herr Zeboath, who as the 'word' is with us on the battlefield and routs the enemy.

The Hymn begins with a ringing proclamation of faith in God who is called in the feudal terminology of warfare 'ein feste Burg' 'ein gute Wehr und Waffen' just as the devil is said to have 'sein grausam Rüstung.' The two adversaries are introduced in the first stanza, 'God' in the first four lines and the devil in the next four which have a markedly different cadence. The regularity of beat in the first four lines with a caesura in the middle of the line expresses calm assured confidence in God's protection. The fifth line, 'der alt böse Feind' is brought out at one breath as though the singer is thrown off his balance by the sight of the enemy and the same disturbed movement lingers in the next line: 'Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint' (270)

270. Compare: "Da Luther es verstanden hat, dem Text durch die ungewöhnliche Melodieführung und einen hammersnden Rhythmus auch einen höchst spannungsreichen musikalischen Ausdruck zu verleihen, darf der Choral(......) als die höchste Vollendung des reformatorischen Anliegens im Kirchenlied angesehen werden."
Hartmann, Horst; Luther als schriftsteller und Dichter, in: Zeitschrift für Germanistik, 4/83, Leipzig, P. 416.
The enemy is so formidable with 'groß Macht und viel List' that in the last line the singer exclaims in dread: 'Auf Erd ist nicht seinsgleichen'.

The second stanza begins with a confession of human helplessness - a leit-motif that recurs in Luther. "Mit unserer Macht ist nichts getan, wir sind alsbald verloren." In the second half of the stanza 'der rechte Kriegs Mann' whom God himself has chosen 'und ist kein anderer Gott' appears filling the faithful with confidence. The last line of the stanza continuing the metaphor of fighting, sums up the hope that sustains the sorely beset human beings: 'Das Feld muß er behalten'.

The third stanza expresses the same defiant faith in the face of great fear. The Konzessivsatz as well as the use of 'doch' imply the great daring or faith involved in the hope of victory:

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wäre
und möchte uns ganz verschlingen,
so fürchten wir uns nicht zu sehr
Es muß uns doch gelingen.
Der Fürst dieser Welt
wie saur er sich stellt
tut er uns doch nicht.

It is in fact the feeling of heroic faith and courage in the face of insurmountable dangers that transforms the hymn into the battle song of people
in peril and gives it its great effect. That the peril is imminent is conveyed in the first stanza with the twice repeated 'jetzt': "aus aller Not-die
uns jetzt hat betroffen"; "mit Ernst er's jetzt meint". That is one of the reasons why this hymn reads not like a translation of an old Testament poem written centuries ago, but like an actual cry from the heart for help in a desperate situation. Luther's fear for the beleaguered protestant church echoes in the lines, lending it urgency and immediacy.

We know that he has in fact given a free rendering of the original and that the hymn is to all intents and purposes a free original poem. The second verse of the psalm runs: 'Gott ist unser Zuversicht und Sterke / Eine Hilfe in den grossen Noten / die uns troffen haben'. Luther has rendered it into the following incomparably more poetic and melodious lines using a very telling metaphor and adding to the urgency by making the trouble a present one.

Ein feste burg ist unser Gott
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not
die uns jetzt hat betroffen.

In the next line Luther uses 'Der alt böse Feind'
in the place of 'Heiden' in the psalm. He thus gives the general sense of the psalm and recaptures the daring faith it embodies, 'schafft jedoch für die Wiedergabe des Inhalts eine eigenständige sprachliche Form'. (271)

The last stanza of the hymn is in the opinion of Markus Jenny not in keeping with the preceding three stanzas, (272) since it introduces 'das Wort'. But the last line of the 3rd stanza (Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fallen) leads upto it and the imagery of fighting (Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan-mit seinem Geist und Gaben) links it up with the first three stanzas. Moreover, the last lines are a triumphant expression of the defiant faith that is the keynote of the poem. It may also be remembered that the harping on 'das Wort' was typical for Luther.

Jesaja dem Propheten, das geschah - the versification of biblical passages.

This hymn was written in 1525 in the course of Luther's work on the Holy Mass in German. Luther is

271. Piirainen, Ilpo Tapam; Die Psalmlieder Martin Luthers in Muttersprache (Sonderheft), 1983/84, P.101-110.

272. Markus Jenny says, that the first 3 stanzas are based in 'freier aber sach-und formgemäß Anlehnung', on the 46th Psalm, while the 4th has nothing to do with it.

Markus, Jenny; Neue Hypothesen zur Entstehung und Bedeutung von 'Ein feste Burg', in: Jahresbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie, 9(1964), P.143-152.
said to have set it to music also. This was to be sung by the congregation during the consecration of Bread and Wine as the body and blood of Christ. Luther has believed in the theory of transubstantiation and hence composed this song that presents Christ in all the glory of his Godhood sitting to the right of God the father. It is a 3rd person narrative and is based on Jesiah, Chapter 6, Verses 1 to 4. This hymn rightly bears the title 'das deutsche Sanctus'.

It consists of 16 lines i.e. eight rhyming pentameters. We have seen how Luther's songs tend to the simplicity and melody of the folk song. This hymn however reflects in its sonority and grandeur, the grandeur of its theme. No wonder Goethe calls it "barbarically great". In fact the pictured splendour reminds us of such hymns of Guru Nanak as 'Sohila Aarti'. It would be admitted that in this hymn Luther follows his original closely. Since the hymn is short it is being quoted in full.

Jesaja, dem Propheten das geschah;  
dab er im Geist den Herren sitzen sah  
auf einem hohen Thron in hellem Glanz;  
seines Kleides saum den Chor fullet ganz  
Es standen zwei Seraph bei ihm daren.  
Sechs Flügel sah er einen jeden han;

Mit zwein verbargen sie ihr Antlitz klar,
mit zwein bedeckten sie die FüBe gar,
und mit dem andern zwein sie flogen frei,
gen andrer riefen sie mit großen Geschrei;
Heilig ist Gott, der Herre Zebaoth
Heilig ist Gott, der Herre Zebaoth
Heilig ist Gott, der Herre Zebaoth.

Sein Ehr die ganze Welt erfüllt hat.
Von dem Geschrei zittert Schwell und Balken gar;
Das Haus auch ganz voll Rauch und Nebel war.

Much has been said about the melody of the hymn, of the 'complete harmony between natural and musical stress', (274) even during Luther's lifetime, Johannes Walther (275) going to the extent of saying that he saw in it the power of the Holy Ghost. (276) The sonority of the verses results from the resonance of the vowels 'a' and 'o' which predominate, 'a' being the rhyme vowel in eleven out of sixteen lines. Only two lines have a less resonant rhyme 'frei' - 'Geschrei' and this could be called natural since it reproduces the call of the angels on the right and left of God to each other and is carried over into the next three lines. 'heilig, heilig, heilig'. Even the scansion is

274. Ibid., P. 132.
275. Johannes Walther (1496-1570) was cantor in Thorgau and conductor of the Dresden Court Chapel. He was Luther's adviser in questions of music.
in most lines the most natural.

Luther had wanted to evolve a German mass. Horst Hermann expresses his views about Luther's German Mass: "Es genugte ihm nicht, das Latein einfach ins Deutsch zu übertragen: Es muß beide, Text und Noten, Akzent, Weise und Gebärde aus rechter Muttersprache und Stimme kommen, sonst ist alles ein Nachahmen." (277)

The Hymn is a glorification of God in all the insignia of his might. He is the Lord of hosts and the King of creation and is enthroned in all majesty and splendour. His honour fills the whole world and as the angels sing 'Holy is God, the lord of the hosts,' the threshold and the beams tremble and the whole house is filled with smoke and vapour. The awesome presence of God in the Eucharist after the transubstantiation is thus made manifest in concrete terms of power and glory. Jesaja's words therefore became the medium for conveying a cardinal point of Christian theology. Here also, as in his other hymns, Luther combines theology and poetry.

Das Deutsche Credo.

Wir glauben all an einen Gott (Catechism Hymns) (278)

This was written most probably in 1524. The


words and the melody are said to be based on a German song of the 15th century. Spitta puts up a very strong case for this point of view and Gerhard Hahn includes it in the group of adaptations of German songs of the Middle Ages and not under Catechism songs. But for our study it is not very important which source Luther followed. He wished to familiarise the laity, especially children, with the fundamental teachings of Christianity and hence made out of them songs which could easily be memorised.

And the Credo as we know is a sheet-anchor of the Christian faith. What interests us would be the variation from the Nicene Creed or the version in the Mass both of which Luther naturally knew very well.

This hymn consists of three stanzas, each devoted to one person of the Trinity, the first to God the father, the second to God the son and the third to God the Holy Ghost. Each stanza has 10 lines with alternating rhymes.

Comparing it with the creed in the Holy Mass we find that the first stanza has more deviations than the others. The Creed speaks of the "One God, the father, almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible". It thus mentions Godhood and fatherhood, but then passes on to the power of the
Almighty. Luther however expands the phrase 'father almighty' into eight lines on the fatherly love and care of God for human beings, his children.

Er will uns allzeit ernähren,
Leib und Seel auch wohl bewahren.
Allem Unglück will er wehren;
Kein Leid soll uns widerfahren.
Er sorget für uns, nut und wacht;
es steht alles in seiner Macht.

All that a loving father will do for his children, God does for man. In this dwelling on God as the father of humanity Luther was following a personal devotion or private thought of his own and that may be the reason for Spitta's calling this hymn one of his 'persönlichen' songs which express "die Gedanken christlichen Glaubens reicher und voller". (279) It is also striking that these lines which are Luther's own and not an adaptation retain the easy limpid flow and simple, mostly mono-syllabic idiom of the folksong.

The second stanza that portrays Christ as true God and true man is a briefer, all the same a close rendering of this part of the MeBCredo. For example the MeBCredo has the following description of Christ's being born as man. 'Er hat Fleisch angenommen durch den Heiligen Geist aus Maria, der Jungfrau und

279, Hahn, Gerhard; Evangelium als literarische Anweisung, loc. cit., P. 236.
ist Mensch geworden'. Luther's hymn says:

"Von Maria der Jungfrauen, ist ein wahrer Mensch geboren durch den heiligen Geist im Glauben."

There is however a significant omission. The last part on Christ, his second coming in glory to the earth to judge men, is left out. Does it mean that Luther would contemplate God as loving father and not as awful judge.

In the third stanza again the Holy Ghost, 'Herr und Lebensspender'of the Creed, becomes in Luther's song 'der aller Schwachen Troster heißt / und mit Gaben zieret schöne'. Once again there is an elaboration of God's love and mercy and a shortening of the lines on the glory of God.

The Trinity thus becomes in Luther's representation: the kind benevolent providential father of the human race. The 'ich' of the Creed becomes the 'we' of congregational singing. The last six lines of the third stanza follow, on the whole, the Creed, except for one or two modifications in the spirit of the Reformation. The lines certainly prove, as always, Luther's musical ear, e.g. "Ich erwarte die Auferstehung der Toten", of the Missal becomes in Luther's hymn 'das Fleisch soll wieder leben'. The
slightly wooden nominal construction and the abstraction of the first is replaced by the dynamic, vivid, verbal and musical construction in Luther's rendering.

In short Luther creates out of well-known sources a poetic record of God's love and mercy.

In this review we have included only four of Luther's hymns. Some of the most famous of his hymns like, 'Ein neues Lied wir heben an', 'Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir', 'Von Himmel kam der Engel schar' etc., have not found a place in this study for the reason that they have been analysed thread-bare by critics and that it is not possible or necessary to deal with all his hymns. It must however be admitted that inclusion of more hymns throw light on the variety that Luther achieves within the limited range of theological verses and on the high poetic quality of what he writes. Most students of Luther are agreed "that Luther's verses are pure poetry, pointing beyond themselves in meditation to ever new levels of meaning." (280) And this inspite of the fact that Luther never considered himself a poet or tried to be one.

"Ein neues Lied wir heben an" after the description of the martyrdom of the two Augustianans closes with a description of nature that brings tender

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flowers and promise of the summer after harsh winter
and sees in them the assurance 'Der das hat angefangen/
der wird es wohl vollenden'. A natural phenomenon is thus
made to echo the working of the divine providence,
to function as "an expression of faith in the
infallibility of God's grace." (281)

The children's Christmas song "Vom Himmel
hoch da kam ich her" written for his own children is
eloquent testimony to Luther's ability to adapt his
style to his audience. In simple language attuned to
children's understanding, he tells the Christmas
story in verses modelled on the Spielmannslied, "Ich
komm aus fremden Landen her". From the simplicity
of the song to the grandeur of "Jesaja, dem Propheten,
das geschah" everything seems within easy reach of Luther.

As for most of his poems being adaptations
and not original work, we have already had convincing
examples to prove that Luther sometimes introduced
sweeping changes which transformed them completely (e.g.
the adaptation of the 46th psalm). We will now refer to
one more example of a similar but subtler change which
however brings out the true poet in Luther. This

281. Ibid., P. 129.
example has already been cited by Burger. (282) In 'was fürchst du Feind Herodes seer', a translation of a hymn, Luther renders the fourth stanza in the following manner:

Ein Wunderwerk da neu geschah.  
Sechs steinere Krüge man da sah.  
Voll Wassers, Das verlor sein Art,  
roter Wein durch sein Wort draus ward.

A literal translation of the same would have been "A new sign of his power/the jugs of water turn red / and in order to stream out wine on command / the water changed its form."

Thomas Muntzer translates it so: 'Ein neu Gewalt da gesehn ist / von Gottes Sohne Jesu Christ / Wasser in Wein verwandelt war, / damit er seine Kraft offenbar.' Muntzer omits the reddening of the water while Luther not only retains this sensuous detail,  

282. "In Luther's version the sequence of sentences and lines is not determined by logic, which would tend to make the miracle into something abstract, but the miracle is brought home to us in a sensuous manner. The point of the stanza is in the last line - a point no less for the ear than for the eye: the transformation of which the stanza tells us is expressed symbolically in the fact that 'Rotter Wein' (red wine) and 'Wort' (word) both in the same line contain the same sound in a different order. It is beyond doubt that Luther's verses are pure poetry pointing beyond themselves in meditation to ever new levels of meaning."

Burger, H.O.; Luther as an Event in Literary History, loc. cit., P. 132.
but also adds a new one, 'Sechs Steinerne Krüge man
da sah/voll Wassers'.

There is no doubt that Luther's translation is
an improvement even on the original and the lilt and
singing quality of the lines add to their effect.

"A new sign of his power" is in Luther's
version "Ein wunderwerk da neu geschah", 'the jugs
of water' is "Sechs Steinerne Krüge man da sah voll
Wassers". 'and in order to stream out wine on command/
the water changed its form' becomes 'Das verlor sein
Art, roter Wein durch sein Wort draus ward.'

The substitution of the more poetic 'Wunderwerk'
for 'A new sign of power', the alliteration in the
second line with the repetition of 's' and 'r' or the
assosance (roter-Wort) the internal rhyme (Wein-sein)
and alliteration (Wein-Wort-Ward) in the last line
of the stanza can be pointed out as examples of Luther's
feeling for language, speech rhythm and melody. Such
lines can come only from the pen of a poet and musician.
COMPARISON.

As we have seen in this chapter Guru Nanak and Martin Luther both wrote hymns expressing their deep faith in and devotion to Almighty. It is rarely that two persons born at the same time and the same place express the same feelings and thoughts. But these two great personalities of their times and even of today born in two different countries with two different cultures have so many similarities in their way of thinking that it is very surprising. Here some common ideas of both the reformers are mentioned.

It is in their concept of God and attitude to God that they resemble each other most. Both were intensely conscious of the one true and eternal God in all creation, in man and beast, tree and stone, fire and air and water. It was not only a deep conviction but even more a personally experienced reality. Filled with the reality of God, as they were, whatever they said or wrote turned round on Him.

From our study of Japji, Asa-di-Var, Sidha Goshti and Baramah, it is clear that Nanak, the God intoxicated saint, sees God in everything. The Japji begins with the confession of faith in God. "There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent."
Luther repeating the Credo says the same thing:

Wir glauben all an einen Gott
Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden.

"Who can sing Him, who appeareth to be far, but is known to be near.

Who can sing Him, who is all seeing and omnipresent", asks Nanak (Japji III).

Luther says: 'God is a supernatural inscrutable Being who resides simultaneously and entirely in every kernel of grain and still is in all and above all and outside all creatures. Nothing is so small that God cannot be still smaller; nothing so broad that God cannot be broader; nothing so narrow that God cannot be narrower." (283) (Vom Abendmahl Christi, W.A.26;339,25 ff). Even more clearly Luther explains God's immanence in 'DaB diese Worte Christi'. God is substantially present everywhere, in and through all creatures, in all the parts and places, so that the world is full of God and He fills all, but without His being encompassed and surrounded by it.(.....) His own divine essence can be in all creatures collectively and in each one individually more profoundly, more intimately, more present than the

283. quoted from Bornkamm Heinrich, Luthers geistige Welt, Translated by Betram, Martin. H.; Luthers World of Thought, loc. cit., P.188.
creature is in itself; yet it can be encompassed nowhere and by no one. It encompasses all things and dwells in all, but not one thing encompasses it and dwells in it. (WA 23:132,26)(284)

God is incomprehensible, say both Luther and Nanak. "Men have grown weary at last of searching for God's limits; the Veds say one thing, that God has no limit." (Japji-stanza XXII) "Praisers praise God but have not acquired a knowledge of Him" (XXIII)

'Thou art the River of wisdom; How can a mere fish know Thy expanse?' (Sri Raga, M. I) (285)

Luther too speaks of God's inscrutable ways. The whole of human history with the rise and fall of nations, of the millions of wrongs that the human race suffers is only a game of God. "And all their splendour is nothing but a game of God, who permitted them to rise a little and then always knocked them over, one after the other." (Psalm 127:15; 370,20) (286)

Elsewhere he says: "He himself acts through us and we are only His mask behind which He conceals Himself"

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284. Ibid., P. 189.
286. Quoted from Bornkamm Heinrich; Luthers geistige Welt, Translated by Betram, Martin H.; Luthers World of Thought, loc. cit., P. 60.
It is through faith that one reaches God, Luther teaches repeatedly. "The only work God demands of us is faith in Christ. This is sufficient for Him". (Adventspostille, W. A. 10 I, 1, 67, 10) In the Hymn 'Nun freut euch lieben Christen gmein' Christ is made to say "Das halt mit festem Glauben" In "Gott der Vater wohn uns bei" faith and trust in God are represented in successive lines.

halt uns bei festem Glauben,
und auf dich laß uns bauen,
aus Herzengrund vertrauen
dir uns lassen ganz und gar. (213;6-9)

Luther defines faith in the following words: Faith is a living resolute confidence in God's mercy; faith is so strong and confident that it would die a thousand times because of it. And such confidence in and recognition of God's mercy makes one happy, intrepid, and eager towards God and all creatures. This the Holy Ghost works by faith. Therefore, man becomes willing and eager to do good to everyone, to suffer all manner of things for the love of, and in praise of God, who has shown man much mercy.

287. Ibid., P. 60.
288. Ibid., P. 90.
Accordingly it is just as impossible to separate (good - NG) works from faith as it is to sever burning and glowing from fire. (Prefatory Remarks to Letter to the Romans: Weimar Ed. Deutsche Bibel, 7:10,9) (289)

Like Luther Guru Nanak associates good deeds or works with Faith when he says: "If good deeds be thy farm and thy seed be of the Word and the way of Truth thy water, the growth will then be of faith (Sri Rag, M I, 2, 20) (290) "Faith and contentment are the food of the angelic beings" (Sri Rag, Var Shloka M I) (291).

Luther's definition of faith cited above identifies faith with belief and child-like trust in God and love of God. In other words, it speaks of the relation of man to God. Here also the two reformers speak in the same language portraying God as a compassionate father who cares for his children and whom man must love and trust completely. Thus Guru Nanak asks: 'O God, how canst Thou be angry with Thy own children for as Thou belongest to them, they belong to Thee' (Sri Rag, M.I) (292) or about him as the 'Compassionate one' (Maru, M I, 16) (293): 'Thou art the Riches of the

289. Ibid., P. 92.
291. Ibid., P. 94.
292. Ibid., P. 130.
293. Ibid., P. 83.
poor O God, the Guru of the Guru-less, Honour of the dishonoured, power of the powerless and light of the blind (...) One must love him as the fish loveth the water and the Chatrik bird the rain.' (Sri Rag M I - Ashtapadis) (294) The love for God rises to mystic heights and God becomes the bridegroom and the human soul, the bride. Intoxicated with love and longing for God, Nanak sings: "It is only when I lose my ego that I merge in Thee and become Thy Bride (...) Birth after birth, I was separated from Thee and I grieved. Now hold me by Thy Hand, O my love, my God, my King" (Suhí, M. I. - Ashtapadis) (295) "Thou art the Lord of Merit, I am meritless, O Lord this is the only prayer of Nanak to Thee: Thou hast blest all Thy Brides with Thy company for all those many nights: Isn't there a night also for me?" (296) or even more movingly in the following lines of the same hymn: "O Lord unfathomable, incomparable, seeing Thee, I surrender to Thee. What shall I ask, pray what shall I utter save that I hunger and thirst for Thee?" (297)

Such intoxication of love we do not meet in

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294. Ibid., P.120.
295. Ibid., P.133.
296. Ibid., P.133.
297. Ibid., P.134.
the pages of Luther. But all Luther's living, teaching and writings is based on the fundamental belief that God is mankind's heavenly father, the 'Feste Burg' where man is safe. We have it in the hymns (298), in everything that he wrote. In 'der groBe Katechismus' for example, in the explanation of the First Commandment occur the words: 'What does it mean to have a God, or what is God?'. Answer: "God is that to which I must look for all that is good and to whom I must flee in every need." Having God therefore means: 'To possess something on which the heart places all its reliance.' (299) This reliance on God decides all aspects of Luther's thinking. Thus Luther sees God concealed behind the course of world history. "He shot the Jews with the Romans, the Romans with the Goths and the Wends, the Chaldeans with the Persians, the Greeks with the Turks". (Psalm 118, WA 31 I; 127, 131) (300) And all their splendour is nothing but a game of God, who permitted them to rise a little and then always knocked them over one after the other."

(Psalm W.A. 127.45, 370, 20) (301) Luther is even more

300. Ibid., P. 59.
301. Ibid., P. 60.
explicit when he says: "One may indeed say that the course of world events and specially the activities of His Saints are God's mummeries behind which he hides Himself and reigns and bestirs Himself in the World so wonderfully." (Psalm 127; W.A. 15, 373, 7 ff) (302)

In his personal life also Luther showed the same absolute trust in God. When he left Wartburg against the wishes of his patron, the Elector of Saxony and risked his life by travelling to Wittenberg through the territory of his great enemy Duke George of Saxony, he wrote to his patron: "I am coming to Wittenberg with much higher protection than that of the elector" (303) "O Bod unfathomable, incomparable, seeing Thee, I surrender to Thee" - sang Nanak. "Faith does not require information, knowledge or certainty, but free submission and joyful venturing upon God's unfelt, untried and unrecognised goodness." (Sermon WA 10, III, 239, 13) (304) 'Surrender' - 'Free submission' 'unfathomable' - 'unfelt, untried and unrecognised' - one can say that the same attitude finds almost the same expression.

Both were also alike in holding that God is creator not only of good but also of evil."This world

302. Ibid., P. 203.
303. Ibid., P. 89.
304. Ibid., P. 88.
is led astray by Doubt, but who hath strayed it thus away, if not Thou ?" (Sri Rag, M I) \(^{(305)}\) Nanak flings the rebellious question at God. But in Ramkali he accepts it and submits to it. "There's no other source that creates: everything is contained in God. Yea whatever is, is from God". \(^{(306)}\) In Babar Vani after wailing over the sufferings of the people, submitting to God's will, he says: "Thou art the author of all things, Thou seest all, strange are Thy manifestations."

Luther's conception of history that has already been referred to, presupposes God's countenancing of evil and demonic power also. That God lets evil flourish was very much apparent to Luther and like Nanak, he too could only say that God's ways are inscrutable. "He (God) lets the pious become faint and suppressed, so that they all imagine that this is the end. But at this very moment God's might is strongest, though hidden and concealed." (Magnificat, WA, 585, \(^{4}\)) \(^{(307)}\) Man must however have faith in God. "Without hesitation and doubt you must fix your gaze on God's will and purpose with you, that you may firmly believe that He wants to and will accomplish

\(^{305}\) Singh, Gopal; loc. cit., P.77.
\(^{306}\) Ibid., P.82.
\(^{307}\) Bornkamm, Heinrich; loc. cit., P.213.
great things with you. Such a faith is alive and active; it permeates and transforms the whole man". (Magnificat.7,553,31)(308) This faith permeates the hymn: "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott". God's grace is however given to whom He chooses and cannot be forced. This is asserted by both Guru Nanak and Martin Luther. "Greatness is in the hands of the Great one, He giveth to whom He pleaseth", says Nanak in 'Ashtapadi'.(309) He is even more unequivocal when he says in the same hymn: "He consulteth no one when He createth; He consulteth no one when he destroyeth. He consulteth no one when He giveth and taketh". (310) In Luther's hymn "Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein", it is very clear that the redemption of man is an act of pure mercy and grace by God. God's 'Vaterherz' takes pity on man who is unable to help himself and sends His son to redeem man. The hymn thus "bildet (...) die zentrale Erkenntnis Luthers ab, daß kein Weg von Menschen zu Gott führt", on the other hand "der Weg führt von Gott zum Menschen über den Sohn". (311)

Thus both Luther and Nanak have the same concept

308. Ibid.,P.214.
310. Ibid.,P.267.
311. Hahn, Gerhard; Evangelium als literarische Anweisung,loc.cit.,P.121.
of God. Both are monotheists which is natural in Christian Europe, but not so natural in Hindu India. An omnipresent, omnipotent God, incomprehensible and inscrutable in His ways, who can be reached only through faith and love and who watches over His creation with fatherly love fills their vision. Neither the Christian God nor Nanak’s God has a name. He is just God to them. Nanak glorifies God’s name (Naam) making it the central thing in his worship. Where Nanak speaks of ‘Naam’ and ‘Sabad’, Luther speaks of the Word of God. The Japji has whole stanzas on the ‘Naam’ and Luther’s hymns have ‘das Wort’ as a dominant leitmotif. In ‘Ein feste Burg’ in the fight with the devil it is said, ‘Ein wortlein kan ja fallen’. In the immediately following stanza we read:

"Das Wort sieollen lassen stahn"

In the hymn
"Es wollt uns Gott genadig sein"
(Psalm 67)

God’s guidance is depicted in the following words:

"Deyn wort die hut und weyde ist,
die alles volck erhalten,
ynn rechter ban zu wollen."

We can quote many such examples to prove that if Nanak makes a cult of the ‘Naam’, Luther makes a
cult of 'the Word'. Even in his adaptation of the psalms of the Old Testament he introduces the word-motif as is clear from our last quotations. Just as the son Jesus Christ is the intermediary between God and man in Luther, the Guru is the intermediary between God and man in Nanak. There seems to be the same lack of clarity in the roles of God the father, the son and the word (at least for the Non-Christian reader) as in the role of the Guru, God and Naam (at least for the Non-Sikh reader). In their praise of God the words could come from the pen of either of the reformers, so similar are the feelings expressed about the unworthiness of man and the glory of God. This could be the attitude of the pious in general. But that does not reduce the surprising similarity of such passages as the following:

1. Great is His glory whose name is great;
   Great is His glory whose justice is true;
   Great is His glory who understandeth our utterances;
   Great is His Greatness who knoweth all our feelings. (312)

2. By Thy power we see, by Thy power we hear,
   by Thy power we fear, or enjoy the highest happiness;
   Everything existeth by Thy power; Thou art
   the omnipotent Creator; Thy name is the holiest of the holy. (313)

313. Ibid., P. 221-222.
The Japji is filled with such hymns of praise, as we have noted in the study of it.

Turning to Luther, we will choose just two examples. The first is 'Das Deutsch Senctus'. The angels sing God's praise.\(^{(314)}\)

\begin{align*}
\text{Heilig ist Gott der Herre Zebaoth} \\
\text{Heilig ist Gott der Herre Zebaoth} \\
\text{Heilig ist Gott der Herre Zebaoth} \\
\text{Sein Ehr die ganze Welt erfüllt hat.}
\end{align*}

The second is the translation of the Latin hymn Te Deum Laudamus:\(^{(315)}\)

\begin{align*}
\text{Herr Gott, dich loben wir.} \\
\text{Herr Gott, wir danken dir,} \\
\text{Dich Vater in Ewigkeit} \\
\text{Ehrt die Welt weit und breit}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{Heilig ist unser Gott} \\
\text{Dein göttlich Macht und Herrlichkeit} \\
\text{Geht über Himmel und Erde weit} \\
\text{The ecstatic singing and the repetition are common in both. The humility before God and the sense of human worthlessness are again typical for both.}
\end{align*}

Thus Nanak says in Baramah:

"I strayed on to the paths of falsehood. And the Master forsook me."

\(^{314}\) Martin Luther; Ausgewählte Schriften hg. von Karin Bornkamm and Gerhard Ebeling, loc. cit., P.271.

\(^{315}\) Ibid., P.272.

It should, however, be borne in mind that both these songs are translations.
Age hath greyed my locks
I have left many winters behind.
But the fires of hell still lie ahead." (316)

Or in Suhi Ashtapadi:
"I am shorn of all merit, O Lord, how shall I
attain unto Thee? (...) I'm ignorant
and unwise." (317)

In 'Nun freut euch lieben Christen gmein'
Luther pictures man's singleness in the following
words:

"Dem Teufel ich gefangen lag,
im Tod war ich verloren.
Mein Sünd mich qualte Nacht und Tag,
darin ich war geboren.
Ich fiel auch immer tiefer drein
Es war kein Gutes am Leben mein.
Die Sünd hatt mich besessen.

There are similar passages also in 'Aus
Tiefer, Not schreie ich zu dir'.'Ach Gott vom Himmel
sie darein' etc.

Before we close the comparison of the contents
of their hymns, another striking similarity in their
attitude has to be pointed out. It is the attitude of
wonder. Nanak's slok 'Wonderful is Thy word' (Slok
III- Asa di-Var), (318) that closes with the words,

317. Singh, Gopal; loc. cit., P.133.
"Beholding these wonderful things I remain wondering", we have already commented on.

In Luther also we come across passages of astounding power, expressing this sense of wonder and awe. "If you should examine a kernel of grain on the field minutely you would die of wonder."

(Sermon von dem Sakrament; W. A. 19, 496.1.11) (319)

"Most people ignore the miraculous work of creation; They are so accustomed to them; they are permeated with them as an old house is with smoke; they use them and wallow around in them like a sow in an oats-sack. Oh, they say, it is so marvellous that the sun shines? That fire heats? That water contains fish? That hens lay eggs? That the earth yields grain? That a cow bears calves? That a woman gives birth to children? Why this happens every day! You dear dolt Hans, must it be insignificant because it happens daily? If the sun ceased to shine for ten days, then its shining would surely be regarded as a great work. If fire were to be found only in one spot in the world, I judge that it would be esteemed more precious than all gold and silver. If there were only one well...

in the world, I suppose that one drop of water would be priced at above 100,000 gulden and that wine and beer would be considered filth by comparison. If God created all other women and children of bone, as He did Eve and but one woman were able to bear children, I maintain that the whole world, kings and lords would worship her as divinity (.....) But is it not vexing to see the accused ingratitude and blindness of mankind? God showers man with such great and rich miracles, but man ignores them all and thanks God for none. 

(Summarien über die Psalmen, W.A. 38, 53, 15 ff) (320) Luther makes use of homely comparisons to illustrate the idea while Nanak uses the loftiest language. But both spring from the same source, namely wonder at creation.

Turning to the form and melody of the hymns one can say that music is an important factor in this respect. Both exploited music for religious purposes. Both loved and knew music very well as we have already pointed out. (321) Luther went to the extent of saying: "Ich gebe nach der Theologie der Music die nächst Stehle und höchste Ehre " (322) and Guru

320. Ibid., P. 193.

321. See page 193 of this thesis.

322. Luther, Martin; Tischreden, P. 226.
Nanak probably thought music the most enduring, the most effective form of art and hence left only hymns behind. Apart from music, they have used all the devices of word melody like rhyme and rhythm, assonance and alliteration, internal rhymes and repetitions of the same sound to evoke a particular mood or feeling etc. What Herbert Wolf says about Luther applies to Nanak also, since both had the same aim and used the same means. "Euphonische und rhythmische Gestaltungsmittel werden dabei miteinander kombiniert, und zwar in aufeinander abgestimmter Form, wobei die akustische Wirkung zuweilen recht deutlich mit dem Inhalt der Aussage korrespondiert." (323)

We note for example in two lines already quoted from Guru Nanak the repeated use of the vowel 'a' and consonants 'm' and 'n'.

Man Maigel Bakat Devana
ban khand maya-moh hairana

'Man' and 'ban' have only one syllable; in the

323. Wolf, Herbert; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 99.

What Brecht says about Luther's Sprechgestik may be recalled in this context. He discusses the distinguishing marks of this style that lets 'Haltungen in den Sätzen durchschauen' and quotes a sentence from Luther as a model "Argert dich aber dein rechtes Auge, so reiß es aus und wirf es von dir!" (quoted from Ulrich Herold; Was haben wir von Martin Luther, Gespräche zu Person und Werk, loc. cit., P. 96.)
last words 'devana' and 'hairana', each has three syllables and rhyme on 'Vana' and 'rana' or again in the stanza 'Wonderful Thy word' from Asa di Var 'Vismath, nath, Vismath Veth' (Nath and Veth have absolute parallelism in the syllable with the long vowel a and e ). Later on in the same stanza we have:

Vismath samjog, Vismath Vijog.

The syllables retain the parallelism although their number goes up. It is superb and varied use of alliteration and assonance that we have here. Herbert Wolf points out characteristic features of Luther's style like "Zwei-und Mehrgliedrigkeit, Parallelismus der Glieder, wechselzeitge Verbindung verschiedener Lautreihungen, Verbindung assonantischer mit alliterierenden Prägungen, Verbindung zwischen Klang-und Sinnspiel, Verbindung mit Reimen usw." (324) characteristics that we find in Nanak also.

About the diction two points of similarity can be pointed out. One is the abundant use of similes, metaphors and other rhetorical devices, the other is the use of images drawn from nature in these similes.

324. Wolf, Herbert; Martin Luther, loc. cit., p. 99.
Elaborate metaphors are quite common in Nanak and are in fact a mannerism with him. One of the best is in 'Arti'. (325)

"The firmament is Thy salver
The sun and moon Thy lamps
The galaxy of stars as pearls strewn.
A mountain of sandal is Thy joss-stick
Breezes that blow Thy fan,
All the woods and vegetation
All flowers that bloom
Take their colours from Thy light."

This is the first stanza of the poem 'Arti', that describes the Hindu religious ritual in which a trayful of oil lamps is swung in circles before a deity. Here however the whole cosmos participates in the Arti, in this vast temple of God where 'echo beats the drum unstruck by hands'. In the 3rd stanza the poet seeks to illustrate in antithetical, paradoxical lines the mystery that God is:

"A thousand eyes hast Thou,
yet no eye hast Thou.
A thousand shapes hast Thou,
yet no shape hast Thou.
A thousand feet hast Thou,
yet no feet hast Thou.
A thousand nostrils hast Thou,
yet no nose hast Thou.
These are miracles that have bewitched my heart."

In the next stanza continuing the image of

the ritual of the lamps, he writes:

"Thine is the light in every lamp
Thine the radiance in all that is radiant
The guru's teaching illumines our minds
What pleases Him is the true worship of lamps."

In the last two lines each human soul
becomes a lighted lamp in a grand Arti before the God
of the Universe.

In the last two stanzas two similes are used:
As the honey-bee seeks honey in flowers
My soul which is ever athirst,
Seeks thy lotus feet
To slake its thirst for nectar.
Lord, show Thy mercy
Give Nanak the water he seeks.
He like the sarang cries for rain
Let him forever abide in Thy Name.

The similes are rather conventional, even
stereo-typed ones in Sanskrit literature. But the
fervour of Nanak's feeling saves them from the taint
of artificiality and conventionality. In the context
they seem to be the most natural figures of speech
to express the poet's intense longing.

Thus each stanza of this poem of six stanzas
makes use of one or other of the rhetorical devices.
In fact metaphor and simile are an integral part of
his poetry, since to expand intangible ideas, he like
all mystics has to depend on these devices.

We have a whole allegory about life in 'Var Magh' about the tradesman. (326) One of the less pleasing among his long metaphors, a type which is very common with him, we have in the following lines:

"As a beggar goes a-begging
Bowl in one hand, staff in the other,
Rings in his ears, in ashes smothered,
So go thou forth in life.

With ear-rings made of contentment,
With modesty for thy begging bowl,
Meditation the fabric of thy garment,
Knowledge of death thy cowl.

Let thy mind be chaste, virginal clean,
Faith the staff on which you lean." (327)

But we have short beautiful ones also scattered almost on every page bodying forth some mystic thought in the vividest manner. A few examples chosen at random are given below.

About the cycle of birth and death and rebirth:

1. The body is like a pitcher of soft clay filled with sorrow;
   It is made and unmade
   and each time it suffers.
   
   (Khushwant Singh, P. 119)

326. In the first watch of night, my trader friend. Khushwant Singh, P. 94.

327. Ibid., P. 57.
2. Maya is like a wicked mother-in-law
   Who will not let me make a home
   Nor let me meet my Lord and Husband.
   (Ibid)

3. We live in a pond whose waters
   He Himself hath filled with fire,
   Our feet are stuck in the mud of attachment
   We cannot move; many have I seen sunk in the mire.
   (P. 121)

4. The Name of the Lord is my only lamp.
   In it I pour my sorrows of oil;
   The brighter burns the flame
   The quicker is consumed the oil.
   (P. 123)

5. Learn goodness from your cattle
   you give them only hay
   With nector-like milk they repay.
   (P. 145)

Two other rhetorical devices Nanak uses
frequently are repetition (anaphora) for which we
already have many examples and hyperbole in which
things are worked up to a climax.

"Were I given a hundred thousand tongues
instead of one,
And the hundred thousand multiplied twenty fold,
A hundred thousand times would I say,
and say again,
The Lord of all the worlds is one."
   (Khushwant Singh, P. 59)
It is actually a highly poetic language that Guru Nanak uses.

The imaginative and poetic quality of the figures of speech is partly because most of them are drawn from Nature. Nanak has also images drawn from ordinary life. The metaphors of the goldsmith (Japji - XXXVIII), the beggar (Khushwant Singh, P.57) etc. are examples. But pictures from Nature predominate.

For example, about death he says:

As on the fish so on us men
When we least expect it
will fall the net.

As a small bird in the talons of a hawk,
or on the ground caught in the huntsman's share
So is man in the thrall of death.

(P.80)

Images of a homely type with rhetorical questions we come across in the passage:

What matters it to the fish, how profound the ocean?
What matters it to the bird, how vast the sky?
What effect does cold have on stone?
What use is a eunuch in rearing a family?
A dog with sandal paste you may smear
It will not change its canine nature
If the man you speak be deaf
What use is recitation of sacred texts to him?
What use their explanation?
Put a blind man in the light,
Light fifty oil lamps
What difference will thy make to him?
Place a mound of gold in front of cattle
They will continue to munch grass.

Compared to Nanak, Luther definitely uses images of a very homely kind as in the quotation on the indifference of people to the miracles of creation. They are so permeated with them, "as an old house is with smoke," they use them and wallow around in them "like a sow in an oats sack." But these occur in his prose writings or tabletalk which naturally will not always rise to the loftiness of poetry. We are forced to quote from them since he has left behind only 36 short hymns in verse and all the typical aspects of Luther's writings cannot be reflected in them. The prose quotation cited above shows the spontaneous flow and aptness of such comparisons. In verse we have naturally loftier metaphors like 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.'

Long metaphors are not so common in Luther as in Nanak. But there are examples. Comparing human heart to a ship, he writes:

"Denn ein menschlich hertz ist wie ein Schiff auff ein wilden meer,welches die stürmwinde von den vier orten der welt treiben. Hie stößt her furcht und sorge
for zukunftigem unfal. Dost feret gremen her und traurigkeit von kegenwertigem ubel. Hie webt hoffnung und vermessenheit von zukunftigem glück. Dost bleset her sicherheit und freude ynn gegenwertigen gütern" (WA DtB 10/IP 100) (328)

Since Luther wrote and spoke to convince and win over his readers or listeners, he uses all the rhetorical devices he can. Repetition of words and sentences for working things upto a climax is a favourite device of his. In the following passage the reader is addressed directly and questions are flung at him.

"Luther, wer sind sie, die von der ander gütter leben? Wer sind sie, die da meinen, es sey genug, das sie gute Tage haben? Wer sind sie, die da leben eynhyn alB die unvermuntftigen thier? Wer sind sie, die niemand straffen, nyemandt yhn weren thar? (Wider den falsch genannten geistlichen Stand). (329)

The questions naturally do not expect an answer. They are rhetorical questions and are meant to make the listeners think for themselves. Piling up of sentences that paraphrase the same idea is another often repeated device of Luther.

328. Quoted from Wolf, Herbert; loc. cit., P. 98.
329. Quoted from Herold Ulrich (Editor); Was haben wir von Martin Luther, Gespräche zu Person und Werk, loc. cit., P. 85-86.
"Die sprachen sind die scheyden/darynn dis messer des geysts stickt. Sie sind der schreyndarynnenn man dis kleinod tregt. Sie sind das gefeB/darynnennen man disen tranck fasset. Sie sind die kemnot/darynnennen dise speysye ligt. Und wie das Evangelion selbs zeygt/Sie sind die körbe/darynnnen man diese brot und fische und brocken behellt."

The rhythmic flow of the sentences is as much to be noticed as the paraphrased repetition of the idea for the sake of effect. Luther has used this method most impressively in 'An den christlichen Adel'. As Werner Lenck sagt: 'In dieser berühmten Schrift sind wirklich Grundelemente der Redeweise des Reformators deutlich zu destillieren. Die Häufung und Steigerung gehört dazu. (...) Entspricht das Dialogisieren dem Grundgestus der Reformation, dem man als ideologischen Widerstreit benennen könnte, so auch die Steigerung in der die Vehemenz dieses Widerstreit Gestalt gewonnen hat." (330)

Repetition of all sorts are exploited by Luther as rhetorical tricks: Anadiplose for example 'Ir seid müßig; müßig seid Ir' (WA, 2, Mose, 5, 17), antithetical balancing of paradoxes ('Got is meyn feyndt ... Got is meyn freundt' - WA 30/11 P 573) and Chiasmus (Do syndt 330. Herold, Ulrich; Was haben wir von Martin Luther, loc.cit., P. 89.)
For Luther’s use of hyperbole we have an example in "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" - "Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel war / und willt uns gar verschlingen / so fürchten wir uns nicht zu sehr / Es soll uns doch gelingen". This is modelled on the following verses of the 46th psalm which Luther had already translated as follows:

> Darum fürchten wir uns nicht, wenn gleich die Welt unterginge und die Berge mitten ins Meer sanken, wenn gleich das Meer wütet und walle und von seinem ungestüm die Berge einflielen.

Luther like Nanak draws a series of metaphors from the realm of animals and of Nature. For him as for Nanak all creation is a manifestation of God. "By His word everything came into being. This power is evident even in a peach stone. No matter how hard its shell, in due season it is forced open by a very soft kernel inside it. All this is ignored by Erasmus. He looks at the creatures as a cow stares at a new gate." (W.A., Tischreden, I, 1160)\(^{332}\) In this quotation if in the first comparison of the peach stone Luther’s very fine and poetic sense of wonder and delight

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331. Wolf, Herbert; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 100-101.
332. Quoted from Bornkamm, Heinrich; loc. cit., P. 194.
at even the most insignificant miracle in nature comes to expression, in the second (Erasmus and the cow) the homely plebeian strain in his nature comes to the fore. Such ironic comparisons are quite usual with him. His comment on Eck, his opponent in the Leipzig debate, is another good example. He said that Eck penetrated the 'Scriptures just as little as a water spider does the water.' (WA, 382, 20)(333)

Since Luther felt God's presence in every phenomenon of nature, it was natural for him to describe them in metaphorical language. Thus the clouds are God's pinions. The dew which falls at the dawn of the day is an image of the Holy Spirit. (Sermon-WA 41, 163, 4) A mild breeze becomes an image of the Gospel which melts the winter of the heart. The ever discontented world is "a head of a thistle, no matter which way it is turned, it invariably directs its prickles upwards". (Psalm 101 WA 51, 246, 3). Bornkamm rightly remarks: 'Luther's supply of such imagery is inexhaustible.' (334)

Such small details from Nature are found more often in Luther than in Nanak. Nanak seems to dwell

on the cosmic heights and all the grandeur of the skies and mountains and rivers, is there in his imagery, while Luther's images have a freshness and vividness and very often Volkstümlichkeit also that make them very effective. The strain of humour and irony that we note in Luther is again absent in Nanak. But we have to remember that while we have in Nanak's case the limited canvas of religious poetry in praise of God, in Luther's case, in our attempt to trace characteristic features of his writing, we have used in this part of our study not only his hymns, but also his prose writings and table-talk where he is naturally freer and more relaxed.

Since the canvass is vaster and has a wider range in the one case, our information would correspondingly be richer and more varied. We know, for example, what Luther thought about rhetoric (WA-TR.2,2199 a and 2216), how he deliberately used it to get the maximum effect. In Guru Nanak's case we are absolutely in the dark regarding such matters. But the fact that both use the same rhetorical devices and for the same purpose, that both are keenly alive to the entrancing power of music and word melody, that they express essentially the same view on God and man would justify our calling them kindred spirits.