In Rabindranath Tagore's autobiographical book 'Reminiscence' in the Chapter describing his educational pursuits in England, Tagore refers to a theory expounded by his Latin teacher, according to which in every age the whole world is moved by common thought currents that effect even nations not in contact with each other. Tagore subscribes to this view and asserts his belief that all humanity is bound together by an invisible power so that what happens in one corner of the world finds its reflection in other parts also. Whatever the validity of this theory, it cannot be denied that certain epochs provide grounds for such an assumption. The 6th and 5th century B.C. and the 15th and 16th century A.D. have supposedly such parallels. The former saw the emergence of Confucius (around 551-479 B.C.) and Laotse (traditionally assigned to the 6th century B.C.) in China; of Buddha (560-480 B.C.) and Mahavira (died in 477 B.C.) in India; of Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) and Euripides (around 480-407 B.C.) in Greece. The latter, as pointed out in the first chapter, saw an eruption of the spirit in several countries, an emergence of forces that gave a new direction to world history. As a part of this
general upsurge, we find parallel religious reform movements in Germany and in Panjab, initiated by two remarkable men who left their mark not only on the history and culture, but also on the language and literature of their people. They are builders of nations, cultures, religions, literatures and languages. (335)

They had not wanted to be any of these things. Luther never wanted to split the church and Nanak seemed to have settled down for good with a steady job as a store-keeper that left him the freedom to lead a pious life with singing of hymns at night and working during the day. It was circumstances that brought them out into the arena. The gross malpractices of the church, the corruption, licentious life, cynical unscrupulous exploitation of the simple faith of the masses as in the selling of indulgences—these were a few of the evils that forced Luther's hand. Wishing to remove the evils and to reform the church, he ended

335. Compare: 'If Panjab's earth is more productive, if its manhood more manly, if its womanhood is more liberated, if its people are more catholic in dress and diet-habits and far less superstitious and roam the whole world for adventure as for livelihood, all this is thanks to great Nanak, whose faith works through living life and sustains, broadens and deepens it by giving it an earthly purpose as much as spiritual hope.'

Singh, Gopal; Sri Guru Granth Sahib, loc. cit., P. XXXV.)
up as a 'Ketzer Wider Willen'. Nanak was sorely grieved at the sight of the religious fanaticism that divided people into Hindus and Muslims and led to oppression and massacre in the name of religion; he was sorely grieved at the sight of the rigid casteism and ritualism of Hinduism and thought a common religion that combined the best traits of both (e.g. the monotheism and the democratic brotherhood of man from Mohammedanism) and brought human beings together as brothers, would bring about peace and the true spirit of religion in the worship of the one eternal God. After his vision at the river he kept on repeating as though it were his watchword: "There is no Hindu and there is no Mussalman". In the strange garb that he wore on his Udasis in worshipping at the mosque, in going to Baghdad, in short, in his life and practice, he tried to reconcile the two religions. He must have succeeded in this attempt, for Hindus and Muslims claimed him for themselves when he was on his death bed. If in the long run Nanak as well as Luther led only to the creation of new militant sects, it was because of external factors and forces.

Both Luther and Nanak tried to remove the intermediaries between man and God and to establish religion in its essence as direct communion with God.
In our fourth chapter we have worked out the similarities in their concept of God and of man's relation to God. God the one and only God, without beginning and end, omnipresent and omnipotent, inscrutable in His ways, incomprehensible; man-powerless to help himself, weak and sinful, but able to attain God through faith, through complete trust in God, man's duty being to obey God's Hukam—in these essentials their views are the same even though each remained anchored firmly in his specific religious background, Luther to the Christian and Nanak to the Hindu religion. Thus Luther believed in transubstantiation and Nanak in rebirth. But apart from such doctrines there is considerable similarity on vital points as for example in the parallels between Naam (sabad)—Word and Son—the Guru.

If Nanak and Luther did not want to be religious reformers or to found new religions, they thought even less of becoming key figures in their language and literature, and yet this was what happened. Nanak could be said to have begun Panjabi, since in the evolution of the Gurmukhi script, he was the strongest inspiration and in the transformation of a primitive language form into a literary language, he played the most important role. He wrote some of the
greatest poetry in Panjabi and influenced later Panjabi writers deeply. Luther helped to establish a standard form for the German language, turned it into a vitally alive medium for literary creation, through his translation of the Bible influenced the thought and culture of a whole nation, influenced also the translation of the Bible in other languages and above all, by setting up a model in prose style, worked on generations of German writers and thus continues to be an enduring influence on German literature. We read for example how Brecht has ‘ganz unbeeindrückt durch die sprachgestaltung etwa in der Klassik direkt wieder an Luther angeknüpft’. (335)

Through his hymns Luther laid the foundation of ‘geistliche lyrik’ which formed the main stream of lyric in the 16th and 17th century. Thereby one has to remember how Luther never considered himself a poet and in fact spoke of his hymns belittlingly as ‘garstige und schnöde Poetry odder geticht’ (WA 31.1.393). On another occasion he gave the following very modest estimate of himself: "Ich will, darf und kann mich keinesfalls mit einem Dichter messen."

(WA.Br.5,1686). Nanak however calls himself poet and

335. Quoted from Ulrich Herold; Was haben wir von Martin Luther, loc.cit., P.96.
singer. More about self-assessing by himself, we do not know. Probably he took it as a gift from God and used it in the service of God, considering it only as a means to convey his message to the people, never as an end in itself.

Not only in music which they loved and created, but also in the many debates they engaged in (Luther in his 'Streitschriften' and Nanak in the many reported disputes as well as in 'Sidha Goshti'), in the dialogue or question and answer form they often used (Luther's "catechism" and Nanak's "Sidha Goshti") they seem to evince the same tastes. In their writings as we have seen in the fourth chapter, both show many similarities, as for example, in the rhythmic and deliberately melodic use of words, in rhetorical devices etc.

In their life's mission and mode of activity they resemble each other. Even in the crucial occurrences of their life, there seems to be some parallelism. Thus Nanak has his mystic experience in 1507 after which he gives up his job and begins his Udasis to preach God's Naam. Luther becomes a monk in 1505 after the incident of the thunderstorm. In 1517 as Nanak sets out on his second Udasi, Luther nails the 95 theses on the church door. The period of the Udasis was for Nanak certainly a period of disputation with
Sidhs, Yogis, Maulavis etc. and the three Udasis lasted up to 1521, although it is to be conceded that we cannot have certainty about Nanak's dates. The period from 1517 to 1521 was period of tremendous strain for Luther also, with disputations at Heidelberg in 1518, at Leipzig in 1519 crowned by the encounter with Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521. If Luther had one of the finest moments of his life in this encounter as he said, "I neither can nor will recant anything, since it is neither right nor safe to act against conscience. God help me. Amen" (336), so Nanak had already some time between 1519 and 1521 his encounter with Babar whom he impressed so much with his uprightness, fearlessness and saintliness that he could even get favours from the conqueror. From 1521-1534 Luther worked at his greatest literary creation, the translation of the bible. He also wrote most of his hymns (1523-24), and published important treatises like "Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weil man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei (1523)" "Von Ordnung Gottesdiensts in der Gemeine (1523)" , "Wider die räuberrichen und mörderichen Rotten der Bauern (1525)" , Der große Katechismus (1529), Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen (1530) etc. In the years

336. Quoted from Martin Luther- 450 Anniversary of the Reformation, loc. cit., P. 58.
after his Udasis, when Guru Nanak settled down at Kartarpur, all his important works like Japji and Baramah were put into writing. In 1525 Luther got married and became a house-holder with a household that within a few years grew into a huge establishment with 16 children, 11 of them adopted children, visitors, guests, students, widows and old women, 'eine gemischte Schar aus jungen Leuten, Studenten, jungen Mädchen, Witwen, alten Frauen und Kindern', (337) stables for livestock, land for cultivation, even a brewery. As Luther writes to his friend Jonas, his wife, Frau Kathe: "fuhrwerk, bestellt das Feld, weidet und kauft Vieh, braut usw". (338) 'Ich armer Mann, so halt ich Haus', laments Luther in self-mockery in 1536. (339) While in Wittenberg, Luther was thus getting more and more involved in the life of his household, at Kartarpur Guru Nanak had taken off the strange pilgrim's garb that he wore on the Udasis, donned the ordinary dress of the day and begun the life of a house-holder. "He also started cultivation of a farm and out of its produce food was offered to whosoever came to him. Thus he laid the foundation

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337. Friedenthal, Richard; Luther, Sein Leben und Seine Zeit, loc. cit., P. 542.
338. Ibid., P. 540.
339. Ibid., P. 541.
of a community kitchen in which everyone, high or low, caste or no caste, and men of all creeds, were made to eat together(...). One more trip, this time to Mecca and Medine, interrupted this life. But Nanak returned soon to take up again a regular householder's life. Morning and evening religious services were performed. Nanak also imparted instruction to the hundreds of men and women who came to meet him. About Luther's household also we read, "Hausandachten werden abgehalten im früheren Refektorium, es wird eifrig gebetet, die Bibel gelesen und ausgelegt". With people always coming and going to meet the two reformers, with the 'langhar' attached to the Sikh household and the many mouths to feed in the Christian household, with the religion as a central influence in daily life in both, the two households must have had very much in common.

But not the two personalities in the centre. Here we see individual differences. Luther with his


341. We read in Macauliffe, how when Lehina, who later became Guru Angad came to meet Guru Nanak, the Guru's wife told him that the Guru was in his fields, and would be home by evening. Lehina went straight to the Guru and saw that he had collected three bundles of grass for his cows and buffaloes. Macauliffe, M. A.; The Sikh Religions, Vol. II, loc. cit., P.5.

'Derbheiten' and outbursts of temper seems very much human. Nanak with his gentleness, tolerance, piety and love seems, if not half divine, at least a saint. But we have to remember that while the glaring light of the 'Tischreden' falls on Luther and even his coarse off-the-cuff remarks noted down by overzealous disciples have been preserved to scandalise later readers, (343) we read about Guru Nanak only the miracles that he worked and his encounters with adversaries whom he always worsted in debates and all of whom at the end fell at his feet. All the same it is easy to ignore the miracles and to concentrate on the human side of the man, enough of which remains. For example there is his sense of humour which delighted in provoking others. Thus in Mecca, he lies with feet turned to the Kaaba and when asked "why hast thou, O sinner, turned thy feet towards God?" replies: "Turn my feet in a direction in which God is not". At Hardwar he provokes the Hindus at their ablutions by throwing water westwards. When Babar tells him to ask for any favour, he replies since God is the only giver and all the others including Kings and 343. Friedenthal, Richard; Luther, Sein Leben und Seine Zeit, loc. cit., P. 539.
Emperors are beggars, "Hear, Emperor Babar, He who beggeth of thee is a fool" (344). Absolute fearlessness is also evident in his reply. Luther was also fearless and has a keen sense of humour. Nanak's reply to Babar reminds us of Luther's letter to protector Friedrich, Elector of Saxony who had forbidden him from leaving the security of Wartburg. "Since I feel that your Ducal Grace is still weak in the faith, I can by no means regard your Ducal Grace as the man to protect or save me." (345) The pages of the 'Tischreden' are filled with examples for his humour and ironic self-mockery. In a healthy, sensible approach to things also both resemble each other. They both reject astrology. "Our God does not consult the sky," Luther says in 'Tischreden' (WA.4, 4846) "Thou calculatest auspicious moments but reflectest not, that God is beyond auspicious moments," (346), says Nanak.

In generosity and kindness also there is similarity. Thus Guru Nanak had as householder, his free kitchen, refused during his Udasis gifts from others much to the chagrin of Mardana, helped the weak and needy, many instances of which are narrated by Macauliffe.

345. Bornkamm, Heinrich; Luthers geistige Welt, loc. cit., P. 89.
Luther did not take any money for his books, nor did he accept a fee from students. "Er schenkte ununterbrochen, wenn Flüchtlinge oder Bedürftige ihn ansprachen". (347)

We have already mentioned their love of disputation. While Luther can be boundlessly intemperate in his speech and fling all sorts of invectives short of obscenity at his opponents, Nanak is always dignified and restrained, although he is very blunt and outspoken in his criticism as we see in his tirades against the Yogis, Brahmins etc. We have one instance in Macauliffe where from bluntness he slides off into what could be called vicious attack. Bhangarnath, the superior of the Yogis asked him why he mixed acid with milk, meaning thereby, why he, a holy man, led a family life.

"When the milk becometh sour, no butter is produced by churning". Nanak replied: "O Bhangarnath, thy mother was an unskillful woman. She knew not how to wash the churn, and so spoilt the butter in producing thee." (348) Naturally Nanak could never have indulged in wild abuse like Luther. (349) Nor could he, with his

347. Friedenthal, Richard; Luther, Sein Leben und Seine Zeit, loc. cit., P. 541.
349. Examples are: Wider Hans Worst (WA 51, P. 469 ff), Neue Zeitung vom Rhein (WA 53, P. 404 ff), und Wider das Papstum zu Rom vom Teufel gestift (WA 51, P. 206 ff)
compassion for the weak, have written Luther’s articles against the revolting peasants or with his fearless advocating of the right written a treatise like “Von weltlicher Obrigkeit wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei.”

Nanak was on the whole a finer personality than Luther, more imaginative and understanding, more tolerant and forbearing, less worldly and aggressive. His calmness and equanimity, courtesy and patience in the face of provocations (for example, in the face of such impertinent questions as those of the Kashmiri Pandit, Brahm Das: “Is that the sort of faqir thou art? Why wearest thou leather, which is unclean? Why twistest thou a rope round thy body? Why hast thou abandoned the observances of thy religion? And why eatest thou flesh and fish?” make him a saintly personality, while Luther with his rudeness and impatience and intolerance always remained an erring human being struggling for perfection. But these different personalities took up the same task, that of religious reformation, used the same means, namely the power of the word and of music and thereby became creators of literary works of the finest kind, literary works that ensure them a place in world literature.