CHAPTER II
INTRODUCTION

Against the background of these turbulent times live Guru Nanak Dev and Martin Luther. A short sketch of their lives would provide an insight into the personality of the two men who played an important role in the history, culture, language and literature of their people.

One has however to admit that the materials available are of a totally different kind. For Guru Nanak's life one depends on the Janam-Sakhis and these make him almost into an incarnation of God, so filled are they with miracles and wonders. His works, the Hymns, reveal mostly the God intoxicated saint. Biographers of Guru Nanak Dev found it very difficult to separate truth from legend, facts from fiction. Even the years of his birth, marriage, death etc. are not established convincingly. All the same the main facts of his life are identifiable and a lovable personality with a keen sense of humour and tolerance emerges. In Luther's case there is no lack of material and Luther comes alive in his writings, in his table talk and in many biographies on him and one sees him in his greatness as well as in his limitations.
Life of Guru Nanak.

The great religious reformer and founder of the Sikh religion was born on 15th April, 1469 in the small village of Talwandi, about forty miles away from Lahore, in the family of a Khatri farmer. Hari Ram Gupta considers Nanak's birth a significant event for India. (82) His father, named Kalu, was a village land accountant. His mother Tripta was a pious lady. Guru Nanak had also an elder sister, whose name was Nanki. At an early age Guru Nanak started to talk about God. At the age of seven he was sent to the village school. When he did not apply himself to his books and the teacher pressed him to read, he asked the teacher:

"Art thou sufficiently learned to teach me?"

and unimpressed by the teacher's listing of his accomplishments, he said the following words:

"Burn worldly love, grind its ashes and make it into ink; turn superior intellect into paper. Make divine love thy pen and thy heart the writer; ask thy Guru and write his instructions. Write God's name, write His praises, write that he hath neither end nor limit." (83)

82. Compare: "It was an epoch making period during which Guru Nanak was born and lived (1469-1539) Events of great significance took place then both in Europe and India."


J.C. Archur feels that Nanak had a keen power of observation and learned many things through it. (84)

After sometime Nanak stopped going to school as he found the teacher incapable of giving true education. His father allowed him to study Persian. For getting an official job, the knowledge of Persian was essential. So he was sent to Rukn-ul-Din for learning Persian. It is said that he surprised his Persian teacher by composing an acrostic on the letters of the Persian alphabet. However not many details are available. In the Janam-Sakhis of Sewa Das, which (according to M.A. Macauliffe) provide the most trustworthy and detailed account about the life of Guru Nanak, it is not clear to what degree he mastered this official language. Macauliffe feels that he had acquired a good knowledge of this language:

"There are numerous Persian words and some Persian Verses of Guru Nanak found in the Guru Granth Sahib and it may be accepted as a fact that he became a fair Persian scholar." (85)

In Janam-Sakhi not much is said about his

84. Compare: "Nanak learned many things from observation including both mosque and temple ceremonial. Indeed he seems to have displayed early an unusual disposition towards religion." Archur, J.C.; The Sikhs-A Study of Comparative Religion, London, 1946, P. 69.

education. It seems that he did not show much interest in worldly knowledge. After reading Nanak's compositions one can easily believe that Nanak had a good knowledge of Hindu and Muslim sacred writings. (86) Nanak's attitude towards earthly education brought his father great disappointment, as like other parents he wanted to make his son a respectable person in the Khatri community. He considered his son insane and became very much worried about his future. After finding him unsuitable for normal jobs, he sent Nanak to graze cattle in the adjoining forest. For a few days this work went on smoothly, but one day Nanak fell asleep and his cattle escaped into the neighbouring field. On hearing the news, the owner of the field became furious and asked Nanak to pay compensation. But Guru Nanak only told him that God would bless his field. His words could not pacify his neighbour, who complained to Rai Bhular, the kind landlord of the village, under whom Nanak's father was working as land accountant. Rai Bhular sent his own men to assess the loss caused by Nanak's cattle. It is said that when they reached the field, they found no damage to crops, not even a

86. Compare: "Nanak became acquainted in due course with portions of the Hindu shastras, sacred writing, with bits of Muslim lore, such as some of the hadith or sayings of Mohammed and with portions of Koran which were in circulation."

Archur, J.C.; The Sikhs-A Study of Comparative Religions, loc. cit., P. 69.
single blade had been destroyed or eaten. One of the important incidents of Nanak's childhood was the Janau Sanskar (sacrificial thread ceremony) according to Hindu custom. This was conducted when he was only nine years old. All the preliminary rites before this ceremony were performed by Kalu's family pandit. When the Pandit was about to put the sacred thread on Nanak's neck, Guru Nanak asked him the purpose of putting it on his neck. The Pandit tried to convince him by saying that this was one of the important ceremonies of the Hindu religion. A Hindu was considered a sudra without this thread. Guru Nanak flatly refused to follow this tradition and said the following words:

"Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread, continence its knot, truth its twist. That would make a janeu for the soul; if thou have it, O Brahman, then put it on me. It will not break or become soiled, or be burned or lost." (87)

According to Dorothy Field:

"This hymn is typical of the manner in which Nanak afterwards conveyed most of his teaching. From that day onwards he protested against the tyranny of caste and the authority of the

87. The lowest class in the Hindu caste system, the others being the Brahmanas (the priestly class), the Kshatriyas (the warrior class) and the Vaisyas (the traders).

Brahman priesthood."(89)

In the Janam Sakhi it is mentioned that Guru Nanak got married at the age of fourteen, (90) and in the course of time two sons were born to him named Sri Chand and Lakshmi Das. The bond of marriage and children could not hold back Guru Nanak in the entanglements of a normal worldly life. He continued to associate himself with religious men and spent the maximum time possible in their company. Just to turn his attention towards worldly life, his father Kalu tried to engage him in some useful occupation. He asked him to go to Sultanpur where his brother-in-law, Jai Ram, had a good post under the governorship of Daulat Khan Lodhi. Nanak's father hoped that under Jai Ram's influence, his son would get some respectable work and turn to worldly life. All this piety of their son did not please Nanak's parents. They wished their son would lead a normal life and stop all this day-dreaming. Nanak's meditation and communing with nature was for them no more than day-dreaming. His parents' attempts to make him earn his own living proved futile. The father suggested in turn agriculture, trade, government service, but without effect. Every time

90. There are differences of opinion about the date of his marriage. Macauliffe points out (p. 29) that the modern Janamsakhis assign it to the period of his stay in Sultanpur as Daulat Khan's store-keeper, when his brother-in-law arranged a match for him.
he answered with spiritual verses. When his father gave up in despair and his mother's prayer also fell on deaf ears, his uncle Lalu and other relatives tried their best to bring him to reason. But Nanak always reacted in the same way, chanted hymns or 'became silent, lay down and ate and drank nothing.' (91) They thought him ill and brought a physician. But the physician found nothing wrong with him. To please his parents Nanak finally accepted the offer of his brother-in-law Jai Ram to get him a 'Government job. So he went to Sultanpur, where Jai Ram was working. Jai Ram introduced Nanak to Daulat Khan, who appointed him Store-Keeper. Nanak discharged his duties with great zeal, efficiency and honesty. But he used to give away everything as alms to the poor, saints and Faquirs. His enemies felt that he was helping the poor only to gain their praise. So they complained against him to their master. Therefore his store was checked, but they did not find any shortage of anything. This incident cannot be considered a miracle, perhaps he might have been giving away his own money which he was getting as salary.

At this time Nanak met Mardana, who belonged

to a tribe of Minstrels by name Dums and who also came from Talwandi. He became the inseparable companion of Nanak and used to accompany him on rebeck or 'rebec' when Nanak sang his religious songs. He got employed under Nanak and became Nanak's personal assistant.

Nanak seemed to have become more or less settled in life. He did his job so well that the Governor was very pleased with him. The night he spent singing hymns to the creator. Sometime before day break he would go to the neighbouring river Bein and carry out his ablutions and the day found him busy at his job.

Then came 20th August 1507, a very important day in Nanak's life. This day brought a total change in his life. In the words of Greenlees:

"On 20th August, 1507, came the day of destiny. After his morning bath in the river, Nanak sat for meditation and heard God's call to give his life for world uplift, guiding men on the right path to Him."

92. A stringed musical instrument played with a bow, or a kind of violin used during the Middle Ages.

93. Compare: "Nanak may have been about forty years of age when in response to a special vision, he entered the final phase of his career, when God offered him a cup of amrit, 'nectar' in token of pledge of divine favour and in promise of Nanak's ultimate success. God then commissioned him to repeat the Name to inspire others, also to repeat it, and to teach all mankind the 'true religion!'"

Arcurt, J.C.; The Sikh-A study of Comparative Religion, loc. cit., P. 73.

According to Puratan Janam Sakhi he was taken into the presence of the Lord, who offered him a cup of nectar and charged him with the mission of preaching the glory of His name. God said to him,

"I am with thee, I have made thee happy and also those who shall take thy name. Go and repeat Mine and cause others to do likewise. Abide uncontaminated by the world. Practise the repetition of my name, charity, ablutions, worship and meditation. I have given thee this cup of nectar, a pledge of my regard." (95)

Nanak determined to obey the call of God and after three days he returned from the forest. Great was the surprise of the people. Everyone had thought that he had been drowned in the river. He resigned his post, gave away everything to the poor and prepared to spread his message among the people of the world. Nanak's employer tried his best to stop him from leaving his job, but failed. The other people felt that he had gone mad or was possessed with an evil spirit and even brought a Mohammedan priest to exercise it. Nanak after remaining silent for one day after returning from the forest made his first announcement.

"There is no Hindu and no Musalman." (96) and he went on repeating the statement. This declaration

95. Macauliffe, M.A.; The Sikh Religion, loc. cit., P. 34.
96. Ibid., P. 37.
of Nanak made the Qazi of that place very angry and he made a complaint against him to the Governor Daulat Khan. Nanak was called by him. Nanak at first refused to go, asking, 'What have I to do with your Khan?' But when he was summoned a second time, he did go. When he was asked by his master for an explanation of his saying, 'There is no Hindu and no Musalman,' Nanak gave the following explanation:

"To be a Musalman is difficult; if one be really so, then one may be called a Musalman. Let one first love the religion of Saints and put aside pride and help as the file removeth rust. Let him accept the religion of his pilots and dismiss anxiety regarding death or life; let him heartily obey the will of God, worship the Creator, and efface himself. When he is kind to all men, then Nanak, shall he be indeed a Musalman."(97)

Then he attended the prayer with the Governor and the Qazi in the mosque. When everybody knelt down for prayer, Nanak remained standing on his feet and laughed at the Qazi, who was droning out the prayer. The Qazi was angry and asked for the reason of his laughter. Nanak told him that the Qazi was not concentrating on his prayer, but was thinking of his new born baby filly and the Governor was thinking of 97. Ibid., P.38.
purchasing horses in Kabul. It is said that both confessed that they were doing so and fell at his feet.

After a few days he made a short visit to his parents at Talwandi and then he decided to make Udasis. The word 'Udasi' has been explained as Missionary Journey by Duncan Greenlees, (98) as he feels that Guru Nanak set out on these journeys to spread God's name in the World. We find him in fact engaging in religious disputes, preaching and making converts. According to him, Nanak began his first journey in 1507 and it lasted upto 1515.

First Missionary Journey:

In this journey he took with him his sincere follower and companion Mardana. He reached the city called Aminabad and stayed with a carpenter named Lalo, who was only a Sudra. He refused the invitation of the steward Malik Bhago to a feast. When Bhago charged him with dining with a low caste person, he asked Lalo and Bhago to bring the 'roti' from their houses. He took both pieces of bread in his hands and squeezed them. From the bread, which was brought from Bhago's house, trickled blood and from Lalo's dry and coarse bread, milk. Nanak showed Bhago that his bread was earned with

exploitation of the poor, whereas Lalo's bread showed the milk of honesty and human kindness. Besides this, Nanak also wanted to show that even the poorest food offered with kindness and love is better than the rich food offered with pride. Later on, Lalo also became his disciple. From there (Sayyidpur) he went to Hardwar. In Hardwar when he was taking his bath in the river he saw Hindus throwing water to the east, presuming that this water would be received by their ancestors. Nanak started throwing water to the west. When he was asked by the Hindus about this act, then he informed them that he was watering his fields at his native place Talwandi. People started laughing and considered him a fool. Nanak told them if their water could reach their ancestors, then why not his water his fields. His fields were much nearer than the abode of their ancestors.

According to Max Arthur Macauliffe, from Hardwar Nanak and his companion went to the South-East and met many Yogis on the way to Kasi (now Varanasi). It is said that in Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh) he sat under a dried Peepal tree, which soon turned green. After reaching Kasi he had great arguments with different priests against idolatry. The most famous incident during his stay in Kasi was his discourse with Pandit
Chatur Das, who was considered the Chief Pandit of this holy city. With his argument he changed the heart of Chatur Das and converted him into a Sikh.

From there Nanak visited other cities like Patna, Ayodhya and Gaya. According to Puratan Janam Sakhi he visited a country which was ruled by a lady magician. This city is called Kamrup. In the Puratan Janam-Sakhi (P.33-34) the story is set in a land which is called either Kauru or Kavaru, both of which are evidently variants of Kamrup. This at least is the assumption made by all who accept Nanak's visit to Assam as true. Assam is famed as the home of the Tantras, and the magic described in the Sakhi has been taken as a description of tantric practices. All printed editions of the Bala version give the name as Karu, but in the manuscripts it appears, as in the Puratan Janam Sakhi, as Kauru. The Bala Manuscript version records a Sakhi which differs radically from that of the Puratan Janam Sakhi, but it does concern women magicians, who turn Mardana into a sheep and make unsuccessful efforts to overcome the Guru. According to W.H. Meleod:

"These references to Kauru have been accepted as satisfactory evidence of a visit to Assam and the point has not been challenged." (99)

After his visit to Assam he visited Bengal,

where it is said that when Nanak and Mardana were wandering in one village, the villagers insulted these wanderers and drove them off their village. But Nanak blessed this village with all prosperity. In another village of Bengal where they were heartily welcomed, Nanak expressed his wish before Mardana that this village should be broken up. Mardana was very much surprised on hearing these words of Nanak. Then he asked him, why he blessed with prosperity a village where they insulted him and blessed with destruction, another where they enjoyed great hospitality. Guru Nanak explained to him, that when these people would be scattered and settled at different places, they would spread their piety and love for humanity. After this they crossed the great river Brahmaputra by ship and reached the holy city of Puri. One finds substantiation of this visit in Janam Sakhi in two verses. In one verse it is stated that Guru Nanak and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu participated in one Kirtan at Puri. In the other verse it is explained that while wandering in Puri, Guru Nanak found Chaitanya to be one of his companions. Some authors like Anil Chandra Banerjee feel that this meeting might have taken place in 1510.

"This meeting between the two religious teachers probably took place between March and July 1510." (100)

100. Banerjee, Anil Chandra; Guru Nanak and his times, loc. cit., P. 130.
Nanak went from Puri to Rameshwaram and from Rameshwaram he went to a foreign country where a different language was spoken.

"The Janam Sakhi has not mentioned the name of this country as Ceylon." (101)

Nanak came west from Ceylon and visited the cities of Somnath and Dwarka and urged by Mardana made the homeward journey through Bikaner. Before going home he visited his sister Nanki at Sultanpur and then proceeded to his native place Talwandi. It is said that it was a very short visit to his parents, wife and children. He was requested by his mother to leave this wandering life and lead a respectable life in his own village. But Nanak did not show any attachment to any one in the family and refused the food and clothes that his mother had brought for him. The father also came and used all the devices he could think of to make Nanak come home. But he pointed out that he was a hermit. "Obey God's order and let me

101. But Max Arthur Macauliffe writes, "The Guru then turned his thought towards Ceylon and succeeded in reaching that country, where he took his seat in Raja Shivnabh's garden. At that time it was barren, but it is said to have become green on the Guru's arrival. The gardener requested the King to go and see the Fauqir who had caused the withered garden to bloom anew. The King sent beautiful damsels to dance before the Guru and tempt him with their charms. The Guru, wrapped up in his own thoughts, neither spoke to them nor noticed them. Macauliffe, M. A.; The Sikh Religion its Gurus and Sacred Writings and Authors, loc. cit., P. 154-155."
again depart", he told them and again set off on his travels with his minstrel.

Greenlees includes the travels that Nanak undertook immediately after this visit to Talwandi along with the first Udasi, while Macauliffe treats them as part of a new Udasi, for he begins the account in the following words:

"The Guru and Mardana again set out on their travels." (102)

They travelled through different parts of Panjab making converts. They also had personal experiences of Babar's invasion of Panjab. They saw how the city of Saiyidpur and the neighbouring villages were devastated and the people massacred. They themselves were taken prisoners and had to work. The Guru had to carry loads on his head and to work with a hand mill for grinding corn. But the work was done for him miraculously and Babar coming to know of it visited him in prison and was so impressed by his godliness that he asked the Guru to accept a boon from him. The Guru then requested for the release of the captives. This was granted. But when they returned to Saiyidpur, they found that all who had remained in the town had been killed. Nanak broke into lamentation.

"Where are those sports, those stables and those horses?" (103)

102. Ibid., P. 101.
103. Ibid., P. 115.
The emperor sent for him and at his request set free all the remaining prisoners and even gave them cloths of honour. Babar asked Nanak to embrace Islam which however he refused with the words:

"There are hundreds of thousands of Muhammads, but only one God." (104)

Nanak and Mardana went on their way and proceeded to Lahore where he became the guest of a Millionaire named Duni Chand in the 'Sradha Ceremony' (105) of his father. Guru Nanak used the opportunity to discourage all these rites.

According to Duncan Greenlees:

"At last, after eight years constant wanderings and at the age of 46, he settled on the site of Kartarpur in January 1516 and consoled his parents by bringing them to live with him there quietly for nearly two years." (106)

According to Greenlees Duncans, Nanak started

104. Ibid., P. 121.

105. Sradha Ceremony- a feast given to Brahmins in a particular month on a particular day in the name of a deceased person.


The accounts in the various books differ on this point. Macauliffe does not mention the Kartarpur settlement in this context. He does not at all divide the Udasis into first, second and third. And while Greenlees Duncan speaks of three Missionary journeys, Surinder Singh Kohli speaks of four.

Kohli, Surinder Singh; Philosophy of Guru Nanak, Delhi, 1969, P. 6.
on his second Missionary journey in 1517. He writes:

"The travellers resumed their wanderings late in 1517 crossing over to Uttarkhand, where the Guru argued with a group of Siddhas and Yogis, again describing for these what true Yoga means. Then they paid a short visit to Kartarpur to console the Guru's parents and after visits to Pasaur and Eminabad they went up to Sialkot." (107)

During this second Udasi Nanak visited Kashmir. From here he crossed the mountains to Mount Sumeru. In the Janam Sakhi of Bhai Gurudas it is mentioned that he had discourse with the Siddhas on Mount Sumeru. But W.H. Mcleod did not agree with this. As he writes:

"The Mount Sumeru Sakhi provides us with a tradition which appears in all versions, but which must nevertheless be wholly rejected. This is not to say that Guru Nanak never visited the Himalayas, nor indeed can be maintained with assurance that he did not penetrate as far as Mount Kailas and Lake Manasa. The conclusion to which our analysis points is that Bhai Gurudas and Janam Sakhis do not provide us with acceptable evidence of such a visit and that accordingly it cannot be a part of the biography which we are seeking to construct." (108)

107. Ibid., P.288.

Macauliffe however speaks of the Guru's going to the South of India and beyond it to Ceylon returning from where he journeyed northwards.

After this journey Guru Nanak went back to Kartarpur. According to Greenlees Nanak started his third Missionary Journey in 1518, which lasted up to 1521. In this third Udasi he perhaps visited Mecca and Medina. Janam Sakhi of Bhai Gurudas gives details about Guru Nanak's activities in Mecca and Baghdad and there one finds a reference to Medina also. But in the Puratan Janam Sakhi and Miharban Janam Sakhi the authors have mentioned only his visit to Mecca. However, Anil Chandra Banerjee feels that Nanak visited Baghdad also.

"During the First World War an inscription was found at Baghdad by a Sikh Commander and it was given publicity in 1918. It was interpreted as containing a definite reference to Guru Nanak's presence at Baghdad in 927 H (1520-1521 A.D.) or ten years earlier."(109)

Max Arthur Macauliffe has also accepted the traditional version about the visit of Nanak to Mecca and Medina and Baghdad. He writes:

"As they proceeded on the road to Mecca, it is said a cloud they saw over their heads accompanied them. (...) When the Guru arrived weary and footsore in Mekka, he went and sat in the great Mosque where pilgrims were engaged in their devotion. His disregard of Moslem customs soon involved him in difficulties. When he lay

down to sleep at night he turned his feet towards the Kaaba. An Arab priest kicked him and said, 'who is this sleeping infidel? Why hast thou, O sinner, turned thy feet towards God? The Guru replied, 'Turn my feet in a direction in which God is not.' (110)

In the following pages we find that Guru Nanak visited Medina and Baghdad also. In the words of Macauliffe:

"In due time the Guru proceeded to Medina, where he vanquished the Muhamadan priests in argument. Thence he journeyed to Baghdad and took up his position outside the city. He shouted the call to prayer, on which the whole population became wrapt in silent astonishment. The high priest of Baghdad, on meeting face to face the enthusiastic stranger, inquired who he was and what sect he belonged to. The Guru replied, 'I have appeared in this age to indicate the way unto men. I reject all sects and only know one God, whom I recognize in the earth, the heavens and in all directions." (111)

It is said that from there they (Nanak and Mardana) went to Kabul and then to Peshawar. Here he had discourse with Yogies at Gorakhnath temple. From there he is supposed to have gone to a famous Muslim centre Hassan Abdul where he met a selfish Muslim Saint Bawa.

Bali, living on a hill. It is said that Guru Nanak was forced to dig a small well to get water to drink and this drew away the water from Bawa Bali, who was living on a hill. This made Bawa Bali very angry and he threw the hill on Nanak. He stopped this hill with his right hand. The mark of Nanak's right hand on this hill was named as Panja Sahib. After a long journey in his own country and in foreign countries Guru Nanak came back and settled down at Kartarpur on the right bank of river Ravi, to lead a peaceful life.

In Kartarpur he took off his pilgrim's dress and dressed himself in the ordinary dress of a common man. He occupied himself with hard work in his fields to earn his livelihood. At the same time he used to preach to the people. By adopting this type of life he wanted to show his followers that to lead a religious and pious life one need not devote oneself exclusively to an ascetic life. Nanak also composed many hymns. According to Duncan Greenlees, he also wrote down many of the hymns he had already sung elsewhere and which no doubt Mardana had committed to memory. Thus the 'Malar' and 'Majh Vars' were written out while Mardana still lived and the 'Japji' and 'Asa di Var' soon after him. When Mardana died in 1522, he was succeeded as Chief Minstrel by his son Shahazada.
Guru Nanak appointed Angad as his successor, as he realized that his end was approaching. When he gave his Guddi (sitting place) to his successor Angad, people came to know that his end was very near. Both Hindus and Muslims started quarrelling as Hindus wanted to cremate him and Muslims to bury him. When the Guru came to know of this he called the people of both communities and asked them to bring flowers and keep them, the Hindus on his right side and the Muslims on his left. It was done. Next day when people opened his sheet they found only flowers. In the words of Greenlees:

"It was 7th September 1539, the next day when the Hindus and Muslims disputed the right to dispose of the holy body, they found only flowers beneath the sheet. Hindus and Muslims then created separate shrines, which were later washed away by the River Ravi, so that men could not make them (the Samadhis) into idols and so betray the teacher they adored." (112)

LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther was born on 10th November, 1483


M.A. Macauliffe however mentions 1538 as the year of his death (P.191)
in Eisleben in the Thuringian Saxony, as the son of Hans and Margarethe Luder. (113) His ancestors were farmers. As he says in his Tischgesprächen:

"Ich bin eines Bauern Sohn. Vater, Großvater und Ahn sind rechte Bauern gewesen." (114)

In the words of Richard Friedenthal:


So according to his family tradition his father


115. Ibid., P. 15-16.
Hans had to leave his parents' house in Möhra in search of new work. He moved on first to Eisleben and then after Martin's birth to Mansfeld where he got work in the copper mines. Later on with his hard labour and hard earned money he was able to rent several furnaces and to get a position among the councillors of this little town in 1491. Luther's parents were very strict and thrifty people. They had to be since it was a big family with four or five sons and four daughters of whom three or four died young. (116)

Martin Luther spent his childhood in needy circumstances and under the very strict discipline of his parents. Even for petty things he had to face the anger of his parents. In the words of Leonard W. Cowie:

"Martin spoke of two particular instances of the discipline in his home - 'My father once whipped me so that I ran away' and then my mother caned me for stealing a nut, until the blood came." (117)

As a result Luther was inclined later to be too lenient to his own children. But he loved his parents and was grateful to them for providing him with a university education.

116. Brecht Martin; Martin Luther, Sein Weg zur Reformation 1483-1521, loc. cit., P. 19.
When Luther was 4 years old his father sent him to Mansfeld school, where he learned diligently.

"Lesen, Rechnen, Schreiben, Singen und die Anfänge des Lateinischen; Stücke aus der lateinischen Fibel, dazu des Ave-Maria, das Vaterunser, die Zehn Gebote und das Glaubenskenntnis (...)" (118)

The rod was freely used by the teachers as Luther complained later and this fact perhaps made him devote much attention to school reforms. In 1496 he went to Magdeburg to attend the school run by the Brüder vom Gemeinsamen Leben. A year later he was sent to St. George's Parish School in Eisennach, where he stayed with Konrad Hutler, whose wife was an aunt of Luther's mother. But the relatives were so poor that he had to beg for food as 'Partekenhengst', which means that he went from door to door with other boys and sang for a piece of bread. (119)

Soon he shifted to the house of a middle class family by name Kotta where he slept. His food he got at the home of the merchant Heinrich Schalbe whose son he helped with his lessons and home work.

In April 1501 he matriculated in arts. Here in

118. Landgraf, Wolfgang; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 14.
119. Ibid., P. 21.
this school he proved himself to be one of the most diligent and intelligent students. In the words of Oskar Thulin:

"He finished his studies in grammar, and since in addition to an excellent mind he also had a special faculty for eloquence, he soon outstripped his fellow students. He easily surpassed the youths who were studying with him in the expressiveness and richness of his language not only in speaking but also in writing both prose and poetry." (120)

In the same year he joined the University of Erfurt, the fifth oldest University of Germany and studied there for four years. He stayed like all students in the Burse where life was rigidly regulated in the spirit of monasticism. He took his Masters degree (Magistergrad) in 1505. During this time he made critical studies of the works of Aristotle. Scholasticism dominated the philosophic studies of the universities at that time, and Luther following the English Franciscan monk William of Occam, became a nominalist.

By getting the Master of Arts degree he had fulfilled his father's hope, who intended to make him a lawyer. His father was so impressed that he stopped

120. A Life of Luther, Edited by Oskar Thulin, USA, 1966, P. 13.
addressing his son with 'Du'. Side by side with his law studies, he also delivered lectures at the Artistenfakultät. But in the middle of the semester he left Erfurt for home, perhaps because of the outbreak of plague in Erfurt, perhaps because his father called him home to arrange a wealthy marriage for him. (121) Martin was in a very disturbed state of mind at this time. One of his friends and two luminaries of the University had died of the plague in 1505. Fear of sudden death and of the judgement of God could have played a role in sending him into the cloister.

"Ich bin drum ins Kloster gelaufen, daß ich nicht verloren wurde, sondern das ewige leben hatte." (122)

It is related that on 2nd July 1505, when Martin Luther was returning from a visit to his parents and was passing through the open fields not far from Erfurt, he was overtaken by a thunderstorm and cried out in great fear:

"Hilf du, heilige Anna, Ich will ein Mönch werden." (123)

On 17th July he knocks at the gates of the Augustinian House for admission.

121. Brecht, Martin; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 57.
122. Landgraf, Wolfgang; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 36.
His father had paid gladly for the expensive textbooks, when he began his legal studies, as like other parents, he wanted to see his son an esteemed person in society. He was shocked and furious when he came to know that his son had decided to enter the religious life and had sought admission to the house of the Augustinian monks in Erfurt.

Luther himself writes about the anger and agony of his father, when he decided to enter the order of the Augustinians:

"When I became a monk, my father almost went out of his mind. He was all upset and refused to give me his permission. Yet I wanted to take this step with his knowledge and approval. When I wrote him about it, he answered me with a letter and called me 'Du'. Until then he had been addressing me as 'Ihr' because I was a Master of Arts. Now he refused to give me his parental consent and blessing." (124)

For a year Luther was a novice and spent his time in fasting and doing penance, in learning to live a life of continuous self-denial. But all this piety did not help him to overcome his doubts. In later years he spoke disappointedly of this 'Fasten, Beten,

124. Dr. Martin Luther's Werke; Tischreden I. (Valentine Bavaraus, Rapsodie et dicta...ex ore Doctoris Martin Lutherie (1548) Taken from the book: A Life of Luther, Edited by Oskar Thulin, München, 1958, P. 17.
hären Hemde, die heiligsten Werck, Regel und ganzes Leben nichts anderes als "eitel fleischlich Werck", da es die Seligkeit durch Eigenleistung erwerben, sich einen geneigten Gott schaffen möchte.\textsuperscript{(125)}

Luther made his profession as a monk in September 1506 and was then prepared for ordination. He was ordained priest in April 1507 and his first mass took place at the beginning of May. His first mass was celebrated in the Church of the Augustinian monastery. Luther's father came to Erfurt with twenty companions to celebrate this festive day. As Luther says:

"Er stiftete der Klosterküche den Betrag von 20 Gulden, eine Summe, für die man fast ein kleines Haus kaufen konnte. Er rückte zu Pferde mit zwanzig Begleiter an."\textsuperscript{(126)}

In 1508 Luther was called to the new University of Wittenberg, where he was offered the professorial chair of his order in the faculty of arts. The little town Wittenberg was a remote lonely place in comparison to Erfurt. This remoteness became very important in Luther's life. The elector of Saxony, Friedrich III the Wise, patronized the University of Wittenberg and the Schloßkirche. On 9th May 1509 Luther wrote the exam and received the degree of Bachelor of the Bible.

\textsuperscript{125} Horst, Hartmann: Martin Luther, loc.cit., P.54.
\textsuperscript{126} Friedenthal, Richard; Luther Sein Leben und Seine Zeit, loc.cit., P.60.
(baccalaures biblicus) at Wittenberg and then prepared for the next degree of Sententiarius, but was called to Erfurt for some unknown reason. He began his career as a theologian.

In 1510 he went to Rome with another monk Dr. Nathin on matters relating to the Augustinian Order. The impressions that the city made on him were such that he later spoke of the 'unheiligsten Stadt des Christentum'. In 1511 he was called back to Wittenburg by Staupitz, who played an important role in Luther's career, as his teacher, friend and patron. Staupitz became interested in his gifted pupil and encouraged him to proceed with his doctorate in Theology. The heavy cost that the study entailed were paid by the Kurfürst Friedrich the Wise, on condition that Luther would teach theology at the University of Wittenburg all his life.

"Staupitz hat Luther nicht nur getrostet und in Gewissenbedenken ermuntert. Er hat ihm getrieben, hinaufgezwungen in seine Berufung, zunächst ganz akademisch und praktisch durch die Berufung in neue Ämter. (.....) Staupitz ernannnte ihn zum Prediger im Wittenberger Kloster, setzte seine Doktorpromotion durch und übergab ihm seinen eignen Lehrstuhl an der Universität, den er (...) kaum recht wahrgenommen hatte." (127)

127. Ibid., P. 113.
After getting the chair of biblical theology his main task was the exposition of the Bible to his students. This task he sustained until ill health and old age forced him to relinquish it at the end of his life.

All the same his own religious and theological problems continued and he entered into the search for evangelical perfection with great zeal. He was also superior in his monastries, and preacher at the town church.

"Er ist ein Geachteter Mann im Orden geworden, Sein Wort hat Gewicht, auf seine Meinung legt man Wert." (128)

As district vicar he was strict in enforcing the rules of the Order. The sacramental consolations of the church were not able to console him against uncertainties and doubts and a feeling of guilt which he was experiencing in religious life. The inner distress brought him into states of deep anxiety and despair.

"Amid all this work and responsibility, however Luther was sadly troubled in his mind and conscience. In another letter written after some years, he said, My life draws nearer and nearer to hell. Day by day I become worse and more wretched. When a devout and serious young

128. Landgraf, Wolfgang; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 78.
man, he had become a friar to save his soul. He believed that God had called him to this way of life and that in it He would use him for His purpose. Yet as the years went by, he could find no spiritual satisfaction in the religious observances of the order, however hard he tried to carry them out. 'Who knows', he asked himself, after several days of exhausting service and penance in the priory, 'whether these things please God?'

Though his zeal and perseverance in performing them gained him the admiration of the other members of his community, he was increasingly haunted by this fear that they brought him no nearer to God, no nearer to salvation. (129)

After becoming a Professor in the University of Wittenberg he studied the Epistles of St. Paul, came to a deep understanding of scriptures and especially of the Epistles of St. Paul, who wrote that the spirit of Christ had made him free from the burden of the law. This reading filled his heart with joy and was a solution to his trouble. He himself accepted the great impact of the Pauline Text on his mind:

"I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, the justice of God, because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in

punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable friar, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience and had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore, I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant. (130)

Now Luther realised that no one could attain salvation by prayer, fasting and penance. But he who honestly repents, gets God's grace and forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Luther was of the opinion that the human heart is too wicked to save itself; forgiveness is the gift of God, which one cannot earn by personal efforts. 'Justification by faith alone' was Luther's doctrine, which became the keyword of the Reformation.

The formation of clear religious views of his own meant that Luther turned against scholasticism and Aristotle, whom he replaced with St. Augustine. He was however no humanist although he sided with them on certain points. Thus he made common cause with them in the case of Reuchlin. But the differences were far greater.

"Gehen die Humanisten zurück zu den Quellen des Altertums, (...) so ist für Luther die

130. Ibid., P.41.
Bibel der Ausgangspunkt aller Überlegungen. Ist für die Humanisten der Mensch und dessen Wille das Maß aller Dinge, so ist es für Luther Gott und dessen Gnade." (131)

Luther also read around this time the writings of mystics Johannes Tauler and was probably impressed by the fact that they used German in their writings.

Since 1516 Luther's lectures were becoming more and more tinged with criticism of the Church. He also began making suggestions of reform. Then in 1517 something happened which brought him into open conflict with the Church. It concerned the sale of indulgences. The practice of indulgences, which was a common feature of the medieval church since the crusades, was in full swing in Luther's time also. These indulgences were the commutation for money of penalty due for sin. They were granted on papal authority and made available through reliable agents of the Pope. A very vigorous sale of indulgences was taking place at that time to raise money for Albrecht von Brandenberg, who had been made Archbishop of Mainz, thanks to the huge sums paid on his behalf by the banking house of Fugger. A Dominican monk Johannes Tetzel was Albrecht's busiest agent. A plague was raging at Wittenberg at this time and hence 131. Landgraf Wolfgang; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P.85.
there was a veritable rush for indulgences.

"To Luther indulgences seemed to be a particularly flagrant example of the wrongful teaching about the forgiveness of sins upheld by the Church. He thought Tetzel's mission was a blasphemous swindle, which would lower the standard of the Christian life and blind men to the true way of finding God's salvation. When people returned to Wittenberg with the pieces of paper they had bought from Tetzel, he was indignant, and in October 1517 he nailed to the door of the castle Church, a list of Ninety five Theses or arguments in Latin against indulgences and pilgrimages."(132)

This was the usual method in those days to invite people to public disputation.

The dispute did not take place, but the 90 theses became known throughout Germany and were printed anew in Leipzig, Basel and Nürnberg. The Church had to act now. Early in 1518 Tetzel answered with 106 counter-theses which he placed before a chapter of Dominican monks. Luther replied to it in March 1518 with the 'Sermon Von AblAb und Gnade'. The Ingolstadt theology Professor Eck now took up the challenge and in his 'Obelisei Gnade' in which he made scornful comments to the 90 theses called Luther a heretic. The General

of the Augustinian order instigated by the Pope, who wanted 'den Menschen doch endlich zum Schweigen zu bringen', (133) summoned Luther to appear before a Chapter of Augustinian Monks in Heidelberg. On 26th April, 1518 Luther spoke before them. He spoke not about indulgences, but about free will, faith and grace. He spoke so convincingly that he found supporters among the youth. New theses of Tetzel awaited him in Wittenberg and Luther answered not in the sober language of a polemist.

"Wenn solche Leute, die die Bibel nicht kennen und weder lateinisch noch Deutsch verstehen, mich so überraschend schelten, so ist mir zumute, als ob mich ein grober Esel anschreie." (134)

The debate between Luther and Eck took place from 27th June to 11th July 1519 in Leipzig. In this debate fundamental matters like the origin of the papal power were raised. So Luther had to make a study of Church history and common law before his debate. In this debate Eck tried to prove and succeeded in proving that Luther had questioned the authority of the great General Council of Constance and defended some of the ideas of Jan HuB, the Bohemian Reformer.

133. Landgraf Wolfgang; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 100.
134. Ibid., P. 103.
who had been declared a heretic at Constance and burned to death. After the Leipzig debate with Eck, Luther called openly for a reformation of the Church. In 1520 he published in quick succession a series of books in which he explained his main principles. They were 'Sermon von den guten Werken'; 'An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung'; 'Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen' etc. He appealed to Christian princes to shake off the Roman tyranny, to introduce a reform of the Church and the priesthood of all believers, according to which every believer by virtue of his faith must become a priest towards his fellowmen. He refused to accept the validity of the principles on which the papacy based its rule in the Church, the superiority of the Church over the state, and the supremacy of the papacy over a general council. He also denied the right of the papacy to regard itself as the authoritative interpreter of the Scripture. He demanded abolition of numerous abuses in the papal administration of the Church and such religious practices as fasting, masses, monastic vows and priestly celibacy. In his proposal he laid emphasis on the life of the Church in the parish and the
administration of the sacrament, the recognition of marriage as a divine form of life and not as a concession to the flesh. For making the Bible accessible to everyone, he wanted to establish schools. His writings, 'On Christian Liberty' in which he said that the life of the Christian revolves around faith and love proved highly provocative. Slowly through his writings Luther became very popular and got support from theologians, clergymen, humanists and also many of the common people. He became the leader of the anti-papal forces. In one of his writings he even called upon the people to use force against the papacy. (135)

Seeing the forthcoming danger to the papal authority the Curia (papal administrative bureaucracy) resumed the tirade against him. On 15th June 1520 the bull Exsurge Domme was issued which threatened Luther with excommunication unless he recanted within 60 days. On 20th December he showed his anger openly by burning a copy of the papal bull and the Corpus Juris Canonica.

On 3rd January 1521, Luther was excommunicated

135. 'Wenn wir Diebe strafen mit dem Galen, Räuber mit dem Schwert, Ketzer mit dem Feuer, warum brauchen wir da nicht jede Art Waffen wider, solche Lehrer der Verderbnis, wider diese Kardinale, Papste und die ganze Grundsuppe des römischen Sodoms (...).'
Wolfgang Landgraf; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 147.
by the papacy in the bull Decet Romanium Pontificem. His great supporter Friedrich the Wise was aware of impending danger from the papacy for him and so devised a plan to delay the action against Luther. He wanted that Luther should be given a fair trial before he was condemned. Because of the support of many German princes and the fear of public riots and unrest, Emperor Charles V was compelled to grant Luther a hearing at the first diet of his reign at Worms.

Luther appeared before the emperor in 1521 and refused to give up his views, unless he were convicted by the scripture. He finished his speech with the sentence: 'Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me. Amen.' So in May 1521 the ban was imposed upon him by the diet. He was considered outlawed. (136)

But the political situation prevailing in Europe during this time and the conflict between Pope

136. What this meant can be understood, from the wording of the Reichsacht. Die Kaiserliche Majestät "gebietet euch allen und jeden besonders, daß ihr samtliche Martin Luther nicht hauset, hofet, atzet tränket noch enthaltet, noch ihm mit Worten oder Werken heimisch oder öffentlich Hilfe, Anhang, Beistand noch Vorschub leistet, sondern wo ihr ihn euch sein bemächtigen könnt, ihn gefänglich annehmet und uns wohl bewahrt zusendet. Es wird verboten seine Schriften zu lesen, zu kaufen, zu verkaufen, zu drucken, absuschreiben."

Quoted from: Wolfgang Landgraf; loc. cit., P. 189.
and emperor indirectly helped the Reformer. Luther on the advice of his protector Friedrich the Wise spent about a year in seclusion at Wartburg to avoid further troubles. Here he was known as Junker Jörg and had to live like Ritter. Luther found it terribly hard at the beginning and was in poor health also. Moreover he was plunged into deep gloom at the thought that he had introduced strife and discord into Christendom. He tried to overcome doubts and uncertainty through writings and produced numerous works like Auslegung des 68. Psalms, Vom Mißbrauch der Messe, Ein Urteil über die Mönchsgelübde etc. His exile time had great importance as he began the translation of the New Testament from Original Greek into German. He worked at it from December 1521 to March 1522 spending daily six hours at it, seeking sometimes three or four weeks for the suitable words. Luther's translation of the 'New Testament' was a monumental work which had a deep and lasting influence on the language, life and religion of the German people.

While Luther was in Wartburg, reforms were being introduced in Wittenberg, reforms like abolition of celibacy for the clergy, taking over of Church property by the town administration etc. Luther supported them. But very soon there were excesses like
the destruction of paintings, statues and other works of art in the churches. Luther therefore, wanted to return. After 10 months' exile Luther returned on 6th March 1522 against the will of his patron Friedrich the Wise to resume his lectures on the Bible and to bring about a powerful reform in the worship of God through his preaching. Luther did not like the use of violence for the Word of God. He believed that the real idols are in the hearts of men and if their hearts are changed, the image of the Church wall must fall into disuse. He also believed that reform must take into account the unconverted, the weaker section of society.

Luther's epistle 'Eine treue Vermahnung an alle Christen, sich zu halten vor Aufruhr und Empörung,' published in March 1522 is instigated by his disquiet at the disturbances in Wittenberg. He sets himself against reforms in the temporal sphere since they are against the authorities appointed by God. In 'Von weltlicher Obrigkeit und wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei' (1523) the same type of argument is followed as in the Zwei-Reiche-Lehre.

The evangelical movement started to flourish in the whole of Germany at this time. The Catholics
naturally adopted counter-measures with the result that the reformation had its first martyrs. Two young Augustinian monks were thus burnt to death in Brüssel on first July, 1523 and Luther wrote, 'Neu Lied von den zween Märterern Christi', in their honour. The new teaching spread to other European countries also and Luther encounters opponents from among his own erstwhile supporters namely, Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer.

In 1524 the peasants started a revolt in the southern part of Germany with Thomas Müntzer as their leader. The whole peasant class was deprived of the bare necessities of life and hence this revolt spread to many other parts of southern and central Germany. They drew up 12 articles in which they put forth their demands and waged war, singing pious hymns. The peasants soon started looting castles and manor houses and slaughtered the occupants. They did not spare even the monasteries. In the beginning of the Peasants Revolt, Luther showed his sympathy as he believed that their grievances were genuine. Being himself a son of peasants he was aware of the problems and hardship of the peasants. But when the peasants became violent and started shedding blood, Luther's attitude fully changed, as he was against all these murders. After seeing this political
chaos, for which he too was held responsible, Luther wrote his brutal virulent pamphlet, 'Against the Murdering Thieving Hordes of Peasants', He wrote:

"If the peasant is in open rebellion, (...) is not simply murder, but it is like a great fire which attacks and lays waste a whole land. Thus rebellion brings with it a land full of murders and bloodshed, makes widows and orphans and turns everything upside down, like a great disaster. Therefore let everyone who can, smite, slay and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous hurtful or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when you must kill a mad dog, if you don't strike, he will strike you and the whole land with you." (137)

As demanded in this pamphlet the Electors of Hesse and Saxony put down the revolt ruthlessly. Thousands of peasants were killed, slain and hanged. Luther who earlier used to talk about the cause of the poor people, made common cause with their enemies. Zwingli, the Swiss reformer attacks him for his writings against the peasants whom he had thrown before beasts.

"Muntzer lays bare Luther's grave mistake in this respect, 'Die armen Mönche, Pfaffen und Kauflleute können sich nicht wehren. Darum hast du sie wohl zu schelten. Aber

137. Cowie, W. Leonard; Luther, Father of the Reformation, loc. cit., P. 77-78.
die gottlosen Regenten soll niemand richten, ob sie schon Christentum mit Füßen treten."  

At the height of the Peasants War Luther married the twenty four year old nun Katherina von Bora, who had escaped from Nimbschen convent in Grimma. Luther was not her first choice, but when a young man from a rich Nürnberg patrician family did not marry her, then she thought of Luther and Luther obliged. The marriage shocked many, especially Luther's friend Malanchthon. About his marriage Luther writes to his friend Spalatin:

"By this marriage I have made myself insignificant and scorned that I hope all the angels will laugh and the devils will weep. The world and its wise men still do not view my marriage as a respectable and holy deed honouring God, but rather do they view everything I do as something wicked and devilish. For that reason it pleases me even more that because of my marriage the notions of all those are effected and condemned who persist in their ignorance of God."

After marriage Luther led a comparatively quiet peaceful life with his wife Katherina von Bora. He became the loving father of six children and used to enjoy their company and play with them for sometime.

139. Thulin Oskar, A Life of Luther; loc.cit., P. 95
Besides his own children he gave shelter to monks and nuns who fled or were driven away from their monasteries and convents. During the time of the plague in Wittenberg, Luther took several children, who became orphans into his home. He kept a free table for poor students. His house was open to sick and needy persons even though his own sources of money were very limited.

"The home of Luther is occupied by a motley crowd of boys, students, girls, widows, old women and youngsters. For this reason there is much disturbance in the place and many regret it for the sake of the good man, the honourable father." (140)

As by this time Luther had become very famous in Germany and to some extent in Europe, students and scholars from different parts of his country and abroad used to come to meet him. Luther used to answer the queries of the students based on different topics. Some scholars had taken down these answers in their note books, which they later published as Luther's Table talk. In 1534 Luther finished the translation of the whole Bible. The first edition appeared in this year, the second in 1540-41 and the third in 1546 just after his death.

Early in 1546 Luther was asked to go to

Eisleben to mediate in a quarrel between Count Albrecht and Gebhard of Mansfeld. At this time he was very ill, but could not disobey the master, and set off in severe winter. He could not resist the cold and after 4 days he died of a heart attack on 18th February 1546 in Eisleben, the town where he was born, and his funeral service took place in St. Andrew's Church, where he had been christened sixty two years ago. According to the wish of the Archduke he was buried in the Church of Wittenberg near the pulpit from which he had preached so many times.

Comparison.

The life history of the two great leaders presents before us two strikingly different personalities. Luther is a scholar, a born polemist, a man of the world, who hobnobs with princes and rulers and is not above dubious diplomacy and politics, at the same time a troubled soul seeking spiritual peace and security in the possession of a personal God. Guru Nanak is a man of God, one of those chosen few, marked as God's own from their very birth, following fearlessly and with single hearted devotion, the shining path leading straight on to God. Nothing could turn him away from the pursuit of God even in very early childhood. Neither parents, nor relations, nor authorities
had the least effect on him, who lived in endless contemplation of God. It did not matter at all to him, that he was called mad or was treated for illness or was judged to be possessed with an evil spirit. To those who thought him insane, he said:

"Simpleton Nanak hath become mad upon the Lord. And knoweth none other then God" (141)

"I am imbued with my Lord" (142) he tells the physician, who has come to treat him. To one who is filled with God, everything else and everyone else seems insignificant. Hence he could ask his parents, who stood near him worried deeply about his condition:

"Since when have I a mother? Since when a father? Whence have we come." (143)

Luther in comparison to him is only an ordinary mortal struggling painfully up the path of virtue, beset with doubts and uncertainties, making human mistakes, all the same holding on steadfastly to his lofty goal, and on the whole honest and upright in his dealings with man and God. Even though "ein zutiefst aus dem christlichen Glauben des Spatmittelalters handelnder Mensch " (144), Luther followed the normal course of the life of his times, trying to rise higher

142. Ibid., P. 27.
143. Ibid., P. 29.
in life as his father desired. It was the accident of the thunderstorm and the fear of immediate death that brought a change in him and led him into the monastery. In its effect, it can be equated with Nanak's three day vision of God after which he gave up his post as Store-keeper and took to preaching. Luther's fixing up the 95 theses at the church door was as much of a challenge as Nanak's announcing after he came out of his trance. 'There is no Hindu and no Musselman.' In Luther's Europe it was the corruption of the pope and of the Roman Catholic Church that he had to fight. In Nanak's India it was the bigotry and ferocity of two religions divided by the different names for the one God that had to be fought. Both applied themselves to the task in their own way. Luther feared, at every step that he took forward in this struggle, excommunication, imprisonment, torture and death by fire as a heretic. As he is going to Augsburg to stand trial by the papal delegate for heresy, he is in panic for days together and says:


And at Worms where he stands before the Kaiser and the great ones of the empire, he refuses to revoke

145. Landgraf, Wolfgang; Martin Luther, loc. cit., P. 114.
his teachings and musters up courage to say; 'Hier steh ich; ich kann nicht anders'. This is the heroism of a trembling mortal. Nanak also faces an emperor, a barbaric one, who could have ordered his torture and death in a trice, but there are no words about any fear that he has felt. It is as though he is beyond fear and courage; as though he is not aware of such feelings, intoxicated as he is with God. He preaches to Babar and gets him to do what he wants. This may be partly because of the legendary and miraculous elements that dominate in the narrations about Nanak's life.

Both loved to propagate their teaching through disputation. All his life Luther was turning out polemical writings in reply to the treatises of somebody or other. There were also verbal disputes like the one at Leipzig with Eck. Nanak argued with everyone who came his way and invited disputes through deliberately shocking behaviour as when he threw water westwards while the Hindus threw it eastwards or when he slept with his feet stretched towards the Kaaba. His dispute with the Sidhs reminds one of Luther's with Eck. Sidha Ghosti is actually a record of Nanak's dispute with the Sidhs. We repeatedly read of his disputes. Thus Macauliffe writes:

"In Batala the Guru vanquished in argument all
priests, who attended the fair and obliged the followers of six schools of philosophy to bow before him.\(^{(146)}\)

But the spirit behind these disputes is completely different. In his polemical writings Luther is unrestrained in abuse, is very often coarse and rude in language and is capable of violent temper. Here also he is only an erring mortal. His anti-papal tirades go to the extreme. Nanak makes a totally different impression. One never reads of his being angry or abusive. Thus when he stays and dines with Lalo, the mason and enrages Malik Bhago by declining his invitation, he tries to pacify him by saying that,

"if his eating from the hands of Malik Bhago afforded that functionary any gratification, he would not be found wanting."\(^{(147)}\)

One wonders, whether the words are not tinged with irony. In fact Nanak seems to have possessed a keen sense of humour that comes to expression in many of the encounters narrated by Macauliffe. Very often his words are deliberately provoking. Thus in the water throwing incident he has called them greater fools than himself. When he tells them, 'The Hindus are going to hell. Death will seize and mercilessly punish them,'

\(^{146}\) Macauliffe, M.A.; The Sikh Religion, loc. cit., P. 158.  
\(^{147}\) Ibid., P. 44.
a Brahmin replies, 'Thou hast in the first place acted contrary to our custom and now thou hast audacity to tell us that we are going to hell'. But Nanak only continues his fearless exposition of the meaninglessness of their rituals. 'Your rosaries are (...) only for show and your counting your beads is only hypocrisy.' (148)

He could now and then play the clown and play practical jokes to prove a point. Thus he (Nanak) hid the lota (brass vessel) of the Brahman, who boasted that his mental eyes saw the secret of the world. The Brahman of course did not see the lota. (149)

Thus a very pleasing picture of a saint emerges in the accounts about Nanak. He is at peace with himself and is not torn by doubts and questionings like Luther. For example Luther felt responsible for the impending religious wars and suffered, because of his feeling of guilt. (150) This was towards the end of his life, and throughout his life he had such feelings of fear and anxiety. We read of them even during his days in the monastery. Guru Nanak, on the other hand, had risen

148. Ibid., P.51.
149. Ibid., P.84.
150. Compare: "The most perplexing question confronting him all the days of his life was: 'Can your viewpoint be correct over against that of the whole Catholic Church and that of countless theologians and believers for more than a thousand years? Are you yourself not the corrupter? Are you not seducing your nation?' Bornkamm, Heinrich; Luther's geistige Welt, Translated by Betram, Martin H.: Luther's World of Thought, St. Louis, Missouri, 1957, P.89.
above such storm and stress, although in a few hymns there are references to his sinfulness and of doubts and mental conflicts. His face expressed such contentment and joy that robber Shaikh Sajjan interpreted the look of spiritual satisfaction on his countenance as a consciousness of worldly wealth and expected much profit from the Guru. (151)

Nanak was a great defender of the down trodden people like farmers, artisans, small traders etc. He always preferred to live in the company of poor but honest people like Lalo and others instead of rich persons like Bhago, the corrupt and dishonest person. But on the other hand Martin Luther always protected the interests of princes, as he knew that they could be a great help to him. It is a well known fact that he at the time of the Peasants' Revolt took the side of the princes and advised them to crush them with a strong hand.

Throughout his life Nanak did not show any attachment to wealth and worldly comforts. When Mardana brings money and gold as presents from the villagers, the Guru laughs and asks him to throw them away and he never accepts presents or rank or position from Babar.

or the others. As he says, he is only hungry for God. He is engrossed in the contemplation of God's name. He never discriminated between rich and poor, man and women. All people from Babar to the leper were alike to him. He taught the people, the purity of thoughts and actions (deeds). But on the contrary, Luther was a practical man. Though he was helpful to the poor and needy like Guru Nanak, at the time of the Peasant Revolt he proved that he cared more for princes than the poor and helpless peasants. Inspite of many good qualities he can never be called a Saint like Guru Nanak.

In spite of the differences in their personalities, there is a striking similarity in their thoughts. Both were reformers, not only in religious but in social matters also. Luther thus took interest in reforming the educational system of his time. Nanak attacks in his hymns all kinds of social evils, corruptions, oppressions etc. by the rich and the powerful.

But it was naturally in their religious approach that they had the greatest similarity. Luther at his best had mystic tendencies and Nanak was one of the greatest mystics. Both reject rites and rituals and turned against institutionalised
religion and against intermediaries between the individual and his God. Both were for direct communion with God.

"Hear me, O Pandit with the religious ceremonies. Meditation on the Supreme Being is the only religious ceremony my brother, From which happiness is derived. You stand chattering of the shastras and Veds, my brother, And make it a worldly affair. The filth of sin which is within thee shall not be washed away by hypocrisy."(152)

It might however be pointed out that Luther deliberately led to a new sect in religion. Nanak tried to combine two religions so that both Hindu and Muslim claimed him for their own at his death, But in the long run he too only created a new sect.

The prevailing tendency of asceticism and the belief in the spiritual value of celibacy for religious men and particularly for saints was discarded by Guru Nanak and also by Martin Luther. After his Udasis (Missionary Journeys) when he finally settled down in Kartarpur, he led the normal life of a householder and worked in the farm like a common man to earn his livelihood. In the words of Dorothy Field, 'Much of Nanak's time was spent in wandering and preaching 152. Ibid., P.335.
great simplicity of life - but he was married as were all the Gurus after him. He discouraged ascetic practices and taught that true religion was in the heart, whatever might be the walk of life." (153)

Similarly Luther also revolted against ascetic practices and married a nun named Catherine von Bora at the age of 42 and led a very happy family life. In his free time he used to help his wife with gardening and farming. The following lines give a true picture of his family life:

"Their marriage was one in which both husband and wife took their part in the affairs of the household. Luther worked in the priory garden, growing lettuces and cabbages, peas and beans, cucumbers and melons." (154)

Nanak's personality can be summed up in the words of Robert Needham Cust:

"The Life of a person who by his actions and percepts has influenced the ideas and consciences of a large number of his fellow-creatures, both during his lifetime and for centuries after his death, can never be devoid of interest. When that influence has not been owing to his wealth, rank or power, but simply to his own merits, that man must be called truly Great; and when we find that his motives were unselfish, that after a long life devoted to


the instruction of others in the paths of virtue and Moral Purity, he died poor, delegated his office, not to his children, but to one of his disciples, whom he considered truly good as well as truly Great."(155)

The personality of a Great Reformer and the father of Protestantism can be summed up in the words of Gerhard Ritter:

"Er ist Volksmann, Agitator, allergroBten stils, der volkstumlichste Redner und Schriftsteller, den Deutschland hervorgebracht hat, von unhorher Schlagkraft und Derbheit der Sprache, MaBlosigkeit des Zorns und Kampferseifers von starker Wirkung auf die Massen."(156)


156. Ritter Gerhard; Deutsche Geschichte, loc. cit., p. 88.