Mysticism is no wishful thinking or pious idealization. It is translating into action what one has learnt of truth in his higher feeling and thought. It is not even mere contemplation, however, sacred it may be. It is, rather, an actualization, in fact and practice, of the spiritual element inherent in man. It is an empirical objectification of the mystic truth perceived intuitively.

Sikh mysticism, which is another name for Guru Nanak's mysticism, is no exception to this mystical operation-alism. In fact, Sikh mysticism is specially rich in this synthesizing of inner and outer aspects of religion. It includes both the mystic ground and the mystic path as essential features of its highest development.

An eminent writer defining Sikh mysticism says:

"(Sikh) Mysticism is the indispensable whole-man, whole-time adventure in identity, in the recovery (in purified, infinitely extended awareness) of the Absolute Unity of God's Person, which awareness is exclusive of all sense of duality, diversity, of every idea, even, which is non-God." 1

This mystic ground or ideal has to be achieved in actual practice. Hence the imperative need for the mystic discipline or the mystic path. The God-mysticism which we discussed in the last chapter, has to be correlated with Soul-mysticism. The human soul cries out for identity with

1. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p. 43.
the divine soul, as "deep calls unto deep." The 'path' is as important as the goal itself because it provides a link and a meeting-point between God as such and man as such.

The process of self-discipline is called the 'way'. It is the Chinese 'Tao', the Buddhistic 'Chyanam' and the 'Tariqat' of the Sufis. In Sikh mysticism it is all-important because Sikhism means 'discipleship' or discipline itself.

The general mystic method, similar in the mystics of all races and all faiths and as systematized by Christian authors, following Greek philosophic thought, is as under:

1. The Purgative way.
2. The Illuminative.
3. The contemplative.

The first is purification of sensual and sensuous interests and propensities; the second is the enlightenment of consciousness; and the third denotes "the union between the mystic subject and the divine object of his quest." 4

In order that human soul be rid of its impurities and evil propensities, a way of inner discipline has to be discovered and followed. The term yoga is commonly used

in Indian mysticism for such mystic discipline which may lead to union with the Supreme Being. Plato says:

"There will always be evil in this nether world; but one effort is imperative; as quickly as possible to forsake this lower world for the higher. This evasion is achieved by assimilating oneself to God in the measure of the possible and assimilation is attained by becoming just and holy in the charity of the spirit." 5

"The human mind", wherein such inner discipline has to take place "is the meeting place of the Nous and the Psyche, while the apex of the soul is in Nous, its lowest part is in Psyche, directed towards separation and objectivity."

Knowledge of the Self, in the form of "methodical cultivation" (a term used by William James 7 to denote via-mystica), is a paramount necessity in order to reach and assimilate divine consciousness. As mentioned earlier, Yoga which has many variations and types, comes very handy as a way of spiritual discipline. "In India, training in mystical insight has been known from time immemorial under the name of Yoga. Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the divine." 8

Sikh mysticism has been variously named as Nam Yoga,

5. Ibid., p.118.
6. Ibid., p.121. The Nous stands for 'spirit' and Psyche for 'mind'.
8. Loc. Cit.
Bhakti yoga, Shabad-Surat Yoga and Sahaj Yoga. A writer has gone even further to call it "Sevenfold Yoga". These terms to denote Guru Nanak's mystical path have been only recently discovered and applied to his way of realization; he himself did not adopt any form of Yoga from among the traditional types, to match his mystical teaching, though he adopted yogic terminology in order to clarify the true meaning underlying the concept of Yoga.

Guru Nanak did not need any traditional arche-types from Indian mysticism to fit in with his own original mystical realization, because he inculcated original ways and measures to attain the truth originally conceived.

An eminent scholar expatiating on Guru Nanak's originality of teaching and message, recently observed:

"Guru Nanak was not a reformer. We know he was not a Hindu who appealed to the Hindu scriptures in order to reform Hindu society. We know he was not a Muslim trying to eradicate evils in Muslim society by appealing to the Quran. I do not find in his teachings any attempt at a reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam, any combination of existing patterns of beliefs to constitute a new and more pleasing pattern. In fact, he set both Hinduism and Islam aside to get to the religion itself. He was an originator, a founder."

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Guru Nanak did not postulate or establish any philosophical system or inherit any theological tradition such as Vedanta or Yoga or even Bhakti way of realization, because he was a mystic in his own right and devised his original theism with corresponding original 'method' or 'path' of attaining to Reality. A writer points out that Sikhism is not primarily a philosophical system.  

Guru Nanak in his religious perception attached no value to "pedantic philosophy", as Teja Singh observes, and went direct to the mystical sources of religious impulse as well as to the true empirical ways of approach to truth.  

Guru Nanak's path, in its final meaning and analysis, is the path of love and may be appropriately called Love Mysticism. As Love requires first purging of all that is anti-love and then adopting all that is conducive to love, Guru Nanak begins with purging in the form of renunciation and restraint to be correspondingly matched with positive affirmation in the form of submission to the divine order or Hukam. These are the two basic principles simultaneously operative in Guru Nanak's mysticism.  

Goethe says: "Thou shalt renounce, renounce. This is the eternal song which every hour hoarsely sings." About love, Fichte remarks: "Man can will nothing but what he loves, his love is the sole, and at the same time the infallible  

Guru Angad (the second Sikh Guru) reveals this universal truth of purging followed by assimilation in cryptic language: "A thing will go into another, if it is emptied of what is inside it." It implies so forcefully that the inception of God's reality in the human heart would depend upon the purging from it of all that is non-God.

Guru Nanak emphasizes this important truth, by using the apt metaphors of 'milk' and the 'utensil': "First wash the utensil and carefully purge it of all infected smell, then only think of pouring milk into it." The clear connotation of this statement would be to clean the mind before receiving God's Name into it.

Perhaps there is no clearer statement in Guru Nanak's works on the subject of determining the true 'path' that will lead to the realization of truth (of course, the path inculcated is not for intellectual rumination, but for mystical perception and volitional impact) than the following complete Slok in Asa-di-Var:

"Truth will be known if the True Lord lives in the heart.
By removing the dirt of falsehood, it will wash all impurity from the body.
Truth will be known if one loves the Truth.
By hearing the Name, the mind becomes enthused and thus emancipated.
Truth will be known if one knows the true way of life.

17. Suhl, AG., 728.
Preparing the field of self, the seed of the creator is sown in it.
Truth will be known if one receives the true instruction;
And if one shows mercy to all living beings and is charitable to the needy.
Truth will be known if one stays at the sanctuary of the spirit.
And by getting instruction from the Guru, he lives in peace.
Truth is the remedy for all men who can wash out all evil with its help.
Nanak says, true are those who possess Truth in their hearts." 18

The Guru clearly defines in this luminous hymn the nature of mystic path by following which a believer can perceive truth in his heart and soul. But this is possible only with the help of the Guru. Guru is the inevitable mediator between man and God.

In Guru Nanak's mysticism, the place of the Guru is primal and paramount. The Guru occupies the highest place of pride in the hierarchy of divine beings nearest to God.

One who has reached the goal, can show the path. The Guru is thus indispensible. Many profess to know the truth but few actually know it, because it is only through the grace of the Guru (Gur-prasad) that God is realized. 19

To quote an excerpt from Aldous Huxley:

St. Francois de Sales used to say, "I hear of nothing but perfection on every side, so far as talk goes; but I see very few people who really practice it. Everybody has his own notion of perfection ... For my part the only perfection I know of is a hearty love of God

and to love one's neighbour as oneself. Charity is the only virtue which rightly unites us to God and man. Such union is our final aim and end, and all the rest is mere delusion." Jean Pierre Camus. 20

The mystic path or discipline (Sadhana) which is totally dependent on the agency of the Guru, involves, thus, the certain need of the Guru and the Sabad which he mediates in his grace and charity, and then the insight which flows from his instruction leading ultimately to union with God. in the highest mystical state called Ṣabā'i, in which the individual soul or self is absorbed into the all-embracing beatitude of divine presence.

But the Guru is not merely a path-finder or a guide in the ordinary sense. He is a Perfect Being himself and always reminds in his holy person, the ultimate goal eternally posited before man. This goal should never be lost sight of because the path is only an indication or a symbolical motivation. The mystic poet Ghalab says:

"Our cherished goal is beyond the domain of comprehension.

Men of insight regard the Qibla (i.e. goal) as only indicative of the Qibla." 21

The goal, according to Guru Nanak, is the mystical rapport with God. As a writer on Guru Nanak observes: "Mysticism of Guru Nanak strives to gain the direct realization of the oneness of all the things and ultimately

to merge into the one Supreme Reality. It is an act of purification and a way of identifying oneself with that Reality." 22

The Goal and the Path, both are in the custody of the Guru, who, according to Guru Nanak, is like the 'eternal ship' in the measureless ocean of Truth:

"The mind is overladen with the heavy burden of sin. How can one cross the ocean of life?

The True Guru is the eternal ship which saves with the help of God's Name." 23

THE GURU AND SABAD.

The Guru is fundamentally a mystic and the path he shows is the mystic path. "Sikhism", it has been said, "cannot be understood as a system of philosophy, but as a way of life, as a mystic rather than a metaphysical path." 24 The Guru keeps strictly to the fundamental aspects of life and truth leaving out the unnecessary details. 25 This was specially true of Guru Nanak.

Three things stand out pre-eminently in Sikhism, as a writer has pointed out, viz. The one True Lord, the


23 Varu, AQ., 1029. (Mastak bhar kalar sir bhara, Keonkar bhavjal langhas para. Satgur bohith adi jugadi ram nam nistara he.)


Guru, and the Name. And it may be added very pertinently that the Guru combines all the three in his mystic person. The True Lord and the Guru are, ultimately speaking, one spiritual entity and the Name flows out of this mystical fount as an act of grace.

Guru is the pivotal figure in Guru Nanak's mysticism. His whole teaching revolves round the Guru's mystical person. A very recent study has shown that "Even in Guru Nanak's time a mystical and impersonal character was attached to the Guruship. The circumstances connected with the nomination of Guru Angad as his successor brought into clear prominence the idea that the Guru constituted a single personality, succession implying only a change of the mortal image but not of the spirit." This masterly and final act of Guru Nanak's mystical transfiguration, in the form of a perpetuated Guruship, has been called the 'key-event' of his life.

The concept of the Guru is not merely a theoretical one, but forms an active, dynamic principle which has worked effectively for five centuries in the development of Sikh mysticism and theism. Guru Nanak himself in his own person epitomized the whole concept of the Guru. This active principle may be compared to the "catholic doctrine of the church as Christ's Mystical Body, perpetually guided by the

26. Ibid., p.112,
Holy Spirit."  

Guru Granth and the Panth Khalsa ultimately assumed the pontificatory role Guru Nanak had entrusted to his successor, Guru Angad and the succeeding eight Gurus.

Defining the meaning of the term Guru, as Guru Nanak conceived it and then personified it himself, Mcleod so aptly remarks:

"For Nanak the Guru was the voice of God within the human heart, but with his own coming the function passed to the man himself. The function was vested in a particular man, Nanak, who, by means of his own exalted perception was qualified to instruct others. It was in this light that his followers understood his life and teachings and appended the title Guru to his name."  

The Role of the Guru in Sikhism is sufficiently akin to that of Murshid and Pir in Sufism. Without a perfect and personal mediation, spiritual dissemination is not possible. Tara Chand says: "Like all Sufis Nanak taught that in the soul's journey towards God it was necessary to be guided by a Guru."  

The Guru's role and function, being of utmost difficulty and hazard, have been described in the mystic phrase, "to bear the unbearable." Not all, but very few could bear this prophetic burden. Guru Nanak himself put his closest disciples to the hardest possible test in order to judge their spiritual mettle, because Guruship did not go

29. Duncan Greenlees, Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, p. CLXVII.
32. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 176.
abegging; it had to be earned with sweat and blood. A Sikh writer says: "The Guru, in whom the flame of God burnt at its brightest and who was no worldling, decided to pass his sons over in the matter of succession to him. He did not wish to make the Divine Ministry a hereditary office, but must confer it on him who by devotion and purity would prove the fittest." 34

This highest example and ideal set forth by Guru Nanak and his successor—Gurus became the solid spiritual bed-rock for the Sikhs in succeeding generations of trial and strife to stand upon, and history shows that the fittest among them gladly met the challenge of the gruesome trials by shedding their blood in courageous martyrdom. In matters of spirit, merit and quality count, not favour and kinship. Divine Grace dawns only on those who deserve. This is what Guru Nanak as Guru taught in practice as well as preaching.

A brief discussion about the origin and tradition of the term Guru 36 may be useful for the understanding of the stages of development through which this concept must have passed before it reached the final meaning in Guru Nanak's thought.

34. Loc. Cit.
36. For literal meaning see Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Pothi, 1, 31. Derived from Sanskrit roots, the word Guru implies 'the bestower of Sabad', 'person of spiritual importance (gauray)' and 'one who dispells darkness with light'. Hence the prevalent meaning of 'preceptor' and 'the giver of Gur-mantar (the secret, mystical formula)'. Cf. also MK, 311, and Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara, p. 320.
The term Guru has been in vogue since time immemorial. In ancient India the Guru was originally a school teacher. Max Weber says:

"These ancient cultivated Vedic gurus of whom the law books still speak, were employed as house chaplains by kings and nobles and as tutors of their sons." 37

The term, however, developed into its present meaning of spiritual ministership in early medieval times. The same author further remarks:

"The place of the Guru with respect to the believers was, in general, most widely extended in the Hindu community since the Brahmanical restoration. The position of the Guru was modeled after the original absolute authority of the distinguished teacher of the vedas (guru) over the scholar (brahmacharin)." 38

Basically a school teacher, the Guru gradually assumed the role of a spiritual preceptor, specially with the dominance of the devotional impulse as a form of worship assigned to the Bhakti Movement by Ramanuja in the South and Ramanand in the North. Mcleod writes:

"The significance of the Guru in the bhakti tradition is well known ... within this tradition the ancient respect for one's spiritual teacher had been magnified to the point where the guru had become an object of devotion and his voice accepted as the veritable voice of God." 39

The veneration for the teacher or the master was equally strong in the Buddhist tantric tradition and the

38. Ibid., p. 318.
Nath-Yogi cult. But the concept of the Guru, as McLeod suggests, received major modification in the Sant tradition to which Guru Nanak belonged. The new meaning attached to this term came to imply that "the Guru or Satguru represented the inner voice, the mystical movement of God in the inmost recesses of the human soul. The Guru remains the vital link the essential mediator of divine Truth, but no longer a human link."  

The Guru, in this context, may be said to have acquired such recondite mystical authority that, as in the case of Kabir, Guru Nanak did not have the need for a human Guru and received direct dispensation from the Divine source. The function and authority of the Guru was, thus, so much apotheosized that he became not only an object of worship but an inevitable mediator between God and man. He actually became the absolute saviour of humanity.

Having been identified with Sabad or Logos, the Guru became the virtual God of the universe. "The Guru accordingly is God; the Guru is the voice of God; and the Guru is the Word, the Truth of God."  

40. Loc. Cit.  
41. As McLeod tries to prove his thesis on the subject. Loc. Cit.  
42. Ibid. p.199. The writer refers to Siddh Gosht, 43, AG., 942 and to Bilaval, 3, 795 to prove his point that since God is Word and Guru is also Word, there is virtual identification between them, as far as the universe is concerned. For Logos, see Marquette, Introduction to comparative Mysticism, p.146.
In this sense of Guru-God-identification, Guru Nanak has often been equated with God in the mystical connotation of one who as Sabad (Word) totally identifies with the Divine reality immanent in the universe. Guru Arjan says:

"Guru Nanak is God Himself known as Nanak."

Again:

"Guru Nanak is the embodiment of God."

This is a clear proof of the fact that according to Guru Nanak, the Guru was no human being but God Himself made manifest in Sabad and that in Sabad alone could God or Guru be identified or realized and from no other source could He be known. Thus, the Sikh Gurus were 'divine beings' whose human form was no corporeality but divine manifestation and in this sense can they be really understood, because their true reality which is Sabad or Logos was ultimately restored and eternally fixed in the form of Guru Granth which is another name for revealed Sabad.

43. See Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Pothi, 1, 32, These lines are from Ragas Gond and Basant respectively. Cf. Bhai Gurdas: "Guru Nanak Dev is Parbrahm (Godhead) and the Perfect God." Var, 13, 25. (Parbrahm puran brahm Gur Nanak deo).

44. For discussion of this point, see Supra, Chap. IV. ('Guru Nanak as a Mystic'). Cf. also Bhai Gurdas: Var, 32, 2. "The image of the Guru is the Sabad of the Guru which is equally acceptable to the Sikh and the Sangat." (Gur murat gur sabad hai sadh sangat samsar parvana).

45. In 1708 A.D. the tenth and last human Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) at the time of his passing away in the physical sense at Nander (Sri Hazur Sahib) relegated the role of the Guru for all time to Guru Granth. See J.S.Grewal and S.S.Bal, Guru Gobind Singh, p.156.
This permanent metamorphosis of the Guru into Sabad also interposes another important implication that besides Guru Nanak who mystically transformed himself into nine successor-Gurus and ultimately into the form of Guru Granth Sahib, there can be no other human Guru in the same sense or position that Guru Nanak and the Sabad are called the Guru and that the later innovations of establishing cults around some 'living' or 'dīh-dhartī' (corporeal) gurus are, according to Guru Nanak's teaching, quite untenable. This point constitutes and has been historically established to be an important cardinal belief in Sikhism.

In Sikhism which is "all mysticism", the purely mystical role of the Guru invariably works through the medium of Sabad which is not ordinary language or speech, but a revealed word, coming directly from God through the eternally-appointed Guru, in the form of Guru Nanak, his nine incarnations and his spoken word called Sabad and Gurbani. No other Guru possesses this exalted authority reserved for Guru Nanak and his Sabad and hence the strict adherence in Sikhism to the worship of Guru Granth along with the rejection of all further 'living' Guruship or Gurudom which at best can be a cheap hero-worship or a superstitious worship of a self-deceiving coterie.

46. Such as Namdhari, Radhaswami and Nirankari sects. For detailed information see Teja Singh, Essays in Sikhism, pp.120 ff.


48. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p.60.
The mystical ground of the Guru having descended from God Himself in the form of Sabad (revealed Word) or Gyan (esoteric knowledge) gradually evolved into a tangible, effective personality of Guru Nanak which in the historical and social context, proliferated into Sadh-Sangat, and a continuous Guruship in the form of Guru Granth and later into a developed religious society called Khalsa or Panth. All this was a great mystical principle come true as a historical truth in due course of time. Undoubtedly the Guru's role was the key-role in the phenomenal development of Sikhism into a Sikh Nation.

Bearing this all-important truth in mind, a modern writer observes that in Sikhism "the greatest emphasis is laid on the role of the Guru and on the disciple's right approach to the Guru. There is only one Guru viz. God." 50

Writing about the place of Guru in Sikhism, and calling him a definite spiritual model, Teja Singh highlights the personality of the Guru in the following words:

"The personality of the Guru is at all times operative in the career of the disciple, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to its diviner issues. Without such a personality, there would be no cohesion, no direction in the moral forces of society and in spite of a thousand kinds of knowledge "there would still be utter darkness." 51


50. Mohan Singh Uberoi, op. cit., p.5.

51. Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions, p.17. The words in the end of the quotation, given within commas, have reference to Asa-di-Var, 1.
In the final analysis about the greatest importance attached to the position of the Guru in Sikhism, it can safely be averred that all spiritual authority, all institutional strength and all temporal prowess that Sikhism acquired in the two centuries after the religious pontificate of the ten Gurus (which was actually one-Guruship), emanated from one mystical source named Guru Nanak. J. S. Grewal observes in this context:

"If we were to choose one key-idea which lends unity to all these developments (that Sikhism came to acquire in history) it is surely the concept of the Guru which at once reconciled the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's position to the authority vested in his successors through that office, and which, at a different level, brought the bani and the panth into parallel prominence with the personal Guru." 52

Reverting to the meaning of the Sabad in its original regenerative role of saving the seething humanity, we must first make distinction between the two mystical concepts of Nam and Sabad, before we take cognizance of Sabad as conceived and posited by Guru Nanak in his works.

Basically speaking, Nam and Sabad are 'interchangeable' terms, as J. S. Grewal suggests53 but whereas Nam is purely a numinous and mystical term with ineffable connotations like Hukam, Sabad is a more tangible and considerable term, in the sense that Sabad is something revealed or made manifest in order to kindle the light of true knowledge in the human

52. Guru Nanak in History, p. 313. The words within the parentheses have been added (not being in the original quotation) in order to complete the sense of the text.

53. Ibid., p. 238.
mind, because knowledge is emancipation, according to vedanta mysticism. 54

J. S. Grewal making a significant study of this issue, says:

"To make a categorical distinction between the Word and the Name is not easy but the Name appears to refer to the object of communication and the word appears to refer to the medium of communication. The Word therefore, embraces all that embraces God's nature, the laws governing the universe as well as the inner mystical experience." 55

Sabad, as a medium of communication (in humanly comprehensible language and thought which implies articulation) between God and man, is probably the only understandable link that binds the two unequal categories (i.e. the spiritual and the corporeal) which Sufis call latafat and kasafat. 56 To quote Mcleod again: "God Himself is, in His fullness, a mystery far exceeding the comprehension of man but in His Word He expresses Himself in terms which may be understood and followed." 57

The basic and essential character of Sabad may be judged from the fact that the religious foundation of Sikhism

54. Cf. Paul Deussen, Outline of the Vedanta, p.40. "From knowledge comes emancipation." Cf. also Guru Nanak's special emphasis on gyan (i.e. divine knowledge). Var Asa, Slok, AG., 469. "As the pitcher holds water and without water it cannot be made, so the mind is contained by gyan and without Guru gyan is not possible." This pithy statement is typically mystical.


was laid on two things, as Teja Singh points out, viz. the holy Word (sabad) and the organized Fellowship (sangat). This Fellowship was originally congregation or Sangat but when it was later developed and its strength multiplied, it came to be known as Panth Khalsa i.e. Sikh nation. So Sabad is the most vital principle in Sikhism (as revealed and personified in the Guru), which in its disseminial expansion created great impact on the society around and ultimately fructified into a theistic Brotherhood known as Khalsa (the pure) in the hands of Guru Gobind Singh.

It would, therefore, be useful to study the most important mystical aspects of Sabad as postulated by Guru Nanak.

1. Sabad is the supratemporal, supraspatial, transcendental reality of Godhead, called Sunn-Sabad (the Void-Logos) by Guru Nanak. The Uncreate, Unmanifest Sabad is not only beyond all categories of being and not-being, but eternally immanent in all that is created and manifested. It is thus extremely paradoxical like the term Nam which is sat as well as Krit (i.e. Mitt-Eternal, as well as Anitt-

58. Essays in Sikhism, p.56. Cf. Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, 42. "Without Guru's Word (Bani) and Fellowship (sangat) there is no other basis." This Guru Nanak said in reply to the Siddhas at Achal Vataia when during discussion, they asked him to show some miracle in support of his claim for spiritual authority.

ephemeral). Thus it is that all those who are devoted to or absorbed in Sabad are perfect transcendent beings (bairagi).  

2. Sabad is knowable or perceivable only in human consciousness (surat) and nowhere else. Hence the well-known mystical concept of Sabad-Surat so commonly used to denote Sikh Yoga or Sikh mysticism. Guru Nanak categorically declares in Siddh-gosht:

"As the lotus flower
does not drown in the pool
As the duck swims,
So with the mind intent
Upon the word of the Guru
One can safely cross
The great sea of life,
Repeating the Holy Name."

Again, answering the question posed by the Siddhas as to who was his Guru, Guru Nanak said:

"Sabad is my Guru and the continuity of attention is the disciple."

Here Guru Nanak implies that as Guru himself he was Sabad and this Sabad was his Guru in the sense of

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60. Ibid., 59, AG., 944. "That Sabad lives eternally (as something) invisible: wherever we see, it is there." (Su sabad kau nirantar vas alakhang jeh dekha teh soi).


being a mystical principle revealed to him by God who was the Primal Guru. 63

3. Sabad is the only saviour or saving factor in the universe. No body ever became God-conscious unless the Sabad or Logos quickened his consciousness. This may mean a mystical transformation inside the heart and not an outward mechanical action or intellectual understanding. Guru Nanak says:

"A Brahman may read the religious text thrice a day and also discuss its grammar. (But) without Guru's sabad no one can ever be saved and without God's Nam the man will die distraught." 64

The outward contact with the Guru or ritualistic uttering of the Sabad or Nam cannot be effective, as they cut no ground in the spirit itself, where alone the ingress of the divine principle can take place. This is how Guru Amar Dass (the third Guru) clarifies this point:

"All the people in the world turn up to see the Guru, But by mere seeing they cannot be saved unless they ponder over the Sabad. Their egoistic impurity cannot be removed unless they get to love the Nam." 65

"Without virtuous action", says Guru Nanak, "no one can worship God." 66 And how can virtuous action or moral

63. Cf. Sohila-Arti, Asa, AG., 12, SSWS, 61. "Six the systems, Six their teachers and six their different teachings: The Lord (Guru) of them all is the One Lord."

64. Bhairo, AG., 1127.


character be acquired? The Guru clearly formulates:

"None ever acquired high character without (acquiring) the Word (Sabad)." 67

In another lucid statement, the Guru avers:

"Why should we wanter when it is Truth that ennobles and purifies?

Without true Sabad there is no salvation." 68

To take one more example out of many that can be cited:

"To have one's mind firmly engrossed in the Sabad is the quite essence of all virtue." 69

4. Sabad is often equated with Anhad Sabad in Adi Granth, but actually these are separate terms and cannot be used for each other. This wider use of the word Sabad can be linked with its origin from the Nath source, through Sant channels, as McLeod suggests. 70 Whereas anhad sabad is purely a mystical experience relating to the hearing of the "soundless sound" or "unstruck music", the sabad itself is the revealed Word made manifest through the Guru, who is basically an embodiment of the Divine Truth or God Himself mystically metamorphosed into human agency. Inversely

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68. Siddh Gosht, 2 AG., 938 (Kia bhavai sach sucha hoe, Sach sabad bin mukt na hoe).
69. Ramkali, AG., 908. (Manua asthir sabade rata eha karni sari).
70. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p.191. For the meaning of Anhad Sabad, see MK, 43.
71. Loc.Cit., For a detailed study of Anhad Sabad see infra Esoteric Mysticism.
speaking, God is manifest only in **Sabad**, as Guru Nanak says:

"He has neither form, colour nor material sign, but He is revealed through the true Word (**sabad**)".  

5. Only the **Guru** is given the divine power to reveal or create the **Sabad** in human language for the benefit of humanity, for which Guru Nanak has used the metaphor of "minting the Word". Just as true or intrinsic coins are minted by the royal authority only and not by any counterfeit means, so the **Guru** is the only Perfect Being on earth who can vouchsafe the **Sabad**, with the divine grace at his back. There is however, a definite spiritual-ethical criterion of human perfection as a precondition for deserving the incidence of Sabad-bestowing Grace. Guru Nanak in the last Stanza of **Japji** says:

"Let continence be the (goldsmith's) workshop and patience be the goldsmith.
Let reason be the anvil and knowledge be the instrument.


73. Ramkali, AG., 879 *(Nanak tin ke sad balihari jin ek sabad liv lai)*.
Let fear be the bellows and penance be the fire.
Let love be the utensil in which the holy nectar be poured.

In this manner, the Guru's Word (sabad) can be minted in the true mint.

Those who are blessed in His eyes, win His favour.
Nanak, it is only Divine Grace that saves man.74

The Sabad is thus closely integrated with idea of the Divine Grace.

GRACE AND FREE WILL.

The question of inter-relationship between 'divine grace' and 'free will' (jabr and ikhtiyar of Sufi mysticism) is indeed baffling. The controversy as to which of these two is relatively more important and determinative in the matter of human salvation, has been raging among theologians of all the great world religions since time immemorial.

According to Guru Nanak, however, 'grace' (which has been expressed in the Adi Granth by various terms such as nazar, kirpa, mehar, karam, prasad, bakhshish, raham, taras, bakhshindgi, amugreh, bhana, dat, and so on)75 is the determinant factor which 'must decide the issue.'76


75. Cf. Mcleod, op. cit., p. 205. For definition of 'grace', see A. Huxley, Perennial Philosophy, p. 191. "Defined in Psychological terms, grace is something other than oursel-conscious personal self, by which we are helped."/ Cf. also Loehlin, Sikhs and Their Scriptures, p. 49.

76. Mcleod, Loc. Cit.
In fact, Guru Nanak has laid so much emphasis on the imperative need of free will as well as human initiative and action (Karma) that sometimes one is liable to underrate the importance of nadar-karam (grace), but Guru Nanak has resolved the issue by clearly stating in Janji that by good actions in the previous births one gets human life and by grace one attains salvation.

This mystical solution of the problem offered by the Guru provides a clear reference in itself to the dual quality of human nature which has both immediate and ultimate areas of operation and contact with divine Reality. Man must immediately act as best as he can (which is the essence of all karma i.e. to act selflessly and without caring for the result) but ultimately speaking he must wait for and depend upon the divine 'favour' and 'choice' i.e. for the grace that saves and liberates human beings irrespective of their merits in action and free will. Though grace can be and is often linked with meritorious and virtuous action, yet in ultimate analysis grace is transcendental and

77. The more typical word used by the Sikh Gurus for karma is karni. Cf. e.g. Sarang (var M.4) Guru Nanak, Slok, AG.,1238; Siri, AG.,25; Var Majh, 7, AG.,141. and Var Majh,12, AG.143. Cf. The imperative need for human action in order to deserve Grace, Paul Brunton, Inner Reality, pp.56, 164.

78. Janji,4, AG,2 "By actions one gets human body and by grace finds the way to salvation." (Karmi avai kapta nadari mokh duar).


absolute and not dependent on any human prerequisites.  

The concept of nadar in Guru Nanak is closely interlinked (in fact, it is coequal) with the concept of Hukam and is thus symbolic of divine mystery and, as J.S. Grewal says, of "God's inscrutable omnipotence". 

Guru Nanak has said that "God's Bounty is as great as He Himself is" which means that the Divine Being, His Hukam and His grace (which is another expression for His Bounty) are almost synonymous terms. The Guru again remarks that "those who receive His gracious nadar, are on the right path." J.S. Grewal cites another example for the absolute nature of nadar, reflecting as it does the Absoluteness of God and His Hukam:

"Through His daya a mere heron is transformed into a swan."

If God is karan-karan (i.e. Absolute Creator or the Primal Cause of all creation), then His nadar is also

81. Cf. Sri, AG., 61. "If we get His grace, we can find Him; with our own effort we cannot know Him." (Karan milai ta paiaj ap na laia jai). See also loc. cit., "There is no one true or false, only those whom you like are good." (Jo tuch Bhave se bhale khote khara na kos).

82. Guru Nanak in History, p. 256.


85. Loc. Cit. with reference to Basant Hindol, AG, 1171. (Bagalai tai phun hansala hovai jai tu karai dayala).
absolutely absolute. In this matter Guru Nanak's thought is quite positive and non-compromising, in as much as he says that if God chooses to punish somebody by granting him everlasting sorrow and hunger, it is still His Bounty and Favour. An exactly similar example occurs in Guru Nanak with regard to Divine order (Hukam):

"By Divine order some are blessed and favoured, while others are eternally discarded."

A man's effort is utterly meaningless and futile if God does not favour him with His nadar. Guru Nanak declares:

"Nanak, those who are deprived of His Grace can neither resort to charity nor devote to the Name."

It is, thus, evident that Nadar and Hukam are, like Nam and Sabad, purely mystical concepts, because no human reason or rationality can possibly be brought forward and advanced to their explanation and justification. There are hundreds of such expressions in Guru Nanak and the other Gurus and Bhagats included in the Adi Granth which clearly highlight the Absoluteness and Omnipotence of God. To cite a brilliant passage from Guru Nanak:

86. Cf. Guru Arjan Gauri Sukhmani, 11, Slok, AG, 276 (Karan karan prabh ek hai dusar nahi koe, Nanak tis balharne jal thal mahial sog).
87. Japji, 25, AG, 5 (Ketia dukh bhukh sad mar, Eh bhai dat teri datar).
88. Japji, 2, AG, 5 (Ikna hukami bakhsis ik hukami sada bhavaiai).
89. Siri, AG, 15. (Nanak nadari bahare racheh dan na nai).
"He makes tigers, hawks and other birds of prey (charags and kuhis) to eat grass:

While those who eat grass are made to eat flesh; this is the way of His will.

He may show mounds of earth in the rivers and covert a desert into an ocean.

He may exalt a worm into kingship and raze to ashes a great army.

All created beings keep alive by breathing but if He wants He can keep them alive without breathing.

Nanak says, just as it pleases the True Lord, He sustains all accordingly. 90

Again:

"Every body is under His care and He keeps them all busy within His sight.

He Himself gives them honourable positions and causes them do (virtuous) acts.

He is the greatest Lord who created His vast universe and keeps all the creatures.

If He looks askance, the kings get ruined;
And if they beg for alms, they get not anything." 91

Since the one God has no second or rival and since none exists beside Him and all His creation is just His manifestation or emanation, there can be no doubt or question about His Absoluteness and Almightyness. His grace and His anger make all the difference to the created beings; the former is enough to save while the latter is sure to lead to perdition. There is no other course or alternative left for man but to obey and understand His Hukam (hukam manai or

90. Var Majh, Slok, AG., 144.
91. Var Asa, 16, AG., 472.
hukam bujhai) and to seek His Nadar, bhana and karam (i. e. His Grace). All else is futile. Guru Nanak is extremely sanguine on this point:

"There is one Throne and one King. He is the Disdainful Lord, pervading every where. The whole universe is His creation. He is the One Creator (Ekankar), the Unknowable, Absolute One." 92

J.S. Grewal has resolved the issue of 'grace' vis-à-vis 'free will' in lucent words:

"There is a point beyond which human understanding cannot proceed and there, it is the bestowing or withholding of God's grace that decides the issue of salvation. Thus Guru Nanak's idea of God's grace repudiates all presumption to salvation by mere effort." 93

The Divine Grace comes to man if he is totally dedicated and single-mindedly devoted, in heart and soul, to the Lord of the Grace. Guru Nanak says:

"The grace of the master is on those who meditated on Him with single mind and they have found favour in His heart." 94

The whole course of man's effort and initiative, in the true sense, is not directed towards any other goal but to please the Lord and deserve His grace. This is the mystical

92.Basant, AG., 1188.


meaning that lies at the source of all human worship and meditation, as well as all action and will.

The perfect man (for which the most appropriate metaphor of the Suhagan i.e. 'faithful bride' is commonly used in Sikh and, for that matter, in all Bhakti mysticism) is one whom the Master (Khasam) has chosen for His favour.

Guru Nanak Says:

"That day is blessed when the Divine Husband looks upon the human bride with favour and she thus acquires all the treasures (in the world).

That bride is the 'accepted one' (suhagan) who is loved by her husband; Nanak says, she is the 'chosen lady'." 96

All human action, in this meaning of the total dependence upon divine grace, is, thus, dedicative and transformative and not becoming in itself any cherished goal, always remains real as a means to the end. Aldous Huxley says:

"Deliverance is out of time into eternity, and is achieved by obedience and docility to the eternal Nature of Things. We have been given free will, in order that we may will our self-will out of existence and so come to live continuously in a 'state of grace'. All our actions must be directed, in the last analysis, to make ourselves passive in relation to the activity and the being of divine Reality." 97

95. Cf. Aldous Huxley Perennial Philosophy, p. 190. "In every exposition of the Perennial Philosophy the human soul is regarded as feminine in relation to the Godhead, the Personal God and even the Order of Nature. Hubris, which is the original sin, consists in regarding the personal ego as self-sufficiently masculine in relation to the spirit within and to Nature without, and in behaving accordingly."


Mystically speaking, the free will itself has to be converted and trained into a controlled and subservient will, so that it does not remain refractory and obtrusive. In technical language, it should become voluntas communis (i.e. a will that is shared and is the will common to man and God) and not voluntas propria which is acquisitive and thus the root of all sin. The will is not to be negated but to be adjusted so that it becomes acceptable to grace. Actually both are co-existent on the human level, though grace is ultimately speaking absolute, as discussed earlier, St. Bernard says: "Grace is necessary to salvation, free will equally so -- but grace in order to give salvation, free will in order to receive it." 

Emphasising the importance of will at human level, William Law remarks:  

"The will is that which has all power; it makes heaven and it makes hell; for there is no hell but where the will of the creature is turned from God, nor any heaven but where the will of the creature worketh with God."

Similarly Eckhart observes:

"God expects but one thing of you, and that is that you should come out of yourself in so far as you are a created being and let God be God in you." 

98. Ibid., p.199. Cf. Guru Angad, Var Asa, Slok (Paangi 7) AG.,466. "The lower ego (haumai) is a deep malady but its remedy also lies in itself. (Haumai diragh roghai dari bhi is maheh)."


100. Ibid., p.200.

101. Loc. Cit.
The so-called 'free-will' (it is not so free a will as in often thought) and the human effort as such, have a useful role to play in making it possible for the divine grace to 'act' or 'come into play'. As Marquette remarks, the idea of grace does not preclude the human aspiration to gain salvation as it is ingrained in every heart. But he further remarks that Hindu mysticism does not accept the 'restrictive Calvinistic idea of predetermination', because man must be lifted above individual limitatous "by a spark from the Infinite."

"The supreme perfection", says St. Teresa, "... consists in reducing our will to such conformity to that of God that as soon as we understand that a thing is willed by Him, we attach ourselves with all our will power; finally to receive with an equal delight that which is sweet and that which is bitter." 103

The concept of Grace (Nadar) ultimately merges into the concept of Hukam, in Guru Nanak's thought, with the probable distinction that whereas Nadar operates purely on

102. Cf. Sufi poet Ghalib: "The analogy for my effort is this much, as if a caged bird may be trying to gather straws to make his nest while he is confined in the cage." Diwan-i-Urdu Radif Ya. Cf. also Mir Taqi Mir (the celebrated Urdu poet): "The odium of free will has been laid undeservedly on us. The divine being ordains whatever He likes and we mortals have been 'defamed' for nothing." Diwan-Urdu, Radif Alif.

103. Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p. 35.

104. Ibid., p. 151. Cf. Mohammad Iqbal: "Raise your self to such an extent that God, when He wills anything, may ask His slave in your person, as to what is your will?" Bang-i-Dira.
the divine level, and is thus inscrutable, Hukam has its operative relavance on the human level and is thus understandable. Nadar is all prayer, while Hukam is all obedience. Guru Nanak holds that mortals are helpless before the absolute power of Hukam and should only seek divine grace (which Sufis call Fazl as compared to human effort which is connected with Adl i.e. judgement). He says:

"All come into being through Hukam and do whatever Hukam ordains.

By Hukam they are subject to death and by Hukam they can merge into Truth.

Nanak, whatever pleases God, that happens and these created beings have no power whatsoever." 106

Only dedicated effort is justifiable, because self-willed effort goes waste. Guru Nanak says that "All make their full effort but what God ordains only that happens." 107

Grace has also a wider meaning, as a modern Sikh writer suggests and in this sense, it is "for every one", which implies that all human beings are equal and their ultimate salvation is the result of a creating and saving divine grace. The same writer defining grace says. "It is perpetual inspiration ...

105. St. Augustine in this sense calls grace, Eucharism which means 'communion with God'. Marquette, op.cit.,p.144.
106. Siri, AG.,55.
107. Var Asa, Slok (Pauri,11) AG.,469. (Sabhni Chhala maria karta kare so ho).
108. Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p.89.
109. Ibid., p.88.
In Guru Nanak the idea of divine grace is also applicable to the 'grace of the Guru'. It occurs in the very first Credal statement (Mul-mantar) enunciated by Guru Nanak, in the form of Gur-prasad which means that God can only be known or realized "with the grace of the Guru". God saves the universe through the agency of the Saviour - Guru and since God and Guru are one, it is all Divine Grace. The Guru is God Himself become manifest to the Universe. He is the spiritually and humanly operative aspect of Godhead. Gopal Singh says:

"Thus identifying the Guru with the only eternal verity which is God, whose essence within us is the soul, Sikhism has made the laws of God and soul universally applicable and valid. Redemption is for every one who awakens his within. The Guru, like the God, is for every one, every age and every clime." 111

Guru Nanak has devoted one full hymn to expressing the saving kindness and grace of the Guru which is indispensable:

"If sat-Guru is kind, then faith is complete. If sat-Guru is kind, there is no repentence. If sat-Guru is kind, no sorrow is felt. If sat-Guru is kind, divine love is tasted. If sat-Guru is kind, there is no fear of death. If sat-Guru is kind, there is eternal bliss. If Sat-Guru is kind, we obtain all precious things. If sat-Guru is kind, we get merged into Truth." 112

To sum up, the Divine grace and the Guru's grace (which are actually one and the same) are given to the 'blessed'...

110. Cf. C.H. Lohelin, Sikhs and their Scriptures, p.49. "... God's grace is mediated through the Guru." Again: "'Parsad' is found over 636 times in the Adi Granth."


soul in mystical experience as a beautiful gift of inspiration, with which the life of such a recipient and experient soul is all transformed and become at once holy and sublime.

Mohan Singh Uberoi writes:

"The Mystic after his mystic experiences returns to life much richer, much more powerful, much more effectively co-operant, much more generous-liberal, much more loving-serving and much more sympathetic and knowing." 113

EGO (HAUMAI) AND DUALITY (DUBIDHA).

Haumai is an original term used by Guru Nanak to express the 'unregenerate' condition of human soul, for which as Mcleod has discussed, 114 no English equivalent is fully suitable. The term 'ego' has psychological ramifications, but it has a workable and popular usage and may serve the purpose. The 'unregenerate' man who is engrossed in haumai is, according to Mcleod, one "who ignores God and follows instead the dictates of haumai" 115 and is, as such, a 'diseased' person (rogi).

113. Sikh Mysticism, p.23.

114. Mcleod has suggested many terms such as 'pride' (originally used by Macauliffe in Sikh Religion), garab, hanker, sin (of Christian connotation) 'self' and 'self-centredness', and has concluded 'ego' to be the nearest usable term.

/See op.cit., pp.182 f./ James Drever, A Dictionary of Psychology, p.79, for the psychological meaning of the term 'ego'.

115. Ibid., p.187.

116. Cf. Guru Arjan, Bhaiao, AG., 1140 "whoever is visible (in this world) is diseased; only my true Guru is diseaseless". (Jo Jo disse so rogi. Rog rahat mere satgur jogi). Cf. also Jairam Mishr, Guru Nanak Dev Jiwan Aur Darshan (Hindi), p.259.
Haumai, in Sikh thought, is the greatest cause of human degeneration, distraction and corruption and is, thus, the surest passport to disaster and perdition. According to Mcleod:

"For Guru Nanak it is haumai which controls the man of unregenerate man and so determines the pattern of his life. The results are disastrous, for instead of leading a man to release and salvation his haumai will invariably stimulate affections which can only bind him more firmly to the wheel of transmigration."

Haumai may be defined as the unsettled, confused state of mind of a man who cannot distinguish between the Real and the Unreal, because he has been distracted by the effect of maya towards perceiving the phenomenal world as something real. This wrong perception inevitably leads to a 'dual perception' of seeing the world in its contradiactoriness of good and bad, high and low, day and night, heaven and hell, chastity and sin, richness and poverty, attachment and detachment, love and hatred, and so on. This 'dual perception' is called, in Guru Nanak's terminology, dubidha, which is a close concomitant of haumai.

While haumai is the root-cause of this human waywardness and distance from 'godliness', dubidha is the result of this inner distraction caused by maya and is basically a psychological problem, because in dubidha a man is so inwardly confused and unsettled that he cannot make correct decision about any thing or find the right course of life which may lead to eternal happiness. He is thus suffering from

schizophrenia or what is called a 'split' personality.

Haumai (ego) is the avidya (i.e. ignorance) of the upanishadic or Vedanta mysticism and is so basic and fundamental that it is not mere mental distraction or 'disease' but it is the chief instrument in the hands of maya not only for creating the transient, flux-ridden and mirage-like universe, but also maintaining it in the same unregenerate or degenerate condition and ultimately destroying it by the weapon of its own original destructibility. The Sufi poet Ghalib says:

"In my construction itself an element of destruction is hidden.

The hot blood of the peasant is (in fact) a leaven of the lightning that destroys the harvest of grain."

Guru Nanak has discussed the nature of haumai in a revealing passage included in his well-known composition Asa-di-Var, which may be cited in toto:

"In haumai one comes and in haumai goes. In haumai is he born and in haumai dies. In haumai, he gives and in haumai takes. In haumai is one truthful and in haumai false. In haumai he thinks of evil and of virtue. In haumai he lands himself into hell and into heaven. In haumai he laughs and in haumai he weeps. In haumai he is polluted and in haumai chastened. In haumai he loses his caste and his species. In haumai is he foolish and also wise

"Schizophrenia: A type of mental disorder ... characterized by dissociation, particularly between the intellectual processes and the affective, the latter being also to a great extent disorganized."

119. Cf. Guru Angad, Var. Asa, Slok, AG, 466, "Haumai is a deep malady ..."

120. Diwan-i-Urdi.
and in *haumai* he remains totally forgetful of salvation. In *haumai* is there *maya* and in *haumai* is superstition (*chhaya*). By producing *haumai*, the world was created. If one understands *haumai*, he will find the door of salvation. Without true knowledge, the man tires himself by too much talking. Nanak says, by *Hukam* are recorded the signs of fate. Just as God makes you see, you may perceive." 121

In the same composition another exquisite passage by Guru Angad on the subject of *haumai* is worth quoting:

"*Haumai* has this quality that in *haumai* man indulges in action. In *haumai* this is the condition that it causes repeated rebirth. From where comes this *haumai* and how can it be discarded? *Haumai* is the same *Hukam* which causes preconditioned avocations. *Haumai* is a deep malady and the remedy also lies in itself. If it pleases God, then one contemplates the *Sabad*. Nanak says, listen O' Friend, in this way, the sorrow is removed." 122

*Haumai* is basically speaking 'the pride of selfhood' or the 'vanity of life'. A vain feeling of self-existence and the transient human powers added to it, create in the ordinary man a sense of false capability and a false security which make him totally oblivious of an uncertain future and a disastrous end. But if a man overcomes this serious complacency and abasement and instead takes refuge in the worship of God and the Guru, he is saved. When there is no self-pride, there is no change of self-abasement, in fact, of any entanglement or involvement whatever, Guru Nanak says:

121. Var Asa, Slok (Pauri 7), AG., 466.
122. Var Asa, Slok (Guru Angad), AG., 466.
"One who thinks he is, says Nanak, will be grabbed (by death).

While I have no haumai and hence no chance of getting into rebirth." 123

The ruinous haumai which separates men from their creator has ruined myriads of beings, who lost their lives in mere indulgence:

"Forgetting the Lord, they enjoyed sensual acts.
By so doing many diseases crept up in their bodies." 124

Guru Nanak has vividly described the wretched condition of those who have no qualities in them, yet they are so vain and arrogant:

"There are those who possess neither awareness, nor reason, nor wisdom and have no understanding of the mysteries of the world.

Nanak, such people are pure dunces who display vanity without having any virtue in them." 125

The maladies caused by haumai, says the Guru, are reprehensible; everywhere it is haumai that causes sorrow and only the Guru's word (sabad) can save the humanity. 126

In Guru Nanak's thought the whole world is a fictitious expansion caused by the magical power of maya which works through the agency of self-caused ignorance called haumai.

123. Var Malar, Slok, AG.,1289. (Hoda phariag Nanak jan. Na haun na mai joni pan).
124. Malar, AG.,1256. (Khasam visar kiai rashhog. Ta tan uthh khloe rog).
125. Sarang, AG.,1246. (Ikna suddh na buddh na akal sar akhar ka bhee na lahant. Nanak se nar asal khar ji bin gur garabh karant.)
126. Shairo, AG.,1153. (Nanak haumai rog hure. Jeh dekha teh eka bedan ape bakhse sabad dhure).
The Guru calls the world, in this sense, "a house of smoke."

The world thus contaminated by haumai and caught in the meshes of duality (dubidha) is nothing but 'diseased' (rogī) and Guru Nanak includes the whole 'phenomena' in this 'contaminated' state:

"The air, the water, the fire are 'diseased' and the whole earth is 'diseased'. So are mother, father, the maya and the body 'diseased' and also families and relations thereof. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva are 'diseased'; in fact, the whole world is 'diseased'..." 128

By the term 'diseased' the Guru implies the impure state of 'contamination' caused by maya and haumai. Separation from divine truth and ignorance of self-hood is generally expressed in terms of 'dirt' and 'filth' (maīl, rog) in Guru Nanak's mystical thought. Perhaps the best word to express the nature of maya is impurity (anjañ). The worst form of haumai is dubidha: "The 'disease' of duality (dubidha) is the greatest malady, in which man becomes a slave of maya." 129

In duality (dubidha) there is utter distraction. Unless it is removed, the right path cannot be found. Guru Nanak says:

"By removing dubidha, recognize the Sabad.
Perceive the one Reality in your ownself and outside.

128. Bhairo, AG, 1246.
Such wisdom is the essence of the Sabad.

In dubidha one gets odium as his fate."

By discarding or shunning duality one becomes unitive, i.e. the votary of the Formless One. In other words from mayadhari (maya-engrossed) and dubhida-chari (duality ridden) he becomes Nirankari. Guru Nanak has often been named in Janam Sakhis and other Sikh Writings as "Nanak Nirankari". He himself says:

"The thoughtful person chooses his course carefully. By shunning dubidha he becomes one with the Nirankar (Formless God)."

The haumai-engrossed (i.e. the ego-centric) man, who is also simultaneously duality-ridden (dubidha-grast) is called manmukh in Sikh terminology. The manmukh is the opposite of Gurumkh, just as manmat or durmat is the opposite of Gurmat. All Sikh Mysticism lies in the adoption of Gurmat (i.e. Guru's Wisdom) and the abnegation of durmat or haumai. They are diametrically opposite to each other:

"Haumai is the opposite of Nam, both cannot live in one place."

So haumai and dubidha have no locus standi in Guru Nanak's mysticism. They must at all costs be negated


131. Dhanasari, AG, 685. (Rakh rakh charan chare vichari. Dubidha chhod bhai nirankari.)

132. Guru Amar Dass, Wadhans, AG, 560. (Haumai navai nal virodh hai doe na vase ik thhai.)
and abjured. The self or man in itself is something spiritually untenable. It leads to perdition until and unless it is infused with the word (sabad), or the divine Name (Nam). The mind must be controlled or restrained and thus conquered. Guru Nanak has used the latter term in Japji, Stanza 28, whose concluding line is:

"Let 'sympathy with all beings' be your great yogic sect and (thus) by conquering the mind, you conquer the world." 133

Man's own effort to control the mind cannot succeed as the mind is too restless (chanchal) and stubborn (hathhila) and has no effect against itself, just as dirt cannot clean the dirt. For cleaning some impurity, we need the principle or element of purity. This is exactly what Guru Nanak calls sabad or Nam:

"If the reason is putrified by the force of sins, it can be cleaned by the love of Name." 134

The metaphor used in Sikhism (Gurmat) for the negation of haumai, is 'burning'; that is, the efficacious sabad 'burns' the haumai, by its mystical power of changing and transforming all that comes into contact with it. It


134. Japji, 20, AG.,4. (Bharjai mat papa kai sang. Oh dhopai navai kai rang). Cf. Inge, Mysticism, in Religion, p.41. The ego can only know itself as object and the object is not the self."

135. Cf. Guru Amar Dass, Sahi, AG.,768: "He is the servant of God (Bhagat) and is Guru-faced (Gurmukh), whose haumai has been 'burnt' by Sabad". (So bhagat jo gurmukh hovai haumai sabad jalai ram).
chastens all the human impurities, viz. haumai, dubidha, manmat, durmat and maya - all that binds human life to the shackles of ignorance and avidya.

Though in all matters of spiritual regeneration, according to Guru Nanak, the first step always is the Guru's grace without which nothing is possible, yet on another level of thought, the Guru inspires the seeker after 'true path' (Sachcha marag) to take maximum initiative possible for him towards achieving the goal, because for the greatest aspirations only supreme effort and supreme sacrifice can avail. So Guru Nanak strongly enjoins upon the Sikh (disciple) to do his utmost effort, with extreme "single-mindedness", to resist evil and to restrain the mind,\(^{136}\) of course with the help and grace of the Guru. The Guru avers:

"One should remember the One Lord, with his mind unruffled and should stop the mind from going astray." \(^{137}\)

Again:

"Restrain the running mind within yourself; this instruction has been received from the Guru himself." \(^{138}\)

In exceedingly trenchant thought, the Guru enlightens the votary:

\(^{136}\) Guru Nanak uses the word nirodh for mental control. Cf. Siri, AG., 19 (Karam milai sach paiai gurmukh sada nirodh).

\(^{137}\) Sorath, AG., 634 (Eko chete manua pa dole dhawat varai rahai).

\(^{138}\) Sorath, AG., 599. (Chaltau thhak roh ghar apne gur miliai ih mat hoi jio).
"You cannot keep your own house protected from deception, then why are you keen to pilfer another's house?

One can protect his own door and house, if he enjoys the bliss (of Nam); this is possible only for the servant of God who acts through the grace of the Guru." 139

LOVING DEPOTION: LOVE MYSTICISM.

So far we have discussed that the 'mystic path' leading to eternal happiness begins with the Guru who mediates the all-pervasive sabad and thus acts between God and man, in a manner that preconceives the inevitability of divine Grace (which is also Guru's Grace) for the saving of humanity. Human effort and will is only limited to a man's final choice whether to follow his own deceptive haumai or to discard it totally in favour of the Guru's uttam panth which is another term for the 'mystic path'. Now we may consider the true path itself which is prema-bhagti or 'loving devotion'. No other method or path (sadhani) is so effective.

139. Sorath, AG., 598. (Anna ghar musat rakh na sakeh ki par ghar johan laga. Ghar dar rakh eh je ras chakheh jo gurmukh sevak laga).

140. Cf. Bhat Kirat, Swyvi, AG., 1406. "We have heard about the uttam panth of the Guru's sangat by meeting which we have removed all fear of death." (Ik Uttam panth sunio gur sangat teh milant jam tras mitai). Uttam Panth means the 'excellent path'. Cf. Bhai Gurdas calls it nirmal panth(i.e. 'pure religion'): "Guru Nanak struck the new coin (of Pontificate) in the world and promulgated his nirmal panth." Var.1, 45.
as this; in fact, all other paths acquire efficacy if they lead to or converge into this all-embracing path.

The path of love and its actualization in the form of inner devotion (bhagti) is basically mystical. Mcleod calls it 'interior religion'. When a seeker rejects and discards all outward methods of approach to Reality such as idolatry, ritualistic worship, pilgrimage, fasting, superstitions devotion to the manifold deities to the exclusion or neglect of the One Supreme Being, the mere recitation of the scriptures and so on, he tries to find the real, truthful method of acquiring union with God and ultimately by the grace of the Guru, he comes to the inward mystical path of 'loving devotion' which proves a true anchor to his wanderings in the ocean of distraction.

As Mcleod remarks:

"Religion is inward and its basic expression is love, or more accurately, loving devotion. This loving devotion, a devotion directed to the formless Lord, is the vital response required of all who have perceived the presence of God suffused throughout creation, and in whom has been awakened a longing for union with Him. It is at this point that Guru Nanak shares with the sants a particular debt to vaishnava bhagti."

"Bhakti", says Loehlin, "indicates the worshipper's

143. Ibid., p.213.
attitude of loving devotion towards the Deity."144 Grierson translates the word Bhakti as "adoration". 145 As we saw earlier in chapter III, Ramanuja raised the concept of bhakti 'out of the world of illusion' into a workable, intellectualized and ethical principle of divine worship, declaring open its efficacy to the public at large, while earlier it was only a "secret mantra of salvation."146

The ethical aspect of bhakti, with its ever-extending scope of reaching the masses and regarding them as equal in the eyes of God and man, became the special mark of Guru Nanak's mystical movement as it developed in its final theocratic shape, and on this very point Guru Nanak radically diverged from his other compatriots, Kabir, Dadu, Chaitanya, Ramanand, Namdev and others. He laid special emphasis on the practical application of the idea of bhakti into Sangat and Pangat (i.e. Langar) which both at once, as if by a magical wand, equalized all men, high and low, rich and poor, in the newly-fashioned religious society of the Sikhs where no barrier whatsoever remained between man and man. 147

144. Sikhs and Their Scriptures, p.53. About the etymology of the word 'bhakti' Loehlin says: "The noun bhakti comes from the Sanskrit root bhai meaning in its religious sense, 'attachment, fondness for, devotion to, trust, homage, worship, piety, faith or love or devotion'. (Monier Williams, Srt, Dict.)." Loc.Cit. Cf. also G. S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p. 76.

145. Loehlin, Loc.Cit.

146. Ibid., pp.56 f.

147. For Langar Cf. Parkash Singh, Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.51,54,133. Mcleod, op.cit. p.210. For the institution of 'classless' society of the Khalsa Panth, see Bhai Gurdas, Var 1,23. "Making the four classes as four pillars of religion, Guru Nanak made one 'class'(varan)out of the four classes. Making the high and the low as equals, he started the cult of humility in the world."
As Loehlin observes, "The Sikh Gurus were both mystical devotees (bhakatas) and practical organizers, a combination that developed a religious reformed sect into a church and finally into a theocracy known as the Khalsa Brotherhood."

Farquhar also highlights this speciality of Guru Nanak's thought, saying that Guru Nanak, like Kabir, "did not wish their followers to become ascetics but advised them to go on with their ordinary avocations." 149

A modern Sikh writer says: "The most exciting and salient feature of Guru Nanak's religion is its emphasis on the ethical aspect of social life." Again: "The mysticism of Guru Nanak is creative and dynamic." 150

The principle of love when combined with religious devotion and adoration certainly acquires a moral and ethical character. Mukerjee observes:

"God's love is regarded as morally perfect with respect to its content in the world, which, however, can be infinitely enriched aesthetically in the social process." 151

\textit{Bhakti} in which there is too much emotional effusion and has outward exercise such as ecstatic singing

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Op.cit.}, p.53.
  \item Modern Religious Movements in India, p.336.
  \item Darshan Singh, \textit{Religion of Guru Nanak}, pp.38 and 64.
  \item Theory and Art of Mysticism, Preface.
\end{itemize}
and dancing and orgiastic revelry (which has been so common in the Bengali mystics (specially of Chaitanya Bhakti cult) and in the Alvar and Adiyar saint poets of Tamilnad, and also in the Sufi mystics of Chishti denomination and the Nanhdhari sect in Sikhism, is not akin to Guru Nanak's concept of Bhakti which takes more of inner form than outer. This inner form is the 'inner love: the real longing of a chaste woman for her husband compared to the devotion of a Bhakat to the Divine Being.'

The love principle is invariably conjoined to the sex instinct in the concept of Bhakti. Mukerjee observes that sex is most intimately related to art and religion because sex attraction easily leads to ecstatic contemplation which is also the essence of all love mysticism. Kierkegaard also finds the secret sources of love in the Eternal and the Infinite.

Stanley Hall says: "No psychologist can fail to see that love of God and the libido have the same mechanisms and

152. Guru Nanak says: "Dancing and jumping is mental enthusiasm." Var Asa, Slok AG., 465. Guru Nanak holds that such revelry has no spiritual value, it is mere sensual and worldly pleasure. He adds to the above-quoted line that "those who have fear in their heart, can have love inside." (Nachan kudan man ka chao. Nanak jin man bhan tina man bhaq).


154. Loc. Cit.

that religious and sex normality and abnormality are very much closely connected. 'Love rules the camp, the court, the grave, for love is God and God is love.' 156

In Guru Nanak’s mysticism, this divine-human relationship of devotional love (Bhakti) became the most dominant expression for describing the intimate mystical union between God and man. Mukerjee says:

"In the Guru Granth of the Sikhs we find the intimacy of spiritual love expressed also in terms of the earthly bride’s wedding with the transcendental Lord." 157

Guru Nanak’s mystic symbolism mainly revolves round this all-important human metaphor of sex-relationship, first as conceived and perfected between man and woman (as husband and wife) and, by analogous correspondence, applied to the spiritual relationship between God and man. Mcleod observes in this context:

"There is in his works the characteristic Vaishnava emphasis upon the absolute necessity of love in the bhakti sense, commonly expressed in the figure of the bride yearning for her Beloved, the divine Bridegroom." 158

The mystical impulse in love consists in the appreciation and perception of beauty at its highest level of manifest divinity, and this mystical contact between love

156. Quoted in Ibid., p.127. Cf. Guru Gobind Singh Swarva: "Let every body hear this truth from me: those who loved God, they alone found Him." (Sach kahau sun leheo sabhe jin prem keo tin hi prabh paio) Cf. also Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, pp.44 and 52.


and beauty, with emphasis on suggestive contemplation rather than on realistic perception, is the basis of all symbolism in mystical literature. Guru Nanak's symbolism can also be appropriately relative to this fundamental idea.

Dean Inge has emphatically pleaded the cause of love vis-a-vis ethos, saying that Christianity prefers love to goodness, because, as de Burgh says, when we say God is love it is not true merely "analogically" but directly. St. Clement remarks that faith leads to knowledge and knowledge to love. St. Bernard says:

"The perfect correspondence of wills makes of two one spirit... love knows not reverence. Love is the great reality. It is the only affection of the soul in which the creature is able to respond to the creator." 161

Similarly, Origen avers: "The Father Himself is not impassable; he has the passion of love." 162

The use of mystical symbols is an inevitable necessity. As Inge says: "even when we have to interpret the absolute values, we cannot dispense with symbols." 163

159. Cf. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, Chap. 'Symbolism and Myth' Defining a 'symbol', he says:"A symbol is a representation of some moral or spiritual truth under the form of natural things. Its object is suggestion or insight; it is a kind of language. Images are taken from natural relations and used to express more universal or ideal relations. The symbol is the indirect presentation of a concept which cannot be presented directly."

160. Ibid., p. 72.

161. Loc. Cit.

162. Loc. Cit.

163. Ibid., p. 76. Cf. Dewan Singh, Farid Darshan, p. 139. Ghalib's verse quoted:"However mystically we may have to talk about divine experience itself, we cannot do without using the symbols of wine and the cup."
In the Bhakti mysticism, which is akin to the Christian 'Voluntaristic mysticism', as Otto remarks, "even the Highest is thought of as responding to amorous longings." This is the true mystical concept underlying all Vaishnava Bhakti and also Guru Nanak's love mysticism.

Love is a giving out of one's inner self to the world abroad. It is thus basically ethical in nature and truth. Eckhart says: "What we have gathered in contemplation, we give out in love." Quoting Guru Nanak viz. "Altruism is the essence of all knowledge" a modern Sikh writer says: "It is the complete socialization of the person, indicated through his love and concern for others."

The true essence of love-mysticism seems to be the complete unification of the divine will and the individualistic human will. Fichte remarks on this issue:

"No longer two wills but one and the same will is all in all. So long as man desires to be something himself, God does not come to him, for no man (qua man and creature) can become God. But so soon as he destroys his own self...

167. Asa, AG., 356. (Vidya vichari ta parupkari), trans. Avtar Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, p. 188.
purely and wholly and to the very root, God alone remains and is all in all." 169

This luminous statement is the crux not only of Guru Nanak's love-mysticism, but of his whole mysticism, because he has enunciated as the very first principle of his thought in Janjhi (Stanza One) the universal truth of abnegating human will to the supreme divine will. This constitutes his most important and profound concept of Hukam.

Guru Nanak has laid down that only those who will obey the Lord and have fear in their hearts, will acquire love for the Divine Being. He has devoted, besides other references, one full drawn-out hymn (with exquisite poetic beauty to match it), in Rag Tilang, to clarify his well-known thesis, so richly couched in love-symbolism of Bride and Bridegroom (suhagan and sauh), that complete submission and dedication to Divine will is the only course open to man to seek and achieve union with the Lord. The hymn opens with the colourful imagery: "The Lord is near at hand (within you), foolish bride, why seek Him without?" 171 and the whole thought culminates in the following beautiful lines:

"Fix your mind on His feet (cleeve to Him), through whose love the priceless treasure is obtained. Do whatever He says. Anoint yourself with the perfume of total surrender to Him.' Thus replies the bride, 'O sister, by this means the Lord is found." 172

172. Trans. Mcleod, Loc. Cit. Cf. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p.1. "In Sikh Mysticism the lover and the Beloved unite in Love and this is their union..."
Guru Nanak's basic difference with traditional bhakti is on two points viz. his "explicit rejection of avatars", as Mcleod says, and addressing his devotion to the non-incarnated, supreme God Himself, and, secondly, his "understanding of the practical expression of love", through the constant meditation of nam simran and nam japam. 173

Guru Nanak's love mysticism is the most explicit and positive postulation of his whole religious thought. All the negative postulates of maya, duja bhav (otherness), dubidha (duality), haumai (ego or self-centredness), sansa or sehsa (doubt), bharam (superstition) and bhulekha (fallacy), vishe vikar (sensual desires or the five low impulses), durmat (low sensibility) bad birodh (garrulousness-friction), jam ka taras (fear of death) and so on, at once fade into nothingness before the refulgent illumination of devotional love practically apotheosized in the form of Nam and Sabad. When there is sun of truth shining at its zenith, how can any darkness remain even for a moment?

Devotional love in Guru Nanak finds its natural concomitants in recitation of Name (nam simran), constant rememberance of sabad in the form of Gurmantar (the Guru-ordained formula, i.e. Vahiguru) and Mullmantar (Credal Statement about God, prefaced to the Adi Granth), acquisition of positive ethical virtues of truth, charity, forbearance, 

173. Loc. Cit.
contentment, continence, tolerance, forgiveness, humility, purity, and equanimity (respectively, sat, daya, sahnshilta, santokh, jat, dhiraj, khima, nimarta, such and sambudhhta), and persistent resort to congregational music (kirtan). 175

Above all else, love mysticism exalts the highest virtue known to man (it is so much divine), i.e. complete selflessness which expresses itself in regarding sorrow and happiness, riches and poverty, grief and pleasure, honour and disgrace, life and death as without distinction, as one and the same thing. This is the highest state, called Sahaj which one can attain to.

G.S. Mansukhmani writes:

"The Bhakat takes every thing in his stride: happiness and sorrow, honour and dishonour, hope and despair, with equanimity, because God is behind it. The State of the devotee is that of a child, pure and innocent, willing to give all and surrender every thing at the feet of the Master ... It is the insatiable desire of the fish for the water, the desire of the chatrik for the rain, of the moth for the flame." 176

Whereas on the spiritual plane nam simran has been regarded as the best devotional act by Guru Nanak, specially in the early morning hour, though it has ultimately to

175. For the meaning of Kirtan, see G. S. Mansukhmani, op. cit. p. 67. For the value of music see Thoreau, quoted in Will Durant, Mansions of Philosophy, p. 292.


177. Cf. Guru Nanak, Janji, 4, AG.,2. "In the morning ambrosial hour, recite true Name and ponder over the greatness of God. "(Amrit Vela sach naro vadiji vichar). Again: "Praise the Lord in the morning, for those who meditated on Him with single mind, they are the perfect heroes, because they did not let slip the time (for prayer) at the pain of death." Var Maha, Slok, AG., 145.
The Sikh mystic discipline has often been associated with the threefold concept of Nam-dan-ishnan. Nam has already been discussed in detail. It purports to be the

178. Cf. Mcleod calls it "the interiorising of the utterance" of Nam and also "exposing one's total being to its deepest meanings." He further says that it is rememberance of God on man, bach, karam level i.e. in thought, word and deed. Op.cit., pp.216 f. Cf. also S. K. Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought, p.98. and Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p.62.

179. Cf. W. T. Stace, Mysticism and philosophy, p.338. "It is better to feed the hungry than to see even such visions as St. Paul saw." Cf. also Parkash Singh, Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.133.

180. Cf. Guru Nanak, Siri, AG., 15. "The lowest among the low-caste and even the extremely low among them are those with whom Nanak wants to associate as he has no affinity with the rich people where the poor are looked after, there dawns your grace and favour, O Lord."


182. See supra Chap. V. and Chap. VI (in the discussion of Sabad.).
inner, mystical aspect of Guru Nanak's religion, which is the basic aspect and the most important. Dan is sharing one's earning with others (wand chhakna) and thus it represents the ethical principle in Sikhism. It is not mere conventional charity but has been freshly interpreted in the light of Guru Nanak's mystical thought. Dan is actually showing sympathy to the whole world, which has been popularly called sarbat ka bhala and is daily uttered in the end of the Sikh Prayer (ardas). Dan is not just giving alms to the poor, which can be hypocritical and formal. In the real sense according to Guru Nanak, dan is, firstly, not to grab or usurp another's right or possession (i.e. haq paraya) which is termed as haram (taboo or prohibited). Guru Nanak warns such 'usurpers' (who in his own times were legion, under the easy garb of religion):

"That which belongs to another is unlawful like the flesh of pig to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu.

The Guru and Peer will extend their grace only if one refrains from eating carrion." 185

Guru Nanak has shown strongest condemnation for the exploiter and usurper of other's rights. He compares it to

183. Cf. Teja Singh, Shabdarath, Vol. II, p. 596, f.n. 6. This term has been popularized by Bhai Vir Singh in his writings, specially in Baba Naugh Singh pp. 21-23, used along with nam japna and dharam di kirat karni, which latter means 'earning honest living'.

184. Cf. Bhai Vir Singh, Rana Surat Singh, pp. 205 f. He has divided dan into dehi (physical), man (mental) and chit (spiritual) kind of charity.

185. Var Majh, Slok, AG., 140. (Haq paraya Nanaka us suar us gai. Gur pir hama ta bhare ja murdar na khai).
eating carrion (murder). How can the Guru help a man who eats dead bodies, and is worse than a cannibal? Secondly, dan implies not to hurt the feelings of others. Daya-taras (mercy), khima (forgiveness), and dhiraj (tolerance, forbearance) are the most prized virtues in Guru Nanak's ethics. Ishnan is purification, physical, mental and spiritual. It is the daily ablution in the morning, then 'washing' the mind with Nam and sabad and accepting Divine Will (Hukam) at all hours, which is spiritual ablution.

SAHAJ AND ANHAD: ESOTERIC MYSTICISM

The conception of Sahaj and Anhad is the most mystical in Guru Nanak's thought. Hence it may be called 'Esoteric-mysticism'. Whereas other types of Guru Nanak's mysticism viz. God-mysticism, Soul-mysticism, Nature-mysticism and Love-mysticism, which have all been discussed earlier, are sufficiently understandable and analyzable in human thought and language, the Esoteric-mysticism is almost ineffable, because the purely mystical states of Sahaj and Anhad are truly known only to the experients of these states. Guru Nanak himself, having experienced directly the blissful union


with God and the concomitant divine manifestations attending such Beatitude, has mystically expressed these visions in symbolical language, incorporating and using esoteric terms already current in Vedanta or Yoga mysticism and in higher Buddhism, investing them with new meanings.

As Niharranjan Ray says:

"... in whichever manner one seeks to describe the Sahaj experience, its real nature must elude understanding in humanly communicable language. The articulation of an experience which was essentially a mystical one and hence, according to Guru Nanak himself, was incapable of being translated in communicable terms, was indeed beyond human expression, had necessarily to be in traditional mystical terms made current and somewhat understandable by his predecessors belonging to various mystic orders of sants and sadhus, and in well-known traditional symbols and images that had some meaning, howsoever vague and generalized, to those whom his words were addressed to." 189

In order to consider the concept of saha j in its mystical connotation, it would be useful first to study its etymological meaning. Sahaj is originally a Sanskrit word which means 'having been born together' (just as human 'twins'), and thus something inwardly perceived or intuited along with one's birth as a human being -- a sort of indwelling mystical principle of divine perception given to man as his birthright


189. Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, p. 120.

190. See WK, 103. Bhai Kahn Singh has given thirteen meanings of the term, but the import which dominantly emerges is that of 'something natural, indwelling, spontaneous and inborn'.

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and, therefore, a natural and effortless heritage of divinity ingrained in humanity. 191

Properly speaking, sahaj is the very 'mysticality' (to use a new term) of religion. It is the acceptance of inwardness and 'intuitionism' as the true basis of religion, to the negation of all ritualistic externalities. 192

In Guru Nanak's thought, sahaj, comes to imply the acceptance of Hukam as the first cardinal principle of Sikhism. 193 Sahaj in this meaning would be the mystical state of a man who has accepted the divine Will (Hukam, Bhana, Raza). Sahaj, thus, is the highest spiritual state attainable in Sikhism, It is the highest bliss.

Another writer on Guru Nanak defining sahaj says:

"The word 'sahaj' means natural fulfilment. Just as vegetables cooked over a slow fire retain their flavour, in the same way gradual and voluntary discipline of the mind and body will bring out the essential goodness inherent in the individual." 194

In the meaning expressed above sahaj connotes a natural slowness and steadiness required for perfect action. Haste makes waste, has been truly said, sahaj is the opposite


193. Cf. Guru Nanak, Janji, 1, Ag. 1. "To walk in the umbrage of Divine will, as, says Nanak, ordained in the spirit itself." (Hukam rajai chalana Nanak likhia nal).

of inordinate haste. Sahaj is compactness and self-sufficiency, while haste is flipancy and inner weakness. A sure man is the 'poised' man. In this anthropomorphic sense (as distinct from the mystical one, discussed earlier), Sahaj would mean equipoise, equanimity and equilibrium. It may be called "balanced perpicacity" or samadhi, in the psychological sense. 195

All true balance and true action (which may be called Sahaj-karam, as distinct from the self-willed action) engender aesthetic as well as spiritual pleasure, while spiritual fulfilment produces infinite bliss. Guru Amar Dass (the third Guru Nanak) who has provided the most explicit and candid exposition of the term Sahaj in his popular composition called Ramkali Anand, declares, as if from the housetop, that with the Grace of the Guru, he has attained the supreme bliss (anand):

'True bliss has dawned on me O my mother, for I have found the Guru.

The Guru has been found through sahaj and my mind is full of joyous melodies.

The precious 'unstruck melodies' have come in to sing the praises of the Lord.

Sing the praises of the Lord, O brethren, for He has come to dwell in the mind.

Nanak says, true bliss has dawned, for I have found the Guru. 196

195. See James Drever, A Dictionary of Psychology, p. 209. Perspicacity is 'acute or clear understanding'.

196. Ramkali Anand, 1, AG., 917.
According to Guru Amar Dass, as is evident from the above mystical confession, the grace of the Guru which consists in the providential 'meeting' or contact with the Guru, is the sure concomitant of Sahaj. Guru Amar Dass, as Sikh history shows, found the true Guru after great difficulty and in comparatively later years of his life. Hence he was deeply conscious of the bliss of such prodigious achievement. In another hymn in his Ramkali Anand, he clearly expounds the nature and truth of Sahaj, concluding that it is produced by the grace of the Guru:

"Sahaj cannot be produced by actions and without Sahaj doubt does not vanish.

Doubt is cast away by no other method, many people tried by performing (endless) actions.

In the state of doubt the soul is polluted, how can we clean it?

Clean your mind by reciting sabad and continue remembering God in the mind.

Nanak says, by the grace of the Guru alone Sahaj is produced and, thus, the doubt is removed."

Sahaj, which is "the state of enlightenment achieved through self-discipline" has been generally accepted to be "the ultimate goal which the religious and spiritual discipline laid down by Guru Nanak was supposed to lead to." Hence this

197. Ibid., 18 AG, 919.
term has been used to denote the ineffable union with God. Various expressions have been current as synonymous with Sahaj, such as Sunn-samadh, turia avastha, chaitha pad, amar pad, param pad, maha-sukh, param anand, dasam duar, anhad pad, sach khand, jivan-mukti and so on. The term sahaj-samadh has also been used by Kabir and the Sikh Gurus.

All this terminology connected with Sahaj was commonly used by all the Nirgun-sampradaya saints, Kabir, Namdev, Dadu, and others, along with Guru Nanak, having borrowed it from the sahajayani Buddhists (who in their turn inherited it from the earlier Mahayana-vajrayana Buddhist tradition) and also from Tantric Hathayoga and the Nathpanthi-Kanphata yogis with whom Guru Nanak came into direct and close contact. The Sahajiya Vaishnavas and Bauls of Bengal also adopted this esoteric terminology.

The patent meaning of Sahaj has been the abnegation of duality and the perception of unity in God as well as the creation. This unitive state or the Sunn state which means Vacuity or Devoidness, is also the primordial state of the

202. Ibid., p. 122.
203. Ibid., pp. 121, 122, 127.
204. "The Supreme ultimate Devoidness (Mahasunn) which is the fifth sunn of Tibetan mystics and Sunyatita of the Saivits." Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p. 20. Cf. Paul Brunton calls it 'the void' or 'the Supernal Empty'. Spiritual Crisis of Man, p. 132.
Nirgun Brahman Himself. Mohan Singh Uberoi describes the Sikh Sahaja Yoga as "unification with Self through cultivation of a state of natural, easy self-Hold, self-Rest." Again: "Sunn is a state in which there is no movement, in the receptacle, of any type, no sound, no wind, no object or objectivity; the subject, God, is there as the container, the presence." 205

Guru Nanak has copiously used esoteric terms and expressions such as sunn, anhad, shiv-shakti, trikut, unman sas-ghar-sur, bajar-kapat, ira-pingla-sukhmana, ajapa jap, dasamduar, dhundhuker-niralam, sache amarapur, sachi nagari, bij-mandar, sunn-kala, satx2, panch-sabad, akul niranjan, purakh-atit, ragnantar dhanakh, Sunn-samad, bis-ikis, dub-mue-vin pani, surat-dhun, nighar, guptibani, anbat sunn, and surat sabad, in all his compositions, specially in Ragas, Ramkali and Maru. These are purely mystical terms common to all Indian religions.

As Niharranjan Ray observes, Guru Nanak's use of these tantric and Yogic terms does not logically follow that he actually practiced or inculcated their practice among his followers, because he has used them only as figures of speech or technical esoteric terms which were current and handy for use and were generally understood among advanced mystical orders of his time. He had had actually many discussions during his

205. Ibid., p.4.
travels and at Kartarpur with Yogis, Sadhus and ascetics of various mystical cults and denominations.

Guru Nanak, in fact, had his own mystical message to convey to humanity and it was original with him and had no conceptual reference to the mystical philosophies of Saivites, vaishnavites, Yogis and even to Kabir, Dadu, Namdev and others, though many of them were accepted as allied co-mystics and their compositions included in the Adi Granth, more with a view to illustration and elaboration than to identification and syncretism.

The achievement of Sahaj-avastha in the form of maha-sukha or jiwan-mukti, which was the ultimate goal of all the mystical cults using esoteric terms concurrently during Guru Nanak's times, was to Guru Nanak a matter of inner discipline and direct experiential contact with divine Reality. Mere esoteric niceties or intricacies, specially of Tantric Yoga were quite alien to his mystic temperament which was fundamentally dynamic, ethical and synthetic.

N. Ray remarks in this context:

"God-experience is an inner experience; one must therefore, cleanse and purify one's inner being. How does one do it? Guru Nanak's clear answer is, by loving devotion and adoration of God and by endless repetition and remembering of His Name, Nam simran." 207.

Summing up, this eminent scholar says:

"Guru Nanak's position and statements are precise, clear and unequivocal and their ethical import and socio-religious significance deep and wide." 208

207. Ibid., p. 138.
208. Ibid., p. 139.
Guru Nanak's mystic thought is easily distinguishable from the Natha-panthi and Kanphata yogi cults, as also though from Tantrism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism, a general fallacy exists to equate or identify it with Kabir's mysticism. But as Mcleod has lucidly discussed, much of Kabir's mystical jargon remains obscure and personal whereas Guru Nanak's postulation especially of the mystic path and discipline is clearer and more cogent than that of Kabir.

Concluding his analysis of Guru Nanak's mystical contribution to Indian religious thought as represented by Sant Tradition (i.e. Nirgun-sampradaya-tradition), Mcleod says:

"The system developed by Guru Nanak is essentially a reworking of the Sant pattern, a reinterpretation which compounded experience and profound insight with a quality of coherence and a power of effective expression."

There is much inconsistency and incoherence in Kabir's thought, as Ray observes, from which Guru Nanak's mysticism is absolutely free, with the result that whereas it is difficult if not impossible to construct a theology out of what Kabir says, it is not so with Guru Nanak. "He was also a mystic, but his mysticism was limited to the final goal of sahaj experience which at the ultimate analysis was a mystical, ineffable, unanalysable, inexpressible


210. Ibid., p.151.
Another eminent writer observes:

"The Sahaia Yoga, according to the Guru, consists in subduing the mind through the grace of the Guru and in the extinction of all troubles and ills in the company of the Guru and the saints. This is the Bhakti Yoga of the Guru." 212.

Among the more technical esoteric (Tantric) terms may be included the *chhat-chakra* or the six nerve-plexuses, the kundalji, the sahansar-dal kanwal, the sas-sur-complex, the dasam-duar, the opening of bajar-kapat or trikuti. These are the well-known yogic terms which Guru Nanak adopted and reinterpreted to suit his own mystic realization. They are, thus, of illustrative value.

The idea of the immersion of 'sun' in the house of 'moon' (sas ghar sur samauna) is typically mystical and has been adopted by Guru Nanak to express the subservience of the creative energy (called shakti—the female symbol) to the spiritual element (called shiva—the male symbol). The sun and moon also stand for the right and left nerve channels (called ira and pingla, respectively) of the Hathayoga.


214. Cf. Niharrranjan Ray, op. cit., p. 128 f. and Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara, p. 400. As Ray says, the male principle is symbolized by the male sperm (bind), which the female principle is ever eager to consume.
Connecting the allied states of Sahaj and Anhad

N. Hay says:

"Apart from the characteristics of peace and tranquility, of wonderment and bliss and of ineffable radiance by which one recognized the sahaj state of being, Guru Nanak recognized another, that of anahad Sabad, an unstruck sound which he used to experience within himself at that ultimate state of being." 215

While sahaj is the highest blissful state attainable by man as a result of mystic discipline and realization, anhad is the mystical expression of that radiant state in terms of divine music esoterically heard within the soul and which the experient only knows in his own experience and cannot describe in human language.

Guru Nanak has treated both these terms with subtle variation of thought and nuance. To give a few instances would be useful.

About Sahaj:

1. "We came by sahaj and left by Hukam: Nanak, there is eternal obedience (to God)" 216
2. "By hearing the Name, one attains sahaj contemplation." 217
3. "By hearing Guru's word, one attains sahaj contemplation." 218
4. "Those who apprehended Him, they recognized the Sahaj. When I pondered over this, my mind was appeased." 219.

216. Siddh-Gosht, 3, AG., 938.
217. Janji, 10, AG., 3.
218. Siddh-Gosht, 41, AG., 942.
219. Gauri Guarari, AG., 221.
5. "One who met the Lord in Sahaj, was accepted. He has neither death nor rebirth." 220

6. "In fear one found the Fearless. Then he entered the house of Sahaj." 221

7. "To see Nature, to hear Gurbani, and to utter your true Name. Thus the treasure of honour was filled and we got Sahaj contemplation." 222

8. "O Yogi, consider the essence with Sahaj. In this way you will not be reborn in this world." 223

About Anhadt:

1. "If one bears the unbearable, it means closing the nine doors. By controlling vital organs, the body becomes eternal." 224

2. "Mind is not purified in the tenth Door. The fool thus, is born again and again in superstition." 225

3. "The true and contented sabad is extremely cool and in sahaj the attention got fixed. The Lord created three gunas and Himself lived in the Fourth State. He made birth and death as one mouthful. The refulgent light of the Life-of-all Lord (sarab jag jiwani) was manifested by Guru as anhad sabad." 226

4. "The Maker has made the nine doors. In the Tenth (door) lives the Unseen-Beyond lord." 227

220. Dhanasari, AG., 686.
221. Sarath, AG., 599.
222. Basant, AG., 1168.
223. Parbhati, AG., 1328.
224. Var Malar, Slok, AG., 1289
225. Basant, AG., 1188.
226. Maru, AG., 1038.
227. Maru, AG., 1036.
5. "The nine doors overflowing, the Tenth is full. Then the 'unstruck sound' creates melodies."

6. "By getting birth into the Guru's house, the wandering ended. By getting absorbed in the anhad (sabad), this mind was appeased."

7. "The air resounds and the ether roars. Nanak, the eternal union comes through sahaj."

8. "The anhad sabad is struck day and night. The state of the Eternal Lord was known through the Word of the Guru."

In the end, the difference between Guru Nanak's concept of anhad and that of the Yogis may be elucidated. The Guru's anhad is attained through sabad-surat or Nam meditation, while the Yogis try to achieve it through Hathayoga discipline. The one is God-oriented, the other self-oriented. Guru Nanak's Esoteric mysticism is thus spontaneously evolved and not syncretically borrowed. It is, in fact, infinitely superior to the Yogic and Tantric cults in the sense of adherence to natural laws of life and the Spirit and also to the ethical principles of behaviour and conduct.