CHAPTER X

RASSEGE OF

GURU NANAKDEV.
thousand of oppressed men. Those who were in darkness of bondages of social, political and economic entanglements. 2

Religion had a forceful influence on the social and political bases of medieval age all over the world. Sikkism was the natural outcome of previous ages of thought. It is a synthetic religion consisting of the different philosophical thoughts of Hinduism and Islam. The approach of the religion of Guru Nanakdeva was nothing but the simplistic of rites based on the basic principles of humanism, large heartedness, tolerance on the unique thought of noble principle of the unity of God and universal brotherhood of mankind.

There lived in the remote village of Talwands near Bhatti, now popularly known as Nanakana Sahib nearly 65 kilometers South of Lahore, Kalu Vedi, a reputed man of Kshatriya Clan of Punjab, now in Pakistan. Guru Nanak was the scion of that family those who claimed their descent from the solar race or Sri Rama Chandra, though Nanakdeva himself repudiated caste and creed. Kalu was blessed with a daughter by his wife

2. Ibid.
Tripati after a long interval of their marriage and several years after he was awarded with baby son on the midnight of the full moon of the month of Kartik (in the month of October-November) according to the English Calendar 3 and up to 1539 A.D. a period of great religious importance when intermingled thought of the mystic saints and founders of Tamilian Trivadu Amraial, Mira Bai, Caitanyadeva, Vallabhacarya and Tulsi discharging down into the national main stream of India. He had an inclination for spiritualism from his childhood. His father was a practical man. He was the Tahasildar of the village and earned reputation from the higher administrative officer of Lodi dynasty. He tried to train his son in his own profession. So Kalusent his son at his early stage to school. Guru Nanakdev became proficient in Sanskrit, Persian and also with Arithmetic. He was intelligent and simultaneously prudent that he protested to the teachers of his against the manners and meanings of the so-called teaching of the age. He craved for the knowledge from them which had an association of Rama and Gopala with their glory. Such words of wisdom which came out of his mouth made the conventional type

of teachers astonished. He was gifted with the poetic art. It used to compose the nectar hymns dedicated to Lord Almighty, which were set in an unchaste and isolated manner but had a blend of the Vedas, the Upanisads, the philosophical analysis of the Brahma-sutras and the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It was also contained the gems of teachings Jain Munis and the Sufistic thoughts of Auliya of Punjab. He used media of communication with the masses the dialect of his own locality. His effort finally gave shape of the Gurumukhi language later on. A major portion of his composition unfortunately lost during the course of transmission. Many of his teachings (Vani—ana) in poetical form is still being used by the different communities as proverbs. Lal Bahadur Sastri, once the Prime Minister of India used to quote a couplet of Guru Nanakdeva, to indicate the humble attitude of a statesman could make an impression in the history. This is the verse of Guru Nanakdeva:

"Nanak Nanhe heurye raho jaise nanhe duv
Barhe rup urh jayage, duv khuv ki khube."
If you are humble, if you keep your foot firm on the earth, then no one can uproot you.

Like Sri Caitanya and Tulsidas he also tried to keep himself up to the stage of humblest of all to the cause of his missionary work to his fellow countrymen. Studied the sacred scriptures of the Hindus and the Muslims with his a keen interest to reveal the mystery of essence of religiousness of all religious paths. But he was not satisfied with that. He craved for the peace and bigger solution of the problems of life and of the society.

The father of Guru Nanakdeva was not satisfied with the unmindful behaviour of his only son. At the instigation of the neighbours he made an arrangement of his son’s marriage with an accomplished daughter of a kshatriya family of Moulayouna village. At the request of his loving younger sister and his husband joyram, a high administrative official of Lodi dynasty he accept the job at office of Lodi with full of his efficiently. But he finally resigned his job to save his good name and honour because of a rumour that he had defulcated the funds of the office for serving some saintly personalities. In the meantime
he was bestowed with two of his children in due course. Sri Chand and Laksmidas were his two sons.

It is said that his father also tried to engage him in a business of Salt. But he did not showed any interest in it. He only treasured the name of God in lieu of treasuring coins in his bag.

His father suspected that he had gone mad, so he called a physician to treat him but treatment for such God intoxicated failed miserably. It was not an ordinary disease to that could be cured by the medicine of worldliness.

So he determined to relinquish all the relations of household affairs. He went out of home for finding the meaning of the creative world and its sufferings. He was then in search of worldliness. Nanakdeva completely renounced the world at the age of thirty and severing all connections with all of his relatives he entered the holy order of sannyas.

He had a working experience as an office bearer of the Lodi. He also had experience of the business and able to feel the financial drawbacks and their purchasing capacity of the commoners. He also
accused the political situation which prevailed at his time and the regime of Bahalul Lodi in Punjab. 
Guru Nanakdev lived in the age of political turmoil. When Guru Nanakdev was born then the remnants of Delhi Sultanate was under the rule of Afghan Lodis.
To gather much knowledge on the human conditions in the different places of his motherland and other countries of the world to establish a universal outlook on brotherhood. He travelled widely with one of his admirer Mardana, a Muslim Rabab (i.e. lyre) stringer distant noted places of India and outside India with his composite garbs of Hindu-Muslims attiresments. During his tenure of his travelling and pilgrimage in India, he extensively toured all corners of India. He travelled to the end of Kamrup in the eastern part of Assam. He stayed three days at the township of Burdwan in West Bengal. He also went to Ceylon. He also visited temple town Madurai and acquired the basic knowledge of devotional cult of South India. He crossed the Himalayan range and visited Tibet and earned knowledge about the Buddhistic approach of Buddha-tantra cult. He paid visit to the holy temples of Kedar and Badrinath and became acquainted with basic knowledge of Saivite thoughts of devotional approach and Vaishnavite devotional cult. He went to the holy places
Purpose of his visited was an obvious matter. He was a man of clear common sense and experimented his experience with the truth. He did believe in oneness of God like other propagators of monism of the devotional era in the medieval history of India.

Formation of his philosophical thought:

Guru Nanakdeva was a man of great soul with a delicate heart and a man of first grade intelligence. In India history of philosophy there is no place of utopian thought. As Guru Nanakdeva was well versed in the documentary information of socio-religious and religious-philosophical matter of monistic though Indian Vedanta philosophy and the Quranic sufism and its course of progress and other philosophical thoughts of contemporary different philosophical schools, sheeping all valuable progressive thought derived out of them. He was a monist, but never decried monotheism. In the Brahma-sutras of Vadarayana, there are apparently opposite exposition
thoughts, but he discarded none of the interpreters and exponents of different thoughts. He coined best of the expositions from them and he revealed them according to his own experience with reality. Nanakdeva was a knowledge worshipper of formless God. But lived and died as a great Hindu saint. He attributed the Almighty with the name of Rāma, Hari etc. When he was travelling as a roaming mendicant, he wished to attain the arati (waving of scented light in front of the idol in the time of vesper) of Sri Jagannathadeva at Puri temple but he was not allowed to enter the holy temple. So the natural ethereal bard composed a complete and tuned it properly. Thus he sung:

Gagan mai Thalu Ravi Chandu dipak bane
Tarikamandal Janak moti

...... (Ragu dhana Sari)

Upon the tray of the sky blaze bright
The lamps of sun and moon
Like diamonds shine the glittering stars
To deck Try wondrous urn
The Sweet Malaya breeze blows soft
For fragrant incense smoke;
To moving air sways to and fro
The fan before Thy holy face;
Like gleaming votive light
The fresh and flowery gross appear.
How wonderful thy worship is,
O slayer of birth and death /
The sacred om, from space arisen,
Is the resounding drum.
To mind Cawes nectal day and night
At Hari’s Lotus Feet;
Oh, shower the waters of Thy grace
On thirsty Nanak, blessed Lord;
And may Thy hallowed name
Become His everlasting home.

In the characteristic appeal of the above-song composed by Guru Nanakadeva, we can come to the conclusion that the form or idol, yet he had no disregard for worshipping idol. It also appears from his composition, that his monistic outlook came out of thinking from monotheism of Vedanta and teachings of the Upanishad. He bridged between the monism and monotheism for a better understanding among the different religious communities. Spiritualism and
understanding or assimilating of ideas of different religious thinkers was his aim of life. According to the superstition which was prevailed in that age, no Sudra was allowed to utter the Pranab 'Om' (presentation of Brahma in a word). So he revolted against that bad practice and introduced word 'ik' before uttering the universal word 'Om'. In practising the spiritualism which is above all religions, he pronounced 'There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim'.

He was in favour of the essential unit of men introduced 'love' as a link between Sufism and the Vedanta philosophy. But unlike most philosophers of India origin, he did not dismiss the role of world on the basis of 'Maya'. Though he himself severed the ties of worldliness, yet he appreciated reality of the world. Thus he composed a song in Asa rag and proclaimed the reality of the world:

Real and Thy realms and real Thy universe
Real are Thy world and real the created forms.
Real are Thine acts and real Thy purposes
Real is thy fiat and real Thy court
Real is Thy order and Thy word.
Real is Thy mercy and real Thy mark of Grace.


He wanted to bring the people in a fold of understanding of truth and nature of this world and object of the life. His object of teaching on the life was the sufistic implication and Buddhistic simplicity of the progress life. 'Live in the world, yet be not of the world'. Spiritual contemplation should control the worldly temptations. He advised to live in this world. 'Anjan-mah-i-Niranjan rahiya' which means 'Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world' and this was his teaching and such teaching was elaborately written in the form of a hymn of Sri Adi Granth:

Religion lieth not in the patched coat, the yogi wears.

Not in the staff he bears,
Not in the ashes or his body
Religion lieth not in rings in the ears,
Not in a shaven head,
Nor in the blowing of the conch-shell
If thou must the path of true religion see,
Among the world's impurities, be of impurities free.
Religion lieth not in visiting tombs,
Nor in visiting places where they burn the dead
Not in sitting entranced in contemplation,
Nor in bathing at places of pilgrimage
If thou must the path of true religion see,
Among the world's impurities, be of impurities free.
When a man meets the true Guru
His doubts are dispelled
And his mind ceases its wanderings;
Drops of nectar pour down on him like rain.
His ears catch strains of Sahaja's celestial music
And his mind is lit up with knowledge divine
If thou must the path of true religion see,
Among the world's impurities, be of impurities free.
Sayeth Nanak, if thou must be a real Yogi,
Be in the world but be dead to its tinsel values

It was his positive approach towards the religious life. He was not an escapist, yet he warned the people not to make hob with the worldliness.
Like the other saints of mystic cult, he 'surrendered' to the will of God. Thus he himself says:

O Nanak, thus runneth the wrath Divine,
Abide by His will and make it thine.

_Ibid, p 57_

He also sung:

For He, O Nanak, is the kings of kings
As He wills, so we must live

_Ibid, p 469_

It depicts his mood of Surrender to the will of God, like a true Vaishnava according to the saying of Lord Krishna as He said in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita:

Tvaya hrishikesa hridi sthitena
Yatha niyuktosmi tatha karomi
'O My Lord, you would guides me, being from my heart

Previously we have been an instance that he wished to show respect to the Lord of the universe in an idol form in the Lord Jagannath's temple of Puri, but he was desisted by the fanatic priests of temple, again we can analyse another saying of his, where he
directly refuted the worshipping of Lord in any other anthropomorphic or idolic form. Thus he said:

God can neither be installed (like an idol) or can He be shaped (Jap, 2)

The ignorant worship shows, not realising that things which themselves sink cannot ferry others across.

(The idol neither feeds the hungry nor rescues the dying (Garang 1241).

Apparentlv it may be regarded as an opposite statement given by him. But the real outlook is coming out of his revelation of his apparently opposite thoughts. But it reveals his motivation against the practising of hypocrisy in the name of religion.

Guru Nanakdeva's concept of religion and religious teachings did not disregard men away from his worldly responsibilities and obligations. The threat from science to religion has no meaning when one understands Guru Nanakdeva's meaning of the life lies within the life itself. The feeling of presence of God without or within for all the time. Therefore scientific discoveries and modern technological advancement has no inconsistency with the spiritual life.
And ethical values adumbrated by Guru Nanakadeva.
Religion as a comic law may be applied for the socio-
logical cause.

He was a Karma Yojin:

There are four ways of life to attain
the supreme thought. Karma, Bhakti, Jnan and Raj's
Yoga are four avenues of the spiritual world. One
can take one of the way or two or more than that or
introduce four ways to stress on them equally to attain
spiritual realisation. 10. Such a synthesis is also
traced with reference to the various types of spiritual
discipline, these are nothing but the path of selfless
activity. The 'Niskama Karma' or selfless activity to
the cause fellow being of the society is called karmayoga
in the term of spiritualism. The laws of Karma or acti-
vity in the social field and the term 'Karma' or activity the
social field the term 'Karma' means both work and its result.
Theme of the activity depends on the non-attachment in the
mood of working and this type of activity increases the

the self-development of the spiritual seeker. The law of karma is the greatest incentive to self-effort. Guru Nanakdeva was an exponent of karma-yoga or selfless activity but had a touch with the mystic yoga process of spiritual law. But it was not unknown to the spiritual history of India or other sematic religion of the world. 11. Buddha himself was a propagator of karma yoga. As Guru Nanakdeva belonged to the movement which produced Kabir, a real man of the world, he was obviously a spiritual progeny of him. Both of them worked for their livelihood and did not like to depend on others earnings. Guru Nanakdeva turned into a householder after realising the essence of truth and lived with his members of family and earned with his sweets in his agricultural lands. Like the Sahajis' Buddhist and deviated group of Sahajyana of Buddhism, Natha yogis influenced much both of them Kabir and his torch bearer Guru Nanak. He lived in the world of non-attachment in midst of worldliness.

He taught his followers not to waste time or the individual life in merrymaking. He advised them not ignore the existence of reality of the world and to work hard for their worldly existence for the

11. Outline of the religious literature of India- N.N. Farquhar, New Delhi. 1966. P537
shake of spiritual advancement. His views were much liked by the savants of the later ages in the history of India in the 19th Century.

During his spiritual journey he stayed in the pilgrim Kuruksha at the time of solar eclipse; he ordered his followers to cook for themselves and the friars objected and horrified pilgrims attacked them ruthlessly for their unholy activity. But he boldly protected against the superstition, preached a sermon for the welfare of the audience by singing a hymn.

Fools wrangle about flesh but know not divine knowledge a meditation on god
They know not what is flesh or what is vegetable
or in what The sin consisteth.

The influence of Islam on his formation of ideas was an intensive matter. The sufis of Christi sect used to say: 'The doors of their monasteries (Khanaqahs) were thrown open for all, the low and high, the Hindu and the Muslims, saint and dervishes.' 13. The kitchen hall of Guru Nanakdeva gave an emphasised in the common meal for the true sense of brotherhood and equality of men of all distinctions. He stressed much on the philosophical

approach of equality of men as God has created all human beings. He also declared: 'there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim'. There is a proverb in Punjab where the people still remember him as their redeemer: 'Baba Nanak Sah Fakir Hindu Ka Guru, Musalman Ka pir'. Nanak is a king, he is the guru of the Hindus and the Pir of the Muslims. He also accused the high born people for their adorations of themselves with the falsehood of the titles and varnas (castes). He also pronounced with the Islamic tone of Islamic sufism: 'Of women are we born, of woman conceived, to woman engaged, to woman married. Woman we befriend, and by woman is the race continued. When woman dies, woman is sought for. It is by woman that order is maintained. Then why call her evil from whom great men born? From woman is woman born, and without woman none should exist,14.

He also protested against concept of Varma. He admitted the Bhaktas (the devotees) in the stage of last stage Asrama, the sannyasa (the renouncer) disregarding the old concept of varma and Asrama. Once Guru Nanakdeva was invited by a richman when he was on pilgrimage with one of his ardent follower Mardana. He was a man of boasted heraldry. His name was Malik Bhago.

14- Asa- p 473.
The Bhai Bala Janan Sakhi described the fact in a historical manner. He refused to take meal given by the egocentric Malik and took food given by the poor Carpenter Lalo's coarse bread.

In the 'History of the Sikhs' (p 47) Cunningham observed that 'they (saint other Sakh Gurus) perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations and their sects remain to this day as they left them'. He had political notion. But teaching Guru Nanakdeva teaches the real teaching of national integration, he taught us how to run a secular state like India and to form casteless society with the spiritual intonation.

Guru Nanakdeva wanted to have brighter casteless society of India. Annie Besant, an Indian freedom fighter and theosophist gave a talk in praising role of Guru Nanak and his contribution to the development of a caste ridden, religiously vivisected country, She quoted from a song composed by Guru Nanakdeva:

'One has become a shriven Samnyasi, and another a yogi, a Brahmaceri, a yati, is considered : a Hindu, a Turk (Musalman), a Rafazi, Imamshahi. *But understand thou that humanity is one.* The maker,
the compassionate, is the same, the Nourisher, and the kind one is the same; full not into the error and delusion of the difference of duality, one is to be served; the Gurudeva of all is one, one is the nature and know thou the Light to be one. The temple and the mosque are the same, Puja and Nimaz (Muslim prayer) are one, all men are one, but many in manifestation; so gods and demons are one. Yaks and Gandharvas. Hindus and Turks are due to the different nature of the garbs of various Lands. The eyes, the ears, the body, the make is one, a combination of earth, air, fire water; the signless Allah is the same; Puranas and Quran are the same; one is the nature and one is the make.

As from one fire a crore of sparks arise and becoming separate merge again into the (same) fire; as from one (heap of) dust many particles fill (The sky) and these particles again disappear in the same dust; as in one river many ripples and formed, but these ripples of water are called but water; so from the universal form conscious and unconscious beings have manifested, but they shall lose themselves into That from which they have come. 15.

His influence on the resurrection of the 19th Century Bengal;

Guru Nanakdev contributed through his thought for the reconstruction of Socio-religious base of Bengal from the beginning of nineteenth century. Maharsi Devendranath Tagore (1817-1905), a saintly man, father of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore was an ardent admirer of Raja Rammohan Ray, the founder of Brahmo movement in India. Maharsi Devendranath was highly influenced by the ideals of Guru Nanakdev in his reforming movement. Maharsi Devendranath Tagore loved to travel in the midst of Himalayas, and while in the Punjab side of the Himalayas, where he had some favourite spots, he would accordingly come down to the Golden Temple at Amritasar, and in some of his visits he would be accompanied by the young poet who was quite a small boy at the time. In their annual religious congregation at the Tagore's house at Jorasanko in Calcutta, frequently they allowed to sing the song of Guru Nanaka Dev, which was rendered into a Bengali translation in poetic form by Rabindranath himself:

Translation of the verses were given previously in poetic form. Poet Rabindranath rendered the above verse without unaltering deepest sense of philosophy and linguistic structure into Bengali for being sung in the religious congregation and religious service. A few lines of his Bengali version as follows:

Gaganera thale ravi canda dipaka jwate,
Taraka mandala camaka re
dhupa malayanila, pavana camara kare,
Sakala vana-raji phulanta jyoti re
kiman arati, he bhave-khandana, tava arati,
anahata sabda bajanta bheri re

'The Sun and the Moon, O Lord, are Thy lamps, the firmament thy salver, the orbs of the slars, the pearls in cased in it. The perfume of the sandle(or the breeze
Prom the south) is thine incense, the wind is thy fan; all the forests are thy followers, O Lord of the Light.

What arati (a lighting ovation to the deity before vesper) is this, O Thou Destroyer of birth, unbeaten strains of eustacy are the trumpets of thy worship. (Refrain) Maheshi Devendranath, father of the poet Rabindranath lightened the sense of fullest, harmony between the teachings of the upanisadas and doctrine of the devotionalis, as it previously propagated by Guru Nanaka dev in the fifteenth century. 17

Swami Vivekananda, a well-known philanthropic monk of the nineteenth century India also taken some ideas of Guru Nanakdev in formation of the Ramakrishna Mission, he took some direct terms of Guru Nanakdev in composing a hymn to his preceptor Sri Ramakrishna: 'Khandana bhava-bandhana bandi tomaya'. 'You are the remover of worldliness, so I like to pay you respect'.

17. Ibid
His contribution in the field of Indic languages and musical sphere.

Dr. Sunitikumar Chattopadhyay, a noted linguist in Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi in the year 1973 said:

"Guru Nanakdeva started his literary career as Punjabi (or Eastern Punjabi) from the time of the ministration of the Guru ......... Our Modern Indian languages owe so much to our religious teachers, like Ramananda and Kabir, Chaitanya and Sanikaradeva, Suradasa and Tulasidas and Guru Nanak, Guru Arjun ......... and to the Saiva, Vaisnava, Jaina and Lingayat saints and the teachers of South".

18. Ibid, 1971

Periodicals:

2. The Punjab past and present, April, 1982.