CHAPTER-III
TEXT SOLIDARITY AND LIFE BACKGROUND OF THE AUTHORS

The authors undertaken in this study belong to the Sikh school which came into existence with the advent of Guru Nanak. There is a time difference of five to six decades between them. They were keenly related with the Sikh Gurus. The social, religious and political infrastructure influenced their thoughts. Although, they all had socio-religious background with Hinduism but the newly emerged Sikh theology had effected them on various levels. There was a difference in the Sikh phenomena during the times of the bards who were the contemporaries of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lall the keen devotee of Guru Gobind Singh. The bards and Bhai Gurdas were the outcome of early sixteenth century A.D. while Bhai Nand Lal lead his life in the late seventeenth century.

Guru Arjan Dev the fifth Sikh Guru had edited the works of numerous bhagats and added them in Sri Guru Granth Sahib under the different titles. The bardsvani also got respectable status in the Sikh scripture. It is edited under the title Sawayie. The edited vani does not provide sufficient information about their authors. We find no information's about their authors as internal evidence. Moreover, Guru Arjan laid more emphasis on the works of bhagats and bards. He was not a biographer but a spiritual guide. Thus, it is necessary for us to find out the demographic and other information from other sources.

A) THE BHATTS-LIFE BACKGROUND AND WORKS

The Bhatt is a caste of Hindu people populated in the northern states of India. Generally, they are Brahmins and engaged in the socio-religious duties of the same caste.

Bhai Kahan Singh Nahbha revealing about their origin states:

1. A Bhatt means a poet who extols the king and his brave men in the royal court.
2. A man having deep knowledge of Vedas.
3. A group of Bhatts who eulogized the first five Sikh Gurus; and their Bani got the terminology of Swayyas. In the Suraj Prakash they are called the incarnation of Vedas.
4. A caste (of Hindus) begotten from the womb of a Brahmin lady with the semen of a Kashatria. Some people opine that the referred caste was begotten by a shudra lady and vaishya man.\textsuperscript{1}

The referred quotation reveals that:

The people of Bhatt caste were Hindus by origin.

a. They might be from parents of different castes but due to their occupation they were dealt as Hindu pandits.

b. They had good status in Hindu religious societies as well as were respected in monarchical courts.

c. By profession they were engaged to disperse higher education.

According to the version of Bhai Kahan Singh some of the learned Bhattas earned respectable status in Indian education system. Kumaril Bhatt a contemporary of Shankra Charya earned a respectable name equal to the referred Hindu scholars.\textsuperscript{2}

Since in this chapter we ought to study the life sketches of the Bhatts whose \textit{Bani} is included Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is confirmed that Bhatt is the caste of Hindus populated in the Northern India. Generally, Brahmins who were carrying the social duties to teach the spiritual education, to perpetrate religious rites to keep a harmony between the public and the monarchy. They, generally were highly educated persons of their times still, wandered from place to place in search of spiritual studies and to earn their livelihood. It is the cause that when Guru Arjan Dev Ji populated the city Amritsar, a group of Bhatts visited him and settled in the same city. Since the religious theology of Sikhism was a quite image of monarchy, the bards not only resided in the city but also had developed there concerns to the Guru family. They continued the attachment in their next generations. By this way they were capable to serve the Gurus with numerous purposes:

a) They were quite able to get alms for their livelihood. Since the Sikh disciples used to pay homage to the Guru families in the shape of cash and commodities. In the same way they were paid their subsistence sources by the Guru or by the congregation. There are some chronicles in the Sikh religion that the Guru used to pay them some portion of the money which the devotees used to present to the Guru.
b) The fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji was keenly devoted to give a separate theological identity to Sikhism. He had to study, analyze and collaborate the prevailing schools of thoughts and the Bhattas, generally being adroit in Hindu puranic as well as vedic literature found enough chance to propagate their views about the forthcoming ideology of the Sikh religion. Due to their presence a scholarly environment got place in the Guru family. It is the reason that Guru in his own compositions has utilized to the maximum the Hindu literary parameters i.e. Visanpade, Ashtapadi etc. Which are less found in the Bani of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Dass and Guru Ram Dass.

c) The third notable function that the Bhattas practiced in the Sikh congregation of the Guru’s time was that of Shabad chantingi. The Bhattas were keenly adroit in the school of Shastri Sangeet. They were perfectly able to sing hymns in Indian classical ragas. But undoubtedly they were good composers as well as devotional singers but they eulogized the Sikh Gurus choosing the poetic form swayya'.

The Bhattas passed a long span of time in Guru’s house. If the prevailing routine of Sri Darbar Shaib remained unchanged, we may say that they might remain attached with Darbar Sahib even during the times of Guru Hargobind Sahib.

It is a matter of fact that the Bhattas could not earn the status like the Sikhs Baba Budha, Bhai Gurdas, Baba Bidhi Chand or other devoted Sikhs. The Sikh chronicles reveal that they were staunch to the Hindu Brahminic life values.

Undoubtedly, the Guru was sufficiently influenced by their scholastic approach as well as the poetic talents. He, therefore, accepted their eulogistic shabads to add in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It was a respectable status which even Bhai Gurdas could not attain:

Prof. Sahib Singh aviewed that the Bhattas of Panjab were related to Kashyap rishi and they primarily settled by the river sides of Sarsvati. They had also genealogical relations with Bhattas. There were six notable brothers Bhikha, Sekha Tokha, Gokha, Chokha and Toda. The Sikh school Bhattas were the genealogical outcome of the referred six brothers. Mathura, Jallap and Kirat all
the three brothers were begotten by Bhikha, Sal and Bhall were the sons of Sekha, Harbans was the son of Gokha while Kalsahar and Gyand were the sons of Chokha.³

The question how the Bhattas came into the Guru's court is also notable. The historical facts evince that this Hindu class was generally dependent upon the subsistence got by alms. They were not pure Brhamins. They were dependent upon alms provided by the religious society and public. Even during these days most of them learn astronomy and generally befool the public and extort money from them. They make gangs and collect tithes for religious purposes like Karseva and langar at gurdwaras and take out a major portion of the collection for their subsistence. They have deep knowledge about the puranic literature and read out text from them to influence the simple minded public.

The Bhatt Bani included in the Guru Granth Sahib testify that they had deep knowledge of Indian classical literature as well the Indian classical music. Their verses bear a respectable status in the Sikh literature and some of their stanzas are generally read when the Sikh-granthis go through a Hukam Nama in Sri Guru Granth Sahib after each prayer. The swayyas of Bhatt Tall received a specific status in this matter. While praising Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji the Bhatt Tall says in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (p-1392)

Su kaho Tall gur seviai ahinis sahej subhae
Darshan parsiai guru kai janam maran dukh jae.

The bhatt, Tall says that serving the Guru (Angad Dev Ji) spontaneously, day and night and beholding the vision of the Guru the pain of birth and death vanishes.

Since we have concluded that the Sikh scholars have not sufficiently tried to search more about their life. Some of the Sikh scholars have explained them the incarnation of Vedas while they themselves have least knowledge about Vedas text while the others failed even to calculate their total number.

After the martyrdom of the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind Sahib succeeded the seat the Guruship. The Sikh chronicles explain that he began to patronize dhadis who used to sing heroic ballads/vars in the Sikh congregation. Here is no
evidence about the Bhattas where did they go but we may calculate their status at Amritsar from the undermentioned factors:

a. The Bhatt swayyas compiled in Guru Granth Sahib bring before us, generally, the scenario of the Hindu cult. They reveal puranic characters and they have used the referred characters to eulogize the first five Gurus. Before the hold of the SGPC on, Sri Dabar Sahib the previous environment of the sight was like that of a Hindu Temple. It is evinced that there were numerous priests who had idols on the banks of the Sarovar and they used to perform prayers like Hindus.4

b. After the martyrdom of the fifth Guru in (1606 AD) his successor Guru Hargobind Sahib established a terrace in the precincts of Sri Darbar Sahib, called Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. The referred Guru got very short time to stay at Amritsar and was compelled to leave the region due to political skirmishes with Mughals. He settled at Kiratpur and Sri Darbar Sahib remained out of his personal touch.5

In the light of the above mentioned facts it is opined that the bard-generations settled around the holy temple and they, being staunch Hindus began to practise the Hindu modes of worship. They kept idols of Rama, Krishana or other incarnations of Vishnu and made a routine to fumigate and make sacrificial food for them. Later on, the Sikh community found it quite different from the basic tenets of Sikhism and cleared the precincts from them.

The bards settled in the city, grew in number generation to generation. Some of them embraced the Sikh theology while the others began to pass their lives as Hindus. Different Bhattas took different sorts of business.

The Eastern side of the walled city has a colonies of business men and traders called Qitas. Some of them, even now make groups and wander in the rural areas and suburbs to collect alms on the name of Gurdwaras or Karseva but they generally spend such money for their own use. Undoubtedly, they consider it their birth right to live on alms like Hindu Brahmins. They may be seen in the robes of Nihangs and Udasis.

Whatever the life style of Bhattas may be now-a-days, the practice they initiated in the time of Guru Arjan is prevailing even till now. They used to sing hymns in the praises of Palki Sahib. The same practice is continue even now. The Sikh devotees who have no relation with them sing the holy hymns in the praise of the Guru when the
Palki Sahib is brought into the Darbar Sahib in the morning. The Sikh community renders a great respect to those Bhattas whose Bani is included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The under mentioned Sikh devotees one by one chant the Bhatt swayyas daily quite in the morning:

a. S.Surinder Singh  
b. S.Narinder Singh  
c. Bhai. Mohan Singh  
d. S.Tejinder Singh  
e. S. Lakhwant Singh  
f. S. Amarjit Singh  
g. S. Ravinder Singh  
h. S. Upkar Singh  
i. S. Har Iqbal Singh  
j. S. Avtar Singh

According to the version of referred follows they are not from the referred bard generations. Their faith is wholly based on devotion. They are performing this service voluntarily since years except during, the Blue Star operation.

In this study, the Bards who were present in the court of Guru Arjan Dev have been undertaken. The Sikh scholars have different views about them.

Prof. Sahib Singh in his work (steek) has quoted a reference from Giani Gurdit Singh whose views are admixture of assumptions. According to the version of Giani Gurdit Singh the Punjabi bards were from the genealogy of Kashyap rishi. They are low caste Brahmins and their elders were settled along the river-basin of Saraswati, the river. The Punjabi bards were termed Sarsut Brahmins while those on the other side to the river were called gaud Brahmins. I opine that there is no concern of the river Sarswati with Sarsut or Gaud Brahmins. Infact, the Brahmins who were devotees of the goddess Sarswati were called Sarsut and the devotees of the goddess Gauri were allowed the eponym of Gaud just like the case of Vashnavis who generally worship the god Vishnu.

Giani Gurdit Singh had got the genealogy of the Bhattas from Bhai Sant Singh of village Kar Sindhu, Tehsil Jind. Even now some of the families of Bhattas live in U.P.
The genealogy of the Bhattas that was attained from Bhai Sant Singh is based on *Punjab wali wahi*; According to this ‘wahi’ the following Bhattas come to the forefront. It begins with the name of Bhatt Bhagirath. After nine generations the name of the Bhatt Rayya came to the forefront. He had six sons Bhikha, Sekha Tokha, Gokha, Chokha and Toda.

Bhika had three sons: Mathura, Jallap and Kirat.

Sekaha had two sons: Sall and Bhall.

Tokhas had his son: Ball.

Gokha had his son: Harbans.

Chokha had two sons: Kalsahar and Gyand.⁶

According to Dr. Krishan Lal Sharma and Dr. Narinder Kaur:

The bhattas were seekers of Truth, well versed in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Upbhrans. Their *swayyas* are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. After wandering all over India they reached the Darbar of Guru Arjan Dev. They got spiritual satisfaction and began to eulogize, the Sikh Gurus. Numerous references about these facts are available from their own *Bani*.⁷

According to Giani Kirpal Singh the Sikh Gurus were the incarnations of Siva. Once, when Shiva entered the assembly of gods, Brahma and the four Vedas did not stand up in respect. They were cursed. They asked for forgiveness. Siva told them that he would incarnate as Sikh Gurus in *Kalyuga (the ironage)*. They would have to take birth and eulogies the Sikh Gurus to get rid of this curse. Brahma took birth in Kalyug in the name of Bhikha. The four Vedas took birth as Bhattas. Each Veda had to take birth in four Bhattas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Vedas</th>
<th>Name of the Bhattas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam Ved</td>
<td>Jallap, Ball, Harbans, Jallan, Null.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rig Ved</td>
<td>Kal, Kalsahar, Jallan, Null.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yujar Ved</td>
<td>Tall, Sall, Jall, Bhall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athrav ved Atharban ved</td>
<td>Kirat, Gyand, Das, Ganga.⁸</td>
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In the above reference Giani Kirpal Singh revealed the bards with the background of a puranic touch, which is mere supernatural revelations and have no concern with factual reality.

The total number of bards calculated by the internal evidence of Bani, is eleven. Bhai Santokh Singh, Dr. Charan Singh, and Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli argue that the number of bards is 17- Kal, Kalsahar, Tall, Jallap, Jall, Kirat, Sall, Ball, Null, Bhikha, Jallan, Das, Gyand, Sewak, Mathura, Ball and Harbans by names.

According to Prof Sahib Singh Kall, Kalsahar and Tall are not three persons it is the name of a single man i.e. Kalsahar. Parath is no Bhatt at all (page-45). Das and Jallan are not the names of Bhattas (page-42) Sewak is not the name of a Bhatt (page-43). Jallap’s second name is Jall (page-45). The total number of Bhattas in Sri Guru Granth Sahib is only eleven.9

Works and Solidarity

The bards selected swayya a poetic metre from Sanskrit poetry. The language they used is an admixture of Braj, Sanskrit, Prakrit and Upbhransh. They were well versed in the Indian classical literature, puranic literature as well the prevalent languages. They wrote 123 swayyas. They extolled the spiritual personalities of the Sikh Gurus and significance of Sikh tenets in their verses.

The works they wrote in praise of the Sikh Gurus, were included in the holy scripture of the Sikh religion which was later bestowed upon the title of a Living Guru or Shabad Guru by the Tenth Master. Their swayyas were never adulterated since they had been included in the referred scripture along with the swayyas written by Guru Arjan Dev himself. Their text was given a specific space and names of bards are also mentioned in their verses, may be seen from page 1389 to page number 1410 of the Holy Granth.

The Subjects of Swayas;

The bard's swayas are not merely the praise of the Sikh gurus, but they reveal some more subject by product. They were quite learned persons well versed in Indian classics. They had also the knowledge of puranic literature. The study of their writings evince that they were expert in the art of Hindi and the Sanskrit poetry. The subjects they undertook in their swayas had significance in the Indian culture of their times.
The need of a spiritual guide;

In the Indian religions a seeker of metaphysics require the guidance of a spiritual guide. Then he should serve him to attain teachings from him. Undoubtedly, devotion has much role in this sphere but a spiritually enlightened guide make easy for his devotee to step advance in his path. A man diverted from the path of divinity can not attain his goal and losses the reward of the labour he bears in this way. A true spiritual guide teaches his follower in a way that he may avail the sweet fruit of his endeavours. The services rendered by a seeker please his guru and then he endows his follower the discipline of the true path. The bard Tall writes;

Su kaho Tall gur seviai ahinis sahej subhae
Darshan parsiai guru kai janam maran dukh jae. SGGS,p.1392

According to the version of Kalsahar the bard, mere the sightview of the True guru provides the seeker the reward of 68 pilgrimages;

darsan parsiae guru ke athasath majan hoe Ibid, p.1392

It is noteable that in the Hindu religion the holy dip in the 68 pilgrimes is considered sacred.

The bard Jallan said that at the threashold of such a guru the stream of nectar flows continously. Saints and followers take holy dip in the nectar of gnosis and enjoy the bliss;

Amrit parwaah chhutket sad duaar
jis giaan gur bimal sar sant sikh naayai Ibid, p.1401

Propagation of the Concept of Recitation;

Since the concept of Recitation of the absolute God has much importance in the Sikh religion, the bards in their works have propagated the concept of recitation of His holy Name. Kalshar said that the practice of recitation was performed by gods, heavenly singers, the strivers, adepts and Shiva (the Hindu god). It was also practised by Narad, Prahlaad and good people. This holy practice provides the bliss of emancipation.*
Sikh Guru the Sacha Patshah:

The Sikh congregation in respect to their gurus used to call them the sacha patshah. The word patshah is the bastard form of the word baadshah of Persian which strikes the meaning of a king. According to the view of the Sikh congregation their gurus were the true kings very different from the Mughal or Hindu kings of their times. The bards, Bhai Gurdas as well Bhai Nand Lal lead their lives in the Panjab under Monarchical infrastructure. Moreover, the Sikh Gurus were not faquirs like Sufies. They lead household lives enjoying its all pleasures. But they were not avaricious, revengeful, proudy, oppresors, and lustful like the worldly kings. Bhagat Kabir too picturised the characteristics of the kings of his times, “koi har samaan nahin raaja, ih bhupat do chaar divas ke jhoote karat kukaaja”. The revelation evinces that the kings the of Panjab during the life times of the Sikh Gurus were indulged in moral turpitude. They had no good character. Their fuctionaries following their orders were also cruel towards the public. The Sikh religion inculcated among the public a sense to call them wolves. It created among them a dare to term them "The False King".

The bardvani affirms the reason for which the Sikh public took their gurus as the sacha patshah i.e. True Kings.Kall the bard, conveyed that the gurus propagated the Name of the Almighty and he had also overcomed the five vices, greed, ego, anger, attatchment and lust. They were fearless even from death:

Satgur dayaal har naam darirhaaya
   tis prasaad vas panch kare.  
   SGGS, p.1397

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Metiaa janamaaant maran bhuu bhaaga
   chit laaga santokh sare.  
   Ibid

The Sikh gurus were fearless from the mundane kings who were always tyrenous cruel towards the people .They assembled the public on one stage to ponder upon the issues for the betterment of the society.Kall the bard, wrote;

Satgur khema taanyan jug jooth samaane
   anbhu neja naam tek jit bhagat aghaane.  
   SGGS, p.1398

Confirmation to the Puranic Culture

In the Panjabi as well as the Hindstani culture, only the upper castes were allowed to read and follow the scriptures. The Hindu scriptures were written in
Sanskrit. The lower caste strata was unable to go through or understand the religious values. The social life hold was dominated by the Brahman caste who never allowed the Vaish and Shudras to partake in religious activities or enter the temple. In such a critical Hindu society, it was the first time when Puranic and Vedic values were composed in Panjabi. The bardvani was the first work narrating the Hindu religious values in Gurmukhi Panjabi script.

The Sikh chronicles convey that the fifth Guru compiled the Bani of previous Gurus and Bhaktas so that the forthcoming or his contemporary poets could not adulterate it by means of their own writings. The Sikh community keenly took care of such adulteration and by this way the Bhatt-Bani with its under mentioned features is quite solid and absolutely reliable:

a. The Bhatt-Bani is a non-raga measure and has its own variations of style.

b. It evinces the proficiency of Bards on the Indian languages with its dialects and classical lingual infrastructure. Swayya is a poetical form generally used by the poets of the medieval age. It is written in Sanskrit, Sahaskrit, Hindi, Punjabi and their dialectical glossary and lingual infrastructure.

c. The Bards were basically Hindus and well versed with Puranic characters and chronicles. They wrote with view to exaggerate Gurus including Guru Arjan who patronized them and provided livelihood by means of maintenance.

d. The Bhatt verses not only extol the Sikh Gurus but also deal with numerous other aspects of Hindu and Sikh theology.

e. The Bhatt-Bani consolidates the concept of the single swaroop of the Sikh Gurus. According to their version all the Gurus had different physical personalities but they were working under the single plan that was ordained by Guru Nanak Dev Ji or the Almighty himself.

f. Every Bhatt before starting his eulogistic verses about any Sikh Guru, he must invoke God. For them God is all powerful and Omnipresent.

g. The Name of God has been a source of spiritual power in all Yugas-Satyug, Treta, Durpar and Kaljog. That power of God now resides in Sikh Gurus.
B) BHAI GURDAS-LIFE SKETCH AND WORKS

Bhai Gurdas has been called the first Sikh scholar but neither about his date of birth nor birth place and nor about his parents is vividly clear till now. Even his writings do not convey such information's that may help us in this concern. It is generally accepted that Bhai Gurdas was related to Guru Amar Dass as the son of his brother. By this way, he was a cousin of Bibi Bhani, the daughter of Guru Amar Dass and the wife of the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Dass Ji. Consequently, he was the maternal uncle of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

Though, Bhai Gurdas who lived nearly four hundred years ago and is termed as the first exponent of Sikh doctrine was an amanuensis of the Adi Granth under the guidance of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji taking the dictations from the Guru. When Guru Arjan Dev Ji thought of compiling the compositions of his predecessors as well as that of some prominent saints and rigorous poets of great repute, Bhai Gurdas had done considerable work in propagating principles, doctrines and tenets of Sikh Masters. Really he did his best and many people became followers of the Sikh faith. Some people who were against the Guru House were composing false bani to delude people. The 5th Guru talked to Bhai Gurdas in this concern Bhai Gurdas also held the same view that Sikh Masters’ works (Gurbani) must be complied in a single volume to avoid any interpolation:

Bhai Kahan Singh reveals the different aspects of his life as under:

Bhai Gurdas was a true Sikh. He was cousin to Bibi Bhani Ji. Bhai Gurdas was initiated into Sikhism by the 4th Guru in 1579. Under the watchful guidance of Guru Arjan Dev Ji Bhai Sahib carried out a thorough and deep study of Sikh ideology. Very soon he gained proficiency in contemporary languages, particularly-Punjabi, Braj, Hindi, Sanskrit and Persian. He was also well acquainted with the theology of Islam and Hinduism. No code of conduct (Rahitnama) is more important than his compositions (Vars and Kabilt Swayyas). Bhai Gurdas expired during the Guruship of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib in Bhadon Sudi & Samvat 1694 (1637 AD) at the ripe age of 88 years at Goindwal. His last rites were performed by Guru Hargobind Sahib himself.\textsuperscript{10}

According to Sarup Dass Bhalla:

Bhai Gurdas ko aagia karee,
Sabh karai ikatar banee ih ghree,
Auh banee bhagtan kee sabh melo
Sachee raakho jhootee pelo.\textsuperscript{11}

The above version affirms that Bhai Gurdas was directed by Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji to collect Gurbani of the previous Gurus and the hymns of saints, keep the true and reject the fake.

Similarly Kesar Singh Chhibbar in his Bansavalinama reverals:

\begin{verbatim}
Bachan keeta Bhai Gurdas Guru di bani juda kariye,
Meene pande ne rala se wich rala na dhariye.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{verbatim}

The Guru asked Bhai Gurdas to compile the \textit{Bani} of the Gurus. The Meene are interpolating \textit{bani}, so let it not be done. Thus, Bhai Gurdas worked as the writer of the divine composition, the \textit{Adi Granth}. In course of compilation Bhai Gurdas assisted the Guru in screening the collected compositions. This marvelous task made him fully contestant with each and every verse of the \textit{Adi Granth}.

His verses find an echo to \textit{Gurbani}. He used simple language to explain the eulogies of the Gurus. He did not make use of brahmanical terminology or difficult words of Sanskrit, although he was a great scholar of Sanskrit and well informed of Hindu religion. He drew his imagery from daily life so that a common man may understand the meaning converged by the divine revelations. When the 5th Guru asked him to include his verses in the \textit{Adi Granth} he humbly refused that he could not stand equal to his Master. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji blessed his \textit{Bani} as the \textit{key to the divine compositions}.

That is why his verses have got scriptural status among Sikh community and are recited and sung along with the divine verses. He did not anchor his thoughts on the Vedas and Shastras for the interpretation of Gurbani though his comments on six schools of Indian philosophy are complete proof that he was well versed in Hindu religion. He used religious terminology and folk idioms prevalent in society in order to identify himself in common masses. Since we could not get any exact clue or indication about his date of birth. We had to depend upon the views of other reliable scholars.

The name 'Gurdas' in Punjabi means 'the servant of the Guru'. As said above he had been the great scholar and calligrapher of the Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib when it was dictated by the 5th Master during the period 1601 to 1604 AD.
Some of the scholars hold that he was born in 1551 AD. Whereas S. Sardul Singh and others are of the view that the year of his birth was 1558. A.D.\footnote{13}

According to Bhai Vir Singh Bhai Gurdas was born on 1553 AD. According to the version of Kesar Singh Chhibber, (Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian) Bhai Gurdas was the son of Ishar Das Bhalla who was the first cousin of Guru Amar Das. Thus Bhai Gurdas was the nephew of Guru Amar Das Ji.\footnote{14}

His father died when he was mere a child of only three years and his mother passed away in his childhood.

Main points indicted in Punjab Kosh about the biography and composition of Bhai Gurdas are as under:

a. A great scholar and interpreter of Gurbani.
b. Date of birth 1559, village Basarke, Distt, Amritsar.
c. Relation as nephew to Guru Amardas (Bhalla Khatri clan)
d. Initiated in Sikhism during the Guruship of Guru Ram Dass in 1579.
e. Well versed in Sikh ideology under the guidance of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Propagated Sikh religion in Lahore, Agra, Kashi etc.
f. Protected Sikhism against the wicked policies of Prithi Chand.
g. Served the four Gurus and got profound knowledge of Sikhism.
h. Guru Arjan Dev Ji declared his compositions as key to Sri Guru Granth Shaib.
i. A great scholar of Punjabi, Hindi, Sanskrit, Braj, Persian and Arabic.
j. Dr. Mohan Singh compared him to Saint Paul. He was well informed of sociology, history and Hindu mythology and puranic literature.
k. Taking in view of Sikh doctrines and principles he wrote 39 \textit{vars} (actually 40 \textit{vars}) and 556 \textit{kabitt swayas} (actually 675 \textit{kabitt swayyas}).
l. Images taken from daily life, used simple language for the common people.
m. His first \textit{var} is biographically \textit{Janam Sakhi} of Guru Nanak.
n. He went to heavenly abode on August 1637. Funeral rites were performed by Guru Hargobind Sahib.\footnote{15}

Dr. Dalip Singh Deep commented on the \textit{compositions} of Bhai Gurdas as under:

Bhai Sahib had written his composition in verse. His subject was to interpret Gurbani. From this point of view his \textit{Bani} is called key to \textit{Gurbani}. It is a treasure of Sikh ways of life. It is not wrong if we call it a Rahitnama of Sikhs. Guru Arjan said
that he who reads the compositions of Bhai Gurdas, he will gain Sikhism. His kabitt swayyas are in Braj and Vars are in Punjabi. Formerly, the kabitt swayyas were counted to be 556. After the research made by Bhai Vir Singh he found 119 more sawyyas. Now total is 675. These are 40 vars of Bhai Gurdas.¹⁶

The historical records reveal that Bhai Gurdas did not undertake a marriage life. It might be that celibacy would enable him to serve Guru's house wholeheartedly. He might be free to spread Guru's precepts and Sikh doctrines with profound devotion. He was not actually against householder's life. In his kabitt 376 he says:

Among lakes Mansarovar is great, among mountains Summer is the highest, among vegetation Sandal tree is the finest, gold is costliest among metals, Swan is supreme among birds, Lion is the strongest among animals, among stones, the philosopher's stone is the best, among the musical measures sri rag is the chief one meditation upon the knowledge given by the Guru is sublime, similarly life of a householder is supreme among all dhamas.¹⁷

Bhai Sahib was not only a learned theologian and commentator of Gurbani, he was highly skilled in stabilizing a system. When Prithi Chand showed animosity and grudge against Guru Arjan, Bhai Sahib openly guided the Sikh sangat against the misleading activities of Prithi Chand.

Guru Hargobind who was on the seat of Guruship, decided to re-affirm the humility of Bhai Gurdas. He gave him a large sum of money to buy horses for Guru's house from Kabul. Bhai Sahib went there and struck a deal. When he was asked for payment he found the coins turned into stones. He felt ashamed and left Kabul and stealthily reached Benaras. The Sikhs there welcomed him. The Raja of Banaras became his admirer. It was now that Bhai Sahib understood the meaning of the line of var 35th, pauree 20th, and repented over it.

Je gur saang vartada, Sikh sidaq ne haare 35/20-6

When the pandits of Benaras asked Bhai Sahib to worship god Shiva. He answered:

As a virtuous woman does not cheat her husband by going to another man, so I will not abandon my Guru to worship Hindu god. If a calf goes to a cow other than its mother-cow he receives kicks only (not milk). If a swan abandons mansarovar, it will receive only shells not pearls for food. If the guard of a king leaves his door and serves another one he loses his respect and honour. So the
Guru's Sikhs cannot leave God to worship gods and goddesses (who are created by Him).  

When the pandits questioned Bhai Sahib for not using Sanskrit as the medium of his composition because according to them it was the language of gods. They also criticized Sikh Guru's for using general language for ordinary mortals. I in response to the above criticism, Bhai Sahib replied:

The Gurus used the spoken language in order to communicate and propagate their precepts to a common man. Sanskrit was merely the language of priests...... speech can only be uttered by body form. God has no body form. God has no language. Thus Sanskrit was not composed by him. It is now found in books. It is a dead language. It is like a tree which bears no fruit, while the current language on the contrary is like a tree with fruit bearing branches. The Gurus, seeing that human life span was limited, compiled the Granth Sahib in public language which is understandable. It is accessible to all and sundry unlike Sanskrit Hindu scriptures, the knowledge of which was denied to people of low caste.

After a great penance in Benaras Bhai Gurdas decided to return to Amritsar to seek Guru's grace. Bhai Gurdas recited the 22th pauree of 35th var and revealed:

je gur bharmaye saang kar kya Sikh vicharaa

Bhai Gurdas settled back to Amritsar. The Guru forgave the great Sikh scholar. He accompanied Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib and went to Goindwal along him. One day he told Guru Sahib that his death was near. He recited Japji and Sukhmani Sahib very lovingly and when the recitation ended he lowered his head in Guru Ji’s lap. His soul went to the heavenly abode. The Guru covered him with a sheet of cloth, performed his funeral rites with his own hands. On the fourth day his ashes were thrown into the river Beas and the Guru returned to Amritsar.

Works

Bhai Gurdas chose three forms of poetry from Indian classical poetry to convey his message- 1 Kabit, 2 Swayya, 3 Var.

A kabit is a form poetry. Generally, it bears four stitches and each stitch comprises of 31 letters. It bears three pauses each after eight letters, while the last stitch ends with seven letters.
A swayya is a popular metre having four lines with numerous names and is mainly of two types i.e. matrik and Varnik. The best form is matric swayya where all the four lines alliterate. Two lines must alliterate. In a Varmik swayya, all the four the four lines must alliterate.

Most of the Brahminical works were written in it. A few Nirmala writers also followed this meter to propagate their views. Use of swayya is also found in the holy verses of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth. The Bhatt Bani is totally in the form of swayyas. Influenced by the Bhatt bani Bhai Gurdas also made a successful use of swayyas in different forms.

Var is taken from the local cultural tradition of Punjab which, generally, is subjected to heroic poetry of Punjab just like Jangnamah. Generally, in this poetical form the poet portrays the heroic activities of two combatants fighting in the warfield. There are numerous vars in Punjabi from the literary tradition like, Asa- di-var, Maajh-di-var, Sialan-di-var etc. It is purely a regional poetical meter of Punjab which is generally sung by dhadis, ragis and composed by bards and mirasis.

In the gurmat literature the terminology of var is slightly different from that of the Panjabi literature. In the gurmat poetry, good man and wicked person (gurmukh & manmukh) are generally taken as two rival characters. Guru Nanak and Bhai Gurdas have composed vars in this technique. According to Bhai Santokh Singh the author of Gurpartap Suraj Granth, Bhai Gurdas wrote 675 kabit sawyys, (8 doharas, 8 sorathas and 8 chhants). Moreover, he wrote 40 vars, subject to the Sikh theology. The subject of his vars is not merely revelation or eulogy of the Sikh gurus but also to bring forth the author’s ideas about significant tenets of Hindu-Sikh religious values and some narratives as internal evidence and extensive scenario of the Sikh cult of its times. Bhai Gurdas wrote six salokas in Sanskrit the text of which is not available.

The language of the kabitts swayyas is mainly Branj while the vars are written in Panjabi dialect of the central Panjab. According to the Sikh chronicles, Guru Arjan bestowed upon the works of Bhai Gurdas the title of keynote to gurbani. The vars of Bhai Gurdas, since the very day, became an integral part of the gurmat literature and the Sikh congregation considered it a spiritual guide to understand gurbani and its present form is undertaken as a solid and reliable source matter.
Out of 675 kabitt-swayyas, more than 656 are kabitts. Out of the rest, 8 are sorthas, 8 are dohras and 8 are chhants. Swayyas are only 6 in number. Hence the appropriate name of this composition should be kabitts by Bhai Gurdas. Moreover, no Arabic or Persian words have been used in them and this shows the extent of command that Bhai Gurdas had over Braj Bhasha.

When we go through the text of kabitts after the first 8 groups.(24 pieces of stanzas are counted 8 steps or units in all). These are full of praises of first six Gurus from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Hargobind Sahib. Kabitts start from number 9 and go on to 675. Out of 675 kabitt-swayyas, swayyas are only 6. Three are in Jhulana chhands. All the rest are kabitts. Therefore, it will not be wrong to call this composition Kabitts of Bhai Gurdas.

In his kabitts one finds a description of the all pervading omnipresent, fathomless, wonderful and sublimity of God. The significance of Guru’s service and meditation on His Name is the purpose of a true Sikh. Through his kabitts he tried his best to simplify and clarify what the Sikh Gurus have explained in Gurbani. These kabitts attract the people towards Sikhism. Bhai Sahib differentiates the traits of Gurmukh and Manmukh. He inspires people to collect all the good moral qualities in them. The persons whom the Guru has blessed are called gursikhs. They are gurmukh; they are saints; they are bhagats. An assemblage of such persons is called Sadh Sangat (Holy-Congregation).

The Guru resides in Holy congregation. And where there is Guru there is God Himself. Bhai Sahib has mentioned the unaccountable qualities of God. He suggests to renounce ego and self conceit. Meditation on the Name of God makes one’s mind stabilized. The mind stops wavering and acquires continuous concentration. This happens only when a devotee denounces ego, listens to guru’s teachings, absorbs His Name in his mind and recognizes the self. By profound and deep meditation and contemplation a Sikh gets divine bliss and reaches eternal ecstasy. This is the highest stage of God-realization. Such a person is called Jivan- Mukat.

Bhai Gurdas has been great preacher of Sikh theology. He elaborates and illustrates numerous concepts of Sikhism. In the following kabitt he advises Sikhs to be practical in Sikhism:
One cannot enjoy the sweetness by reciting the name of sugar.

By recitation of fire ones does not feel warmth.

The continuous recitation of physician does not procure from disease and the memory of wealth cannot fulfill the need of money.

By repeating the word sandal tree one cant enjoy the sweet flavors of sandal wood and the call for the moon does not extend light.

In the similar way, the verbal recitation of gnosis can produce no benefit and is necessary for man to enact deeds. *Kabitt* -437

Similarly the concept of self realization has much significance in the Sikh theology. The spiritual teacher by means of his teachings the seekers to cognize their self. Bhai Gurdas writes:

A washer man rubs soap to a dirty cloth and then strikes it again and again on a slab to make it clean.

A goldsmith heats up the gold continuously to remove its impurity, just as fragrant wind of Malay mountain shakes other plants violently making them sweet smelling like sandalwood.

Similarly, the spiritual guide teaches his followers to save themselves from the ill effects of mundane wealth (*Maayaa*) and conveys gnosis to enable them for self realization. *Kabitt* - 614

According to Bhai Gurdas the meditation of the Almighty is significant for a seeker of truth. It transforms man complety. A man of lower caste may acquire high status in society by means of meditation. According to the Sikh fold one must live a simple life with humbleness and sublimity. The Sikh theology teaches man to discard off hypocritical life style, pride, ego and avarice. According to the Sikh fold one must live a simple life with humbleness and sublimity:

The soil is the more sublime than the other elements.

So every one emerges from it and lastly falls in it.

The last finger of hand is the smallest in size but avails the grandeur when wears costly ring.
Honey bee and silk worm are the minor creations of the universe but one provides sweet honey and the other endows comfortable silk clothes.

In the same way Ravidass, Namdev, Bidar and Kabir were outcome of lower castes but due to meditation they acquired high status and benefitted the masses.

*Kabitt*- 632

Bhai Sahib elaborates the concept of humility. A humble person is always honoured and respected:

Head is the highest limb of the body.
Eyes glance the universe.
Ears listen to sweet music.
Nostrils help to enjoy sweet scents and flavors.
One speaks melodious tones with mouth and hands feed the whole body.
But none of them is worshipped.
Feet though the lowest limbs of the body are generally worshipped because of their humility.

*Kabitt*-289

Bhai Gurdas explains the significance of a holy congregation for the spiritual development of a human being. Emphasizing his views with parabolas he writes:

A cow eats grass and provides milk.
Milk when processed butter and curd emerge from it.
Sugarcane is crushed in machine and then its juice is processed to make sweet sugar candy.
The proximity of sandal tree provides fragrance to the neighboring plants.
By this way the congregation of saints endows good virtues in the nature of man and he becomes well wisher to all.

*Kabitt*-129

In the Sikh theology man's deep attachment with mundane wealth is always condemned. Bhai Gurdas elaborates:

A poppy eater condemns poppy verbally and calls it a bad thing but it is never possible for him to leave its use.
A gambler weeps at the hour of defeat, even then he can't get rid off his bad habit.

A thief feels fear in heart when he breaks into the house of others but does not leave his habit unto death.

Similarly, everyone cognizes that mundane wealth is the root cause of sufferings, even then, non may overcome its attachment. Kabitt 591

Here are numerous authors who have written and commented upon the kabitt-swayyas in Punjabi, we may quote the name of Sant Sampuran Singh. His annotation on kabitt-swayyas is written in a scholarly style. It is named Sidhant Bodhni i.e. understanding of doctrine. There are various authors who have commented on vars of Bhai Gurdas such as Bhai Vir Singh, Pandit Narayan Singh, Akali Kaur Singh, Dr. Jodh Singh, Gobind Singh Mansukhani, S. Amar Singh Chaakar (Published by S.G.P.C. Amritsar) Dr. Dalip Singh, Deep, S.J.S Pall, Prof. Bikram Singh Ghuman (GNDU, Amritsar), but less is available subjected to the Kabit Swayyas. Shamsheer Singh Puri has made an endeavour to simplify and translate them into English.

The var is a poetic composition subjected to the martial activities subjected to the martial activities of medeviel Punjab a hero or a warrior. In the medievad Punjab, vars were sing praises to eulogize a king, a leader or a prominent person. In Punjabi, to sing praises 'var 'gauna' means singing praises of a particular personality. In Punjabi literature var is a part of hero literature. The vars were sung before the advent of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He is the first poet to write spiritual vars in which the Almighty God is eulogized. Similarly, Guru Amar Dass, Guru Ram Dass, Guru Arjan Dev Ji also wrote spiritual vars which are found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind Sahib propagated singing vars in the Sikh congregations. Such vars produced martial spirit among the Sikh community. Spiritual enthusiasm was the need of the hour. During that time Natha and Adbulla were the prominent bards who used to sing heroic vars. Vital importance was given to this poetic form by Bhai Gurdas. He preferred to convey his spiritual message to the people by this forms of poetry. His vars occupy a tremendous significance in Punjabi literature as well as in gurmat literature.
Subjects of Vars of Bhai Gurdas:-

The first var contains 48 paurees. It begins with invocation to the Almighty God. Bhai Sahib describes about the creator of the universe, the four yugas - Satyug (Goldage), Treta (Silverage), Duapur (Brassage) and Kalyug (Ironage), four varnas - Brahm, Khatri, Vaish and Shudra. The Kalyug (Ironage) was an age of anarchy. Everyone is busy according to his own whims and fancies. The Hindus and Muslims had become orthodox. They are selfish, jealous, arrogant provocative and bigoted. Hindu temples were being demolished replacing with mosques by the ruling class of the medieval age. The poor were being trampled and butchered. It was natural fact that in such a period of oppression and anarchy, the advent of a prophet like Guru Nanak Dev Ji was of utmost need. It was purposefully decided by the Almighty God to send Guru Nanak Dev for the services and protection of the suffering humanity. In this var, prominent events of Guru Nanak’s life are described in brief verse. All the six Gurus (from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Hargobind Sahib) are highly eulogized for their serving and protecting the poor and the oppressed class.

The second var has 20 stanzas. This var describes the omnipresence and omnipotence of God. The third var with 20 paurees deals with the qualities and attributes of a gurmukh (a guru oriented man), and throws light on the subjects of significance of a true guru and holy congregation.

The fourth var consists of 21 stanzas. Here, Bhai Sahib describes that human life is supreme of all 84 lakh species of life on earth. Human life is the only period in which acquaintance with God is possible for the purpose of eternal ecstasy (Mukati). It is possible for a gurmukh with the bliss of God.

The fifth var consists of 21 stanzas. It again throws light on the attributes of an ideal Sikh (a gurmukh). He transcends all sorts of doubts and suspicious rituals and keeps in mind the teachings of the Guru. He believes in one God. A gurmukh burns the fire of egotism. The Guru helps the gurmukh to swim across the dreadful ocean of life.

The sixth var consisting 20 stanzas deals with the significance of holy-congregation (satsangat). God himself resides in satsangat.

The seventh var having 20 stanzas again constitutes systematically the personality development of a gurmukh. This var also puts light on Bhai Sahib's deep knowledge about Hindu theology and their scriptures-vedas, shastras and puranas etc.
The eighth var of 24 stanzas unfolds the reality of limitlessness of universe as is shown in the 35th pauree of Jap Ji Sahib. There are countless heavenly bodies in the universe. It is all unaccountable. In the end the of var the poet throws light on two prominent faiths of his times, Hinduism and Islam. The revelation highlights the root cause of the emergence of the Sikh fold.

The ninth var with 20 stanzas opens with the elaboration of the grace of Waheguru (the wonderous supreme Being) Bhai Sahib exalts the importance of Guru’s teaching (Gurshabad) and extols the holy congregation (satsangat). In the next phases of the var, Bhai Sahib portrays the virtues of an ideal Sikh (gurmukh), his life style, his virtuous dealings with fellow beings and his submission to the Guru. He accompanies only with saints and noble souls, reciting the glories of 'Waheguru'.

The tenth var with 23 stanzas is called the (Bhagat Mala) because this var has been devoted to the subject of bhagats and saints of Indian sub-continent. Puranic personalities such as Prehlad, Dhru, Raja Ball, Ambrik, Raja Janak, Hari Chand, Tara Rani, Vidur, Duryodhan, Dropadi, Sudama, Jaidev, Trilochan, Dhanna Bhagat, Beni, Kabir, Rama Nand, Sain, Ravidas, Ahiliya and Gautam have been extolled for their divine virtues.

In var 11 with stanzas 21, Bhai Sahib again characterizes gurmukhs and their relations with the Guru. The names of some prominent Sikhs of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Ram Das Ji, Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji are remembered respectfully. It indicates that some other devout Sikhs of Punjab who were (dwelling in different towns) busy in their professions were spiritually attached to the House of Guru.

The var 12 has 20 stanzas. The subject matter of this var describes the daily routine and code of conduct of a Sikh. He must be polite, humble, wise, free from avarice, lust, anger, not listening to slander or indulging in it, submissive to the will of his Guru. He must not speak out insulting words to others, sleep a little, eat a little, never fall in the paws of mammon and arrogance.

The Bhai has solidified his views by elaborating the cases of Shiv Ji, Indra, Brahma and Narad. Bhagat Dhruv and Namdev are respectfully praised, though some of them belonged to lower strata of the society.
The thirteenth var comprises of 25 stanzas. It explains the significance of the word- Waheguru, (the Gurmantar) of the Sikhs. He who meditates on 'Wahaguru' or recites Waheguru, his ego is destroyed. Guru is the manifestation of God. Guru's word (Gurbani), shabad is an elixir if recited with deep concentration. This var closes by revealing the glories of the six Gurus.

The var 14 has 20 stanzas. According to this var Guru's Name is truthful. It resides in holy congregation. It endows respect to the unrespected. In pauree 4th the three Hindu gods are criticized for their contradictory deeds. Narad is termed a back-biter. Revealing the examples of earth, water, tree, sesame seed, domestic animals, cotton, sugarcane, iron, sandalwood, etc. Bhai Sahib justifies that Guru-oriented Sikh has all these traits in him. That is why he is supreme. A gurmukh is always at the disposal of service of others that helps him in the recitation of God's Name.

The var 15 is based upon 21 stanzas. It begins with praises of the Guru. Human life is supreme among the 84 species. The basic purpose of recitation (Nam-Simran) is to acquire the bliss of God. The life of demons and human beings relies upon the blessings of God, who is omnipotent. Guru alone is a true friend. He dispels tribulations of human mind. He is an honest guide, a true doctor, a pious pilgrimage, a philosopher's stone (Paras), and Kalap-Variksh. He emancipates his followers.

The var 16, with 21 stanzas, begins with the basic principles of Sikhism such as non-attachment, altruism, humility, service of humanity and the Guru, the pious-congregation etc.

The var 17 has 21 stanzas. Bhai Sahib describes the nature of manmukh with the parabols of frog, heron, owl, elephant, tumma (a bitter fruit) etc. He has bitterly criticized as a hypocrite, an arrogant, a betrayer, a cruel, a back-biter, a liar, an ungrateful, a faithless, an imitator, an apostate, a defrauder, a bastard person who indulges in evil company.

The var 18 is based upon 23 stanzas. Bhai Sahib explains that the limitless universe is the creation of God. He resides in His creation. He is not aloof and detached from his creation. All the five elements, fire, air, water etc. function in His Orders (Hukam). Bhai Sahib cautions the seekers repeatedly not to indulge in materialistic world. He reminds the human beings of their ultimate goal. For becoming sachiar
(truthful human being), the blessings of the true Guru are of utmost importance for all human beings.

*The var* 19 has 21 *stanzas*. Bhai Sahib basically deals with the glories and traits of a Guru - conscious-man. The *gurmukh* knows that his life in this world is temporary. He does not know the time of his death. He lives in family but has no deeper attachment with the transient world. The grace of the Guru the *gurmukh* people are very powerful but they do not demonstrate their power.

The *var* 20, consists of 21 *stanzas*. It deals with the single conglomeration of the Sikh Gurus. Though they carry different names and physical bodies yet a single divine light radiates among them. Bhai Sahib also describes purity and chastity of a *gurmukh* who spends his life in the will of the Almighty. He always concentrates on the feet of the true Guru.

The *var* 21 is extended in 20 *stanzas*. The subject of this *var* is the worship of God. The virtue of infinity of God is revealed. It is said that ego and vanity are perpetual impediments in the way of realization of God. Due to these evils the human soul becomes impatient and dissatisfied; always craving for more and more worldly luxury. Hypocrisy and dogmatism are two other vices which lead human beings away from God.

The *var* 22, with 21 *stanzas* deals with the invocation of supreme reality which is beyond the perception of *Vedas* and *Katebas*. The Omnipotent Lord forming the creation of the universe permeates in it and enjoys Himself. The importance of holy congregation and characteristics of guru – orientate man are again discussed. The *var* ends with the message of Guru Angad Dev that principles of Sikhism should be followed strictly.

The *var* 23, with twenty one *stanzas* deals with different subjects such as:(i) Hindu mythology, (ii) attitude of *gurmukh* towards illusionary world, (iii) The prevailing morals of Hindus or Muslims (iv) humility and life style of Guru oriented person have been thoroughly elaborated. Selflessness leads one to attain respect from the masses. Examples of devotees like Dhru Prahlad, Ambrik, Ball, Janak, Jai Dev, Nam Dev, Trilochan, Bhagat Dhana, Sadhna, Bhagat Kabir, Ravidas, Bidar etc. from the low caste are elaborated.
The var 24 contains 25 stanzas. It is full of paens (songs of praises) of Sikh Gurus (from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji). Bhai Sahib deals with the concept of conglomeration (ek joat) of the Gurus. They were separate personalities physically. They were assigned a single mission. They were working a single program allotted to them by God.

The var 25 has 20 stanzas. Bhai Gurdas describes the personality of Guru Hargobind Sahib. He compares the nature of kings and faquirs. Because of ego two kings cannot dwell in one country but twenty faquirs who are free from ego can live in one hut. A person from low caste can achieve union with God by virtue of his good deeds. A few examples of devotees are elaborated to solidify the concept like Namdev, Dhanna, Bhikhan and Ravidas.

The var 26, with thirty five stanzas begins with the obeisance to the true Guru and the Lord. Much has been said about the characteristics of the Iranage (Kalyug). Stanzas 16, 21, 22, 30, 31, 33, 34 are written in glory of the first Guru. Pauree No. 32 deals with the life and daily routine of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib.

The var 27 with 23 paurees deals with internal relationship of the Guru and his follower. He reminds us of the immortal tales of love between Laila Majnu, Sassi Punnu, Sohni Mahiwal and Hir Ranjha. Fire of love between the two lovers should be full of intensity, selfless union without any deceitfulness. One sided love cannot achieve the goal. Love between the Guru and the follower should of such nature that they should become one spiritually.

The Var 28 comprises 22 paurees. It throws light on the characteristics of Sikhism. Sikh religion is supreme of all other faiths. It is the path of love and brotherhood. It preaches selfless service, humility, sweetness of tongue, honest labour, life without enmity etc.

The Var 29, with 21 stanza, Bhai Sahib puts emphasis on holy congregation. The guru is compared with a sailor who is responsible for traversing the ship full of passengers (followers) across the worldly ocean. Bhai Sahib once more asks the sikhs to keep themselves away from illusory world, slanderers and backbiters.

The var 30, with 20 stanza, the poet has puts forth comparison between good and evil, truth and falsehood, gurmukh and manmukh.
The var 31, having 20 paurees puts light on various subjects such as persons full of vice, and virtuous persons, true seekers of truth and persons who only pose to be true. Numerous examples have been taken from Hindu semi historical and historical characters. Rama and Ravana from Ramayana and Putana, an evil soul who tried to kill Krishna by feeding him on her breast coated with poison.

The var 32, with 20 paurees brings forth differences between the foolish and the wise the friend and the foe etc. Bhai Sahib forbids us not to have any friendship with fools. A foolish friend is like a coal, when it is hot it burns the hand, and blackens the hand when it is cool.

The var 33, consists of 22 paurees. It describes manmukh having double faces, like two faced mirror, spinning wheel, a two mouthed snake and a prostitute. It is difficult to change the life style of such a person.

The var 34, with 21 paurees is subjected to the persons who have given up to day the teachings of the Guru. They are impertinent indiscreet and unmannered. It is useless to have any spiritual conversation with such apostates. A non-believer is like a young bride who advises others to go to their in-laws while she does not resides with parents impenitently. A non believer is like a hot piece of iron which can acquire any shape the strikes of hammer.

The var 35, containing 23 paurees warns us against slanderers, ungrateful backbiters and dishonest people. According to the poet such persons are incorrigible, like as a dog who licks the millstone and cannot change his nature.

The var 36, of 21 paurees deals with the rivals of Guru's house called Minnas. Baba Prithi Chand, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev, claimed for guruship. He is compared with a heron, an owl, a bamboo etc. He was mean, ill mannered and ill informed. He was a culprit, a sinner, an apostate, a thief, a bad friend, a gambler, a slanderer, an ungrateful deceiver, full of anger, greed and unworthiness.

The var number 37, is composed of 31 stanza. It deals with various wonderful creations of God. Human form is the supreme creation which alone enables the human soil to merge with its Creator. The child takes birth and cries. The members of the family become happy at his arrival. They bring it up putting aside their on comforts. It grows up, but does not take care are his parents. Bhai Sahib actually wants to convey the message that we are the children of God. He is our father. We are no better than a
child who does not care for his parents. Thus we are ungrateful and self created children (manmukh).

The var number 38 consists of 20 paurees. It elaborates the features of a noble, pious, devoted follower of Sikhism. The poet terms it is superior to all other Indian faiths. According to version is a religion of the world. A gursikh remains away from luxury, lust of worldly attraction and sexual pleasures. He always endeavors to gain Guru's happiness and bliss. Guru's happiness leads him to a state of ecstasy and permanent equipoise. The pleasures of spiritual love can be attained from holy congregation, meditation on Nam and renunciation of egotism. In the last stanza once again, Bhai Sahib reminds of the single mission of all the six Gurus. They had separate personalities to the outer eye, in spirit they were all one.

The var 39 has 21 stanzas. The first stanza starts with the invocation to God. The next stanza eulogises of first five Gurus. The third exclusively deals with the eulogy of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib. These paurees mentioned above also vividly explain the concept of conglomeration of Sikh Gurus. In the farther paurees the importance of gurmukh, sadhsangat, such khand (the realm of Truth and Eternity) is elaborated in brief. After that the description of three main deities of Hindus are described and the Sikhs are advised to adore only the true Guru (Satguru).

The last var i.e 40th var, containing 22 paurees is the gist of thoughts expressed in the previous 39 vars, as well of description of all the fundamental tenets of Sikhism. Bhai Sahib advises us to meditate on the formless God. He advises to have faith in monotheism. Only the true Guru is able to cut off the shackles of the cycle of the transmigration of soul i.e. birth and death.

C) BHAJ NAND LAL -FAMILY BACKGROUND, LIFE SKETCH AND WORKS

Bhai Nand Lal Goya was the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh, He was an adroit in Persian, Panjabi and Hindi. He composed numerous works with a view to eulogize the Sikh Gurus. He also put forth a commendable picture of the contemporary Sikh-world. He was equally an admirable poet as well as prose writer of Hindi, Punjabi, Persian and Arabic. Therefore, his works evince his hold on this art. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha has put forth various aspects of his life as under:
Bhai Nand Lal’s father, Munshi Chhajoo Ram was khatree by caste. He was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic. In search of job, he went to Ghazani in 1630 A.D. Basically, he belonged to Punjab. On the basis of deep studies he occupied the office of Mir Munshi in the court of Moyyun-udin. Bhai Nand Lal took birth in 1633 A.D. His father managed good arrangements for his son’s studies. When Nand Lal was 12 years of age, Chhajoo Ram who believed in –– Bairagi tradition, invited the Guru of the sect to perform the ceremony of yagopavit in which a male child is allowed to wear a sacred thread according to the caste group. Nand Lal humbly requested them not to force him to put on the thread against his will. He declared that he would not follow a religion without his own satisfaction. His father passed away in 1652 A.D. Bhai Nand Lal, being highly qualified wanted to occupy the office of his father. But the regional ruler wanted to grant him a lower ranked post to gain experience. He left Ghazani disappointedly, reached Multan and built a house near Delhi darwaja. The people of the area called him by the name of ‘Agha.’ So, the locality gained the terminology of Aghapur. He was married with the daughter of a Sikh family. After his marriage his mind inclined towards Sikhism. In 1682 A.D, Bhai Nand Lal visited Amritsar and then from here he went over to Anandpur Sahib to get spiritual bliss from Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Prince Mauzzam had friendly relations with the Guru. The Guru recommended the referred Prince to grant some employment to Bhai Nand Lal. He was employed as Mir Munshi in his court and settled in Agra in 1683. One day hearing the correct interpretation of an ayat of the holy Quran, Aurangzeb wished Bhai Nand Lal to become a Muslim. To save himself from the ill intentions of the emperor, the Prince allowed him to go to Anandpur Sahib and have refuge, under Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji the Tenth Master. At the darbar of the referred Guru he was highly respected as a great poet. Most of his compositions are written in Persian and Punjabi language in the eulogy of the Sikh Gurus especially in the glory of the 10th Guru. When Guru Ji left Anandpur Sahib, Bhai Nand Lal returned to Multan where he preached Sikhism till his death in 1705 A.D. According to the versions of Dr. Ganda Singh, Bhai Nand Lal established an institution in Multan to preach the Sikh religion. The referred institution rendered its services until the British occupation in Multan in 1849.22
Prof. Ujagar Singh Bawa reveals that Bhai Nand Lal was married in Multan. He got his first, son Lakhpat Rai in 1673 A.D, Leela Rai in 1675 A.D. Both his sons acquired their studies and received good status in their lives. Bhai Lakhpat Rai died childless. His brother Leela Ram begot Naunidh Singh who arose to an army officer. Munshi Paras Ram, the second son of Naunidh Singh got the status of a court official of Nawab Muzaffar Khan, the governor of Multan and had three sons Lala Naib Raj, Chaylea and Lala Karam Chand.23

Works

Bhai Nand Lal composed the undermentioned works which is a commendable addition in the Sikh literature:

1. **Zindagi Namah (Persian Verse):** The first writing of Bhai Nand Lal Ji was under the title of ‘Bandagi Namah’. When he presented it to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Guru Sahib felt very happy to go through it and asked Bhai Sahib to change its name to ‘Zindagi Namah’. The major subject of the work is the “devotion for the Almighty (Akalpurakh) and ‘complete submission to the Guru. Infact, some significant tenets of Sikhism revealed in Sri Guru Granth Sahib are fully explained in beautiful and sweet mathnavi.

(a) **Significance of Guru:-**

(i) Murshad-e-Kamil hamaa ra aarzoo’st

Ghair Murshad Kas na yaabad rah badoo’st

*Murshad Kamil Phal-e yaar o zoost
Gair Murshad Kamil Phal-e yaabad rah badoo*st

Every one seeks for a true Guru without a true Guru no one can reach the Akalpurakh.

(ii) Murshad-e-kaamil hamaan’ bashad hamaan,

Kaz kalaamash booy-e-Haq aayad ee yaan.

*Murshad Kamil Phal-e Bashad Phalan
Kaz kalaamash booy-e-Haq aayad ee yaan*

It is only a perfect Guru whose Gurbani emits the divine fragrance in the world.
A person who genuflects before the true Guru in humility shines like the sun to enlighten the whole world.

**Significance of Recitation (Nam-Simran):**

(i) Yaade oo gar moonish-e-jaanat baved,
Har do aalam jer-e-farmaanat baved.  
Ibid, p. 42

(ii) Bas bajuragi hast andar yaad-e-oo.
Yaad-e-oo, kun yaad-e-oo, kun yaad-e-oo.  
Ibid, p. 42

The greatness of a person lies in the remembrance of God. Remember the Name of Lord again and again. (Continuously).

**Significance of holy congregation (Satsangat)**

(i) Aan hajoom-e-khush ke oo dafaa-e-balaas’t
Aan hajoom-e-khush ke az behr-e-khudaas’t.  
Ibid, p.60

The holy congregation is full of divine bliss. It dispels all our mental and physical pains.

(ii) Aan’ hajaom-e-khush ke behr-e-bandagee’st
Aan’ hajoom-e-khush ke bunyaad-e-oo’st.  
Ibid, p. 60
The holy-congregation is overwhelmed with divine ecstasy it is based on the foundation of Truth.

(d) **Omnipresence and Oneness (Tauheed) of God:-**

(i) Qaad’re mutlaq b’qudarat zaahar ast.
Dar miyaan-e-qudarat khud qaadar ast.  

\[
\text{قادر مطلق بقدرۃ شاهراً}
\text{در میان قدرۃ خواد قادر شاهراً}
\]

The Creator of the Universe dwells in His Own Creation. He exists in His Own Nature or Creation.

(ii) Qaadar-o-qudarat b’ hum aameekhtand.
Aan’ multaay ghair haq ra reekhtand.  

\[
\text{قادر و قدرۃ بهم آمیختند}
\text{اان مختدد گھیر حق را ریختند}
\]

The Creator and his Creation are one and the perfect human beings (Gurumukh) renounce everything without the Name of God.

(e) **The concept of God-oriented-man (Gurmukh):-**

(i) Jahar-o-batan shudai yaksan-e-oo
Har do aalam bandaa-e-farmaan-e-oo  

\[
\text{جحرو باتن شدای یکسان}
\text{هر دو االام باندا افرماان یکسان}
\]

The God-oriented-man is same internally and externally. Both the worlds obeys his command.

(ii) Ham badil yaad-e-khuda va barjubaan’
Een’ jubaanash dil shudaa dil shud jubaan  

\[
\text{ہم بعدال یاد خدا و برجوان} 
\text{یان جوباناش دل شدآ دل شد جوبان}
\]

The God-oriented-man cannot separate his heart from his tongue. What is in his heart, is on his tongue.
(f) **The concept of self-oriented-man (Manmukh):**

(i) Har Ke ghafil shud chira aakal bavad.
Har ke ghafil gashat oo jahil bavad.  
Ibid, p. 41

If a person forgets the name of God, how can he be wife some one who does not remember God, is foolish.

(ii) kufar hashad az khuda ghafil shudan
Dar libass-e-dunyeevee ma'el shudan  
Ibid, p. 41

Being non-cognizant about God, if some one is allured by worldly luxuries it is nothing less than lilas phemy and paganism.

(g) **The concept of prayer (Ardaas):**

(i) Aai Khuda har be adab ra deh adab.
Ta guzarad umar andar yaade rab.  
Ibid, p. 60

O ! God bestow your kindness even on the ill mannered so that they may live their life in the remembrance of Your Pious Name.

(ii) Yaa Alahi yaavari kun banda ra
Surakharoo kun har dil-e-sharminda ra.  
Ibid, p. 73

O ! Akalpurakh, you are requested to help your servants who are otherwise very ashamed of themselves for their shortcomings.
(iii)  Yaa Alahi har dil-e-puzmurda ra Sabaz kun har khaatr-e-afsurda ra.  Ibid, p. 73

O ! God, it is our humble request to rejuvenate the withered souls of human beings with Your Pious Name and bliss.

2. **Diwan-e-Goya (Ghazaliyat):** This work endowed a long life to Bhai Nand Lal engaged in devotion and literary world for sharpness of his poetic dissertation, sublimity of style, purity and austerity of thought, profound love of beauty of all comprehensive imagination. The revelation of his sentiments and beauty of style and technique are the notable features of the work. It is an impressive work both from the spiritual and virtuosity points of view. Moreover, it is a highly successful attempt to interpret the theology of *gurbani* after Bhai Gurdas. The work has been accomplished in Persian school beyond the concept of Kanta Bhagati prevalent in Indian devotional literature.

   The work comprises of 59 ghazals, 19 robayat and 4 baits. The ghazals have numerous themes. Bhai Sahib has highlighted the significance of God’s Name, his devotion towards the Gurus, significance of religious discipline and divine knowledge, the importance of the holy congregation and recitation of Lord’s Name. He has also revealed the virtues of the Almighty like the infinite, graceful, omnipotent, omnipresent, unique and adorable which are admitted in the Sikh theology. The author has tried to follow the school of the Persian Sufi poetry. Iranian Sufistic style has been adopted which is far away from the Qadry and Chishty Sufi-Schools of the medieval Punjab.

3. **Tausif-o-Sana va Khatma (Persian):** This work is subjected to the admiration and greatness of the Almighty. It is in prose, only the ending portion called ‘Khatma’ is in verse. It is the most significant writing of Bhai Nand Lal because of the frequent use of extremely difficult glossary and metaphors in Persian and Arabic. That is why, most of the scholars have not given much attention towards it. The work deals with decent paras of prose as well as excellent qualities of verse distiches like the *Lawaiah* of Jaami.
In the eulogy of Guru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa Panth, the brave holy congregation, Bhai Nand Lal writes:

Ham falk bandaa-e-sangtaanash ra
Ham Malik bandaa-e-khalisaaanash ra

La-makaan’ goshaa az zameer-e-shaan’
Khulad ra toshaa az khaa már-e-shaan’

Behar-o-bar har do ra navaa az shaan’
Mehar-o-mah har do ra ziaa az shaan’

Eulogizing Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Bhai Sahib writes that eighteen pious Puranas, Five Pirs, Seven Rishis, the people of all the four directions of the world (East, West, North, South), the residents of the earth, the underworld, the sky, all the gods and goddesses of heaven, all the perishable human beings and eternal deities are singing encomiums of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and his powerful and brave holy congregation.

4. **Ganj Namah (A Record of Riches):** In this work the author has praised the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh subsequently. The last poem of the work, “Nasro Mansoor Guru Gobind Singh……” endowed the author permanency in the Sikh world. It also indicates the deep devotion of the author that he had for the Gurus. The work denotes his proficiency in Persian as well as in Arabic language.

   It is a valuable admixture of Persian prose and verse written in the style of Gulistan Saadi. In the beginning of each chapter subjected to each Guru, a few lines of prose are written in the eulogistic words and then the equality of the same are revealed in distiches of the Guru. It was firstly published in Gurmukhi script by the efforts of Bhai Vir Singh and in 1914 A.D. by the Khalsa Tract Society Amritsar.
The author accomplished its verse in behar ramal using the poetic form of mathnavi.

It is also possible that Bhai Nand Lal went through the bani of bards written in praise of the Gurus and tried to bring out a specimen of the same kind in Persian with view to accomplish the work initiated by the bards.

5. Jot Bikas (Persian): The work is accomplished in mathnavi and the author has tried to put forth the Persian translation (liberal) of his Hindi work. The thesis he could not complete in equal number of distiches and it is longer than the Hindi work subjected to the same theme.

6. Jot Bikas (Hindi): In this work Bhai Nand Lal has eulogized the Sikh Gurus subsequently. He has revealed that all the Gurus have same theological view. They are equally studded with natural and supernatural qualities. In the worldly affairs they are dedicated to the welfare of humanity. He has also compared them with the Hindu deities and called them the outcome of a single soul. The work comprises of 43 distiches. The concept of theological unanimity (single swaroop) of Sikh Gurus is revealed as:

- Nanak so Angad Gur devna
- So Amar Das Har sevna
- So Ram Das So Arjna
- So Hargobgind har parsna
- So karta Har Rai dataarning
- So Har Krishan agham apaarning
- So Tegh Bahadur Sat Saroopna
  So Guru Gobind Singh Har ka Roopna
- Sabh eko eko ekna
  Nahi bhed na Kachhu bhi pekhna\(^{24}\)

1) Guru Angad got whatever Nanak endowed him.
2) Amar Dass worshipped the Almighty.
3) Ram Dass and Arjan had no differences. Hargobind also enjoyed His bliss.
4) Har Rai endowed salvation to his devotees.
5) Harkrishan had unaccountable verves. Guru Teg Bahadur was the swaroop of the Almighty.

6) Guru Gobind Singh was also an image of God.

7) All of them were similar. Don't calculate any difference among them. Here the poet is consolidating verse the concept of single swaroop of Sikh Gurus.

7. Rahat Namah and Tankhah Namah (Punjabi verse): According to Bhai Kahan Singh these are not the compositions of Bhai Nand Lal. Dr. Ganda Singh indicate that the referred two works are quite at par with the thoughts of Bhai Sahib and those of Guru Gobind Singh. Moreover, the successors of Bhai Sahib claim that these works belong to Bhai Nand Lal Ji. S. Attar Singh Ryis Bhadaur published Rahit Namah in Punjabi in 1876 from Albert Press, Lahore. The date given at the end of the Rahit Namah shows that it is a composition before the creation of Khalsa. There is no word “Khalsa” used in this composition.

    Tankhah Namah was written after the creation of Khalsa (i.e. 1699 A.D) because there are a few references subjected to ‘Khalsa’. The ecology of ‘Khalsa’ exists in this work.  

8. Dastoor-ul-Insha (Persian prose); This work contains some of the letters and writings of Bhai Nand Lal which were written to his relatives and friends. It is a valuable source of historical background of Punjab and Multan.

9. Arz-ul-Alfaz (Persian verse); This work of Bhai Nand Lal evinces his hold on Persian and Arabic glossary. Devotion of God and eulogy of Guru Sahiban are the subjects of this composition. It is a commendable literary approach and denotes spiritual quality of Bhai Nand Lal. It contains glossary which is typically Persian and Arabic. Only those who are highly proficient in these languages can enjoy the contents. Dr. Ganda Singh in his book, “Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali” has compiled a few couplets as specimen.

Invoking and thanking the Akaalpurakh Bhai Nand Lal writes respectfully:

Hazaraan’ sataayish hazaaraan’ sapaaas  
B’dargahe dadaare paak az haraas.

The Concept of Omnipresent God

The Sikh religion follows the concept of Omnipresent God. It was also the basic value of the Sufi cult that the Almighty is not confined in temples and mosques but he is present everywhere and in each situation. A seeker needs to create capability in himself to feel His presence. Idols and Pilgrims may be the image or center for man mere to concentrate his mind but not God. Undoubtedly, it is a Quranic concept which it borrowed from Mosaic and Christian cults. The Sufies also congised it significant for spiritual development. While the Sikh theology is based upon the same religious value.

Bhai Nand Lal Goya narrates;

Khuda hazir bawad daayam babean deedar-e-pakish ra
Na girdaab-e-darro haayal na darya wa na saahelaha

Har ja ke banigarand Jamaal-e-to banigarand
Sahib-e-dilaan nazaaraa-e-rue tow mee kunand

According to the version of Bhai Nand Lal The Almighty is omnipresent but a seeker lacks eyevie to feel His presence;

Khuda ke dar hama haal haazir ast-o-naazir
Kujast deedah ke beenad ba har tarf deedar 28

Ibid, p.19

In the path of God realisation human ego and numerous affairs of mundane life and attachments prove a bar. The poet said;

Jammal-e-oo haman ja behijaab jalwagarast
Tu dar hijab khud ee yaar-e-maliqa che kunad29

Ibid, p.16

The Concept of the Recitation of His Name:

In the Sikh religion the recitation of Almighty's Name has great importance as in the Discipline Sufis. A Sikh by his Guru is instructed to make it his daily routine to practise His Name early in the morning. Moreover, in his activities he must remember His name. This practice in the Sikh cult is called 'Naam Abhiaas'. It is similar to the concept of 'Ziker' of the Sufi culture. Bhai Nand Lal emphasises on recitation as under;

Khush ast umar ke dar yaad biguzrad warna
Che haasilst azeen gumbad-e-kabood mara30

Ibid, p.3

Baghair-e-yaad-e-tow Goya nami tawaanam zeesat
Ba soo-e-dosat rihaai dahand zood mara31

Ibid, p 18
Bayaad-e-dosat tawaan umar ra basar bordan
Ke dar baraabar-e-aan heech kimia na rasad

A seeker when becomes habitual to recite His Name regularly, it becomes a matter itself for him to enjoy and receive His bliss. The seeker needs to remember his virtues to enjoy the pleasures of Naam Abhiaas. In the words of Bhai Nand Lal;

Ziker wasafash bar zabaan bashed laziz
Naam-e-oo andar jahaan bashed laziz

Har ke baashad daaima dar yaad-e-oo
Yaad-e-Haq har dam bawad irshaad-e-oo

Gar tura yaad-e-khuda baashad mudaam
Ta shawi ai jaan-e-man mard-e-tamaam

Yaad-e-oo sarmaaya a-e-imaan bawad
Har gada az yaad-e-oo sultaan bawad

The concept of polytheism is rejected in the Sikh religion like Islam. A Sikh should devout himself to only one God. This concept is an advanced form of "la Ilaha Illallah". Bhai Nand Lal describes as under;
According to the version of the Bhai recitation of His Name is the solution of each confusion. One must concentrate on his Name and discard off the feelings of self. He may arise himself above the feeling of pains and pleasures only by the mode of recitation. A man is mere a minor most water-drop segregated from an endless ocean. The poet calls Him an Ocean and the human being a poor drop which may lose its existence if falls upon bare earth but lives if again gets space in its origin. One must try to attain a source to exist its being which is possible by means of recitation. In other words he indicates that man is a part and he must endeavour to have its place in the lap of the absolute Almighty;

Hal-e-har mushkil hameen yaad-e-Khudaast
Har ke yaad-e-Haq kunad zaat-e-Khudaast

The Significance of Guru (Murshid)

The Sikh religion cognises that for a seeker to step further in metaphysics must have some spiritual guide. In the regional and Sikh culture he is called Guru. This concept was also prevalent in the Sufi cult where such personality is termed 'Murshid'. In the Sufi cult a seeker has 'ishaq' for his murshid and loves him heartily but in the Sikh culture he serves his Guru, obeys his orders and wishes as his pleasures. He pays regard to his Guru and has a sense of respect for him. According to Bhai Nand Lal;
The Epicurean Philosophy;

Bhai Nand Lal was a traditional Persian poet. Like the traditional Persian poets he has also versified the Epicurean philosophy in his ghazals. According to his version the world is unreal perishable and will come to an end:

Az guzashtanha che mi pursi dareen dehar-e-kharaab
Baadashah khawahad guzasht-o-ham gada khawahad guzasht

Ibid, p.8
The Poetic Techniques;

Bhai Nand Lal has used the poetic technique of *talmeehaat* to clarify his views. Generally, Persian and Urdu scholars denote the historical semi historical or mythological facts in poems by the name of *talmeehaat*. In Panjabi literature such techniques bear no weightage. Bhai Nand Lal being a follower of traditional Persian poets has used this technique in large measures. He has borrowed *talmeehaat* from Persian classical literature which have no relevancy with the cultural heritage of Panjab. All of them are related with Jewish, Islamic or Sufi traditions:

Dar kucha-e-ishq arch-e-muhaalst raseedan.
Mansoor sifat ba qadam-e-daara tawaan raft

Khabar dahand ba yaaraan-e-mudai ke imshab
Ana ulhaq zadeh mansoor soo-e-daara aamad

Magu az haal-e-Leilla ba dil-e-shoreeda-e-Goya
Ke sharah qissa-e-Majnoon mara diwana mi saazad

Awaaz-e-lan tarani ba har dam ba gosh-e-dil
Moosa magar ba deedan-e-deedaar mi rawad

Az nida-e-naqa-e-Leilla dil-e-shoreedah am
Hamchoo Majanoo mast gasht-o-reh soo-e-sehra giraf

Ibid, p.8

Ibid, p.11

Ibid, p.12

Ibid, p.15

Ibid, p.9
Finally, it is concluded that Bhai Nand Lal not only eulogised the Sikh Gurus but his works are subjected to preach the Sikh theology, to propagate the Sikh as well as Sufi values and most probably the concept of devotion which he had learnt in Sikhism.

**Devotion but not Love**

The Sikh religion has a difference from Sufism on the matter of *guru* and *murshid*. A Sikh has no love but respect for his spiritual as well as teacher in other spheres of life. Bhai Nand Lal in the congregation of the Tenth Guru learnt this aspect. The Sikh community took his works as devotional poetry. The poet has deep reverence and regards for *Guru*. He conveys that the object of life was mere to embrace the slavery of his spiritual guide;

Hawa-e-bandagi awurad dar wajud mara
Wagar nah zouq-e-chunin amdan na bood mara\(^{50}\)  \(\text{Ibid, p.3}\)

He is frequently so devoted to his *guru* that he is eveready to sacrifice his life for those who provide information regarding to Holy threshold;

Fida ast jaan-o-dil-e-man ba khaak-e-muqadam-e-paak
Har aan kas-e-ke basoo-e-tow rah namood mara\(^{51}\)  \(\text{Ibid, p.3}\)

Historical Significance;

Bhai Nand Lal passed a few years in the patronage of the tenth Guru. He accomplished his works during the same days but his works do not provide sufficient informations about his contemporary society. The cultural analysis of his works provided two facts *Firstly*, the daily routine of the Sikh congregation and *Secondly*, the character sketch of his patron Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Nand Lal's works inform that there was a tradition in the Sikhs that they used to assemble twice a month in the form of the holy congregation. On the referred days they used to perpetrate their religious duties. It is opined that he refers towards the *Masya* and *Sakranti* days. The same
tradition is prevalent even now. The Sikhs assemble on the referred days, take a Holy
dip at pilgrim centers and listen to the words of their Gurus.

About the character sketch of the tenth Guru, Bhai Nand Lal has versified his poem "Nasro Mansoor Guru Gobind Singh". The referred poem provided the poet a long life since it gain high appreciation from the Sikh Community. In the poem the poet has a devotional eye view about the Guru, even then it provided the undermentioned facts which are significant in the field of history as under;

The Sikh Gurus were not faquirs like sufies. The people used to call them Sacha Patshaah i.e. the true king. They lead their lives with wealth and mundane pleasures. Guru Gobind Singh was a saint as well as a soldier. He was master in martial activities. He fought bravely against the oppressive rulers of his times. His followers were ever ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their Guru. "Saltanat-e-Daham"52

Solidarity and Reliability;

The text of the works of Bhai Nand Lal may be termed original without amalgamation and quite same as it was composed by the author due to the under mentioned facts:

a) Generally, the Sikhs during the time of the compilation of the works were having mere knowledge of Gurmukhi Panjabi. There were least in number who could read and compose in Urdu or Persian. So the question of amalgamation from outside does not rise.

b) Bhai Nand Lal left the Panjab regions and settled at Multan during the life time of the tenth Guru. Therefore, he would have carried his works along with him.

c) The non Sikhs of Multan had no interest to go through such text or felt no need to add their own writings in it. Thus it is saved from the amalgamation by the local scholars.

d) The author was a court-poet of Guru Gobind Singh so the Sikhs considered his writings sacred and safeguarded its originality.

Conclusively, in the light of the above studies the under mentioned facts are found:

Ibid p113-114.
a) The bards led their lives in a monarchical infrastructure where the socio-religious values were gone away from the upper strata of the society. They have portrayed the gurus in monarchical infrastructure.

b) They were patriarchally Hindus and in their verse they have used adjectives and similes from the ancient classical literature.

c) Their language cannot be said purely Panjabi but an admixture of Braj and Prakrit amalgamated with the Panjabi of their times.

d) The text of their verse is quite pure since it became a specific part of the Sikh scripture and the Sikh tradition never allowed any indulgence in it.

e) Bhai Gurdas had family relations with Guru Arjan Dev. Though his verse is not included in Guru Granth Sahib, yet the Sikh traditions have guarded its text and each subject of the author undertook assimilates with the Sikh traditions.

f) The referred Bhai composed kabitts and swayyas, following the verse of bards especially the eulogistic stanzas of the work. The vars were composed and finalized during the time of Guru Hargobind Sahib when the referred Guru managed to propagate the var singing in his court.

g) Bhai Nand Lal composed his works in Hindi, Panjabi as well as in Persian.

h) The works of Bhai Nand Lal are unique in the medieval Persian literature. None of the Sikhs or other tried to accomplish such subjects in Persian.
References

2. Ibid
18. Ibid


27. *Ibid*, p.21


29. *Ibid*, p.16

30. *Ibid*, p. 3

31. *Ibid*, p.18

32. *Ibid*, p. 16

33. *Ibid*, p. 18

34. *Ibid*, p. 39

35. *Ibid*, p. 42

36. *Ibid*, p.43

37. *Ibid*, p.43

38. *Ibid*, p. 43

39. *Ibid*, p. 10

40. *Ibid*, p. 26

41. *Ibid*, p. 15

42. *Ibid*, p. 19

43. *Ibid*, p. 39

44. *Ibid*, p. 8

45. *Ibid*, p. 8

46. *Ibid*, p. 11

47. *Ibid*, p. 12

48. *Ibid*, p.15

49. *Ibid*, p. 9

50. *Ibid*, p.3

51. *Ibid*, p.3

52. *Ibid*, pp. 113, 114