INTRODUCTION

Politics is one of the most vital aspects of human life. The word 'Politics' means the "science and art of government."¹ No society viz. association of human beings can function properly unless it is bound in some order i.e. some system and this system is introduced by politics for government of the society. Even the whole universe is bound in Hukam viz. the Cosmic Order which may be termed as the Sole Lord's Government which implies His own Politics.* If God Himself employs Politics to govern His own Kingdom that is the Universe, how can the human beings dispense with it? Rather Politics is not only indispensable but essential for human society.

Though many attempts have been made by various scholars to study the different aspects of Sikh Polity, but most of the works generally begin with the period of Guru Hargobind i.e. 1596 A.D. to 1644 A.D. Therein the Sikh Polity has been regarded as the outcome of the Sixth

¹. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, edited by T.F. Hoad, p. 360
* Politics in itself is not something abhororable or a dirty game; it is its abuse that makes it so.
Guru's policy put forth by him by putting on two Swords - one of Miri (Temporal Power) and the other of Piri (Spiritual Power) on the occasion of his anointment. But no attempt has so far been made by any scholar to study exclusively the Philosophy of Politics as propounded by Guru Nanak, the Founder of Sikh Religion. In fact, the political principles put forth by Guru Nanak were, later on, picked up by Guru Hargobind.

A thorough and careful perusal of Guru Nanak's hymns shows that he had a clear understanding of the politico-social milieu in which he lived and he consciously and boldly reacted to the politics of oppression and tyranny by whatsoever quarters it was exercised. But what is more important is that he not only exhibited awareness of the problems faced by his contemporary society at the hands of the misrulers, but also propounded, though not systematically, a novel Philosophy of Politics based on ethics. In stead of simply criticising and condemning the then prevalent corrupt political set-up, he adopted a positive and constructive approach by envisaging a new type
of political system in which there would be no scope of oppression and tyranny, no chance of encroachment of the human rights of people.

Guru Nanak vociferously condemned the Lodhi rulers for missing their duty of defending their subjects against Babar's invasion of India. But at the same time, he showed no hesitation to condemn Babar and his hordes who observed no ethics during warfare and who did not lose any opportunity to dishonour the victimised innocent armless civilian populace of India. Moreover, Guru Nanak did not spare even the people of India for their moral and political degeneration which dissuaded them from raising their voice against tyranny. In fact, Guru Nanak suggested that both the ruler and the people must observe some sort of ethics of politics and codes of conduct.

In the words of A.C. Banerjee, Guru Nanak "was primarily a religious teacher; he did not directly aim at political regeneration of the people. But unlike other religious teachers of medieval India he had a deep awareness of the political problems - maladministration and
insecurity - which affected the daily life of the common people in his times. This was natural for a religious teacher whose view of spiritual life centred round the ordinary householder and eschewed asceticism. Moreover, he had a deep sympathy for human suffering, and whenever suffering arose from man-made causes his reaction found expression in poetry. He condemned the lapses and corruption of rulers and officials alike. His condemnation of Lodhi administration reached the peak of bitterness in connection with Ibrahim Lodhi's failure to defend his subjects against the invasions of Babar. In the quartet of poems known as Babar-Vani we have poetry which is true to life in its most tragic aspect. But he confined himself to the moral and religious aspects of the issue in stead of prescribing a political solution. He did not ask the people in general - not even his own disciples - to rise against the corrupt and weak Lodhi regime or to resist the new regime established by the invader. He thought of God as the great destroyer of demons (asur sanghar), and he felt sure that under His Hukam righteousness would ultimately prevail."

A.C. Banerjee further writes, "The remarks of the Gurus are really confined to the invocation of Divine intervention against unjust rulers. This approach was confined to the moral plane; it did not urge human action or enunciate a political theory of resistance.... If Guru Nanak really desired to lay down a doctrine of resistance, he would surely have spoken directly and offered clear guidance to his followers".¹

But A.C. Banerjee's perspective on Guru Nanak's approach to the political problems faced by his contemporary society is not wholly acceptable for the simple reason that if Guru Nanak's approach was confined only to the invocation of Divine intervention, what was the need of his condemning the rulers as well as the subjects for not performing their respective duties? He would have simply attributed the whole tragedy to the Divine Will and finished his task. It is also not correct to say that Guru Nanak did not aim at political regeneration of the people and that he would have spoken directly and offered clear guidance

¹ A.C. Banerjee, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
to his followers for resistance to the unjust rulers. Here it is necessary to remember that the political degeneration among the people of Guru Nanak's times was the result of their centuries-long slumber and sloth; therefore, the political regeneration could not be infused in them overnight; rather it was necessary to gradually prepare them for resistance to tyranny by arousing political awakening and consciousness among them. And Guru Nanak surely did it by making a profuse use of the forceful and sharp-edged literary weapon of 'Satire' in his poetic compositions. Herein, he gave a clear message to the people to resist tyranny and oppression of the rulers. Further, it is not correct to observe that Guru Nanak has not given any political solution to the problems of society. Guru Nanak has definitely given a solution to the political problems of society by envisaging a new type of political system which would automatically establish a righteous rule; but the need is to make an intensive study of his verses and analyse his thoughts to comprehend and formulate his Philosophy of Politics which is the outcome of his religion with a new notion.
Gordon observes that Guru Nanak rose out of the dust as a great preacher with a great theme which he boldly proclaimed, waking up the people to a higher notion of religion.¹

According to Gurbax Singh, Guru Nanak infused in the people the will to do and the soul to dare. No doubt, the Mughals struck at the weak and declining Lodhi Rule, but the old rulers would have met the same fate even if the Mughals had not appeared on the scene. Under the dead weight of their own sins and incompetence, aggravated by the ever increasing external pressure exerted on them by the new forces roused to a high pitch by the message of Guru Nanak, they would have succumbed to extinction.²

The verses of Guru Nanak, which reflect his response to contemporary politics, suggest his serious concern with politics of his time. Although response of Guru Nanak to his political milieu does not form an orderly pattern, and the verses which reflect his response to contemporary

politics form only a very small portion of his compositions, yet, in qualitative terms, these verses are significant. In fact, the verses of Guru Nanak need a comprehensive and analytical study.

The present work is an attempt to study and comprehend the Philosophy of Politics as emerges from Guru Nanak's verses. An attempt has been made to concentrate on the verses of Guru Nanak himself, however, at a few places, the verses of other Gurus, the Varan of Bhai Gurdas and the writings of other writers have been quoted for the purpose of proper understanding of the subject.

A brief plan of the thesis is given below. It has been divided into the following nine chapters:

2. Guru Nanak's Concept of State.
3. Guru Nanak's Concept of Economy
4. Guru Nanak's Concept of Justice
5. Guru Nanak's Concept of Man
6. Guru Nanak's Concept of Human Rights

7. **Guru Nanak's Ethics of War**

8. **State and Religion Relationship of Guru Nanak's Vision.**

9. **Relevance of Guru Nanak's Philosophy of Politics.**

While quoting from the Adi Granth, I have depended mainly on the English renderings of the verses by Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib, Dr. Gopal Singh, S. Manmohan Singh and Dr. Darshan Singh. At a few places, I have used the English Translation from the works of other writers like S. Khushwant Singh, S. Fauja Singh, S. Bhagat Singh Hira, S. Taran Singh and Dr. Trilochan Singh. I express my sincere thanks to all these learned scholars and other writers whom I have quoted in my work without their consent.

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I sincerely and unconditionally apologise for any mistake I may have committed unconsciously while quoting or interpreting the holy hymns from the Adi Granth.

(Gurdip Kaur)