Chapter - II
Guru Nanak's Concept of State

Political thought is primarily concerned with speculation about State, its nature, its structure, its purpose and its functions. Dr. Garner says that political science "begins and ends with the state." But what is the State? Aristotle defines the state as "a union of families and villages having for its end a perfect and self-sufficing life by which we mean a happy and honourable life."^2

According to Dr. Garner, "State as a concept of political science and public law, is a community of persons more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent or nearly so, of external control and possessing an organised government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience."^3

State is a "political organisation of society, or the body politic, or more narrowly, the institutions

1. Dr. Garner, quoted in V.D. Mahajan, Political Theory, p. 132
3. Dr. Garner, quoted in V.D. Mahajan, Political Theory, p. 135
of government. The state is a form of human association distinguished from other social groups by its purpose, the establishment of order and security; its methods, the laws and their jurisdiction or geographical boundaries; and finally by its sovereignty. The state consists most broadly, of the agreement of the individuals on the means whereby disputes are settled in the form of laws."\(^1\)

An examination of the definitions of state quoted above brings out its four essential constituent elements or basic requirements viz. (1) Population, (2) Territory, (3) Government, (4) Sovereignty.

Guru Nanak's concept of State can be inferred from his concept of God's State i.e., the whole universe. It puts forth the Ideal State which is governed in such a way that the people live in prosperity and happiness.

Guru Nanak conceiving God as the Sovereign King of the State i.e., the universe, envisages the Ideal State in the following words:

\begin{quote}
Thou art the Creator and the Cause:
The Self-dependent King, whose subjects are ever in Bliss.\(^2\)
\end{quote}

An analysis of Guru Nanak's composition quoted above brings forth all the four constituent elements of the state. The words 'Thou art the Creator and the Cause (Tu Ape Karta Karanjog) imply the whole creation of God that inhabit His State viz. the whole universe which implies the territory of His State that is the whole universe itself. The words 'The Self-dependent King (Nihkewal Rajan) imply the King i.e. government and sovereignty of the King of the State, and the words 'whose subjects are ever in bliss (Sukhi Log) imply population of the State and their happy and prosperous condition.

Now, in order to understand and comprehend Guru Nanak's concept of the Ideal State it is imperative to study all the four constituent elements of the State one by one in the context of various concepts he puts forth in his verses.

1. **Territory** :-

As far as territory of the State is concerned, Guru Nanak makes no comment on its specific size. It may spread over the whole of the globe as it is or it may be demarcated by dividing the globe into various small states for convenience of organisation and administration, but the political system is to be the same in each state.
2. Population viz. Sangat:

Guru Nanak gives the concept of Sangat which implies population of the Ideal State of his vision, its nature and character. He employs the terms Sat-Sangat, Sadh-Sangat, Sant-Sabha, Sadh-Sabha while propounding the concept of Sangat in his verses. According to him, Sangat viz. Sat-Sangat is the congregation in which the participants always speak of, eulogize and practise the Lord's attributes. He writes:

Sat Sangat is the congregation where the Lord's attributes are ever spoken of.
Nanak, by eulogizing the True Lord.
One comes to realise the Lord's Truth.¹

The Sangat is the congregation, company, body, association or society in which persons belonging to any religion, faith, caste, colour, creed or sex are free to participate. No discrimination on grounds of birth or status etc. is exercised. The following words of Guru Nanak stand surety to it:

Brahmas and Indras, Gopis and Krishna
Shiva and the Supreme Yogis - all attempt His greatness to utter.

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1280
Scholars (Pandits), Seers (Rakhisars), alongwith their scriptures, in all ages, and
The charming damsels of the heavens, earth and netherlands - all are singing Thy praise.¹

The only expectation made of a participant is that he or she must participate in the Sangat wholeheartedly dedicating himself/herself to the service of his/her fellow-beings. Guru Nanak emphasises the desirability and essentiality of an act of service for a human being in the following words:­

All created beings are Thine own, without service no one's life is fruitful.²

Here, it is necessary to know what Service (Sewa) is in the thought of Guru Nanak.

Service (Sewa):­

Service (Sewa) is a way of human behaviour which has been accepted and emphasised by Guru Nanak as the best act an individual can ever cherish to perform. There are references in Guru Nanak's verses that only that person who dedicates himself to the acts

2. Ibid., p. 354
of service is worthy of being a human being. Service also signifies the religiosity of a person. No meditation can match an act of service. All other methods of attaining spiritual exaltation are insufficient unless they are fused with an act of self-abnegating service. To quote Guru Nanak:

About wandering mendicants, heroes, celibates, anchorites -

By the Master, perfectly - endowed has this been determined,

Without service noway is attained fulfilment -

Service is the purest of actions.¹

According to Guru Nanak, only that person who serves the Lord, obtains honour in His Court. To quote him:

He who created the beings and has put them to tasks -
Unto Him I am a sacrifice.
Perform His Service, gather profit and thus thou obtain honour in God's Court.²

Here the question arises as to how God can be served as He has no form of His own. True, God Himself is formless and has no physical appearance; but He manifests Himself in the whole creation. A man who realises this truth sees only God pervading

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p-992
2. Ibid., p. 438
all the beings. Guru Nanak avers:

The entire revealed Word, all realization, all
expression of holiness,
All visible forms Thy body.
Thyself art Thou the voluptuary tasting all
and absorbing their fragrance:
No other is there to mention, mother mine:
The Lord is one and sole—
One and sole, brother.¹

Further:

Within everyone is the Soul, and the Soul is
He, who pervades all.²

When a man perceives the permeance of the
Creator in the whole creation, he regards every eye
as God's eye, every body as God's body, every foot
as God's foot, every nose as God's nose and is
fascinated by His play. To quote Guru Nanak:

Thousand Thy eyes, Thy shapes,
Yet no eyes dost Thou wear or shape.
Thousand Thy lotus-feet; of thousand waves Thy
wafted fragrance,
Yet invisible, wonderfully captivating Thy essence.³

2. Ibid., p. 1273
3. Ibid., p. 663
Having attained to such a state of realisation, a man finds every being representing God and he makes the service of the beings of the world his object. Guru Nanak says:-

-One obtains happiness by performing service,
-All the world continues coming and going.
-By service in this world,
-Shall you get a place at the Portal Divine.  

In his compositions, Guru Nanak puts forth three ways of performing service - (1) with body, (2) by involving mind and (3) through financial donations. Guru Nanak describes his own experience of rendering of all the three types of service as under :-

-Placing before God my body, mind and wealth,
says Nanak, I have partaken of the supreme elixir of the Lord.  

Guru Nanak ordains every individual to voluntarily contribute a considerable portion of his earnings to the Common Fund of the State/Society which has to be used for individual as well as collective cause. Only such donation is fruitful. To quote Guru

2. Ibid., p. 1343
Nanak :-

Saith Nanak : In the hereafter is received award for what man from his own earnings offers.¹

It is the duty of every individual to contribute his share in the form of service done through above mentioned three means simultaneously.

But Service as recommended by Guru Nanak is not an isolated act of giving something in aims. It is much more. It is a style of life adopting which one ever gives. In fact, it is all dedication - giving oneself. It means if situation demands every individual has to be ever ready to submit his total being to the cause of the suffering humanity. He must be prepared to lay down even his life in service of the needy.

Every member of the congregation (Sangat) treats an opportunity of service as a boon and he is so motivated that he finds dignity in excelling his fellow members in this act. Moreover, the members of the Sangat not only aspire and endeavour to, but spontaneously imbibe the attributes of God through practising the precept of service of the Lord because

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¹ Guru Nanak, *Adi Granth*, p. 472
according to Guru Nanak: -

As is the one whom he serves,
so does he himself become.¹

As far as the criterion by which Sat-Sangat
can be judged, is concerned, Guru Nanak writes about
it in the following words: -

What qualities has holy company?
Such it is wherein the Sole Name of the Lord is
expounded,
By the sole Name Divine is known the Ordinance,
Of which the Preceptor, realization has granted.²

And: -
Acceptable become the persons who are imbued with
the Lord,
In their association supreme wealth is attained.³

It leads to the conclusion that all other
gatherings where Sole God's Name is not remembered
and discussed and where only arguments and quarrels
take place, are mere crowds and not the Sangat.

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, pp. 223
2. Ibid., 72
3. Ibid., 353.
According to Guru Nanak:

One may indulge in a million feats of cleverness,
And with millions make alliances:
Without holy company comes not fulfilment;
Without the Name goes not torment of suffering.\(^1\)

The Sangat is an association of the people seeking the Truth and attuned to God. They lead their lives in accordance with the Guru's Word or dictates and they dedicate themselves to the service of God through the service of His beings viz. humankind. The people - the members of the Sangat - always make endeavours for their collective uplift in all the domains of life - spiritual, social, political and economic etc. The Sangat is the supreme body which is all-powerful.

According to Prof. Harbans Singh, "Sangat, originally from Sanskrit sangati, meaning union, association or company, is the word used for Sikhs gathered for prayer or religious ceremony. It had a social implication as well; it united the Sikhs in a particular locality or region into a brotherhood or fraternity. A member of the sangat i.e. every Sikh, was known as bhai, literally brother, signifying one of holy living. The sangat brought together men not only in spiritual pursuit but also

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1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 20
in worldly affairs, forging community of purpose as well as of action based on mutual equality and brotherhood. Though sangats were spread over widely separated localities, they formed a single entity owning loyalty to the word of Guru Nanak. Sangats were thus the Sikh community in formation."¹

"In these sangats the disciples mixed together without consideration of caste or status.... The Sikh sangat was thus the melting-pot for the high and the low, the twice-born and the untouchable. It was a new fraternity emerging as the participants' response of discipleship to the Guru."²

"In a narrow sense a Satsang is merely a holy congregation, where the seekers come together for spiritual advancement. But in a broad sense it connotes an ideal society whose members live entirely according to the dictates of the Guru. Such a society was named as "Sant Sabha" by Guru Nanak (see Sidh Goshta) and 'The Khalsa' by Guru Gobind Singh."³

Guru Nanak's concept of the Sangat denotes the kind of people inhabiting the State of his vision.

2. Ibid.
3. **Sovereignty** :-

In Guru Nanak's philosophy, the ultimate Sovereignty rests with God Himself. He says :-

He alone is the Lord, immutable, holy -
Eternal His greatness.

...He acts as is His pleasure -
Command Him none may !

Saith Nanak : He is the King of kings -
abiding by His will is best. ¹

Guru Nanak also holds that God pervades all beings. He writes :-

In all art Thou pervasive. ²

And :-

By the First learn : Sole and immaculate
is the Supreme Being-

...

By questing after Him, in each being we behold Him. ³

2. Ibid., p. 72
Since God, the True Sovereign, pervades all beings, an individual is a sovereign as well. But an individual is a member of the Sangat also wherein he/she is equal, in status, with others and has equal rights for participation in all the proceedings of the Sangat irrespective of his/her caste, colour, creed or sex. An individual is, thus, an individual as well as a unit of the Sangat. He/She enjoys the double status of this type.

But it is only in the Sat-Sangat, Sadh-Sangat or Sangat that God's permeance in all beings can be perceived by one. Guru Nanak avers:

In holy company is found the Lord,
by devotion to Him through the Master's guidance.¹

It is evident from the foregoing verse of Guru Nanak that the immanence of God in each being can be perceived only in the congregation of exalted beings. Therefore, the sovereignty resting with God is verily vested by Him in the Sangat - the assembly of the exalted people and in the broader sense, the people as a whole living according to the dictates of the Guru. In this way, the people viz. the Sangat represent God and they, speaking in political terms, possess sovereignty in the State.

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 22
Thus, Guru Nanak's concept of Sovereignty has similarity with that of Popular Sovereignty. The doctrine of popular sovereignty implies that the supreme power in the state rests with the people. It is they alone who decide as to how the administrative machinery of a country has to be worked. This theory was put forward by the anti-monarchical writers as a counter-blast to the despotic power claimed by the monarchs at that time. Writers like Marsiglio of Padua, William of Ockam, George Buchanan, Thomas Barclay, Francis Hotman Boucher, Saurez, Bellarmin, Althusius and others attacked the exercise of unlimited powers by the kings and advocated assumption and exercise of that power by the people as a whole. Rousseau also advocated the sovereignty of the people. He took pains to show that sovereignty rests with the general will, which is the will common to all the people. His view was that the people were the repository of all the powers in the state, and the government was merely a servant who carried out the will of the state. ¹

However, there is a glaring difference between Guru Nanak's concept of Sovereignty and the doctrine of Popular Sovereignty available before him. It is that

¹. V.D. Mahajan, op.cit., p. 282
the former has its origin in the spiritual character of the Sangat viz. the people which is missing in the latter.

Moreover, God's permeance in each being makes each individual equal to another. There is no distinction on the basis of one's caste, colour, creed, sex, race, birth or status etc. Since all beings are equal, therefore, everyone is individually sovereign according to Guru Nanak's concept of sovereignty. Thus sovereignty rests with all the people and there is no occasion for its transfer to anybody in this system.

It is also necessary to point out here that in this concept of dual sovereignty, the individual sovereignty is not in conflict with the collective sovereignty. The former does not make one ego-inflated or defiant to the collective sovereignty; rather it is seasoned with humility and compassion for others through service to one's fellow-beings and it makes him/her a dignified and honourable being. Thus the individual sovereignty identifies itself with the collective sovereignty. In fact, each individual is the ruler as well as the ruled one.

In the words of Dr. Darshan Singh, "It is for the first time in the history of mankind that an individual
is given so much recognition and importance. An individual is a ruler as well as ruled one. Each individual is thus a sovereign as well. It is in this context that later on the concept of King in every saddle came into being."¹

Constitution:-

It is also essential for every state to have a constitution. According to Aristotle, "Constitution is the way of life the state has chosen for itself."² In the opinion of Woolsey, a constitution is "the collection of principles according to which the powers of the government, rights of the governed and the relations between the two are adjusted."³ According to Jellinek, a state without a constitution is not a state but a regime of anarchy.⁴ Therefore, a Constitution is indispensable for government of a state.

God, the Supreme King, rules over His state i.e. the Universe, the Divine Kingdom according to His own Constitution which is His Law, the Divine Law or the Law of Nature. It is His Will which

1. Dr. Darshan Singh, Japu Ji Sahib : Text, Context and Concerns, p. 43
2. Aristotle, quoted in V.D. Mahajan, op.cit.,p485
3. Woolsey, quoted in V.D. Mahajan, op.cit.,p.485
4. Jellinek, quoted in V.D. Mahajan, op.cit.,p.486
maintains His Hukam in the whole universe. Guru Nanak says:

In all worlds is operative God's sole Ordinance.¹

Since the Sangat are the representative of God in the Ideal State of Guru Nanak's vision, they are to give the constitution of the State in the form of Gurmatas viz. general counsel and resolution in accordance with the Guru's Word in the presence of the Guru viz. Guru Granth Sahib. However, it can be drafted by a constitution-committee comprising the unanimously selected representatives of the Sangat for their convenience, but it must be approved by the Sangat through Jaikaaras viz. verbal approval by the Sangat before its promulgation. Guru Nanak says as under:

Do such deeds as are approved in the holy company.²

**Government**: —

The nature of the State depends on the form of its government or the type of its political system. W.W. Willoughby observes that the states "are all alike—each and all being distinguished by the same sovereign


2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1141
attributes.\textsuperscript{1} To quote Gilchrist, "Strictly speaking all states are the same. The students must bear this in mind - the form of state is really the form of government."\textsuperscript{2}

Guru Nanak, while singing the nobility of human body, uses the image of a state for it. He says :-

\begin{quote}
Human body is a state which is the sublime dwelling-place of the unique Immaculate Lord. There dwell the five pre-eminent ones viz. the five senses and above them the unique Immaculate Lord has established His seat.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

It is from this image of the state (used for body) that the conceptual structure of the state of Guru Nanak's vision can be inferred. The term Nagari, herein, stands for the State which is the best dwelling-place of God Himself. Since the Sangat viz. the people are pervaded by God, they represent God on the earth, therefore, the State is the dwelling-place of the Sangat viz. the people. There also dwell the Panches - the pre-eminent persons who are accepted by God, in other words accepted by the Sangat

\textsuperscript{1} W.W. Willoughby, quoted by V.D. Mahajan in \textit{Political Theory}, p. 451
\textsuperscript{2} Gilchrist, quoted by V.D. Mahajan in \textit{Political Theory}, p. 451
\textsuperscript{3} Guru Nanak, \textit{Adi Granth}, p. 1039
viz. the people. Moreover, the existence of the Panches - the Accepted Five - testifies the existence of the Sangat, viz. the People in the Nagari, viz. the State. And there is the Ekankar Niralam - the Lord who sits on the seat viz. the Throne. The words Ekankar Niralam, here, connote the import of the ruler of the State.

In this way, a three-rung structure of the Ideal State of Guru Nanak's vision or the form of its government or the type of its political system evolves from the fore-going discussion of Guru Nanak's composition. This is the paradigm of the model state or government put forth by Guru Nanak. In this system, the first rung is the Sangat, viz. the people. The second rung is the Panches (the Five Accepted Ones or the Five Beloved Ones viz. Panj Pyaras) and the third rung is the Ruler.

**Panches viz. Panch Parvan (The Five Accepted Ones):**

Guru Nanak puts forth the concept of Panches viz. Panch Parvan* (The Five Accepted Ones or the Five Beloved Ones viz. Panj Pyaras) in his compositions. The Panches (Panj Pyaras) are the select persons attuned to God and accepted by Him. They always contemplate on the Sole Supreme Being and they grace...

* Hereafter the term 'Panch Parvan' will be generally denoted through the word 'Panches' in the thesis.
the Portal of the Lord, the King. Guru Nanak presents them as:

The Elect of God are those approved of Him;
Pre-eminent among men are they,
At God's Portal are they honoured.
And in splendour shine at His royal Door.
By meditation on God do they find illumination.¹

Herein the Panches (Panj Pyaras) have been shown as occupying the pre-eminent position in the Divine Kingdom, the image used by Guru Nanak for the Universe. They are God-oriented and the Select of God Himself.

Guru Nanak also avers:

In Gurmat (Sikh Thought) the Panches (Five Beloved Ones) are the sons of Guru.²

Thus it is evident that the institution of the Five Beloved (Panj Pyaras) was conceived by Guru Nanak. Since then it has been continually directing the destiny of the Sikhs. Even during the period of

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 3
² Ibid., p. 1041
the succeeding Gurus, this institution of the five pre-eminents\(^1\) efficiently and effectively held the reins of the Panth. But its position was elevated to the acme when Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, after baptising the Panj Pyaras (the Five Beloved Ones) with Amrit (Nectar i.e. the immortalising beverage or the eternalising libation), bowed before them and beseeched them to baptise him, too, in the same way. This act of the Tenth Master exhibits as to how significant the institution of the Five Beloved Ones in Gurmat (Sikhism) is, how much reverence the collective will of the Sangat (the Khalsa) is held in and how the positions of Guru and disciple exchange themselves and become one and the same at a time. Such an example is not found elsewhere in the history of humankind where the Guru himself descends to the level of the disciple (\textit{Aape Gur Chela}), and the

\begin{enumerate}
  \item [(i)] Names of the Five Beloved Ones at the times of Guru Arjan Dev Ji: Bhai Bidhi Chand Ji, Bhai Jethha Ji, Bhai Lahang Ji, Bhai Pirana Ji, Bhai Pera Ji.
  
  \item [(ii)] Names of the Five Beloved Ones at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji: Dewan Mati Das Ji, Bhai Gurditta Ji, Bhai Dayala Ji, Bhai Udho Ji, Bhai Jaita Ji.
  
  \item [(iii)] Names of the Five Beloved Ones who were baptised by the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh Ji: Bhai Daya Singh Ji, Bhai Dharam Singh Ji, Bhai Himmat Singh Ji, Bhai Mohkam Singh Ji, Bhai Sahib Singh Ji.

Please see Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, \textit{Mahan Kosh}, P. 791.
disciple ascends to the status of the Guru (guide). Thus the institution of Panj Pyaras was not new at the time of Guru Gobind Singh. It is a part of the basic structure of Sikhism since the day of its inception by Guru Nanak.

In the State of Guru Nanak's vision the Panches (Panj Pyaras) are the middle-rung leaders. The Panches are to be selected by the Sangat unanimously from amongst themselves on the ground of their merit only. As the Panches are the Select of God, and the Sangat are the representative of God on the earth, therefore, only the Sangats of various constituencies are entitled to select the Panches. Of course, they are selected by the Sangat, but once they are selected and are in office, their unanimous advice or counsel will be acceptable to and binding on all. But their position is not permanent; their tenure in their office is subject to their adherence to the norms of capability and performance of their duty. Moreover, every individual in the capacity of a constituent member of the Sangat can aspire to be one of the Panches, but he will have to prove himself equal to the responsibility this high office expects of him.

1. The Sangat came to be known as the Khalsa during the times of Guru Gobind Singh.
In the political system envisaged by Guru Nanak, the role of the Panches is that of a link between the Sangat and the Ruler. They are to act as a cabinet of counsellors or advisers as well as guides. They are to advise the Ruler on all the issues of the state and to guide the Sangat on these issues so that there may be a proper co-ordination between the Ruler and the Sangat and the government functions smoothly. Their functions are those of the Executive as well as the Judiciary. In the Executive, they are to act as the Council of Ministers i.e. the Chief consultants and helpers of the Ruler with regard to proper implementation of the policies of the State which are, however, to be designed and framed by the Sangat or by a Committee-comprising their representatives—with the approval of the Sangat, for the service and general welfare of the people and with no other end. The concept of the Panches is, indeed, the concept of collective leadership. Besides this, under this system, every department will comprise Panches (Panj Pyaras) with one nominal head. The Panches will act as the chief decision-makers while the head will simply be the signing authority. Moreover, the Panches will take all decisions unanimously.
The Panches' power is not limited to the political matters only. They have the authority to guide and keep a constant vigilance on the functioning of every institution i.e. religious, social, political and economic etc.

In the Ideal State of Guru Nanak's vision, it is the Sangat who reigns supreme. In it, no individual is given absolute power in any matter so that despotism or tyranny does not creep into it. Therefore, the concept of the Panches or Collective Leadership becomes the pre-requisite of the Ideal State. The Panches can effectively restrain the Ruler from the use of high-handedness of any sort in governing the State. Guru Nanak makes it clear in his pithy statement given under:

The ruler retains his office due to his good qualities, And till he discharges his duties with the advice and in the fear of the Panches.1

In this way, the temporal ruler does not possess absolute power. Unlike God, the King of the Universe, the temporal ruler is bound to have the

counsel of the Panches while performing his duties.

In the Lord's Court, the Panches occupy the most prominent position. Guru Nanak says :-

All creatures on their actions are judged in God's Court, just and true.
At His court are seated in celestial beauty the saints, Elect of God.
Who through His glance of grace are marked with His approval.  

Similarly, the Panches - the Select of the Sangat, the representative of God on the earth - are approved and authorised to occupy the most prominent place in the Judiciary of the Ideal State. They will act as the Jury. They will judge any matter that arises before them as antagonistic to the Law of the State and pass the verdict on the same collectively and unanimously. The verdict may be announced by the Judge or the Ruler but the decision-makers are the Panches. No individual is allowed or authorised to act as a sole judge in order to avoid even the smallest degree of subjectivity in the judgment as it can be tantamount to injustice. The Panches or the Jury will

make the judgment only in accordance with the Law of the State. They will be impartial while making the judgment and deliver justice to all.

The Panches are also to guide and lead the Sangat - the people. They are supposed to steer the people clear of any vicissitude or problem. They are to show the right path to the Sangat. They are to give proper guidance and true leadership to the Sangat on the issues of the State. While they are to discharge such a responsibility, they must themselves be illumined, enlightened and awakened. It means that the Panches must be selected by the Sangat only on the merit of their virtues. Such a person must not be selected as a Panch who is himself ignorant because he will not be able to give proper guidance to the people and help them find the true path. Guru Nanak says:

Being ignorant, if one shows the Path, he misleads the whole company, says Nanak,
He will be punished in the Lord's Court;
such will be the fate of this Guide.¹

Only those persons are fit to be selected as Panches who contemplate on the Naam of the Lord.

They by doing so find illumination with which they can guide the Sangat aright. Guru Nanak says:

By meditation of God do they find illumination. 

In other words, only the devotees of God are fit to be selected as Panches because they are free from fear of others and can lead the Sangat to their destination by dispensing truth to them. Guru Nanak says:

Lord! thy devotees in each age are holy.
As with tongues delight - suffused Divine laudation they sing.
Expressing Divine laudation, suffering and penury they cast off,
From fear of others free.
Ever awake, never are they found asleep.
By dispensing truth to the whole assembly liberation they bring.

Further, only such persons deserve to be selected as Panches who always cherish love of God in their hearts. They express their love of God through love of mankind and out of their love of mankind they render self-abnegating service to

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 3
2. Ibid., p. 1025
humankind. Guru Nanak exhorts such persons to be ever-ready for self-sacrifice. He says :-

If you seek to Play (the game) of love,
Then enter upon My Path with your head upon your palm.

But, once you set your foot on My Way,
Then find not a way out, and lay down thy head.¹

The Ruler :-

Guru Nanak's concept of the Ruler is to be inferred from his concept of the King of the Divine Kingdom, i.e. God but with the difference that while God, the King, is the Master of all beings, the Ruler of the Ideal State is to act as the Representative and Servant of the People who, in turn, represent God on the earth. According to Guru Nanak, there is but one King in the whole universe and He is the Lord Himself. He says :-

By R. Know : Truly beauteous is the Lord Himself,
None other than He is the King.²

And:-

Saith Nanak : He is the true King needing not anybody's counsel.³

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1412
2. Ibid., p. 936
3. Ibid., p. 17
But it should not lead to the conclusion that the role of the Ruler in the Ideal State is negatable; rather the Ruler in the Ideal State plays an important role, but his qualities and duties are to be inferred from Guru Nanak's concept of the King of the Divine Kingdom and his compositions commenting on his contemporary rulers and political set-up. Moreover, the Ruler of the Ideal State will act in consultation with the Panches.

Here it is necessary to look into the necessity of a Ruler in the State. As is evident from the image of the Divine kingdom that it is the King viz. God who governs the whole universe according to His own Law which keeps every thing in order - the cosmic order viz. Hukam, similarly the necessity of a Ruler in the State is indispensable. Since sovereignty in the State of Guru Nanak's vision rests with the Sangat, they are, indeed, the virtual ruler as well as the ruled. But it is not feasible for the Sangat as a whole to govern the State themselves, therefore, the need for the ruler emerges. However, there is a great difference in the position of God, the King of the Divine kingdom who is the Master of all beings, the self-supporting King of the universe,
and the ruler in the Ideal State who is to act as the Servant of the Sangat viz. the people and who is to derive his powers from the Sangat to rule over the State on behalf of the Sangat. He owes his authority to God/the Sangat/the individual, therefore, he is to act according to the general will or collective consent of the Sangat i.e. the People as a whole.

In the political system of Guru Nanak's vision, the Ruler will be selected or appointed by the Sangat from among themselves not by majority but by consensus on the basis of the merit of the person. The Sangat, in Guru Nanak's concept of the State, is the only competent authority to select the Ruler. The selection of the ruler will not be on the basis of his birth rights, dynasty rights or divine rights etc., but it will exclusively be a choice based on the merit of his virtues or qualities. His position is not permanent; he rules till his merits equal his office. He forfeits his right to retain his authority as soon as he loses the confidence of the people. He is neither the owner nor the master; he is only a custodian and a servant who is given powers by the Sangat to function as a particular functionary. On the
authority conferred by the Sangat on him, he may appoint his Council of Ministers from among the Panches unanimously selected by the Sangat of various constituencies. This position will also be assigned to a person purely on his merit and no other consideration will ever influence the procedure of appointment. In fact, in this political system, the procedure of appointing any functionary shall be by consensus and not by majority, depending on the merit of the person. Every functionary will carry with him an authority delegated by the Sangat viz. the people unanimously for discharge of a specific duty.

The ruler is to govern the State only in accordance with the constitution given by the Sangat and in consultation with the Panches selected by the Sangat unanimously, and help in establishment of the rule of the Law. But at the same time, sovereignty remains with the Sangat; it is not transferred to anybody, not even to the ruler. In fact, the ruler is not a sovereign but only a ruler authorised by the Sangat to rule till he deserves it. He governs the State only till the mandate of the Sangat is in his favour. Thus, Guru Nanak reverses the concept of
sovereignty prevalent at his times when the monarchs were the sovereign and the people were their subjects. But the ruler in the political system conceived by Guru Nanak carries with him an authority delegated by an individual as well as the Sangat unanimously for performance of a specific duty. He, indeed, rules on behalf of the Sangat viz. the people. In this system, the Sangat as well as an individual holds the real power. Everyone participates in every opinion and decision-making body not only freely but also effectively.

While expounding his concept of ruler in his compositions Guru Nanak uses different terms like Raja, Sultan, Patshah, Badshah, etc. for the general term of the Ruler—the Premier or Head of a State.

According to Guru Nanak only a capable person deserves to be a ruler. He says:—

Such occupy the throne as for it are fit;
These are such as by the Master's guidance the five evils annul, and turn God's humble servants, Realizing the Lord existing since primal time ever-present, who never shall not be — And who illusion and doubt have lifted.¹

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1039
The above words of Guru Nanak clearly indicate that he does not deem each and everyone fit to be a ruler. As the ruler occupies a pivotal position in society as well as state, he is supposed to possess the ability demanded of his high office. Though every individual as a constituent member of the Sangat can aspire to be the ruler, but he must possess the capability required for this high office and he must come up to expectations of the Sangat—the appointing authority i.e. the Electorate.

Keeping the afore-mentioned Ideal State in mind, Guru Nanak prescribes certain qualifications for a person to be selected as a ruler.

Since in the State of Guru Nanak's vision, the ruler will function as the servant of the Sangat i.e. the people, therefore, only such a person who is the Master's servant is worthy of becoming the ruler as he is enlightened and exalted by Truth. Guru Nanak says :-

The Master's servants are beloved of the holy Preceptor,
By contemplation of the holy word seated on Thrones.
The essence they realize and of the inner mystery
have enlightenment -
In holy company by truth exalted.¹

According to Guru Nanak, only such a person who has realised the Truth is qualified to be a ruler. He must have subdued the five evils viz. lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. Only such a person can become a selfless and self-abnegating ruler. Only a soul attuned to the True Word can truly understand the meaning of 'Parenthood of God and fraternity of man'. In order to attain to this state of mind he has to renounce worldly passions. A person engrossed in the mundane infirmities is by no means fit to become a ruler. On the other hand, the person who has overcome his weaknesses comes out triumphant in all spheres. Moreover, he will function treating himself as a servant to the Master and hence servant to the people as God dwells in the people, and not as a master of the people. He must take it for granted that he has to answer for his weaknesses to the Master and hence to the people. Guru Nanak puts his thought in the following words:

As greed, avarice and evil from their mind they cast out.
As fealty in the sovereign's name they proclaim,

Never are they discomfited.
Should one reputed to be the sovereign's servant,
Returns impertinent answers to his face,
Shall forfeit pay and never an exalted position occupy.¹

Only such a person will be selected as the ruler who is a flawless personality with a transpersonal outlook and who has transcended all the base passions of greed, illusion and sin etc. Indeed, he must have conquered his mind. Guru Nanak says :

Conquering thus thyself, mayest thou be lord of the world.²

Further, he must be manned and armoured with the virtues of truth, contentment, chastity, charity and self-restraint. Guru Nanak regarding the body as fortress and mind as its king, puts forth these traits in the following verse :

In the strong fortress of the body with beauteous doors, abides the mind king with his special assistants.
Whoever is engrossed in falsehood and avarice, he obtains not an abode in the Lord-Home, Through greed and sin one regrets,

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 936
2. Ibid., p. 6
If the mortal seeks the Lord's protection, then in this body village of King come and abide the powerful truth, contentment, chastity, charity and self-control. Nanak through the Guru's word one easily meets with Lord, the Life of the World and honour.\textsuperscript{1}

Moreover, he must have bedecked his character with fearlessness and dauntlessness. As God is fearless so he must also be fearless not in order to equal Him; but to imbibe this Godly quality in himself. Only then he can be able to discharge his duties and obligations sincerely and impartially. This he can do by meditating on the Naam through the Guru. Guru Nanak writes conceiving mind to be a king :-

This mind is the King and the hero of battles, By meditating on the Name, through the Guru this soul becomes fearless. Overpowering and arresting the five evil passions are holding ego in its grip, the soul confines them in one place.\textsuperscript{2}

From the above stanza it is also evident that the person to be selected as a ruler is to be such a hero

\textsuperscript{1} Guru Nanak, \textit{Adi Granth}, p. 1037
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 415
and warrior who has overpowered and arrested the five evil passions and has full control over them.

The person to be selected as a ruler is also to be rich in the qualities of intelligence, rationality, maturity of thought, sagacity and foresight so that he may be capable of discharging his responsibilities and duties properly. He must be adequately knowledgeable to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. A ruler lacking in these qualities is always prone to the error of doing favour to the anti-social elements in the state. He is unable to keep his integrity to the state intact and save the interests of the state. Consequently, stability of the State is put to danger. Guru Nanak has expressed this thought conceiving human body as a state and mind as its immature king. He says :-

The king (mind) is immature, he loves the wicked, and the state (human body) is unstable.1

Further, only such a person as develops godly qualities in himself deserves to be a ruler. He can do so by loving devotion to God, the Divine King. Thus he realises God and becomes God-like. Since God Himself is the King of the whole universe,

only a person who is God-like is the most suitable one to be the ruler of the Ideal State. Guru Nanak says :-

One that by loving devotion the Divine King contemplates,

In the battle against evil with his ego suppressed puts up a fight -

Night and day abiding dyed in love of God,

Reputed in the three worlds, over the Four Ages.

Whoever the Lord realizes, is like unto Him-

Pure in the extreme, his life fruitful.¹

Only such a person as have the above-

mentioned qualities and virtues can be a realised soul and qualify for becoming the ruler. Such a person is called a Gurmukh (God-oriented). Guru Nanak describing the traits of a Gurmukh says :-

The God-directed about the teachings of Shastras, Simiritis and Vedas are enlightened.

The God-directed of the Lord, pervasive in each being have realization.

The God-directed all rancour and enmity efface.²

2. Ibid., p. 942
And:-

The God-oriented alone recognises the doings wherein lie Truth, Contentment, Compassion and Righteousness.¹

The afore-quoted verses of Guru Nanak make it clear that only a Gurmukh is blessed with the qualities which are required by one to be the ruler of the State of Guru Nanak's vision. Since a Gurmukh's qualifications are similar to that of a ruler, therefore, only a Gurmukh qualifies to be a ruler.

Only a Gurmukh-ruler can dedicate himself to the service and welfare of the people for he, being unattached, is not self-centred, but is transpersonal in his outlook. This quality of the ruler can be inferred from the following words of Guru Nanak wherein he conceiving God as the King of the universe addresses Him as under :-

Thou the Sole Supreme Being, unattached, Divine, monarch,

Thyself dost Thou bring to fulfilment objectives of Thy devotees.²

2. Ibid., p. 1039
Plato says, "until kings are Philosophers or philosophers are kings, cities will never cease from ill - no, nor the human race; nor will our ideal polity ever come into being." Similarly, Guru Nanak's verses seem to articulate: Until Gurmukhs are rulers or rulers are Gurmukhs, states will never cease from ill-no, nor the human race; nor will our Ideal State ever come into being. Confucius also holds the opinion that the people should be governed through moral excellence. He says, "He who governs by his excellence may be compared to the pole-star, which abides in its place, while all the stars bow towards it.... If you govern the people by laws and keep them in order by penalties, they will avoid penalties, but if you govern them through moral excellence, they will retain their sense of shame and also live upto this standard." 

Functions of the State:

According to Aristotle, "The state comes into being for the sake of mere life; it continues


2. Confucius : Analects, Book.II,1,3., quoted in Dr. Trilochan Singh, op.cit., p. 108
to exist for the sake of the good life."¹ John Locke says that the purpose of the state is the 'commongood' or the 'good of mankind.'²

Guru Nanak's very concept of State indicates that the objective of the State of his vision is service of the people with a view to the attainment of their material welfare and spiritual exaltation. He says:–

The Self-dependent King - whose subjects are ever in Bliss.³

The very objective of the State of Guru Nanak's vision determines its nature and makes it a 'Service-State'. Guru Nanak while viewing state as a Service-State enrolls the idea of political system. The Service-State of his vision as a political system is not merely a static legal institution having population, definite territory, government and sovereignty; rather it is an active system operating in service of the people and it has certain functions to perform. The functions of

the State are performed by it through its government, therefore, the functions of the State, in turn, become the duties of the government of the State. So the functions of the State and the duties of the government become synonyms.

Guru Nanak, while assigning certain functions to the State or enjoining various duties on the government, has employed the then prevalent terms of political phraseology like Rajan, Raja, Sultan, Khan, Patshah, Kazi, Mugaddam, Mehta, Adali etc. to denote the general terms which are known as the State and the Government in the modern political terminology.

1. **Internal and External Security of the People** :-

   The first and foremost function of the State is to provide internal and external security to the people. It is the duty of the government to maintain law and order and ensure peace in the State and to give full defence to the people from foreign invasions. According to Guru Nanak, under the rule of the Lord neither enemy nor suffering can harm human beings. To quote him :-

   *Everlasting be Thy rule! Everlasting Thy rule—may it ever abide!*
Such alone serve Thee as in God-given enlightenment are absorbed.
Such from foes and suffering are to tally immune; Sin approaches them not.¹

Similarly it is obligatory for the government to grant full protection to people against foe and sufferings of all sorts—internal as well as external. If some aggressive forces kill the armless and innocent people, their protector i.e. the government is accountable for it. Guru Nanak puts forth it in his peculiar metaphorical vein in the following words :-

Should a powerful foe molest one equally powerful, Little would the mind be grieved, But when a ferocious tiger falls upon a herd of Kine,
Then must the Master be called to account.²

Guru Nanak vociferously condemns the rulers of his times who failed to discharge their duty of protecting their subjects from the atrocities inflicted by the army of the foreign invader, Babar, on them. He makes a scathing attack on such non-performing

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 567
2. Ibid., 360
These dogs that despoiled the jewels and wasted them, 
Now in their death none shall remember them.\(^1\)

The word 'jewels' here implies the people 
and resources of India.

Guru Nanak comments on the negligent rulers 
as under:\(^{-}\)

Rulers in levity and frivolity lost their senses.
Babar's command has gone abroad, that even princes 
now without a crust go about.\(^2\)

These comments of Guru Nanak on his contemporary 
rulers are an indication of the stress that he lays on 
the Internal and External Security of the people as one 
of the most significant functions of the State.

2. Fulfilment of the People's Essential Needs:\(^{-}\)

An important function of the State is to 
look after the well-being of the people. It is the 
duty of the government to ensure fulfilment of their 
essential needs such as livelihood.

According to Guru Nanak, the King, God is 
ever-bounteous and He provides sustenance to all His

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\(^1\) Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 360

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 417
beings. To quote him:

Eternally he doles out gifts;
Those receiving them at last can receive no more.
Infinitely the creation receives from Him sustenance.¹

Similarly, the government is to make a proper arrangement for fulfilling the people’s essential needs. It is to evolve such an economic system in which every individual is free to work, every individual gets employment and every individual works and fulfils his essential needs out of his earnings through productive work.

In the opinion of Guru Nanak, only such government is true and can rule successfully which takes proper care of the bare necessities of all the people. To quote him:

Only His is the true government
who nourishes the people day and night.²

Under such a government all the people are ever blissful as they have no scarcity of anything to cater to their essential needs. Guru

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 2
2. Ibid., p. 1331
Nanak eulogises such government:—

The fire in every home is Thy army and
righteousness exercises cheiftainship.¹
The Self-dependent king, whose subjects are ever in Bliss.²

Thus it is quite clear that it is the function of the State or the duty of the Government to arrange for the fulfilment of the essential needs of its people.

3. Check On Concentration of Wealth:—

It is obligatory for the government not to let wealth concentrate in a few hands as this tendency leads to economic disparities in society. Especially in the modern times when there is a wide gap between the 'overfed' and the 'underfed', it is the duty of the government not only to reduce but to engulf this gap and bring both closer to each other. To achieve this goal it is essential for everybody, may he be the ruler himself, to shed his inclination for amassing wealth, Guru Nanak's condemnation of such rulers and other individuals who fill their own coffers to amass

2. Ibid.
wealth for themselves, is indicative of the necessity of elimination of this tendency in the society. To quote him:

Amassing wealth, the Kings become proud.
The loved wealth goes not with the mortal.¹

Guru Nanak denounces the economic imperialism of the capitalists and the moneyed classes. According to him, accumulation of wealth is possible only by the acts of injustice and high-handedness. He says:

For wealth are vast multitudes dishonoured;
Many for this strayed;
This without evil-doing comes not,
in death it accompanies not man.²

According to Guru Nanak, God, the Lord of the Universe is the real Owner and He distributes the wealth as He pleases. To quote him:

This world is Thine. Thou art the Lord of Universe,
In a moment Thou establishest and disestablishest.
Thou distribuest wealth as Thou pleasest.³

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1342
². Ibid., p. 417
³. Ibid.
Since God is the real Owner and Giver of the wealth, all the people, including the Ruler and the Panches are only the custodians of the wealth. They have no right to consume it for their personal use beyond the limit of satisfaction of their essential needs.

In the State of Guru Nanak's vision, the government is supposed to evolve and maintain an economic system in which concentration of wealth in a few hands finds no chance of occurrence; rather it automatically remains under check. This system is discussed in detail in the Chapter III, entitled Guru Nanak's Concept of Economy.

4. Protection of the People from Exploitation

It becomes the duty of government of the state to protect the people from exploitation as the poor and the down-trodden often fall a victim to the common tendency of the rich and the powerful to exploit others at an opportune time. Guru Nanak calls his contemporary rulers who in stead of protecting their subjects from exploitation, themselves exploited their subjects, the blood-sucking kings and ferocious tigers, and their courtiers who tyrannised and tortured the poor subjects, the dogs.
When such rulers would be called for settlement of accounts, they would be dishonoured and insulted for their deeds of exploitation. The following words of Guru Nanak makes a scathing attack on the conduct of such rulers:

The kings are tigers; their courtiers are dogs,
They disturb the people caring not a fig for their convenience.
The kings' officials tear the docile subjects with their claws,
And, like curs, lick up their blood and bile.¹

He further says:­

But, hark, where men are to be judged
(at the Lord's Court),
Their noses will be chopped off, for God will trust them not.²

Exploiting of others and the grabbing propensities of the powerful are utterly condemned by Guru Nanak. He says:­

Saith Nanak: To grab what is another's is evil,
A pig's flesh to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu.

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1288
² Ibid.
Forbidden meat by addition of condiments turns not lawful.\(^1\)

He also advances the argument that if any cloth is defiled with blood then how a person who sucks the blood of human beings through exploitation can be without stain. How can he be pure-minded? He writes :-

If blood sticks to the clothes, the clothes become impure;
How can the minds of those be pure who suck the blood of human beings?\(^2\)

The above discussion shows that in the State of Guru Nanak's vision, the government authorities, the officials and functionaries cannot exploit anyone but they will do the reverse of it i.e. will protect the people against exploitation of any sort. Thus, the system of Guru Nanak's vision will be totally free from exploitation.

5. **Public Service** :-

The State of Guru Nanak's vision is supposed to perform public service directed towards the material,

2. Ibid., p. 140
mental and moral welfare of the people with the purpose of making their lives full, happy and comfortable by removing the obstacles like disease, ignorance and poverty etc., and making the conditions of human life conducive to the realisation of spiritual exaltation of the people.

The following words of Guru Nanak make it clear that the State of his vision, based on his concept of the Divine Kingdom, fulfils the functions of the people, and thus performs public service:

Thou the Sole Supreme Being, unattached, Divine monarch.

Thyself dost Thou bring to fulfilment objectives of Thy devotees.¹

The word 'monarch (Raja)', here, denotes the government of the State of Guru Nanak's vision who is to perform the functions of the State.

Moreover, the service of the people is performed by the State through its government not for any gain or profit but for the sake of service aiming at the happiness of the people.

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1039
The State is to render public service according to the needs of the times. However, in modern times, the important public services are the means of communication and transport, water supply, electricity etc. Public health is also to be looked after by the State. Hospitals and dispensaries are to be set up in which the treatment free of cost is open to everybody without any distinction of the rich and the poor, the high or the low etc. Educational institutions are also to be run by the State. In those institutions free education is to be given to the people without discrimination of any sort. Guru Nanak's following words are suggestive of the need of education for the people. He says:—

The subjects bereft of understanding are carcases full of straw.¹

The people are also to be given security against sickness, old age infirmity, accident and disability etc. and other calamities.

The ensurance of security to the people will make the conditions of their lives conducive to the realisation of their spiritual exaltation - the real purpose of their life.

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 469
Deliverance of Justice

Deliverance of Justice to all the people is one of the major functions of the State. Regarding human body as a city and mind as its king, Guru Nanak brings forth the functions of the State or the duty of the government - the mind - to do justice under all circumstances. He writes:

In the city of the body the mind is king,
And his five sources of knowledge abide therein thought - absorbed.
The King settled on his throne the holy word contemplates
And praiseworthy justice maintains.¹

The word 'city' in the above quotation denotes the 'state'.

According to Guru Nanak, the Government is required to govern the people with justice. He says:

A ruler can purify his mind only by administering Justice...²

Guru Nanak conceives God, the King of the Universe, as a Justice-dispenser. He says:

By His Might has He, the Dispenser of Justice, established His Throne.³

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 907
2. Ibid., p. 1240
3. Ibid., p. 580
And:-

He by His Might creates the creation,
He Himself, the King of the universe,
administrers justice.¹

Only a truthful i.e. just government can ensure its stability and is remembered even after the expiry of its term. Guru Nanak says:—

The rule of the truthful King is known in many ages to come.²

The government forfeits its right to retain its authority as soon as it allows corruption to creep into its administration. The corruption that prevailed in the judicial system of Guru Nanak's age, was gnawing at the very roots of society. It became the butt of his vehement condemnation and ridicule. He comments:—

The Kaliage is a Knife, the kings are butchers;
Religion (Righteousness and Justice) has taken wings and fled.³

And:—

In this age none at sight of suffering takes pity,
No one from receiving graft restrains himself.

2. Ibid., p. 142
3. Ibid., p. 145
Rulers administer justice as is their palm greased. None by invoking the name of God is persuaded.¹

The corruption in this department was practised even in the name of God or holy scriptures. The Kazis (priests of Islam) often accepted bribe and delivered injustice in return thereof. At the instance of objection raised by any person they used to quote the verses from the holy scriptures and interpreted them in such a way as suited their own selfish interests. Guru Nanak satirises the unjust practice of the so-called justice in very strong terms in the following verse:

Becoming a judge a Kazi sits to administer justice. He tells the rosary and mutters God's name; Taking bribe he usurps the right to justice (and does injustice) If someone asks him, then he quotes and reads out some aphorism.²

It can be inferred from the above discussion that in the State of Guru Nanak's vision the government authorities, judges and other officials will be such

2. Ibid. p. 954
persons as have risen above corrupt practices and ensure deliverance of justice to all the people. They will not let corruption creep into the judicial system of the state, rather the judicial system of the state will be such in which there remains no opportunity for corruption to prevail.

7. **Safeguard of the People's Human Rights**

The government will guarantee the people their personal liberty and other human rights. It will protect the honour of the people because death is better than a life of dishonour. Guru Nanak says:

> In one lives and loses honour;
> All that he eats is unrightful.\(^1\)

The Government authorities will not impose their own religion, culture and thoughts upon the people; rather they will ensure liberty of conscience to the people. It can be inferred from Guru Nanak's verses full of poignant criticism of such Kings who, during his times, imposed their culture and faith on their subjects. The Muslim rulers mulcted the Hindu temples and their religious rites and practices. Guru Nanak makes a scathing attack on their policy of

\(^1\) Guru Nanak, *Adi Granth*, p. 142
suppression of other's faith even though he himself does not believe in the faith, rites and practices of the Hindus. He simply raises his voice against the forcible suppression of anyone's feelings. He condemns such tax in these words:

Ah! tax is levied on the temples of gods
Such a practice has come into vogue.¹

Guru Nanak not only criticises such rulers as tried to impose their faith and culture on their subjects but also vehemently condemns such people who adopted the culture and faith of the ruling class under pressure and duress. He condemns the Hindus for wearing the blue (Islamic) attire and reading Islamic scriptures curbing their own conscience. He writes in Asa di Var:

Wearing blue the rulers' approval They seek;
With money derived from mlechhas the Puranak they worship.²

Though Guru Nanak is not against learning of any language, yet he condemns the adoption of the language of the aliens under pressure. He criticises

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1191
2. Ibid., p. 472
the Hindus of his times for adopting the Islamic language in stead of their own language. To quote him:-

In every house all the persons say 'Mian'
( Islamic language ),
Your language has become different, O man (Hindu).

All these comments of Guru Nanak are indicative of the duty of the government to protect the people's human rights.

Guru Nanak's condemnation of his age as the dark age when "true men speak the truth and suffer for it; when penitent cannot perform penance; when he who repeats God's name meets obloquy" is suggestive of the function of the State to make conditions of human life conducive to the execution of religious exercises and attainment of spiritual exaltation by human beings. The State will do so by guaranteeing non-violation of the people's human rights.

8. **Promotion of Fraternity of Human Beings** :

The state is not a mere aggregate or sum-total of human beings; it is their unity.

It will be the function of the State of Guru Nanak's vision or the duty of its government to maintain this unity and to make it everlasting through promotion of the sense of Fraternity among human beings. The State will do so by recognising equal dignity of all individuals, by guaranteeing equal freedom and rights to all, and by rendering service to all equally without any discrimination.

The people of the State may comprise persons of diverse races, religions, creeds, sects, castes and cultures etc., but all of them are to be treated alike as all of them are but forms of the One, the Lord Himself. Guru Nanak says :-

Himself He assumes numerous guises -
Thus expresses the humble Nanak the vision.¹

Since the Light of one Creator pervades all beings howsoever diverse they may be, the sense of Brotherhood of Man is the natural outcome of this all-pervasiveness of God in His creation and

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 350
it cements the ties of unity in diversity. Guru
Nanak avers:—

One God moves concealed in all diversity of
creation, though no one form resembles another. ¹

Bhai Jodh Singh writes in his book 'Some
Studies in Sikhism', "Brotherhood of Man is the
necessary outcome of God-head." ²

Guru Nanak's concept of human brotherhood,
indeed, implies universal fraternity of human
beings and it transcends the boundaries of countries
or states also. Guru Nanak conveys the message of
universal fraternity of human beings in the following
verse:—

All creatures are noble, none low,
One sole Maker has all vessels fashioned;
In all three worlds is manifest the same Light.³

Guru Nanak's concept of universal fraternity
of human beings finds expression in Article 1 of the
Universal Declaration of 1948 in these words, "All

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 596, quoted by
Dr. Harnam Singh Shan in Five Hundred Thoughts
of Guru Nanak, p. 273
human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."\(^1\)

Such a feeling of universal fraternity will pave a way for, what is called in political phraseology, 'peaceful co-existence' on the international level. Guru Nanak, the protagonist of peace and compassion, decries the invasion by one state on another through his condemnation of Babar's aggression on India and vivid depiction of the ghastly scene of carnage and heart-rending soldiers on the innocent people of India which have already been discussed in the first chapter.

**Responsibilities and Duties of the People:**

While Guru Nanak has prescribed various qualifications of a ruler and assigned indispensable functions to the State or enjoined various duties on the government, he also expects the Sangat viz. the people or the citizens of the State to assume certain responsibilities and discharge their duties with all sincerity and integrity.

The Sangat will have to be very cautious and careful in the selection of the Panches as well as the Ruler. What Guru Nanak says in the spiritual terms is fully applicable in the political terms also. He says about the selection of a guide:

The disciples, who have an ignorant Guide; cannot secure a position of respect.¹

Herein, the word 'disciples' denotes the 'people' and the word 'Guide' denotes the leader in the political terms.

Guru Nanak condemns conferment of authority (spiritual) on the undeserving persons in poignant terms:

They who confer authority on those who deserve not, are fools, and they, who accept it, are shameless. How can a mouse, dragging winnowing-basket tied with a string to his waist behind him, enter a hole? Both will be destroyed: the consecrators and the consecrated.²

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 58
2. Ibid., p. 1285, quoted in Fauja Singh, Guru Nanak And The Social Problem, the seminar paper published in Perspectives On Guru Nanak, edited by Harbans Singh, p. 147.
It can be inferred from the above composition of Guru Nanak that the selection of an undeserving person as the Ruler or a Panch by the Sangat will definitely prove fatal to all of them.

The responsibility of the Electorate is quite evident from the fore-going discussion.

Revenue is essential for the existence and functioning of the State and meeting the expenses on public services. For the purpose of raising the revenue it becomes indispensable for the people to contribute to the State Exchequer. Contribution to the State Exchequer is, indeed, their responsibility which they are expected to execute voluntarily and with pleasure not only for maintaining and sustaining the State but also for their solidarity with the government.

Guru Nanak says:—

The ruler puts forth the requirement of the State Exchequer,

The people contribute to it with pleasure—

Thus is ensured their solidarity with the State.\(^1\)

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But the revenue contributed by the people is never to be misappropriated by the government.

The people will always bear in mind that the Government is their own and none else's. They will also pay due regard and appreciation to the government for its right decisions. It will enable the government to function effectively and discharge its duties efficiently. If the people pay full regard to such a government which looks after them well and works for their welfare then they have not to worry at all in any matter. It will also ensure their free access to the government to apprise it of their grievances if any. Guru Nanak says:

They deem God, the True King, as their own, No obstacles stop them at the door of His palace.  

The people are not to live in terror of the government. In fact, there is no place for despotism or tyranny in Guru Nanak's concept of the State. It is also opposed to the Theory of Divine Rights of Kings according to which the King was ordained by God to rule over the people. In the State of Guru Nanak's vision, the government cannot

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 57
act arbitrarily or ride rough-shod over the people's wishes. It has to be responsive and responsible to the people and respect their wishes. The ruler shall act as the servant of the people and serve in public interest. If he misbehaves and acts contrary to the wishes and interests of the people, he will be pulled up by the people. He has to remember always that the people are the final source of authority and the real power rests not with him but with the people as he is to rule in accordance with their wishes. The following composition of Guru Nanak refers to the real authority of the common and even unprivileged people:

A worm He may exalt to position of a ruler and,
He may reduce an army to ashes.¹

According to Guru Nanak, a great responsibility falls on the shoulders of the people to ensure proper, efficient and effective functioning of the government in the interest of the people. They should take direct and vital interest in politics. They have to be intelligent, educated, enlightened, well-informed, public-spirited, sober and level-headed. They must be fully aware

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 144
of their obligations and rights. They should have the will and ability to exercise power. Commenting on the contemporary political set-up, Guru Nanak condemns the unenlightened people steeped in obscurantism who lived in fear of the despotic rulers. He calls them mere corpses stuffed with chaff:

Greed and evil are King and counsellor; falsehood their officer.
Lust the officer who is called for advice - all three hold conclave to chalk out plans.
The subjects bereft of understanding are carcases full of straw.¹

Guru Nanak goes even to the extent of saying that if the people obey the orders of a corrupt and oppressive ruler who fails to deliver justice or who takes bribe for delivering justice, it is the fault more of the people than that of the ruler. Such people have been compared to a dog who obeys the just or unjust orders of his master only for a piece of bread. Guru Nanak says:

Rulers administer justice as is their palm greased.
None by invoking the Name of God is persuaded.

¹ Guru Nanak, [Adi Granth, pp. 468-69.](#)
Saith Nanak: Men are human in shape and name -
Their doings dog-like: at the door waiting to
carry out commands.\footnote{1}

The above compositions of Guru Nanak make it clear that the people are supposed to be fully conscious of their obligations and rights and they are to be justice-loving. They are expected to resist tyranny and raise a strong voice against 'unjust rule'. It is the people who are to give mandate for or against the government.

The Sangat viz. the people have full authority to replace any functionary of the Government - the ruler as well as the five beloved ones. Therefore, the tenure of all functionaries is subject to their maintenance of capability and performance. In case of a functionary proving to be a non-performer, a sub-performer or an ill-performer, the Sangat is authorised to recall and replace him with a better substitute.

The form of government of Guru Nanak's vision, thus, implies a government of the Sangat

\footnote{1} Guru Nanak, \textit{Adi Granth}, p. 350
for the Sangat and by the Sangat. It is, in fact, a 'Sangatocracy'.

Commenting on the Sikh concept of 'the duties of a ruler' P.K. Chaudhary says that it corresponds with the ancient Hindu concept of Raja Dharma.¹

But Guru Nanak's concept of the State differs from the ancient Raja Dharma in so far as it enjoins on every individual (Sikh) to strongly oppose an 'unjust rule' in order to secure justice for the people. Referring to this aspect of Sikh Polity, Kapur Singh says, "The interest of Sikh in society and politics, however, is direct and vital. His is, what Schubart calls, the Heroic culture-mentality, which views the world as under-developed and chaotic, and which he must improve by his organisational effort. Such a heroic man, the Singh, does not accept the world as it is, but he fights against it to change it ..."²

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The fore-going discussion shows that the State of Guru Nanak's vision is, indeed, a Service-State in the real sense of the word. In it, not only the Government viz. the Ruler and the Panches but also the people viz. the Sangat will assume their respective responsibilities and discharge their duties with sincerity and integrity always keeping the larger interests of the individual as well as the people as a whole in view. Therefore, the political system as envisaged by Guru Nanak will automatically evolve itself into a 'righteous rule'.