Guru Nanak's Concept of Man

Homo Sapiens is the acme of God's Creation and the central figure in the whole of the universe. Man is at the helm of worldly affairs. Every thought whether spiritual or temporal regards man as the 'supreme creature' of the universe and gives due recognition to human life. So much so that any religion, any philosophy is so closely related and associated with man that it cannot, at all, exist independent of him; the Philosophy of Politics is no exception to it.

The word 'Politics' means the "science and art of government."* The Philosophy of Politics or Political Thought concentrates on speculation about the nature, purpose, functions etc. of the state. But it would be wrong to restrict its scope to the problems of state and government only; it is essential to extend it to the study of man. Since man lies at the centre of all social sciences, therefore, a discussion about his nature, his place in the universe, and his relation to his fellow-being viz. society must be the pre-supposition of all reflections about the state and its government.

According to Phyllis Doyle, "three main subjects constitute the pith of political thought. The nature and functions of man; his relation to the rest of the universe

* The word 'Man', in this chapter, denotes 'Human Being.'

1. 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Ethymology edited by T.F. Hoad, P.360
which involves a consideration of the meaning of life as a whole; emerging from the interaction of these to the problem of the relation of man to his fellowmen. The latter is the main concern of political theory in its narrowest sense and involves a discussion on the nature, purpose and functions of the state.¹

**Amid immensity** of creation man is unique. He alone possesses a self as well as consciousness. He is endowed with the unique gift of intelligence. "Man has capacity to master not only the forces of nature but also the living beings through his intellect. In the absence of the sentient and intellectual capacity, no allusion or assertion of any sort of reality is possible. Thus man stands at the highest pedestal of the cosmos; he is last step of the staircase of the universe."² In the opinion of Willard F. Libby, "It seems likely that man has unique mental and spiritual qualifications."³ The author concludes: "Man's intelligence, self-respect, sense of responsibility and sense of destiny are the qualities which will carry us forward. He must enjoy his role as King of the universe for all this to come true."⁴

1. Phyllis Doyle, quoted in R.M. Bhagat, Political Thought: Plato to Marx, P.1
2. Lajwanti Lahori, The Concept of Man in Sikhism, P58
4. Ibid.
Since times immemorial man has been endeavouring to know and understand himself. Various schools of thought have propounded different philosophies on man. From where has he come; what was the purpose behind his creation; what has he to do and why, where has he to go after death, and many other similar questions pose a challenge to the thinkers and philosophers. Different schools of thought have tried to answer such queries in their own way. Guru Nanak has also put forth his concept of man in his peculiar way.

Guru Nanak’s concept of man is based on his spiritual and intuitive knowledge woven in the very texture of his hymns. According to Guru Nanak’s religious thought, the chief goal of man is to win respect and honour in the Court of People as well as God. Guru Nanak’s whole thought revolves round this goal of human life and the question as to how to realise this goal. To understand Guru Nanak’s concept of man aright, it is necessary to first understand his cosmogony and cosmology.

Guru Nanak’s Cosmogony and Cosmology:–

When the Sidhas posed the question to Guru Nanak about the origin of the cosmos:–

How may the origin of the cosmos be described?  

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 940
Guru Nanak replied:—

The origin of the cosmos is wonder profound.¹

Though Guru Nanak regards the origin of the cosmos as a matter of wonder only and he does not propound any systematic theory of the cosmic creation yet his verses contained in the Adi Granth make repeated references to the creation of the cosmos and the order prevailing in the whole universe. In fact, these verses form the very pattern of Guru Nanak's Cosmogony and Cosmology, the features of which can be discerned by a close scrutiny of the text of his hymns.

In the Mul Mantra (Fundamental Creed), Guru Nanak describes Brahma as the Creator (Karta). The Mul Mantra reads as under:—

He is the Sole Supreme Being; of eternal
manifestation;
Creator, Immanent Reality; Without Fear;
Without Rancour; Timeless Form; Unincarnated;
Self-Existent; Realized by grace of the holy
Preceptor.²

As He creates so He is the Cause of the origin of the universe or creation.

According to Guru Nanak, God is not only the Cause but the Sole Cause of the whole Creation. He postulates:—

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 940
2. Ibid., p. 1
From the One has arisen all creation.¹

Guru Nanak regards God as the Efficient as well Material Cause of Creation. He affirms that the Cause of Creation is in the hands of the Creator alone:-

He, the Lord is Omnipotent, "so has Nanak Realised. The cause is only in the Creator's control who Keeps all creative Power to Himself".²

Guru Nanak outrightly rejects the idea of any other creator besides God. He says:-

Reality Himself He made by the act of joining. Breaking the Egg He joined and unjoined it. Earth and Heaven His seats He made. Night and day with fear and love He invested. He who created, also watches over them. None other than He is Creator.³

The universe is the outcome of the ineffable Divine Order (Hukam). Guru Nanak writes:-

By Divine Order are all forms manifested; Inexpressible is the Divine Order.⁴

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.223  
². Ibid., P.1353  
³. Ibid., P.839  
⁴. Ibid., P.1
God's one Utterance gave rise to all the sources of life. According to Guru Nanak:

All the endless expanse of creation arose out of one Note,

Giving rise to millions of streams.¹

'Streams' here implies all the the sources from which creation has multiplied.

In fact, God's very Ideation is His Word, His Note, His Utterance, His Will or the Divine Order (Hukam).

At another place also, Guru Nanak observes that it is from the Word of the Lord that all forms have been created. To quote him:

One end is the earth, another water
In a Chamber of four doors is Thy seat.
One sole being in all the worlds is pervasive-
In Thy Word lies the mint wherefrom issue all created forms.²

The secret concerning the state of being before creation poses a great challenge to human intellect. According to Guru Nanak, before the creation of the Universe, the Lord abided in Himself. For countless years nothing was visible as everything abided unmanifested in the Wondrons Word within the Lord Himself. The Lord Himself was trance-absorbed in the void.

2. Ibid., P. 596
To quote Guru Nanak:-

The Absolute Lord then abided in Himself.\(^1\)

When there was neither the earth, nor the sky
then the

Absolute Lord's Light permeated all the three worlds,
Yea, all distinctions, all forms, then abided in
one Wondrous Word.\(^2\)

And:-

Within the infinite Order

For crores of years, there was utter darkness.
Neither there was earth nor sky.
Neither there was day nor night.
Only (He) was existent, trance-absorbed in the Void.\(^3\)

The Lord created the universe when He willed.
He manifested five elements, various species of creation,
day and night etc. from the attributeless void, and He
sustained the expanse of the whole universe without
any external support. Guru Nanak says:-

As it pleased Him, the world He created;
Without a supporting power the expanse He sustained.\(^4\)

And:-

From the unattributed void were created earth
and sky,

\(\ldots\)

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1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, PP.940
2. Ibid., P. 945-46
3. Ibid., P. 1035
4. Ibid., p. 1036
From the attributeless void arose species of creation and forms of utterance -

From the attributeless void were created the pair of night and day,

The five elements from the attributeless void were manifested.

Wherefrom is the body compounded and man in action engages.¹

According to Guru Nanak, God's Will viz. Divine Law governs the whole universe. This Divine Law maintains the Cosmic Order (Hukam) which is operative everywhere in the universe. Guru Nanak says:

In all worlds is operative God's sole Order.²

Here it is necessary to clarify that the word 'Hukam' (Divine Order) used by Guru Nanak in his hymns means neither the king's order to his subjects nor God's order to His beings. It means a system which operates in the perfect manner to sustain the universal set-up. It is, thus, the Cosmic Order. Guru Nanak speaks of the crores of solar systems like the one the human beings are living in. Each organ of this universe is functioning in a well co-ordinated perfect system.

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, PP.1037-38
². Ibid., P.223 (Hukam also implies the Divine Law or Ordinance which maintains the Cosmic Order (Hukam).
the slightest particle is not outside the system operating in the universe. This objectively operating perfect system given by God to the total universal set-up has been termed as Hukam in Guru Nanak's verses.

God is not only the Creator; He is also the Sustainer and the Destroyer of all the myriads of world and underworlds. Guru Nanak writes:-

Myriads are, the worlds and underworlds;
yea, endless and countless are these,
And all, O God, are Created and Supported by Thee;
Thou Createst and Destroyest.
The eighty-four lakhs of species on the earth
too Issued from Thee.¹

Another mystery relates to the hour of creation. According to Guru Nanak, it is known to none else but God (the Creator) Himself as to when the genesis took place. To quote Guru Nanak :-

What the hour and occasion,
What the date and day,
What the season and month -
When Creation began ?
Had Brahmins found the answer,
In their scriptures would they have recorded it;

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 1283
Nor have the Kazis from Koranic record.
The Yogi knows not the date and day,
season or month;
The creator who made the universe,
alone knows the answer.¹

The immensity of creation is quite puzzling.
The Cosmic expanse, according to Guru Nanak, is too large
to measure, its objects are innumerable. He writes:—

Endless the forms created by Him—
Invisible their limit.
Many yearn His extent to know
Yet it ever eludes them.
None knows His limit—
The more it is expressed, the farther it beggars
description.

....

To Him alone is His extent known.²

Now the question arises what initiated the
existence of the universe and how the universe came
into existence. According to Guru Nanak, it is the Word
of the Lord Himself that initiated the existence of the
universe. In the Sidh-Gothi, a Sidha posed a question

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.4
2. Ibid., P.5
to Guru Nanak:

What is the origin of existence? \(^1\)

Guru Nanak replied:

The Word is the origin of existence. \(^2\)

In the opinion of Guru Nanak, the Word originated from the True Lord and from the Word water came into existence and from the water the universe (creation) came into existence. To quote him:

From the True Lord came the Word,
from the Word came water,
With water are the three worlds created,
And Divine Light in all beings is pervasive. \(^3\)

It is clarified here that the words *Pavan* and *Shabad* as used by Guru Nanak in his verses, are synonymous at some places. For instance, in the Salok at the end of Japuji Sahib, Guru Nanak regards *Pavan* as *Guru*, and in the Sidh-Goshti, he regards *Shabad* as his *Guru*. But nowhere in his verses, Guru Nanak has acknowledged and accepted two *Gurus*. Therefore, *Pavan* and *Shabad* cannot be two different entities. Hence,

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2. *Abid.*, P.943
3. Ibid., P.19
4. Ibid., P.8
5. Ibid., P.943
Pavan and Shabad are one and the same thing, and Pavan is synonymous with Shabad. In other words, the word Pavan or Pava used in the above-quoted verses denotes Shabad viz. Word. It is the Word of the Lord viz Shabad which has been regarded by Guru Nanak as the beginning of the universe.

It is only by His Will that all species of creation breathe and live. Guru Nanak avers:

All He does as pleases Him:
Eighty-four lakhs species of creation, all by His will breathe and live.¹

The whole creation is true and real as it is created by the True One, the Ultimate Reality. It is transitory only in its appearance. Guru Nanak says:

True are Thy worlds, True Thy universes;
True Thy regions, True the forms Thou Createst.
True are Thy Doings, True all Thy Thoughts.

O Thou True King, True, is all Thy Play,
Nanak: they who dwell on Thy Truth, are also True.
For all that is born to die is false and vain.²

2. Ibid., P. 463
And:-

Since Thou art True, everything (created by Thee)
is also true.¹

Moreover, the creation of God is a reality
for God, the Ultimate Reality is immanent in it. Guru
Nanak says:

His own self He Himself expanded, and manifested
He Himself the Name;
Secondly Himself created He the expanse of the
universe;
And abiding in it He beholds it delightfully.²

The words like False (Koor), Dream (Sapna)
etc. used by the Guru For the 'world' often create a
doubt in one's mind about the reality of the creation.
It is made clear here that the 'world' for which the
above words have been used, is not the Creation of God
but it is the world, the narrow world created due to
one's Hummal (ego). It becomes quite clear from the
following question and answer between the Sidha and
Guru Nanak:-

The Sidha asked:-

How does the world come into existence?³

The Guru replied:-

The world comes into existence through a
sense of Ego.⁴

2. Ibid., P 463
3. Ibid., P. 946.
4. Ibid.,
What is the purpose behind the creation?
This question is still another mystery about which Guru Nanak says that it is known to Himself alone. He writes:

P of P know:
The Supreme Lord is King:
To view His might has He raised this show.
All this He views and its meaning realizes;
all to Him is known,
And within and without is He operative.¹

Even then Guru Nanak believes that the purpose of the creation of the world is the evolution of the human soul. It means that the individual soul could evolve and exalt unto the Ultimate Reality, the Supreme Soul so that nothing but Brahma and His Love could abide in his mind. To quote Guru Nanak:

For the sake of Saints, the Lord has installed the three worlds.
He who comprehends his own self comes to know the reality.
Who, within his mind, enshrines the truth, and hearty Divine Love;
Prays Nanak, I am a servant of His.²

Moreover, God has created the earth and made it the theatre whereon human beings are supposed to practise righteousness. Guru Nanak writes:

2. Ibid., P.224
The earth has He created and made it the theatre of righteousness.\(^1\)

Guru Nanak means to say that God has created the Universe with a view to enable individuals to acquire the status of 'saints' through evolution, that is through their spiritual exaltation by practising righteousness and dwelling on the Word of Guru. The saint stands for a God-oriented man who bears the True Lord and His Love in his heart, and practises righteousness. Guru Nanak says:-

The True One the earth for making the God-oriented has created,
Within it the rest of creation and dissolution is only a play.
He who is dyed in the True Word, full of joy of it, Attached to truth, with honour departs to his true home.\(^2\)

This shows that the earth has been created for transformation of ordinary human beings into 'saints', the God-oriented, the perfect men through evolution of their soul by putting them into the cycle of births and deaths

\(^1\) Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.1033
\(^2\) Ibid., P.941
so that the True Preceptor finds them fit to be imbued with the Word. Guru Nanak says:

After the self over multiple birth has wandered
Has the True Preceptor his teaching imparted.¹

It is only through the Word that one's soul can exalt. To quote Guru Nanak:

The True Preceptor the spurious into genuine coins,
By the holy Word converts, exalts.²

Using the image of Tourney for the world Guru Nanak describes how the blessed ones, the God-oriented joyfully participate in the Game of life on the earth arranged by the Lord Himself and come out victorious by toppling the Egocentrics. To quote Guru Nanak:

The Lord Himself Created the Tourney: Himself He brings the Spectators to watch the Bout;
And there is a riot of Noise all around, but the Blessed ones are in Joy.
For, they Floor the Egocentrics, the Foolish ones, who build on Illusions.
Nay, the God Himself Stages, this play: Himself He Wrestles Himself He Defeats.³

2. Ibid., P. 143
3. Ibid., F. 1280
Thus the world is a necessary, perpetual and dependent entity which is a rational and reflected truth and an individual, taking it as real, has to lead a righteous life, to recognise his self and to realise the Name through contemplation on the Word of the True Preceptor to attain to perfection.

**Man's Place in the Universe:**

As the whole universe is but a manifestation of God Himself so is man who is a part of it. Though man is a tiny entity as compared to the limitless universe; but he occupies a prominent place in it.

According to Guru Nanak, in the whole universe, the earth - the planet wherein the living beings exist - occupies the most significant place. God has created countless things forming the universe and amongst them, the earth has been established as the place for human beings to practise righteousness. Guru Nanak says:—

God created nights, seasons, lunar days, week, days, wind, water, fire and nether-lands.

In the midst of these He established the earth as a place for practice of righteousness.¹

On the earth God created variegated beings, which have been given various names and which are countless in number. To quote Guru Nanak:—

Therein (on the earth) He created beings of various kinds and colours.

Various and countless are their names.²

2. Ibid.
Among all the beings living on the earth, the human being occupies the most prominent place. So much so that Guru Nanak, in his compositions refers to human birth as a precious one and hard to attain. It indicates that human life is significant and out of eighty four lakhs of species created by God on earth the human being is superior to the other species. Guru Nanak says:

This life, precious as a jewel, for a cowrie-shell is forfeited.¹

Further:–

With the human birth hard to attain, are the God-oriented blessed.²

God has endowed man with mental faculties and consciousness which the other species lack. The following words of Guru Nanak bring forth his presumption about the presence of these faculties in human being:–

In that sphere are fashioned Absorption, Wisdom, Enlightenment of Mind

Forged therein is the vision of gods and mystics.³

According to Guru Nanak, God has enthroned Mind in human body as a King who directs and governs all the activities of man. He says:–

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.156
2. Ibid., P.751
3. Ibid., P.8
In the citadel town of the body rules the self (mind) as King, Served by the officers of sources of action and his personal servants, the sources of enlightenment.¹

At another place, Guru Nanak says that mind is a 'trader' in the 'shop' of the body wherein it carries on the trade of truth. It means that mind has the power to sift good from evil and truth from untruth. Guru Nanak writes :-

This body is a shop, the mind-therein the trader-Spontaneously therein carrying on commerce of truth.²

Even the human body itself has been eulogised and regarded as the abode of the Lord Himself. Guru Nanak says :-

The body is the mansion, temple and home of the Lord, within which has He enshrined Infinite Light.³

The theory of genesis of Creation as expounded by Guru Nanak traces the origin of man to the Divine essence of the Universe, He avers :

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.1037
2. Ibid., P. 942
3. Ibid., P.1256
From the unattributed void were created air and water, raising creation, in citadel of the body is He situated as monarch. 
Sire: in fire and water lies your light; in your state of void was lodged your might.

Guru Nanak stresses the need of Self-cognition and exhorts man to know and recognise his origin. He says:

Thou egotist devoid of merit, know thy essence.

At the same time, man must not forget his end.

Guru Nanak says:

Life in death terminates In this world all by death are consumed.

The above discussion shows that man, though appearing to be nothing as compared to the vastness of the whole universe, yet occupies the most prominent place among the beings living on the earth, and the earth, as a theatre of righteousness, has a significant place in the universe. Hence, man has a prominent place in the universe.

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1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth., P.1037
2. Ibid., P.63
3. Ibid., P.15
Composition of Man :-

The biological composition of human being, according to Guru Nanak, emerges from the mingling of mother's ovum with father's sperm. To quote him :-

As mother's blood with father's sperm mingles, is shaped the wondrous figure of man.1

No doubt, the incarnation of human being springs from the union of mother's ovum and father's sperm, but it becomes viable with the required degree of temperature and is alive till the breath remains in it. Guru Nanak puts it as under :-

This body emerging from blood and sperm owes its viability to fire in it.

Its duration on breath depends - recorded is this truth on each forehead.2

The word 'fire', here, implies the minimum degree of temperature (generally speaking 98.4°Fahrenheit) required for maintenance of metabolism of human body.

Here it is necessary to point out that some learned scholars have interpreted the words 'agni paas pirman' as 'will one day be made over to the fire'.3

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, F.1022
2. Ibid., P.63
But this interpretation cannot be accepted. Since, in the verse under reference, Guru Nanak is talking in the context of origin of man, therefore, the question of making over the body to fire after death (end) does not arise here. With this meaning the spirit of the verse becomes paradoxical. Most probably, Guru Nanak wants to convey the sense that human body owes its viability i.e. existence to the required degree of temperature the source of which is fire - one of the five elements which are the creation of God Himself and from which human body is created. There is every possibility that he has used the word 'agni' in the sense of fire, the source of temperature and 'piraan' in the sense of viability or existence. Hence, the words under reference have been interpreted as per translation given above i.e. 'owes its viability to fire in it.'

Guru Nanak further says that the human body is created from the blend of five elements:-

By compounding the five elements is this body created.

These five elements are, according to Guru Nanak, air, water, fire, earth and sky :-

The subtle attributes of the five elements -
Water, fire, air, earth and the sky -
within their core abides
(the God-conscious being).

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth , P.1039
2. Ibid., P.1031
But body alone does not make a man; mind is also in it, which governs all the actions of human being. Guru Nanak says:

In the city of the body the mind is King,
And his five sources of knowledge abide therein thought-absorbed.¹

The peculiar characteristic of human mind is that it is ever restless and unstable like mercury and human being always dances to the tunes of his intellect. Guru Nanak writes:

The air, the water and the fire unite to create thy body,
Which plays (to the tune of) thy ever restless intellect.²

Man does not mean the body and the mind, either. The question arises then what makes the man? Guru Nanak poses the question: what dies at the time of death? Is it man who actually dies? To quote him:

The body is the dust and the wind speaks therein,
Consider, O, wiseman, who it is that has died.
It is the inner-understanding, strife and ego which have died.

He, who is the Seer, dies not.

I have not died, rather my calamitous ignorance is dead.

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.907
². Ibid., P.152
He who is everywhere contained, dies not.¹

It is evident from the above composition of Guru Nanak that at more subtle level, man is composed of three things - body, mind and soul (self). The body is made up of various gross elements, mind is subtle and soul is the essence due to which both body and mind are functioning.

Indeed, soul is the motivating force in the body. Till soul remains in the body, the latter and the mind function, when it departs from the body, the bodily flame extinguishes and the body and the mind cease to function.

Now the question arises: what is Soul? The Soul is the emanation from the True One Himself, Guru Nanak says:-

The mind in his body abides;

in the mind abides the True One.²

The Soul and the Supreme Soul are one and the same; both are marked by eternity and immortality. There is, in essence, no distinction between the two. The Soul is to the Supreme Soul what the ray is to the Sun or what the light is to its source, Guru Nanak says:-

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 152
2. Ibid., P. 686
Within the self is lodged the Divine Power, 
That is the eternal Creator. 
The self too is beyond death and destruction.¹

"Soul, God and soul, in essence, are one and the same. Both are immortal, eternal, changeless and beginningless ... The body is a complex of various gross elements and is able to function only as long as the soul is present inside. It is the body that changes, decays and turns on the wheel of birth and death."²

Man's Growth and Behavioural Changes:

Guru Nanak divides the physical growth of a man during his life-span in nine parts in the following words which are self-explanatory:

Uptill the age of ten is man called child, 
At twenty is he in full bloom of youth; 
At thirty is he at the peak in manly beauty; 
At forty is he filled with manhood to maturity; 
At fifty his steps begin to falter; 
At sixty comes old age; 
At seventy, of senses is he bereft; 

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 1026
². J.J. Karma, Guru Nanak And His Message, the article published in Perspectives on Guru Nanak, edited by Harbans Singh, P. 315
At eighty to do anything is he powerless.
At ninety is he confined to bed to relax,
And has no power his bodily functions to perform. 1

With man's physical growth, his behaviour also changes, Guru Nanak gives an objective description of the behavioural changes taking place with his growth in the following verse:

In the first stage is man involved
In attachment to mother's breast, brimful of milk.
In the second acquires he awareness of mother
and father.
In the third, of relatives as brothers, sister-in-law, sister.
In the fourth arises in him the play of love.
In the fifth is the attracted to delicacies to eat and drink.
In the sixth by lust overpowered,
Is he oblivious of all discrimination.
In the seventh stage, garnering wealth,
settles he in a home.
In the eighth stage, in choleric temper,
his bodily powers he ruins.
In the ninth, hair gone gray, uneasy he breathes,
In the tenth burnt in fire, to ashes he turns.
Thereafter, his companions, wailing depart.
Flown is the swan of life; wanders on its

path in the hereafter.

Thus comes man; then goes; even his name vanishes.¹

Nature of Man:

Guru Nanak has put forth various perspectives on the Nature of Man, but here its aspect concerned only with the philosophy of politics will be discussed.

Man is essentially good in substance for within him is the Light of the Lord Himself. Guru Nanak says:

Within us is the sublime Light of God,
the Life of the World.²

Not only this, God has endowed man with likeness to Himself, that is why there is no distinction between God and Soul. To quote Guru Nanak:

The soul is the Lord and the Lord is the soul.³

The Supreme Soul viz. God from whom has emanated the self or soul of man possesses all excellent attributes which are countless in number. In fact, He is the treasury of excellences. To quote Guru Nanak:

2. Ibid., P.1031
3. Ibid., P. 1030
O Nanak ! sing praises of the Lord who is the treasury of excellences.¹

Moreover, the Lord is all goodness, purity and perfection. Guru Nanak says :-

That Primal Lord is blotless and immaculate.²

Since human soul is endowed with God's Light, therefore, it has all the attributes of God qualitatively. It indicates that man is initially good. But he does not remain so when he is distracted and led astray by Haumai and Maya.

Haumai:

The term Haumai consisting of two words Hau and Mai, means 'I am'. It conveys the sense of 'I-am-ness' or self-conceit.

Haumai is an instinct which is so powerful that it influences each and every action of man throughout the course of his existence which may span myriads of births and lives. It serves as the initial force or motive in all his actions.³ Guru Nanak has put forth his view of Haumai most comprehensively in the following verse :-

2. Ibid., P. 1034
3. Taran Singh, Guru Nanak's Conception of Humai (3go), the article published in Teachings Of Guru Nanak edited by Taran Singh, P.36
In ego man comes, in ego he goes,
In ego he is born, in ego he dies.
In ego he gives, in ego he receives,
In ego he earns, in ego he loses.
In ego he is true or false,
In ego he has considerations of sin and virtue.
In ego he descends to hell or rises to heaven,
In ego he laughs, in ego he weeps.
In ego he begrimes, in ego he washes himself,
In ego he is misled into the considerations of
castes and kinds.
In ego he is foolish, in ego he is wise,
And loses all sense of salvation and liberation,
In ego he is absorbed in Maya (illusion), in ego
he is overtaken by delusion.
In ego are men born as creatures.
Man can see the Gate, if he understands his ego,
Without realization, all talk of ego that
entangles a man.
Nanak, under the Supreme Will our record is made,
As One sees the one, we perceive the other.  

The above-quoted verse of Guru Nanak makes it clear that whatever man does - giving or receiving, earning or losing, being true or false, distinguishing between sin and virtue, feeling pleasure or sorrow, becoming polluted or pure, indulging in caste-considerations, being foolish or wise etc., he does in ego. It is in ego that he comes into the world and departs from it. In ego he is led to delusion and he becomes oblivious of his duty of seeking liberation. He can find the Gate to Liberation only by understanding his ego.

It is due to their Haumai that the kings (rulers) are ambitious of annexing more and more territory to their dominion for making it larger and larger. That is why they make many expeditions i.e. they wage many wars. Guru Nanak says:

In ego kings make many expeditions

(wage many wars).

In ego are they destroyed and in transmigration involved.¹

It is Haumai that causes man's transmigration from life to life. This Haumai is a snare that enmeshes man so tightly. It becomes fetters due to which man is whirled about in the cycle of births again and again. Guru Nanak says:

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 226
One in bonds of egoism caught must in transmigration be whirled about. 1

And :-

Whoever in involvement in egoism and avarice dies, Ever and again dies and takes birth. 2

This Haumai travels with the soul of man from birth to birth. As an avalanche, while rolling down a hill, carries along the soil and straw etc. that come its way and cling to it, similarly, man's soul, transmigrating from birth to birth, carries along the adjuncts of the deeds performed in ego during his previous birth, in the form of Kirat. Man bound by his Kirat, commits sins in this birth. Guru Nanak says:-

Bound by their deeds (of previous birth) sins they commit. 3

Generally, the soul remains latent in man; it is not perceived by ordinary senses as it is often veiled by Haumai. The individual overwhelmed by Haumai is inclined to impulses and worldly desires. He, being ego-centric (Manmukh), is spiritually blind. He does not recognise his origin and becomes self-conceited and self-assertive. Guru Nanak says:-

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 227
2. Ibid., P. 1009
3. Ibid., P. 1029
Such their origin not realizing,
With their non-existent merits are conceited.¹

A man engrossed in Haumai sees everywhere only
the projection of his own mind. Haumai is the condition
of mind due to which man remains ignorant of the reality -
the true purpose of his life. Guru Nanak writes :-

By pride and egoism is not attained the Truth.²

God abides within man, but due to Haumai the
latter is unable to experience the presence of the
former. Hence the true and initial impress of God on
man diminishes. It is only when man banishes Haumai that
he realises God. Guru Nanak says :-

With egoism art Thou not experienced,
Where Thou art, is not egoism.³

Haumai fills man with the sense of individuality,
a complex of superiority over others and generates a
feeling in him that he is born to command and rule over
others. This idea finds a clear expression in the words
of Taran Singh. To quote him :-

"Ego is the basis of individuality which at once separates one from the totality of life or cosmic
and social life. This separation gives the idea of preservation of the self which leads to struggle for
existence."⁴

¹Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 468
²Ibid., P.226
³Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 1092
⁴Taran Singh.,Op.,cit.,P.36
"The idea of struggle for existence makes the egoist self-seeking, conceited, self-assertive, selfish and proud. As he secures his interests and himself, he develops a complex of superiority. He begins to feel proud of his caste, birth, country, creed, colour, sex, prowess, learning, culture, conduct, rituals etc. Thus, he begins to feel that he is born to rule while others are there to serve his will and carry out his order. They are just the means to preserve and watch his interests."¹

Maya :-

The second enticement misleading man is Maya. Guru Nanak's compositions present Maya from various points of view, but as far as the study of the Nature of Man is concerned, the three points of view are prominent.

First, the term Maya as used by Guru Nanak, in his hymns has the import of material possession, wealth or riches. Man's passion for Maya makes his nature possessive, sensuous and egoistic. His craze for Maya makes him subservient to avarice. Guru Nanak Says:-

Being maddened by Maya by falsehood are drugged. Lost in subservience to greed and avarice,

Now and in the hereafter would they be in regret.²

². Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.930
This Maya (riches or wealth) is such as not only invariably involves the sin of exploitation of the weak and poor but also consumes its possessor. Moreover, it does not stand by him for ever especially after his death. Guru Nanak writes:

For wealth are vast multitudes dishonoured;
Many for this are strayed;
This without evil-doing comes not,
in death it accompanies not man.¹

And:

Gathering the world's riches, the kings become egotistical
But their loved riches keep not their company in Yond.²

Also:

Beings in hankering after worldly wealth are exhausted,
Yet with no one it lasts.
As the self half-heartedly departs,
Wealth gets forsaken.³

Secondly, the word Maya or Moh-Maya employed by Guru Nanak in his compositions conveys the sense of the lures of the worldly life in general. It (Moh-Maya) ensnares man in infatuation with the worldly relations and degenerates his nature. Guru Nanak says:-

2. Ibid., P.1342
3. Ibid., P.935
Mnya-attachment is all Yama-snare;
The egoist in it bound is impure, of evil repute and horrifying aspect.¹

And :

Love of the progeny, wife and the world,
is vast expanse of Maya-attachment;²

Man's attachment with the worldly pleasures prevents him from rising above his individuality as it makes him self-assertive. Guru Nanak says :-

To be engaged in the strife of Maya,
led by Evil instincts, is a vain struggle,
But the Unwise One asserts his Ego and knows not the "true Deed,
The Egocentric is strayed into desiring by Maya and so whatever he utters is a mere waste;

Yea vain is the ablution of the Sinner,
and the embellishment of the Way(of works).³

Thus man bewitched by Maya is unable to find the path of righteousness and enters into the labyrinth of false and useless deeds. Moreover, when man comes into contact with Maya, he becomes oblivious of the presence of the Light of God Himself put within him by God. Guru Nanak writes:-

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 222
² Ibid., P. 1029
³ Ibid., P. 1343
By union of mother and father is this body acquired.

In that has the Creator His decree recorded:

Recorded therein is His grace, light and exaltation.

But in conjunction with Maya have we lost our senses!

The third aspect of Maya is that the whole
universe or the phenomenal world or Qudrat (Nature)
- itself appears to be Maya. But it is only due to
man's ignorance that it seems so. In fact, the Nature,
- the creation of God Himself is real, but it seems to
be Maya due to man's failure to view or perceive
God's immanence in it. Guru Nanak says: -

Friend, all manifestation appears to be Maya
due to delusion -

To the purblind who perceives not immanence
of God in it.

Such a one can perceive neither this reality
(the creation)

nor the Reality Ultimate. 2

In fact, it is due to man's Haumai that the
world seems to be Maya-Chhaya to him. Guru Nanak says:-

In ego it is Maya; in ego it is Chhaya. 3

The fore-going discussion shows that the purity
of man's nature is polluted by Haumai and Maya due to which

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 989
2. Ibid., P. 15
3. Ibid., P. 466
he is illusioned and bewildered and he becomes a Manmukh (Egocentric). The egocentric becomes a thoughtless brute as he is spiritually blind. Guru Nanak says:—

The egoist is blind, a thoughtless brute.
For to make gain in the world has arrived;
But turned labourer to Maya, is robbed.¹

In order to regain the purity of his nature man has to become a Gurmukh (God-oriented one). A Gurmukh is an anti-thesis of a Manmukh. Guru Nanak delineates his (Gurmukh's) traits as under:—

The God-directed subduing egoism make
conquest of the mind,
The God-directed in heart cherish holy truth,
The God-directed make conquest of the world,
And destroy and tear apart Yama, agent of death,
The God-directed at the holy Portal are not repulsed,
Whoever by the holy Preceptor is granted
union with the Supreme Being,
Of the Divine mystery has awareness.
Saith Nanak: The God-directed by the holy Word have
Divine realization.²

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 931
2. Ibid., P. 946
But how can a ḫanmukh be transformed into a Gurmukh? For this he has to purify his mind and recognise his true self. In order to purify his mind man has to banish Haumai from it and rid it from the shackles of Maya. One can do so by hearing and abiding by the Guru’s Word. Guru Nanak says:

By discarding egoism does the mind become a recluse;

Albiet the mind by desire and daulity is gripped.

And:

Burn egoism, acquisitiveness and avarice,

And by the holy Word renounce impurity of mind.²

Further:

Meeting with the Guru one’s intellect becomes Sublime.

And the mind becomes Immaculate, and one is rid of one’s Ego.

It is also with the help of the true Preceptor that man can realise his true self. Such a person as contemplates his self, is attuned to the Supreme Self, and he becomes God-like. Guru Nanak writes:

Man realizes his self, as to the holy preceptor he attains.

Whose has shattered desire

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 415
2. Ibid., P. 843.
3. Ibid., P. 1188
Has broken the pot of daulity and impulse,
And from Maya-snare keeps detached -
States Nanak in humility: To such a one
    am I a slave.¹

And:

Those contemplating the self to the Supreme
    Self are attuned.²

Also:

By contemplating itself, the self becomes God-like.³

When man reaches this stage, he regains his original form and nature. He is completely attuned to God. His nature becomes like that of God. Though he does not become God, he certainly becomes God-like. Guru Nanak calls such a man a Gurmukh (God-Oriented One).

This shows that self-volition of man is possible. Darshan Singh observes, "In the poetry of Guru Nanak, there are frequent references depicting self-volition. There is no doubt that in the universal order, an individual is nothing. He has to move, feel and act in accordance with the universal order. He cannot change the universal order merely to see that it suits him. Good or bad deeds

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 840
². Ibid., P. 421
³. Ibid., P. 415
are because of this Order. But along with it, every man is endowed with a conscience, capacity to think and act. He has the power to develop a highly ethical and religious conduct. According to Guru Nanak, such a conduct with spiritual basis, produces eternal happiness. But this power is limited and is also dependent upon his grace.  

Free Will:–

Man is not born free for he is bound by his Kirat from his very birth. Moreover, during his present birth also he falls a victim to the instinct of Haumai and the lure of Haya due to which he gets himself tethered more tightly to the chains. Guru Nanak says:–

Creatures bound in bonds arise and are destroyed, Round their necks, nooses of egoism and Haya:  
Whoever by the Master's guidance to the Name Divine is not devoted, In bonds towards Yama's demense is haled.

But it does not lead to the conclusion that man is tied to these bonds for ever and that he can never be free. The above-quoted verse of Guru Nanak itself makes it clear that there is every chance and hope for everyone to get liberation from the bonds; but he can do so only through reflection of the Divine

1. Darshan Singh, The Religion of Guru Nanak, PP. B4-B5
2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 1041
Name by the Master's guidance. Moreover, the grace of God is also essential for attainment of liberation by man. Guru Nanak avers:-

By good deeds one gets human incarnation, but by God's Grace he gets liberation.  

This verse also indicates that man has got the human birth as an opportunity for becoming free or attaining liberation. A man is worth being human only if he does not succumb to his past deeds viz. Karma; rather he snaps all bondage of sins and seeks redemption from his own Karma. He is supposed to attain deliverance during the span of his human birth that, too, positively i.e. by following the path of Truth and Righteousness. "Man was not born free. He is born to be free. Those who lack spiritual consciousness are helpless victims of their low cravings and they drift away from truth." He who performs adhyatam Karams (spiritual activities) of devotion day and night, will be blessed by illumination. The eternal Light of God will blaze up in his being.

Now the question arises whether man has got free will or freedom of choice of action. Man has been endowed with mind which is the source of consciousness of good and evil. Guru Nanak lays pragmatic stress on the divine factor of human mind determining the goodness and evil of human actions.

and this factor is the autonomous power of choice which is perpetually present and operative in man's mind. Man's very capacity to choose between good and evil grants him freedom of choice of action. He has free will to exercise but remaining within the Cosmic Order. In fact, it is man's mind that directs man's actions and determines their nature. Guru Nanak says:

Our thinking acts on the mind's prompting:

The mind evil and good determines.¹

"This autonomous power of choice is the divinity in man, according to Sikhism, and is the core around which the whole human personality is constructed. It is this central core of the human personality which is at the heart of the individual consciousness and it is, therefore², "the source of all human misery, as well as the panacea of all his ills."³

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Moreover, Guru Nanak's assertion that man will gather only the deserts of his own deeds and Guru Nanak's exhortation to man to refrain from committing evil deeds, and to imbibe merits and shed demerits form the very basis of his assumption of free human will i.e. man's freedom of choice of action. Guru Nanak says:

Such shall be the reward as the deed performed.¹

Further:

Why endeavour in the way of evil
As therefrom is received evil retribution.²

And:

Discarding evils to attain merits you rush
In doing evil lies regret,
By not realizing distinction between pure and impure,
In the mire shalt thou be sunk.³

But it does not mean that man has an absolute freedom to do whatever he likes to do. Rather he can exercise his free will only within the Cosmic Order. As soon as he tries to transgress the Cosmic Order, the Divine Law interferes and stops the working of his free will. In other words, man has to attune his free will to God's Will. According to Dr. Gopal Singh, "Man can never have a total free will, it is impossible

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.468
². Ibid., P. 474
³. Ibid., P,598
and absurd. However here before us we see man in pain and sin, and though being constantly warned by God within them, they choose Him not and go their own peculiar ways led by the Writ of habit (Kirat) which is part of their sub-conscious mind. There is, thus, an element of choice within them, all the time to exercise their will, however limited that freedom is, as is obvious to anyone with a little sense of his own psyche."¹

**Man and Society**

Man and society are so closely related to each other that both are inseparable. Man is, by nature, a social being. According to Aristotle, "The individual when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature..."¹

Society is defined as a "collection of individuals held together by certain enduring relationship in pursuance of common ends."² Indeed, each individual

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2. V.D. Mahajan, *Political Theory*, P. 142
is an essential constituent of society. One can become its useful constituent by shedding one's selfish interests for the sake of the general well-being of the society as a whole. Generally speaking "Society is a very large group of men and women, in which there are relatively smaller groups. Society is a term which designates the whole network of many types of relationships. Within the large social framework, we find family, class, caste, club, trade union, school, church, fine arts circle, chamber of commerce, political party and many other groups."

But the concept of Society viz Sikh Society as propounded by Guru Nanak has some peculiar features. In the general tenor of his thought, 'Sangat', Sat-sangat or Sachiar Jabha connotes the Sikh Society. The concept of Sangat has already been discussed in chapter II.

The members of this society are supposed not to cling to the man-made prejudices regarding the high and the low and not to be guiled by impostors.

1. B.K. Gokhale, Political Science: theory and government machinery, P.71
In this society, there is no place for any considerations of caste, colour, creed, sex, faith, birth or status etc. All individuals male as well as female are considered to be the repository of the Lord's Light and are treated alike. The structure of this society reats on the principles of fraternity and equality put forth by Guru Nanak in the following verses which are self-explanatory:

All creatures are noble, none low,
One sole Maker has all vessels fashioned;
In all three worlds is manifest the same Light.¹
Himself is He male and female.²
Understand people by their light, ask not their caste.
In the presence of God no one is differentiated by caste.³

Ask not about the birth and lineage of a person.
Treat people in terms of their true home.
Man becomes high or low by his deeds, not by birth.⁴

The members of this society are expected always to stand by the so-called lowliest of the lowly, the down-trodden, the underprivileged; and to endeavour for the latter's uplift for raising them to their own level. Doing away with the degrading prejudice of untouchability Guru Nanak says:

2. Ibid., P. 1020
3. Ibid., P. 349, quoted in Dr. Trilochan Singh, op.cit., P. 105.
4. Ibid., P. 1330 quoted in Dr. Trilochan Singh, op.cit., p-105.
The lowliest among the lowly
Nanak stands by their side;
He envies not the great of the world.
Lord: Thy grace falls on the land where the
Poor are cherished.1

This society is, indeed, a society which is
casteless, classless, rather distinctionless.

Moreover, each and every member of this society is supposed to be its useful constituent. Therefore, he is required to lead a householder's life, earn his livelihood by doing some productive work and give in charity a considerable portion of his earnings for the help of the needy; and not to become a parasite on the society by adopting the life of an ascetic the pretext of seeking spiritual exaltation. Guru Nanak says:—

Should induce himself to good charitable deeds
Such householder is pure as Ganga Water.2

At the same time, he is not to be puffed up with the feeling of arrogance of a giver. The charity is not to be made with the view of seeking a thousandfold reward for it and praise from the world, but with the feeling of contentment. Guru Nanak says:—

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 15
2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 952
The charitable when giving away charity should feel content:

A thousandfold reward for their benefactors they seek

And acclaim from the world.¹

In this society, every individual serves others and is served by them as well. In fact, the reciprocity of Service (Sewa) is the principle underlying the relationship between Man and Society of Guru Nanak's vision. The Concept of 'Service' has already been discussed in Chapter II. The most conspicuous characteristic of the Service rendered by the members of this society is that they render it always bearing in mind that:

God is the Sole Giver of all beings, ²

lest I should forget Him ever.

Thus, they feel contented and serve the society or humankind in the broader sense. They practise righteousness by doing good and meditate on the Truth alone. Guru Nanak Says:

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.466
2. Ibid., P. 2
Those who have attained contentment,
alone have rendered service;
On holy Truth alone have they meditated.
Towards evil have they never taken a step;
By doing good, righteousness they practise.¹

Service, in the society, has another aspect
also. It is the proper discharge of one's duties assigned
to him by society. Guru Nanak's Dharma, the Law of
Nature, is synonymous with the social order in its
temporal import. It demands of every man to perform
his duties well that go along with his station in
society. Every individual is expected to uphold the
social order comprising the family, the occupation,
the religious institutions, the state and other social
institutions. Every man or woman is required to adopt
a certain specific pattern of behaviour for maintenance
of social order. In fact, a society is the integrated
system of roles of its members. By playing his own
role well, a man or woman enables others to play their
roles befittingly. By doing so the individuals
concertedly build up and maintain the ordered pattern
of their society. For an individual this specific
pattern of behaviour implies contentment. A man
while performing his own duties well does not allow his

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P.466-7
ambitions to transgress his own role; rather he is contented with the proper performance of his own role in society.

From the political point of view, the members of the society can be divided into four categories role-wise—(1) Rulers (2) Judges (3) Leaders (4) The Ruled.

The Rulers, in this society, are enjoined upon to serve it by administering justice and looking after the people well so that they live in prosperity and happiness. The Judges are expected to serve the society by making impartial judgment, the Leaders by guiding the people with their own enlightenment, and the people or the Ruled by being enlightened and aware of their rights and duties, and resisting injustice of all sorts. All of them are required to fulfil their dharma by performing their respective duties well.

The Ideal and its Attainment:

The ideal, a man should aspire to attain to, has been termed by Guru Nanak as a Sachiara. A Sachiara is one who is a person of righteous conduct. He exalts himself spiritually by purifying his mind and becomes God-like i.e. one with God. He gets honour in the people's as well as God's Court - the final goal of

human life. But how to be a Sachiara? Guru poses this problem in the very first stanza of Japu Ji. He writes:

How, then to become a Sachiara,
and how to demolish the wall of illusion?
By recognising the Cosmic Order
and being in tune with the Divine Will
This, too, Nanak has written at the same place.¹

A person who recognises the Cosmic Order, sheds his ego and abides by the Divine Will. Guru Nanak says:

All by the Ordinance are governed, None exempt
Saith Nanak: Should man realize the might of the Ordinance,
His ego he most certainly would disclaim.²

Now the question arises as to how one can recognise the Cosmic Order. According to Guru Nanak, it is only by following the Guru's Word i.e., by following the instruction of the Guru that one can recognise the Cosmic Order. To quote him:

1. Guru Nanak Adi Granth, P. 1
2. Ibid.
By Guru's Word recognise the Cosmic Order.¹

When a person recognises the Cosmic Order, he attunes his free will to the Divine Will. Spontaneous observance of ethics is the way of life of a Sachihara and he is a person of **truthful actions**. Guru Nanak stresses the need of observance of ethics in human life and attaches utmost importance to **truthful conduct**. To quote him:—

*Truth is higher than everything else,*

*but higher still is truthful conduct.*²

Purity of mind is the most conspicuous characteristic of a Sachihara. Purity becomes a part and parcel of his life and it is reflected in each and every action done by him. The purity of mind can be obtained by man through reflection on the Lord's Name. Guru Nanak says:—

*If mind is polluted, purify it*  
*with reflection on the Naam.*³

It suggests that man should always remember the Supreme Being, he should dedicate himself to **Naam-Simran** (remembrance of God's Naam). But this **Naam-Simran** does not mean a parrot-like chanting of God's Name. It is something very different, something much more. It means that it is not only the devotee's tongue,

². Ibid., P. 62  
³. Ibid., P.4
the organ of speech in human body, that utters the Name of the Lord, but each and every pore in his body performs the function of the tongue and spontaneously utters the Lord's Name with the inhalation and exhalation of each breath. *Naam-Simran* is an incessant process of remembrance of the Lord's Name, so much so that each and every activity of the human being dedicated to *Naam-Simran*, is charged with it. It is, indeed, complete absorption in the *Naam*. Guru Nanak suggests it in the following words:

Were man's one tongue to become a hundred thousand, 
And even twenty times that; 
Were each such tongue to utter the Lord's Name Supreme a hundred thousand times each instant - 
Such be the stairs of devotion Ascending to make union with Him.¹

*Naam-Simran* is the dignified path treading which one becomes one with God i.e. becomes God-like and gets honour.

But for true devotion to the Lord's Name, cultivation of noble equalities is essential. According to Guru Nanak:

> Without cultivation of noble qualities no true devotion can be!²

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². Ibid., P.4
The cultivation of noble qualities, here, implies performance of good deeds i.e. performance of Service (Sewa) to the Lord through service to humankind.

Guru Nanak also attaches due importance to the role of good company in the life of man. According to him, by keeping company with the best one can become the best. Good company does not allow the process of development operative within man to tend to regression; it ever keeps him alive to the situation. It helps him shed demerits and imbibe good qualities. To quote Guru Nanak:—

In noble company is man ennobled;
Striving for merit, his demerits he washes off;
Without service to the Master comes not poise.¹

It is with this view in mind that Guru Nanak has stressed the need of Sat-Sangat for uplift of man in general.

Guru Nanak exhorts man to dwell on the Sole Lord's Name so that he may go to his heavenly abode with honour. It suggests that the final goal of human life is to win honour and respect in the People's as well as God's Court. To quote Guru Nanak:—

O man, Dwell on the name of thy only God,
That thou goest back to thy Home with Honour and glory.²

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth., P. 414
². Ibid., P. 1254
According to Guru Nanak, only those are truly exalted who are honoured in the Divine Writ. To quote him:

Brother! Those who in the Divine Writ are honoured are truly perfect-
Perfect, with perfection of wisdom, truly exalted. ¹

It suggests that it is essential for a man to keep his dignity and honour intact throughout the span of his life. Life without honour is not worth-living. Guru Nanak says:

If one lives and loses dignity,
Whatever he eats is unrightful. ²

When one comes to know the way of living righteously and honourably one becomes a Sachitra, Such a person neither does injustice nor does he bear it. He transcends his ego, sheds all his selfish interests and thinks in the larger interests of humankind. He is ever prepared even to lay down his life for the cause of upholding righteousness and saving the dignity of human beings. He is a true hero and the dying of such a person is approved by the Lord Himself and he obtains honour in the people's as well as Lord's Court. Guru Nanak avers:

Holy is the death of heroic man, whose dying is Divinely approved.

Such alone may be called heroes as at the Divine Portal obtain true honour. ³

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, P. 1012
2. Ibid., P. 142
3. Ibid., Pp. 579-580