CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE PUNJAB IN
THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Punjab, the land of five rivers, lay between 27° 39' and 35° 2' north latitude and 69° 35' and 78° 35' east longitude. Its shape was something between a dice-box and an hour-glass.

It was bordered on its north by Jammu and Kashmir, and its west by the North West Frontier province and Baluchistan. To its south lay Rajputana and Sind, which were comparatively sparsely populated, and on its east was situated the United provinces.

However, after 1857, from time to time, some territorial changes had been made in the Punjab. The Punjab, thus, had mountains and desert along three of its boundaries.

After annexation by the British in 1849, the Punjab along with the trans-Indus territories, which were placed under the same administration, comprised an area of about 73,000 square miles. Its population was about ten millions. In 1855 the

2. See Map - 1, facing page 1.
Punjab was divided into seven divisions or commissionerships viz., Cis-Sutlej; Trans-Sutlej; Lahore; Jhelum; Multan; Lia and Peshawar. These divisions were further divided into 27 districts. Among these seven divisions, the last four were predominantly Mohammedans, whereas in the rest, majority of the inhabitants were the Hindus and the Sikhs.\footnote{Selections from the Records of the Government of India 11, Report on the Census, taken on the 1st January, 1885, on the Population of the Punjab Territories, (Calcutta, 1856), pp. 18, 19, 32.}

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Punjabis observed many religious practices bordering on superstitions. Some of these religious practices involved the worship of many animals and reptiles particularly the snakes. They took the form also of worshipping the sun, the moon, the tombs and the dead. Some other practices amounted to worshipping trees. While superstitions at the bottom of these practices concerned the birth and death, the others were related to agriculture, marriage, evil spirits, ghosts and evil eye. These practices had crept into different religions in various periods of India’s long history and had survived the efforts of many proponents.
of the Bhakti Movement to eradicate them.

The religious beliefs common among the people of the Punjab which fill the last quarter of the nineteenth century were both varied and numerous and in a number of cases bordering on the superstitions.

ANIMAL AND TREE WORSHIP

Both among the Hindus and the Sikhs there were many who believed in the sanctity of animal life and in the fertility of certain plants and trees. Of the animals, the cow was regarded the most sacred. Offerings of flour and fodder were made to them. Even cow-dung was regarded as a special means of purification: the dung was used to

smear the floor and the urine of the cow was sprinkled to purify the houses. The snakes were regarded as sacrosanct and considered the servants of Raja Basak Nag. Offerings of milk and grain were made to them specially on the Nag Panchmi festival. Trees were held sacred and believed to be pervaded by divinity. The trees were therefore, worshipped. Some of them thus adored commonly were the Tulsi plant, the Pipal and the Jand. The Tulsi (Ocymum Sanctum) was regarded sacred because its name meant Haripriya (the beloved of Vishnu) in Sanskrit. It was literally adored and closely connected with the worship of Vishnu. The Tulsi was worshipped, specially by the women, by placing a lamp made of flour at its root and saying:

"Tulsi Oiva Balia, Mainu Mardi Nun Sambhalia." (I have lit a lamp for Tulsi and she will take care of me when I die).

8. Census of British India 1881, appendix, P. ix.
The Tulsi plant was ceremonially worshipped once in its life span. It was significantly married not to any other plant but to a human being belonging to the highest caste among the Hindu viz., a Brahmin. The Pipal (Ficus religiosa) was regarded as the Brahmin among the trees. It was considered so pious that the Hindus did not cut its wood and pick its fruit. The Hindu women worshipped this tree as the incarnation of Vasudeva on the Amavasaya, when it fell on Monday. They poured water at its roots, smeared the trunk with red lead and ground sandal-wood and walked round it one hundred and eight times, putting at each circuit a copper coin and a sweetmeat at the roots. The Jand tree (Prosopis spicigera) was specially reverenced by the Khatries and the Brahmins. The tree and its leaves were also employed in the marriage ceremonies of many tribes.

SUN, MOON AND PLANET WORSHIP

The sun was worshipped by saluting and watering on each morning. Especially, Sunday was considered his day and most of the villagers then abstain from salt and did not

set their milk as usual to make butter form, but made rice milk of it and distributed most of it among the Brahmins. Moon worship, among the Punjabis was very common. At the first sight of a new moon, they took seven threads from their turbans and presented them to her (moon). After prayer, they exchanged with one another the salutation Ram. Ram. Among the planet worship, the worship of Sanichar (Saturn) was very common. While doing so the Hindus gave the gifts of mustard oil and an iron or a copper coin to the Dakant Brahmins on Sanichar var (Saturday).

THE DEAD AND THE TOMB WORSHIP

The worship of the dead and the tombs was very common. The Hindus worshipped their Pitars or dead ancestors by doing Sharadhas (offerings to the dead ancestors). Their shrines were called Jatheras in the Punjab. The 15th or the last day of the moonless fortnight of the month Asmi (seventh month of the Hindu year) was considered sacred to the Pitars and on that day the cattle was not yolked for work and the Brahmins were fed. In addition to this, the

19. Ibbetson., op. cit., P. 126. Not only the Hindus but the Mohammedans would also do this and then throw the threads to the right side. They would also toss a coin into the air. (for details, see Ibbetson., op. cit., P. 126).
20. Ibid., P. 126.
Mohammedans, the Hindus and the Sikhs worshipped the tombs and shrines of the dead saints and the Shahids (martyrs). Among the dead saints so adored the most prominent were: Sakhi Sarwar Sultan or Lakhdara, Baba Farid Shakerganj, Boali Qalander, Panch Pir or the five saints. Among the Shahids adored and worshipped the most famous were the Shahids of the Karnal. The shrines of the Shahids were built in Mohammedan form and the offerings were made on Thursday and made by the Muslim Faquire. Mostly, the people of the Punjab made offerings at the tombs for obtaining temporal blessings. Solemn vows were taken for further offerings at the shrines in view of the birth of a male child, success in a criminal case, the happy ending of a quarrel in the family, smooth celebration of the marriage or successful negotiation of a love-affair and the like.

24. Ibid., P. 215; Ibbetson., op. cit., PP. 202, 203; Census of British India, 1881, appendix B, P. xi; District Gazetteer Gurnoon, 1883-84, P. 42.
child was handed over to the saint or the attendants of the tomb.  

SUPERSTITIONS

Superstition could, indeed, be used as a more appropriate term for the ordinary religious beliefs of the people. Throughout the Province it prevailed in every form of grossness. It would be tiresome to give a complete account of all the superstitions. It would, however, be quite apt to mention the prominent ones among them. They were as below:

BIRTH AND DEATH SUPERSTITIONS

A pregnant women was believed to possess magical powers. Her shadow upon the crops was considered injurious and the belief that a snake would become blind if her shadow fell on it was almost universal. A special set of

26. At the tomb of Pir Shah Deula (Gujrat District) the heads of the children, so offered, were compressed by means of a press so that the head became very small in size. Such children could not speak and lost all their intellectual faculties. They were made to beg in the streets, exploiting the people's feeling of pity. (N.P.R. 1882, PP. 424-425).

27. "The superstitions of the people are very numerous and complex; and any complete account of them would take months to write and the necessary information years to collect." (for details, see District Gazetteer Rawalpindi, 1907, P. 83).
precautions was prescribed for the pregnant women during an eclipse. No work of any sort was to be done then; not even the locking or unlocking a door (lest the child should be deformed) and sewing or cutting (lest it should lead to the deformation of body). After delivery, a woman was considered unclean for a certain period, usually forty days, and numerous taboos were imposed on her and on her husband. If a woman died within thirteen days of her delivery, it was believed that she would return in the guise of a malignant spirit to torment her husband and family. To avert this, a piece of red cloth and the grass image of her child was often placed on the bier. Some people also drove nails through her head and eyes, while some others fastened nails on either side of the door of their house. In some families Qazi (priest of the mosque) was called in to recite some words called Kalma. Among the Mohammedans, a pregnant woman would avoid the use of antimony, Dandasa (a bark of Akhrot tree) and the shadow of a woman suffering from Athra i.e., one whose children die in infancy.

28. Hastings, James., op. cit., PP. 240, 244.
29. Ibid., P. 243.
30. Ibbetson., op. cit., PP. 747-748.
31. Ibid., P. 760.
AGRICULTURAL SUPERSTITIONS

Agricultural superstitions, connected with earth, cattle and agriculture were numerous. In Ludhiana District, a Jat, before he began to prepare his fields by ploughing for any harvest, had to ask the Brahmin whether the land was awake or asleep. If he was told that it was asleep, he had to wait for six days for it to wake. Then he could go on ploughing it whenever he liked. In Gujrat District, no ploughing was ever done either in January or in June as the peasants there regarded the two months as unlucky months. In Gurdaspur District, the farmers would not commence ploughing on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Sowing was considered unlucky during the first 15 days of Aspi, called the Sharadha days. Generally, no well was worked on the Sankrant day. All peasants including the orthodox Mohammedans believed in the ghosts and evil spirits. Some precautions were taken to keep them off the heaps of grain on the threshing floors. The Mohammedans would bury in the heap a paper bearing the name of Allah written by Mullaha, while the Hindus would keep in it some iron implements like a Ramba (a flat trowel) or a Datri (sickle).

33. District Gazetteer Gujrat, 1883-84, P. 71.
34. District Gazetteer Gurdaspur, 1914, PP. 59, 61.
Fuel cakes were burnt and were put in an earthen vessel to keep off evil spirits. In Shahpur District, when a Persian wheel at work would utter a sound like Kuk (shriek) louder than its usual inharmonious screech. This was considered an omen of ill, and to avert disaster the owner of the well would sacrifice a sheep or goat and smear the blood of its neck on the pivots of the well-machinery. Tawits (amulets) were used to protect the bullocks, camels and horses from Nazar (evil eye).

**Mock Marriage**

A marriage with an animal, tree, plant or other inanimate object was called 'mock marriage'. This custom prevailed among the Hindus only and was based on the fear of ill luck connected with certain kinds of marital unions. Mock marriages were invariably resorted to (i) when a widower was to remarry, (ii) when a bachelor wished to marry a widow and (iii) when the horoscope of the girl showed that the influence of certain stars was likely to lead to early widowhood. In the case of the first two, the mock marriage of males was celebrated in the Western Punjab with a sheep, in the Central Punjab with the Ber tree (Zizyphus Jujuba) or

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35. District Gazetteer Gurdaspur, 1914, P. 60.
sometimes with the Pinal in the Eastern Punjab with the Akh plant (Asclepia gigantea). In the case of the third (the mock marriage of girls) a pitcher full of water was dressed like a boy and the girl was taken through the ceremonies of marriage with this mock-bridegroom. The ceremonies were then repeated with the real bridegroom by way of an informal marriage and it was supposed that the effect of the evil stars would befall the pitcher and not the bridegroom, thus averting the disaster of early widowhood. This type of mock marriage was called Kumbh vivah and was most prevalent among the Banias of the Eastern Punjab. 38

**EVIL SPIRITS AND GHOSTS**

When a person died, it was thought that though his body was buried or burnt, his spirit rose into the spiritland. But it was a universal belief that unless the funeral rites were properly performed, the soul must wander in misery unable to enter heaven. Therefore, care was taken in this connection so that the deceased might join the company of the blessed. 39

A woman dying during or after child-birth (but before the termination of the period of impurity) took the form of a Churel. Many steps were taken to prevent her return to the house.

Iron nails were driven into the ground at all places where she had breathed her last, where her dead body was bathed and where it was cremated. In some districts powdered chillies were stuffed into the eyes of the corpse to make the ghost blind, so that it might not return home. Another way of checking the return of the ghost was to remove the corpse from the house through a special way or door, not generally used by the family and to shut it immediately so that the spirit might not find its way back. There was a general belief that the spirit of a person who died a painful or a violent death assumed the shape of a Bhut (in case of a male) and Churel (in case of a female). A bachelor or a man without a male issue must become a Bhut.

Many superstitions were connected with the wicked doings of these beings. Sometimes the Bhuts would turn the bed upside down. The small whirlwinds which arose like pillars of dust in the hot weather were supposed to be the work of Bhuts going to bathe in the river Ganges.

41. William Crooke, Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India, (Delhi, 1926), P. 236; District Gazetteer Bahawalpur, 1904, P. 189.
42. Manucha, K.M., Hindu Home Life, (1890), P. 1; Gazetteer of Chamba State, 1904, P. 68.
43. District Gazetteer Jhelum, 1904, P. 132.
44. District Gazetteer Karnal, 1918, P. 77.
It was a widely current fear, especially, among mothers that the evil spirits and ghosts had a peculiar fascination for pretty children. The mothers cheated these mischievous beings by marking a black dot on the child’s face. Young children were not allowed to remain alone in the house or to go out alone in the fields after dark or to go out in dust storms or under shady trees for fear of malignant spirits. No scents were used by them. Visits to grave yards at night were avoided by all. Some days before and after marriage an iron knife or similar article was kept both by the bride and bridegroom; at child birth the woman used to keep some iron implement at her pillow to ward off the evil spirits.

**EVIL EYE**

There was a widespread belief in the 'evil eye'. The common term by which it was known was Nazar used in the sense of the baneful influence of the glance of a person. Thus, a prominent proverb was running like this:

’Sap Da Khada Bachde, Nazar Da Khada Nahin Bachde.’

(The snake - bitten escapes. He that is affected by the evil eye escapes not)

46. District Gazetteer Shahr, 1914, PP. 60, 61.
47. District Gazetteer Gurdaspur, 1914, P. 61.
The origin of the *Nazar* was based on the belief that envy or covetousness necessarily resulted in harm to the one against whom it was directed. The objects liable to be so affected were beautiful children, a strongly built man, the breast-milk of a mother nursing her baby, a milch cow or buffalo and a dish of delicacies. To avert the effect of the evil eye, amulets of various types were used; iron was considered the sovereign safeguard against it; an iron pot or earthen vessel painted black was kept on the newly built houses.

Besides the afore-mentioned religious beliefs and superstitions, other social evils such as female infanticide and *Sati* also...
prevailed in the Punjab. The girls who escaped death at the time of their birth, were subjected to unnatural practice of child marriage. If unfortunately, they lost their husbands, they were often compelled to immolate themselves on the pyres of their deceased husbands. If they did not want to do so, they were required to undergo the life-long agony of enforced widowhood. A widow was an object of universal contempt and she deserved no sympathy, nor was any given to her.

The traffic in women also existed. For instance, the Punjabi women were exported to Sind, as in this province the paucity of women was a marked one. Women were imported from the east of the Yamuna river and sub-montane districts of Himalaya. The purchasers of women were mainly Jats (both Sikh and Hindu), Aroras or Kirars, and, in a less degree, Kambohs and Khatris.

On the Frontier, the Mohammedan Pathans sold women to the Khattaks of Peshawar and Kohat. As a rule, the women sold by Pathans were those who had been unfaithful and who, instead of being murdered, were thus punished. However, among the upper classes, there was no dearth of wives.


The condition of the lower classes was miserable. They were denounced and detested as untouchables. The rigid and hereditary caste system was responsible for this. This caste system, besides giving rise to a false sense of social pride, bred exclusiveness in social relations, disintegrated the social structure and worst of all, condemned the greater part of the population to a life of perpetual subjection and servitude. On the other hand, the people of upper classes, though they did not suffer from social tyranny or handicaps, were the slaves of their own habits. They had enormous wealth and lived luxuriously. Extensive use of liquor, plurality of wives, keeping of prostitutes and unclean domestic life were some of the social evils which afflicted them. Notwithstanding all this, the Punjabis did not abandon their religious practices.

**Characteristics of Different Religions**

It could perhaps be said that in the Punjab the most marked characteristic of the Hindu was thrift, of the Sikh bravery, of the Buddhist honesty and of the Mohammedan pride. But there were a few broad practical matters by which several religions could be distinguished. The Hindu, Jain and Buddhist believed in their respective Shastras, the Sikh in the Adi Granth, and the Muslim in the Quran. The Hindu, Jain and Sikh prayed generally by facing the East and never the South; the Muslim prayed by facing in which lay the Mecca. The first three worshipped in temples, the last in mosques. The first three again held the Brahmins in high esteem. The Buddhists had a popular

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57. Ibid., PP. 12-13.
order of celibate monks, while the Muslim ministrants were chosen from among the congregations. The Hindu venerated the cow, did not kill animals, and often abstained from meat, the Sikh revered the cow but killed and ate most other animals like goat, pig, deer, cock, etc., the Buddhist and Jain scrupulously respected all animal life; the Mohammedan abhorred the pig and dog, but killed and ate most other animals. The Hindu and Jain shaved their heads with the exception of a scalp-lock; the Sikh allowed the hair of their head and face to grow uncut and untrimmed. The Muslim never shaved their beard but always the lower edge of their moustache; they often shaved their head, and when they did so, they left no scalp-lock. The Muslim practised circumcision, while the Sikh had a baptism of initiation and a ceremony of communion. The Hindu, Jain and Sikh married by circumambulation, the Muslim by consent of the parties formally asked and given before the Maulvi. The former three burnt their dead, while the Muslim only buried whereas the Buddhists either burnt or buried. Similarly, the customs relating to eating, drinking, dressing, etc. also varied, the detailed study of which is not very relevant here.


Beef was forbidden for Hindus to such an extent that, a Hindu could still remain a Hindu in spite of all his contrary religious beliefs, he could be allowed to mix socially with whomsoever he pleased, he could scrupulously avoid attending any Hindu religious worship, and if a Brahmana, he could even neglect to have his Upvita (sacred thread), when he attained the proper age. But let him once eat beef, or even smell it, and he becomes outcast for ever. (Chhabra, G.S., Social and Economic History of the Punjab, 1849-1901, (Jullundur, 1962),p.99).

60. Census Report, 1881, PP. 102-103.
After the annexation of the Punjab, the British introduced many administrative and social reforms. Many new roads and canals were constructed; educational institutions, dispensaries and jails were set up in every district; a uniform code of civil and criminal law and procedure was adopted; the currency was reformed and a system of regular settlements was started. The religious institutions were respected and provided with sufficient grants. The style and comforts of the people's dwellings also improved, the houses now built were more commodious and the furniture was better. In place of earthen vessels, the people increasingly began to use copper vessels. The houses of the educated classes began to be furnished more in conformity with the European ideas. Thus, the Punjab under supervision of the British started making progress in different fields. Consequently, a new era dawned in the second half of the nineteenth century.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE PUNJAB

The Christian Missionaries started their work in the Punjab in the first half of the nineteenth century. John C. Lowrie, an advocate of American Presbyterian Mission, founded a Mission at Ludhiana in 1834. The 'Ludhiana Mission' rapidly grew into a centre of education and missionary propaganda. The Ludhiana Press was established in 1835 and soon produced a

61. Gazetteer of the Punjab, Provincial Volume, 1808-89, p.95.
stream of tracts, pamphlets and journals in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and Kashmiri. After that, this Mission set up its various centres of propaganda in the province.

The Church Missionary Society established its centres at Simla and Kotgarh in 1840. A little later, it set up more branches around Amritsar and Lahore and in the hill districts. This Society also established a college at Lahore which prepared the Indians for holy order. The Society for the propagation of the Gospel began its work in Delhi in 1852. In 1877 it started the St. Stephen’s college in Delhi.

After this, the American United Presbyterian Missionaries started their work in the Punjab in 1855 and founded centres of preaching at Sialkot (1855), Rawalpindi (1856), Gujranwala (1868), Gurdaspur (1872), Jhelum (1876), Pathankot (1880), Jafarwal (1884), Lyallpur (1895), Sargodha (1905) and Dharial (1920).

Then, the Methodist Episcopal Missionaries commenced their work and set up various centres in the Punjab at Lahore (1881), Multan (1888), Patiala (1891), Delhi (1892), Raiwind (1922).

66. Ibid., P. 79.
67. Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Provincial Series Punjab, 1, PP. 52-55.
68. Ganda Singh, Punjab, P. 79.

On seeing the rapid growth of different Missionaries the Church of Scotland also set up its centres at Chamba 1863, Sialkot 1857, Daska 1857.
and Hissar (1928). Later on, it founded its centres at Bhatinda, Fazilka, Gurgaon and Rohtak.

Other Missionaries who started their work in the Punjab were the Moravian, the Medical Missions, the Salvation Army and The Zanana Bible. In addition to various Christian Missionaries, some Roman Catholic Orders also began their propaganda in the Punjab. Thus, after the annexation of the Punjab, many Christian Missionaries moved into the province and started their religious activities.

Christian Missionaries were actively supported by the British rulers. British officials not only collected money for the Missionaries but themselves donated large sums. For instance, Sir John Lawrance, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab (1854-58) used to contribute rupees five hundred a year towards these activities. The official interest of the Government is manifest from Queen Victoria's letter to Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General (1848-56), expressing the hope that the development of the railway communication in the country would facilitate the spread of Christianity. Thus, due to official support and patronage, within a short period, the Missionaries opened their centres almost in all the important cities and towns of the Punjab.

69. Ganda Singh, Punjab, p. 79.
70. Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Provincial Series Punjab, 1, pp. 52-53.
Along with their religious activities, the Missionaries also played a vital role in educational field. In fact, the Missionaries were the pioneers of education in the Punjab. By opening many schools and colleges they popularised the British system of education in the Punjab. The earliest missionary institution for boys was established at Kotgarh in the hills near Simla in 1843, by the Church Missionary Society. This, however, was an elementary school. The American Mission established first English school at Jullundur in 1849, and at Lahore in 1849. The American Presbyterian School, Ludhiana was set up in 1851, while the American and the Church Missions established their schools at Amritsar and Ambala Cantonment in 1853 and 1854 respectively. In addition, in the field of women education, Missionary Societies also showed keen interest and the American Presbyterian Mission Ludhiana set up its first elementary school for girls in 1836. In this way, the Missionary Societies established many schools in the Punjab. Later on, some of these institutions were upgraded to college level. Moreover, Medical Colleges, technical schools and colleges were established on European lines. The Sanatoria, orphanages and leper-asylums were also set up in the Punjab.

75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., p. 27.
77. Ganda Singh., Punjab, p. 84.
The Missionaries did useful work in the bringing up of orphans, the provision of free medical aid to the poor and the needy. However, their main objects were to convert the inhabitants to Christianity and to get English knowing Punjabis, because annexation of the Punjab created an immediate need for trained subordinates to staff the new provincial government. Thus, in order to fulfil their aims, they started large-scale conversions. They attracted the Punjabis by various ways such as through street and bazar preachings, publications, distributing religious tracts and journals, sending 'Zanana' Mission door to door and giving plots to the converts in their newly founded colonies with many amenities.

The proselytizing activities of the Missionaries affected the rank and file of the province. Maharaja Dalip Singh was converted to Christianity in 1853 and later on, he was sent to England. After that, mostly the people of backward classes and untouchable castes were converted to Christianity. That is why within a short time Isai, meaning Christian, acquired a pejorative sense and became synonymous with Chuhra the Punjabi word for the untouchable sweeper. It was then that the neophytes realised that neither the patronage of the padre nor the seeming dignity of the sola topee could eradicate the
stigma of untouchability. Thereafter, the number of conversions from the lower castes declined. Then the Christian Missionaries turned their attention to the well-to-do Jat and Kshatriya castes. Several Sikh families of note accepted Christianity. For instance, Raja Harnam Singh, the brother of Maharaja Kapurthala and Sadhu Sunder Singh, Jat Sikh of Rampur (Patiala State) were converted to Christianity. Besides, many Muslims also embraced Christianity. Faqir Ramu Shah of village Ghodwaha (District Hoshiarpur) along with his many disciples accepted Christianity. As a result of these efforts of the missionaries, the number of Christians went on increasing in the Punjab.

The orthodox-minded among the Hindus, Sikhs and Mohammedans in the Punjab became concerned with the proselytizing activities of the Christian Missionaries. They thought to reform their own religions. Consequently, several socio-religious movements, reformatory in nature, became active in the Punjab. Some of these movements originated in the Punjab, whereas others travelled into it from other parts of India. The most prominent movements among the Hindus were: the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Sanatan Dharma, the Dev Samaj, and among the Sikhs, the Nirankari, the Namdhari and

85. The growth of Christianity in the Punjab is borne out by Census figures: 1881-3795, 1891-19547, 1901-37980, 1911-163994.
the Guru Singh Sabha. Among the Muslims, the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore and the Ahmadiya of Qadian became popular. In order to understand their reaction, a brief description of the activities of these reform movements in the Punjab may not be out of place here.

**THE BRAHMO SAMAJ**

The Brahmo Samaj was founded in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal. It came to the Punjab in 1863 with the setting up of its head office in Lahore. Over the next two decades branches were started in Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Multan, Rupar, Simla and Dera Ghazi Khan. However, the Lahore Samaj and its Simla branch remained active. Both Lahore and Simla contained cohesive and stable Bengali Communities which supported the Brahmo Samaj with funds and talent. The prayers of the Brahmos were somewhat after the style of the English Church Service and were addressed to Brahma, the One God. The doctrines of the Brahmos were opposed to Vedas and to all scriptures which could be interpreted to support polytheism.

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They rejected caste restrictions and sought to establish theistic faith which would take the place of all other beliefs.

The Brahmo Samaj was against infant weddings. The opinions of the most eminent medical men in the country were invited in regard to the proper marriageable age and the consensus on the point was strictly adhered to. They also condemned enforced celibacy of widows. Inter-caste marriages were encouraged and solemnized. Education also came within the ambit of their social activities and members of the Brahmo Samaj distinguished themselves as philanthropists.

However, despite their efforts, the movement could not attract many people in the Punjab. According to P. Thomas, it was never a "popular religion". The weakest link in the movement was its tendency to schism which did not appeal to the people. There was very little in the movement which made for peace and unity. The least pique or difference of view not only created dissensions but also generated new sects. Moreover, its appeal had been mainly to men and women of upper classes who had received English education. It did not realise that for its survival, it must reach down to the man in the street and regenerate him. Thus, having failed to identify itself with the masses, the movement did not make much headway in the Punjab.

92. Sophia Dobson Collet., The Brahmo Year Book for 1876, (London, 1876), P. 45.
97. The Brahmo Samaj failed to make much success as is clear from the figures: 1891-128, 1911-700, 1921-305. (Kenneth W. Jones., Arya Dharma, P. 327)
THE ARYA SAMAJ

Having been founded at Bombay in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, it was introduced into the Punjab in 1877. The movement started in the province with its cardinal objects to reform the Hinduism from within and to protect it from the onslaughts of the Christian Missionaries and the Mohammedans. In order to achieve its objects, the Samaj raised the slogan 'Back to the Vedas.' It condemned the prevailing beliefs and disapproved ancestor worship and accepted the Vedas as the infallible books of true knowledge.

The Samaj introduced many social reforms among the Hindus: it championed the rights of the depressed and untouchable classes; it encouraged widow re-marriage and was opposed to the child marriage. It also took keen interest in the advancement of indigenous educational system. Further, it remained actively engaged in philanthropic work. "Outside Christian circles it was the first purely Indian association to organise orphanages

100. Ganda Singh., Punjab, P. 149.
and widow homes. During the times of natural calamities such as plague, cholera, famine and floods, it organised medical relief, nursed the sick and helped in disposal of the dead.

Despite its social reforms, the movement could not make much progress in the Punjab. It was due to the reason that it antagonised the other two communities - the Muslims and the Sikhs. By advocating that the child marriage and the purdah system were the legacy of the Muslim rule, it annoyed the Mohammedans. The latter also became opponents of the Samaj because it advocated Shuddhi - i.e. reconversion of Muslims and untouchables into Hindus. The Sikhs were antagonised because Swami Dayanand was said to have used derogatory words against the Gurus in his book Satyarth Parkash. Secondly, after the death of...


Satyarth Parkash, the sacred book of the Arya Samaj was published in 1874. It was banned by the Punjab Government because of offensive references to Prophet Mohammed and Islam. An amended version is now in circulation. (Khushwant Singh, op. cit.; P. 140; Ikram, S.M., Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan, (Lahore, 1965), P. 210.)

The Arya Samaj injured the religious feelings of two communities - the Muslims and the Sikhs, from time to time. For instance, the Imperial paper of Lahore, wrote in its issue of October 3, 1888, that the Aryas were inciting their members against Muslims and advising them to avenge themselves upon that community, because they believed that all the evils, such as child-marriage and purdah were the products of the Muslim rule in India (Home, Secret, Native Papers Report Punjab 1888, p. 247).

Further, the Akhbar-i-Am (Lahore) wrote in its issue of February 23, 1889, that some Aryas had spoken against the Sikh Gurus and that somebody had published Granth Sahib full of mistakes. (Home, Secret, N.P.R. 1889, p. 93).

Similarly, Ravi, another paper from Lahore, wrote on August 7, 1889, that somebody had written a book Granthi Phobia, injuring the feelings of the Sikhs. (Home Secret, N.P.R. 1889, p. 324).
of its founder, Swami Dayanand, the Arya Samaj split into two sections in 1892, ostensibly on a difference of opinion about meat-eating and about conducting the affairs of Dayananda Anglo-Vedic college founded in the memory of the Swami in 1886. The vegetarians were known by the name 'Mahatma' whereas the flesh-eating section was known as 'cultured party'. Moreover, being anti-British, the Samaj also suffered a setback. The British Government considered Swami Dayanand a politician and the Arya Samaj a political body. Thus the Arya Samaj became a subject of criticism by the Government and other faiths, and it could not make progress numerically in the last decade of the nineteenth century.


111. Saini, B.S., op. cit., p. 97.

In the Census of 1891, the number of persons who registered themselves as Aryas was 14030. In the Census for 1901, the statistics for Aryas were not given separately but the adult male Aryas (i.e. over 15 years of age) were less than those in 1891. (Census Report, 1891, p. 172; Census Report, 1911, P. 34).
Being infuriated by the attacks of the Arya Samaj on orthodox Hinduism, Din Dyal, by caste a Brahmin, started the Sanatan Dharm Sabha movement in Lahore in 1889. The objects of the Sabha as given in its constitution were to preserve and promote the old orthodox Hinduism in the country; to establish a college for imparting modern education together with religious instructions and to establish a library in which all works dealing with Sanatan Dharm may be kept.

In order to achieve these objects, the Sabha attracted a number of scholars and talented men, who tried to spread its ideals in the Punjab. The Sabha's efforts bore some fruit and by 1901, it established a high school and an advanced Sanskrit Pathshala at Lahore.

The Sabha attacked the Arya Samaj and taught the people to retain their idols and live in orthodox fashion. However, it could not make much headway in the Punjab due to the impact of the Arya Samaj and other reform movements. Ultimately, in 1902 it was absorbed in Bharat Dharma Mahamandala.

THE DEV SAMAJ

It was founded on February 16, 1887, in Lahore, by Pandit Satya Nand Agnihotri. The founder was under the powerful

112. District Gazetteer Lahore, 1894, P. 91; Fargouhar, J.N., Modern Religious Movements in India, (Delhi, 1967), P.316.
113. District Gazetteer of Lahore, 1894, P. 91.
115. Punj ab Administrative Report, 1901-02, P. 84.
117. Ibid., P. 317.
influence of the Brahmo Samaj and worked as its missionary for some years. Subsequently, finding himself unable to continue with Brahmos, he started the Dev Samaj movement. The main purpose of launching it was to bring 'the reign of truth and goodness into this world by effecting a radical change in the hearts of mankind'.

In order to achieve its object the Samaj rejected caste, child marriage, purdah, excessive ceremonial expenses and traditional mourning rites. The Deo Dharmis rejected the idea of redemption and pilgrimages and supported the female education and female medical aid. However, soon they became the fiercest opponents of the Aryas. The years 1888-1892 witnessed an intense pamphlet war between Agnihotri (founder of Dev Samaj) and the Aryas. Agnihotri published eighteen tracts during this period in addition to numerous newspaper articles and public speeches, all of which condemned the Arya Samaj and Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

The Dev Samaj did not become popular in the Punjab and the strength of its followers did not rise more than two

Perhaps it was due to that it paid more attention towards the social reforms than to religious reconstruction. Moreover, in 1913 the split appeared in it and a new Samaj named, 'The Society for the promotion of higher life' was started by some Deo Dharmis. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the Dev Samaj, because of its narrow vision, conservative nature and critical attitude regarding Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj, could not attract large numbers.

THE NIRANKARI MOVEMENT

It was started by Dayal Dass of Peshawar during the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This movement originated at a time when certain religious perversions such as worship of Brahmins, expensive marriages, death ceremonies, worship of various gods and goddesses, etc. had crept into the Sikh community. The founder's positive aspect of teaching was that 'God is formless' or Nirankar and thus he described himself as a Nirankari. He coined the phrase:

"Dhan Nirankar, Deh Dhari Seb Khwar"  
(Praise to be the Formless Creator; worship of mortals is of no avail).

In 1901, there were in all 12 missionaries and about 190 members and sympathisers in the province.
The Nirankaris worshipped God as spirit only and were deadly against the adoration of the idols. They preached against offerings to Brahmins and to the dead bodies. They abstained strictly from flesh, wine and other intoxicants. They believed in living pure, simple and truthful life. Their sacred book was the Adi Granth of the Sikhs. They favoured the simple marriages and widow remarriage.

The Nirankaris were the first who inaugurated Anand Vivah on Chait 1, 1911 Vikram Samvat, (March 13, 1855 A.D.). It was performed by circumambulating the Adi Granth. This act was then strongly criticised by their opponents, but afterwards it became a custom among the Sikhs. Various estimates about the numbers of this movement have been made. The Census Report of 1891 records the number of Nirankaris as 50724 of which 11817 were Sikhs and 38907 Hindus. While, Captain A.H. Bingley wrote in 1899 that their number was about 38000. Until 1947, the influence of the movement was restricted to Sikh and Hindu communities of the North West Frontier Province, Jammu and Kashmir state, and the south-eastern districts and princely


states of the Punjab. The Nirankaris styled Dayal Dass and his successors with such titles as Sri Satguru (the true Guru) and Sri Hazur Sahib (his holy eminence). Nirankaris also disapproved of the militant Khalsa as well as the orthodox salute Satsiri Akal; they themselves salute as Dhan Nirankan. They wear particular dress which easily distinguishes them from others. Many among the sikhs did not like these acts of the Nirankaris and never became their followers. As it directly hit the supremacy of the Brahmins and rejected the rules and regulations of the 'Hindu Dharm Shastras'; regarding the marriage, birth and death ceremonies, it never became popular among the Hindus too.

THE NAMDHARI OR KUKA MOVEMENT

Another prominent movement among the Sikhs was the Namdhari or the Kuka movement. It was founded by Baluk Singh, an Udasi in the year 1847, in District Rawalpindi. He exhorted his followers 'to live simple and practise no religious rituals other than repeating God's name or 'Nam' (hence Namdhari). Under Baluk Singh's successor, Baba Ram Singh of

134. Ibid., P. 125.
village Bhaini (Ludhiana), the movement took roots. The latter introduced some changes in the forms of worship, appearance and dress which distinguished his followers from the rest of the Sikhs. His disciples chanted hymns and like dancing dervishes worked themselves into a state of frenzy and emitted loud Kukas (shrieks). Hence they came to be named as Kukas.

In socio-religious field, Baba Ram Singh advocated inter-caste marriages, remarriage of widows and prohibited the use of alcoholic drinks, tobacco, meat, etc. He attacked the prevailing practices of worship of Samadhs (Hindu tombs), Mazars (Muslim tombs) graves, idols and supremacy of priestly classes. However, the movement did not become very popular because the men and women dancing together and indulging in orgies lost the sympathies of the more orthodox section among the Hindus and the Sikhs. Moreover, the Kukas, by forming parties moved from village to village singing their popular song:

"Marhi Masani dhaake kar doo maidana, pehlon maro pir Behnoi phir flare Sultana."

(Destroy and raise to the ground all marks of cremation and burial. First destroy the worship of Pir Behnoi and then that of Sakhi Sarvar Sultan.)

For sometime, the Kukas carried the work of breaking the idols, shrines and marks of worship such as - cremation marks, graves, Samadhs, etc., because they desired to bring the people out from the grip of old beliefs and superstitions. They were against visiting Hindu shrines such as Devi-dwaras, Shiva-dwaras and other temples where money was extorted. As a result of their propaganda against the worship of shrines, the leadership of priestly classes - Brahmans, Mahants, Sodhis and Bedis was deeply shaken and their sources of income were hit badly. Consequently, they all stood in opposition of the Kukas.

Later on, they murdered the butchers and others whom they suspected of slaughtering kine. This angered the Mohammedans as well as the Britishers who were habitual to take beef.

A new version of the Sau Sakhi (a book of hundred stories) was circulated in which Baba Ram Singh was proclaimed an

incarnation of Guru Gobind Singh. Further it was also proclaimed:

"Guru Gobind Singh's Granth is the only true book, written by inspiration, and is the only sacred writing. Gobind Singh is the only Guru. Any person, irrespective of caste or religion, can be permitted to convert. Converts are allowed to read Gobind Singh's Granth and no other book." 146

In political field, the Kukas believed in the establishment of Sikh power in the Punjab. Naturally, the British Government did not like this. In addition, the rulers of the Punjab States, leading chiefs, Jagirdars, etc. also opposed them. They all rallied to support the Government in suppressing this movement. They sent secret reports and representations against the Kukas to the Government.147 This movement also failed to eradicate social evils such as casteism and untouchability from amongst its followers. The Kukas also believed in the mechanical recitation of the Granth and performing Hawans.148 They did not preach spirituality to the truth seekers, which was the urgent need of the people of that time. Though the founder of the movement, Baluk Singh had started this movement with this goal in mind yet his successor had deviated from that spiritual path. That is why this movement could not bring the people of all communities on one common platform and declined with the passage of time.

145. Khushwant Singh., op. cit., P. 130; Chhabra, G.S., op. cit., P. 129.
147. Bajua, Fauja Singh., op. cit., P. 188.
THE GURU SINGH SABHA MOVEMENT

This movement started as a reaction to the proselytising activities of the Christian Missionaries. In 1873 four Sikh students of the Mission High School of Amritsar announced their decision to embrace Christianity. As a result, the Sikhs seriously thought of forming a society which could inspire the Sikhs as a whole to meet the danger. Consequently, some educated, highly respected among the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar in 'Mijitha Bunga' and organised the 'Guru Singh Sabha' in 1873.

The principal objects of this movement were to protect Sikhism from the onslaughts of Christian Missionaries, Arya Samaj, the revival of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, production of religious literature in Punjabi and a campaign against illiteracy. The founders also sought to "interest high placed Englishmen in, and assure their association, with the educational programme of the Singh Sabha." To ensure the


In 1873, when four Sikh boys - Aya Singh, Atar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh, of the Mission School of Amritsar announced their decision to turn Christian, there were protest meetings all over the Punjab; Sikh preachers talked to the boys and prevented them from abandoning their ancestral faith.(Khushwant Singh., op. cit. P. 138; Ganda Singh., Punjab, P. 132).


Leaders of the Amritsar Singh Sabha were Khem Singh Bedi, Bikram Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala, and Thakar Singh Sandhawalia. Several Sikh theologians including the celebrated Gyani Gyan Singh took active interest. (Khushwant Singh., op. cit., P. 141).

patronage of the Government, the Sabha resolved "to cultivate loyalty to the Crown". 152

The movement became popular: many Sikhs of Amritsar, Jhelum and Rawalpindi joined it.153 The Manji Sahib and Darbar Sahib Amritsar became places of Sikh gatherings and research in Sikh literature was also initiated.154 However, the Singh Sabha could not make much headway due to bitter differences among its leaders. Ultimately the movement declined. Later on, it was revived by some educated persons at Lahore.

THE LAHORE SINGH SABHA

It was founded by Gurmukh Singh and his associates in 1879.155 Its main objects were to represent the interest of the Sikhs, to encourage the Punjabi language and to maintain the original purity of Sikh doctrines and customs.156 Soon after the foundation it opened its branches in many towns, sent missionaries to the villages, established liaison with Sikh regiments and began publishing journals in Punjabi to achieve its aims. 157

SIRI GURU SINGH SABHA GENERAL

On April 11, 1880, both Singh Sabhas of Amritsar and Lahore were merged into one and was named 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha

155. Ibid., P. 124; Chhabra, G.S., op. cit., P. 131.
156. Administrative Report, 1901-02, P. 183; Census Report, 1901, P. 125.
General. But this association proved a failure due to the differences among the leaders of both the Sabhas. The Amritsar group was dominated by the conservatives like Kham Singh Bedi, who, by virtue of his descent from Nanak, was wont to accept homage due to a Guru. The Lahore group, on the other hand, was radical and strongly opposed the institution of Guruji. The two groups clashed on the right of untouchable Sikhs to worship in the Gurdwaras. The conservatives sided with the priests who allowed untouchables to enter only at specified hours without the right to make offerings. The radicals considered it an encroachment on the right of the untouchables and they wanted the removal of restrictions placed on them (untouchables). The debate became acrimonious. The conservatives dissociated themselves from the movement and then became openly hostile. Thus due to the dissenting opinion of the conservative and the radical groups the movement suffered and it did not attract many followers to its fold.

MOVEMENTS AMONG THE MUSLIMS

While these social and religious activities were going on among the Hindus and the Sikhs, the Muslim reaction thereto was not unimportant. The Muslims began to cherish a nostalgic feeling for their past glories in India and the Muslim world.

159. Khushuaut Singh., op. cit., P. 143.
160. Ibid., P. 143.
They had at the same time, a passion for social reform, an urge for rational inquiry and a quest for new values. Among them the following movements germinated in the second half of the nineteenth century.

(i) **THE AHJUMAN-I-HIMAYAT-I-ISLAM, LAHORE**

It was organised in 1866. Its chief aims were to give the Muslims a good grounding in the principles of their religion along with secular instructions, and to support orphan and destitute children. In order to achieve these aims, it established a school and college in Lahore.

(ii) **THE AHMADIYA MOVEMENT**

The Ahmadiya movement was founded in 1889 by Mirza Gulam Ahmed. Its centre was at Qadian in District Gurdaspur. The object of this movement was to remove perversions in Islam. In 1891 the Mirza proclaimed himself the promised Messiah of the Christians, promised Mahdi of the Muslims and promised Avtar of the Hindus. He also denounced the infallibility of the Vedas. In order to make clear his position, he wrote three books - namely, *Fath-e-Islam; Tauidh-i-Maram* and *Izala-i-Ahram*. From that time onwards, he was involved in bitter

controversies with the orthodox Muslims, the Arya Samajists and the Christians. He was denounced by the Mullahas as a heretic and a Fatwa was issued, excommunicating his followers.165

Thus, on account of Mirza’s proclamations, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians opposed this movement tooth and nail. Consequently, it received a severe set back in the end of the nineteenth century.

NEED OF THE HOUR

A brief survey of the various socio-religious movements of the time given above clearly establishes that though good attempts were made by various movements among the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims to introduce reforms in the socio-religious spheres, their success was somewhat limited. Among the many reasons of why that was so was that their reforming efforts of each of these movements was confined to its single community alone. All the reform movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century singularly failed to draw the attention of the people to the goal of God-realization. Though, the founder of some religious movements in the second half of the nineteenth century had that goal in mind, but they deviated from it. The Christians, as already noticed, confined their activities mainly to the proselytizing activities.166

166. For growth of Christianity in the Punjab, see above, P. 24 , footnote No. 85.
appeal of Brahmo Samaj remained confined to the people of upper classes who had received English education.\textsuperscript{167} The Arya Samaj remained busy mostly in political and educational activities and in condemning other faiths. Later, it also started policy of reconversions under Shuddhi.\textsuperscript{168} The Sanatan Dharma Sabha and the Dev Samaj mostly fought against the Arya Samaj. The Dev Samaj did not make much headway in the Punjab and till 1891, it could attract about two hundred persons only.\textsuperscript{169} Similarly, the Nirankaris and the Kukas had adopted more external rites and rituals than spiritual practices. The Kukas also remained busy in destroying the shrines and marks of worship of the Hindus and the Muslims,\textsuperscript{170} and as such failed to win the sympathies of both these communities. Reformatory movements among the Muslims, as mentioned earlier,\textsuperscript{171} also remained confined to their own community. To sum up, by about the end of the nineteenth century, even if all the aforementioned movements succeeded in eliminating some social evils, they failed to provide a common platform to the Punjabis\textsuperscript{172} in God-realization. The people needed a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{167} See above, P. 26.
  \item \textsuperscript{168} See above, PP. 27-29.
  \item \textsuperscript{169} See above, PP. 30-32.
  \item \textsuperscript{170} See above, PP. 33-36.
  \item \textsuperscript{171} See above, PP. 41-42.
  \item \textsuperscript{172} The total population of the Punjab in 1891 was 25,130,127 (for details, see Census Report, 1891, P. 93).
\end{itemize}
guide who would show the spiritual path and thus help them in God-realization. It was this need of the hour that the Radha Soami Movement which had already originated outside the Punjab, tried to fulfill after its arrival in the Punjab.

ORIGIN OF THE RADHA SOAMI MOVEMENT

The Radha Soami Movement was founded by Seth Shiv Dayal Singh (1818-1878), a Hindu banker of Agra, in January 1861.


Farquhar, J.N. writes the name of the founder of the Radha Soami Movement 'Tulsi Ram', it is wrong. (Modern Religious Movements in India, P. 163); Chaturvedi, Parshuram does not accept this name. (Uttar Bharat Ki Sant Parampara, Hindi, (Paryag, Samvat 2008), P. 679); Seth Partap Singh, younger brother and biographer of Soami Ji Maharaj, gives the name Shiv Dayal (Jiuan Charitar Soami Ji Maharaj, Hindi, (Agra, 1950), P. 1); Tripathi, Bansidhar writes that Sheo Dayal Singh established the Radha Soami Satsang in 1878 and died the same year. It is wrong, (Sadhus of India : The Sociological View, (Bombay, 1978), P. 48).
The founder described God as the union between 'Radha', symbolising the soul, and 'Soami', the Master; hence himself as a worshipper of 'Radha Soami'. It was thoroughly a reactionary Movement against the prevalent traditions, rituals, superstitions and other false religious beliefs. Its cardinal object was the moral uplift of the people of all communities and to free them from the prevailing social malpractices and to bring them on one common platform to attain these objects. It laid emphasis on the constant practice of 

*Surat Shabd Yoga* and announced that it is the simplest way to get salvation from the cycle of birth and death.

The founder of the Movement was born on August 25, 1818 in a Seth Khatri family of Agra. Later on, he became popular with the titles - 'Radha Soami Dyal' and 'Soami ji Maharaj'. His father, Seth Diluali Singh was a rich banker and his mother Mahamaya was a pious lady. His ancestors belonged to Lahore.

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For details about the teachings of the Radha Soamis, see *below*, Chapter No. IV, PP. 122-168.


had blind faith in the Adi Granth of the Sikhs. Later on, they attended the discourses of Sant Tulsi Sahib of Hathras (U.P.) who frequently visited Agra and all members of the family became his devotees. 179

At the age of five, he was sent to school, where he learnt Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Punjabi, Arabic and Sanskrit. During his student life, he remained completely loyal to his tutors. 180 Moreover, he showed keen interest in spiritual practices from the early age of six. Regarding his guide or Spiritual Guru, various scholars hold different opinions. For instance, the scholars of Agra Centres are of the opinion that he (Shiv Dayal) never needed, nor he had any Guru. He was the incarnation of the Supreme Being and had descended from the Highest Spiritual Region and had assumed human form at will. 181

179. Dayal Bagh Souvenir, PP. 1, 2; Chaturvedi, Parshuram., op. cit., P. 658; Kirpal Singh., Jiwan Charitar Baba Jaimal Singh ji Maharaj, Punjabi, (Delhi, 1968), PP. 10,11,12.

Details about Sant Tulsi Sahib's early life are not known. However, it is said that he was born about 1763 A.D. in the south. Later on he settled in a small village, Jogia, situated on the outskirts of Hathras in Aligarh District of present Uttar Pradesh. He lived here till his death in 1843. As he came from the south he was known as Oakhani Baba (the sage from the south). He used to visit other neighbouring towns and cities. Among his disciples were Seth Dilwali Singh of Agra, his wife Mahamaya, his mother, his mother-in-law and sister. They were all disciples of Sant Tulsi Sahib, who used to pay visits to them in Agra, stayed with them in Panni Gali and held discourses there. (For details, see Radha Soami Satsang Baas., Tulsi Sahib : Saint of Hathras, (Delhi, 1978), PP. 1,3,5; Puri, Lekh Raj., Radha Soami Teachings, (Delhi, 1972), P. 323).


However, Parshuram Chaturvedi is of the opinion that, 'Shiv Dayal took initiation from Baba Girdhari Dass, a disciple of Sant Tulsi Sahib of Hathras.'\(^{182}\) Mahant, Ganesha Singh remarks that Sant Daya Singh was the Guru of Seth Shiv Dayal Singh.\(^{183}\) Giani Partap Singh is of the opinion that one Nirmaly Sant Didar Singh, nick named 'Mauj Parkash' of village Gill, District Ludhiana, who was then incharge of Gurdwara Mai Theen (Historical Gurdwara of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Agra), was the Guru of Shiv Dayal Singh; it is from him that he learnt the secret of Surat Shabd Yoga.\(^{184}\)

The afore-mentioned versions of various scholars do not appear to be correct. Sant Tulsi Sahib of Hathras seems to be his Guru; the parents of Seth Shiv Dayal Singh had no contact with Daya Singh and Didar Singh (Mauj Parkash). They were

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\(^{182}\) Chaturvedi, Parshuram., op. cit., P. 659.


\(^{185}\) The present writer searched out a manuscript of 361 pages, written in Punjabi, from the Personal library of Dr. Gurcharan Singh, Sector 15-A, Kothi No. 23, Chandigarh. This MS contains much valuable information of the Radha Soami Movement. See its pages No. 23, 24 (cited hereafter as Manuscript No. 1).

I am grateful to Dr. Gurcharan Singh of Chandigarh for providing me access to the manuscript which is now in his possession.
the followers of Sant Tulsai Sahib of Hathras. Thus the family Guru can be the Guru of the child. Moreover, it is also said that Seth Shiv Dayal Singh took birth with the prophecy of Sant Tulsai Sahib and the former used to call his beloved Master Sahib or Sahib Ji. 186

Shiv Dayal Singh was appointed as a tutor of Raja Ballabhgarh but, he could not proceed with this job for long. He resigned and returned to his native home in order to devote the entire time to religious pursuits. 187 Soon after the death of his father, he decided to wind up the ancestral business of money lending and one day, called all the debtors and requested them to return the money within a week. Those who could not comply with his request, their documents were destroyed in their presence, to relieve them of their obligation to reply. 188

His reputation as a great saint, a great scholar and a spiritualist had spread in all quarters of the country. Often the people in large groups visited Soami Ji Maharaj for discussions on religious subjects. After listening to his discourses they felt satisfied and were filled with humility. Most of them, however, sought initiation and were benefited

by spiritual practices and regular Satsang. It is said that Swami Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj visited Agra and stayed with Soamiji at his residence in Pannigali in 1872. There was a long discussion for a week. Being convinced by the teachings of the Radha Soami Faith, Swami Dayanand is said to have taken initiation from Soami Ji Maharaj. Due to the efforts of Soamiji Maharaj, the number of his followers increased rapidly and he presided over the Satsang meetings for 17 years.

Over-absorption in spiritual work and neglect of nourishing diet and absence of rest adversely affected Shiv Dayal’s health. Ultimately, he breathed his last on June 15, 1878, at the age of sixty. His ashes lie in a sacred tomb in the Radha Soami Garden, about three miles away from Agra city. The tomb is still under construction and huge amount has been spent on it.

190. Ibid., pp. 18, 363, 364.
SOAMI JI'S WRITINGS

Soami Ji's writings are contained in two books, Sarbachan i.e. 'Essential Utterances', one in poetry and the other in prose. He occasionally composed Shabadas (Poems) and dictated these to one Jiwan Lal, and sometimes to Rai Saligram Sahib. Similarly, Sarbachan prose is a collection of certain portions of Soami Ji's discourses which were taken down from time to time by his followers. Both the works were published in 1884 under joint authority of Rai Saligram Sahib and Seth Partap Singh.

Soamiji Maharaj, with the help of his disciples and representatives, tried to spread the Radha Soami Movement. During his life time, about 4000 persons irrespective of any distinction of caste, creed, colour, sex and social status, became his followers. After his death, the Radha Soami Faith broke up into three main centres i.e. Agra, Delhi and Beas. The details about the establishment of Beas Centre belong to the next chapter.

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195. Dyal Bhag Souvenir, P. 19; Radha Soami Satsang Beas., The Sarbachan, Prose, (Delhi, 1974), P. 3.

196. For details about the Agra Centre, see below, Chapter No. VI. PP. 224-251.