CHAPTER 4

BHAKTI - SĀDHANA

SĀDHANA AND SĀDHANA

In all the atheistic systems of Indian Philosophy, the dominant goal of every adherent is to achieve complete identification with the supreme reality, to be untied from the worldly ties and be liberated from all senses of duality. Guru poets also speak of the same. For this purpose a Sadhaka has to follow a particular type of conduct based on certain means, which make a particular type of Sādhana. In fact, the act of practising the means prescribed in a particular system can rightly be observed as Sādhana of that system and thus whereas Sādhan (means) is a Karma, the Sādhana is a Kīrya. In Indian tradition, four prominent systems; each of which has a particular type of Sādhana, the prevalent and though in the end all of them have the same destination, they seem to be alike, yet the practices are different and hence the Sādhana is different.

A study of the poetry of the Sikh Gurus reveals that they were profoundly Bhaktas and so they would naturally adopt the means which would help in strengthening their sense of Bhakti. There is an other dimension of the thought also, according to which, there is no need for adopting and practising any means in Bhakti, because

1. Karma, Jñāna, Yoga and Bhakti Mārga.
it is purely a gift from God and can be bestowed with His grace, at any time. It is generally believed that it is impossible to gain the path of Bhakti with self efforts. It can only be rewarded to a man whom He chooses and upon whom he showers his kindness. Man and its capacities are incomplete and incapable of doing anything which can result in the attainment of Bhakti. Bhakti cannot be done, but it is awakened with His grace. "It is received only if His grace is bestowed and all other wisdoms and practices put us in trouble." At another place, Guru Nanak says, "He cannot be propitiated with the different types of conduct." In Guru poets, there is a great emphasis on the Grace of God. No effort can be justified unless God, with all his kindnesses, wills so, and here the Bhakti becomes virtually a gift from God. But still, the rational mind cannot stop here and it concludes that even to follow the path of Bhakti, not to speak of perfection in it, certain types of efforts to awake the self, to direct it towards the right path and to make a selection in the conducts to be followed, are indeed needed. God in Sikh Gurus is omnipotent and hence competent to do

2. "Indeed he, who believes that he has, by his life and character, deserved God's love is hardly worthy of it" - Sewa Ram Singh, The Divine Master, p. 260.

3. Āsā di Vār; M.1.

4. Rāga Āsā; M.1.
anything. He, with His grace, can make any mind to be aware about the spirit of Bhakti. But generally, for this awareness, certain types of conduct are practised. Affirming this fact, Guru Nanak says "Bhakti cannot be attained without performing virtues." It does not mean that Gurus, at this point, are fickle minded and there is some contradiction in them. In fact, they want to stress that, no doubt, Bhakti is resultant of some Sadhana, successful adoption of some means, still, successful adoption of certain means and prescribed course of practice, alone is not sufficient unless these are equally graced by Lord.

There is another view, also, mostly prevalent in the followers of Guru poets, that God Himself descended on earth in the image of Guru Nanak. He did not need the adoption of any method for the accomplishment of his Bhakti. All the accomplishments were already in Him. But all this seems to be an outcome of blind faith in Sikh Gurus and ignorance of the common man. Guru had to be dynamic, the dominant feature of his personality, in adopting some conduct, based on certain means, which were preached by him. To support this view, Bhāi Gurdās, a prominent Sikh scholar and recognised authority on Sikhism can be quoted as such –

5. A person can know if Thou make him to realise; – Asa; M.4.
6. –If you make somebody to know, then he can know; – Asa; M.5.
"Firstly Baba (Nanak) was grasped by Him and then he laboured hard. He took sand and stones as food and made his bedding of stones to sleep. He did lot of austerities and was greatly fortunate that an attachment with Hari was developed."

Alone in India, innumerable are the conducts and principles practised by the adherent of different schools. Guru Nanak gives an indication to this fact, when he asserts that methods of approach are uncountable. He says:

"Innumerable are jāps (types of repulsion), innumerable Bāmas. Innumerable are types of adorations, innumerable are types of austerities. Innumerable are scriptures, which are being constantly studied. Innumerable are Yogas, through which mind develops asceticism." 8

From these innumerable methods, Guru poets select a few which help in developing an awareness about the bhāv-related to deity and strengthening and sustaining their sense of Bhakti. Nine types, or as are called, nine characteristics of Bhakti, explored by the Indian Bhakti tradition and exposed through Bh. Pu., can safely be taken as nine means for the attainment of Supra-Bhakti. Such indications are available in Guru poets also. As it is stated above, Guru poets have an admiration for these nine means and have frequently emphasised their

7. Vār 1, Pauri, 24.
8. Japu jī.
9. S.N. Das Gupta; History of Indian Philosophy; Vol. 4; p. 421.
importance. But, as has been made clear, their accept­ance is not strictly same as in the Indian Bhakti tradition. The attitude of the Guru poets about these traditional means is different. For the attainment of Bhakti, Sikh Gurus have advocated many ways, which come from various methods and are knitted well.

The means adopted by a particular school are always determined by the ideal of personality which the school has before it. In Sikh Gurus, besides building a really spiritual character and leading it towards God realisation, they wanted to vibrate a revolutionary spirit in the whole of the social structure to bring a complete renaissance. They achieved this ideal through the development of an individual. They lay emphasis upon proceeding from the individual to the society. This individual is the centre of their teachings, like all other systems in India, and for its right development they have stressed upon the adherence to Bhakti. This Bhakti requires the adaption of a few means, internal and external. Though no hard and fast line can be drawn between the internal and the external means, because both go together, effect and reflect each other, yet for the purpose of analysis

10. External means here should not be taken as traditional Karma-Kanda, which has mentally been rejected by Sikh Gurus as "Karma-Kanda tells of many conducts, but without Nama this all is a shameless ego" - Gauri; M.3.
this division is adopted. It is an obvious fact that any Sadhā, which is being completed with methods purely dependable upon the external means, will effect the internal self provided, these are performed with sincerity. Similarly, internal virtues must be reflected through the external conduct of the person.

THREE STAGES

In Indian tradition and especially in the Vedānta system, three stages are recognised for the development of God-consciousness and these are Sravāna, Manāna, and Niḍhiyāsana. "Sravāna stands for the study of the scriptures under a qualified Guru. Manāna means constant reflection upon what has been learnt so that intellectual convictions may be produced in the mind. And, lastly, Niḍhiyāsana implies meditation which helps to bring about a direct realisation of the unity of all things in God." Guru Nānak too uses these terms in Japuji and elucidates every stage to be achieved and surpassed with the collaboration of many other means. About Sravāna, he says, "by hearing (Sravāna, Sumiai as used by Guru Deva) comes the truthfullness, contentedness and wisdom and the purification of bathing in the waters

11. Rādhā Krishan; See the Introduction; P.28 of the book "The Upanishadas as Anthology" by D.Ś. Sharma.
of sixty-eight holy places is attained by it. By hearing and studying (the sanctified scriptures) the real honour is received and the mind enjoys the natural hold (Sahej) of attention. O Nanak, Bhaktas enjoy always the cheerfulness, because by hearing, the sufferings and sins are relinquished. Guru Rama Das is of opinion, "The tongue of Guru, through its exertion, is shedding the sweet nectar of Hari Nam and all the appetites of the devotees, who have heard and tried a constant reflection upon it, (Guru's words) will vanish." Let us, advises Guru Nanak, "By singing, hearing, reflecting and having emotional attachment with Him, shed the miseries of others and take them to the Home of Happiness." This hearing is the hearing of His Nam which is already in us.

SRAVANA

The motion of Sravana in Sikh Gurus includes in itself the following means for the attainment of Bhakti:-

12. In India sixty-eight places of pilgrimage are considered holy and a bath is taken in their sacred waters for rectification.


15. Japu ji, Pauri 5.

The need of a Guru, in the course of enjoying mystical experiences, is always stressed in almost all the mystical traditions, but in medieval saints generally and in Sikh Gurus particularly, the position of a Guru is well-esteemed and is exalted so high that no distinction between a Guru and God is made. Guru for the saints is everything. They are well considered that without the guidance of a qualified Guru, no Sadhna can be perfect. Kabir, in his simple way of expression, believes that it is Guru with whose help God is apprehended and hence he enjoys a position even superior to God. And again emphasizing the need of Guru, he says, "Guru and Gobinda (deity) both are standing before, but at whose feet should I bow?"

This mental crisis is over when his inner-self feels it impossible to go without a Guru and a choice is made keeping in view the immediate purpose, "Wonderful is the Guru, who helped to meet Gobinda."

In Punjabi families this is a common saying that there can be no salvation without a Guru (Guru bina gat mahna). Guru in the poetry of Sikh Gurus is the sole being or centre of all the means

17. Dr. Sarnam Singh Sharma, Kabira: ik Vivechana; P. 425.
of Śādhnā to be adopted and performed and, that is why, it is full of the praises of Guru.

Guru’s praises in the Ṇdi Granth led many western and eastern scholars to say that Guru Nanak was the disciple of a human Guru. Many named Kabira as his Guru. But this seems unreasonable. There is a popular belief amongst the Sikhs that all the ten Gurus were different only in name and form, otherwise the same light (Joti) sparkled in them. The Guru here, is a spirit or life and not a mortal body. This idea is duly supported by Guru poetry also. "Sme is the light and same is the way and the same embodiment is turned up again and again. It is realised that Thou art, Nanak and Lāhna (Guru Angad Dev) and Thou art Guru Amardas. Only after seeing Guru, the mind finds a basis of happiness." Guru Nanak says, "It is a lamp enlightened by a Lamp and the light is visible in the three regions (Tribhavana)."

It is just possible that the successors of Guru Nanak might have adored him as their Guru and have regarded him as God-Himself, and rather it is so. But a more close and analytical study of their poetry reveals that Guru in them is represented in two forms. One is Guru in

18. "Nanak (1469-1538), the most famous disciple of Kabira . . . . . . . (A. A. Macdonell, India’s Past; P. 228).
particular and here they have esteemed Guru Nanak and the other is Guru in general, where they do not take Guru Nanak as an embodied spirit but only a spirit of light that guides and enlightens every mystic, from any religion or system he might be. Their emphasis is on the later notion about Guru, because "Guru Deva is in the beginning, in the ages and in all the times and Guru Deva is the Hari-Mantra, repetition of which brings salvation." \(^{21}\) And "True Guru of mine is eternal, neither He comes nor goes. He is undecaying Purkhā, who is merged in all." \(^{22}\) It is the distinctive feature of Sikhism that Guru in it is never accepted as a body, but is worshipped only as a spirit. Moreover, the decision of the tenth Guru, not to permit the continuation of Guruship after him and establishment of Guru Granth Sahib - a collection of the holy verses by the Guru poets and other saint poets - as Guru, shows their tendency towards the concept of Guru, not as a body, but as a spirit or light, which, according to him, can be perceived from these holy verses. "It means that the real Guru is not made in any human likeness, that he is simply a channel for the transmission of impersonal truths, and that any one that imparts that truth, be it a book or a human being,

\(^{21}\) Gaurī Bāwan Akhari; M.5.

\(^{22}\) Sukhī; M.4 Ashatpādi.
So, it is clear that Guru in Sikhism is not a person, however high he may have gone, but Brahman himself. As Dr. Mohan Singh believes, "Guru is not a person but the certainty of one's being led from darkness unto light; and is synonymous with the word, the Supreme unmanifests meaning, purpose, which as light draws us out of the darkness of ignorance or gives us the fullest awareness of the subject alone."  

It is also true that Guru, in almost all the mystical sects occupies the Supreme position and in medieval saint poets it has occupied even more. Even when the Guru is accepted in the human abode i.e. in the form of a mortal being, as in the case of Kabira, whose Guru is known to be Rāmānanda, he is exalted to such a position that he is preferred to God even, as is evident from the verses quoted above. It becomes apparent by this attitude of the saint poets that even if the Guru is a human being, he is worshipped, adored and esteemed as Brahman. But so far as the concept of Gurus' is concerned, it is quite evident from the poetry of Guru Nānak that in his mystical career he never accepted any mortal being as his Guru. His concept of Guru can


24. Dr. Mohan Singh Diwan; Sikh Mysticism, P. 47.
be embodied in the words, "Unfathomable is Supreme Brahman
and Supreme Ishwara and Nanak has got the same as Guru." 25
And again he says, "Hari and Guru are prevalent in one
form and Nanak has liked Hari as Guru." 26 He has
clearly indicated throughout his poetry that His Guru
is not temporal being and is not subject to any form or
name. He is Brahman Himself, who in Sikhism, is non-
temporal, non-spacious and beyond all the limitations of
time. The word 'Guru' in the poetry of Sikh Gurus, always
accompanied by the words Par Brahman, Hari, Gobinda etc.
It is clear that Guru for them is Brahman and none else.
Guru in Sikhism, supersedes the position of incarnated
manifestation i.e. Aytāra in Hinduism and Prophet in Islam
even. Aytāras and Prophets are subject to birth and
death, according to Gurus, and are enwrapped in matter,
whereas Guru is perfect, (Puran) Supreme Brahman (Par-
Brahman), and True (Satya) and so is beyond all limitation.
He is eternal and undecaying.

Sikh Gurus are firm believers that without Guru,
no Sādhana can be adopted and completed successfully,
because "The soul can only receive impulses from another
soul." 27 Whenever there is a mention of Guru, the

25. Sorath; M. I.
26. Marū; M. I. Sohle.
27. Complete works of Viveka Nanda; Vol. III,
p. 45.
emotional nature of the poets is so intensified that their voice seems choked. An overwhelming stream of emotions, which seems uncontrollable and unalterable, flows so fast and blindly that the self of the poet seems to be melted and channelised out in quite and most intensified way. It seems as if they cannot afford to spare a moment of being not in his remembrance and being without him. Guru for them is a guide, beloved, friend and every sort of dearest kith and kin. He is God, for them a way to God and a pointer to it too. He is a sailor, who helps in crossing the dreadful and terrible world - ocean. He helps to be in the embrace of infinity and eternity. He is a touch-stone (Pāra), a touch of which can transform them from iron to gold and whose teachings can make them like a diamond, full of light and unbreakable. That is how, in extreme passionate way, they have described the personality of Guru, whose attainment for them, is a cheapest bargain even after paying the life as its value. Guru Nānak puts a question to himself, "If somebody (Guru) gives you a talk about the Master, O' Nānak, what will you pay to him?" And replies himself "After cutting my head, I shall make it a place for him to rest upon and shall serve him without head." The importance of Guru is raised upto such an extent that Guru Angad deva says, "If hundred

28. Vadhan's, M.I.
of moons may appear and thousands of suns may rise,
but even with this much light, there is complete dark-
ness without a Guru."

So, in Guru posts, there is an advice for the
votaries to surrender before the Guru and to serve him
whole-heartedly. The more emphasis of the Sikh Gurus
is on the complete self-surrender, so that every barrier
of fear and ego may be broken and the light should pre-
vail. Guru Arjun expresses the desire in the words,
"I dedicate the body, mind and my all possessions (Dham)
to the person (Guru) who helps me to meet the Greatest
(Prabhu). And with it O' Namak, all the superstitions
and fears will vanish and the messenger of death (Yama)
will not be able to approach.""

But this office of Guruship is not to be accorded
to everyone. Before adopting a Guru, a selection must
be made to know whether he deserves to be a Guru or not.
The qualities of a Guru, as prescribed in the poetry of
Guru posts, show that every next man cannot hold this
office. "True (Sat) Guru can only be he, or meeting
with whom brings happiness to self, the duality of mind
disappears and a supreme position of Hari is attained.""
The true Guru will not be victim to duality. He must

29. Ṭāsā dī Vār, M.2.
be above all senses. The objects of material world should not be able to fascinate him and he should have developed a sense of equality and indiscrimination.

"True Guru, from his inner self, is above the sense of enmity and in every one he finds the Same Brahman. He (True Guru) wishes the welfare of all and so why should ill-luck come to him?" He should always be absorbed in contemplation and should enable himself to enjoy the direct communication, where he is to lead his followers.

"Only he can be called, a true Guru, who knows Brahman and relates the story (Katha) of Hari." The Guru as depicted in the poetry of the Sikh Gurus is a being who is not subject to any worldly convictions. He is above the needs and is perfect. The real test of his personality is that he should be able to transform the mentality of his adherents. The Guru poets have firm belief that without the help of a Guru, it is hard to break with the strong-hold of the senses. To be at the feet of Guru and hear him (Sravana) obediently is the only means to attain perfection and all other means remain secondary to it. But along with it, they have emphasised a selection of a Guru, only because they are convinced

32. Vār Gaurī 1; M.4.

33. By the kindness of the Guru, the down-turned lotus of the heart up-turns and blooms; and light dawns M.5. (C/F Mohan Singh; Sikh Mysticism, p. 10).

34. Mačār, M.4.

35. Vār Aṣā, M.1.
that an unworthy Guru cannot play the real role, successfully and effectively. Only to have a Guru is not enough, a perfect Guru is a necessity. And to be an adherent is not enough, but to be a true adherent is needful. They have stressed on the positive activity of the both, Guru and disciple, and only then the required goal can be achieved. Guru should be perfect and the adherent should be enkindled with a fire of curiosity (jīgyāsā) to reach the truth. It is the duty of the Guru to evoke the divine spirit in the votaries, but it is in the nature of human being that even while dwelling in the temple of purities it enjoys and extracts more pleasure from the impurities. That is why Gurus have emphatically preached that the office of the Guruship should only go to the worthy of it, because "The dark convictions (Bharaa) of the mind cannot be removed by a blind Guru, who leaves the root (Māl) and pursues the leaves. He is absorbed in position and will lose himself in the same." About such a Guru it is said, "He tells a lie, enjoys with impurities and goes to teach others. He ruins himself and perverts the adherents." The second phase of the idea is that an adherent should also have curiosity for

36. True Guru, who abides in truth, is a pond of nectar, in which even if a Crow takes a bath, he becomes the Swan (Hamsa). - Gujri M.4.

37. Gaurī M.3, Ashatpādi.

the attainment of truth. So, Guru deva believes, "If one turns away from Guru and does not believe in what he says, he may gather and collect much with his own efforts, but whatever he may do, he shall have to go to hell." 39 "The man, who turns away from Guru, does not find any place anywhere and will wander from door to door like an divorced woman remembered with bad name as characterless." 40 So, it is most needful, according to Guru poets, to have a perfect Guru and to act in accordance with his teachings sincerely.

Faith ( Shraddhā)

Sravana, the first stage of development of spirituality includes another thing in it and that is faith. An unshakable and undisturbed faith in Guru, i.e. Brahman, his authority and teachings are required to attain the Bhakti. Faith, by Guru poets too is given much importance and is widely acclaimed when they say "No peace results from saying and hearing even in most religious men, (Sekh) unless there is a faith," 41 and "If no faith in true Guru comes and no attachment with his Word is developed in a person, no ease will come to him even if he comes and goes hundred times." 42 But

39. Prabhāṭi; M.3.
40. Vār Sorath; M.3.
41. Sārang; M.5.
42. Vār Vadhans; M.3.
it must be distinguished from superstition. To superstition, they have called śārīra and have advised to a Śakti to abstain from it. "Throw-away all the superstitions and remember the Ā śā of God, because in the end only this Ā śā will accompany you." 43 Superstition is a negative force whereas faith is a positive and a strength in itself. It is a strong-hold based on reasoning. Though these both, faith and reason, ordinarily seem contrary and hold different poles, yet these are complimentary. 44 Faith without without intellect, its reasoning potentiality and its proper exertion is blindness, which is not acceptable to Ā śā. They believe, "Reasoning potentiality in intellect is pure in the whole world," and advised the Śakti to "Drink its nectar by thinking repeatedly." 45 Faith, in them, is a culmination or resultant of reasoning, which is a method for Ā śā. No doubt, they were deep in faith but were profoundly rational also. The seeker of truth, according to Ā śā, should not plunge into any contradiction - which ordinary mind thinks between faith and reason and should not try to choose between the two. They do not believe that faith and reasoning can be set apart, 43. Jājīvānti, M.9.
44. "Reason is theoretical, faith is active faith without reason is action on the basis of Credulity. Reason without faith is impossible, since it is from the experience associated with activity that reason draws its data." Richard N. Bender, Philosophy of Life, p. 29.
45. Kātyānaś K.4, Ashatyadi.
because it is not the "Study that helps to understand the real secret, (Bhed) but it is the thinking which helps." The real thinking is developed with the help of proper reasoning. Further it is indicated that "The inner self is subject to the unbreakable tyranny of greed and lust, because due to undeveloped faculty of reasoning, it is fascinated by these." So, the reason or Bibek, as they say, is most needed for the awakening and development of faith, because unless the negative and positive force of a certain act or approach is differentiated - which reasoning power helps to do - no force of any kind can be so strong. That is why, Guru poets have emphasised on the making of these two supplementary forces and have preached the role of reasoning in building up a right and strong type of faith.

Moreover, how these two can be contradictory for the seeker of ultimate reality, when the two, on the whole, help us to proceed on the same path. What is the proof with us to believe that the reality reveals itself to us only through faith and not reasoning, when Guru poets have indicated, as in the above quotation, that the intellect full of reasoning faculty is pure in the whole world, and it helps to enjoy the divine nectar

46. Var Majh, M.1.
47. Shairo, M.3.
Along with it, reasoning even about God does not become defiance against Him, because it is well inferred that reasoning and all its resultants are subject to constant change and are relative, whereas God is absolute. So, the changing aspects and the new found dimensions of Reality through reasoning, help us to strengthen our faith in Him. It is at least an experience that leads us to admire His glory in many-fold and multi-coloured creations. It is also a way to the realisation of the Supreme truth.

But this reasoning should not be made synonymous to unhealthy discussion (Vād Vivād). To be absorbed in unhealthy discussion is the most destructive step in the path of realisation. It is not destructive only in itself but it spoils the mind and shakes the faith.

This faith in Guru poets carried importance so much so that it is the only remedy for all the diseases of worldly temptations. In their poetry, there are many verses to emphasise its utility. "The people who have no faith in heart, O' Nanak, what they will say about Jnān?" They have stressed upon the positive role of

48. At another place, Guru Amardas says, "Oh! brethren, a rare Guru-mukh understands and without understanding (the resultant of reasoning) to do action is just to lose the meaning of life (Sri Raga M.3.)

49. The man who is absorbed in unhealthy discussion, will perish; - Rām Kali; M.3.

Ashatpadi.

50. Vār Sorath; M.3.
faith. "The minds who have got the faith in Prabhu, the real Jñāna is revealed in them.\textsuperscript{51} And \textit{The man in whose mind is the faith of Guru, Hari Prabhu will be remembered by Him.}\textsuperscript{52} With it, they have advised Bhakta to stick to faith and make it an indispensable part of their Sādhanā. "Do not be led astray in suspicion or superstition, but serve the true Guru and keep the mind fixed upon one place."\textsuperscript{53} "Remain firm, never be unstable and make the words of Guru your basis", so that, "The whole world should talk high of you and be untainted in the divine court."\textsuperscript{54} With such a state of mind, Sādhaka reaches beyond all the worries and fears and enjoys divine bliss. Complete faith will attract the divine grace which will look after the Bhakta all the time. A wonderful acquisition of mind is expressed in the lines, "Whatever I beg, I shall get exactly the same, since I have complete faith and confidence in my Lord (Jo kuchh māngun, soi kuchh pāon, apane khassām bharosā)." Faith is such an activity, a force and power that it helps to realise the greatness of God, His unique infinity and a feeling of gradual development from the lowest position to the highest. Sādhaka enjoys the unity and rejoices with Him.

\textsuperscript{51} Gaurī Sukhmānī; M.5.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Rām Kali; M.3. Ashatpadi.
\textsuperscript{54} Dhanasari; M.5.
"My Master has accepted me and after destroying the
suspicions and fears has given me peace. Enjoy, O'
servants of Hari, the greatest divine bliss because O'
Nanak, faith has penetrated into the heart." At last,
with faith, such a level of being is attained that there
remain no difference between Guru and disciple and they
become one in the true sense of the word. "The disciple
of Guru when acts in accordance with Guru's teachings
become one with the Guru." "

Congregation (Sadh-Sangat)

In most of the Bhakti scriptures, there is an
indication that the company of the unholy people, the
people deluded by the appeal of sensual organs, should
be avoided, because they always remain busy in hankering
after sense enjoyments and their self is so covered by
the darkness that they never see the light of spirituality.
Contrary to it, if the company of the holy people - who
always remain absorbed in Supreme reality or in remembrance
of it - is enjoyed the best of the inner-self is
unveiled and it becomes purified. "Purest is the company
of holy-men and service to them brings the attachment
with divine atmosphere. With the grace of Guru, he, who
serves, enjoys the divine bliss, remembrance of which

55. Mafar M.5.
56. Asa M.4, Chhant.
enlightens the mind. Its evaluation is beyond description." 57 And "In the holy company, one becomes holy as it washes away the sins and helps to proceed towards virtues." 58

This concept of congregation is an originality of the medieval saint-poets. They have emphasised its importance so much so that without adherence to it, in their opinion, no object of Sadhana can be fulfilled. They believe that Bhakti is a great source of peace and calmness and of liberation also, but that too is attainable only through congregation. "There is no peace without the Bhakti of Hari. Win this invaluable diamond of life and remember Him every moment in the company of holy men." 59 It helps to promote the feelings of brotherhood and equality and strengthens the ties of humanity. It leads to the path of service and enriches with a sense of value towards every human being. It, ultimately, leads to realise the importance of mutual respect and unbreakable ties of humanity. The bonds of relations, determined by the age, grew stronger among the members of the congregation. "The disciple of Guru (Member of a congregation) have only one feeling and that is of mutual love. In it

57. Asa-M. 5.
every member is like father, brother and son."

The basic need for the successful completion of all types of Sadhna is the purification of mind. Without it, even a step towards perfection cannot be advanced. This too, according to Guru poets, is achieved through the grace of a saint or the company of the saints. "With a touch of touch-stone (Pāras) iron becomes gold and such is the greatness only of the saints."

Company of the saints is very essential, according to Guru poets, because to be at the feet of a Guru, to hear (Srāvana) him and act upon his words individually will be of great use, but still greater it will be in the company of the saints when the ideas of the Guru are put into practice. In congregation, every other member of it effects, inspires and touches the soul and the attack upon mental darkness becomes many sided. The Srāvana becomes more effective. Moreover, the true company is the source of all virtues because God and Guru both abide in it. "In the true company truth is perceived and love with true Nām is developed."

The concept of true company in Guru poets is also original. They do not believe that every religious

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60. Vār Sorath; Paurī M.4.

61. Gujri Ashtapadi; M.1.

62. Every member of the Congregation is a saint, because it is purified, as "With the Attainment of holy company, the mind is purified" (Āsā; M.5).

63. Vār Vadhana; M.3.
gathering is true company, but the true company is only
towards where the Nam of Hari, the loving God, is being
remembered and meditated upon. Guru Deva puts a question,
"Which should be taken as true company?" And replies in
his own way, "Where only one Nam is remembered," because
the spirit of Guru vibrates in the congregation rather
He Himself dwells in it, so it is the purest and bliss-
ful company. The true company is emphasised and
valued so much so, that sometimes it seems as if it
supersedes every other means (Nam, Simran, japa etc.)
because all the means can be practised in the congregation.

Prayer (Ardas)

Prayer too enjoys a great esteem in the poetry
of Sikh Gurus. There is a common belief that before
stepping in any new direction, prayer must be offered
before the Guru i.e. God, for a successful completion.
It is offered individually and collectively, but more
emphasis is on the collective prayer. There is a firm
belief in Sikhs that "People's prayer never goes un-
rewarded." This shows the confidence and trust in

64. Sri Raga, M.1.
65. Sri Raga, M.5.
66. If we want our aim to be achieved, we must pray
before Hari. We must pray before Guru, the
true witness to fulfill our aims;—Vår Sri
Raga Pauri M.4.
67. Birtha Kabhi Nā jāvai jān kī Ardās.
the deity and in the force of the prayer. The concept of prayer in Guru poets is, in fact, an emotional emanation through many minds at the same time and that is why an emphasis on congregation, as indicated above, is laid. There is an inspiration to join the prayer, because it is the only way to be saved from delusions and to be in communion with God. Guru Arjuna Reva says that God is "The bestower of peace and comforts and a source of removing all the fears, so offer prayers before Him." Prayer in Sikhism is offered only to God or Guru, synonymous to God, and to no other gods, spirits or human beings. They do not recognise any other being parallel to God, who can deserve any sort of prayer.

Prayer in Guru poets can be offered in two ways, with the use of speech or silently. They believe that to beg for some rewards, for the removal of some miseries or for the completion of Sadhana is useless, because He knows even without telling anything. Here it can safely be concluded that, according to Guru poets, the use of tongue is not necessary in prayer. The emphasis is upon the kindness and generosity of God. Even more than this is upon the faith and trust in deity. But par excellent

69. Sri Raga; M.5.

69. He knows my condition (story, hitha) even without speaking; - Asa di Var; M.1. - Without speaking and without telling, Antaryami (God) knows; Sarang M.5.
is the intention of mind which is not subject to speech for its conveyance. So, the Guru poets have expounded the inter-relation and mutual understanding - developed with constant and true prayer - between the mind of the devotee and the deity. With prayer two minds are intuned. The devotee gradually rises above, he ascends and deity descends to embrace him and an unobservable unity, likeness and inter-merger is experienced. When such a state of being is achieved through a hearty prayer, the devotee enjoys the presence of God in human likeness, and finds Him in the form of human relationship. God for him becomes a father, mother, brother etc. i.e. nearest possible relation, where the same blood, the source of war with, circulates. He is bound in the unbreakable bonds.

The way of offering prayer, as depicted in Guru poets, is that it must be accorded while standing with full respect and reverence and folded hands.70

Prayer in Sikh Gurus is a way of pleasing God and his par excellent attributes. He commands all the divine attributes and qualities and, devotee through prayer, tries to attract His grace. He prays for His Nam. It is an obvious fact in the field of Bhakti that

70. He Himself knows; He Himself creates and Himself sets right. Before Him O, Namak! prayer while standing. Var Maru i; M.2. - I pray while folding my both hands; Bhairo M.5.
a Bhakta must praise the divine virtues of his deity. They believe that praise is an effective means. It means as if it is a determining factor in moulding the mind of a Bhakta, to be engaged in Bhakti, because it becomes impossible to stick to it unless the idea of His greatness is not coined in the loving heart. He is the master of all the possible attributes. He has a loving heart and for the purpose of dwelling in the loving Heart the way of prayer is prescribed and devotee is inspired to follow it. Poetry of Sikh Gurus is full of prayers in which they have sung the songs of praise, talked of His greatness, kindness, generosity and lovable nature. He is ever kind. Bhakta in Sikhism do not pray for personal benefits always, but for the welfare of all. Here the prayer becomes an objective way and probably it is the unique characteristic of Sikhism.

Along with it, prayer is an effective method for confessions. Bhakta, as depicted in Guru-poetry, is advised to be always frank and fearless in confessing of his weaknesses and disabilities. He admits that he deserves no favour because he is virtually over-whelmed by Gumas. He knows that he is overpowerd of Tamas Guna and thus prays before God to save him. Through prayer he does not insist upon justice, because he knows that

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71. Our sins are as many, as an ocean is with sufficient water. But O, Gracious Lord, do some kindness, as you make to float even the drowning stones;—Gauri M.i.
thus he will not be spared, and so he prays for His grace only. He entrusts only His greatness and does not repent on the deeds. Bhakta, being confident of deity’s kind nature, He is sure to be embraced. He does not repent or worry upon the committed mistakes, because he knows that He will not only pardon him but also show him the right path in the future. Through this attitude of confessions — or in other words we may call the utter humility and deep sense of modesty culminates the idea of personal inadequacy. He realises that his own efforts, however virtuous in quality and large in quantity these may be, are inadequate to enable the self to abide in Him. Realising this fact, he prays

72. If He asks for account (of done deeds) nobody can be saved. Thus the belief in duality and Trinity can also bring no peace. It is only if True Prabhu Himself pardons them, with His kindness, we can be united; — Majh; M.3. Ashatpadi.

73. As a child by nature, (i.e. without any conscious effort) commits laks of sins and a father reproaches and advise him through many ways, but again embraces him. Similarly, Prabhu pardons the committed sins and shows the right path in future, — Sorath; M.5.

74. Prabhu, we are the dust of thy feet; — Todi M.5.

75. We are qualitiless and have no quality and it is only your pity which shower, your kindness upon us and we get the dearest Sat Guru. — Mundan II.5
in the way that He is the only Saviour. Except Him none other can save him. This tendency of the mind, of being frank in admissions of self-inadequacies and clear in vision of entrusting Him as the only Saviour, helps the Bhakta to inculcate the feelings of surrender before that Saviour. Consequently, he submits before God and surrenders the self. "Before Thee is my prayer and Thou art my whole-self i.e. mind and body", Nānak says, "It is all Thy greatness and none knows even my name". It is not out of the fear of punishment but because of modesty, extreme pietism and expression of love. Such a state of being ultimately awakes the assurance, in the mind of Bhakta, about the love of God. He feels contented that as his self isloaging intensively and feels it impossible to live without Bhakti, though some times he falls in the laps of doubt about success, as "O' mother, I do not know what will happen, but it is impossible to live without perceiving Hari." Similarly, He too is tied in his bonds of emotional attachment and so will definitely save him. This confidence assures him that he is equally being loved

76. Nothing is out of you, O, The destroyer of all fears;- Bilawal M.5.
77. Asa; M.5.
78. A way of addressing, at the time of irresistible emotional intensity.
79. Chaupade; - 4, M.1.
by Him and He will naturally save him at the time of need. He realises that it is His nature "Whoever comes to His shelter (Saram), He embraces him because it is His nature."

A glance at the prayer, which is in daily practice in the Sikh community and occurs in a canto in Gauri Sukhmani M.5 will not be useless. It reveals the points which Guru poets want to express through prayer. It would also clarify their contention about the nature of being of the self and supra self.

**Study of Holy Verses (Scriptures)**

The act of *Sravan* i.e. to hear the instructions imparted by a Guru can be taken in two ways; verbal and written. Guru instructs the disciple to hear his oral instructions and also study the needful scriptures under his guidance. Such study is of great value especially for the development of the right personality and in Guru poets, too, it is highly recommended. Guru Arjuna Deva emphatically preaches the need of study when

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80. **Bihagra Chant M.5.**

81. **Thou art my Master and my prayer is Kato Thee.**
The whole body and soul is Thine.
Thou art our mother and father and we are Thy children,
Unbounded are the pleasures in Thy kindness.
None knows Thy limits, because, Thou,
Shagwan art the highest.
The whole substance is withheld by Thee, and whatever is Thy order is obeyable.
Thou Self (Gati Miti) is known by Thee Namk, Thy servant, is always at Thy feet.
he says, "Without education (Bidya) where is the learned? (Pandits)." Guru Nanak is of opinion "with the grace of Guru if someone studies and thinks on it, he receives honour with this act of studying." But there concept of actual learned man is apparent in another verse where it is said "The learned man should be called a fool, if he is subject to lust, greed and ego." and "The same is the ignorant who says "I know" because he who knows does not reveal." More sublime is the learned who instead of exhibiting his acquisitions concentrates on the sublimity and tries to realise the Reality. More reading, and that too sincere and right reading, is only an initial step, the actual education lies in the realisation of the truth hidden in it. Guru Nava has made it very clear in the words that "The only acceptable educated is he, who realises what he has studied." And as a result of this realisation he understands that "Intellectual reasoning" is rewarded by true Guru and the Jaam of Guru is of the Guru Prabh.

82. Bhairo; M.5.
83. Prabhāti; M.1.
84. Vār Mājha; M.1.
85. Ḡā M.5. Their hatred about the so-called educated man of this time, can be seen in the words in Vār Malār M.1.
86. Dhamāsari; M.1.
87. A resultant of real and effective education.
88. Todi; M.4.
The unique heritage of scriptures, in the Indian tradition, is Vedas and a study of these has been recommended since long. To subdue the lower self, to rise above and to realise the truth, the study of the Vedas (Shruti) is recommended by Hindu sages, because these are the purest type of scriptures and are revealed by Brahman Himself. These the supreme authority because these contain the supreme truth and so are esteemed and are exalted to the position of Brahman Himself. These have an authentic impression on every sphere of Indian life. But this supreme authority of Vedas as direct revelation is not acceptable to Gurus. They believe that the poetry of Vedas is devoted to the description of three Gunas. The study of these sanctified scriptures is not sufficient to wash away the impurities. Guru Amardas, tells to a learned man "O' Pandit, the dirt is not washed even if the Vedas are studied for four ages," because these contain the details of Maya only and are perishable.

Their attitude towards the study of Vedas is clearly indicated in the words "Vedas (Rud) and Katabas do not know the secret that Brahman has neither mother, father, nor son nor brother..." That is, He cannot be

89. The poetry of Vedas deals upon three Gunas - Mrīśar M.3. Compare with Gita 2.45
90. Vār Sorath;M.3.
92. Four sanctified scriptures of Islam.
93. Māru;M.1., Sohle.
bound in the bonds of human relations as is related by these. And "The Creator is the Master of uncountable deep and secretly qualities which Vedas could not apprehend." 94

No doubt, Vedas, according to Guru poets, are not the only authority and the study of these is not the only way for a mystic to assimilate the mystical experiences. But by this, it cannot be concluded that no place to the study of the scriptures is given in them. It is equally valuable and useful for a Sadhaka and Sikh Gurus believe, "Sacred book (Pothi) is the place of God." 95

Talking about the "the study of Vedas particularly, they are of opinion, "The study of these swallows the sinful mentality and the Janā obtained through these enlightens the mind just as a lamp enlightens the darkened places." 96

Again, "Gurumukh is satisfied by thinking on Vedas." 97

They believe that the study of Vedas is useful, because it imparts with the Janā discrimination between the virtues and vice but it is only a first step in the path of realisation. That also is not complete only by knowing it, but by living it. Their main emphasis is

94. Āsā; M.5. Chhant.
95. Sārang; M.5.
96. Āsā di Vār; M.1.
98. Marū; M.3, Shohle.
not on the condemnation of the authority of the *Vedas*,
but on the intention of the readers or the prevalent
tendency of the people. There is an inexhaustible
spirit of indignation and hatred towards the actual
intention of the people, who found much honour in mere
reading and enjoying with the exploited rewards than
really to act in accordance with their teachings. Such
people do not understand the reality being revealed
through them. Neither the teacher, who teaches the *Vedas*,
realises the truth, which is contained in these, nor the
students strive to know it. All are victim to the ego
and are full of delusions. They do not adhere to
their teachings, but study them only to get themselves
worshipped. It is this intention which faces hatred
throughout the Guru-poetry. Otherwise *Vedas* are not
false and unreal in themselves, because after expounding
the four methods, these have become true. But Guru's
stress is upon the Bhakti and so it is clear that without
*Bhāva Bhakti* the reading of scripture is useless.

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99. He (Nānak) respected every religion, so far
as its real essence was concerned, but despised
mechanical worship in any respect — H.A. Rose;
Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics; edited
by James Hastings; Vol. 11 p. 510.

100. Gaurī; M.3.

101. Rām Kali Kī Vār; M.1.

102. Āsā dī Vār; M.1.

103. Liberation is attainable only with Bhāva-
Bhakti and that too with utter humbleness.
- Āsā dī Vār; M.1
Kirtan is a particular type of representation in Sikh Gurus and it is to sing the holy verses with the help of musical instruments. It is to awake an awareness of the presence of the beloved in the self. (In most of the mystical systems of the world, the problem is to awake the mind, to make an awareness of the supreme reality in it, to realise its origin and to rise above the world, to finish with the sense of duality and to abide in the eternal bliss and happiness.) This is the most powerful means in the Vaishnavite sects and also among Sikhs, particularly for the beginners. In Kirtan, the melodious musical tunes which emerge through the verses relating to mystical experiences of the saint poets, really captivate the minds of the singer and the listener both. The holy verses, full of high ideals and lofty feelings, when are set at musical tunes, they have immeasurable impact on the cultivation of a yearning mind. The Sadhaka loses the self in the enchanting melody, forgets the world around, rests in the depth of the self and dips in the source of meotar. It is the most immanent and forceful method which Sikh Gurus advocated. Rather it is the central point of Sikh Guru’s Sadhana, and is very essential for the formative stage of the votaries. Even the Laity is well impressed through its formative character, which definitely plays a great role in the right formation of a Sadhaka.
The act of Kīrtan, in Guru poets, is two-fold. It is to sing and to hear (Srāvāna) the holy verses accompanied by music. Through it the praises of God are sung and so are impressively imparted. In the Bhakti Sādhanā of Sikh Gurus, these two elements of praising God and that too in a congregational form, are of great importance and they have deliberately preached it in their poetry. Guru Arjuna proclaims "The praise of Hari and the company of holy is the activity above all actions. The servant is absorbed in performance of these (in Kīrtan and congregation) and so Thou, the destructor (Bhanjam) of all the miseries and degradation has become kind. This mind is lost (Rāta) in the Kīrtan of Hari." *104 Because they believe that this "Mind awakes only in Kīrtan of the Hari." *105 Guru Arjuna in Rāg-Gaurī has indicated that all sorts of religious performances and ceremonies, which are undertaken as means, are nothing but a source of bondage and so of the circle of birth and death. Only Kīrtan is an effective method and this truth, he discloses, is not only what he says, but he has simply reported what Guru has taught. *106 That is why about a Bhakta, it is said in Guru poetry, "He does not desire for any fruit, but is absorbed only with the

105. Gaurī, M.5.
106. As Guru has taught (advised), I have simply reported the same, Gaurī M.5.
The words of Guru deva, "The heaven (Baikunth) is there, where is Thy Kirtam," throw light upon the importance of Kirtam in Bhakti-Sadhana of Guru poets. Guru Arjun Deva gives a very categorical contrast between the utility of Kirtam and other means in the life of a Sadhaka. He says:-

"On the places of pilgrimages, the people are victim to the sense of ego and the learned (Pandits) are always absorbed in Maya. Tell me a place, dear, where the Kirtam of Hari is performed. Sutras and Vedas think upon virtues and vices, heaven and hell and upon the transmigration of the soul. But we sing the Kirtam of Hari in the company of holy and this is attained from a Guru."

Abiding in His Hukam (Order) and Rasā (Will)

Hukam in Guru poets is a divine urge, which instigates His will to attain multiplicity through activity. The Puranic Brahman desires to be many, He becomes and that Will or Desire and its actual process of being many, according to Guru poets, is practised and materialised through Hukam. Guru Nanak has clearly indicated,

107. Sukhmani; M.5.
108. Suhī; M.5.
109. Xam; M.5
110. Hukam is an Arabic word which originally means an order, but later on it began to denote to 14-A judgment or legal decision (Kuran 21, 78); especially of God (13, 41) 2-A logical judgment expressed in a dijma." (The Encyclopaedia of Islam; Vol. II p. 332). But the contents of the word are considerably changed by Guru poets, as is evident from the above discussion.
"By Hukam have been the bodies (Akar) ... By Hukam have been the Jīvas ... Every being is within the fold of Hukam and nothing is out of it." Guru Arjun Deva expresses his belief in a line "As is Thy Hukam, similarly it would be done." Whatever is in this visible world, it is due to His Hukam and thus Hukam becomes a creative force in Guru poets. They do not believe that anything is existing beyond His Hukam. Even a minute particle of the universal, in any form, animate or inanimate, is in, through and out of His Hukam. It is the divine grip, which includes in itself almost every type of activity, constructive or destructive, and preserves every thing within its fold. Salvation or bondage all are in His Hukam.

His Hukam is, supreme, unchangeable and unavoidable. It is absolute truth and everybody has to act within its magnitude. Guru poets have preached in

111. Japuji.
112. Var Gujri 2; M.5.
113. Maru; M.1.
114. By Hukam people are chained, O, dear, and by Hukam they are punished. By Hukam the Sabda (of Guru) is recognised, O, dear and by Hukam the place in divine court is received; - Sorath, M.1.
accordance with it, because it is thus He wills. Guru Nānak Deva in his first Pauri of Japuji raises this point and affirms that no sort of intellectual pursuit, no wisdom, fasts or anything can be effective in being purified so as to follow the path of Bhakti. In a very dramatic way he puts the question "How to be a Sachiar and how the barriers of falsehood should be broken?" And then answers "Act in accordance with Hukam and Raḥā". Through Hukam He exercises His will and it is in human being's and welfare to obey it. Rather there is no question of obeying or disobeying it, because it is not in worldly being's potentiality to challenge it and it is automatically exercised without carying for his

115. Order (Hukam) and will (Raḥā) are, in fact, two key-words to understand the whole Guru-philosophy. The words are taken from Islamic Culture, and in Guru poetry these means that though the former He creates the considerable varities of the visible world and though the later He governs them. A Ṣadhaka is required to realise the sense of the words and act in accordance with these.

116. The word Ṣachiar, in Guru poetry stands both for Supreme reality and the person intuned with that Reality, as:-

"Thou art the Creator Ṣachiar and my Master"- Asa;M.4.

"O, Nānak, the person, who is the recipient of His kindness, perceives and becomes Ṣachiar at His door."
- Vadhams Ki Var, Shaloka M.3.

117. Japuji.
subject's material will. So, Guru poets believe in complete obedience in His Hukam and according to them, "He is wise, He is honourable, for whom the Hukam is sweet." Because "The person who realises Hukam enjoys the real happiness." It is an indispensable belief for the development of balanced personality of a Sadhaka and moreover "It is only after realising the Hukam that one abides in Master." It is a means to develop the qualities of contentedness, truth and patience without which no Sadhaka can be successful in the act of Sravana. The absence of belief will eventually instigate the sense of ego, which results in identifying the human self as the doer of all karmas. It is a powerful impediment in the efforts for the attainment of Bhakti. Even the strongest men of power, wisdom, divinity and austerity are just empty vessels if they do not obey the Hukam, which helps to receive honour in His court. But on the other hand if the Hukam is well realised, all such impediments arising out of ego will vanish. "If one understands the Hukam", says Guru Nanak, "None will be victim to ego."
Guru poets believe that resigning the self before His Hukam is the only desirable and helpful quality of a sincere Sadhaka. That is why an advice from them comes as "O' people of Hari, leave the dark convictions of mind, because happiness is in realising His Hukam." The obedient Sadhaka, is frequently advised by Sikh Gurus to abnegate the self, knowing that it is the only proper way. Perfect faith in Him and His Rasa, being executed through Hukam, is the best and effective method to inculcate the feelings of emotional attachment. Fifth Guru Deva, with a sense of self-surrender, perfect faith and sweetness of heart says, "Thy Hukam is sweet to me and the things done by Thee are liked by me. Whatever Thou bestow, my mind finds satisfaction in the same and does not run to the others." Their conviction of being within the fold of Hukam is so firm that they do not find any peace in not accepting it. "Unless Hukam is realised the miseries will be experienced." Guru Amardas emphasising the importance of obeying Hukam believes that without realising it every body weeps. Having no confidence in Him, one cannot even sleep at night. Contrary to it, if the wife acts in accordance with husband's will she commands praise from near and dear

124. Sri Raga; M.5.
125. TodI; M.5.
126. Asa; M.5.
ones and dwells in the palace of peace and happiness. 127

This recognition of the divine Hukam is, in fact, an initial step in following the path of Bhakti. But in Sikh Gurus it is given so much importance that every sort of conduct, which is helpful for Bhakti, has its origin and completion in it. It is almost beyond description. "Hukam cannot be defined". 128 It is for them a method to begin with, a path to lead towards ultimate aim and the aim to be achieved. Guru Arjun Deva has beautifully explained "Only one is the conduct and one is the practice that Thy Bhakti is performed with obeying Thy Hukam. Who ever meditates upon this Mantra, 129 crosses the dreadful waters to the shores." So, this is a key-method to the attainment of Bhakti which can only be perceived by an act of Sravana from a Guru. This important achievement in the Bhakti-Sadhana of Guru poets is impossible without being at the feet of a Guru. It is said "The Hukam is recognised after meeting the Guru, and, since then, I am happy." 130

Inner-Means

Undisputedly, Sikh Gurus have advocated, through their poetry, and practised above means to strengthen

127. Vār Sri Rāga M.3.
128. Japu ji.
129. Āsa M.5.
130. Āsa M.5.
the sense of Bhakti, which is the sole method of salvation. It can be attained through His grace that is Hukam and Rasa only. This concept of Hukam and Rasa is of such a nature as a Bhakta intuned with this, will gradually and eventually be intuned with the Reality also. In this way the ultimate aim before Bhakta is to realise and abide in it. But as indicated above, this is not the ultimate aim only, but it is the initial step also, because unless this step is completed, no method, according to Gurus, can be practised effectively. Because, "After obeying Thy Hukam, Bhakti can be performed." The most tremendous impediment in the way of Bhakti is the sense of ego. But this too is not sublimated or banished with any kind of ethical conduct only. With the realisation of His Hukam or self-surrender before it, this evil, itself, is removed away. "If Hukam is realised," says Guru Deva, "none will say "I am"." In Guru poets, therefore, the basic conduct is to train the mind and to develop a strong sense of self-abnegation. For this very purpose the above stated methods which constitute to the act of Sravana, have been recommended. But in all the methods like the Kirtam of the holy verses, attending the congregation, offering the prayers etc., there can be a possibility of all this being as an act of deception, show and wickedness, which

131. Asā, M. I.
132. Japuji.
the Sikh Gurus have denounced. They never liked any action, which the self does not share and is being done only for action's sake. They do not like that an action however, pious and useful in form it may look, which does not unfold the inner self of the doer. If there is no harmony in action and intention, it carried little importance for the real development. That is why, they found the following dangers in adopting the mere external forms of representing Bhakti Sādhaṃ:

1. These may instigate the doer to identify himself as the actual doer of all these and thus a sense of ego may arise to become a strong barrier between the Sādhaka (Bhakta) and Sādhyā (deity).

2. These may not be done with an intention to be pure, good or holy, but simply to be called so and, in this way, the doer may not be exploiting others by being wicked and stupid.

3. These may not be done with a worldly purpose behind, even the fulfilment of which does not bring satisfaction to the thirsty, and so these may not become an inspiration for him to increase his lusts.

4. Without knowing the meaning and goal of the methods being practised, the Sādhaka may not be dragged to blind faith and superstitions which are equally harmful.

5. Moreover, as Gītā\textsuperscript{133} says, if there is no

\textsuperscript{133} 15.11
purity even the efforts (of practising different methods) do not become effective i.e. unless the inner self does not flow through these, there is no use. So, along with the above stated methods, they have emphasised some inner qualities for the purification of a Sādhaka.

Emphasising internal purity by mastering the destructive instincts, like lust, greed, ego, cupidity and absorption in Māyā, the Guru Ṛeva has warned the Sādhaka that God is not attainable through these,¹³⁴ and has advised him to melt his whole-self in the divine love, so that every Karma or the Karma-Indari like feet, hands, eyes etc. should express His love. He emphatically says that union with husband is possible only through these.¹³⁵

Qualities like purity of mind, speech and action, spirit of tolerance and brotherhood, meekness, kindness, contentedness and detachment are most essential for a Sravana, because only then it leads to Sādhaka towards the achievement of Bhakti through external means. Guru poets have preached the cultivation of these qualities. Guru Ṛeva, stressing the need of these, says that if the qualities like truth, contentedness and purity in speech are practised, no suffering arising out of the disunion will come and a merger in Him will be experienced.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Rāga Tilamps; M.1.
¹³⁵ Mājhi Kī Vār; M.2.
¹³⁶ Sūhī; M.1. Chhant.
Advising a married woman, that is a Bhakta as a married woman, Guru Arjuna Deva says, "The Suhagan is successful only when she beautifies herself with the qualities like truthfulness, contentedness, kindness and dutifulness (Dharma), because thus she is liked by Prabhu (Husband)." Describing the duties of a real Bhakta, Guru Sahib writes "The essence of the activity is that truthfulness, contentedness and kindness should be acted upon. Spirit of detachment and humility are other qualities, if anybody is granted by formless Prabhu." The internal qualities are so indispensable for every Sadhaka of any system the follower he may be, that no step without these can be forwarded. These help to be Godward, where his look is always towards God, his attention is towards God and the world or its glittering things cannot attract him. It does not mean that external means are of lesser importance. Both internal and external are equally important and needful, because these are inter-dependent and co-effective and play the equal role in the cultivation of a balanced personality.

Sravana from a qualified Guru and acting in accordance with that is just a stepping step in the path of Bhakti and the real formative stage comes with the

137. Bilawal; M.1.
138. Sri Raga; M.5.
practice of continuous reflection (Mannan) upon it. No doubt, Sravana is equally important and sometimes more than any stage, because the difficult period of mending the mind is here. When it is successfully moulded the trained mind cannot afford to spare any moment to depart with it. It moves automatically, successfully and remains always absorbed in the required means as 'Gurumukh is always under discipline'. Moreover, the importance of Sravana is so exalted in Guru posts that it is indispensable even for the great religious leader, perceptor and the masters of super-natural powers, i.e. gods and goddesses. It actually helps to expand and enrich the consciousness and excites such a curiosity to search the realities and dwell in it permanently, as it is not easy to be static at any moment. Still the need of Mannan is greater, because without it every Sadhaka remains unripe and untested. It is an act of constant reflection upon what has been learnt and in this way help to regulate the different faculties and bring or produce the desired intellectual convictions.

Mannan, too, is highly esteemed as an effective method of Sadhana. Guru Nanak elucidates it in the following lines:—

139. Sri Raga; M.1.
140. See Japuji; Pauri 8-11.
"The importance of Manman is beyond description. With Manman, the mind and intellect are awakened. With Manman, the significance of all regions is perceived. With Manman, the disciple of Guru is liberated and gets others liberated. With Manman, the circle of birth and death ceases." 141

In another stanza, Guru Amardas emphasising the importance of Manman, believes "The people who hear and reflect upon it, they dwell in the house of the Self." 142 The views of fourth Guru about it are:-

"The voice of Guru imparts with nectar (Through speech) as it is glorified by the Nam of Hari and the disciples, who have heard, learned and reflected upon it, their all lusts are pacified." 143

But the question is on what to reflect? Whatever is learnt and heard is to be reflected upon is the right answer, but in Guru poets the whole thing is so unified that particularly every heard, learnt or acquired is reduced to the Nam to be reflected upon. In Indian Bhakti tradition, the object of reflection is called Mantra and it varies from sect to sect or system to system and many times in the same system or sect. The need of Mantra and constant reflection upon it is more emphasised in Buddhists sects and in the different Tantric sects, where these prevail in various forms, but Guru poets have not selected or preached any other Mantra except

141. Ibid; Pauri 12-15.
142. Sri Raga, M.5.
144
His Nām. His Nām is the only Mantra, which is to be remembered continuously, (Nām Simran) and reflected upon (Mannan, Jāp). They have clearly affirmed "Nām is our all conducts and Nām is our purest type of practices,"145 and "Even if the lake and orores of Karmas are practised (i.e. Mantras are practised) these cannot be parallel to Nām."146 Their concept of Nām is more clear in the words "The best religion amongst all the religions and purest Karma amongst all the Karmas is the repetition of Nām."147 Nām is like a medicine which relieves the Śādhaka from all the mental and physical diseases. "Nām is a medicine for all the diseases and to sing of its qualities brings the happiness of salvation."148 "The whole world is diseased and the Nām is medicine."149 "The world is a fire and to extinct it, Nām is the water."150
So, the Nām is the only effective Mantra, the constant reflection upon which saves the Śādhaka from the tremendous diseases like the sense of ego, illusion, and other impurities.

144. Liberation, its fruits and methods to attain is the Nām of Hari, - Gaurī; M.5.
145. Nām is the Mantra given by Guru-Sukhmani M.5.
146. Sri Rāga; M.1, Ashatpadi.
147. Gaurī Sukhmani; M.5.
148. Ibid.
149. Dhanāsari; M.1.
150. Vār Malär; M.1.
Everything in the visible world, every animate and inanimate being and every minute particle of the world is attributed with one or the other Nam (name), as there is no form without a Nam. This idea is supported by Guru poetry also, when it is said "Whatever is created is under Nan and there is no place without it." But this characteristic of the visible things is not something independent and evolution through itself, but it is also attributed by Him. When this whole universe is an emergence from His wholeness, as it is believed by the Sikh Gurus, it is obviously understandable that all the names have also been from God Himself. "He Himself has created the self, (Universe) and Himself has attributed the Nam." Nam is all-prevading and universal like God. Body and soul i.e. matter and mind, in both the states of beings, He Himself is enlightened and the nectar of the Nam is stored in the both. So the Nam and God are not two different entities, but are the same. It is exalted almost to the position of God, as is evident from the words, "By Nam are created, all the jivas. By Nam are created, all the bodies." Word
'Nam', even when used in the most ordinary sense in Guru poetry, as indicated above, too stands for higher meaning, because even there it is created by God Himself. In addition to it the concept of Nam in their Bhakti stands for an individual importance. It is an individual and important means of their Bhakti-Sadhna, and so throughout the Guru poetry, it predominates their whole thinking. In them Nam is a Mantra, as indicated above, and they have directed every effort to meditate upon it. It is a powerful means for the attainment of Bhakti, it is Bhakti in itself and even the object of Bhakti, because it brings, strengthens, and sweetens the emotional attachment with the beloved and helps, by constant reflection upon it, to abide in Him.

The object of meditation i.e. God in Sikhism is an Absolute being and is beyond all the names. It is because no name can adequately and accurately express Him. Every effort to reduce Him, to a name, or to understand His existence in its wholeness, through a name is inadequate and so He is known as nameless or beyond all the names and forms. "He has nothing of the form, feature or colour, but Prabhu is distinct from these Guṇas." Still, every name, form and colour represents Him because He, as an essence, is vibrating in these

156. Gaurī Sukhmani; M.5.
157. Gītā 7.8
and is peeping through these. "He is nearest to the Jīva and is always in their company, because he prevails in nature and so is in form and colour." It is clear from the portrait of God as depicted in Guru poetry that if he is beyond all the names and hence is nameless, then it is also true that all names lead towards Him. Moreover, names are nothing more than a pointing towards a particular individual and sometimes to convey his qualities. God is the master of all attributes and so all names lead to Him, provided the intention of the man who is reflecting upon Nām, indicating the supreme reality, should be pure, sincere and rightly directed. Probably, that is the main reason that most of the names, relating to the God as apprehended in different sects, are attributed to the God of the Sikh Gurus, for example in a single passage of poetry in Rām Kali, Guru Arjun Deva remembers Him with the following name:

"Bhagwant, Gosāin, Jagan Nāth, Mādho, Gopāl, Gobinda, Mukanda, Nārayan, Rama, Bāsudeva (Vāsudeva) etc. are the names from Hindu culture; and Karīm, Rahīm, Allāh, Maulā (Pīr, Pekimber) (Prophet) Sehk, are the names for spiritualist personalities) etc. are the names from Muslim culture."

Their attitude towards the different names is quite apparent in the concluding line, when it is said

158. Asa, M.5.

159. For various types of names attributed to God of Sikh Gurus, see Dr. Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, pp. 126-27.
"Then the illusion is removed by Guru, Allah and Par-Brahman are seen one." All these names are just an effort to indicate that reality and so these cannot be real, because these are unable to represent His actual state of being. That is why, Guru poets have called these superficial names. But the popular name to be meditated upon - prevalent in Sikhism and made authentic by an authority on Sikhism is "Vāhe-Guru!".

Nam-Simran (Remembrance of Nam)

The easiest and convenient method of reflecting upon Nam is to remember it ceaselessly. The act of remembering the Nam is not performed or completed only with the help of voice or speech. To remember the Nam with the help of sound is also not ineffective, provided it is not for the sake of show only. If the Atma of the Sadhaka actually flows through the voice, if it is dissolved in it, if it is urging him to remember loudly, it is verily substitutive. But if it is being done without the urge of the self, it is all useless. Guru poets while explaining this act of deception, or self-deception,

160. Ram Kali, M.5.
162. With combining the four words (u, from Vishnu, Ha, from Hari, Gu from Gobind and Ra from Rama), he (Guru Nanak) prepared 'Vāhe-Guru' the Mantra to be repeated. Bhai Gurdass; Var 1, Fauri 49.
have used many symbols to make it conveniently understandable and impressive. Guru Deva compares this act with that of a crow which always finds satisfaction in being busy in moving in the rubbish or with that of a horn of a ram which always causes injuries in fight. That is the mere parrot-like repetition is useless and also dangerous at many stages. The intensive urge of the mind, even if it accepts the assistance of voice, is the real required element; as "The person who reflects in mind and speaks Hari Hari from the mouth, never misses the aim." Thus Simran, as prevalent in Sikhism, so often becomes Kirtan. Kirtan being an individual and collective performance, several times enters the field of Simran.

But the emphasis is on the silent remembrance. It matters little whether it is spoken or not, when the mind is in remembrance. This notion is more clearer in the Guru Deva, when it is said "every body cries Rāma Rāma, but Rāma is not apprehended by mere crying." What is evident from these remarks is that silent remembrance is more fruitful because here only the actual urge impels to remember. It becomes their spiritual

163. Gaurī; M.5. Ashatpadi.
164. Ibid.
165. Gaurī; M.5.
166. Gujrī; M.3.
hunger which finds satisfaction only in Naam. It cannot be practised for show or deception, which is the compelling motive of Manmukha. With such a contemptuous motive, he may remember melodiou1y, it will remain fruitless. “Manmukh are tired with remembering Hari Hari, but the internal dirt is not washed away. With the dirty mind, Neither Bhakti is done nor Naam is received.” For the real and effective remembrance of Naam, the mental purity, with other desired ethical qualities, is essential.

To produce the thick, deep and ever-lasting intellectual convictions, continuous and undisturbed remembrance of the Naam is advocated. Though there is a notion available in Guru poets that even the minute portion of time is sincerely devoted in His memory is enough for the desired goal, yet there is an advice from them that Sadhaka should be in remembrance of His Naam at every moment, not discontinuing even for the duration of the twinkling of an eye. Not to forget him, even for a while, would eventually make him habitual to be always in Him and not to think of any other thing at any time. They have stressed the need of permanent

169. Whosoever lives in remembrance even for Nimakh (a minute portion of time), he remains indestructible for Lake and crores of days i.e. forever. - Gauri, M.5. Ashatpadi.
absorption in remembrance. "Remember while standing, sitting, and sleeping and sing Hari Hari even when on the way."¹⁷⁰ That is every moment should be devoted to His memory so that the whole creative energies should be centralised and directed towards the achievement of the goal more forcefully.

In Rāga Sri and Gaurī i.e. Sukhmani Sahib, Guru Arjun Deva has elaborately discussed the supremeness of the remembrance of Nām. He has made it clear that no other method like worship, bodily disciplines, intellectual and material acquisitions can be useful in attaining the perfection. He believes that every other method or reflection upon any other Mantra is verily below the Nām of Hari. He is so clear in his view that he says "The remembrance of Prabha is the highest than all (means)."¹⁷¹ Again in the same composition he says, "The best Dharma of all the Dharma and the purest performance is the reflection upon Nām."¹⁷² All the other adopted means to produce the intellectual conviction, in the mind are uneffective except Nām."¹⁷³

Nām Śimran in Guru poets, in fact, is a creative force, which creates the needful atmosphere in Śadhuś's mind and inspires him to have high ideals. It

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¹⁷⁰ Asā, M.5.
¹⁷¹ Sukhmani; M.5.
¹⁷² Ibid.
¹⁷³ The whole of the Karmas and Dharmas are performed but this mind is not sublimated except with Nām; Ram Kali; M.5. Asatpadi.
becomes a way to be followed and ultimately helps to attain perfection. The clear indication in the words "The whole existence is by the Hari Simran" is that, it is the basis of the existence of the universe. It is such a virtue, pregnant with such a force as the whole impurities of the mind are washed away by it. It is the nectar which infuses the life in the dead. It is a diamond, a symbol of the source of light and strength. It is an effective means to bring the stability. So much so that men from any caste, creed, category and class can practise it and can attain salvation."

The attachment of the Sikh Gurus with this method, as is apparent from their writings, is so intensified that they cannot depart from it even for a while. It is in fact the soul of their Simran. Expressing its exclusiveness, and emotional attachment with it, they would say "Where the Nam of my Gobinda is not being repeated, that town is just a jungle." In another stanza, fifth Guru says "Happy is the only day, when Prabha comes to the mind. The day when the Supreme Brahman is forgotten is the curse even if however good the season may be." The only method in them is Nam Simran and is so convenient that it is within the...

174. Gaurī Sukhmani; M.5.
175. Gaurī M.5.
176. Mājh; M.5.
177. Vār Gaurī, 2, M.5.
approach of everybody. "The man who remembers Gobinda, he may be learned or unlearned, will attain the supreme position."

**Japa**

Japa (repetition) is also a means which attributes to the stage of Manman. It is a sort of meditation exercised through constant repetition of the given Mantra. In the Buddhist and Tantric sects, the Mantras to be repeated are of many kinds and even the ways of repetition have, too, attained many forms. The adherents of these sects learn many kinds of postures and poses to attain mastery over the art of repetition, so as to be a perfect one. Patanjali, the famous exponent of Yoga-Sadhana, too introduces and advocates Japa for the purpose of destroying the impact of arising evil thoughts.

He advocates the repetition of the Symbol 'OM' for the emergence of a really spiritual consciousness crossing the barriers of many-fold evils. The content of the word 'OM' according to Bh. Gita, is Brahman. It means

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179. OM: The symbol of three in one, the three worlds in the Soul; The three times in, past, present, future in eternity; The three Divine powers, creation, prevention, transformation, in the one Being; the three essences, immortality, omniscience, joy, in the one spirit. This is the word, the symbol, of the Master and Lord, the perfected spiritual man. (Charles Johnstone, The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali P. 25).

180. 8.13.
the Bhakti scriptures advocate the repetition of the Brahman. Even if the symbol 'Om' is adopted for repetition purpose, it would mean the strengthening of the attention through concentration in Brahman. Guru poets adopt Nam as their Mantra, as indicated above, to be repeated and through it concentrate upon that Absolute reality.

In the Vaishnavite Bhakti scriptures, the word Japa is replaced by words Simran and Bhajan and are made synonymous as regards the contents in the advanced stage of the meaning of the word. These two words, also suggest the constant repetition of the Nam, though the different ways of bodily practices, which are done for effective Japa, are not recommended in these scriptures. The sense of the undisturbed and uninterrupted Simran is almost parallel to the sense of Japa. When all these are performed loudly, it may seem a bit different, but when silence is observed, no difference is left. To remember silently or to repeat silently is alike. In Bhakti scriptures, these two words, Simran and Bhajan command more frequency. In Guru poets too, these two words occur and emphasise the same sense as discussed above.


182. Simran is discussed above. For reference to Bhajan see Gauri Thiti M.5. and Jaijaivantii M.9.
In Guru poetry the use of the word Japa is also very much frequent. So much so that a long poem by Guru Nanak Deva is given heading as Japa by which it can safely be inferred that some mention about Japa is clearly available in them. Moreover, the word reflects its imperative mood and that means that Guru Deva has directed his followers to repeat the poem written by him. Now, here Japa is not of a word or sentence as a Mantra, but of a very long poem and, in fact, it is not repetition but is reading in which Nam and its essentials are repeated or remembered. The distinction in the traditional concept of Japa and that of the Guru's is clear.

Japa is an activity of the Sadhaka to train the mind through repeated practice and to centralise the whole energy, which ordinarily remain scattered by the attraction of the different sensual organs. It is a way to control all these, to centralise all, to concentrate on one point and to evolve a strong attention, which is not easily disturbed. All these qualities have greatly been valued in the Bhakti-Sadhana of the Guru poets and for that they, too, have adopted the word Japa.

Japa or the constant repetition, according to them, is performed in three ways i.e. loud Japa, silent Japa, and Live Japa. These three types have respective stages which lead from one to another.
1. **Loud Japa**

In loud *Japa*, the help of vocal organs is sought and it is performed through voice. It is the initial stage in *Japa-Sādhāna* and a Sādhaka starts from it. It is easier and convenient for a beginner and so he is advised to start with it. Guru Arjuna Deva says "Thou repeat (Japa) and make others to repeat". At most of the places the use of the word *Japa*, in Guru poets means the repetition with the help of the sound i.e. loud *Japa*.

2. **Ajapa Japa**

It is another kind of *Japa* in which the voice does not become any substitute. In fact, here it is not necessary to speak out the Nām, but repeat in the heart. It is an activity in silence and denotes to the advanced level of the Sādhāna. The description of this type of *Japa* is available in the words "If Ajapa Japa is not forgotten the votary remains in the beginning and in the ages i.e. he becomes eternal," and "In whose mouth is Nām, he repeats Ajapa Japa." "In Gurmat, Rāma is repeated by perfect man." It is a sort of constant turning of the thought which helps to

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183. Gaurī Sukhamī; M.5.
184. "Let there be soundless repetition of Om and meditation there on"; - Patañjali Yoga Sutra, 1.28
185. Malār kī Vār.; M.1.
186. Bilāwal; M.1.
187. Gaurī Goārārī; M.1.
develop a strong attention (Dhyana).

3. Liva-Japa

It is the third stage of Japa and is a symbol of the highest level of the Bhakta's Sādhana. Here the Sādhaka need not to do any effort. It is a state of being completely unified with deity. The both identities of Sādhaka and Sādhyā are identified and a complete absorption (Liva) is experienced. That does not mean a state of only losing the self in the higher self and being deprived of the self entity, but with it, the self is regenerated with new vigour and vitality and with immorality and eternity. It is a state of complete identification and so the repetition is performed in such an automatic way as blood regulates in the body. Here the repetition is not done and the other two kinds of Japa are left behind. In fact, it is a state of persistently being in Japa as culminated from the practice of other two types. Guru Deva says "By Gurmāt the Liva with true (God) is realised and with it Gurmukh remains awakened day and night i.e. he is always conscious of being in God." 189

But, inspite of the fact that Guru poets have advocated Japa Sādhana and have given an analysis of its

188. Philosophy of the Guru.
nature and different stages, we will have to agree that here the word Japa does not stand for the meaning and nature of Śādha as in the other indicated sects. A wonderful contrast is given in their own words. Guru Deva when talking about their sincere devotees or followers says: "Japa, Tapa, Sanyama, Karma, Nā-Jāna, Nām Japan Prabhā Tera". The word Japa is used in the same line twice (as Japa and Japan) and at each place it gives a different meaning. The former conveys the traditional meaning of the repeating with certain bodily poises and prescribed Mantra. Guru-Deva has shown reluctance about it. The later conveys the meaning of remembering only. Except from it, the word Japa is used in Guru poetry, at many places, to express a spirit of indignation about its performance. As "The people who have forgotten the Nām, what other repetitions they repeat?" And "Repetition, austerity and temperateness may be practised and may be dwelt on at the places of pilgrimage; and the charities and virtues may be exercised, but without truth what is the use?" In fact, the

190. Tapa: The word comes from a root which means to heat, make hot, and thus it means to be ardent or full of efforts (Ernest Wood, Yoga Dictionary, P. 156).

191. The poising of the mind on an idea or thing by means of combination of concentration, meditation and contemplation taken in succession. Ibid. P. 138.

192. It can be translated as "They do not know the repetition, austerity, temperateness and action, but simply remember They Nām."


194. Sri Raga, Mā.
concept of Japa is different than its original meaning and in Guru-poets its content is changed, as indicated above, and is made synonymous to the contents of the words Simran and Bhajan. In them Japa is just to remember the Nam of deity, it may be again and again, and that concept of Japa, to be performed through prescribed bodily postures and set Mantras, is not available here. In Guru poets it is a natural process, through which the intellectual convictions are produced.

Nidhiyasana (Profound Meditation)

Nidhiyasana is an advanced type of Sadhana and a state of being, which culminates from the continuous and sincere devotion to the first two stages namely Sravana and Manman. With a whole-hearted assumption of what is learnt, listened and done at the feet of Guru and constant reflection upon that would eventually lead to the perfection in Sadhana, and in fact, the Nidhiyasana is the state of perfection in itself. Here no fear of being fascinated by the worldly temptation, sensual organs and internal weaknesses like the sense of hatred, pride, ego etc. is left and Sadhaka is at persistent stability in his Sadhana. Reaching here would mean the enjoyment a confrontation with the Supreme reality, His divine presence and eternal bliss. Guru poets, giving a description of these three stages and a link provided by gradual process, say "Hear the advice
reflects upon it and enjoy the fruits according to your wishes". It is a state where nothing is seen and felt except the presence of Brahman. The eyes see him, the ears hear him, nose smells him and hands touch him i.e. the whole structure of the human being, the whole pattern of its senses and, of course, of the being itself experiences a great upheaval of being lifted from the lower self to the higher-self. Rather he feels an upheaval and is no more in the cage of the matter. He is free in himself, enjoying the eternal freedom. Guru Sahib relates such an experience in the words "With it (Nidhiyāsana) the darkness has perished and light has entered as if a ray of sun has appeared in darkness. With it the invisible, unapproachable, unknowable and untainted God is seen by Gurumukh with his eyes." At this stage Gurumukh does not see Him in a particular thing only but feels in every particle. "Brahman is seen, Brahman is heard, only one is experienced. He Himself expands the self in everything, so none is knowable except Prabha." Whereas the words Sravana and Mannan are used by Guru poets, they have not used the word Nidhiyāsana.

195. Gauri Sukhmani; M.5.
196. Vār Sri Rāga; Pauri; M.4.
197. Bilāwal Chhant; M.5.
By this, Dr. Jai Ram Mishra concludes that the perfect state of Mannan has become a substitute for Nidhiyãsana here. Dr. Mishra wants to say that the stage of Mannan and Nidhiyãsana in Guru poets are not distinctively placed and they have mixed the two, and both are expressed by the word Mannan. No doubt, the state of being with Mannan, as represented by Guru-poets is a state of perfection and Sãdhaka, with it, is at his best in efforts and acquisition both. But a close study of the Guru poetry reveals that not only they have combined the idea of both states in one word, but they have changed the order in accordance with their nature of Sãdhana. In fact, in Vedanta system, these three (Sravana, Mannan and Nidhiyãsana) are the methods, means or steps for the attainment of supreme Jñãn, but Gurus were Bhaktas who did not believe in only Jñãn being efficient for the purpose. It is also true that their Bhakti is not debarred of Jñãn. They have deliberately preached the substitutive aspect of Jñãn, but not as an end in itself. It is, for them, a means for the attainment of Bhakti. Therefore, they have used the terms Sravana and Mannan and have practised these to strengthen their devotion based on Jñãn. But as regards the final stage or means, being not Jñãn but Bhakti, in them, they have turned towards Bhava instead of speaking

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198. See Dr. Jai Ram Mishra; Guru Granth Darshan, p. 272.
about the traditional form of Nidhiyāsana. Thus every
form of the means of Sādhnā is coloured in the colour
of Bhakti and this is not in scattered form but in a link.
In Gurus it is linked as Sravana, Mannan and Bhāva (or
Bhāo, Bhāo as are used by Guru poets) instead of Sarvana,
Mannan and Nidhiyāsana and it is not by chance, but is
deliberately done. It is a modification so as to bring
the immersive means of Jnān-Sādhnā in the context of
Bhakti. Here Bhakti is enriched with Jnān and the means
of attaining Jnān are made subject to the attainment of
Bhakti. An apparent notion, to support this idea, is
available in Guru-poetry:-

"Heard, reflected and after it developed Bhāo." 199
"Let us sing, hear, reflect and develop Bhāo." 200

So, in Guru poets, the first two means of
Sādhnā are not to culminate in Nidhiyāsana, the third one,
but in Bhāva and thus the entire concept gets a new
meaning and form.

Bhāva, emotional attachment, is a means of
Bhakti and a state of being where Sādhaka abides in God
permanently and does not become subject to the circle
of birth and death. Mind is no more victim to the tyranny

199. Japujī; Paurī 21.
200. Ibid. Paurī 5.
of the senses. It is free and dwells in divine happiness and enjoys the warmth of his embrace. It is the state of complete unification which results in eternal voluptuousness. Guru Amardas relates this state of being in the beginning of his poem Ānand Sahib. These are the means which form Guru poets Bhakti-Sadhna. It is to undertake the adventure of being transformed from finiteness to infiniteness, from dis-union to union and to be co-habitent and co-participant with God.